

Complaints Annual Update: April 2021- March 2022

Welcome to our annual complaints update. We appreciate 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 court or scheme manager directly, or you can check the poster in your communal area for contact details of your local management team.

Our Complaints Policy

We focus on effective and speedy resolution to complaints locally by the court or scheme manager when an issue is first brought to our attention. This is known as an 'informal complaint' with responses given within 10 working days. If this does not resolve the complaint, 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 the relevant service and will be completed within 20 working days.

Performance Information

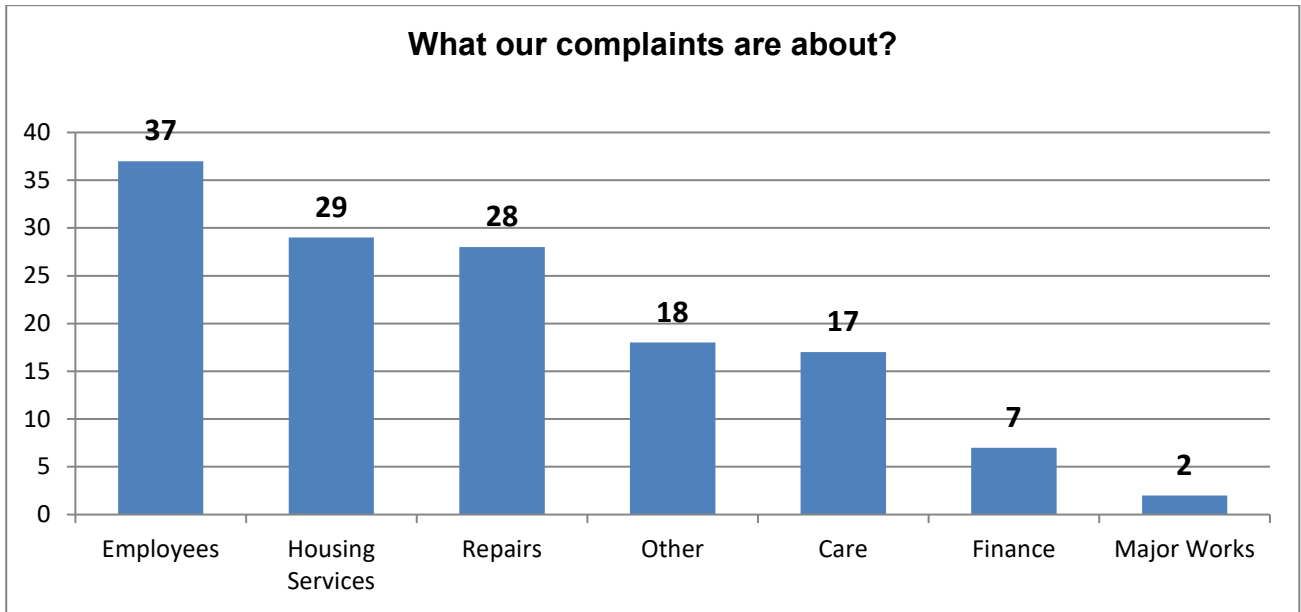
We received 138 formal complaints during 2021-22. Of the 138 formal complaints, 62 were in Extra Care, 74 in Retirement Living and two in Property Sales.

If a complainant is not satisfied with their stage one response they may request to escalate to stage two. Of the 25 stage two complaints received, 12 were in Extra Care, 12 in Retirement Living and one from Property Sales.

Our performance against the response targets which are set within the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code are as follows:

Acknowledgement of stage one formal complaints within five working days

- **We achieved 100%**
- Response to stage one formal complaints within 10 working days
 - **We achieved 97% (four responses outside timescale)**
- Response to stage two formal complaints within 20 working days
 - **We achieved 96% (one response outside timescale)**



Learning from Formal Complaints

Complaints are important to us because if we get something wrong there may be changes we need to make to improve our services. We call these 'Lessons Learnt'.

Learning from some complaints can be specific to a court or scheme or sometimes have potential to improve services across the business. The main themes evident this year relate to how the handling of concerns/issues raised have been handled; following procedures; and keeping complainants informed, rather than a specific area of service.

However, we did identify the need to review and improve our anti-social behaviour policy and procedure, to include employee training. This work has now been completed and the new training is underway across the organisation. There has also been an update to the lettings policy to clarify the appeals process and how we consider applications where there has been a previous eviction order.

We have spent time this year reviewing how we learn lessons and make sure changes are actioned and record how services are improved. We are implementing changes through our internal complaints group, and a resident led complaints group. If you are interested in knowing more, please contact our Business Improvement Team by email at feedback@housing21.org.uk or by telephone on 0303 123 1622.

Informal Complaints

We dealt with 603 informal complaints with 83% being responded to within 10 working days. The main area of complaint is repairs (24%) followed by housing issues (18%) and employees (17%). The more complaints we can handle informally helps our residents get quick resolutions to their concerns.

Compliments

We welcome and value compliments about our employees and services. We have received 745:

- 600 about employees
- 137 about services
- 8 about contractors

Housing Ombudsman Update

The Housing Ombudsman is a government funded body who look at complaints from residents of different types of housing providers if they remain unhappy with the response from their landlord. It's free, confidential, and impartial. The Housing Ombudsman will lodge an enquiry with us and check that the complainant has gone through the formal complaints procedure. If so, then they will advise the complainant whether they can investigate or not.

During this period 16 enquiries were received of which: Retirement Living: 11 and Extra Care: five. Of these, six have been actioned as cases for investigation by the Housing Ombudsman.

Once the investigation of a case has taken place the Housing Ombudsman will make a judgement making of one or more determinations in relation to the complaint. The report will say whether there was any fault due to the landlord and make any recommendations.

The outcomes of case can take many months and so the determinations received in any year may refer to a previous year. During 2021-22 we received determinations for five complaint cases as follows:

Service Area	Determination	Complaint Subject Area
Retirement Living	No Maladministration and Outside Jurisdiction	Relating to employee handling of data and progressing anti-social behaviour reports
Retirement Living	Case Withdrawn	Repairs progress. Resident was satisfied with outcome, but Ombudsman had pursued the case incorrectly.
Retirement Living	No Maladministration	Handling and progressing of anti-social behaviour, and request to move
Extra Care	Outside Jurisdiction	Requesting permission to sub-let a property awaiting sale
Extra Care	Resolved by Redress*	Allegations around employee conduct and issue of ASB letter

** Resolved by redress – this is where a landlord has already offered an apology and compensation to the resident which, in the Housing Ombudsman's opinion, resolved the complaint satisfactorily.*

Our target is zero at fault cases. None of the above determinations were at fault.

We hope this update has been useful and interesting. If there is anything you would like to suggest about the information you receive about complaints, please let us know by emailing feedback@housing21.org.uk or speaking with your local manager.