



# ANNUAL COMPLAINTS PERFORMANCE AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT REPORT

April 2023 – March 2024

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# Introduction

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From April 2024 the Housing Ombudsman requires landlords to produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report as part of the Complaint Handling Code. This report includes the self-assessment we have carried out against the code and as part of this process we have reviewed and updated our complaints policy and procedures.

This comes after a period of great change for the Great Hospital as, following an announcement in February 2024, we began a consultation with all residents around the proposal to cease directly providing domiciliary care. This consultation came to an end on May 31, 2024, and during that time we received 290 feedback questionnaire responses and held five open meetings and numerous individual meetings with residents and their family members.

The purpose of the consultation was to enable the Great Hospital to continue its historic legacy of providing housing for people in need, while maintaining and preserving our unique heritage site.

We recognise that, in order to provide the best level of housing and support for our residents, we need to collaborate and show openness and transparency in the way we work together. Complaints, compliments and comments are a crucial part of this as they help us to learn what we are doing right, where we can improve and what we need to change.

# Our approach to complaints

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- ❖ We recognise that complaints can and should be seen in a positive light and can help us to develop and improve our services.
- ❖ We have reviewed and updated our complaints policy and procedures to align with the Housing Ombudsman Code.
- ❖ We have provided additional complaint handling training to staff where necessary.
- ❖ Following the consultation with residents, we are reviewing and updating our handbook which includes our complaints policy and procedures as well as contact details for the Housing Ombudsman.
- ❖ We have always operated an 'open-door' policy and we intend to keep this approach while, at the same time, enabling a transparent and open complaints process that is effective and fair.
- ❖ We continue to utilise our digital maintenance service request system which means all service requests are logged and tracked, providing an audit trail and clear records.
- ❖ We have implemented a new Resident Engagement database which provides an audit trail and clear records, as well as assisting staff with complaint investigation.
- ❖ We ensure that new residents are signposted to our complaints policy as well as contact details for the Housing Ombudsman.
- ❖ We have strengthened our understanding of the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code and reviewed our internal processes and staff roles to ensure we are compliant.

## Complaints Handling Performance

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Between April 2023 – March 2024, the Great Hospital received five complaints. All of these were investigated and responded to, one at board level with the Care Committee agreeing a response.

One of these complaints began as a request for information, this was then logged as a complaint when there was an unreasonable delay in receiving the information (from a third party). The complaint was then responded to and closed with no requirement for a second stage.

The four further complaints were responded to and closed with no requirements for a second stage.

None of the complaints received related to a service request.

There were no findings of non-compliance received from the Housing Ombudsman.

## Learning and Outcomes

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We recognise that our community are, at times, reluctant to proceed with a formal complaints process. We will ensure that any barriers to the complaints process are addressed and broken down.

We recognise that we could have done more to communicate with residents when awaiting information from a third party and will ensure that any extensions are agreed to and communicated clearly.

We recognise that our previous complaint handling responses were not always within the timescales set out in our policy, and in future we will ensure that these are adhered to. New response templates have been created which provide a clear and defined timescale.

We will be providing a more detailed analysis of our complaint handling processes to the Care Committee to ensure the MRC has full oversight.

# Service Requests

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We are extremely proud of our record of service requests, and this is reflected in the fact that we received no complaints at all arising from these.

Between 31 March 2023 and 1 April 2024, 711 service requests were created on our system.

Of these, 12 were classified as urgent and were completed and closed in an average time of 3 hours and 37 minutes (against our target of 5 days for urgent requests as stated in our Resident Handbook).

A further 696 were completed and closed in an average time of 7 working days (against our target of 28 days for non-urgent requests as stated in our Resident Handbook)

The remaining 3 are long term projects that are ongoing, these do not relate to residential accommodation.

## Governing Body Response

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This report and the self-assessment were shared with the member responsible for complaints (MRC) in July 2024 and subsequently with the board of Trustees. Their response was as follows:

*The board is assured and satisfied that the Great Hospital has put in place new measures for ensuring it is compliant with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code, as evidenced by the self-assessment and annual complaints performance and service improvement report.*

*Over the coming year, the board look forward to seeing learning outcomes from complaints as a way of ensuring the Great Hospital is seeking to improve service levels where possible.*