

Homes and Neighbourhoods  
Islington Town Hall

Report of: **Corporate Director of Homes and Neighbourhoods**  
**Cllr O'Halloran Executive Member for Homes and Communities**

Meeting of: Housing Scrutiny Committee

Date: 7<sup>th</sup> November 2023

Ward(s): All Wards across Islington.

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Subject: Housing Ombudsman Annual Complaints Review 2022/2023 Synopsis

- 1.1. The Housing Ombudsman's Annual Complaints Review has revealed a sharp increase of severe maladministration findings, as individual performance reports were published for 163 landlords where the Ombudsman made most findings.
- 1.2. Together, they paint a challenging picture of social housing complaints which has seen a huge spike due to poor property conditions, legislative changes, media attention and the inquest into the death of Awaab Ishak a child who sadly died in Rochdale due to Damp and Mould.
- 1.3. The review also reveals an increase in maladministration findings where service requests were not handled reasonably and a decrease in findings of no fault. Combined this means more than half of findings were upheld for the first time.
- 1.4. The Annual Complaints Review provides a unique and comprehensive assessment of complaints in social housing, including that the Ombudsman received over 5,000 complaints for the first-time last year, a 28% increase on the previous year.
- 1.5. The Ombudsman has again written to Chief Executives of landlords who have a maladministration rate of over 50% to bring urgent attention to the figures. There are 91 landlords with a maladministration rate above 50%, with 25 landlords being above 75%. Islington Council received this letter on the 11<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

- 1.6. The Review also looks at Complaint Handling Failure Orders (CHFOs) and key issues for the first time.
- 1.7. The Ombudsman issued 146 CHFOs last year, mostly for failing to progress complaints in line with its Complaint Handling Code, with 73% of those being for landlords with over 10,000 homes. Please note Islington Council received two Complaint Handling Failures.
- 1.8. Most worryingly for the Ombudsman is the overall trend in the sector, with a 323% increase in severe maladministration findings, a 40% increase in maladministration findings and 20% drop in no maladministration findings.
- 1.9. In terms of what residents were complaining about, property condition was once again the leading category, with the Ombudsman making almost 2,000 findings where the failure rate has increased dramatically from 39% to 54% this year.
- 1.10. The Ombudsman also found a 52% maladministration rate for health and safety complaints.
- 1.11. Another key element of the Annual Complaints Review is the regional data. This has shown the Southwest as having the lowest overall maladministration rate, as well as having a significantly lower maladministration rate on health and safety complaints.
- 1.12. The Northeast and Yorkshire has the lowest severe maladministration rate.
- 1.13. London continues to be where the Ombudsman makes most of its determinations, even accounting for the quantity of social homes in the region. It had the highest maladministration rate and accounted for 77 of the 130 severe maladministration findings last year.
- 1.14. The rate of maladministration for **local authorities was slightly higher than housing associations, 62% compared to 50%**. The Housing Ombudsman have found that due to less resource, it is harder for local authorities to offer reasonable redress to therefore ending up with more maladministration findings.
- 1.15. The Annual Complaints Review once again shows that London has the highest number of determinations, even accounting for quantity of housing stock in region.

1.16. The London region also has the **highest maladministration rate at 58%** and has the highest maladministration rate for property condition at 58%.

1.17. Out of the 131 severe maladministration findings we made last year, 77 of these were for London landlords.

1.18. It can be seen from the following table that Islington Council had a 56.8% of maladministration findings, with 74 landlords having a higher percentage maladministration finding compared to Islington.

