

Meeting:	Board Meeting
Date:	19 May 2025
Agenda Item:	10d
Submitted By:	Heather Rigg
Board Action	Approval

SUBJECT:

Annual Complaints Performance & Learning Report April 2025 to March 2026

Including MRC review

Appendix One – Housing Ombudsman Service Complaint Handling Code Self Assessment

LINK TO BUSINESS PLAN/CORPORATE STRATEGY:

To deliver a quality product and value for money service for our customers to support those facing housing affordability challenge

Creating Social Value for GT and wider GPLC group

RECOMMENDATION:

This paper is presented to the Board as a review of the GT complaints performance including a review of the paper, provide commentary and feedback from the MRC. Finally the Board is asked to approve the paper for publication to comply with the Housing Ombudsman Service Complaints Handling Code requirements.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY of paper:

The purpose of this paper is to provide GT Board with oversight into complaints management and performance by GT over the period April 2025 until March 2026, to provide volumes of complaints received and provide assurance that they were responded to within the time frames expected within the Housing Ombudsman’s Complaints Handling Code.

The report looks at the theme of complaints received learnings and improvement actions implemented or being undertaken.

Finally, the report provides insight into compensatory payments made during the course of the year.

The Board is requested to review the report consider the learning outcomes and improvements and provide their response which will be published alongside this report.

Appendix 1 Copy of annual self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman’s Code of Conduct which will also be published

Regulatory Assurance:

To ensure compliance with Transparency, Accountability and Influence Standard

To ensure compliance with requirements of the Housing Ombudsman Service Complaint Handling Code

VFM: Consideration of benefit derived to optimise economy, efficiency, and effectiveness

Customer Complaints are a key channel for customer feedback, learnings and enable the business to review and improve service delivery and customer experience.

RISKS associated

Risk	Brief description of material risks	Probability L/M/H
Strategic	Failure to deliver key strategic driver of provision of value for money service for our customers	M
Financial	Where service failures go wrong there is a risk that there could be maladministration, disrepair or compensation	M
Development	Minimal impact	L
Operational	Resource capacity focused on dealing with poor service or resolving complaints	M
Reputational	Impact of poor service or published judgments impact GT and GPLC reputation	M
Mitigation	Every complaint is managed through a formal process, each are reviewed to ensure that key learnings are highlighted, and improvements mitigate working with key stakeholders to ensure that there is always a continuous improvement focus	

Stakeholder Impact	Y/N	Short Description
Grainger plc	Y	Failure to meet the strategic drivers
Residents	Y	Poor service delivery
Colleague	Y	Impact on Morale
Regulator	Y	Failure to meet requirements of consumer standards

ESG Impact	Y/N	Short Description
Environmental	N	
Social (including EDI)		
- Colleague	Y	Fair equitable service delivery
- Residents	Y	Fair equitable service delivery
Governance	Y	To ensure meeting requirements of intragroup agreement, regulatory and legislative requirements outlined to provide GT Board assurance

Introduction

To ensure compliance with the Housing Ombudsman’s Complaint Handling Code Grainger Trust provides an annual complaints performance and service improvement report to update GT Board and residents.

This report will be published on the GT website and on the Grainger App to ensure customers have oversight of performance and hard copies will be made available to share with anyone who requests.

The annual self-assessment confirms that Grainger Trust considers itself compliant with the Housing Ombudsman’s Complaint Handling Code, with any learning identified being addressed through ongoing service improvement activity.

This report will include:

- An annual self-assessment against the Code to ensure our complaint handling policy remains in line with the codes requirements. (Appendix 1)
- A qualitative and quantitative analysis of GT complaint handling performance. This will also include a summary of the types of complaints GT has refused to accept
- Any findings of non-compliance by GT with this Code by the Ombudsman
- The service improvements made by GT because of the learning from complaints
- Any annual report about GT performance from the Ombudsman
- Any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of GT

This GT Board will review this report and provide a response which will also be published.

Analysis of GT Complaint Handling and Performance

The complaints policy published in December 2024 is still valid and will be due for review in December 2026. This is joint policy reflected in both GT and GPLC which is compliant with the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) Complaints Handling Code (CHC) which requires all registered providers of housing to have an accessible 2 stage published process.

