



Department for Levelling Up,  
Housing & Communities

**Rt Hon Michael Gove MP**

*Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and  
Communities*

*Minister for Intergovernmental Relations*

**Department for Levelling Up, Housing and  
Communities**

4th Floor, Fry Building  
2 Marsham Street  
London SW1P 4DF

David Ford  
CEO  
Tandridge Council  
Oxted  
Surrey  
RH8 0BT

Via email only

16 August 2023

Dear David,

I write following a finding of severe maladministration by the Housing Ombudsman for your failure to abide by duties under the Equality Act 2010 or act in accordance with your own safeguarding policy.

In this case you failed an extremely vulnerable resident. Her case was not referred immediately, as it should have been, to the relevant support services. The behaviour of a member of your staff towards both the resident and the mental health advocate supporting the resident was described as aggressive, intimidating and neither appropriate nor solution focused.

This is not acceptable. Your residents should expect their concerns to be taken seriously, for reasonable adjustments to be made where appropriate, and that an investigation of any complaint should be fair. Residents, particularly those who are vulnerable, should expect that their needs are understood and acted upon.

I understand that you have now apologised to this resident and are making improvements to your processes. I expect you to ensure that these changes make a difference, and I will take a personal interest in how you deliver your responsibilities to you residents.

I am copying this letter to Claire Coutinho MP, Councillor Catherine Sayer, Councillor Jeffrey Gray, the Select Committee for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, and the Housing Ombudsman.

**Yours ever,**

**Rt Hon Michael Gove MP**

Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities  
Minister for Intergovernmental Relations