



MASONIC HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report

Masonic Housing Association (MHA) has always taken complaints very seriously. The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 placed a statutory duty on the Ombudsman to monitor compliance with the Code from 1 April 2024. The Ombudsman will ensure that the MHA Board has:

- Scrutinised and challenged its compliance with the Code including reviewing the self-assessment, its complaint handling performance and learning from complaints
- Published the review on its website
- Complies with the Code in practice

As well as monitoring formal complaints, MHA monitor all data that gives an insight to the tenant satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the services provided as follows:

- Monitoring of satisfaction of the repairs service by contacting tenants directly by the scheme manager
- Monitoring of Anti-Social Behaviour complaints – ASB is outside of the formal complaint handling code/jurisdiction of the Ombudsman unless MHA have not acted or adhered to policy
- Tenant Satisfaction Biannual Survey with standardised questions set by the Regulator of Social Housing, which provides customer insight

New Complaint Handling Code 2024

During 2024 MHA have taken the following action in the light of the new requirements of the Social Housing Regulation Act in relation to how it deals with complaints:

- Revised complaints policy drafted to incorporate the latest guidance from the Ombudsman (published in February 2024) including the Self-assessment check list.
- Board review of policy to ensure compliance with the new legislation and the Complaint Handling Code
- Review of scheme chairmen reports and tenant surveys to understand if there are any common themes or issues that need to be addressed. No issues for remediation have been raised.
- Revised complaints policy made available to tenants and published on the website, along with the self-assessment.

There were no formal complaints (Stage 1 or Stage 2) received in 2024. The low level of complaints did not result from MHA not promoting or discouraging tenants from making complaints. The House committees and Scheme managers work closely with their tenants leading to high levels of tenant satisfaction with the condition of their accommodation. This can be evidenced by the Tenant Satisfaction Survey undertaken by Acuity in December 2023 as follows:

	MHA 2023	MHA 2021	Acuity
% of tenants satisfied with overall service	98%	98%	76%
% of tenants satisfied with how well maintained the property is	97%	96%	71%
% of tenants satisfied with how safe they feel at MHA	99%	95%	78%
% of tenants satisfied landlord listens to their views and acts upon them	93%	93%	76%
% of tenants satisfied with repairs service.	93%	94%	63%
% of tenants satisfied with complaints handling.	50%	43%	34%

Two tenants responded that they had made a complaint in 2023. Neither of these were classed as stage 1 or 2. Out of these, one responded that they were very satisfied with MHA's approach to complaints handling, the other was 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied'. Whilst MHA is proud to have received no formal complaints, we recognise the need for improvements in how we record complaints and service requests previously referred to as informal complaints and concerns.

Learning from new complaints system introduced by Housing Ombudsman

- Checklist implemented which is published on MHA's website. This has raised the profile of complaints handling within the Association and ensured compliance with the code.
- The Complaints Policy has been revised to ensure it is up to date and compliant with current legislation. The outcome is that the policy helps tenants better understand what constitutes a formal complaint, what is classed as a service request, and how anti-social behaviour is not part of the process.
- Data from other sources, such as the tenants' satisfaction survey, have been assessed for further evidence of the complaints culture of the Association and its effectiveness. This demonstrates that there is an extremely low number of complaints because tenants have high satisfaction levels with repairs, maintenance and the quality of their home.
- House committees are raising the profile of complaints to ensure that tenants are aware of their right to complain. A culture shift is being encouraged so that tenants feel comfortable making complaints. MHA recognise this as a positive opportunity to further improve the services provided. The new code and the consumer standards require MHA to see things from the residents' view far more than it did before.
- Any complaints, however small, are fed back to the F&GP committee via the scheme chairmen's quarterly reports. A positive learning outcome is that this will enhance the complaints recording log going forward to effectively review trends and improve reporting of service requests.