Complaints performance, emerging themes and learning are reviewed through a quarterly report to the Member Responsible for Complaints and the Grainger Trust Board, providing ongoing oversight and assurance.

This year April 2025 – March 2026

Complaint Stage	Number of Complaints
Stage 1	52
Stage 2	8

This is an increase of 12 complaints from the previous year or an increase of 30% year on year. The year-on-year increase in complaints reflects improved identification and recording of dissatisfaction, proactive signposting to the complaints process, and growth in the housing portfolio, rather than a deterioration in service delivery.

Only 15% of complaints escalated from a Stage 1 to a Stage 2. The low rate of escalation to Stage 2 indicates that issues are generally being resolved at the earliest stage, providing assurance that complaint handling is effective and proportionate.

The complaints handling code expects landlords to acknowledge and formally respond to all Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints within specific timelines. All complaints should be acknowledged within 5 working days whether is an initial stage 1 or an escalated stage 2. Stage 1 complaints should be responded to formally within 10 working days, and Stage 2 complaints should be responded to formally within 20 working days.

Where there is the need request an extension to a complaint, the customer should be informed, and the timelines cannot exceed a further 10 working days for stage 1 and 20 working days for stage 2.

Complaint Stage	Target	Acknowledgement	Target	Response
Stage 1	5 working days	100%	10 working days	90.2%
Stage 2	5 working days	100%	20 working days	100%

There were 5 complaints which were overdue and the reason for this was down to human error.

The average time take to respond to a stage 1 complaint was 6 working days and was 12 working days for a stage 2 complaint.

The complaints where target response times were not met arose from issues during the bedding-in period of the new complaints management system and from staff understanding of the full acknowledgement requirements of the Housing Ombudsman’s Complaint Handling Code. While the system issues automated acknowledgements, these do cases trigger the full formal acknowledgement process required by the Code, and this point was initially caused confusion with staff team. Management oversight checks have since been strengthened and refresher training is ongoing to ensure staff fully understand and consistently apply the Code requirements

There were 8 extensions of time for complaints for the period and the reason for this was due to 3rd party involvement from contractors or housebuilders/developers. Where extensions to response times were required, residents were informed of the reasons and provided with revised timescales in accordance with the Complaints Handling Code.

There were no complaints that were refused in the period.

There were no findings of non-compliance against the code by the Housing Ombudsman, Grainger Trust did not feature in the Housing Ombudsman’s Annual Report and there were no reports or publications undertaken by the Housing Ombudsman in relation to Grainger Trust.

There was proactive engagement, with requests for information from the Housing Ombudsman on 3 cases in the with no further contact received to date but it is worth noting that the HOS is running at a considerable backlog.

Complaints Analysis and Learnings

In the period there were 52 complaints raised at stage 1 and of these 8 then escalated on to a stage 2.

Complaint Theme	Volume
Time Taken to Repair	14
Missed Appointment Attendance	9
Security	5
Tenancy Issue	3
Out of Hours (contractor)	3
Fly Tipping	2
Quality of work (contractor)	2
Parking	2
Defects Liability	1
Customer Service - Communication	1
Handling of ASB	1
Heating/Hot Water Repairs	1
Neighbour Issue	1
Attitude & Behaviour (contractor)	1
Total	46

Time Taken to Repair & Miss Appointments

The time taken repair category is associated with the volume of repairs linked to the repairs and maintenance contract. This volume of complaints aligns with the TSM data and touchpoint survey data also.

The main issue with the complaints that were raised were associated with cancellation of jobs, failure to be advised new appointments or multiple contractor attendances to properties. Residents reported that often repair jobs were raised and dates to complete works were scheduled only for messages to be sent to rebook works for a new date; or worse that they did not receive any communication on the cancellation. Other issues raised included operatives being unable to complete works or lacking the time to complete works fully.

