

Complaints report

Attached at annex 1 is a table giving data on complaints for this year. There is a comparison to previous years also, although the way some of this information has been presented this year is different. In particular, I have now reported on the resolution timeframe, so it is in line with both our complaints policy and the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code – which is 10 working days for stage 1 complaints and 20 working days for stage 2 complaints. In previous years, we reported on complaints that were resolved in 1 day, within 21 days and over 21 days.

Board should note:

- Although a slight drop in number from 2022/23, SHAL have received a high number of complaints this year.
- Receiving a large number of complaints is seen as positive by both SHAL and the Housing Ombudsman, as it shows that the complaints process is clear and accessible, well-advertised and provides valuable opportunities for learning.
- On completion of repairs tenants receive an automated text asking them if they are satisfied. Previously any responses of dissatisfaction were logged as a complaint and were investigated. We no longer log these responses in this way in line with the updated Complaint Handling Code – survey responses should not be treated as a complaint, but tenants must be made aware of how they can make a complaint if they wish to do so.
- The majority of complaints were resolved at stage 1. 8 complaints progressed to stage 2 and 4 complaints were received via the Housing Ombudsman.
- Two disrepair claims were recorded as complaints. This is how these cases are logged on our system, but they are not complaints and are referred to TLT to respond to.

Following a mutual exchange in July 2023, we have received 8 complaints from one household between August 2023 and March 2024. These complaints are a mix of both stage 1 and 2 and also the Housing Ombudsman. We have responded to each complaint, some of which been pursued in an unreasonable manner, and we have taken steps to respond to poor behaviour from this household. There are currently no open complaints from this household, but we believe that they may have now approached the Housing Ombudsman once again following our final stage 2 response on 4 March 2024.

At stage 1, 31 complaints were responded to within the timeframe of 10 working days. This is in line with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. Two complaints required an extension to this timeframe:

- CCC581 – extension agreed with the tenant as he was in hospital and unable to meet during the investigation into the complaint.
- CCC557 – extension agreed with the tenant due to availability of himself, SHAL and Enerveo to visit his home during the investigation of the complaint.

5 complaints at stage 1 were resolved to outside the timeframe of 10 working days:

- CCC609 – response letter sent 1 day outside timeframe.
- CCC602 – response letter sent 2 days outside timeframe.
- CCC559 – response letter sent 7 days outside timeframe.
- CCC583 – response letter sent 13 days outside timeframe.
- CCC617 – response letter sent outside timeframe (internal investigation).

At stage 2, 5 complaints were responded to within the timeframe of 20 working days. This is in line with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. Two complaints required an extension to this timeframe:

- CCC591 – extension agreed with the tenant as the complaint was received prior to Christmas and SHAL were closed when the response would have been due on 29 December 2023.
- CCC603 – extension agreed with the tenant as the SHAL colleague investigating the complaint was unwell.

1 complaint was resolved outside of the timeframe of 20 working days:

- CCC573 – home visit completed, and response sent 1 day after timeframe.

The learning from complaints is that:

- Annual training will be provided to all staff working with complaints, with the next date being 26 April 2024. This training will cover SHAL's policy the complaint handling code and how to log, update and close a complaint on our system.
- We now have flowcharts to outline the process for both stage 1 and 2 complaints which are annexed to the complaints policy.
- Where a complaint is received about a colleague, the complaints process and any internal investigation/ disciplinary process must run side by side, with the complainant being kept up to date.
- Our development process will be updated to make sure that information around restrictive covenants is available at the point of tenancy sign up.
- We have set up a Complaints Committee, with colleagues from Management Team and Customer Services which meet's monthly. Any colleague who has investigated a complaint in the previous month also attends. The committee reviews every complaint closed in the previous month, making sure that we have investigated and responded to the complaint in line with the complaints policy and the Complaint Handling Code.

4 complaints were received via the Housing Ombudsman this year. SHAL have responded to each case within the required timeframe. To date, we have received confirmation from the Ombudsman that one case is not a case they can investigate. We are awaiting to hear from the Ombudsman regarding the other 3 cases after sending all of the requested information to them. We have chased this up in early April and have yet heard nothing from them.