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|  | <p><b>First Wave Housing Limited</b></p> <p><b>Board Meeting</b></p> <p>1 October 2026</p> |
| <p><b>FWH Annual Complaints Report 2025/2026</b></p>                              |                                                                                            |

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| <b>No. of Appendices:</b>                                                   | Appendix 1- FWH Self- Assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code |
| <b>Background Papers:</b>                                                   | N/A                                                                                      |
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## 1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This annual report sets out First Wave Housing (FWH) complaints performance for the period 7 April 2025 to 5 April 2026.

## 2.0 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 The Board are asked to note the annual complaints report and provide feedback.

## 3.0 Detail

- 3.1 FWH received six formal complaints during the reporting period, an increase of five compared to the previous year. The majority of complaints were resolved within the prescribed timescales, although a small number exceeded the required response timeframe.
- 3.2 Under the current complaints policy, an acknowledgement should be provided within 5 working days and a response within 10 working days.
- 3.3 Complaint 1- Broken lift

3.3.1 A resident submitted a complaint about a communal lift that was out of service for an extended period.

3.3.2 The complaint was resolved following an investigation, which confirmed that the lift was experiencing an intermittent fault that caused it to stop working and that Brent could not prevent these failures from occurring.

#### 3.4 Complaint 2- Window repairs and Pest Control issues

3.4.1 This complaint was referred by the customer service team on behalf of the resident, who had raised concerns about outstanding proofing work following pest control visits and a window repair that had not been completed promptly.

3.4.2 The complaint response provided a detailed explanation of the reasons for the delay and the remedial action taken. Compensation was awarded in recognition of the impact on the resident.

3.4.3 It should be noted that the complaint response was sent to the previous tenant of the property and the case was subsequently closed. It was therefore not possible to confirm that the correct tenant received the response or that the complaint had been satisfactorily resolved.

#### 3.5 Complaint 3- Ongoing leak in the property

3.5.1 The complaint arose from the resident's dissatisfaction with the handling of a leak within their property. The resident raised concerns about numerous missed Priority 1 (P1) appointments, in addition to failures to attend scheduled appointments, which resulted in the resident taking unnecessary time off work.

3.5.2 The complaint response provided a comprehensive chronology of events, acknowledged the service failures identified and outlined the action taken. Compensation was awarded for the inconvenience caused. The resident acknowledged the response but remained dissatisfied with the outcome and sought legal advice. The complaint has since been closed, although there remains a possibility that the matter could progress to a disrepair claim.

#### 3.6 Complaint 4- Damp and mould issues

3.6.1 The complaint arose from the resident's dissatisfaction with the lack of repair action following a surveyor inspection of damp and mould issues within the property.

3.6.2 The response was delayed by more than two months due to administrative backlogs, significantly exceeding the target timescale. Despite the delay, the response was thorough and addressed all the resident's points. The resident did not escalate the complaint to stage two.

#### 3.7 Complaint 5- Unresolved leak from the property above

- 3.7.1 The resident complained about delays in completing remedial works following a leak from the property above, which they felt had significantly affected their household's day-to-day living.
- 3.7.2 A review of this case confirmed that the necessary remedial work had been completed prior to the response being issued. However, it was acknowledged that the delays experienced were avoidable, and this was highlighted by the case handler in response to the complaint. The resident was awarded compensation.

### 3.8 Complaint 6- Anti-Social Behaviour

- 3.8.1 The resident raised several concerns about a neighbour and the impact this was having on how they lived in their property.
- 3.8.2 To help resolve the matter, mediation was offered to the resident, with the aim of achieving a positive outcome for all parties. The patch manager also visited to confirm that the resident was satisfied with the proposed action and followed up on additional repair issues in the property that were unrelated to the complaint.

### 3.9 **Analysis of complaints**

- 3.9.1 Analysis of the complaints indicates an increase in cases relating to repairs services. FWH officers noted that new repairs contractors were mobilised during the last financial year, which may have contributed to this increase.
- 3.9.2 Residents were actively engaged during the procurement process for the new repairs contractors and were advised that their feedback would play an important role in monitoring contractor performance during the early stages of the contract.
- 3.9.3 The review identified some variation in quality between individual case handlers. However, all but one response was clear, concise and demonstrated an appropriate level of accountability. Overall, FWH officers are satisfied with the standard of the responses provided.
- 3.9.4 As a landlord, FWH is committed to ensuring residents' voices are heard and concerns are addressed appropriately. Where issues arise that are outside of FWH's control, these should be communicated in a way that acknowledges the resident's experience, demonstrates empathy and clearly explains our position. One complaint response reviewed lacked sufficient empathy. This does not reflect the standards FWH looks to uphold.

### 3.10 **Area of improvement**

- 3.10.1 Complaints are managed by the relevant service areas in accordance with the Service Level Agreement (SLA) in place with FWH. Whilst FWH is not directly responsible for complaints handling, the review of cases identified that some complaints were responded to outside of the target timescales due to resourcing pressures. To address this, FWH is currently recruiting a Business

Support Officer who will triage FWH complaints. This is intended to ensure all complaints are allocated to the correct case handler promptly and progress is monitored effectively.

3.10.2 The review highlighted the importance of verifying tenant records before complaint responses are issued.

3.10.3 Board members have requested complaint reviews to be presented at Board meetings more frequently to have greater oversight of complaint trends, performance and lessons learned.

3.10.4 FWH officers will monitor repairs-related complaints to develop a better understanding of residents' experiences and contractor performance. Any concerns will be reported to the Head of Service for Housing Management Property so that appropriate follow-up action is taken and service improvements are implemented.

#### **4.0 Self- Assessment Against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code**

4.1 The Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code became statutory on 1 April 2024, establishing best practices for managing complaints, including clear expectations for:

- Stages of the complaints process
- Timescales for responses
- Information required in responses

4.2 FWH conducted its annual self-assessment in September 2026 and did not identify any areas of non-compliance within its policies.

#### **5.0 Changes to Regulatory Reporting**

5.1 FWH officers have recently been advised by Legal Services that, for regulatory reporting purposes, FWH should be treated as a subsidiary of the Council rather than as a standalone company.

5.2 This is a new interpretation, and further clarification is needed on the practical implications. Subject to confirmation, responsibility for collating and submitting FWH complaints data would instead sit with the Council.

#### **6.0 Conclusion**

6.1 FWH takes complaints handling seriously and is satisfied that complaints are currently being managed effectively. However, the review identified opportunities to strengthen handling processes and improve the consistency of responses provided to residents.

6.2 The FWH complaints policy was redrafted in 2024 after areas of non-compliance were identified in the previous policy. FWH is now confident that

the updated policy fully complies with the Complaint Handling Code and aligns with the Council's wider policy.

- 6.3 FWH officers will keep the Board informed of any changes to regulatory reporting requirements as further guidance becomes available. In the meantime, FWH will continue to carry out annual self-assessments against the Complaints Handling Code and monitor any developments in regulatory and legislative requirements to ensure ongoing compliance.