There has been on going oversight from both GT team and senior management team within GPLC to hold contractor to account. Work-in-progress meetings were introduced in January 2026 with the contractor and Grainger Trust staff to proactively review open

repairs. These meetings allow delays or resource issues to be identified at an early stage, enabling work to be reassigned where appropriate and access issues to be managed proactively through direct staff support to residents. As a result, residents benefit from clearer communication, quicker intervention where issues arise, and improved oversight of repair delivery, which has led to a reduction in overdue works and repeat service failures

Security

Several complaints were received regarding the contractor's failure to resolve faults with door-locking mechanisms, or to make homes safe during out-of-hours attendance, which left residents feeling vulnerable. A further theme related to calls not being triaged as emergency or priority when residents reported security-related issues, again resulting in customers feeling unsafe.

The introduction of work-in-progress meetings has strengthened identification of security-related issues, including delays caused by lead times for specialist parts. These forums enable early engagement with the contractor to reinforce the requirement to secure homes safely and to treat security concerns as priority or emergency repairs. This has improved response arrangements, ensured homes are made safe at the earliest opportunity, and provided residents with greater reassurance where security issues arise.

Tenancy Concerns

Complaints relating to tenancy matters highlighted the need for clearer explanations during enforcement action and tenancy renewal processes. Learning from these cases has improved staff understanding and the clarity of communication provided to residents, helping ensure expectations, rights and next steps are explained more consistently. This has led to earlier resolution of concerns and improved resident confidence in tenancy-related decision-making

Out of Hours Contractor

Complaints relating to out-of-hours services highlighted the importance of accurate triage and attendance for emergency situations. Learning from these cases informed reinforced expectations with the contractor and refreshed guidance following the introduction of Awaab's Law, ensuring emergency issues are identified and prioritised appropriately. As a result, residents receive a more reliable and timely out-of-hours response for critical repairs

Other Improvements

A new complaints manage system was rolled out on MRI Evolution which

Includes:

- Parent and child category codes for root cause analysis
- Introduction of automated acknowledgement emails to customers including copy of the complaint policy
- Stage 1 and Stage 2 template responses which are fully amendable to personalise depending on the individual complaint
- Where complaint remedies are associated with a service request this can be raised and linked to the complaint
- Fully reportable and time stamped recording of complaint managements to ensure adherence to the Complaints Handling Code

As the new system went live in October 2025, the reporting period for this review only captures data from the second half of the year.

Compensation Paid

Over the period a sum of £625.21 has been paid in compensation and good will gestures.

In general compensation was paid where there was a loss of service such as gas or water or where repairs failed to meet required timelines and customers could not have full use and enjoyment of their homes.

Board - Member Responsible for Complaints Response (Di Hart)

In my role as Member Responsible for Complaints, I have reviewed the Annual Complaints Performance and Improvement Report April 2025 to March 2026, which was considered and approved by the Board on 19 May 2025.

The Board has received assurance that Grainger Trust continues to operate an accessible and effective two-stage complaints process in line with the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. Performance against the Code demonstrates strong compliance, with 100% of complaints acknowledged within target timescales, 90.2% of Stage 1 complaints responded to within 10 working days, and 100% of Stage 2 complaints responded to within 20 working days.

The Board has noted an overall increase in complaint volumes during the year, reflecting improved identification and recording of dissatisfaction and growth in the housing portfolio, alongside a low escalation rate of 15% from Stage 1 to Stage 2, indicating that most issues are resolved at the earliest stage.

Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) results demonstrate improving satisfaction with complaint handling, increasing to 38% in 2025/26 compared to 24% in the previous year. However, the Board recognises that this remains an area of comparatively lower satisfaction and continues to be a key focus for service improvement.

The Board has also considered the key themes driving complaints, including repairs, communication and contractor performance, and has received assurance that learning from complaints is being used to drive service improvements. This includes strengthened oversight, improved contractor management and enhanced staff training to ensure consistent application of the Complaint Handling Code.

I am satisfied that Grainger Trust has effective arrangements in place for managing complaints, learning from outcomes, and delivering continuous improvement. I also confirm that the annual self-assessment has been completed and supports the Trust's position that it is compliant with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code, with no findings of non-compliance during the reporting period.

The Board will continue to receive regular updates on complaints performance and tenant satisfaction to ensure ongoing oversight, transparency and accountability.