**Minutes for Housing 21 Residents Complaints Panel**

**Date: Thursday 01 May 2025**

**Via Microsoft Teams – Review the Complaints performance and service improvement report.**

**Attendance:**

**Housing 21 employees:** Vanessa Pritchard Wilkes (VPW) – Chair, Sam Pritchard (SP), Sara Herrington (SH)

**Residents**: David Lowrie (DL), Mick Rose (MR), Ian Devereux (ID), Pauline Smart (PS), and John Young (JY)

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| **Topic** |  | **Action** |
| **1.** | **Welcome and Introductions.**VPW welcomed the panel to the meeting. Everyone introduced themselves and especially a welcome to Sara Herrington, new employee to Housing 21. She is replacing Vanessa and has the role of Head of Strategic Projects & Business Improvement for Retirement Living. |  |
| **2.** | The purpose of the meeting is to review the Complaints Performance and Service Improvement report ready for submission to the Housing Ombudsman. VPW asked permission to record part of the session to then be able to play back to Board at their meeting on 15th May. The group agreed to the recording. |  |
| **3** | A general discussion was held around the report and the panel raised a number of questions – * (ID) Can we identify that the removal of informal complaints category may mean complaints be falling under the radar, and we are not capturing them as people maybe fearful to lodge a complaint. VPW responded that Housing Managers do have access to raise service requested which can be logged on our in-house system, ERICA. The number of service requests should also be included in the report.
* (MR)The report is informative and easy to read. VPW asked the panel view on alternative formats. Panel agreed.
* (MR) The training on stage one handling needs to be clear and concise so the message is strong at the beginning. The resident panel section is easily missed, and more attention needs to be brought to the fact the panel is involved. Also, resident vulnerabilities are ever growing will be set in increase over the next 10 years, so preparation is needed for that. VPW agreed to these points. Vulnerabilities are set in increase and how we handle this data is where we can improve – something we can work with the panel on going forward.
* (ID) Discussed before however can we look at a provision for advocacy for residents and having an unbiased arbitration for vulnerabilities. VPW thought this is a great suggestion and something Housing 21, and the panel can work on together.
* (JY) Addition of graphs and pie charts would help bring the information alive and off the page. It is very text heavy. VPW agreed and in the final version we will aim to have more logos and images.
* (PS) It is felt that residents are being treated differently across schemes and too scared to complain, she felt the transparency is missing. VPW advised that Housing managers should be speaking to residents about how to complain and should not be treated differently.
* (ID) Is the communication of complaints process accessible. Employees have been asked, have the residents? It is assumed that residents know how complaints work. VPW again said housing managers should share the relevant information and maybe a study of schemes who have had no or very few complaints could be taken place to see if it’s a true happy scheme with no issues or an accessibility issue. Panel agreed this would be a good study.

Recording ended for the session. The meeting continued to discuss the self-assessment report and in person meeting. | **VPW to include Service request statistics in report****VPW to ensure more images added.****VPW to arrange a study of schemes with low number of complaints** |
| **4.** | **Self-Assessment Report**VPW ran through the remainder of the self-assessment report, sections 4 to 7.The group discussed the need to raise awareness amongst the residents on what a complaint is and what a service request is. It was important to utilise every communication method available. It’s needed to have clear communication and understand the outcome residents need, not losing sight of the customers’ needs amongst the policy and guidance. Have a simple visual module that sets out the process of thinking about a complaint and giving simple examples of what a complaint is and what is a service request. Discussion also on having a simple booklet/ leaflet on once a complaint made the next steps and what the resident can expect – timeline of events for example.ID asked if there is a wrap up procedure following a stage 2 closure with complaint handlers from stage 1 and stage 2 evaluating the process and responses. VPW advised there is currently no process for that, and it is not actively completed however this is a valid idea and should be taken forward.MR advised the self-assessment is a very long document and needs to be condensed for residents. Maybe things doing well and things we are looking to improve. VPW agreed it is a lengthy document and a resident friendly version one will be produced as soon as possible. |  |
| **5.** | **HOS Panel**PS is a member of the Housing Ombudsman Service and gave a brief update on various actions they have coming such as a 5-year plan with many actions. It was agreed that PS will perhaps have a quarterly one to one with Richard Dell (board member responsible for Complaints) and Sara Herrington (Head of Strategic Projects & Business Improvement for Retirement Housing) so actions can be shared and PS can provide all the information given to her. Plan to share information from the HOS panel at face to face meeting on 14 May 2025. | **Meetings to be set up between PS/RD/SH** |
| **6.** | **Any Other Business**Nothing raised. |  |
|  | **Close Of Meeting**Meeting Closed at 14:35pm |  |