



INFORMATION PAPER

Tackling Homelessness Committee

August 2026

YMCA Lincolnshire Complaints Handling

Executive Summary

This report provides the annual review of complaints received between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026 and demonstrates YMCA Lincolnshire's compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.

A total of 36 complaints were received during the reporting period, representing an increase of 14 compared with the previous year. The increase is likely to reflect improved awareness of the complaints process, clearer reporting routes and enhanced staff understanding of the distinction between complaints and service requests.

All complaints were accepted for investigation, all were resolved at Stage 1 and none were referred to the Housing Ombudsman. No findings of non-compliance with the Complaint Handling Code were issued during the reporting period by The Housing Ombudsman Service.

Complaints have resulted in several service improvements, including changes to agency staffing arrangements, strengthened staff induction and GDPR training and improvements to operational processes. All recommendations arising from the February 2025 internal audit have now been completed.

The Committee is asked to consider whether this report provides assurance of compliance with the Complaint Handling Code and to recommend approval of the updated policy, annual self-assessment and publication of the report onto YMCA Lincolnshire's website.

Background

The Complaint Handling Code introduced by the Housing Ombudsman became statutory on 1st April 2024. All members of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme of which YMCA Lincolnshire are members are obliged by law to meet its requirements.

The Code sets out best practice for landlord's complaint handling procedures, enabling a positive complaints culture across the social housing sector. The complaint handling code encourages a positive landlord-tenant relationship so that residents feel that they can raise a complaint if things go wrong.

The Complaint Handling Code sets out best practice for landlords to effectively handle complaints, including:

- the stages a process should have
- the timescales to provide a response
- what information must be provided in a complaint response

All registered social landlords regardless of their size, must annually carry out a self-

assessment and submit this to the Housing Ombudsman. In line with the Housing Ombudsman requirements, the self-assessment must be reviewed annually. In line with recent changes, landlords with under 1,000 properties must submit their data within six months of the end of the financial year.

A copy of the reviewed self-assessment is attached to this report in Appendix 1. Once approved it will replace the existing self-assessment that is currently displayed on our website.

YMCA Lincolnshire's Member Responsible for Complaints is Jackie Ross

Complaints data 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026

A total of 36 complaints were received between 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026. This is an increase of 14 based on the previous reported 12 months.

It is likely that this increase in number is due to:

- The promotion of how to make a complaint amongst our residents
- The introduction of the Resident Complaint and Feedback Policy
- Staff training identifying the difference between a complaint and a request for service.

100% of complainants received an acknowledgement letter within 5 days of their complaint being received and 87% of Stage 1 complaints were investigated and feedback provided within 10 days of the complaint being received.

Breakdown of complaints by service:

	25/26	24/25	Change
Nomad Centre	14*	11	+3
Hostel	9	8	+1
Outreach	13	2	+11

All complaints received were accepted and investigated.

* 5 complaints all made about the same issue were withdrawn as the residents stated that they wanted it to be a compliment rather than a complaint.

The increase in complaint numbers does coincide with complaint QR codes being made available to all residents, making it easier for complaints to be made especially within the Outreach service.

Complaint themes:

Complaint subject	Number
Repairs	9
YMCA staff	16
Agency staff	3
Quality of support	4
Wifi quality	1
External issues	2
Bed bugs	1
Total	36

Nine complaints related to repairs. Analysis indicates these are predominantly around delays in completing work rather than the quality of repairs. This has prompted a review of repair response times.

Complaints relating to staff conduct remain the largest category and account for 44% of all complaints. This has resulted in strengthened induction processes, changes to agency arrangements and additional professional boundaries training.

Whilst complaint volumes have increased by 64%, there is no evidence that this reflects declining service standards. The increase may indicate greater resident confidence in using the complaints process following improved promotion, easier reporting, revised policy documentation and staff training.

Outcomes

Outcome	Number
Upheld	19
Partially Upheld	5
Not upheld	6
Withdrawn	6
Total	36

Complaint stages:

All complaints were successfully resolved at stage 1, resulting in none being escalated to stage 2.

No complaints were escalated to the Housing Ombudsman.

Complaints upheld:

Of the complaints upheld 8 were regarding staff conduct, three of which were in relation to agency staff members and 7 were about the length of time it took for repairs to be carried out.

Non-compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Code

Between 1st April 2025 and 31st March 2026 there have been 5 incidents where non-compliance with the code by the Ombudsman has occurred. This was due to the length of time it took complaints to be investigated and responded to. In all cases, complainants were kept informed and were satisfied with the reason for the delay.

YMCA Lincolnshire has not received any annual reports or publications about our performance from the Ombudsman during the previous 12 months.

Service Improvement

- Following repeated complaints relating to agency staff conduct, our agency provider was changed to improve consistency of service delivery.
- Staff have received additional guidance on checking handover documentation to improve communication between shifts.
- Professional boundaries discussions are now included as part of day 1 induction for new staff

- GDPR refresher training for all staff now takes place annually.

Internal Audit Update

Campbell Tickell identified nine recommendations relating to complaints handling. All recommendations have now been fully implemented, including the introduction of a standalone Housing Complaints Policy, improvements to website accessibility, revised complaint definitions and enhanced reporting arrangements. Completion of these actions has strengthened YMCA Lincolnshire's compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code and improved accessibility of the complaints process for residents.

Risks

Current complaint volumes relating to staff conduct will continue to be monitored to ensure learning is embedded and agency staffing arrangements remain effective.

Repair delays remain the second highest complaint category and will continue to be monitored throughout the next financial year. An additional member of the repairs team has been recruited to reduce repair waiting times and improve response performance.

Board Reassurance

The purpose of this report is to provide assurance to the Tackling Homelessness Committee that:

- All complaints were investigated in accordance with the Complaint Handling Code
- All complaints were accepted for investigation.
- No complaints progressed beyond Stage 1.
- No findings of maladministration or Complaint Handling Code non-compliance were issued by the Housing Ombudsman.
- Learning from complaints has been implemented and monitored.
- Learning arising from complaints is monitored and has informed service improvements during the reporting period.

Conclusion

Complaint volumes increased during the reporting period, which is considered to reflect improved accessibility and awareness of the complaints process rather than declining service standards. All complaints were investigated in accordance with the Complaint Handling Code, no cases progressed beyond Stage 1 and there were no findings of non-compliance by the Housing Ombudsman.

Learning from complaints has informed service improvements and all recommendations arising from the internal audit have been implemented. The report therefore provides assurance that YMCA Lincolnshire has effective complaints handling arrangements in place and continues to meet its statutory obligations.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

1. Note the annual complaints performance.
2. Consider whether the report provides assurance of compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.
3. Recommend approval of the updated Resident Complaint and Feedback Policy.
4. Recommend approval of the annual self-assessment and publication on the YMCA Lincolnshire website.
5. Provide any further challenge or direction regarding complaints performance.