

Response from the Member Responsible for Complaints
Debbie Fox
[Operations Committee – 26 June 2025]

I have reviewed the 2024/25 Complaints Report and the accompanying Self-Assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code for IDS and its subsidiary Otto Schiff Housing Association. I would like to thank relevant members of the executive team for the clarity, transparency, and thoughtful analysis presented in this report.

The document provides a detailed and candid overview of the organisation's complaint-handling performance, with clear evidence of how learning from resident feedback is being used to drive service improvements. As the Member Responsible for Complaints, I am reassured by the organisation's commitment to continuous improvement and resident-centred service delivery.

Organisational Learning and Culture

The proactive steps taken to embed a stronger culture of learning and accountability are particularly welcome. The increased use of the Housing Ombudsman's e-learning modules, the introduction of regular case management meetings, and a focus on reducing unresolved complaints all demonstrate a structured and consistent approach to improving complaint handling.

It is encouraging to see that the complaints process is being used not just to resolve individual issues, but as a mechanism to identify systemic improvements. The actions taken in response to resident concerns – from enhancements to repairs processes, revised estate management procedures, to strengthened contractor oversight – clearly show that learning from complaints is being applied meaningfully.

Transparency and Resident Involvement

I welcome the increased transparency through the publication of monthly complaints dashboards and the ongoing demographic analysis of complainants. While only a small proportion of residents have submitted complaints, the efforts to understand patterns and identify any potential barriers to access reflect a responsible and resident-focused approach.

The inclusion of resident feedback in validating the self-assessment is a strong indicator of a culture that values resident input and seeks to ensure that the complaints process remains accessible, fair, and effective.

Response to Ombudsman Findings

The organisation's response to the Housing Ombudsman's determination of maladministration has been appropriate and timely. The steps taken – including increased compensation, direct engagement with the resident, and a commitment to review and publish relevant self-assessments – demonstrate openness and a willingness to learn and improve.

Early action to align with future regulatory requirements, such as those arising from Awaab's Law, also highlights a forward-thinking and risk-aware approach.

Areas for Continued Focus

While overall response times are strong, the timeliness of Stage 2 responses (83.3%) remains an area where further consistency would be beneficial. Additionally, the increased volume of complaints from certain estates and property types may signal areas requiring closer operational or community engagement.

The underrepresentation of certain groups – particularly sheltered residents and homeowners – within the complaints data may warrant further investigation to ensure equitable access and visibility across all tenure types.

Conclusion

Having reviewed the report and self-assessment, I confirm that in my view, the self-assessment provides an accurate and honest reflection of current performance and compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. I am satisfied that the organisation continues to place a strong emphasis on listening to residents, learning from feedback, and improving service delivery.

Debbie Fox

Member Responsible for Complaints

26 June 2025