

## **Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2023/24**

### **1. Foreword From the Board**

At Eldon, we are dedicated to maintaining the highest standards of service and ensuring that our tenants' and customers' voices are heard and respected. We recognise that effective complaint handling is crucial in achieving this goal. Our annual assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code is a testament to our commitment to transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement.

We are proud of the progress made so far and the proactive steps taken to enhance our complaint handling processes. This report outlines what we want to achieve and the improvements we are implementing, reflecting our ongoing dedication to listening to and learning from those we serve.

We acknowledge the valuable feedback and active participation of our tenants and customers in shaping our services. Their insights have been and are instrumental in driving the changes detailed in this report. As we move forward, we are confident that the measures we have put in place will further strengthen our ability to address concerns promptly and effectively, ensuring a positive experience for all.

On behalf of the Board, I extend my gratitude to the staff, tenants, and customers who have contributed to this journey. Together, we are building a stronger, more responsive services to our tenants and customers.

Chair: Hony Premlal

### **2. Message from the Executive and Governance Officer - appointed Complaints Officer / Coordinator**

As the newly appointed Complaints Coordinator, I am pleased to share this report on our complaint handling performance and our service improvement plan. Our commitment to excellence is evident in our adherence to the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code and our continuous efforts to enhance our processes.

We are making significant strides in updating policies, improving recording mechanisms, and training our staff to address complaints efficiently and effectively. The collaborative efforts of our staff and the valuable feedback from our tenants and customers have been crucial in driving these improvements.

I am pleased with the progress we have made and making and remain dedicated to ensuring that the voices of our tenants and customers are at the heart of our service.

### 3. Executive Summary

All landlords are required to conduct an annual assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code to understand their position relative to the expectations of the code. Eldon Housing completed its assessment in June 2024, and we pledge to continuously refer to the code in the design of any complaint service improvements. The Association strives to ensure that complaint handling aligns with our values, committed to listening and learning from our tenants and customers to ensure all complaints, including service requests, are dealt with and resolved efficiently and effectively.

As part of the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Code and self-assessment, we have been diligently working on our self-assessment and the complaint's improvement plan. Many of the actions outlined in the plan have been completed or are on track to achieve significant improvements in the Association's complaint handling.

We are prepared for the complaints submission at the end of June 2024 and excited to publish our revised Complaints Policy and Procedure, alongside a realistic and ambitious complaints service improvement plan. We are committed to executing this plan in collaboration with our tenants and customers.

### 4. Complaints Performance

We are proud to have only received very few complaints. However, we recognise the need for improvements in how we record, capture complaints and service requests previously referred to as informal complaints and concerns. Complaint handling is at the heart of what we do to ensure the tenant and customer voice is heard. Our staff have indicated that tenants' concerns are often addressed immediately due to the setting and staffing on-site, but we are enhancing our processes to ensure these interactions are captured to improve our performance reporting and measuring dissatisfaction and themes. The new self-assessment and code has driven the Association to make these improvements for better reporting and learning. As a small housing association with fewer than 300 homes and our unique C4C facilities management services, the improvements outlined in this report are crucial for driving our progress forward.

- **Total Complaints:**

The Association handled **4 complaints** during 2023/24, all were resolved at **Stage 1** of the Complaints Policy and Procedure.

- **Response Timeframes:**

- **3 complaints** fall outside of the **10-day response** timeframe but were kept informed of reason for the delays, including **meetings/visits** prior to formal responses.
- **1 complaint** missed the **5-day acknowledgement** period but was addressed within the **10-day response** timeframe.

- **Outcomes:**
  - All complaints were **partially upheld**.
  - **1 complaint** escalated to the Housing Ombudsman was returned to the Association without further action required.
- **External Inquiries:**
  - No cases or inquiries from the **Housing Ombudsman**.
  - No inquiries received from **MPs or Councillors**.
- **Theme of the Complaints**
  - Property / neighbour issues / claims of prejudice from Eldon.
  - Service from Centra (out of hours service).
  - Repairs / Customer service from FM team.
  - Alteration request ignored.

## 5. Tenant Satisfaction Measures

We have utilised the outcome of our recent survey to inform our complaints improvement plan. Satisfaction with complaints handling did improve 2023/24 to 52% from 51% in 2022/23. We are actively working to improve all areas of the business to enhance tenant satisfaction. This result fell below the Association's target but above sector average.

We are undergoing a transformational change, working closely with our Tenants Panel to build upon our strengths, ensure continuous improvement, and ensure the tenant voice is heard. This is an exciting time of collaboration and progress.

## 6. Complaints Services Improvement Plan

1. **Update and Review Complaints Policy & Procedures:** Ensure compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Code.
2. **Provide Accessible Information:** Develop and distribute a summary of the Complaints Policy and Procedure across our sites and on our website. Send this summary to complainants with acknowledgment letters.
3. **Accessible Resources:** Create a video explaining how to make a complaint, using the summary as a guide. Develop a "How to Make a Complaint" leaflet.
4. **Improve Complaints Recording:** Enhance the complaints recording log to effectively review trends and improve reporting of service requests.
5. **Develop a Direct/Central Complaints Email:** Centralise all complaints received for improved monitoring, reporting and acknowledging.
6. **Board Oversight:** Appoint a Board Champion to ensure effective oversight and compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Code.

7. **Dedicated Complaints Coordinator:** Appoint a Complaints Coordinator to oversee complaints and support staff in handling them.
8. **Staff Training and Development:** Provide continuous training for staff to understand and competently manage complaints, including recognising and recording service requests.
9. **Enhanced Reporting and Learning:** Improve reporting mechanisms to provide efficient information for learning, service improvements, and effective reporting.
10. **Regular Review and Discussion:** Make complaints a standing agenda item for tenant site meetings and Tenant Panel meetings, ensuring effective complaints handling and oversight.
11. **Quality Assurance Committee:** Establish a Quality Assurance Committee with one or two Tenant Panel members attending, with complaints as a standing agenda item. Provide quarterly complaints report to the committee.
12. **Monthly Updates to SLT:** The Complaints Coordinator will provide monthly updates to the Senior Leadership Team.
13. **Review Staff Code of Conduct:** Ensure the expectations for complaint handling are included in the staff Code of Conduct / Charter.
14. **Staff Induction and Training:** Provide staff training and support dealing with complaints against the new code and implement revised policy and procedure. Discuss complaint handling during staff induction and onboarding, with additional training provided as needed.