

**Report to:** Board

**Report by** CEO /Tony Price Board Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC)

**Subject:** Ombudsman Self-Assessment 2025

**Item Number:**

**Date:** 22/4/25

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide background information on the completion of the Ombudsman Code Self-Assessment and the process followed.
- 1.2. The Joint Complaint Handling Code ('the Code'), from the Housing Ombudsman and Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (dated 20 September 2023), sets out requirements for organisations that will allow them to respond to complaints effectively and fairly. The purpose of the Code is to enable organisations to resolve complaints raised by individuals quickly, and to use the data and learning from complaints to drive service improvements.
- 1.3. Organisations must have a single policy for dealing with complaints covered by the Code. Non-compliance with the Code could result in the relevant Ombudsman taking further action. The Housing Ombudsman has a duty to monitor compliance with the Code and the power to issue Complaint Handling Failure Orders. Completed self-assessments must be submitted to the Ombudsman by the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2024.
- 1.4. **Self-Assessment guidance** - The Code requires that landlords provide more information to the Ombudsman than just the self-assessment, instead the landlord must:

Produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report, which must include:

- the annual self-assessment against the 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 the Code by the Ombudsman
- the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints
- its actions following any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman
- its actions following any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord

1.4.1. The landlord must also ensure that the annual complaints performance and service improvement report has been 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.

1.4.2. A link to these documents from the landlord's website should be submitted to the Ombudsman via a dedicated electronic form.

1.4.3. Landlords are required to publish and submit their self-assessment as part of their annual complaints performance and service improvement report.

1.4.4. Dates for submission by landlords are as follows:

- landlords with 1,000 homes or more are required to submit their form by 30 June each year
- landlords with less than 1,000 properties in 2024 were required to submit their self-assessments at the point they publish their TSMs or 12 weeks after their year-end, whichever is sooner. **For 2025 this has not been made clear so will be submitted as landlords with more than 1000 homes for 2025**

1.4.5. Landlords will be expected to report on their 2024/2025 performance in the annual complaints performance and service improvement report. Landlords can choose to include additional information regarding how they have performed for the period from April 2025 until their submission is due should they wish to do so.

## 2. Regulatory Standards

Withing Adullam Homes, Complaints, Compliments and Comments are monitored weekly, monthly, and reported quarterly to SLT. An annual report is also completed by the Assistant Director of Quality & Support and submitted to the Operations Committee.

Adullam Homes also have in place a Complaints/Tracker Group which meets each quarter with key officers in attendance to discuss and monitor complaints performance. The quality team will send out monthly complaints reports to staff and ask for updates direct from managers on progress.





Adullam Homes now has a Complaints Officer, and the role focuses on ensuring that the Complaints Policy, procedure, and processes are being applied/followed throughout Adullam per the Ombudsman regulatory requirements by completing regular and in-depth audits of Pyramid:

- Fortnightly reports are sent to managers with the data relating to their service, including information relating to letters missing from the Custom Tab, missing data from the Complaints details, staff proformas, complaints that are open passed the completion target, ensuring all compliments are closed the day of receipt, any central complaints have been recorded and the relevant manager notified etc.
- The Complaints Officer meets with each service manager once a quarter to look at any issues that were not addressed, discuss any patterns of incorrect recording/not following the complaints procedure and highlights any training needs for the service.
- Monthly reports are sent to all managers highlighting the main areas that need addressing.
- The Complaints Officer provides an overall quarterly report for SLT including any areas that need addressing and inform SLT of any complaints that have been forwarded to Housing Ombudsman.
- Meets with Central Managers to ensure they are following the correct procedures with complaints assigned to their Cost Centres.
- Runs 2 Complaints training sessions every 4-6 months for new staff/those that require refresher training.
- Is also responsible for the completion of the Annual Self-Assessment against Ombudsman code.

**Please note, the responsibility for inputting complaints, investigating complaints, and communicating with complainants will still sit within the services.**

**RSM Internal Auditors** - As part of the Adullam Homes Internal Audit Plan an audit was completed in January 2025 on Consumer Regulation Complaints. Below are the findings:

*RSM conclusion - An appropriately designed control framework is in place. Our work has highlighted exceptions relating to consistency across policies / procedures in relation to compensation as well as details on the complaints process wherever the Ombudsman is involved. We have also outlined some suggestions aimed at enhancing the content and format of reports presented to management and the Board. We have agreed a total of two low priority management actions to address the issues identified.*

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|  |  |  |  | Taking account of the issues identified, the board can take substantial assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage this risk are suitably designed, consistently applied and effective. |
| Minimal Assurance   | Partial Assurance   | Reasonable Assurance  | Substantial Assurance   |   |

**Ombudsman Code Self-Assessment** – This was finalised during March/April working with the input/joint working of the Assistant Director of Quality & Assurance and will be submitted to the Ombudsman in June 2025.

Adullam Homes are also required to complete a report to be submitted to the ombudsman along with the assessment as stated at 1.4.

Adullam Homes must also ensure that the annual complaints performance and service improvement report has been reported to our governing body and published on the section of its website relating to complaints. **The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside this.**

Please see attached completed Self-Assessment for 2025 Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report - April 2025 (2024/25 Q1-Q4)

### 3. **Recommendation** - That committee note the content of the report.

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In the event of any queries please contact the report author prior to the meeting.

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