



Report to: Audit & Governance Committee Meeting  
21 February 2024

Director or Business Manager Lead: Suzanne Shead – Director Housing Health and Wellbeing

Lead Officer: Jill Baker, Business Manager Customer Services, ext. 5810

Report Summary	
<b>Report Title</b>	Housing Ombudsman Annual Review Update
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	To inform Members of the Housing annual review updates
<b>Recommendations</b>	That Members note the report
<b>Reason for Recommendation</b>	It is an Ombudsman requirement that Annual Review Letters are shared with Members

## 1.0 **Background Information**

- 1.1 As a landlord, the Council is accountable to the Housing Ombudsman, who consider complaints from tenants in instances where either the Council's complaints procedure has been exhausted or where the complainant feels the Council has not dealt with a complaint appropriately.
- 1.2 Each year the Housing Ombudsman undertakes an annual review of complaints. The 2022/23 annual review was published on 17 October 2023.
- [Annual Complaints Review 2022-23 | Housing Ombudsman \(housing-ombudsman.org.uk\)](#)
- 1.3 The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman annual review was published earlier this year, and this was shared with Members at the September committee.

## **2.0 Housing Ombudsman Annual Review April 2022 – March 2023**

- 2.1 The Housing Ombudsman website states *“we are committed to openness and transparency. An important part of this is using our data to provide residents with more information and insights and learning for landlords to improve their services.*

*Our 2022-23 individual landlord performance reports have been published for landlords with five or more cases determined between 1 April 2022 and March 2023.*

*We have not created individual reports for landlords with fewer than five determinations as meaningful performance interpretation is not possible. If a landlord does not have an individual report or is not listed in that table, we did not make a formal determination for them in 2022-23.”*

- 2.2 As the Council hasn't had five or more cases determined by the Housing Ombudsman, there isn't an individual report for us.

## **3.0 Housing Ombudsman Decisions**

- 3.1 Our records show that during this period, the Housing Ombudsman reached a decision on one case relating to this Council. The outcome of the investigation was reported to this committee on 27 September 2023.

<b>Ombudsman reference number</b>	<b>Summary of complaint</b>	<b>Decision</b>
202205089	Handling of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adaptations following occupational therapist assessments.</li><li>• Rehousing request.</li></ul>	No maladministration

- 3.2 It stated that the Council acted appropriately and in accordance with its policy which gave it discretion as to whether it would carry out complex adaptations or seek suitable alternative accommodation.
- 3.3 The Housing Ombudsman recommended that the Council should consider reviewing its complaint responses in this case. It stated *“complaint responses should focus on responding to the issues raised and should not be used to highlight other issues such as resident behaviour. Such issues should be raised separately under the relevant procedures”*.
- 3.4 The Council recognised the above, however in this case, felt the additional issues included in the complaint responses were relevant to the complaint investigation.

- 3.5 The Housing Ombudsman publishes anonymised decisions on its website, three months after the final decision date. [Decisions Archive - Housing Ombudsman \(housing-ombudsman.org.uk\)](https://housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

#### **4.0 Joint Complaint Handling Code**

- 4.1 The Housing Ombudsman and Local Government Ombudsman is launching a Joint Complaint Handling Code. Both Ombudsman have carried out their own consultations on this and the outcome of the consultations are due in January 2024. Both the Council and the Housing Local Influence Network submitted responses.
- 4.2 Following on from the consultation, the Ombudsman will launch the Joint Complaint Handling Code. The Council will carry out a self-assessment of its Customer Feedback Policy against the Code and then make any amendments identified to ensure it meets the requirements of it.
- 4.3 Adhering to the Joint Complaint Handling Code will become a statutory requirement.

#### **5.0 Implications**

In writing this report and in putting forward recommendation's officers have considered the following implications: Data Protection, Digital and Cyber Security, Equality and Diversity, Financial, Human Resources, Human Rights, Legal, Safeguarding and Sustainability and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment where appropriate.

##### **5.1 Financial Implications FIN23-24/5789**

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

#### **Background Papers and Published Documents**

Nil.