Performance & Service Improvement Report

31 March 2025

1. Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to provide the new annual Ombudsman Statutory Code Performance and Service Improvement Report for review and response.
This report provides an update on SidLife's complaint handling performance over the last financial year and highlights the changes we have made as a result of the learnings from complaints.
SidLife is a charity in the heart of our community providing safe living for older people. Monitoring and reviewing complaints help us do this by providing a way of learning and giving us an opportunity to put things right in a fair and reasonable way for our residents.

Complaint Handling Code 2024
The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 (the Act) empowered the Housing Ombudsman to issue a code of practice about the procedures members of the scheme should have in place for considering complaints. It also placed a duty on the Housing Ombudsman to monitor compliance with a code of practice that it has issued.

The Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code became statutory on 1st April 2024 meaning that landlords are obliged by law to follow its requirements. The Code aims to achieve best practice in complaint handling and ultimately to provide a better service to residents.

To monitor landlord compliance, the Housing Ombudsman require landlords to complete a self-assessment against the code standards with part of the assessment requiring evidence of an annual Performance and Service Improvement Report.

This report will cover:
- our self-assessment against that code
- our complaint handling performance- an overview of the complaints we have received
- a summary of the complaints we have not accepted and the reasons behind this
- an overview of any determinations we have received from the HO
- some of the changes we are implementing to improve our complaints process
- the learnings we have embedded from complaints over the past year.

2. Annual Self-Assessment against the code

Our self-assessment against the code is provided (Appendix A). SidLife is fully compliant with the requirements of the statutory code.

3. Complaint Handling Performance - Service Improvements

We have not received any complaints during the past year reporting period, and there were no complaints received that we have not accepted.

We have completed our Tenant Satisfaction Survey (March 2025) based on the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM's), introduced as part of the Social Housing Regulation Act. The TSM were introduced to make sure that all social landlords are looking after homes and neighbourhoods, keeping people safe, effectively handling complaints, and treating customers with fairness and respect. The Regulator of Social Housing uses the measures to see how well social housing providers, which includes SidLife, are doing at providing good quality homes and services.

There are 22 tenant satisfaction measures that all social housing providers must report on. Twelve of these were collected through a satisfaction survey (we adopted a census

approach due to SidLife being only a small provider) and the remaining 10 are generated from management information (for full details please refer to SidLife Tenant Satisfaction Measures Report, March 2025)

The principles set out in the TSM Survey and Technical Requirements guidelines and focuses on the key areas below:

- Overall satisfaction
- Keeping properties in good order
- Maintaining building safety
- Safety checks
- Respectful and helpful engagement
- Effective handling of complaints
- Responsible neighbourhood management

31 surveys were completed (31 out of 32 units, 1 vacancy) all 12 TSM scored 96-100%

We also asked for our Residents to provide any overall feedback and thoughts, so that we could use for any learnings and to improve any services if possible. We had 2 suggestions in the feedback specifically that we are going to see if we can use in future when we look at refurbishment and how we can adapt and enhance our homes to better assist our residents (regarding ramps and lighting).

SidLife gets regular feedback from residents through various channels, giving us an opportunity to listen, learn and where appropriate act and improve our services . These include daily resident walk-rounds, Resident meetings; Informal (monthly) and Formal (bi-annual with Board), through Support Plans (individual meetings with residents) and suggestion boxes. As a landlord we have worked hard to create an open culture, with transparency and communication, so residents are encouraged to raise any concerns and feedback at earliest opportunity with a staff member so a resolution can be investigated before reaching complaint level.

4. Learning from Complaints and Service Improvements

One of the key learnings, which was identified whilst running the TSM survey was that it would be good to implement a 'Repair Satisfaction Feedback form' following any significant repairs carried out (where deemed appropriate). This give us the opportunity to understand if the repair was carried out as expected, measure success and help to feed in to our end of year analysis of all repairs.

In addition to SidLife updating all our key policies last year, we have rolled out the 'SidLife Respect Agreement'. Existing residents were given the opportunity to sign up to the SidLife Respect Agreement if they wished, and all new residents are now asked to sign up when they move into one of SidLife houses. The agreement is intended to demonstrate how SidLife is committed to ensuring everyone living, working or visiting our houses are treated with respect, kindness and dignity. The agreement sets out a guide for the type of conduct that is expected of all residents and the consequences of falling short of these expectations (and potential impact on Tenancy).

A significant number of improvements were implemented (last year) to improve our complaints handling and we have worked very hard to fully embed a resolution approach to complaints (or where concerns are raised before they reach compliant level), which focus on putting things right for the resident (R&M Log) and providing organisational learnings in line with the Housing Ombudsman principles of acting fairly, putting things right and learning

from outcomes. The impact of this approach is reflected in the lack of complaints received that reach complaint level. SidLife operate a very open channel for communication and feedback on a one to one basis, which means that complaints can be resolved at the earliest opportunity before the need to escalate.

5. Service Improvement plan 2025-2026

This year we will continue to focus on enhancing the improvements we started over the past year, to help us deliver safe and secure houses and enhanced communities.

In particular, we will focus on:

- Accurate and efficient monitoring of our R&M log, as the majority of complaints are categorised as service requests. In this way we can ensure that we consistently achieve timescales set with each type of categorised service request. Each year, we conduct a statistical analysis and report findings to residents, for transparency, to try and enhance resident satisfaction and engagement and support our focus on resolution before issues become complaints.
- Embedding our new governance structure (following the appointment of a MRC) for complaints to ensure residents, staff and the Board are all aware of our complaint process, and the MRC working with the Chief Operating Officer is able to scrutinise and assess our actions and complaint handling culture.
- We will strive to publish information about complaints and our wider engagement more regularly during the year to show how we are performing against the timescales set and, importantly, how we are listening to and learning from the complaints we receive.

6. Housing Ombudsman determinations (Landlord Performance Report)

This is our second completed annual Performance and Service Improvement Report, since the legislation and code requirements came into force in 2024. We have not received any determinations through the Landlord Performance Report from the Housing Ombudsman for the year 2023/2024 or to date.

7. Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC) and MRC Response

The Complaint Handling Code requires landlords to have a Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC) on their governing body to provide assurance to the governing body on the effectiveness of its complaints system, including challenging the data and information provided to the Board or equivalent body. The role of the MRC is to champion a positive complaint handling culture and build effective relationships with complaints teams, residents, its audit and risk committees as well wider teams and the Housing Ombudsman Service.

The MRC for SidLife is Val Fursey - Vice Chair

<u>MRC Response</u>

As Vice chair of the Board of Trustees, I am aware how hard we all work to deliver great services to meet our residents' expectations. Should we fail on any level to meet those expectations, our aim is to rectify them through an accessible, fair and effective complaints handling service.

Learning from complaints is an essential part of highlighting and targeting areas of improvement. I am confident SidLife has a positive complaint handling service and through regular complaints performance information provided to the Board, I am assured on the

effectiveness of our complaints system. We are continuously improving this by learning from complaints and feedback effectively.
I am pleased to approve our updated self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman complaint handling code and am confident we have a good, code compliant complaints handling service.

Val Fursey
Vice Chair SidLife Limited