

Southdown's Board's Response to the Housing Ombudsman's code self-assessment 2024 and Annual Review of Complaints: Jo Ellis, Chair of Southdown's Service Quality Committee

Complaints are an invaluable source of learning for Southdown. As a Board member, Southdown's management of complaints offers me a direct insight into the experiences and perceptions of our, clients, tenants and shared owners.

As the Board Chair of Southdown's Service Quality Committee and member responsible for overseeing complaints, I was pleased to receive our annual review of complaints and review [Southdown's self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code](#),

The Service Quality Committee's review of Southdown's compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code gave me the necessary assurance that we had made the required changes to our processes and were complying with both the letter and the spirit of the revised framework.

For me, the review of complaints both highlights areas where Southdown excel and, crucially, where we need to improve. Having read this report and self-assessment and reviewed the complaints, and Southdown's responses to these, I'm confident they provide a comprehensive overview of the complaints we received over the past year, the trends we've identified, and the actions we've taken to address them.

I'm proud of the dedication and professionalism of the managers responding to complaints. Their commitment to resolving issues and ensuring fair outcomes is commendable. Through the team's review of complaints, I have seen how the process itself can help Southdown better anticipate and meet the, often complex, needs of its clients and tenants.

Through my review of the complaints received and Southdown's investigation and responses, I am confident that Southdown's teams are treating complaints seriously and using them as an opportunity for learning. For me this year's review has highlighted a few emerging themes for Southdown.

- Where we have developed innovative new service models there has often been the need to find ways of quickly clarifying the levels of service clients can expect from us. This appears to be particularly the case where clients are accessing us and feeling that they are at a point of crisis.
- We've made progress in streamlining our complaints handling process, ensuring that each complaint is addressed thoroughly and efficiently. Whilst I'm confident we have

strong systems in place for monitoring and tracking complaints - there are still improvements we can make to support us in identifying themes from our complaints and complaint handling.

- Where 'service improvement' actions have been identified in response to a complaint it was sometimes difficult to track the implementation of the steps identified. Plans are now in place to bring more visibility of these, particularly where they have identified the need to revise our processes.
- Where it is proposed that service offerings change, often for understandable and practical reasons, it remains essential that, where possible, clients are consulted or at least given the rationale for these changes.

I'm enormously grateful to those who took the time to share their feedback with us, either through complaints or via annual client and tenant surveys. As the Chair of Southdown's Service Quality Committee, I shall be seeking to ensure not only that the voice of clients is heard but that we create more opportunities for clients and tenants to scrutinise our performance and driving positive change within our organisation, shaping the way services are delivered.

Yours Sincerely
Jo Ellis, Chair, Service Quality Committee