1.19. Landlords with high maladministration rates 22-23, are as follows:

Landlord	% maladministration findings
2Dominion Housing Group	64.8%
Arun District Council	66.7%
Ashford Borough Council	72.7%
Basildon Borough Council	86.7%
Believe Housing	63.6%
Birmingham City Council	85.2%
BPHA	57.1%
Bristol City Council	53.3%
Broadland Housing Association	77.8%
Camden Council	65.5%
Cheshire Peaks & Plains Housing Trust	80.0%
Chisel Limited	70.0%
Clarion Housing Association	53.6%

Connect Housing Association	54.5%
Cross Keys Homes	54.5%
East Devon District Council	76.9%
East End Homes	60.0%
Epping Forest District Council	80.0%
Estuary Housing Association	66.7%
For Housing	80.0%
Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council	50.0%
Gateway Housing Association	71.4%
Gentoo Group	69.2%
Great Places Housing Group	68.0%
GreenSquareAccord	76.3%
Hammersmith and Fulham Council	83.8%
Haringey London Borough Council	81.4%
Harlow District Council	64.3%
Havering Council	72.7%
Hightown Housing Association	80.0%
Homes Plus	54.5%
Housing For Women	80.0%
Hyde Housing Association	65.6%
Incommunities	61.1%
Inquilab Housing Association	83.3%
Islington and Shoreditch Housing Association	66.7%

Islington Council	56.8%
'Johnnie' Johnson Housing Trust	57.1%
Kingston upon Hull City Council	66.7%
Lambeth Council	79.7%
Leeds City Council	56.8%
Lewes District Council	80.0%
Lewisham Council	66.7%
Livv Housing Group	65.2%
London & Quadrant Housing Trust	62.3%
London Borough of Barking and Dagenham	88.2%
London Borough of Barnet	62.5%
London Borough of Brent	72.7%
London Borough of Croydon	66.7%
London Borough of Ealing	62.5%
London Borough of Enfield	90.0%
London Borough of Hackney	63.3%
London Borough of Hounslow	71.4%
Longhurst Group	63.6%
Manchester City Council	66.7%
Melton Borough Council	55.6%
Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing	54.7%
Network Homes	52.8%
Newcastle City Council	60.0%

North West Leicestershire District Council	50.0%
Norwich City Council	100.0%
Nottingham City Council	66.7%
Orbit Group	55.8%
Paragon Asra Housing Limited	68.1%
Peabody Trust	57.6%
Poplar HARCA	83.3%
RHP	83.3%
Rochdale Boroughwide Housing	52.6%
Royal Borough of Greenwich	69.2%
Salix Homes	60.0%
Sheffield City Council	62.5%
Shepherds Bush Housing Association	53.3%
Slough Borough Council	69.2%
Soho Housing Association	60.0%
Southend-on-Sea City Council	83.3%
Southern Housing Group	63.3%
Southwark Council	76.9%
Southway Housing Trust (Manchester)	60.0%
Sovereign Housing Association	69.4%
The Guinness Partnership	52.0%
Thrive Homes	85.7%
Thurrock Council	54.5%

Torus	58.8%
Tower Hamlets Council	60.0%
Walsall Housing Group	63.6%
Wandle Housing Association	67.3%
Weaver Vale Housing Trust	80.0%
Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council	88.9%
West Kent Housing Association	54.5%
Westminster City Council	62.7%
Wolverhampton City Council	55.6%

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1. That Housing Scrutiny Committee note the report and the Housing Scrutiny Committee receives these annual reports in the future to hold the Homes and Neighbourhood service to account and to help drive service improvements for our residents. The Housing Scrutiny Committee also note the strategic action/improvement plan attached to the Paragraph 49 report also on this Committee agenda.

## 3. Background

- 3.1. Attached to this report as Appendix 1 is the Annual Performance report for 2022/2023 relating to Islington Council.

## 6 Financial Implications

The maladministration compensation payments totalled £11.879k in 22-23 & were met from the HRA. The report however makes clear in the conclusion that there remains a risk that service failures and hence maladministration compensation payments could increase in future years. Effecting the improvement action plan will be carried out within existing staffing resources.

## 7 Legal Implications

- 7.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report and recommendations.

## 8 **Conclusion**

- 8.1 It is of the greatest importance the council implements service wide improvements to address the findings of the Housing Ombudsman's findings contained within this report to ensure the council provides the best possible services to our residents. However, we must also recognise until the housing crisis is addressed, we will continue to see rising casework. The new regulatory settlement will have a significant and positive impact. The root causes also need addressing, otherwise the risk of more service failure is acute. The council aims to provide the best housing services in the country and the Housing Ombudsman work will assist with these service improvements.

### **Report Author**

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