

Compliments and Complaints Update

Performance update: April – June 2024 - Quarter One

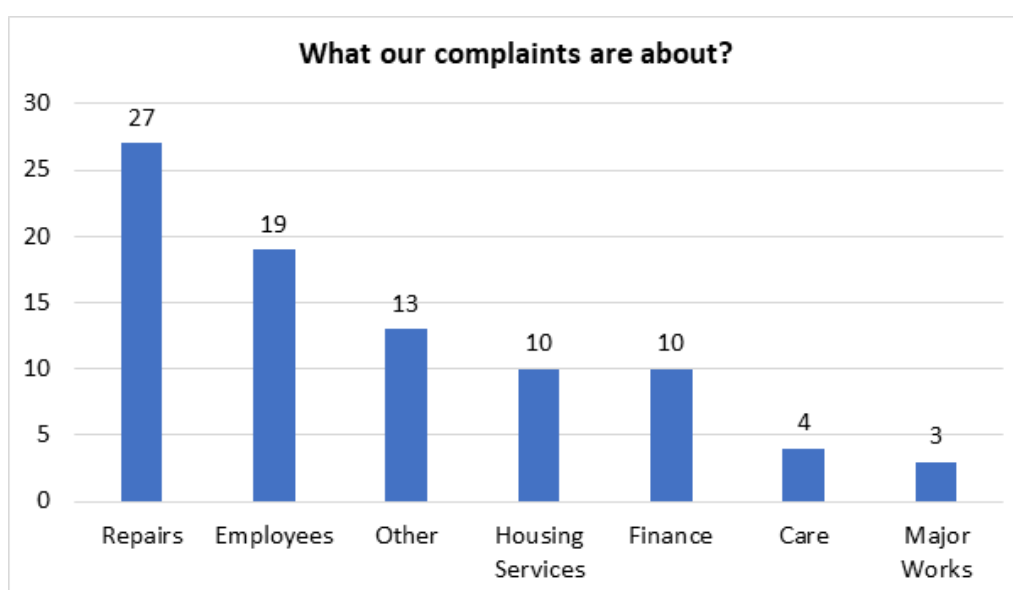
We received 94 formal complaints between April and June (Retirement Living 39, Extra Care 54 and one Property Development). This is compared to 35 for the same period in the previous financial year. From April, a change in the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code saw a change to all social housing landlord's complaints procedures. This means there is no longer an informal complaint category and has seen an increase in the number of formal complaints logged. In the year to date, five percent of all formal stage one complaints received have been escalated to stage two by the complainant. In addition, a further four were escalated which had originally been logged during the previous financial year.

Our performance

Our performance this quarter 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 99 percent** (one outside timescale)
- Response to stage one formal complaints within 10 working days
 - **we achieved 94 percent** (six outside timescale)
- Response to stage two formal complaints within 20 working days
 - **we achieved 89 percent** (one of the nine stage two complaints was dealt with one day late)

Note: We have introduced new procedures to ensure that our targets timescales are consistently met.



The types of complaints which are logged as 'Other' include: failure of service (five), fairness and/or respect (two), external agencies (two), failure to communicate (one), failure to consult (one), resident engagement (one) and legal issues (one).

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 complaints is mainly related to local learning at schemes. A common theme no matter what the subject of the complaint is a failure to follow policy and procedure, such as complaints and anti-social behaviour (ASB) handling, and lettings which we are working to improve.

Some examples of local learning are:

- Various development areas for local managers are:
 - refresher training on gaining permission to access flats
 - updated Complaints Policy and Procedure
 - following ASB and nuisance procedures
 - ensuring professional behaviour and standards are followed when dealing with an incident
 - following procedure when running late for care calls
 - ending tenancy procedures
 - resolving mis-communication issues within a new team
 - following lettable standard
 - giving clear explanations for actions
 - giving clear explanations of changes to planned works commencement
 - training on arrears and rent accounting
 - following procedures if a non-resident is living at a scheme
- Service delivery procedures reviewed within catering services at schemes, such as storage of food items, allergen posters and hand hygiene
- More robust tendering processes to ensure the right caterers are awarded contracts. Contract to be reviewed/monitored more regularly in senior Housing 21 management meetings
- Holding regular residents' meetings and giving newsletter recommendations on ways to keep homes as cool as possible in warmer months
- Confirmed schedule for technology installation to support digital upgrade to emergency alarm system
- Re-visit a consultation on the provision of a contractors service
- Making arrangements for a key safe to be installed while the Appello service is not working

- Remedial works to ensure wheelchair access can be achieved into the building and buggy store
- Consultation around Section 20 work requires a joint session between Housing Management and Property Services, with an emphasis on ensuring residents have understood the process of works to be carried out and the options open to them in regard to choice. We should ensure that this is documented clearly and sent to residents in a timely manner after the meeting for their information.
- Process for residents to have the opportunity to read, date and sign to an agreement of a witness statements following the ASB procedure, as no evidence to confirm if this was provided previously which has contributed to a complaint.
- Acknowledge failures of service and various actions taken: care teams to review customer care plans and risk assessment; management team to produce an overview of key tasks for each resident to sit alongside their main care plan; review of the electronic care rostering system. Teams to undertake refresher training of effective recording and documentation to improve communication within the team and around diabetes
- Core support service explanation to be given to residents via future residents meetings and newsletters

We will continue to review how we learn from our formal complaints and make sure changes are actioned and recorded so we can see how services are improved. We are implementing changes through our internal complaints' groups, and a resident led complaints' group.

Further details about our Complaints Policy and Procedure can be found via our website at: <https://www.housing21.org.uk/about-us/contact-us/complaints/>


Compliments

We always welcome and value compliments about our employees and services. We have received a total of 249 compliments this quarter- 72 percent were about employees/teams, 25 percent about services, and three about our contractors.

Housing Ombudsman Update

The Housing Ombudsman looks at complaints from residents from different types of housing providers if residents remain unhappy with the response from their landlord. Its work is funded by annual landlord subscription fees. Investigating these complaints is a free, independent, and impartial service for residents about their housing-related complaints.

We received and submitted five case requests during this period (three Retirement Living and two Extra Care); and received two determinations. Case requests can take many months for the Housing Ombudsman to process, and so determinations can often relate to a previous financial year. Our target is zero at fault cases.



Two determinations received this year were both found not at fault (one no maladministration and one reasonable redress). The issues were related to the handling of a transfer application and one about the handling of pest control and moving within a scheme.

We are seeking more members of our Resident Complaints' Panel, please take a look in the Resident Information section on the website under Complaints if you would like to get involved in this key part of our approach to complaints:

<https://www.housing21.org.uk/resident-information/get-involved-engagement-and-feedback/feedback-and-complaints/complaints/>

You can also speak to your scheme manager for further information, or please email us directly at feedback@housing21.org.uk.

The Housing Ombudsman Service can be contacted at any point during the complaints process for advice and guidance using the following contact details:

- Telephone: 0300 111 3000
- Postal address: Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 1484,
Unit D, Preston, PR2 0ET
- Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk
- [Contact us: Housing Ombudsman \(housing-ombudsman.org.uk\)](https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

