

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Housing**Additional Housing Complaints Officer****1. Purpose of Report**

To seek approval for an additional Housing Complaints Officer in the Housing Services and Strategy team.

2. Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to RESOLVE that an additional Housing Complaints Officer (Grade 6) is added to the establishment.

3. Detail

In recent years the Housing Ombudsman (HO) and the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) have been encouraging tenants and leaseholders to provide feedback and hold their landlords to account. The Council are in support of this approach. However, this has led to an increase in the number of complaints received.

In response to this last year a dedicated Housing Complaints Officer was added to the establishment. In the recent RSH inspection complaints was an area of focus, and an area that forms part of the Service Improvement Plan.

In 2025/26 the Housing Service received 260 Stage 1 complaints.

The role of Housing Complaints Officer is to complete the following tasks:

- Acknowledge all Stage 1 complaints, contacting the complainant by telephone to discuss their complaint further when required
- Write responses to all Stage 1 complaints, by reviewing information held on the housing management system and speaking to those involved
- Ensure that there is consistency in the responses sent, and that feedback is used to improve complaint responses
- Liaise with the Complaints and Compliments Officer to discuss cases where compensation may be appropriate, and seek the relevant approval for compensation
- Produce and monitor a log of all actions agreed as part of a Stage 1 complaint
- Produce quarterly reports to highlight the learning from complaints
- Work with Corporate Communications to highlight the positive work that is being undertaken and how the Housing service is learning from complaints

- Support the Complaints and Compliments Officer to obtain all information required for complaints that are escalated to Stage 2 and/or the Housing Ombudsman

The currently workload is higher than one officer can cover and an additional post is required. Other Nottinghamshire borough councils are taking similar steps, with one recently creating a team of a Senior Complaints Officer and two Complaints Investigators with their Housing Service.

The Housing Services and Strategy Manager (Grade 13) and the Housing Performance Manager (Grade 9) are now routinely completing Stage 1 responses as part of their work every week. Managers throughout the Housing Service have also been supporting the Housing Services and Strategy team during this time, in a similar way to before the Housing Complaints Officer was created. This means that many housing managers are having to prioritise complaint responses over other essential tasks.

In addition to this, the number of complaints received remains high and the HO and RSH expectations of the detailed responses required mean that responses take longer to draft than previously. There has also been an increase in the complexity of the complaints received, with many customers complaining about multiple concerns, leading to further time being required to investigate leading to the impact on our compliance rate.

Due to the limitation of resource, there has been a recent dependency on complaint extensions to try and best maintain the Council's complaint response compliancy and allow for sufficient allocation of resource to investigate the complaint. Of the 162 complaints that have been responded to within the timescales, 67 of these maintained compliancy through the use of extensions. The HO guidance is clear that landlords should not routinely be using extensions, as part of their complaints process. Where tenants are unhappy with the service provided, they are also on many occasions having an extended wait for this response, which compounds to the original matter that they made a complaint about. When mistakes are made, it is appropriate that these are investigated and resolved promptly.

4. Key Decision

This report is not a key decision as defined under Regulation 8 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

5. Updates from Scrutiny

Not applicable.

6. Financial Implications

Finance comments will be updated at the meeting as necessary.

7. Legal Implications

Legal comments will be updated at the meeting as necessary.

8. Human Resources Implications

The comments from the Human Resources Manager were as follows:

HR supports the proposals and any recruitment in line with existing Recruitment policies.

9. Union Comments

Union comments will be updated at the meeting as necessary.

10. Climate Change Implications

The climate change implications are contained within the report.

11. 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.

12. Equality Impact Assessment

Not applicable.

13. Background Papers

Not applicable.