

Richmond Housing Partnership (RHP)

Complaints Scrutiny Report

July 2026





1. Background

Tpas have been working with Richmond Housing Partnership (RHP) to support them to strengthen their approach to tenant scrutiny. This report gives an overview of a pilot scrutiny programme held in July 2026.

2. What we chose to scrutinise

We met with the existing Customer Focus Group (which includes tenants and leaseholders), to choose a topic based on RHP's most recent data. We looked at:

- **Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)** – these are 12 'perception measures' that every landlord in England must measure and report on. They give landlords an understanding of how satisfied tenants are with their landlord and they are submitted to the Regulator for Social Housing every year.
- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)** – these are things landlords measure internally that help them see how well they are doing against their own targets. Lots of landlords measure similar things but KPIs are more individual to a landlord than the TSMs, which are used to compare all landlords across the country.
- **Complaints Data** – this measures the number of complaints RHP have received in the last year and includes how many complaints were escalated to stage 2 and to the Housing Ombudsman. It also includes how many cases were responded to in time, and what sorts of things the complaints were about.

The Customer Focus Group considered a range of services based on the data they saw. They chose to focus on Complaints for the first scrutiny pilot because:

- Tenant satisfaction with how RHP handles complaints was only 26.9%. This was the lowest performing TSM and was 20% lower than the top performing landlords.
- 36% of Stage 1 cases were escalated to Stage 2. This is a high percentage and reflects the number of tenants that weren't satisfied with RHP's response to their initial complaint.
- There were 62 cases that had been referred to the Housing Ombudsman which is also a high number for the size of RHP.
- Several members of the Customer Focus Group have also made a formal complaint in recent years and felt if their experience was the same as other tenants, there was more RHP could be doing to improve the service.

3. What we did

Once the topic was chosen, the Customer Focus Group created a list of questions they wanted to try to answer. The main question they wanted to answer was:

How do we improve the delivery of the complaints service to increase customer satisfaction with RHP's complaint handling?

The group also wanted to answer as many of these sub questions as they could:

1. How do RHP resolve more complaints at Stage 1?
2. How do we make sure investigations are thorough?
3. How do we improve the quality of the written responses?



4. How do we effectively measure actual “lessons learnt” and improve all services from them (such as lack of communication and the quality of sub-contractor works)?
5. How do we make sure communication is timely, clear and consistent in complaints?
6. How do we make sure complaint handlers speak to the complainant sooner to get their experience of the issue?
7. How do we make sure actions to fix issues are completed to a good standard?

In order to start answering these questions we needed to speak to the people who had made a formal complaint in the last 6 to 12 months, to understand their experience better. We invited recent complainants to join an online focus group, and we offered them £30 each in Amazon vouchers for giving up their time. During the focus group we asked about their experience of:

- How confident they were that their complaint had been investigated thoroughly and how well their experience had been gathered at the beginning.
- How they would describe the quality of their formal complaint response, including the language and tone, and whether they felt it covered all the points they’d raised.
- Their experience of communication during the life of their complaint.
- How they would describe the quality of any actions taken to resolve their case or fix something.
- What made them escalate to stage 2, if they wanted to escalate but didn’t, why was that; or if they were happy with their stage 1 response, what was it that made it good.

We signed 12 tenants and leaseholders up to the focus group (so everyone would have the opportunity to speak). 6 tenants joined the call on the day, but their experiences were all very similar which means we didn’t have any recommendations made that contradicted each other.

Robert Dobbs, Director of Operations and Nathan Dimmick, Complaints Manager also came to the focus group and heard firsthand the feedback and experiences from tenants. Every tenant contributed honestly and openly to the discussion and shared how they had been made to feel by their experience.

4. What we found

The table below summarises the feedback tenants gave us, and the recommendations made to improve the service and increase satisfaction.

What tenants said	What RHP will do	What difference it should make
<i>‘Look at all my correspondence before you reply, I’ve told you everything. It would make it easier if someone just came out and looked. I’m told something’s been removed [according to the system] and I look out my door and can see it’s still there!’</i>	Make sure all staff understand the importance of good record keeping and that systems are in place for information and reports to be stored so staff can access them easily.	Repairs surveys, inspection reports and contact notes will be visible to all relevant staff, so we know what’s been recommended, what actions we need to take, and what we’ve previously agreed with you. This will make it easier to investigate your complaints and for staff to be able to answer your questions when you contact us. Increase in satisfaction over time.



