

Meeting: [CAD, O&S, Cabinet](#) **Date:** 5th, 11th [17th February 2026](#)

Wards affected: [All wards](#)

Report Title: [Housing Ombudsman Self-Assessment for Complaint handling](#)

When does the decision need to be implemented? [February 2026](#)

Cabinet Member Contact Details: Councillor Alan Tyerman, Cabinet Member for Housing and Finance, alan.tyerman@torbay.gov.uk

Director Contact Details: David Carter, Director of Regeneration, david.carter@torbay.gov.uk

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report seeks approval and comments from Overview & Scrutiny and Cabinet Members regarding complaint handling for their social housing stock in line with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.
- 1.2 From 1st April 2024 the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code became statutory. Landlords are obliged by law to follow its requirements. There will be a legal duty placed on the Ombudsman to monitor compliance with the Code.

2. Reason for Proposal and its benefits

- 2.1 The proposal in this report is to ensure that we achieve best practice in complaint handling and ultimately provide a better service to tenants.
- 2.2 The reasons for the proposal and the need for the Members to provide comments is to demonstrate to the Housing Ombudsman that we are operating our Complaints Handling in line with their Code.

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

1. That the Overview & Scrutiny Committee note the content of the report and make any recommendation to Cabinet.
2. That the Overview & Scrutiny Committee provide comments to Cabinet to consider for its response as the Governing Body, in relation to the Self-Assessment Report 2025 (Appendix 1), which will be published on the Council's website as part of the new statutory requirement and submitted to the Housing Ombudsman.
3. Members responses demonstrate that they have had sight of the annual complaint report together with the self-assessment. That Members are assured that the self-assessment reflects the landlord's complaint handling practice.
4. That this report is added as an agenda item going forward for Cabinet every August.

4. Appendices

Appendix 1: Self-assessment 2025

Appendix 2: Complaints Policy

5. Background Documents

[Guidance on annual submissions | Housing Ombudsman Service](#)

Supporting Information

1. Introduction

1.1 No Complaints have been received since Torbay Council held their own housing stock, 1st December 2024 to date are as follows:

| Complaint level | 2024/2025 |
|------------------------|------------------|
| Initial complaint | 0 |
| Stage 1 complaint | 0 |
| Stage 2 complaint | 0 |

2. Options under consideration

2.1 Not applicable

3. Financial Opportunities and Implications

3.1 Not applicable

4. Legal Implications

4.1 Not applicable

5. Engagement and Consultation

5.1 Not applicable

6. Procurement Implications

6.1 Not applicable

7. Protecting our naturally inspiring Bay and tackling Climate Change

7.1 Not applicable

8. Associated Risks

8.1 Not applicable

9. Equality Impact Assessment

| Protected characteristics under the Equality Act and groups with increased vulnerability | Data and insight | Equality considerations (including any adverse impacts) | Mitigation activities | Responsible department and timeframe for implementing mitigation activities |
|--|--|--|---|---|
| Age | <p>18 per cent of Torbay residents are under 18 years old.</p> <p>55 per cent of Torbay residents are aged between 18 to 64 years old.</p> <p>27 per cent of Torbay residents are aged 65 and older.</p> | <p>Torbay Council should ensure that the methods of submitting complaints remain accessible by enabling customers to report by various methods face to face, in writing or via Torbay Council's website. This is particularly relevant to ensure we capture concerns or complaints from harder to reach demographic groups (which often includes younger people), who tend to reach for their device rather than a pen and paper when they are unhappy with a service.</p> <p>Torbay Council should clearly advise that complaints are received via email, in person, in writing and over the telephone, to ensure they capture the needs of our older or more technology restricted demographic of customers.</p> | <p>Sometimes Torbay Council's complainant may be an older person, or someone with limited ability (due to health issues e.g., dementia).</p> <p>Torbay Council need to ensure that correct support is put in place and that referral mechanisms are available to the relevant agencies, and when we are aware of health issues or limited capability in a household, that we have support in place even before a customer may need to complain.</p> | <p>Regeneration</p> <p>Adult Services</p> <p>Children's Services</p> |

