

# **YMCA East Surrey Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2023-2024**

## **Introduction**

From April 2024 the Housing Ombudsman Service requires landlords to produce an Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report.

Previously at YMCA East Surrey we have shared performance around complaints with our residents and professionals in several ways including at Resident Forums, Housing Advisory Groups and Surrey County Council Quarterly Contract Monitoring Reporting Meetings. However, moving forward, we hope this new way of reporting complaint compliance gives insight around how we handle our complaints, the types of complaints we receive, plus the learning outcomes and actions we take.

To produce the content of this report, we have involved our resident, and plan to introduce a section in future Resident Forums Groups to not only take feedback, but to support us to ensure this report is accessible and easy to understand for our residents. However, if you have any feedback while reading this report or suggestions, we welcome it with open arms.

The timing of the annual submission to the Ombudsman has been aligned with the Regulator of Social Housing's requirements for the submission of Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) outcomes.

## **Requirements**

It is a condition of membership of the Housing Ombudsman that all landlords are required to have a complaint policy which is compliant with the statutory Complaint Handling Code, and as part of that to complete an annual submission which includes an annual complaint handling and performance improvement report.

This is applicable to all members regardless of their size or operational set up and tenancy status, as they can consider complaints from applicants, tenants, leaseholders, and licensees.

In terms of our expectations of landlords, all landlords are required to complete the self-assessment, annual complaints handling and service improvement report, and for its governing body to scrutinise this and provide its response.

The Report must detail the following:

- A qualitative and quantitative analysis of the landlord's complaint handling performance - this must also include a summary of the types of complaints the landlord has refused to accept
- Any findings of non-compliance with the Code by the Ombudsman
- The service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints
- Its actions following any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman

- Its actions following any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord.

The self-assessment should be submitted each year and form part of the annual complaints and service improvement report and is an assessment of the landlord's complaints policy against the statutory Code 2024. Landlords will then be expected to include their performance against the Code in place at that time.

## Steps to be carried out

1. Complete this annual *Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report*
2. Ensure compliance of our *Complaints Policy* so that it is in line with the *Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code*. The code can be found here: [Complaint Handling Code 2024 | Housing Ombudsman Service \(housing-ombudsman.org.uk\)](https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/complaint-handling-code-2024)
3. Complete the *Self-Assessment Form*. The template and additional guidance for which can be found via the following link: [Self-assessment webinars | Housing Ombudsman Service \(housing-ombudsman.org.uk\)](https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/self-assessment-webinars).
4. Provide a *Governing Body Response* to the report. This should come from someone who sits on the Board of Trustees and would be the assigned Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC)
5. Upload all five documents to our website. The link to our website can be found here: [Home - YMCA East Surrey](https://www.ymcaeast Surrey.org.uk)
6. Completion of the electronic submission form using the following link: [Complaint Handling Code Annual Submissions Form](https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/complaint-handling-code-annual-submissions-form)

## Annual Self-Assessment

The purpose of the self-assessment is to set out how we demonstrate our complaint handling service and how it complies with the provisions of the Complaint Handling Code. In addition, the self-assessment supports us to inform our residents about our service provision.

The self-assessment form should be completed by the complaints officer and be reviewed and approved by YMCA East Surrey governing body annually. In this case it is our Board of Trustees or Finance and Resource Committee.

Once approved, YMCA East Surrey must publish the self-assessment as part of the annual complaints performance and service improvement report on our website.

The *Governing Body Response* to the report must be published alongside the self-assessment.

We are required to complete the self-assessment in full and support all statements with evidence, with additional commentary as necessary.

The new Complaints Handling Code came into effect April 2024, and in preparation we have undertaken a full review of our complaints policy to ensure compliance with the new code.

The annual self-assessment of the Complaints Handling Code can be viewed on our website.

The self-assessment was reviewed with the support of our Trustee's, CEO, Central Services, and support from residents via our feedback mechanisms that include resident forums, resident representatives, support meetings, feedback forms and the feedback post-box.

During the review of our complaints handling, it was highlighted we had gaps in our complaints policy that needed addressing but we made robust efforts to address these gaps to ensure compliance with the new complaints handling code.

### **Complaints Handling Performance 2023-2024**

We received 4 complaints during the last 12 months. All were resolved at Stage 1, with none escalating to Stage 2.

100% of complaints were acknowledged within timescales.

100% of complaints were responded to and investigated within timescales.

Of the 4 complaints, all were upheld and all resolved. The theme of 2 complaints was around quality of service related to maintenance and housekeeping.

There have been several other issues and interventions with the maintenance service and a different approach is being taken from April 2025 which sees some services delivered by different suppliers.

Further to this we received 2 complaints regarding noise nuisance made by residents late at night in our rear garden that back onto residential flats. These matters were dealt with in line with house rules and licence agreements.

All complaints raised directly with YMCA East Surrey have been accepted during the reporting period.

### **Housing Ombudsman Service**

During the last 12 months the Housing Ombudsman did not issue YMCA East Surrey with any non-compliance findings with the code.

The Housing Ombudsman has not produced an annual report on YMCA East Surrey performance.

No further reports or publications were produced by the Housing Ombudsman in relation to YMCA East Surrey

### **Service Improvements and Learning**

We view complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve services for our residents. As part of our commitment to this, through complaints, we aim to introduce a 'Learning from Feedback Forum' led by operational managers, in order to have the opportunity to learn, progress and regularly discuss feedback. We track complaints learning and action using internal tracker tools.

Here are some examples of how we plan to use feedback to make service improvements;

**Contractors / Third Party Providers** – Some of the complaints we have received in previous years were relate directly to resident experience with a third party such as a contractor delivering services on our behalf. Moving forward where a complaint is received, we will invite the third party to form part of the complaint investigation. We will follow-up discussions with third parties as part of regular contractor review meetings to share the learning and set the standards we expect for our residents. We will continue to review and monitor any future complaints to ensure high levels of service are maintained.

**Photographic cataloguing of empty homes (voids)** – This will be introduced as direct learning from resident feedback complaint whereby a resident was dissatisfied about the standard of their room when they moved in. We already document void rooms via a room inspection report but the introduction of having photographic evidence of each property before it is re-let will assist in ensuring the standard is met and helps when managing any feedback.

This will also formed part of a new 'Voids Standard'. A review, during which parties including residents, support staff and outside agencies i.e. Surrey County Council will be invited to inspect properties before handover to ensure standards where being met.

**Maintenance and Housekeeping** - In the reporting period, complaints relating to Maintenance and Housing keeping were received and upheld. This feedback and insight from residents is vital in ensuring high quality services are being delivered. As a result of this, and other feedback, a scrutiny review was undertaken on and led by residents making recommendations that made a difference to maintenance and housekeeping and allowed us to make improvements. The complaints details and learning will form part of the next review due by June 2025.

### **Board Response**

Chair, Paul Burns who is Board Member and Trustee responsible for Complaints has overseen this report, and Paul chairs the Board of Trustees. . This report was shared with the board at the Finance and General Purpose meeting 14<sup>th</sup> January 2025. The board response to this report is as follows;

*"The board is satisfied that the approach to complaint handling by the organisation remains a high priority and that we are compliant with the Complaint Handling Code, evidenced in the self-assessment and Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report.*

*During the coming months we expect to see an enhanced focus on service improvement and learning outcomes from complaints to ensure YMCA East Surrey can continue to demonstrate their commitment to residents.*

*The Board wish to extend they're thanks to the residents who feedback to staff and for their support and engagement in the completion of the self-assessment and Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report".*