

LiveWest Board response



In February 2024 I was appointed as the Board Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC), in line with the expectations of the Housing Ombudsman’s Complaints Handling Code. As MRC, I have reviewed the LiveWest annual submission to the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) for 2025 and confirm as follows.

- 1.** The complaints elements of our Customer Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Policy (the Policy) comply fully with the HOS Complaints Handling Code as evidenced in our self-assessment.
- 2.** The Policy was updated and scrutinised by the Customer Services Committee (CSC) in April 2025 and approved by the Board later in the same month. Participating at the CSC were the Chair and Vice Chair of InFocus, our customer scrutiny panel and part of our resident engagement framework. InFocus reviews and contributes to new and revised service policies.
- 3.** The CSC also received and scrutinised our Annual Report on Complaints including our self-assessment against the complaints handling code. Pending updates to our complaints policy the CSC Committee confirmed full compliance with the code in its recommendations to the Board.
- 4.** At its meeting in April the CSC approved several changes to the complaints policy, which include the following:
 - Clarifying who can access our internal complaints process to LiveWest customers who are occupying or applying to occupy premises owned or managed by LiveWest.

- Changing the stage 1 acknowledgement timescales to 5 working days to align with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.
 - Increasing the timescales for a customer to let us know their intention to escalate a complaint from 10 working days to 28 days.
- 5.** The quarterly and annual report from the CSC to the Board provides an overview of complaints performance, complaints learning, and compliance with the HOS Complaint Handling Code and Tenant Satisfaction Measures. It includes a section for the MRC to advise on and discuss with the Board our performance on complaints.
- 6.** As MRC, I’m pleased to share our progress in complaint handling. The Housing Ombudsman Service Annual Landlord Report 2024/25 shows our maladministration rate has dropped from 71% to 37%, with no complaint handling failure orders and full compliance with all orders.
- 7.** To further improve our handling of customer complaints and as seen within the Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report we have established the following:
- Customer Complaints Panel:** This panel collaborates with us to ensure that our complaint process is simple, accessible and effectively communicated to our customers. Members of the panel evaluate customer satisfaction and feedback, providing recommendations for improvements to the complaints process ensuring LiveWest uses insights gained from complaints to improve services.
 - Compensation Panel:** The panel reviews high-impact complaints. Its purpose is to ensure that our approach to handling complaint compensation is fair and proportionate, in line with guidance from the Housing Ombudsman as well as LiveWest’s compensation

- procedures. The panel evaluates findings and shares insights throughout LiveWest.
- Deep Dive Reviews:** Where customer complaints indicate areas of concern a comprehensive analysis is carried out. This process involves assessing the feedback provided by our customers, identifying the underlying issues, and determining key actions and recommendations to improve our services.
- 8.** Ensuring that our customers feel safe, respected and confident in our services and that we are working together to provide services and support that matters most. This is at the heart of our five-year strategy at LiveWest. As MRC, I will continue to engage with the teams to ensure that our Policy is being applied as intended and that our strategic focus is fully integrated into our handling of customer complaints. This assurance process flows from the Customer Services Committee (CSC) to the Board.

I have discussed all of the above with the Chair of the Board, Jacqueline Starr. She is satisfied that it is a suitable response on behalf of the Board. I will also present it for assurance at CSC and the next Board in August, with any significant further comment to be forwarded to the HOS as an addendum. On this basis I can confirm that our submission is fully in line with the Board’s informed understanding.

John Newbury
Senior Independent Director and Vice Chair, Board Member Responsible for Complaints 25th June 2024