

The Sheppard Trust

Sheltered homes for older women in housing need

Annual report for 2024/2025

on complaints performance and service improvements

May 2025

1 Introduction and Context

The Sheppard Trust is a very small housing provider, presently housing 25 residents. Since September 2024 residents have been housed in temporary accommodation whilst a brand-new housing scheme is being constructed. 21 residents are living in accommodation supplied by Birchgrove Life and 4 in accommodation supplied by Greystar.

Birchgrove Life staff are on site 24 hours per day and Greystar have a concierge service 24 hours a day. Sheppard Trust staff visit each site at least once per week and are available by telephone the remainder of the time. As a result the vast majority of issues can be dealt with quickly and informally before any formal complaint is required.

The Trust has worked with residents to help them understand which organisation is responsible for the various services provided, for example by including information in the residents handbook and going through it at resident meetings. Residents are encouraged to raise issues and complaints with the relevant organisation responsible for the service concerned, however the Trust will also accept complaints about any issue and support the resident to obtain a resolution from the organisation responsible.

The Trust welcomes feedback on its services and welcomes complaints as an opportunity to resolve issues, learn and improve services. We expect lower volumes of complaints during this interim housing solution as residents may complain to the housing provider rather than us. However we remain alert to the possibility that low complaints volumes could mean a resident is unwilling to complain, and so continue to provide other opportunities to ensure residents voices are heard including resident meetings and “meet and greet” opportunities to speak with trustees on the Appointments and Wellbeing Committee.

2 Complaints performance summary

	2024/2025	2023/2024	2022/2023
Issues logged as a complaint at stage 1	3	1	3
Complaints upheld at stage 1	1	0	1
Complaints not upheld at stage 1	1	1	1
Complaints withdrawn	1	0	0
Other (complaint turned out to be a service request on investigation)	0	0	1

Complaints escalated to stage 2	0	0	0
Complaints escalated to the Ombudsman	0	0	0
Complaints not accepted	0	0	0

Type of complaint

	2024/2025	2023/2024	2022/2023
Complaints about maintenance	0	0	2
Complaints about staff conduct	1	0	1
Complaints about a third party temporary accommodation provider	1	0	0
Complaints about the choice of temporary accommodation	1	0	0
Complaints about inaction on a neighbour dispute	0	1	0

Timely handling of complaints

	2024/2025	2023/2024	2022/2023
Complaints dealt with within the timescales in the policy	100%	100%	100%

3 Learning from complaints and service improvements

As a result of the Trusts relocation and temporary housing solution there has been a lot of change for our residents.

As a result of a complaint about one of the accommodation providers we gained experience in good practice for jointly addressing issues. The other provider also made service improvements.

One complaint related directly to the move. We collected formal and informal feedback from our residents regarding the moving process. The Trust will use this data to inform our future move to permanent accommodation and the process of settling into a new building.

We improved our reporting to residents. The findings of this report, in broad terms, and the details of our complaints procedure, were shared at a residents meeting on 30 April 2025. As a result residents felt empowered to make a further complaint about their accommodation provider as a group so that we could to address the issue with the provider.

4 Engagement with the Housing Ombudsman Service

The Housing Ombudsman Service published a new Complaint Handling Code in February 2024 which came into effect on 1 April 2024. We made changes to our complaints policy and procedure in 2024 to ensure that it meets the new code. We completed a self assessment against the Code which has been reviewed in 2025 and is included as an appendix to this report.

There were no complaints escalated to the Ombudsman, or findings or reports by the Ombudsman.

5 Governance response to this report

The Board of Trustees considered this report on 19 May 2025. The Board reiterated the Sheppard Trust's commitment to enabling residents to be heard and to dealing with complaints appropriately. The Board approved the self-assessment and this report for publication.