

Compliments and Complaints Update

Performance update: October – December 2024 - Quarter Three

We received 78 formal complaints this period (Retirement Living 37, Extra Care 40 and Asset management 1). This compared to 32 for the same period in the previous financial year (Retirement Living 12 and Extra Care 20).

From April, the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code meant all social housing landlords' complaints procedures changed. This means there is no longer an informal complaint category and so we have seen an increase in the number of formal complaints logged.

In the year to date we have received a total of 236 formal stage one complaints of which 29 (12 percent) have been escalated to stage two by the complainant. In addition, a further five were escalated to stage two which had originally been logged during the previous financial year.

We have recently improved our systems so that our local managers can help to resolve concerns as a service request where the complainant is happy to do so.

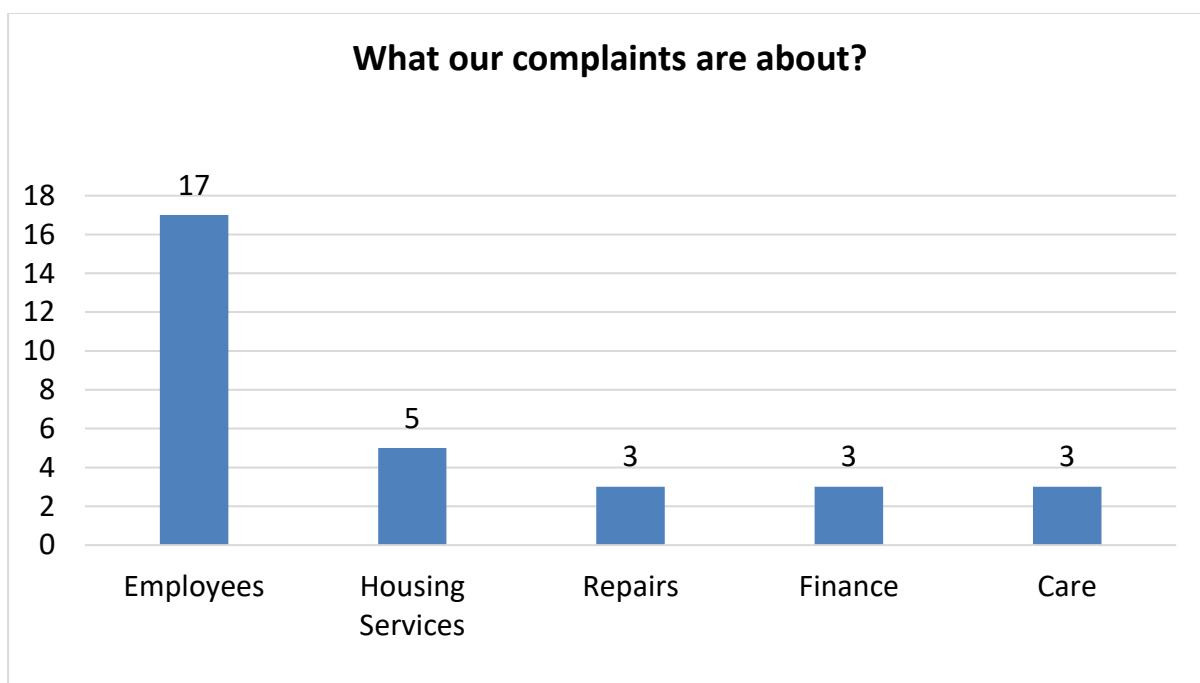
The Housing Ombudsman Code says: A service request is a request from a resident to the landlord requiring action to be taken to put something right. Service requests are not complaints, but must be recorded, monitored, and reviewed regularly. A complaint must be raised when the resident expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, even if the handling of the service request remains ongoing. Landlords must not stop their efforts to address the service request if the resident complains.

The service request can help to ensure that we can resolve as many concerns locally and as quickly as possible.

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 94 percent** (five outside timescale)
- Response to stage one formal complaints within 10 working days
 - **We achieved 93 percent** (five outside timescale and three still in progress)
- Response to stage two formal complaints within 20 working days
 - **We achieved 100 percent**



In addition to these main areas, others include: asset management, failure to consult, external agencies and leaseholder engagement.

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 this quarter are:

- Additional training and mentoring support on effective communication. Review of 2024/25 Resident Satisfaction Survey to identify areas for improvement and produce an action plan with residents to address these.
- Improved procedures for:
 - repairs communications
 - Rents accounts and Direct Debits
 - proactively making appointments for attendance, tracking repairs, and updating resident; and ensure contractors are not showing up without pre-arranged appointments
 - new procedure for logging to repairs with clarification of priority e.g. emergency, urgent, routine
- Additional training:
 - on complaints and personal data procedures
 - on rent accounts and understanding of arrears, together with quality of written communications
 - procedure for contacting relatives
- following ASB procedures

Other organisation-wide learning includes:

- development and implementation of Housing 21 Unacceptable Behaviour Policy.
- the need to be careful with our language and not refer to ASB issues or concerns as complaints, this has been picked up by the Ombudsman. We will be issuing further guidance on this to help with clarification.
- learning from the Ombudsman investigation into various issues such as noise, data handling which we will be looking at in more detail in the next couple of months to see what changes we need to make

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 248 compliments this quarter - 78 percent were about employees/teams, 17 percent about services, and five percent 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.

In the year to April – December 2024 we received and submitted ten case requests (seven Retirement Living and three Extra Care). 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.

Three of the determinations received this year related to complaints handled in 2023-24 period – all were found as no maladministration or resolved by reasonable regress.



Of the cases received and submitted this year we have received three determinations, one of which found both maladministration (handling of concerns relating to heating and property temperature) and service failure (relating to the complaints handling). We are now in the process of implementing the findings, and will ensure that we amend any policies and procedures, and arrange training as required.

We are always seeking more members of our Residents' Complaint Panel, please take a look at the Resident information section on the website under Complaints if you would like to get involved: <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 email us 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 page on the internet: [Housing Ombudsman \(housing-ombudsman.org.uk\)](https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