<i>'my letter had the wrong name and address on, simple spelling mistakes, the wrong information. I felt they didn't care, it felt rushed like they'd overtyped someone else's letter'</i> <i>'I had the wrong reference number, that wasn't my case number'</i>	Quality check 20% of complaint responses before they are sent to make sure: • Contact details and case reference numbers are correct • All points of the complaint have been addressed • The language is clear and the tone is reassuring and empathetic	To leave tenants and leaseholders feeling that they have been listened to, investigations have been fair, and all points have been answered. To have responses that are clear and show that care has been taken to put things right. Increase in satisfaction Reduction in escalations to Stage 2
<i>'You have to chase constantly. People are supposed to call you back and they don't. You feel like you're being really demanding but you just want to know what's happening. It's really frustrating'</i>	Emphasise the importance of all staff calling tenants back when requested, and measure this is happening.	Tenants won't have to feel the need to chase RHP for updates and progress. People will feel more cared about and overtime trust in RHP will increase across all services.
<i>'I got a call at 6.30 one evening completely out of the blue. I wasn't expecting it. It's like they think you're not busy'</i>	If RHP make complaints calls to you outside of normal office hours, they'll agree this with you first.	Improved communication by being flexible around tenants' commitments. Tenants' time is respected.
<i>'I had to chase for things to be done and I felt blamed like I was being demanding. It took 4 to 5 months and only got sorted when I went into the office and said I wasn't leaving until I spoke to someone'</i> <i>'Things only started happening what I got my MP involved'</i>	Listen better to tenants earlier on and be clearer about actions to be taken. Where actions aren't going to be taken, reasons will be given for this.	More clarity with issues being resolved sooner wherever possible. Tenants feel listened to and don't have to 'push' for reasonable requests to be carried out by escalating to stage 2 or having to ask their councillor or MP to act on their behalf. Better Communication Increased satisfaction.
<i>'I wasn't happy with my stage 1 response but I chose not to escalate in case it affected my mum's tenancy. Are we on a blacklist?'</i> <i>'I feel I'm treated differently because I complain'</i>	Reassure tenants that RHP are happy for you to make a complaint or escalate a case where you're not satisfied with something.	Tenants won't fear they will be discriminated against for making a complaint.



50% of the tenants in the focus group said <i>'I got a letter at the end of the day my response was due to say they were extending it. Why can't you tell me that sooner? I've been waiting long enough and now it's going to take even longer. It's unacceptable'</i>	Make sure any need for extensions is identified sooner and let tenants know if an extension is needed before the due date of their response.	Tenants are not left feeling RHP don't care or haven't prioritised their complaint case. All staff will understand the importance of prioritising complaint cases. Better communication.
<i>'The first person I spoke to about my complaint was brilliant, I felt they had a good understanding of my case, but they were leaving. The second person was amazing, but they were due to leave too, like the first'</i>	Wherever possible, RHP will make sure the first person you speak to in the complaints team will manage your case and write your response. When this isn't possible RHP will tell you that, making sure your final complaint investigator has all the information they need.	Increased confidence that experiences have been heard and understood first hand. Less frustration that your complaint gets passed on to different people. Better communication.
<i>'I asked for someone new [to my case] and experienced, then it got sorted out.'</i>	RHP will make sure all staff have complaints training so everyone knows what role they play in a positive complaints culture, and what is expected to handle a complaint well and on time.	More confidence for tenants and leaseholders that staff know what they need to do to progress a complaint case and find a proportionate resolution.
<i>'I made a complaint direct to the contractor because RHP hadn't replied, the [contractor's] manager came out and agreed it wasn't good enough, but asked me not to tell RHP'</i>	RHP will assure themselves that any sub-contractors are competent to deliver the service they expect for you. They will look for trends and themes in your feedback to make sure the quality expected is delivered.	Tenants will see an improvement in the quality of works carried out in your homes where work is contracted out. Increased repairs satisfaction Fewer repeat visits, and better value for money.

Comment from Robert Dobbs, Director of Operations:

I would like to thank everyone who took part in this scrutiny exercise and openly shared their recent experiences of our complaints service. Hearing directly from customers about what worked well, where we fell short, and how those experiences made them feel has been invaluable. The insight, challenge and scrutiny provided by customers will help us strengthen how we manage complaints, improve communication, and ensure we learn from feedback to deliver better outcomes. We are committed to acting on these recommendations and will continue to share the impact that customer feedback and scrutiny have made in improving our services.



5. What happens next

RHP have committed to acting on the recommendations above and having them all in place within 3 months. That means by the end of October 2026 tenants should start seeing a difference when they make a formal complaint.

The Customer Focus Group will see regular updates on the action plan that comes out of these recommendations so they can hold RHP to account where things have not happened within the three months.

By the end of March next year RHP should compare their Tenant Satisfaction Measure for complaints and their stage 1 to stage 2 escalation rate to see if they are showing improvements from the original data that triggered this scrutiny. Enough time needs to pass so the new changes have been experienced by tenants, before you remeasure performance.

If complaint satisfaction is higher than 26.9%, and the volume of escalations from stage 1 to stage 2 is lower than 36%, RHP can demonstrate to tenants that they've improved based on tenant feedback. If there is no significant improvement, further work will need to take place to strengthen these recommendations or focus on areas that remain an issue for tenants.

This pilot project was the first in a range of scrutiny exercises that will be shaped by tenants. RHP will keep everyone informed of future projects and for every topic chosen by customers, invitations to take part will be sent to those who have used the relevant service in recent months.