

Report of the Monitoring Officer

REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

1. Purpose of Report

The Housing Ombudsman has made a finding of maladministration in respect of the Council failing to notify a complainant that their utility meters were locked behind a suited lock.

2. Recommendation

The Committee is asked to NOTE the report.

3. Detail

In summary, the complainant contacted the Council regarding be unable to access their utility meters as they were locked behind a door to prevent vandalism. The utility meters were locked with a lock suited to the communal doors. The complainant had access to the utility meters at the start of their tenancy.

The complainant stated that they were being overcharged for their utilities and required access so that their energy provide could investigate the matter.

The request was passed to the Housing Repairs Team to deal with initially as a request for service and to confirm how to open the door. However, the Housing Repairs Team did not make contact with the complainant for several months.

During stage 2 of the complaint process, it was found that the Housing Repairs Team had delayed confirming the suited lock and an apology was provided.

The Housing Ombudsman determined that the Council had delayed the confirmation of the suited lock with the complainant. The Council's delays in responding to the resident's concerns were unreasonable. These delays caused the resident to expend unnecessary time and trouble to access their meters.

The Housing Ombudsman requested that the complainant be issued with £350 compensation for the issues identified above. All actions requested by the Housing Ombudsman have been completed and they have now closed the case.

It should be noted that the complainant was attempting to escalate three complaints to stage 2. The complainant's e-mails were unclear and they were asked to clarify specifically which complaints they required escalating. To assist with this complaint, a meeting was undertaken with the complainant to determine the nature of the complaint.

Furthermore, the complainant was notified that the complaint could not meet its initial deadline within the timeframes specified by the Council's Complaint Procedure and a new date was provided.

The Housing Ombudsman were provided with this information but did not recognise it during their complaint investigation. Therefore, they have recorded a fault that the Council delayed the stage 2 complaint.

The full report is attached as an appendix.

4. Financial Implications

The comments of the Head of Finance Services were as follows:

The cost of this compensation was charged to the service budget.

5. Legal Implications

The comments of the Head of Legal Services were as follows:

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

6. Human Resources Implications

The comments from the Human Resources Manager were as follows:

N/A

7. Union Comments

The Union comments were as follows:

N/A

8. Climate Change Implications

The comments from the Waste and Climate Change Manager were as follows:

N/A

9. Data Protection Compliance Implications

This report does not contain any [OFFICIAL (SENSITIVE)] information and there are no Data Protection issues in relation to this report.

10. Equality Impact Assessment

N/A

11. Background Papers

Nil.