

Attitudes, respect and rights



Self-assessment – May 2025

Culture, vision and values

Housing Ombudsman Service recommendation	What we've done to date
Review your mission statement to ensure it is reflective of your current, and future, service. Consider at Board level if you are assured your current approach to vulnerabilities is working.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Our Board agreed closer working relationships with our Customer Panel, reflecting a commitment for the Board to get closer to the Voice of the Customer.• A specific Board session to review our approach to vulnerabilities took place in May 2025. <p>This session was based around the following key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Review and reflection on this self-assessment○ The customer of the future and how we may need to change our strategic approach / delivery model to adapt○ To provide an overview of digital tools / data and how they can support us in making better decision making.
Undertake a review at Board level as to whether you are currently offering a 'human-centric' service provision. If not, identify the barriers to this and what needs to change in order to introduce and then embed this culture and ethos.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• As above; there is recognition that there is further work we need to do to embed a consistent customer-centric provision, and this is identified as a priority focus for 2025. This formed part of the Board session focusing on this area.
Consider adopting a values-based recruitment model to improve resident/ landlord relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Customer-centricity is a project being led by our People team. Value-based recruitment is in place across Care and Support and across the business, recruitment is aligned to the behaviours of our GSA Way.• We have developed a draft vulnerability strategy, and service design and workforce strategy is a key pillar within this.

	<p>Recruiting for attitude and equipping colleagues with the right training are identified within the draft strategy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Vulnerability strategy links with the Customer Strategy and therefore these need to be fully aligned.
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What does the resident need?

Housing Ombudsman Service recommendation	What we've done to date
Review your vulnerability policy in conjunction with current practice. Is the policy being implemented? If not, identify where the disconnect lies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our vulnerability procedure has launched with an accompanying training package. This focuses on the importance of the three R's - recognise, record, respond. • Our Customer Panel have been engaged on the work on vulnerability, including review of our e-learning package design ahead of launch. • A primary area of focus is ensuring standardised systems are available and that there is a consistent training offer and monitoring arrangements validate that records are being maintained. • Our Customer Investment strategy will also set expectations in relation to customer centricity and ensuring it is embedded. • The vulnerability strategy will be used to break down actions that need to be delivered to ensure our approach to vulnerability is effective and we adopt an 'every contact counts' approach to maintaining up to date data on needs and vulnerabilities.
Implement a vulnerability strategy, including how it is defined, who assesses, and what the review process is. This must be in line with The Equality Act, the Human Rights Act and the Care Act. This should be co-produced with residents and consider any future good practice guidance published by the Housing Ombudsman, following engagement and consultation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have drafted a vulnerability strategy which is based on 6 pillars: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understanding and identifying vulnerability 2. Data and Analytics 3. Person-centred tailored support 4. Inclusive service design and workforce strategy 5. Partnership Working 6. Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

Implement a specific reasonable adjustments policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This policy is in place; a procedure is required and agreed methodology for standardised recording. This is being considered as part of our single housing management system project.
Test the vulnerability and reasonable adjustments strategy and policy against the '3Rs' on vulnerable residents - recognise, respond and record.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This will be tested through spot check and audit processes as a cross-cutting theme underpinning all areas of work. A vulnerability review by the Operations Quality Team is scheduled later this year, in order to be able to monitor the effectiveness of our single housing management system in consolidating recording on vulnerabilities. Arrangements will be put in place to assess that the housing system is being consistently used.
Introduce minimum staff training requirements such as Dementia Friends, and training on customer care, mental health, learning disabilities, and sight and hearing loss.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using wider course materials available to us, including access to materials relating to the Care Certificate, we have designed a bespoke course covering the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dementia awareness Mental health awareness Learning Disability Sensory loss- including sight loss and hearing loss <p>The course is currently being transferred to our e-learning platform and went live in March 2025.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our approach to Customer Care training forms part of our Customer Strategy.
Consider a dedicated taskforce for vulnerability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workforce options to optimise our approach to vulnerability are being considered as part of the development of our vulnerability strategy. Options under consideration include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing a network of champions within individual teams - Developing a dedicated team

