

Annual Complaints and Compliments: April 2020 – March 2021

We welcome all feedback about our services, whether that is in the form of a complaint, a suggestion on how you think we could do something better, or to pass on a compliment for good service. You do not have to fill in a form, and we will not treat you any differently if you make a complaint. You can approach your local manager directly; this will be known as an 'informal complaint' with responses given within 10 working days.

Our two-stage formal complaint procedure

Our policy was updated on 1 January 2021 to reflect the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman Service Complaint Handling Code. All social housing landlords are required to adopt the Code. We also consulted with our Residents Complaints Panel as part of the review.

If a complaint is not resolved, or it is too complex to be dealt with informally, then our next stage will be 'Stage one formal complaint'. The relevant line manager will contact the complainant to discuss their complaint, and formally respond within 10 working days. If the complaint falls under a different policy such as anti-social behaviour and nuisance, then the complainant will be informed.

If a complainant is not satisfied by the outcome of a Stage one formal complaint, they can ask to escalate to 'Stage two formal complaint'. This will be undertaken by the Executive Director of Service and will be completed within 20 working days.

If dissatisfied with our handling of a housing related complaint you can contact the Housing Ombudsman Service on 0300 111 3000 or info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk. Care related complaints can be referred to the Social Care Ombudsman at 0300 061 0614 or www.lgo.org.uk.

Resident Guide 2021

The resident guide to making a suggestion, comment or complaint is available at your court or scheme and on our website. You can ask your local manager for assistance with accessing this information, or alternatively, you can call 0303 123 1622 or email feedback@housing21.org.uk.

Compliments

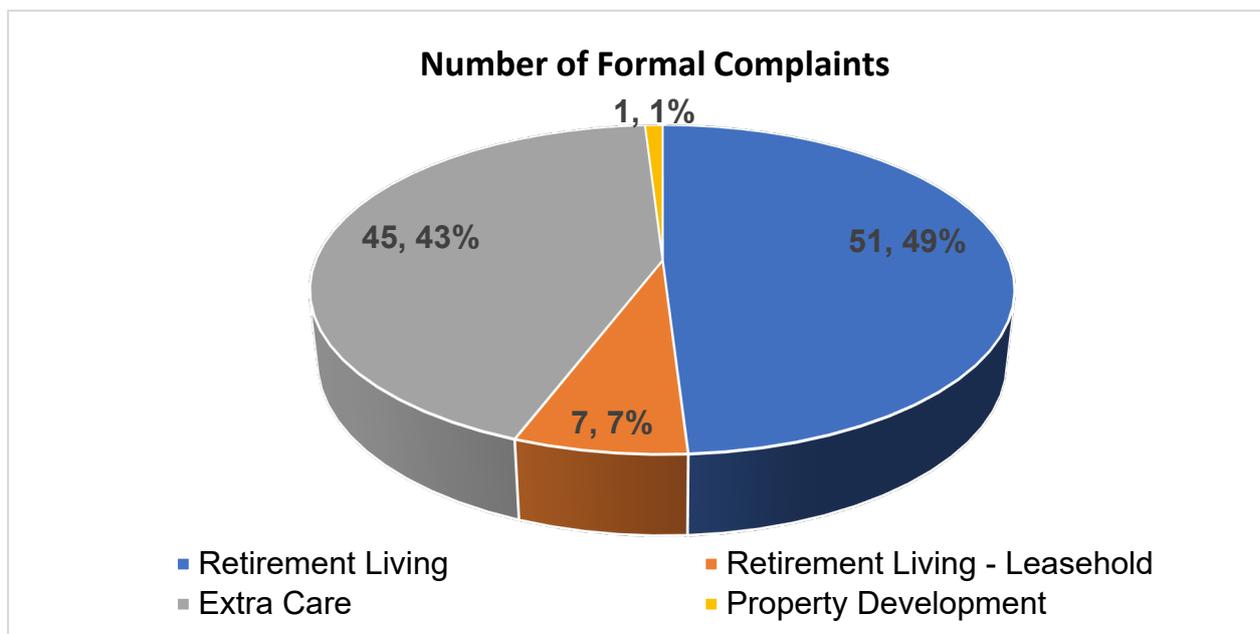
We receive many compliments about our staff and services, and very much welcome this feedback. The numbers across the business are given below:

Business Area	Region Description	Total
Retirement Living	Retirement Living Central	16

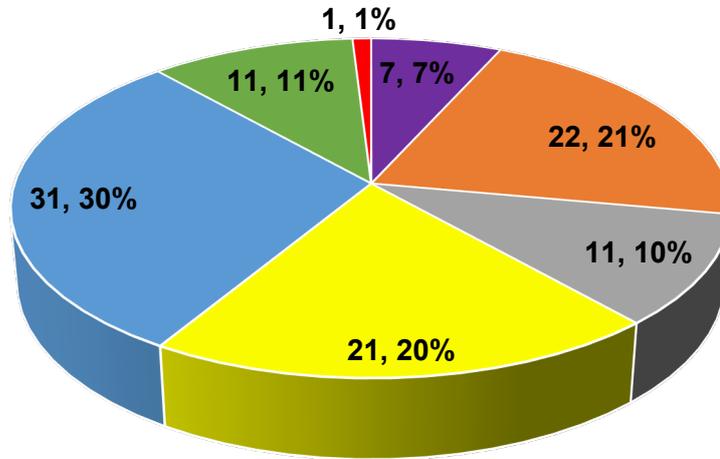
Business Area	Region Description	Total
	Retirement Living North	27
	Retirement Living South	58
Retirement Living - Leasehold		19
Extra Care	Extra Care North East	398
	Extra Care North West	153
	Extra Care South East	70
	Extra Care South West	178
	Kent PFI	4
	Walsall Ppp	44
Grand Total		967

Performance on formal complaints

During the financial year April 2020 to March 2021, we responded to 104 formal complaints about the services we provide as shown below:



What our complaints are about?



