

# BOARD RESPONSE

I'm the (Board) Member Responsible for Complaints at YMCA Thames Gateway Group, and my role is to champion a positive complaint handling culture throughout the business, including at Board level. I am pleased to be able to share this first and comprehensive Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report about our housing services with you. This report covers the last financial year, 2023-24.

It is disappointing to see from the report that we were only responding to just over half of our residents within the timescale, when they raised a Stage 1 complaint. This is an area that the Board expect to see an improvement in and I know that operational teams are working hard to improve this for the year ahead.

This report demonstrates our commitment to continuous improvement and our commitment to working with our residents, and I'm pleased that work is underway to strengthen our resident forums as one of the mechanisms to facilitate this.

A copy of the report has been shared with our Operations and Programs Committee for review and discussion. The results of the annual self-assessment against the Complaints Handling Code has been shared with the Audit and Risk Committee.

## **As a Board we note the following:**

### **Compliance**

The annual self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code shows three areas of non-compliance, which will be addressed through the introduction of a specific Complaints Policy for our housing services. This new policy will be in place by 30 September and shared on the website. The introduction on this new policy will be used to further strengthen other areas where we were already compliant but could do better.

### **Service improvements**

The report sets out where service improvements have been made, including providing the opportunity for residents and their advocates to come and meet the team to explain the impact that a service failure had on them. It also contains areas for improvement that have been identified but that have been but yet to be implemented.

### **Focus on learnings**

I know that the team recognise the opportunities for learning that complaints provide with the report highlighting the importance attached to staff training and consistent record keeping.

The Board recognise the need to provide a responsive and effective complaint handling service to residents. The focus for the coming year will be on resolving complaints in a timely manner and putting things right promptly; progress will be monitored through the Operations and Programs Committee.

As the Member Responsible for Complaints, I am confident that YMCA Thames Gateway Group will continue to work with our residents and ensure that learnings from complaints are translated into service improvement.



*Alice Stevens*