Look to the future

Housing Ombudsman Service recommendation	What we've done to date
Carry out your own "Resident of the Future" forecast for the next ten years. Draw upon the available information around demographics, both locally and nationally, and identify where you foresee the gaps being.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is picked up as part of our draft vulnerability strategy and the wider customer investment strategy; ensuring we know both our current customers and use intelligence to predict future customer need.
Consider the ageing communities specifically in rural and coastal areas, with reference to Professor Whitty's report.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is picked up as part of our draft vulnerability strategy and the wider customer investment strategy; ensuring we know both our current customers and use intelligence to predict future customer need. There are no coastal communities within our stock base, however there is some more rural stock that may require focus.
Devise an action plan for what you need to start putting in place from now onwards to ensure you are ready to meet the needs of your future residents. This should include the anticipatory requirement regarding reasonable adjustments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The analysis of our current and predicted customer need will feed into strategy development, stock investment decisions and the wider target operating model.

Complaint handling

Housing Ombudsman Service recommendation	What we've done to date
Raise awareness of the complaints procedure and ensure it is accessible for residents who may face barriers to raising a complaint, as required by the Complaint Handling Code.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is included within our reasonable adjustments policy and our vulnerability e-learning. We will consider further opportunities to raise awareness with customers.
Ensure the complaints policy permits complaints about staff conduct, attitudes and approach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our complaints policy permits this, and this is followed in practice.

Establish and enforce a clear process for how complaints about bullying/ discrimination will be investigated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separate guidance is required as a stand-alone document.
Contact restriction policies must set out clear timescales, review and appeals process. Where there is single point of contact, this should be applied consistently.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In place as part of our unreasonable behaviour policy and procedure.
Calls to be recorded, either a physical recording or a contemporaneous telephone record.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call recording is in place in the Contact Centre, but it is not available outside for all colleague contacts. Our new housing management system will be used to revisit system recording expectations relating to customer contact.

Case handlers

Housing Ombudsman Service recommendation	What we've done to date
Landlords need to ensure they provide clear explanations; repeat information where needed, including in different formats; offer face-to-face contact as much as possible and a named point of contact; investigate concerns and share the outcome; recognise when things have gone wrong, apologise and explain how these will be addressed; and know when to make appropriate referrals to agencies and whom to signpost to. Underpinning all of these should be a baseline of empathy and respect.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New templates are in place and aide memoires provide guidance. Key messages have been further embedded through Customer Care team training. • Letter quality, including demonstration of empathy and respect, is monitored through independent spot checks completed independently by the Quality and Compliance Team. • Further review of customer-facing standard letters is underway.
Ensure disability or language needs are routinely considered as part of the complaints process and that extra accessibility support, or accessible materials are offered where appropriate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Template letter has section on vulnerabilities and our policy on reasonable adjustments includes complaint handling. This is also reiterated in our vulnerable persons procedure and related training.

Identify where more specific training, guidance or support is needed to fulfil your role. For example, do you feel under confident in having what may be seen as a difficult conversation or delivering bad news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having difficult conversations training has been rolled out in some teams. • Further discussions are underway with our Learning and Development team to standardise our training offer and ensure a consistent approach.
Maintain accurate records of residents' vulnerabilities and individual circumstances.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is in discussion and will be delivered in phase two of our single housing management system project.
Use mandatory checks, such as annual boiler checks, as a 'touchpoint' opportunity to undertake welfare checks with residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are reviewing how we use all touchpoints as an opportunity to undertake welfare checks, including the routes to take if any concerns are identified. This forms part of the vulnerability strategy. • We are also about to pilot a new approach which will allow us to focus on this area.
Although it is important for landlords to know the vulnerabilities and individual circumstances of its residents and any associated legal duties, the above approach should apply to all residents as, fundamentally, it is about a high standard of customer care and a human-centric approach to service delivery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are revisiting this key message through all our communications and will continue to reiterate expectations around customer care and a human centric provision.