



3CHA
Three Conditions
Housing Association

Annual Complaints Review

Author: Helen Western

September 2024

3CHA Annual Review of Complaints 2023-24

Annual Complaints Report 2023-24

Introduction to the annual review of complaints 2023-24

This report summarises the resident and tenant complaints received during the period 1st August 2023 to 31st July 2024.

3CHA is a Registered Provider of Social Housing, owning and managing 7 family houses for intermediate rent in the Milton Keynes area. Through our Housing and Support Providers, we provide accommodation with support to 950+ individuals through our supported exempt accommodation provision. This accommodation is not designated as social housing however our complaints policy and procedure is applicable to all 3CHA residents and tenants.

3CHA's role as a landlord is overseen by the Board within the framework set for it by the Regulator of Social Housing. We are committed to providing data to allow scrutiny of our performance across all operations, including our non-social housing activity.

Although the Board receive quarterly complaints updates, this is the first year that we have undertaken annual complaints review.

The Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code

3CHA's handling of complaints relating to its landlord functions is dictated by a framework set by the Housing Ombudsman. The Ombudsman has continued to refine its Complaint Handling Code - a framework for the management of, and learning from, complaints - and requires landlords to self-assess against this on an annual basis. 3CHA has recognised the good practice as set out in the code and has adapted its policy and procedures to incorporate the changes.

Complaints Process

3CHA aim to deliver a consistently high standard across our service. However, we know that sometimes things go wrong, and residents feel that they are not receiving the service that they should expect.

We welcome compliments and complaints and consider them as an opportunity for improvement.

If residents say they are unhappy with a service – we accept this and will listen and discuss the concerns with residents, avoiding standard letters. We will ask and understand what a resident wants from their complaint and respond appropriately. Satisfaction is a key measure of service quality. We treat complaints seriously and aim to learn from our service failures. Where a service has failed or we have got something wrong we will identify the problem, put it right, apologise and improve the way we do things.

Stage 1

When a complaint is received, the person receiving the complaint will:

- Listen, ask, and understand what outcome the resident wants from making the complaint ensuring that all aspects of the complaint are clear.
- Speak to the individual and agree with them what we will do and by when.
- Where possible, a complaint will be resolved at the time it is received.
- Acknowledge the complaint **within 5 working days of receipt.**

If a complaint needs further investigation, then we will explain who is dealing with the complaint and will provide a full response **within ten working days of the complaint being acknowledged.** 3CHA will consider the complexity of the complaint and inform the resident of the expected timescale for a response. This would not normally be more than 10 working days. If a complaint is likely to take longer than ten days to resolve, we will explain what is happening and the expected timescale for what actions are planned.

If 3CHA do not keep to the agreed timescales, or if the complainant feels that there is an unnecessary delay in responding, they can ask for the complaint to be escalated to the next stage. If the circumstances are complicated or there are specific reasons why a complaint cannot be investigated within the normal time frame (for example absence of relevant staff or witnesses) 3CHA may refuse to escalate the complaint, but this will be fully explained to the complainant.

All complaints are recorded.

The manager for the service will make sure that any necessary changes are made to how the service is delivered following a complaint. This may involve changing the way we do something or providing training for individuals or teams to prevent complaints recurring.

Stage 2

If the resident is not satisfied with our response to their complaint, they can ask for it to be escalated to Stage 2 of the process.

When a request to escalate a complaint is received, the person receiving the request will:

- Ensure that the complaint is logged as a Stage 2 complaint.
- Make reasonable efforts to understand why the complaint remains dissatisfied.
- Acknowledge the request to escalate the complaint **within 5 working days of receipt.**

We will conduct a review of the complaint to make sure we made the correct decision and took the right action in resolving the issue(s).

This review will be completed by a Director of the Association who has not been previously involved in the investigation. A full response detailing the outcome of the review will be provided **within 20 working days** of the complaint escalation request being acknowledged.

3CHA will consider the complexity of the complaint and inform the resident of the expected timescale for a response. This would not normally be more than 20 working days. If a complaint is likely to take longer than 20 working days to resolve, we will explain what is happening and the expected timescale for what actions are planned.

Complaints Activity and Performance 2023/24

During the reporting year we received 5 complaints. All complaints were made by residents of our supported accommodation. None of these complaints were escalated to Stage 2.

