



Falcon Rural Housing Limited

Board of Directors Comments on the Housing Ombudsman Service Complaints Handling Code and the Association's Annual Complaints Performance Report 2024/25.

The Board of Directors of Falcon Rural Housing Limited ("FRH") supports the aims of the Housing Ombudsman Service ("HOS") in seeking to establish a robust framework for consistency and transparency in complaint handling across the sector.

It also supports, in principle, the reporting requirements put in place by the HOS to monitor landlords' compliance with the Code, in conjunction with its powers to intervene where it considers a housing association is failing to comply.

However, the Board wants to make the HOS aware that the prescribed wording in the Complaints Code which enables tenants to refer their complaints to the HOS at any time during the Complaints process has, from our tenants' experience, been found to be misleading and incorrect. The Board would suggest that the HOS amends its wording to make it clearer to the tenant when the HOS will actually step in and help them with their complaint.

The Board remains concerned that the Code does not take into consideration the operational burdens these reporting requirements place on smaller housing associations, whose resources of scale and structure cannot match those of the larger RPs. Small housing associations such as FRH will face significant demands upon staffing and time management to achieve compliance, which may prove operationally and financially unviable.

As requested in the Board's 2023/24 report, it is still hoped that the HOS will soon recognise that one size does not fit all and adjust the Code requirements accordingly, so that complaints data and reporting thereof is not only more meaningful and useful to small landlords, but ultimately serves to benefit tenants, as intended.

FRH acknowledges the requirement within the Code not only to facilitate tenant complaints, but to record detailed data about every stage one and stage two complaint made, and to publish annual information about the complaints received.

During the year 2024/25, FRH received and accepted 6 formal complaints, all of which were resolved at stage 1.

No complaints were referred to the Housing Ombudsman and there were no reports, findings or publications from the Ombudsman.

Having reviewed its Complaints Annual Report for the year 2024/25, the Association's Board has learned lessons from the small number of complaints received and has published these on its website, as required by the HOS.