

## ISLINGTON COMMUNITY HOUSING COOP

### 2023/24 ANNUAL COMPLAINTS PERFORMANCE AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT REPORT

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This is the first annual complaints report in accordance with the Housing Ombudsman Service's new complaint handling code, which became mandatory for all social landlords from 1 April 2024. This report provides information on the number of complaints managed by ISLINGTON COMMUNITY HOUSING COOP (ICHC) during 23/24 and the response times against policy. This report also sets out what ICHC has learned.

ICHC owns 104 homes, all of which are social housing.

Over the course of 2023/24 we received seven complaints from three members living in ICHC homes and four customers living in private rented or privately owned properties. The complaints are related to how we dealt with repairs and maintenance, mutual exchange policy, contractor conduct, anti-social behaviour (ASB) and communal charges.

None of the complaints were referred to or investigated by the Housing Ombudsman Service 2023/24. We received one Subject Access request from the Information Commissioner's Office.

	Stage 1	Stage 2	Referred By Ombudsman
Volume	7	0	0
Total	7	0	0

#### Issues

1. ASB complaint was logged about incorrect disposal of waste and lack of cleaning of communal area.
  - a. Issues relating to the complaint are outside of the landlord's responsibility. Meetings were held with members to try and create a more reasonable living environment and ASB Policy was shared.
2. Request to remove gas contractor from our preferred contractor list and change frequency of annual checks certificate recording to MOT style where we keep original date.

- a. Complaint was partially upheld where MOT style of gas safety certification was introduced. Gas contractor remained due to long standing relationship and value for money.
3. Complaint received from private property owner that contractor working on ICHC property is leaving rubbish on steps and they have not used netting to stop the spread of dust.
  - a. Complaint upheld, contractor acted immediately to resolve issue once alerted.
4. Complaint logged on incorrect grounds of refusal for mutual exchange as per Homeswapper policy and subject access request.
  - a. Complaint rejected as ICHC is not a member of Homeswapper and has a local home swap policy. Subject access request actioned.
5. Complaint logged from private property that ICHC fence is falling over and damaging their garden and plants.
  - a. Complaint upheld, fence repaired at cost of ICHC due to party wall checks.
6. Complaint logged from neighbouring privately rented property that pests are coming from ICHC garden due to rubbish and poor maintenance.
  - a. Complaint upheld, garden rubbish cleared and grass and weeds cut down to reasonable size.
7. Complaint logged by member due to high cost incurred from communal lighting and fire panel installation as there is no landlord meter. Request for compensation due to extra cost incurred.
  - a. Complaint partially upheld and landlord communal supply moved to a different property and a request for landlord communal meter to be installed. Request for compensation of extra cost of electricity usage rejected. Comparable cost of usage against larger properties provided and offer for inconvenience caused is more than estimated annual usage.

## **Learning Points**

1. A review of our complaint logging practices has shown room for improvement. We plan to enhance our complaint recording systems, ensuring that all issues, whether classified as service request or formal complaints are captured accurately. This will involve setting clearer distinctions between service request and complaints to improve how issues are escalated and addressed.
2. Additional training sessions will be provided for all relevant staff to improve their ability to identify and log both service request and complaints. This training will cover best practice in complaint handling, the importance of timely follow-ups and effective communication to ensure swift and efficient resolution process.
3. To provide Members with flexible and accessible means of submitting complaints, all current complaint channels (phone, email, online, letter and in person) will remain active. We will also review and assess these channels to confirm their effectiveness and ease of use for Members.

## **Conclusion**

This report highlights the key areas for improvement during 2023/24 period. To enhance our services, we are committed to:

- Ensuring that we are transparent about our commitment to being transparent about how we handle complaints.
- Highlight steps taken to clearly communicate how members and public can submit complaints.
- Improving our recording and logging processes to accurately capture all Member issues.
- Providing additional training for staff to improve the identification and timely logging of service requests and complaints.

We believe these actions will lead to improved Member satisfaction and a stronger complaint management process that aligns with the Housing Ombudsman's Code of Conduct.

The Management Committee (MC) has reviewed the following documents:

1. The 2023/24 Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report.
2. Notification from the Housing Ombudsman regarding complaints.
3. ICHC Self Assessment
4. The updated Complaints Policy

The MC supports the updated Complaints Policy, which aligns with the Housing Ombudsman's Code of Conduct and recognises the importance of distinguishing service request from complaints. By ensuring a prompt response and effective communication, ICHC can better address Member needs and enhance service delivery.

Moving forward, quarterly complaints reports will be submitted to the MC. These reports will facilitate continuous monitoring and improvement of our complaint handling, ensuring we meet the expectations of the Housing Ombudsman and our Members.

The MC acknowledges that this report reflects data from 2023/24 and appreciates that the improvements implemented as of April 2024 are aimed at addressing past performance. This approach will support continuous learning and progress, ensuring we meet evolving standards and Member expectations.