

Board response to Southdown's self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code and its Annual Review of Complaints 2026.

As Southdown's Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC), I have reviewed the Southdown Annual Review of Complaints and the Self-Assessment against Complaint Handling Code. I am satisfied that the self-assessment provides an accurate reflection of Southdown's complaint handling arrangements and demonstrates compliance with the Code.

Complaints provide a valuable opportunity for Southdown to hear directly from the people who use our services and live in our homes. They help us understand where we can improve, and whether the changes we make are delivering meaningful benefits for clients and tenants. A positive complaints culture is essential to achieving this and is actively supported by the Board and senior leadership team.

The annual report highlights several encouraging outcomes during 2025/26. The increased number of complaints is positive- reflecting a greater focus on recognising and dealing with complaints. Our response times improved significantly, with 75% of Stage 1 complaints and 100% of Stage 2 complaints responded to within target timescales. There was also a notable increase in the proportion of complaints resolved at Stage 1, demonstrating a stronger focus on early resolution and working constructively with complainants to address concerns.

The Board has reviewed the themes emerging from complaints during the year, particularly those relating to communication, consistency of service delivery and ensuring people feel listened to and understood. We are encouraged that learning from complaints has already informed improvements and we will continue to monitor how this learning is embedded and translated into improved outcomes for clients and tenants.

I welcome the finding that Southdown remains compliant with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code and note the areas identified for further improvement, including the development of an easy-read complaints leaflet, enhanced complaints reporting and analysis, and additional training for managers. These improvements demonstrate a commitment not simply to compliance, but to continuously strengthening the quality and accessibility of the complaints process.

The Board is also pleased to note that one Housing Ombudsman case concluded during the year resulted in a finding of no maladministration and recognised Southdown's efforts to work positively with tenants to resolve concerns. While external validation is welcome, our primary focus remains on listening to feedback, learning from complaints and using this insight to improve services.

I am satisfied that the Board has received appropriate assurance regarding complaint handling performance during 2025/26 and that Southdown is committed to learning from complaints, addressing concerns fairly and transparently, and continuously improving the services we provide.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank all clients, tenants, shared owners, advocates and family members who took the time to provide feedback during the year. Whether through a complaint, survey or other engagement activity, your views help shape our services and ensure we remain focused on delivering high-quality, person-centred support and housing services.

Simon Anderson

Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC)