

Listening to you

Complaints Insight Report – October 2022-March 2023

We are committed to delivering an excellent customer experience and listening to your feedback to improve our services. We believe in being open and honest, building trust through a transparent feedback process.

This is the fifth edition of our Complaints Insight Report which is published twice a year and made available for our customers. We highlight any trends, the lessons we have learnt and any changes we have made to our services to provide a clear view of the feedback we receive. We also give you an overview of any complaints which have been escalated to the Housing Ombudsman.

Complaints Data	Apr 2021-Sept 2021	Oct 2021-Mar 2022	Apr 2022-Sep 2022	Oct 2022-Mar 2023
Total no of complaints	80	68	82	95
% Of complaints resolved at stage 1	98.4%	98.5%	95.2%	92.5%
% Of complaints resolved at stage 2	1.6%	1.5%	4.8%	7.5%
No. of complaints escalated from stage 1 to stage 2	38	3	2	5
Main areas for complaints:	Outstanding Repairs Poor Communication	Outstanding Repairs Poor Communication	Outstanding Repairs Poor Communication	Quality of Repair Poor Communication
No. of complaints escalated to the Housing Ombudsman	4	0	3	3

Over the past year we have seen an increase in complaints, we have seen a rise in dissatisfaction with outstanding repairs and overall poor communication. We are working hard on completing a backlog of repairs, completing repairs as per the timescales in our responsive repairs policy and focusing on improving communication with our customers.

As a result of the complaints, what are we doing to improve?

Repairs

Following complaints and feedback from customer satisfaction surveys;

- ✓ Our Repairs Team have been actively recruiting across all trades to support the clearing of backlog jobs and some key posts have already been filled.
- ✓ Two contractors have been approved to clear the backlog of works with a focus on aged complaint cases.
- ✓ We have been working closely with the Customer Relations Team to resolve complaints and address any customer concerns, and repairs, and prioritise these accordingly.
- ✓ Our Repair Team Leaders and Management are completing pre and post-inspections and spot audits of works
- ✓ Teams have been actively visiting WCH estates, completing visual inspections to ensure communal repairs that may not have been previously reported are raised and addressed.

Outstanding repairs

We continue to work on our strategy to address ongoing repairs. We have increased our contractor base to utilise resource and keep completion times within target. We are on the right track and have seen an improvement in our response times. We continue to encourage customers to book their repairs on our DTS system as the first port of call, 24hrs per day.

Poor communication

- ✓ Text messages have been sent to customers with a link to a new repair's status page [Repairs | Watford Community Housing \(wcht.org.uk\)](#)
- ✓ We are creating a contractor postcard for carded appointments so customers can rebook at ease.
- ✓ All requests from customers wishing to speak to their Housing Officers are now trackable through a CRM (Customer Relations Management) system which is monitored by our Area Housing Managers.
- ✓ Complaint investigating managers are calling customers to understand their concerns.
- ✓ Customer facing staff are recording customer contact by using Orchard mobile

- ✓ We are making changes to our Customer Service queue system, we have reduced the number of queue options and have added new on-hold music.

Others Changes we have made following your feedback:

- ✓ We have identified training needs for our Contact Centre around offering a better first-time resolution. From feedback collated from our post call surveys, we recognise the need to make sure our customers can resolve issues when they call first time. This includes more training on direct debits, tenancy agreements, fire safety, repairs diagnostics and using our digital platform.
- ✓ Our Gateway Membership Team (GMT) selected and led a customer scrutiny session in February 2023 on our “Out of Hours Service”. Feedback from this session led WCH to retender for this service and in March we completed tender evaluations with the help of our customers. We have awarded “Lemon” the contract and will be going live with this new provider in May 2023.
- ✓ We have also launched our new customer feedback system, CX Feedback to collect your feedback around our key services such as Repairs, Grounds Maintenance, Communal Cleaning, Moving into your Home and Planned Improvement Work. The system enables us to send out surveys via a phone call, text, or email so we can listen to your views on lots of different subjects. The system can also text you directly with updates and messages about your local area. We will be able to target this so the information that we send will be very detailed and just relate to you and your neighbours.
- ✓ Our Housing Management Team with the assistance of our customers have been updating our Anti-Social Behaviour, Panel Guidance and Succession policy to streamline the procedure to improve the customer’s experience.
- ✓ We have created an Aftercare Manager position to support customers moving into their new homes.
- ✓ Following the Housing Ombudsman’s spotlight report on noise complaints “Time to be Heard”, a project group has been formed to create a new policy a manage noise issues.

Housing Ombudsman Complaints

We want to provide you with an honest and clear view of our complaints, including those cases which are escalated to the Housing Ombudsman. As Watford Community Housing have had less than four Housing Ombudsman determinations in the last year, the Housing Ombudsman have not issued an annual performance report. To view landlord annual performance reports or to seek advice please visit: [Home - Housing Ombudsman \(housing-ombudsman.org.uk\)](https://housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

We are also actively sharing Housing Ombudsman complaint determinations and press releases with our Leadership Team to drive a positive complaints culture.

The table below provides details of the reasons why the case was reviewed by the Housing Ombudsman, whether the case is still open or closed and any final determinations provided by the Housing Ombudsman.

Details of Case	Status	Ombudsman's Determination
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landlord's handling of the resident's request to remove a ramp from their property. • Landlord's handling of the resident's complaint. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Awaiting Outcome</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Overdue - August 2022.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landlord's handling of the resident's repairs. • Landlord's response to the resident's request for more extensive redecoration works. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Awaiting Outcome</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Overdue - July 2022</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landlord's handling of the resident's request that their property be adapted. • Landlord's handling of the resident's complaint. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Awaiting Outcome</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Overdue January 2023</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landlord's handling of repairs – balcony door, window and communal intercom system. • Landlord's handling of reported fly-tipping. • Landlords handling of the resident's queries about moving to a new property. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Awaiting Outcome</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Overdue February 2023</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landlords handling of the resident's complaint. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The landlord's handling of the rent account in respect of a garage. • The level of the increase of the rent for the garage. • The Ombudsman is unable to investigate the level of rent or service charge. They will review how the landlord handled the enquiry and the issues raised. 	<p>Awaiting Outcome</p>	<p>Outcome Due March 2023</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The landlord's response to the residents request for the repairs to the; damp and mould, bathroom flooring and skirting board. • The length of time taken to complete repairs. • The length of time taken to respond to the customers complaint. 	<p>Awaiting Outcome</p>	<p>Outcome Due May 2023</p>

Customer Representatives

At present we have four volunteer Customer Representatives who collaborate with the Leadership Team or Director/Assistant Directors as part of our stage two complaints process. The Customer Representative provides input into the complaint from the customer perspective and ensures a fair outcome has been achieved. We offer opportunities for all WCH customers to become involved in customer complaints-handling under our Involvement Menu. Customers who express an interest in this area of our work are required to undergo relevant training. This is currently delivered by TPAS under a regular training programme. If this role is of interest to you and you would like more information, please contact the Customer Relations Team by email: Feedback@wcht.org.uk