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| Carers | At the time of the 2021 census there were 14,900 unpaid carers in Torbay. 5,185 of these provided 50 hours or more of care. | There is no differential impact anticipated. | Not Applicable | Not Applicable |
| Disability | In the 2021 Census, 23.8% of Torbay residents answered that their day-to-day activities were limited a little or a lot by a physical or mental health condition or illness. | <p>Some customers with learning difficulties, hearing or sight impairments or mental health issues may not understand how policies and procedures work. Torbay Council must ensure support is offered in all aspects of tenancy support, and all aspects of raising a formal complaint should the need arise.</p> <p>Torbay Council will work with Support Workers or appointed persons on behalf of the complainant if applicable. This ensures accessibility of the service as well as making any other reasonable adjustments where required (such as letters in alternate formats or specified methods of contact).</p> | <p>Regularly monitor customers contact preferences and update the case management system to this effect.</p> <p>Ensure appointed Support Workers or appointed persons remain relevant/updated.</p> <p>Ensure Torbay Council staff are up to date with relevant mental health training.</p> | <p>Regeneration</p> <p>Adult Services</p> <p>Children's Services</p> |
| Gender reassignment | In the 2021 Census, 0.4% of Torbay's community answered that their gender identity was not the same as their sex registered at birth. This proportion is similar to the Southwest and is lower than England. | There is no differential impact anticipated. | Not Applicable | |

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| Marriage and civil partnership | Of those Torbay residents aged 16 and over at the time of 2021 Census, 44.2% of people were married or in a registered civil partnership. | There is no differential impact anticipated. | Not Applicable | |
| Pregnancy and maternity | Over the period 2010 to 2021, the rate of live births (as a proportion of females aged 15 to 44) has been slightly but significantly higher in Torbay (average of 63.7 per 1,000) than England (60.2) and the South West (58.4). There has been a notable fall in the numbers of live births since the middle of the last decade across all geographical areas. | There is no differential impact anticipated. | Not Applicable | |
| Race | In the 2021 Census, 96.1% of Torbay residents described their ethnicity as white. This is a higher proportion than the South West and England. Black, Asian and minority ethnic individuals are more likely to live in areas of Torbay classified as being amongst the 20% most deprived areas in England. | Although it is expected there would be little or no impact (Torbay Council would be aware of any language barriers upon the point of a tenancy being offered), it should be advised that assistance by way of an interpreter can be organised by prior arrangement. | <p>Torbay Council will ensure any language barriers which could impact communication are noted on the case management software upon execution of the tenancy.</p> <p>Torbay Council will review complaints from persons who are not housing customers on a case by case basis.</p> | |

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| | | | <p>Torbay Council must ensure that provisions are in place before the landlord/tenant relationship is formally executed, and that this provision is ongoing.</p> <p>The housing management team should also ensure relevant departments, namely Revenues, are aware of any language barriers for the provision of invoicing/revenue collection.</p> | |
| Religion and belief | 64.8% of Torbay residents who stated that they have a religion in the 2021 census. | There is no differential impact anticipated. | Not Applicable | |
| Sex | 51.3% of Torbay's population are female and 48.7% are male | There is no differential impact anticipated. | Not Applicable | |
| Sexual orientation | In the 2021 Census, 3.4% of those in Torbay aged over 16 identified their sexuality as either Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or, used another term to describe their sexual orientation. | There is no differential impact anticipated. | Not Applicable | |

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| Armed Forces Community | In 2021, 3.8% of residents in England reported that they had previously served in the UK armed forces. In Torbay, 5.9 per cent of the population have previously served in the UK armed forces. | There is no differential impact anticipated. | Not Applicable | |
| Additional considerations | | | | |
| Socio-economic impacts (Including impacts on child poverty and deprivation) | | There is no differential impact anticipated. | Not Applicable | |
| Public Health impacts (Including impacts on the general health of the population of Torbay) | | There is no differential impact anticipated. | Not Applicable | |
| Human Rights impacts | | There is no differential impact anticipated. | Not Applicable | |
| Child Friendly | Torbay Council is a Child Friendly Council and all staff and Councillors are Corporate Parents and have a responsibility towards cared for and care experienced children and young people. | There is no differential impact anticipated. | Not Applicable | |

Member's comments:

It was noted that since holding Social Housing stock that there have been no complaints received. Compliance is not optional and the self-assessment confirm that we meet the code requirements. This reinforces that complaints are not a failure but an opportunity to learn, improve and put things right.