

## **Annual Complaints Compliance Report**

### **Overview**

During the past year the organisation received one formal housing complaint. This related to an administrative error in the application of a service charge.

The error was identified and acknowledged promptly, and the tenants affected were fully reimbursed. This response reflects our commitment to transparency, accountability, and prompt resolution where issues arise.

Following this complaint, an additional internal check on service charge application has been introduced through the finance team to provide a secondary verification prior to charges being applied.

No further housing complaints were received during the reporting period. Our proactive engagement with tenants continues to focus on addressing concerns early through regular dialogue and collaborative problem solving.

The organisation maintains a comprehensive complaints policy covering both housing and social care services.

### **Complaints Policy and Approach**

The complaints policy is designed to support openness, learning, and service improvement. Stakeholders are encouraged to raise concerns so that issues can be addressed constructively.

The policy follows a clear two-stage complaints process:

#### **Stage 1 – Initial Response**

Acknowledgement and resolution attempt within a specified timeframe.

#### **Stage 2 – Review Stage**

If unresolved, the complaint is escalated for review by a different decision-maker.

Where appropriate, tenants may escalate complaints to the Housing Ombudsman Service, and contact details are provided throughout the process.

The complaints procedure is circulated annually across the neighbourhoods to ensure tenants and their representatives are aware of how to raise concerns and access the formal complaints process.

## **Proactive Engagement**

Because we support vulnerable adults and operate within a co-housing environment, the organisation prioritises early engagement and informal resolution wherever possible.

Mechanisms supporting this approach include:

- Regular face-to-face contact between housing officers and tenants
- Tenancy reviews involving tenants and support circles
- Neighbourhood walk-through audits reviewing maintenance and environmental standards
- Monthly neighbourhood meetings where housing matters can be raised
- Annual social care reviews providing an additional forum for housing feedback
- Family and Friends events strengthening communication with support networks
- Anonymous surveys where appropriate
- Independent facilitation enabling residents to provide open feedback

These mechanisms ensure tenants have multiple opportunities to raise concerns before issues escalate into formal complaints.

## **Two-Tier Engagement Model**

Tenant engagement operates through two complementary levels.

### **Tier 1 – Ongoing Informal Engagement**

Regular interaction with tenants and stakeholders enables immediate discussion and resolution of concerns.

### **Tier 2 – Structured Review Mechanisms**

Formal reviews, meetings, and surveys provide opportunities to identify broader or systemic issues.

This approach supports both early resolution and continuous improvement.

## **Trustee Oversight**

Trustees maintain direct oversight of tenant experience.

Board meetings include a “touch points” agenda item, where trustees share observations and informal feedback gathered from interactions within the community.

In addition, the Co-Housing Committee includes a standing agenda item to review any complaints received and the actions taken in response. This ensures learning and accountability are embedded within governance structures.

## **Continuous Improvement**

Several improvements were introduced during the year to strengthen service monitoring and tenant engagement.

#### Maintenance Verification

Spot-check reviews of completed maintenance work are now conducted directly with tenants. These checks gather immediate feedback and confirm that works have been completed to an appropriate standard.

#### Community Conference

The organisation held its annual co-housing community conference, providing residents with an opportunity to reflect on community life and share feedback.

#### Independent Community Feedback

An external facilitator also conducted inclusive conversations with residents to gather independent feedback on community life.

#### Policy Review

The complaints policy was reviewed to ensure continued alignment with the Complaint Handling Code issued by the Housing Ombudsman Service.

#### Self-Assessment Against the Complaint Handling Code

Trustees have reviewed the organisation's complaints procedures against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code. The Board is satisfied that the policy reflects the requirements of the Code.

#### Summary

The organisation's complaints approach emphasises early engagement, transparency, and continuous learning.

The single complaint received during the year was addressed promptly and transparently, with appropriate reimbursement and the introduction of additional internal controls to strengthen service charge verification.

#### Approval

Approved by the Co-Housing Committee of Sturts Community Trust Housing Association.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: Chair of the Co-Housing Committee

Date: \_\_\_\_\_