

Listening to you

Complaints Insight Report – April 2024 – September 2024

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

This is the eight 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 because of any feedback we receive. We also give you an overview of any complaints which have been escalated to the Housing Ombudsman.

Complaints Data	Oct 2022 – Mar 2023	Apr 2023 – Sept 2023	Oct 2023 – Mar 2024	April 2024 – Sept 2024
Total no. of complaints	95	69	131	78
% of complaints resolved at stage 1	92.5%	92.7%	85.5%	80%
% of complaints resolved at stage 2	7.5%	7.3%	14.5%	20%
No. of complaints escalated from stage 1 to stage 2	5	5	19	16
Main areas for complaints:	1. Quality of Repair 2. Poor Communication	1. Outstanding Repairs 2. Poor Communication	1. Outstanding Repairs 2. Poor Communication	1. Outstanding Repairs 2. Poor Communication
No. of complaints escalated to the Housing Ombudsman	3	2	4	2
Responded to within Ombudsman timescales?	98%	100%	100%	100%

Over the past 6 months we have seen:

- ✓ Fewer complaints at all stages. We historically see less complaints reported through Spring/Summer and may see a rise in complaints during Autumn/Winter
- ✓ More customers using our stage two appeal process compared to 2022/23
- ✓ Our Tenant Satisfaction Measurement for complaint handling improve from 28.7% (2022/23) to 35.7% in 2023/24

The root causes of most dissatisfaction are outstanding repairs and overall poor communication. We continue to manage our repairs and aim to achieve the timescales in our Responsive Repairs Policy and focus on improving communication with our customers. We have increased our workforce and are seeing improvements in our satisfaction with repairs which has moved from 67.9% to 71.1% during this reporting period.

We have also seen increased satisfaction with the ease of reporting repairs, which has moved from 69.1% to 80.3%. We acknowledge we cannot always meet our key repair targets and have recorded dissatisfaction due to waiting times. We are working hard to improve our repair services and key service changes are highlighted below.

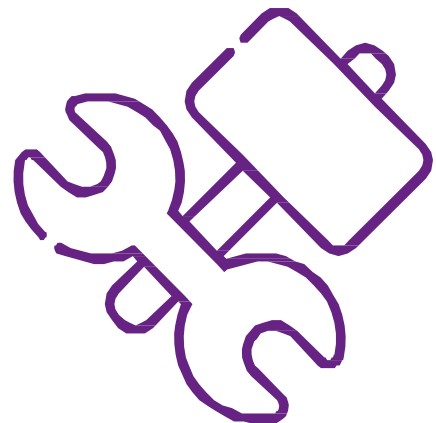
As a result of the complaints, what are we doing to improve?

Repairs

We know that guttering jobs are really important to preventing damp and mould, so we have been using new drone technology to survey areas where we have had the most reported repairs of this type.

We will be using this data to put together a guttering / roofing works programme.

- ✓ Our Repairs team have grown and across all trades to support the demand. Some key posts have already been filled in flooring and plastering.
- ✓ We are updating our [repairs website](#) page frequently to reflect our current timescales against each trade.
- ✓ Following scrutiny from our Gateway Membership Team. We have created an external contractor's satisfaction survey to review our contractor's performance.
- ✓ We have completed regular toolbox talks with our Repairs Team and have shared customer feedback and discussed best practices.



Outstanding repairs and timescales

We have an action plan to address ongoing repairs. We have increased our contractor base to utilise resources and keep completion times within target. We are on the right track and have seen an improvement in our response times.

Our average first-time fix rate between April-September is 82.5% and we have seen positive improvements in gas and electrical repairs. Our Customer Service Team have completed multiple training sessions with our Repairs and Resource Planning team to ensure repairs are recorded accurately to assist with first-time fix.

We continue to encourage customers to book their repairs on their online accounts as the first port of call, 24hrs per day. As of October, over 50% of our customers have an online account.

Communication

- ✓ We know that some of our customer like face-to-face contact, so in June 2024 as part of our Big Door Knock campaign we knocked on 4720 doors and completed 1248 surveys.
- ✓ 87% of our customers told us that they know how to report a complaint.
- ✓ We also delivered our Summer 2024 edition of the Voice newsletter which told customers how to escalate complaints.
- ✓ Complaint investigating managers call every customer to understand their concerns. We are working with our customers to ensure our complaint responses meet any needs such as learning difficulties and offer a customer advocacy service.
- ✓ Customer-facing staff are recording customer contact by using a mobile housing app while out on visits.
- ✓ We are engaging more with our interpretation services to support our customers who don't use English as their first language.
- ✓ We have updated our repair call scripts to our out-of-hours provider, to ensure our customers received continuity of service at evenings and weekends.
- ✓ Customers can now complete a new post call survey with our out-of-hours provider – Lemon.
- ✓ We have sent out regular communications by email and SMS to keep customers up to date on repairs and service issues.
- ✓ More customers are accessing our call back feature, 2339 call-backs were completed in 1.2 average attempts.
- ✓ We have changed the Customer Service Team's working pattern to reflect our busy call periods to ensure we are providing good coverage during peak times.
- ✓ We have added service messages to our phone system to promote customers to check their heating during the Autumn / Winter months and to acknowledge busy call periods.
- ✓ Our first call resolution scores from customers completing post call surveys have averaged 72% for this period. We have also seen excellent scores in our Customer Service Officers being polite and knowledgeable averaging at 97%.



