



Title: Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2023-24	Date of Meeting: 16 th September 2024
Author: Carole Richardson	Email: carole.richardson@northstarhg.co.uk
Job Title: Executive Director of Customers	
Strategic Heading: Compliance	Status: Decision
Purpose: To share annual complaints performance for JPC and the service improvements implemented as a result.	
Recommendation: Board is recommended to approve the self-assessment and the actions contained in the report.	

1. Context

In March 2024, the Board was updated on North Star’s compliance against the revised Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code which incorporates John Pease Cottages tenants. The code came into effect from the 1st April 2024. Sections 8.1 and 8.2 of the code state that: Landlords must produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which must include:

- The annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements.
- A qualitative and quantitative analysis of the landlord’s complaint handling performance. This must also include a summary of the types of complaints the landlord has refused to accept.
- Any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman.
- The service improvements made because of the learning from complaints.
- Any annual report about the landlord’s performance from the Ombudsman; and
- Any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord.

The annual complaints performance and service improvement report must be reported to the landlord’s governing body (or equivalent) and published on the section of its website relating to complaints. The governing body’s response to the report must be published alongside this.

2. Self-Assessment Against the Complaints Handling Code

The self-assessment against the Complaints Handling Code is attached at Appendix One.

John Pease Cottages is fully compliant with the Housing Ombudsman’s Complaint Handling Code and there are no areas of non-compliance.

3. Complaints Performance 2023-24

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Number of formal complaints received during the year	0	1	1
Percentage of Stage 1 complaints responded to within target (The standard is 10 working days which can be increased to 20 with the agreement of the customer)	-	100%	0%
Percentage of complaints upheld	-	100%	100%
Number of complaints progressing to Stage 2	-	0	0
Percentage of Stage 2 complaints responded to within target – 10 working days	-	-	-

The complaint received was regarding delays with a flooring repair including missed appointments and the tenant was not happy with the communication around delays. An apology was given and the work was completed to the satisfaction of the tenant.

The following actions have been made to the maintenance service to improve repairs delays and communication:

- We appointed new sub-contractors within our repairs service to assist with the backlog of repairs.
- Carried out a review of Property Services Team – to improve processes, communication, and workload within the team to allow time for more complex cases to be addressed.

There were no stage two complaints received during 2023/2024.

4. Refused Complaints

No complaints were refused during 2023/24. We have a procedure in place to record any refused complaint and the reason provided in accordance with the Complaints policy.

5. Service Improvements

In addition to the actions outlined in section 3 the following service improvements have been implemented during the last 12 months:

- As part of our ongoing compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Code and our commitment to resolving complaints and learning, we have appointed a Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC). They will have responsibility for supporting a positive complaints culture and ensuring Board receive regular information on our approach to complaints. A member of North Star's Senior Management Team (Executive Director of Customers) has also been appointed as a senior person. They are responsible for complaint handling, assessing any themes or trends to identify any potential systemic issues or risks.
- We commissioned an independent organisation, Customer Service Solutions (CSS) to review our approach to complaint handling to improve the customer experience and satisfaction levels. CSS met with staff, contractors and customers who had a complaint with North Star within the last 12 months. From the review, several actions for improvement were identified. These actions have been implemented.
- We reviewed our Compensation and Remedy Policy to include gestures of goodwill, and other remedies. This included delegating authority to staff to resolve issues and compensate where appropriate at first point of contact.

- Introduced a new digital system that enables staff to arrange gestures of goodwill whilst the customer is still on the phone.
- Developed and implemented a digital complaints case management system to improve record keeping, monitoring of targets and the identification of themes.
- Delivered training and awareness raising to staff relating to our approach, standards and expectations. This was also delivered to contractors of the repairs service.
- We have strengthened our communication to raise customer awareness of making a complaint. This includes regular social media posts, articles in our newsletters and further information on our website in addition to developing an easy read leaflet on how to make a complaint.
- We are routinely contacting customers who have had a complaint with John Pease Cottages to capture further insight and identify any learning as well as best practice. Customers are being contacted by a member of staff who is independent of the complaint.
- To reduce call waiting times we implemented an automated service for customers who want to pay their rent electronically.

6. Housing Ombudsman Determinations and reports

John Pease Cottages have not any cases taken to the Housing Ombudsman and therefore have no Housing Ombudsman determinations or Landlord Performance reports.

7. Next Steps

We will be publishing the latest self-assessment alongside a copy of this report with a statement from the MRC on our website and providing an update to all customers in our next newsletter. As part of the Code, we are required to make an annual submission to enable the Ombudsman to monitor landlords' compliance with the Code.

Board will receive a quarterly performance update on complaints and an annual report on how we are performing against the Code.

The MRC will meet with the Executive Director of Customers and Executive Director of Technical Services every six months. The purpose is to share patterns, learning and improvements. The MRC will update Board the following meeting.

8. Recommendations

Board is recommended to **approve** the self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code and the actions outlined in this report.

Board is requested to provide a response to the report that we will publish on the website.

9. Strategic Risk & Risk Appetite

[SRR6 Not meeting regulatory requirements](#)

[SRR8 Failure to deliver high levels of customer satisfaction](#)

Risk Appetite

There is a very low-risk appetite for not meeting regulatory compliance and expectations.

There is a low-risk appetite for failure to deliver high levels of customer satisfaction.