

Appendix 4 – Complaint Response Quality Assurance Reviews 2025/26

Purpose

Throughout 2025/26, we carried out quarterly quality assurance reviews of complaint responses. The reviews assessed complaint acknowledgements, investigations, remedies, escalation information, communication quality and learning from complaints. We used the findings to identify good practice and highlight areas requiring improvement.

Strengths

Theme	Summary of Findings
Escalation information	Escalation information was consistently the strongest area of performance. Responses generally provided clear information about escalation rights and access to the Housing Ombudsman.
Professional communication	Responses were generally professional, respectful and written in accessible language.
Effective complaint handling foundations	Reviews found that complaint responses generally followed the complaints process and demonstrated broad compliance with complaint handling requirements.
Examples of good practice	Reviews identified many examples of clear investigations, appropriate use of evidence, reasoned decision-making and resident-focused communication.

Learning Themes

Theme	Summary of Findings
Complaint definition and acknowledgements	Complaint issues, outcomes sought and complaint scope were not always clearly defined at the outset. Some reviews also identified missing or incomplete acknowledgements.
Timeliness and delay management	Delays remained a recurring issue. Explanations for delays and communication of revised timescales were not always sufficiently clear or consistent.
Investigation quality and decision-making	While many investigations were effective, some responses did not clearly explain the investigation undertaken, evidence considered or rationale for decisions.
Remedies and outcomes	Remedies were not always clearly linked to complaint findings, service failures or the outcomes sought by residents. In some cases, timescales and justification for actions lacked clarity.
Learning from complaints	Services did not consistently identify or record learning and service improvement actions within complaint responses.
Consistency and joint working	Reviews identified variability in quality between services. Joint complaints highlighted the importance of coordinated investigations and

	coherent responses where multiple services are involved.
Resident focus, empathy and communication	Some responses could better acknowledge the impact on residents and more clearly demonstrate how outcomes sought were considered.

Improvement actions

Improvement Action	Purpose
Strengthen complaint definition and acknowledgements	Establish consistent standards for defining complaint issues, recording outcomes sought and ensuring formal acknowledgements are provided in line with the Complaints Policy.
Improve response quality standards	Reinforce guidance on what constitutes a high-quality complaint investigation and response, supported by practical examples and quality standards.
Improve timeliness and delay management	Strengthen monitoring of response times, management oversight, staff training and communication with residents where delays occur.
Improve investigation recording and decision-making	Reinforce the use of complaint templates and ensure investigations clearly identify the evidence reviewed, relevant policies considered and rationale for decisions.
Strengthen remedies and compensation guidance	Improve consistency in the use of remedies, compensation and outcome-based resolutions, ensuring actions are proportionate, justified and clearly explained.

Strengthen learning and service improvement	Introduce clearer expectations for identifying, recording and evidencing learning from complaints and the actions taken to prevent recurrence.
Strengthen quality assurance and oversight	Enhance review arrangements and quality assurance controls, particularly for complex, Stage 2 and multi-service complaints, to improve consistency and compliance.

Conclusion

The 2025/26 quality assurance programme found that complaint responses were generally professional, compliant and resident-focused, with particular strengths in communication and escalation information. The reviews also highlighted opportunities to improve complaint definition, timeliness, investigation quality, remedies, learning and consistency across services. We have used these findings to drive targeted service improvements and will continue to strengthen complaint handling arrangements during 2026/27, including exploring opportunities for greater tenant involvement in reviewing complaint response quality and informing future service improvements.