

Self Help Community Housing Association Annual Complaints Performance Report 2025/2026

Increased level of complaints

We received four complaints during the year. Although this is a low number, the Board recognises that some complaints may not be identified or recorded correctly. We will continue to ensure staff understand the difference between a service request and a complaint. Staff respond to many service requests and aim to resolve issues quickly where possible. Feedback helps us improve our service and identify where we may be falling short. Our aim is to handle all complaints fairly, sensitively and in a way that supports better service delivery.

Encouraging complaints

We aim to listen to clients and respond promptly to concerns. Where possible, we resolve issues at the first point of contact. If an issue becomes a complaint, we respond in line with our complaints policy and aim to resolve it quickly and fairly.

Complaints are discussed at monthly team meetings and quarterly at Board meetings.

No of complaints by quarter

Quarter	No of complaints	Resolved at which stage
Q1	0	
Q2	1	1
Q3	1	Moved to stage 2
Q4	2	1 & 2

Complaints at Stage 1.

One complaint related to the way we handled a race hate incident. This complaint was not resolved at Stage 1 and was escalated to Stage 2, where it was resolved.

Three other complaints were resolved at Stage 1: two related to maintenance issues, and one concerned issues in a shared house.

Complaints at Stage 2

One complaint was escalated to Stage 2, where the Chair of the Board carried out a comprehensive review of the case.

Review of the case that passed to Stage 2

Anonymised complaint case study: how we responded to a serious complaint

In summary, this case shows how we respond when a complaint raises serious concerns about safety, discrimination or communication. We review what happened, listen to the resident, consider safeguarding and equality issues, check the evidence, escalate the complaint where appropriate and provide a written response explaining our findings.

This anonymised case study explains how we responded to a serious complaint from a resident living in shared accommodation. The complaint raised concerns about alleged discriminatory abuse, threats, safeguarding, risk management and the quality of communication following the incident.

The complaint was considered at both Stage 1 and Stage 2 of our complaints procedure. It covered safeguarding, equality considerations, resident safety, communication records and supporting evidence. Personal names, addresses and other identifying details have been removed to protect confidentiality.

What the complaint was about

The resident raised concerns that:

- The resident reported experiencing discriminatory abuse and threats from another resident.
- They said earlier concerns about intimidation and safety had been reported to staff.
- They felt the incident had not been sufficiently recognised or investigated as a hate-motivated or discriminatory incident.
- They said they had not received enough information about the investigation, risk assessment, findings or decisions made afterwards.
- They were dissatisfied with the safeguarding response and the communication they received following the incident.

The resident asked us to formally investigate the matter and explain how safeguarding, equality duties, risk management and complaint-handling requirements had been considered.

Stage 1: initial investigation

After receiving the complaint, we made enquiries with relevant staff and reviewed records relating to the incident and the actions taken afterwards. This included safeguarding referrals, serious incident reporting, contact with Adult Social Care, immediate safety actions and support for the complainant.

- Safeguarding referrals.
- Serious incident reporting.
- Contact with Adult Social Care.
- Immediate actions following the incident.
- Support offered to the complainant.

We reviewed safeguarding information and contact with external professionals. Based on the information available and advice received, we considered whether any further referral or action was needed at that stage.

Stage 2: review and escalation

Following the Stage 1 response, the resident asked for the complaint to be escalated to Stage 2. The resident provided additional evidence and asked us to confirm that this information would be fully considered as part of the review.

The complainant also requested:

- Independent consideration of the complaint.
- Clarification regarding the reviewing officer.
- Confirmation of Stage 2 timescales.
- Transparent recording of how evidence had been assessed.

Independent review

The Stage 2 review involved independent oversight of the complaint, correspondence and supporting evidence. To support the review, we brought together:

- Complaint correspondence.
- Policies and procedures.
- Chronologies of events.
- Internal communications.
- Investigation records.
- Relevant supporting documents.

Reviewers requested a clear chronology so that events, decisions and communications could be understood in sequence and independently assessed.

Evidence considered

The documentation reviewed appears to have included:

- The original complaint.
- Subsequent correspondence.
- Staff accounts.
- Safeguarding information.
- Serious Incident Reporting documentation.
- Text message transcripts submitted by the complainant.
- Organisational records relating to the incident and its aftermath.

The review involved substantial evidence gathering and chronology preparation so that the circumstances of the complaint, the actions taken and communication with the resident could be considered in sequence.

Outcome

After completing the Stage 2 review, we issued a written response through the complaints process. The response explained how the complaint had been considered, what evidence had been reviewed, what conclusions had been reached and what this meant for the resident.

The records show that:

- The complaint was formally escalated.
- Additional evidence submitted by the complainant was received.
- An independent review process took place.
- A Stage 2 response was issued in writing.

What this shows about our approach

This case demonstrates that when a complaint raises serious concerns, we respond in a structured, fair and transparent way. In this case, we:

- Accepted and acknowledged the complaint.
- Conducted a Stage 1 investigation.
- Sought information from relevant staff members.
- Considered safeguarding issues.
- Obtained information from external safeguarding professionals.
- Facilitated a Stage 2 review.
- Engaged independent reviewers.
- Compiled extensive documentary evidence and chronology records.
- Issued a formal written Stage 2 response.

We also reviewed what the complaint showed about our systems, including how clearly we communicate with residents, record decisions and explain safeguarding and risk-management actions.

We recognise that complaints can arise from distressing events and complex circumstances. Our aim is to listen carefully, review evidence fairly, consider safeguarding and equality issues, communicate clearly and use complaints as opportunities to learn and improve.

No refused complaints

We did not refuse any complaints during the year.

Referral to the Housing Association Ombudsman

No complaints were referred to the Housing Ombudsman Service. We advise clients that they can contact the Ombudsman at any stage of the process for advice and support.

Service improvements

Following client feedback during the year, we have:

- Ensured better communication around maintenance updates.
- Ensured better communication around repair response times.
- Reviewed our approach to managing hate crime reporting and our knowledge of working with non-binary clients.

We understand that poor communication can frustrate residents, and we are improving how we keep clients informed. Staff need to follow matters through with clients by providing updates, not only arranging works.

We are upgrading our IT and recording systems to improve services for clients.

Overall, the Board's feedback was positive and reflected our commitment to improving and publicising our complaints process and developing a positive complaints culture.

The Housing Ombudsman Service

We include the Housing Ombudsman Service's contact information in relevant correspondence so residents know how to access independent advice and support.

Residents do not need to have an active formal complaint to seek advice and support from the Housing Ombudsman Service.

The Housing Ombudsman can be contacted in the following ways:

Web: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Email: info@housingombudsman.org.uk

Post: Housing Ombudsman Service
PO Box 1484
Unit D
Preston
PR2 0ET

Tel: 0300 111 3000

Access to our Complaints Policy and Procedure

We aim to resolve complaints at the first point of contact where possible. We also have a dedicated complaints inbox, which is publicised to residents.

Board response

The Board received the 2025/2026 self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code and the annual complaints handling and performance report in September 2026.

The 2025/2026 self-assessment confirmed that Self Help was compliant with all requirements of the Complaint Handling Code, and the Board approved this position.

We used the complaint that progressed to Stage 2 as a learning opportunity for staff.

Our Chair oversees complaints on behalf of the Board. The Chair reviews complaints with the CEO and identifies any patterns or areas for service improvement.

The Board will continue to review whether Self Help should remain a member of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme. Membership is voluntary for Self Help Community Housing Association, and the Board will monitor any changes arising from the Renters' Reform Act.

The Board and organisation will continue to learn from client feedback and improve services.