Other changes we have made following your feedback

- ✓ Our Gateway Membership Team (GMT) selected and led a customer scrutiny session in July 2024 on fly-tipping and dumped rubbish. This scrutiny generated an 11-point action plan and an idea for a, " Love Your Neighbourhood" program which we will be launching at the end of 2024/25.
- ✓ We have purchased more mobile CCTV units to monitor our Estates for fly tipping and ASB.
- ✓ 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 damp and mould enquiries, repairs diagnostics, setting clear expectations and using our digital platform.
- ✓ The Contact Centre has recently completed in-house training on damp and mould and repairs diagnostics.
- ✓ Following consultation with our GMT we have updated our Recharges policy to make sure that our customers that cause damage to our homes, do not take resources from tenants who take pride in theirs.
- ✓ Following an Anti-Social Behaviour Housing Ombudsman determination, our Housing Managers has reviewed the case learnings with the Housing Team in line with our updated Anti-Social Behaviour and Good Neighbourhood Management policies.
- ✓ For Anti-Social Behaviour cases we are using our new CRM Safer Communities Systems to better record and manage cases. Part of this offers mediation at early stages and more referrals to other partners throughout the duration of the case.
- ✓ For noise nuisance cases we are using expertise from Environmental Health colleagues and have

purchased anti-vibration mats and door bumper strips to help reduce noise-transference.

- ✓ We have identified continuous training is required with our complaint investigating managers and completed a “complaints lunch and learn” session in May to ensure investigating managers are responding to complaints in line with the new Housing Ombudsman code and remedies guidance.
- ✓ We have also completed our Housing Ombudsman self-assessment in line with the new code and updated our Customer Complaints and Feedback Policy to reflect the required changes.



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. 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 have received our annual landlord report for 2023/24 and have implemented the lessons learned with our Customer Experience Committee and Gateway Membership Team.](#)

We are also actively sharing Housing Ombudsman complaint determinations and press releases with our Leadership Team to drive a positive complaints culture, as well as providing weekly complaints and compliments report to our Leadership Team. The table below provides details of the reasons why a 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"> The landlord's response to the resident's concerns about structural issues of the building. The landlord's handling of the resident's reports of anti-social behaviour (ASB). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Severe maladministration in landlord's handling of the resident's reports about ASB. Maladministration in landlord's handling of the resident's: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Reports about building defects and inadequate noise insulation. Complaint. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The customer was compensated in line with the Ombudsman remedies guidance. Within 4 weeks our Group Director of Operations wrote to the customer to apologise for our failings. We completed refresher training our ASB and Good Neighbourhood policies with our Housing Team. Within 12 weeks we completed a comprehensive review of our ASB policies and practices dealing with reports of noise which factored in the Ombudsman "Noise" spotlight report. Within 16 weeks we completed a case review and made changes to our policies to prevent similar future complaints.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The landlord's handling of a boiler repairs. The landlord's response on staff conduct. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No maladministration in respect of the landlord's handling of the resident's reports of boiler repairs. resident's reports of staff conduct and complaint handling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The customer was paid the goodwill amounts offered at stage one and two.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The landlord's handling and response to the residents reports of anti-social behaviour. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maladministration in the landlord's response to the resident's reports of ASB. • Maladministration in the landlord's complaint handling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Group Director of Operations wrote to the customers apologising for our failings. • The customer was compensated in line with the Ombudsman remedies guidance. • The customer was sent a letter regarding communication methods to provide a more effective service.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The landlord's handling of reports of issues with drainage on communal grounds. • The resident's associated reports of damp and mould in the property 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The landlord has made an offer of redress in its response to the resident's reports of communal drainage issues, prior to investigation which, in the Ombudsman's opinion, resolves the complaint satisfactorily. * • No maladministration with the landlord's response to the residents reports of damp and mould. <p>*Determination received October 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The customer was paid the goodwill amounts offered at stage one and two.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The complaint is about the landlord's handling of repairs, including cracked tiles and water stains. • Their concerns about staff conduct. • The landlord's handling of ongoing 	<p>Awaiting outcome</p>	

repairs to the property, including the kitchen, bathroom and porch. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The landlord's handling of reports of missed appointments.		
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Customer Representatives

At present, we have three volunteer Customer Representatives who collaborate with the Leadership Team or Director, they have assisted with 16 stage two complaints. 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 Watford Community Housing 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 emailing Feedback@wcht.org.uk.