

Role Profile

Role Title: Head of Complaints and Learning

Business Area: Customer Service

Department/Team: Complaints Team

Reports to: Assistant Director – Customer Experience

Direct Reports and span of control: Complaints Team Leader x1, Feedback Manager x1, indirect leadership of Complaints Assistant x2 and Complaints Officer x6

Dimensions (budget holder, level of contract/systems etc responsibility): Budget of £600k, leading the complaints service across the Aster Group and its subsidiary companies (34.5k homes), management of Group wide complaints team with approximately 1,550 complaints PA, responsible for managing the relationship with the Housing Ombudsman, the reputational and financial risks, providing assurance to SLT's and various panels.

Created/Reviewed date: December 2023

Role Purpose

The Head of Complaints and Learning will be an influential and inspiring leader. They will challenge, promote, provide assurance, and confidence in compliance to the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code. This assurance will be provided to the Customer Service Leadership team, various Customer Panels and Operational and Executive Board.

To be strategically be responsible for the management of all stages of the Complaints process, ensuring that statutory and organisational requirements are met, that complaints are investigated with appropriate thoroughness and impartiality, and that all complainants receive a full and timely response.

This important role has the responsibility and accountability for the Aster Group (to include all subsidiaries) complaints service in line with the Housing Ombudsman's scheme and complaint handling code.

To provide data, presentations and strategic improvement plans to the Leadership Team and panels to ensure a cycle of continuous improvement.

The postholder also has a crucial role in relation to customer voice, leading the development and support of the Designated Complaint Panel and individual panel members with oversight of reviews to ensure the panel is equipped and competent to review complaints which have exhausted Aster's complaints process.

Key Accountabilities

- Take responsibility for liaison with, and resolution of communication received from the Housing Ombudsman to minimise risk, or any reputational damage to the business.
- The post holder will be Aster's expert source of practical and theoretical knowledge on complaints regulations and procedure, and will be responsible for company wide complaints handling training.
- The post holder will be required to have developed interpersonal and communication skills in dealing with what are frequently complex or sensitive situations.

Role Profile

- There will be occasional exposure to highly distressing or highly emotional circumstances, including dealing with complainants with severely challenging behaviour.
- Responsible for the complaints policy, procedure, processes and terms of reference for groups, to ensure that the service delivers, and risk is managed appropriately.
- Responsible for compliance to complaints managed through JCAD, with appropriate control actions
- Responsible for the service budget, including compensation payments, always ensuring that they are paid in alignment with the compensation matrix and housing ombudsman guidance for suitable redress
- Provide expertise and work closely with senior leaders to ensure that correspondence from the Ombudsman is appropriately dealt with, that documentation provided is relevant, appropriate and of high quality and that responses are made within required time frames.
- Complete an annual self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman complaint handling code, identifying where improvements are required and leading on the business delivery of changes required
- Scrutinise complaints for issues that may expose Aster to adverse media publicity and, or legal action and advise the senior leadership team appropriately.
- Monitor the Housing Ombudsman's publications, Spotlight reports and generic maladministration reports, assessing the potential impact on the group and disseminating them with guidance of action required to improve service delivery or highlighting potential risk
- Write and present assurance reports to leadership teams, customer panels and other governing bodies within the Governance structure in line with the delegation matrix
- Take the lead on providing a robust high quality training programme on complaints handling and investigation for a wide range of individuals with differing priorities and levels of understanding
- Ensure that lessons are learned from complaints through feedback to services, communications briefings, formal reports and business-wide learning, working closely with the operational teams where cross cutting themes emerge
- To fully exploit opportunities to offer a range of channels for customers to report complaints, ensuring the service is accessible to a diverse and representative range of customers.
- Membership and support of corporate projects

Experience and Qualifications

- An in depth understanding of the Housing Ombudsman Code.
- Experience of working at a senior management level in a Corporate Complaints role
- Strong track record of collaborative leadership
- Inspires and motivates people

Role Profile

- Strong ability to matrix-manage and collaborate with multiple stakeholders
- Experience in gathering and analysing data, preparing reports, and introducing process improvements throughout the reporting process
- Ability to determine specifications and standards for business reporting and maintaining data integrity
- Committed to progressing ideas and projects and meeting deadlines
- Commitment to personal and professional development
- Experience of working with, and influencing, multiple stakeholders to achieve the best possible outcome for both customers and the business
- Ability to write and present on progress to a wide audience including customer services leadership team
- Good understanding of the regulatory and legislative environment that Registered Providers operate in.
- Able to deputise for Assistant Director of Customer Experience