

Complaint Performance and Improvement Plan

As a Registered Provider, Brentwood Housing Trust (The Trust) aims to provide high quality homes and services to its residents, but we recognise that sometimes residents may receive a less than satisfactory service.

We have reviewed our Complaints Policy in accordance with the Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code April 2024 to further improve residents experience by ensuring complaints are dealt with in a timely and transparent manner.

We recognise that complaints are a valuable source of information that can help us identify recurring or underlying problems with our management of stock and areas where potential improvements can be made.

As part of our complaints process, we undertake periodic analysis of the trends in both the number and nature of the complaints that we receive to identify shared and recurring causes of complaints. This includes looking at, where known, the various diversity strands and tenure types to identify any trends.

This report reflects our compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code, and our complaints handling performance from January 2024 to December 2024.

We've included in the report:

- A summary of complaints including the numbers
 - a) of complaints received and resolved
 - b) response times
- Service improvements made as a result of complaints
- Planned improvements
- Brentwood Housing Trust Board statement

Complaint performance January 2024 – December 2024

Brentwood Housing Trust Complaints Policy dictates that complaints should be responded to within the following timescales:

- Acknowledgement – 5 working days
- Stage 1 Complaint Responses – 10 working Days
- Stage 2 Complaint Responses – 20 working Days

Over the past year, we have received 2 Stage 1 Complaints. Both complaints were upheld. The Trust carried out further works to both properties. Complaint was resolved at Stage 2. However, the second complaint was unresolved, and the resident referred the matter to the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman found that the Trust was guilty of maladministration in dealing with repair and also maladministration in handling the complaint.

Service Improvements as a Result of Complaints Received

The complaints received were primarily due to maintenance issues. Although the contractor visited within the priority times set, the cause of the issue was not immediately identified and so required more works or the involvement of specialist surveyors.

The following changes have been made to our current systems to try to ensure that complaints are dealt with more efficiently:

- **Complaints Officer** Brentwood Housing Trust now has a dedicated Complaints Officer.
- **Member Responsible for Complaints** Brentwood Housing Trust has appointed a Board Member Responsible for Complaints. The MRC has oversight of all complaints and will ensure complaint handling drives business improvement for the organisation leading to better services for residents.
- **Delay in complaints handling:** The Trust has now revised its Complaints Procedure and the way in which it records complaints received. Staff have undergone training in receiving and reporting Complaints.
- **Record Keeping/Communication:** - Staff have undergone training and new reporting procedures have been put in place.
- **Complaint responses:** These are now monitored by the Housing Manager to ensure that they conform to the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Guide. Additionally, a report is made to the Board of Management annually.
- **Keeping the resident informed:** The resident will be kept informed of progress throughout the investigation.
- **Use of the Website:** We will publish a Self-Assessment of complaints performance and service improvement reports along with the Board of Managements response on our website.

Board Statement

On behalf of the board, I would like to confirm the commitment and hard work demonstrated in managing complaints at Brentwood Housing Trust. The Trust has undertaken a review of its procedures in dealing with complaints and will continually seek to improve the way in which complaints are handled. The annual complaints review, and insight report have highlighted that the Trust receives very few complaints and those that are received are usually resolved at an early stage. We acknowledge the valuable insights gained from the Complaint Handling Code Self-Assessment. This exercise has provided us with a clear perspective on our operational strengths and pinpointed areas where we can enhance and develop our services. The board continually looks for assurance that our services are meeting the needs of all stakeholders and supports fully the proposed Service Improvement Plan for 2024/25. We believe that the initiatives outlined in the Plan will address the identified opportunities for enhancement. It is imperative that we continue to evolve our complaint management practices, ensuring they remain robust and responsive to the needs of our customers. As we move forward, we encourage the management team to actively engage and collaborate with all stakeholders to facilitate the smooth implementation of the Service Improvement Plan and continued learning. The board looks forward to receiving regular updates on progress.'