

September 2024

Peter Birtwistle Trust Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvements Report

Analysis of Complaints

As reported to RSH:

TSM CH01 the number of stage one complaints in the relevant stock type in the reporting year - 2.

TSM CH02 proportion of stage one complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman complaint handling code timescales -100%

TSM TP09 proportion of respondents who report making a complaint in the last 12 months who are satisfied with their landlord's approach to complaints handling - 73.3%

Given the TSM TP09 result, it is clear the perception of complaints handling by residents and what constitutes a complaint is not consistent with the number of complaints received. This could have been due to 'complaints' from residents being given to grounds staff and or contractors and there not being a clear enough process for this to be reported to the trust office. Alternatively, it could be that grounds staff and or contractors do not perceive that a complaint has been made and do therefore not report it to the trust office.

In the year to 31st March 2024 the trust received 9 complaints. All 9 were, upon greater reflection, minor complaints. Of the 9, seven were responded to and resolved on a 'there and then' basis.

Two were initially escalated to stage one, however, both complaints were processed, and the residents involved were satisfied with how the complaint was resolved. These 2 complaints involved bins being moved and residents not being happy with how they were asked to desist with moving the bins.

There were no stage two complaints and no reports from the Housing Ombudsman.

The trust is a small organisation, and residents are known by name to all members of staff. Complaints are relatively low due to the high importance given to service requests from residents.

Themes that have arisen from the 9 complaints include gardens and grounds and repairs and maintenance. This reflects how important communal gardens and grounds and reporting and responding to repairs are to our residents.

Service Improvements

Following the implementation of the code and the self-assessment:

We now have a more systematic approach to complaints handling, record keeping is more consistent following the introduction of pro-forma documents and follow up calls and letters are logged.

The self-assessment has shown that response letters should include clearer guidance regarding escalation.

There will be regular updates to all staff and contractors about what to do if a resident or relative or friend of a resident makes an expression of dissatisfaction. These can be via toolbox talks.

Regular, at least monthly, monitoring of the complaints log file will be undertaken to ensure deadlines are met and recording of complaints is accurate.

As part of our resident engagement process, we are and will continue to actively encourage residents to make complaints about services in our day-to-day interactions, explaining that complaints are a positive way to change service delivery, that they can remain anonymous, and they are not 'making a fuss'.

We have developed a more robust recording system for day-to-day repairs including expected timeframes.

We are working on how to best to manage residents' expectations of work on gardens and grounds.

Staff have attended Housing Ombudsman seminars to help with understanding of the new code and will continue to make use of the learning resources provided by the Housing Ombudsman.

A feedback form will be developed to allow residents to comment on how they felt their complaint was dealt with.

An annual review of the complaints policy and process and adherence to the code will be diarised to coincide with year-end so that the self-assessment, performance and service improvements report and trustee statement are completed before the 30th June.

Publication

The trust's website is currently under development, once completed the complaints policy will be available online.

We currently publicise the complaints policy in our Residents' Handbook and regular residents' newsletter. We also publicise the Housing Ombudsman in the Residents Handbook and give all new residents a copy of the leaflet entitled Information for Residents about the Housing Ombudsman's Service.

We will implement updating residents annually with information on the Housing Ombudsman.