

Annual Complaints Performance & Service Improvement Report 2024-25

Introduction

This report provides an update on Luton Community Housing Limited's (T/A Squared) complaint handling performance over the last financial year.

It is linked to our annual self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code and highlights the changes the learnings from complaints and our intended actions to inform service improvement.

Squared's purpose is to improve the lives of our customers by providing good quality, affordable accommodation for those in need in our local community and our mission is to place our customers at the heart of everything we do. Squared views complaints and any other feedback, including comments and compliments as an opportunity to learn, improve service delivery and team member development. Complaints help us do this as they give us an opportunity to put things right for our customer, in a fair and reasonable way.

The content of this report includes:

- 1) An introduction to the Housing Ombudsman (HO) Code to provide context to the self-assessment.
- 2) Our self-assessment against that code.
- 3) A summary of the number and types of complaints we handle including the issues raised by our customers.
- 4) An overview of determinations received from the HO.
- 5) A summary of the learning and service improvements we propose to be implementing to improve our complaints process and service delivery.

1) The Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code 2024

The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 (the Act) empowered the Housing Ombudsman (HO) to issue a Code of Practice about the procedures members of the scheme should have in place when considering complaints. It also placed a duty on the Ombudsman to monitor compliance with the Code of Practice issued.

The Code clarifies the definition of a complaint, how complaints can be made, the process that should be used and the governance structure around complaints.

The Complaint Handling Code became statutory on 1 April 2024.

2) Self-assessment against the Code

To demonstrate our compliance with the Code, a detailed self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code can be found in the footer of every page on our website under Complaints Policy and Procedure.

Some of the key changes and improvements made since our last published assessment in 2024 are:

- The appointment of, Jacky Constantine, as Complaints Officer responsible for monitoring and reporting on complaints and supporting our team members in their effective handling of complaints to support a positive complaint handling culture.
- Introduced a new housing software system, MRI Housing Enterprise, containing a customer complaints business process which was scoped and developed in line with our data requirements for monitoring complaints, to improve our record-keeping and reporting on complaints.
- Reviewed our telephone system and made changes to the call answering system, to provide an improved customer experience in reaching the right department first time.
- Implemented Service Improvement Plans, informed by TSM survey data and customer feedback.
- Introduced CX feedback software to facilitate spot surveys to monitor any service improvements implemented.
- Improved our customer communication with regard to repair completion dates, so that the customer feels informed every step of the way.
- Implemented an Asset Management Strategy, to inform our repairs and capital expenditure programme, including the introduction of a new Damp & Mould Policy to proactively work towards a process for managing damp and mould, having a data driven solution to identify damp and mould in customers' homes.
- Introduced 'Complaints' as a mandatory agenda item on Leadership Team, Operational Management Team and Departmental Team Meetings; at which complaints are discussed and learning identified to inform process improvements, staff development and manage risk.
- Complaints reports are shared with the Leadership Team to brief on complaint trends and areas of focus; to ensure lessons are not simply identified but learnt, acted upon and measures are put in place to drive improvement.
- Housing Ombudsman eLearning course continues to be rolled out to all front facing and other relevant team members:
 - Dispute Resolution
 - Applying Dispute Resolution Principles

In September 2025, 84% of our team members have been through the Housing Ombudsman e-learning module "Dispute Resolution Training".

- Mandatory annual in-house training sessions on the practical application of effective complaint handling.

In September 2025, 71% of our team members have been through Squared's internal training program in 2024/2025 "Effective Complaints Handling". This

percentage will vary due to staff turnover, therefore we will be carrying out an annual refresher.

- Developed and implemented the Complaints Toolkit and shared with all team members and made available to them in our Squared Library on Sharepoint.
- Within Property Services:
 - post inspection visits have increased to learn lessons about both the quality of the repair and associated materials supplied.
 - regular system interrogation is undertaken, leading to improvement in work scheduling and outstanding job identification.
 - internal capacity for repairs is monitored, particularly at times of peak demand to ensure we engage with local subcontractors to support our repairs service in a timely manner.
- Our Complaints Policy and Procedure has been reviewed to ensure we maintain compliance with the Code.
- Our Complaints letter templates have been reviewed to ensure we maintain compliance with the Code, and provide guidance and support to team members.
- A Complaints Tracker has been introduced on our Housing Management System to support team members to monitor and track progress of complaints and the time frames to adhere to.

3) A summary of the number and types of complaints we handle including the issues raised by our customers

We received 28 complaints between April 2024 and May 2025; an increase of 3 from the previous year's total.

25 complaints were handled at stage 1, in line with our complaints policy, and 3 were escalated to stage 2.

On average complaints were resolved within 9.8 days, an improvement from the previous year's average of 19 days.

Complaints by Service Area	Number
Homes	3
Homes & Governance	1
Homes with Support (Hostels & HMOs)	7
Landlord Services	3
Property Services	13
Various departments	1
Total	28

Complaint Reason by Stage 2024-25	Stage 1	Stage 2
Kitchen adaptation	1	
Property compliance	1	
Repair	4	
Delay in returning property	1	
Rent refund	1	
Cleaning and Pest Control	2	
Loss /theft of personal property	1	
Lack of response to a service request	1	
Dissatisfaction with staff member's handling of complaint	1	
Quality of staff members' support and/or communication	10	
Lack of ownership of complaint by team	1	
About another company	1	
Quality of staff members' support and/or communication		1
Repair		2
	25	3

According to our last Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM), a survey across our customers in 2023, four out of ten residents who made a complaint in the previous 12 months were satisfied with our handling of their complaint (40%).

Since we received this feedback, actions have been taken to improve our handling of the complaints process, and the data has informed the development and implementation of our Service Improvement Plans.

Our next TSM Survey is due to be sent to our customers in the Autumn of 2025. On receipt of the feedback the data will be analysed and will be used to review and update the actions on our Service Improvement Plans for the next year (2025-26).

4) An overview of determinations received from the Housing Ombudsman

In the year 2024-25 we received no Complaint Handling Failure Orders from the Housing Ombudsman.

5) A summary of the learning and service improvements we propose to implement to improve our complaints process and service delivery

A number of improvements have been identified or are being implemented to improve our complaints handling and service delivery.

- Further improve our acknowledgement times to complaints by ensuring staff members understand our complaints policy and procedure. Aiming for 100% acknowledgements within 5 working days.
- Further improve our response times to complaints by ensuring staff members understand our complaints policy and procedure. Aiming for 100% Stage 1

responses within 10 days and Stage 2 responses within 20 days, unless additional time requested and granted.

- Increase opportunities for customers to engage in providing feedback on their satisfaction with our handling of complaints.
- Continue to focus on increasing customer satisfaction of our complaint handling by focusing on resolution first time.
- Issue the 2025 Star Survey to obtain feedback from customers on our Tenant Satisfaction Measures to further inform our Service Improvement Planning and monitoring process.
- Further review the capacity of our new housing management system with regard to keeping our customers informed digitally but understanding that a proportion of our customers prefer personal contact.
- Taking care with regards to the administration of documents in relation to court proceedings, ensuring property compliance and certification is up to date.
- Taking steps to enhance more effective communications between teams, trying to be clearer in our communications between teams, and with our customers, to avoid misunderstandings.
- Implement further training for our team members focussed on Customer Care and effective Communications.
- Continue promoting a positive complaints culture whereby we continue to note the learning each time a complaint is completed and any steps we need to take to improve services for customers.
- We will continue monitoring, reviewing and feedback data to staff members across Squared and the Board of Management, and to our customers as relevant; as well as the lessons learnt about cases where we fall short in our service provision to be able to continue to improve our services.