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| <b>Title:</b> Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2024-25   | <b>Date of Meeting:</b> 16 <sup>th</sup> June 2025   |
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| <b>Job Title:</b> Executive Director of Customers  |  |
| <b>Strategic Heading:</b> Compliance   | <b>Status:</b> Decision  |
| <b>Purpose:</b> To share annual complaints performance for John Pease Cottages and the service improvements implemented as a result. |  |
| <b>Recommendation:</b> Board is recommended to approve the self-assessment and the actions contained in the report.                  |  |

## 1. Context

The revised Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code came into effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024. Sections 8.1 and 8.2 of the code state that: Landlords must produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which must include:

- The annual self-assessment against this 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 this Code by the Ombudsman.
- The service improvements made because of the learning from complaints.
- Any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman; and
- Any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord.

The annual complaints performance and service improvement report must be 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.

## 2. Self-Assessment Against the Complaints Handling Code

The self-assessment against the Complaints Handling Code has been reviewed for 2025 and is attached at Appendix One.

John Pease Cottages is fully compliant with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code and there are no areas of non-compliance.

### 3. Complaints Performance 2023-24

|   | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | 2024/25 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|
| Number of formal complaints received during the year  | 1       | 1       | 0       |
| Percentage of Stage 1 complaints responded to within target (The standard is 10 working days which can be increased to 20 with the agreement of the customer) | 100%    | 0%      | N/A     |
| Percentage of complaints upheld   | 100%    | 100%    | N/A     |
| Number of complaints progressing to Stage 2   | 0       | 0       | 0       |
| Percentage of Stage 2 complaints responded to within target – 10 working days   | -       | -       | N/A     |

There were no stage 1 or stage 2 complaints received during 2024/25 from John Pease Cottage tenants.

### 4. Refused Complaints

No complaints were refused during 2024/25. We have a procedure in place to record any refused complaint and the reason provided in accordance with the Complaints policy.

### 5. Service Improvements

Although there were no complaints for John Pease Cottages last year, We have set out clear service improvement actions to strengthen our approach at North Star. These have been highlighted below as areas that will also improve the service for the customers at John Pease Cottages. These include:

- Faster resolution times and clearer communication.
- Enhanced training on empathy, tone, and the emotional impact of service failure.
- A stronger focus on resolving issues at the first point of contact.
- Improved follow-up with complainants to capture learning and share insights across the organisation.

These initiatives form part of our broader **Heartbeat** programme—a cultural shift to put customers at the centre of everything we do, ensuring their voices drive learning, action, and accountability.

| Service improvement   | Lead                 |
|---|----------------------|
| Stage One Complaints will be led by Service Managers and Heads of Service, with support from Team Managers and Directors as needed (e.g., to manage backlogs or cover absence). | Director of Customer |

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|   | Experience & Transformation                      |
| Stage Two Complaints will be managed by Heads of Service and Directors not involved in Stage One. These will be distributed as evenly as possible across the organisation to ensure fairness and capacity.  | Director of Customer Experience & Transformation |
| Formal reflective reviews will be introduced for all Stage Two complaints to improve learning and accountability. These reviews will focus on ownership of actions, recognising vulnerability, and understanding the human impact of service failure — in line with Heartbeat’s emphasis on empathy and flexibility.                            | Director of Customer Experience & Transformation |
| Heartbeat values — trust, listening and learning, empathy and flexibility — will be embedded into all complaints activity, including reflective reviews, complaint clinics, and team discussions.   | Directors and Heads of Service                   |
| Our housing management system, will be evaluated to ensure it supports effective reporting, action monitoring, and theme identification, in line with the Heartbeat goal of delivering consistent, high-quality service.  | Director of Customer Experience & Transformation |
| Our Compensation and Remedy Policy will be enhanced with clearer guidance for staff on assessing distress, disruption, and vulnerability. This includes refresher training for all complaint handlers.  | Director of Customer Experience & Transformation |
| Where compensation is recommended by policy, it will be offered to all complainants. If fault lies with a contractor, we will seek to recover associated costs.   | All managers                                     |
| Refresher training sessions for all managers will be scheduled to ensure confidence in the complaints process and system. These will cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The role of tone, language, and empathy.</li> <li>○ Emotional impact of service failure.</li> <li>○ Resolving issues at first point of contact.</li> </ul> | Director of Customer Experience & Transformation |

## 6. Housing Ombudsman Determinations and reports

John Pease Cottages have not any cases taken to the Housing Ombudsman and therefore have no Housing Ombudsman determinations, areas of non-compliance reported by the Housing Ombudsman or Landlord Performance reports.

## 7. Next Steps

We will be publishing the latest self-assessment alongside a copy of this report with a statement from the MRC on our website and providing an update to all customers in our next newsletter. As part of the Code, we are required to make an annual submission to enable the Ombudsman to monitor landlords’ compliance with the Code.

Board will receive a quarterly performance update on complaints and an annual report on how we are performing against the Code.

The MRC will meet with the Executive Director of Customers and Executive Director of Technical Services every six months. The purpose is to share patterns, learning and improvements. The MRC will update Board the following meeting.

## **8. Recommendations**

Board is recommended to **approve** the self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code and the actions outlined in this report.

Board is requested to provide a response to the report that we will publish on the website.

## **9. Strategic Risk & Risk Appetite**

[SRR6 Not meeting regulatory requirements](#)

[SRR8 Failure to deliver high levels of customer satisfaction](#)

### **Risk Appetite**

There is a very low-risk appetite for not meeting regulatory compliance and expectations.

There is a low-risk appetite for failure to deliver high levels of customer satisfaction.