

# Formal Complaints Insight Report

October 2023

## 1. Background and Introduction

The Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code requires that the Board receives regular information on complaints that provides insight on the organisation's complaint handling performance, to support a positive complaint handling culture.

This Insight Report provides an overview of formal complaint numbers, trends, and learning, including news from the Housing Ombudsman and actions arising from recommendations of the Housing Ombudsman Spotlight reports.

## 2. Complaints Handling

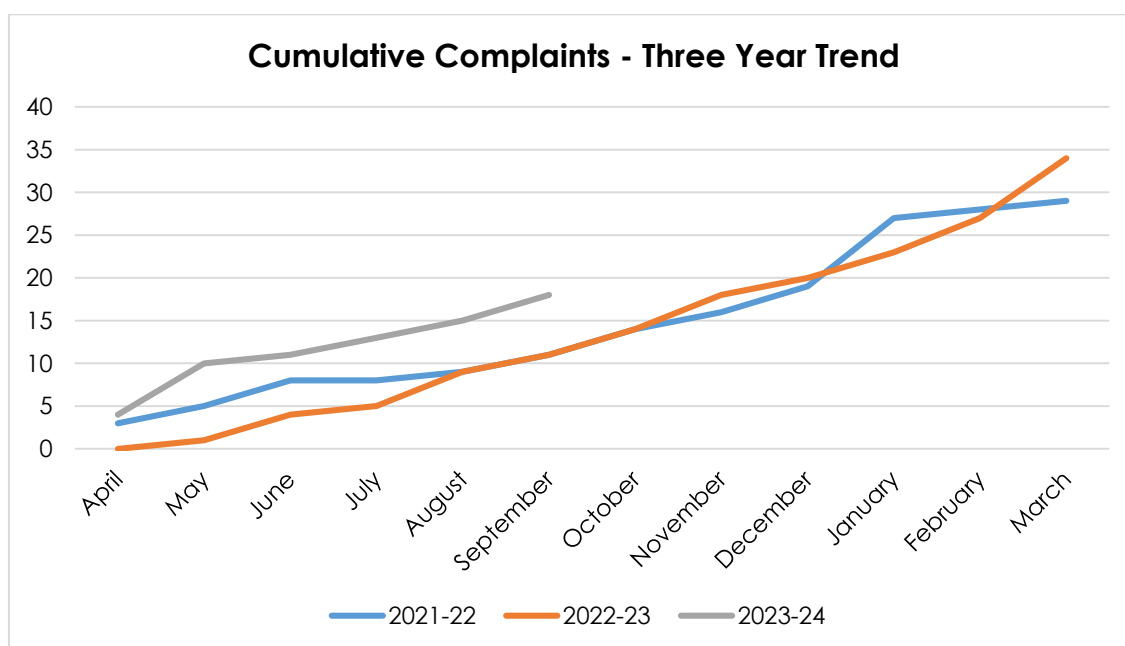
### 2.1. Total Complaints YTD

Year 2023-24

Stage / Service	Upheld	Partially Upheld	Not Upheld	Outstanding	TOTAL	Refused
<b>Stage 1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>2</b>
Asset	7	5	2	1	15	1
Housing	1	2	0	0	3	1
<b>Stage 2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>-</b>
Asset	0	1	0	0	1	-
Housing	0	0	0	0	0	-
Development	0	1	0	0	1	-

### 2.2. Year on Year Comparison

The following chart represents both the year-on-year increase in complaint numbers, and demonstrated a consistent pattern of complaint numbers throughout the year.



### 2.3. Complaints Response Times

Our Complaints policy, based on the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code, requires that certain timescales for complaint handling are met.

The following table demonstrates the performance of complaints closed in target time:

Stage	Cases Closed	Total Time	Target Time	Average Time	No. 'in time'
1	17	220 days	10 days	13 days	8 (47%)
2	2	96 days	20 days	48 days	0

## 3. Learning from Complaints

### 3.1. Service Failure Areas

Of the 14 complaints which were upheld partially or in full this year to date, these were found to have revealed issues and opportunities to improve on the following:

Service Failure Area	Total
Customer Care - contractor	1
Personnel - performance	4
Process breakdown	5
Repairs appointing – contractor	4
Service Standard – contractor	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>

### 3.2. Themes and Actions

Improvements required arising from complaint investigations are logged and tracked to implementation. All complaints closed in the previous 12-month period have been analysed and of 33 Upheld complaints closed in this period, two key trends were identified, and the following improvements implemented:

#### Communication

39% (13) of all complaints concerned poor management of repair appointments made by our contractor (gas). This centred around multiple cancellations and rearranged appointments with little or no communication to advise of appointment changes. As a result, we put in place more stringent parameters around changes to appointments and requirements for additional key performance data to be reported in monthly contractor management meetings. Subsequently we have seen a significant reduction in complaints about appointment changes, now down to 11% (2) of complaints received in the current year (April to September 23). This will be further monitored as we move into the colder months where gas boiler repairs become more common.

#### Personnel

24% (8) of all complaints were the result of instances of poor employee performance and customer care, largely originating from a one source. Examples include instances of failure to follow prescribed process and maintain ownership of workload, to deliver agreed actions, and also of failing to provide accurate information and advice. Personnel performance measures were put in place, and training for staff on handling challenging conversations and customers has been provided, ensuring they have confidence and assertiveness to provide accurate and relevant information and advice to customers. As a result, we have received no further similar complaints in the current financial year.

## Housing Ombudsman Update

The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 brought in new requirements for the Housing Ombudsman, and for members of the Housing Ombudsman scheme. These include the requirement:

- for the Housing Ombudsman to consult with members on the Complaint Handling Code, prior to the Code becoming a statutory code of practice for social landlords. Consultation has commenced, with the intention to have the revised statutory code in place for 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024.
- For providers to demonstrate compliance with the Code by submitting a completed self-assessment annually, whereas previously we were obliged to publish our self-assessment on our website only.

The Code will also be adopted by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, creating one unified approach across all public services.

The Housing Ombudsman and the Regulator of Social Housing have together developed a Memorandum of Understanding which clearly outlines their respective roles and scope regarding the governance and regulation of social housing providers. The Memorandum can be found on the gov.uk website [here](#).