- Finance
- Repairs and Maintenance
- Major Works
- Housing Services
- Staff
- Other
- Care

Our new two stage policy came into operation on the 1 January introducing new performance timescales to be in line with the Housing Ombudsman Service Complaints Handling Code. Of the 104 formal complaints received in 2020/21 a total of 31 were recorded under the new formal Stage 1 procedure. Below is a summary of the performance against these target timescales:

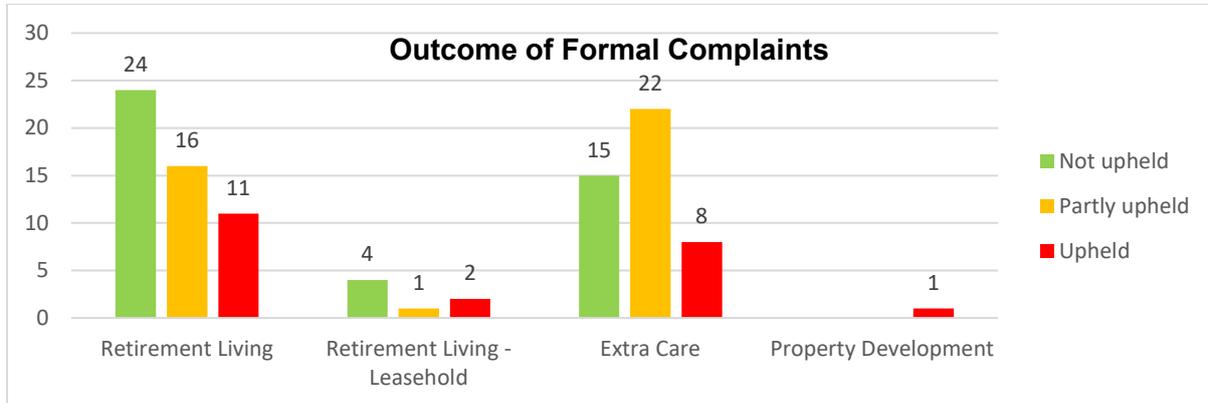
Business Area	Number of Complaints	% acknowledged within 5 days
Retirement Living	13	100.00%
Leasehold	1	100.00%
Extra Care	17	100.00%
Total	31	100.00%

Business Area	Number of Complaints	Stage 1 response within 10 working days?	% on target
Retirement Living	11	YES	84.62%
	2	NO	15.38%
Leasehold	1	YES	100.00%
Extra Care	17	YES	100.00%
Total	31		100.00%

Sometimes it is not possible to respond to a formal complaint within 10 working days. Where this is the case, we will contact the complainant to explain the reason and agree an extension period of 10 working days. A total of 11 formal stage one complaints were extended (35%).

At the time of this this report two stage two complaints have been completed. The response time is 20 working days, and no extensions of time were required. The stage two reviews generally upheld the original complaint response. However, in one case a further concern was acknowledged, and some compensation awarded.

We record the outcome of our complaints i.e. where they were upheld, part upheld, or not upheld. Overall, 59% of complaints had some aspect of the complaint upheld.



We use this information to ensure that we are learning from the complaints we receive. If we get something wrong, there may be changes we need to make to improve our services. This might be something specific to a court or scheme, or perhaps a review of our policies and procedures.

Examples of how we improved services include:

- new training for surveyors on damp and condensation issues via new advanced external course “Dampness in the home”
- review ‘decant’ policy for dealing with moves into temporary accommodation where a resident has no insurance cover
- review of policies for handling customer finances where support is required from Housing 21
- review of forms used to record interest in shared ownership for new Extra Care developments, and the advice given on the requirements of this government subsidised scheme regarding ownership of other properties
- resident charges team to cross check the surplus deficit information in the draft budget with the previous year’s actual figures. With a further check by the housing manager before releasing the information to the residents
- review training on communication and record keeping relating to repairs handling
- review of Pets Policy
- review of Anti-social behaviour and nuisance policy
- standardisation of presentation of communal notice boards
- new Pebbles tablets for staff ensure that photos can be taken at sign up
- Improved consultation process for major works

Housing Ombudsman Cases

We received 14 enquiries from the Housing Ombudsman on behalf of complainants. Many enquiries do not escalate to cases to be investigated as every effort is made to try to resolve a complaint by Housing 21. When the Housing Ombudsman investigates a case, it can be many months after the initial enquiry before the outcome, called the determination, is received.

Six cases were determined, and some of these pre-dated the 2020-21 period. Each case may have a few determinations relating to different aspects of a complaint.

In total there were 13 determinations associated with the six cases investigated:

Determination Type:	Number	Determination Made:
No Maladministration	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No fault found
Resolved by Redress	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Confirmed the resolution offered in Housing 21 response
Outside Jurisdiction	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Housing Ombudsman could not investigate
Service Failure	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Investigation into allegations of ASB against the complainant
Maladministration	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not following policy relating to contacting relatives of complainant• Excessive delay in communication relating to heating replacement• Handling reports made by complainant about the behaviour of a court manager

The Housing Ombudsman Service publishes the determination reports (anonymised) on its website at <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk>, together with other useful Spotlight and Insight reports.
