

# ODU-DUA HA

## ANNUAL COMPLAINTS PERFORMANCE AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

June 2024

### Annual Complaints Performance Report:

This report provides an analysis of complaints received from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. We received one complaint during this period and this was dissatisfaction with repairs and maintenance. Although maintenance and repairs was a key area in which concerns were raised by tenants, we also reviewed the other areas that tenants had raised concerns in our day-to-day contact with them to consider where improvements are required.

### Key Areas of Concern:

- 1. Repairs and Maintenance:** Tenants are understandably frustrated by delays, missed appointments, inadequate or uncompleted repairs, contractor performance and overall poor communication.
- 2. Housing Management:** Problems with updating housing information and record keeping, handling of anti-social behaviour such as noise nuisance, and responses to service requests.
- 3. Staff Behaviour:** Failure to respond to service requests in a timely manner and allegations of lack of empathy.
- 4. Estate Services:** Concerns about communal cleaning, garden maintenance, security, illegal fly-tipping and parking restrictions.
- 5. Gas Heating Servicing:** Poor service delivery by contractors for gas heating repairs including delays in getting repairs done and missed appointments.

The one complaint we received was dealt with by liaising with the gas contractor and making an apology to the tenant.

## Lessons Learned from Complaint Received:

1. **Communication and Responsiveness:** We recognise the importance of keeping the tenant informed of the progress of their repairs and the impact on the tenant of our failure to do so.
2. **Proactive Maintenance and Repairs:** Better communication and management of our contractors so they are clear of our service standards and expectations. Regular performance review meetings in particular with the gas contractor.

## Service Improvement Plan:

Key areas of improvement	Proposed actions
Improve Communication with Tenants	Implement a comprehensive communication plan using various methods (i.e. phone calls, emails, letters &, when available, text messaging); send regular updates both automative and non-automative to tenants about the status of their complaints. This will significantly improve our responsiveness and keep tenants better informed.
Streamline Complaint Handling Processes	Monitor complaints on a weekly basis by the officer handling the complaint and ensuring prompt acknowledgments and replies within the agreed timescales. This will help resolve issues more efficiently.
Reasonable Adjustments for Disability and Vulnerability	Review of policies and procedures to accommodate tenants with known disabilities and vulnerabilities, Train staff in these areas to have more knowledge, understanding and empathy. This is essential for creating a more inclusive and safer environment.
Preventive Maintenance	Use data from stock conditions surveys to address potential issues. This will reduce the number of emergency repairs and improve overall service reliability.
Staff Training	Develop and implement staff training covering complaint handling, customer service and conflict resolution. Improving staff understanding and communication

	skills will improve our relationship with our tenants and their perception of staff/ organization.
Regular Feedback and Surveys	Conduct regular surveys and publicise the results to tenants. This will provide invaluable feedback so issues can be dealt with promptly as well as promoting accountability, transparency and continuous service improvement.

**In addition to the above, we have also considered feedback from the Tenant Satisfaction Survey to implement improvements:**

<b>You Said – these are the things we need to improve</b>	<b>We Did – implement actions to improve our services</b>
<b>Day-to-day repairs - Timescales to complete repairs</b>	We have reviewed our repairs processes and set stricter service level agreements with contractors to ensure repairs are completed within reasonable timelines. We will closely monitor repair timelines going forward.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Streamlined the repairs reporting process - repairs calls are now taken directly by the Repairs team.</li> <li>There is now a dedicated Repairs in box in place for both tenants, staff and contractors.</li> <li>For emergency out of hours repairs we are using Pinnacle to ensure the right level of service is provided and tenants receive the correct advice. All calls are monitored by Pinnacle.</li> <li>We are using a new IT system to raise, record and track repairs. It is also used to monitor actual performance against published timescales which is shared with the Board.</li> <li>We are planning a text messaging service to keep tenants informed of appointments and progress with their repairs.</li> <li>Our Repairs Handbook has been updated and this is now on our new website. This includes information on repairs responsibilities and</li> </ul>