Complaints Category (Note: More than one category can be assigned to a complaint)

The following table shows the number of issues reported in each category:

Property condition / maintenance	Support service	Bully & harassment
3	3	1
43%	43%	14%

Outcomes and findings

Number & percentage of complaints upheld	Number & percentage of complaints partially upheld	Number & percentage of complaints not upheld
1	2	4
14%	29%	57%

Response Timescales Stage 1

The required timescale to respond to a complaint is 10 working days at Stage 1. Of the 5 complaints received, 3 (60%) did not meet this timescale. The reasons for the delay in responding were as follows:

- 1 due to the complexity of complaint
- 2 due to difficulty in contacting the resident

In addition to the complaints recorded above, a further 2 complaints were initially recorded and then not pursued by the residents and an additional complaint was recorded then recategorised as a complaint of ASB.

Themes from complaints

The number of complaints received from our residents and tenants is relatively low. Although the majority of complaints in respect of property condition and maintenance were not upheld, it highlights the need to ensure that residents and tenants are given clear timescales in respect of repairs and that they are kept informed of any progress or delays.

In respect of the complaints regarding the support service, 2 of the complaints were in relation to a particular support worker and a lack of supervision and training. This was addressed with the Housing and Support Provider and improvements implemented.

Where complaints were upheld and it was appropriate to do so, 3CHA awarded compensation – the total cost of which for this reporting year was £300.

Housing Ombudsman Cases

We are not aware of any complaints being raised with the Housing Ombudsman.

Tenant Perception on Complaint Handling:

The Tenant Perception Measures relate to our social housing tenants only. At the end of May 2024, we undertook the Tenant Perception Survey in accordance with the Regulatory Standards. Tenants were asked the following questions:

Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling complaints	
Have you made a complaint to 3CHA in the last 12 months?	Response (Please circle / highlight): Yes / No
If yes, 'How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with 3CHA's approach to complaints handling?	Response (Please circle / highlight): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Very satisfied• Fairly satisfied• Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied• Fairly dissatisfied• Very dissatisfied

At the time of the survey 5 of the 7 social housing units were occupied and we received a 100% response.

The proportion of respondents who reported making a complaint in the last 12 months who were satisfied with 3CHA's approach to complaints handling, was 50%. Although we do not have any record of our social housing tenants making a complaint, 2 residents reported making a complaint during the survey. 1 of these residents reported being neither satisfied or dissatisfied with our approach and 1 reported being very satisfied.

It is possible that tenants may have raised issues in respect of anti-social behaviour which have not been managed through the complaints process or that we have not logged an issue as a complaint when it should have been. We have taken this on

board and will make clear when talking to tenants which process we are managing their issue through.

Self-Assessment Against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Code

We undertook our annual self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Code in April 2024. Our policies and procedures were updated to ensure that we are meeting all requirements.

All customer facing 3CHA colleagues are required to complete the Dispute Resolution Training available through the Housing Ombudsman Service.

Other Methods of Feedback Collection

60% of the complaints received were as a result of the monthly resident satisfaction survey undertaken by 3CHA. The survey is completed either by 3CHA directly contacting the residents or by support workers facilitating residents completing a paper version of the survey. The remaining complaints were made directly to 3CHA either through our website or by our feedback@3CHA.co.uk email address.

All exempt accommodation residents are given information regarding complaints during the sign-up procedure. Additionally, a resident leaflet is displayed in communal areas giving detail of our complaints process and how to contact us. We check that this is visible during our regular property inspections.

At the tenancy sign up meeting, our social housing tenants receive a tenant handbook which includes details of our complaints procedure and how to contact us. The handbook is also emailed to the tenant so that they can access it electronically.

Conclusion and Areas for Improvement

We continue to take complaints seriously and have a culture of respect for the people living in our homes. We also recognise that we can learn from complaints and will ensure that we share the wider learning from complaints with all of our colleagues and housing and support providers.

Less than 1% of our residents and tenants made a complaint during the reporting year. 3CHA are reliant on our housing and support providers to manage Stage 1 complaints from our supported accommodation residents and provide the information as part of their monthly report.

As the majority of our complaints came through our resident survey, this suggests that residents are not complaining directly to their housing and support provider, and we are not capturing the issues that residents may be facing.

We will undertake a review of our complaints policy and procedure; staffing and systems to enable us to manage all complaints directly. This will ensure that we are capturing all stage 1 complaints, allowing us to identify any issues or trends and take the appropriate action.

In respect of our social housing, we need to ensure that we recognise when a tenant is making a complaint and ensure that it is recorded and managed through the complaint's procedure.

During our regular team meetings with all colleagues, we will:

- Discuss the definition of a complaint and what this means in practice
- Agree the importance of accurate recording of complaints made and the procedure to follow
- Agree the importance of regular, agreed communication with our tenants
- Agree the need to help residents and tenants to understand the process that their issue is being managed under e.g. anti-social behaviour

By taking the above actions we expect there to be an initial increase in Stage 1 complaints as tenants and residents feel able to contact 3CHA directly.

We expect our management of and learning from complaints to continue to improve during the next reporting year.