

Complaints Advisory Panel Meeting Minutes

Date: 9th June 2026

Meeting: Complaints Advisory Panel

Attendees: Ged (Chair), Christine, Emma, Brian, Anne-Marie

Staff: Lauren (Customer Engagement), Natalie Connolly (Customer Feedback Manager)

1. Introductions

Attendees introduced themselves at the start of the meeting.

2. Case Selection Discussion

The panel members why they had selected this complaint for review.

- The panel stated that the case was chosen because there were a number of issues involved.
- Some of the panel members discussed selected the case because it involved an injury to the customer and the panel had not previously reviewed a complaint of this nature.

3. Initial Panel Observations

The chair shared the panel's initial considerations:

- Whether the Neighbourhood Housing Officer (NHO) acted appropriately.
- Lack of photographic evidence.
- Significant delay between the alleged incident and it being reported.
- Lack of communication from Stockport Homes Group (SHG).

4. Complaint Handling and Information Gathering

The panel discussed the quality and availability of information gathered during the complaint investigation.

Key Points Raised

- The queried the customer's assertion that they had been forced to move into the property. Lauren and Natalie provided contextual information regarding allocations and property sign-up processes.
- The panel also raised questions regarding the property's heating system.

Panel Feedback

- The panel felt current complaint questions are too vague and do not encourage customers to provide sufficient detail.
- Greater efforts should be made to obtain evidence at an earlier stage of the complaint, including photographic evidence.
- The panel asked whether customers could upload photographs directly when submitting complaints.

- It was noted that it was unclear when customer photographs had been taken and suggested including a statement such as:
 - *"Image submitted by customer on [date]."*
- It was suggested separate forms for complaints and compliments, as the information required differs significantly.

5. Repairs and Property Condition

The panel discussed concerns regarding the repair history and property condition.

Points Raised

- Why defects, such as the radiator issue, were not identified and reported during the property handover process.
- The complaint contained a significant amount of hearsay from both parties.
- There were multiple instances of no access and unanswered telephone calls.
- The panel noted that many call attempts appeared to take place during school hours.
- Greater clarity should be provided when recording reasons for no access appointments.

Key Sign-Up Process

The panel discussed whether there should be a checklist completed during key sign-up to identify and document issues such as defective radiators before tenants move in.

6. Injury/Burns Element of Complaint

The panel discussed the customer's allegations relating to burns.

Feedback

- SHG is unable to investigate personal injury claims and appropriately signposts customers to seek independent legal advice.
- The panel noted that solicitors can be costly and suggested that Citizens Advice details should also be provided as an alternative source of support and guidance.

7. Complaint Response Language

The panel reviewed the language used within the complaint response.

Observations

- Technical and corporate terminology used when explaining the Housing Ombudsman's medical evidence requirements could be difficult for customers to understand.
- The panel recommended including simpler explanations alongside references to the Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.
- On page four of the response, the panel felt the wording relating to customer requirements and disabilities should be more accessible and customer-friendly.

8. Housing Support Services

Action

Lauren Burley / Natalie to follow up with Housing Support regarding a list of available support services and resources provided to customers.

9. Housing Officer Conduct

The panel discussed whether the Housing Officer acted appropriately during the handling of the issues raised.

Panel Discussion

- The panel acknowledged that the matter largely relied on differing accounts from the customer and staff.
- Members felt the Housing Officer appeared to have undertaken actions expected within their role.
- However, the panel felt there was a perception that conclusions may have been reached before sufficient evidence was obtained.
- The panel noted this may have contributed to customer frustration and a breakdown in the working relationship.

Neighbour Involvement

The panel questioned whether neighbours should have been approached regarding the customer's concerns.

Concerns included:

- The relevance of neighbour evidence to the reported incident.
- Whether it was appropriate to include neighbour comments within the complaint response.
- The neighbour's reported statement regarding the customer standing on a radiator was viewed as hearsay.
- The panel felt reference to neighbour conversations appeared defensive and lacked sufficient evidential value.
- Members considered the inclusion of this information inappropriate.

10. Record Keeping

The panel discussed concerns around informal conversations and record keeping.

Questions Raised

- Should verbal or informal conversations be relied upon when there is no formal record?
- How are annual tenancy visits monitored and evidenced?
- Should records be retained where conversations may later become relevant to complaint investigations?

11. Complaint Timeline Review

The panel spent time reviewing:

- Repair dates.
- Complaint dates.
- Attendance records.
- Call-out history.

The panel noted:

- Multiple repair issues had been reported.
- The customer had not provided photographs despite requests for evidence.
- The customer had not appealed the recharge decision.
- There were several instances throughout the complaint where findings could not be conclusively evidenced, leading to references to possibilities rather than confirmed facts.

Complaint Handling Observation

Natalie highlighted to the panel that one aspect of the complaint relating to the customer's bed and carpets had not been addressed within the complaint response by the Feedback Officer.

Actions

Action	Owner
List of Services and support available to customers from Housing Support.	Housing Support/Customer Feedback
Review complaint forms, more specific information could be requested at the point of submission, photos, etc.	Customer Feedback
Consider separate forms for a compliment and complaint.	Customer Feedback
Review complaint response wording to ensure 'plain English' explanations accompany Ombudsman references and technical language.	Customer Feedback
Consider including citizen advice signpost where personal injury matters are raised.	Customer Feedback