	<p>timescales which has also been published in the Tenants' Newsletter.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are having regular performance monitoring meetings with our main Repairs contractors.</li> <li>• These meetings will look at repairs not completed at the first visit and the reasons for this.</li> <li>• We are introducing telephone surveys carried out internally by staff to follow up on repairs where orders have been raised.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Communications &amp; information – Listen carefully, take interest</b></p>	<p>We will enhance our customer service training for staff to improve active listening skills and demonstrate more empathy when interacting with tenants. Tenant views will be given higher priority.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As well as the Repairs email, we have created a dedicated email inbox for Housing Management matters.</li> <li>• We have redesigned our Tenants' newsletters to make the contents more accessible and engaging.</li> <li>• We have updated our Tenants' Handbook and this is on our new website.</li> <li>• We are using a new IT system to improve recording of our contact with tenants, including complaints and reports of anti-social behaviour.</li> <li>• When available on our new IT system, we will be using a text messaging service to contact tenants more quickly and easily.</li> <li>• At Lithos Road Estate, there is a generous 30 minute grace period which compares favourably with other sites where there is car parking enforcement in place.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Customer services &amp; contact – Care, empathy, support, etc.</b></p>	<p>Our customer service standards have been updated to ensure tenants are treated with care, empathy and provided appropriate support when raising queries or issues.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are introducing satisfaction surveys (which will be carried out independently) to gauge feedback from tenants on our contact with</li> </ul>

	<p>them to consider what we do well and what needs to be improved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have updated our complaints policy in line with the Housing Ombudsman’s guidelines and all key staff have received introductory training on this, with more detailed training to follow in July.</li> <li>• Our new website is now in place. There is some more information to include and when fully completed it will provide tenants with improved access to information, for example, on how they can contact staff, access policies, make complaints and report repairs.</li> </ul>
<b>Day-to-day repairs – Contractor</b>	<p>We are reviewing our approved contractor list and their performance. Contractors who do not meet our standards for quality repairs will be removed from the list.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are having regular performance review meetings with our main Repairs contractors.</li> <li>• Contractors are required to send reports including photos when they attend for a repair.</li> <li>• We are reintroducing satisfaction surveys on repairs carried out and discuss any issues arising from these with our contractors.</li> <li>• We are collaborating with other Housing Associations to share information on contractors and will continue to look to add to our approved list those contractors that can provide both quality and value for money services.</li> </ul>
<b>Property condition – Regular inspections</b>	<p>We are increasing the frequency of property inspections to identify and address maintenance issues promptly before they become larger problems for tenants.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have carried out stock condition surveys of all properties, we will use these reports (expected at end of June) to plan our improvement works; however, anything urgent identified during these inspections is addressed.</li> <li>• We are using specialist contractors for damp and mould issues.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are reviewing our damp and mould policy.</li> <li>• We are planning to improve our IT system so we can capture images of properties and communal areas when inspections are carried out and tenants will also be able to comment on outstanding repairs.</li> <li>• Cyclical and major works (such as window replacement) have been completed on some sites and underway at other locations.</li> <li>• We have initiated our bathroom replacement programme which will need to be over a number of years.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Scheme specific feedback - Poor maintenance of communal areas</b></p>	<p>Improving maintenance of communal areas is a key priority. We have allocated more resources for regular cleaning and upkeep of these shared spaces.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have accepted that the cleaning at some sites has been poor and have taken action: Meetings with contractors; New cleaning crew; Revised cleaning specification; Issued rent credits or gift cards in lieu of poor service. We will be asking cleaning staff to wear Hi-Vis jackets to make their presence more visible when they are cleaning your block. There is more to do such as getting regular before and after photos.</li> <li>• At specific sites we will be changing the cleaning contractor to improve the service.</li> <li>• We will be using the results of the stock condition surveys to plan for improvement works in communal areas.</li> <li>• We have conducted fire risk assessments at all properties with a communal area and are implementing necessary changes.</li> <li>• There is already a pet's policy in place, however, we will promote better understanding of this to remind tenants of responsible pet ownership.</li> <li>• We actively share information in our Tenants' Newsletters of how to deal with bulky waste and how to report fly-tipping in communal areas.</li> </ul>

## **Implementation Timeline:**

Timeline – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Responsible Person - **Operations Manager**

By implementing the service improvement plan, we aim to improve tenant satisfaction, enhance the experience for any tenants who do wish to make a complaint, and improve overall service quality.

This will be available to and reviewed by the Board.