

## **CESSA Housing Association Member Responsible for Complaints – Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report as at 31 December 2025**

As detailed in the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) Code of Practice, the Association's Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC) is required to have Governance oversight on behalf of the COM of all complaints received within the previous period. This report is intended to provide assurance to the Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC) and the Committee of Management (COM) on the effectiveness of the Association's complaints handling framework, its compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's Code of Practice, and the extent to which learning is identified and acted upon.

The Association's Complaints Officer, the Director of Housing (DoH), after each quarter (31 March, 30 June & 30 September) *during* the year (even if nil returns), will provide a written report on formal complaints received. A final written report, (provided below) is then submitted to the MRC at the end of each financial year in advance of the required complaints analysis submission to the HOS, which in 2026 is due by 21 March.

DoH is able to confirm that the Association is compliant with the HOS Code of Practice and that, in anticipation of needing to meet the Code from 2024 onwards, policy T01H – CESSA HA Complaints had been further updated and approved by the Association's Housing Committee in March 2025. This was made available to tenants via their scheme's Tenants Information folder (generally held for reference purposes in communal lounges). The policy is also published on the Association's website, along with the Tenant's Annual Report 2025. The latter contains an analysis and explanation of Complaint performance for the previous year, together with detailed performance charts for the Regulatory Tenant Satisfaction Measures submitted in April 2025 for the preceding financial year (2024). The Association continues to promote early resolution of service requests wherever possible, whilst ensuring that residents are always able to escalate concerns into the formal complaints process where they remain dissatisfied. DoH is able to advise the following:

1. **Complaint Response Times:** Receipt of Stage 1 & Stage 2 complaints should be acknowledged within 5 working days and responded to within 10 working days of their acknowledgement.

In 2025 the one complaint was acknowledged the day that it was received and responded to 10 days following its receipt, thereby meeting the Association's target response time.

All service requests were acknowledged by the end of the next working day following their receipt and, all but one, received a final response within 3 days of the date they were received (well within the target time of a further 10 working days). The exception was where a tenant had raised concerns that there were rodents living in the loft space above their flat. This had been immediately investigated with the area being found to be clear with no evidence of either animals or birds living in the roof space. This was further supported by the use of a drone to inspect the roof eaves and guttering immediately over the tenant's flat which identified that squirrels were using the area as a playground. The Association was, however, to provide a final response until its roofing contractor was able to visit to physically inspect the area, which was delayed until they could arrange an appointment leading to an actual response time of 44 days. This affected the overall response time to service requests resulting in an average of 6 days (which remains with the target time).

Whilst the number of formal complaints remains low, the Association remains mindful that low complaint volumes can, in some circumstances, indicate barriers to raising concerns. The Association will therefore continue to ensure that the complaints process remains visible, accessible, and well understood by all tenants.

Although HA's policy T01H - Complaints (in line with HOS guidelines) does not require there to be a formal acknowledgement and response time for tenant service requests, these were immediately acknowledged and responded to on the same day of the request being made.

2. Stage 1 Complaints: In 2025 there was one Stage 1 expressions of tenant dissatisfaction. The complainant raised a concern regarding a scheme cleaner using their paid hours to carry out laundry work on behalf of 4 residents. The complaint was investigated and upheld, with the staff member being reminded that regularly carrying out laundry for individual residents did not form part of her official duties and that, therefore, such work should be carried out outside of contracted hours.
3. Stage 2 Complaints: There were no Stage 2 complaints in 2025.
4. HOS Complaints: No complaints were escalated to the HOS in 2025.
5. Service Requests: There were 11 service requests in 2025 from 3 schemes (CESSAC House, Glamis Court and St Georges Court). At CESSAC House, 7 of the 8 service requests were raised by the same tenant. Concerns raised were around: The scheme garden and loss of hot water and heat, the unpleasant smell in the scheme corridor; use of the tannoy system; the communal shower being too hot, replacement of a kitchen blind following the window having been replaced; lack of action about noises from rodents in the scheme loft (actually squirrels on the external guttering); not being informed of a contractor visit and the level of remedial recharges being requested following a fire in their flat caused by a tenant failing to maintain their air fryer in a safe condition.
6. Expressions of Thanks: In 2025 there were 7 letters of thanks. These were for: Sending out H&S advisory information to tenants; the support offered during a power failure; CEO's kind Christmas message; for the scheme Christmas party; For giving a new tenant an opportunity to move into their new home; and 2 letters of thanks from next of kin for the services provided while their relative was living at the scheme.
7. HOS Self-Assessment Compliance: DoH has completed the 27-page self-assessment form (attached) and is pleased to report that the Association's policies and procedures comply with the HOS' Code of Practice. The single Stage 1 complaint received in 2025 was also compliant, with the exception of a failure to provide a final written response to 2 service requests in addition to the oral update provided.

The Association has also corrected its non-compliance with the Code's requirement that HA's include a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties that reflects the need to:

- a. have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments;
- b. take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and
- c. act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body."

This was included in the 2025/26 Objectives for staff agreed by the Housing Committee annually in March 2026. The requirement will also be included in future annual objectives under 'Business as Usual'.

Once reviewed by the MRC, the self-assessment will be uploaded to the CESSA HA website for tenants; information. The self-assessment will also be submitted on the HOS' online portal by the deadline date of 21 March. Note that in order to meet HOS requirements, the Tenants Annual Report for 2025 has been uploaded together with revised policy T01H – Complaints (attached for information). The complaints policy has been further amended in January 2026 to ensure compliance with the Heat

Network Regulations and is being presented to the Association's Housing Committee on 19 March before final publication (an advance copy of which is also attached).

8. Lessons Learned: There were no particular lessons to learn from the one formal complaint received in 2025. However, in 2 service requests it was evident that the Association had relied upon a final oral update being provided to the tenant, that was not then followed up in writing. Therefore, staff have been reminded that where a service request has been raised in writing, a written response clarifying the actions taken should be provided. The Association will continue to review its complaints handling approach to ensure that it remains proportionate, responsive, and centred on delivering positive outcomes for tenants.

Gill Peckham  
Director of Housing

20/02/2026