

Annual Report 2020 / 2021

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Introduction

Yoker Housing Association Limited (the Association) aims to provide an excellent service to all its customers. However, there are times when we do not always get things right and fall short of the standard that we wish to achieve. When customers are unhappy with an aspect of our service, we want to deal with these issues as quickly as possible and find an effective solution.

When handling complaints, the Association aims to make it as easy as possible for tenants and other customers to let us know why they are unhappy and for us to inform them of what we are doing to resolve their issues. To ensure that a customer complaint can be dealt with as effectively as possible, all staff employed by the Association have received important training in relation to dealing with complaints.

The Association publishes information on a quarterly basis in relation complaint outcomes and actions that have been taken to improve its services.

This annual report both summarises and builds upon the quarterly reports published by the Association. The report includes:

- Performance statistics, in line with the performance indicators published by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) and
- Complaint trends and the actions that have been taken to improve services following complaints being received.

This report provides an overview of the complaints handling procedure and key performance information relating to complaints that were received and investigated during the year 2020 / 2021 which covers the period 1st of April 2020 to 31st of March 2021. The report also provides comparative information for the years 2019 / 2020 and 2018 / 2019.

The report provides information under the following headings:

1. The Complaints Handling Process

- What is a complaint?
- How are complaints investigated?

2. Complaints Report

- Number of complaints received
- How complaints were received
- Escalation of complaints to Stage 2 of the complaints handling procedure
- Complaints investigated by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO)
- Who made complaints?
- Equalities
- The time taken to respond to complaints
- The types of complaints that were received
- Customer satisfaction
- The outcome to complaints
- Learning from complaints

The Complaints Handling Process

In accordance with the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010, the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) developed a series of model Complaints Handling Procedures (CHP) for use across the public sector. The legislation was introduced to improve how complaints within the public sector are handled through the development of simplified and standardised complaints handling procedures.

As part of this process, the SPSO developed a model complaints procedure for housing providers that all housing associations in Scotland were required to adopt prior to October 2012. The Association implemented the complaints handling procedure on the 17th of September 2012.

The SPSO has subsequently reviewed the model complaints handling procedure and placed a requirement on housing associations to implement the revised model complaints handling procedure by the 1st of April 2021. The Association implemented the revised complaints handling procedure on the 28th of January 2021.

What is a complaint?

“A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction received from customers about the Association’s action or lack of action, or about the service that the Association provides or has been provided on the Association’s behalf by another party”.

Complaints provide the Association with valuable feedback on how we deliver services. Complaints also allow us to improve our services and improve how we manage partnerships with our contractors.

Customers can make a complaint in person, in writing, by telephone or by email. The types of things that customers can complain about include:

- Failure or refusal to provide a service;
- Inadequate quality or standard of service, or an unreasonable delay in providing a service;
- Delays in responding to enquiries or requests;
- Unfairness, bias or prejudice in service delivery;
- Lack of provision, or the provision of misleading, unsuitable or incorrect advice or information;
- A repair that has not been carried out properly or in an agreed timeframe;
- Dissatisfaction with one of the Association’s policies or its impact on the individual;
- Failure to properly apply law, procedure or guidance when delivering services;
- Failure to follow the appropriate administrative process;
- Conduct, treatment by or attitude of a member of staff or contractor; or
- Disagreement with a decision.

A complaint is not:

- A routine first-time request for a service;
- A request for compensation only;
- Issues that are in court or have already been heard by a court or a tribunal;
- Disagreement with a decision where there is a statutory procedure for challenging that decision (such as for freedom of information and subject access requests), or an established appeals process followed throughout the sector;
- A request for information under the Data Protection or Freedom of Information (Scotland) Acts;
- A grievance by a staff member or a grievance relating to employment or staff recruitment;
- A concern raised internally by a member of staff (which was not about a service they received, such as a whistleblowing concern);
- A concern about a child or an adult's safety;
- An attempt to reopen a previously concluded complaint or to have a complaint reconsidered where we have already given our final decision;
- Abuse or unsubstantiated allegations about the Association or staff where such actions would be covered by other internal policies; or
- A concern about the actions or service of a different organisation, where the Association has no involvement in the issue.

How are complaints investigated?

The Association's complaints procedure has two stages. How complaints are investigated depends on the nature and complexity of the complaint. The different stages of the complaints handling procedure are:

Stage 1 – Frontline Resolution:

This stage allows complaints to be resolved quickly and close to the point of service delivery. Complaints are usually dealt with within five working days and the types of action taken in response to a complaint may include an on-the-spot apology or an explanation of why something has gone wrong.

If a complainant remains dissatisfied after their complaint has been dealt with, they can ask for their complaint to be investigated through Stage 2 of the procedure.

Stage 2 – Investigation:

Stage 2 deals with two types of complaint: those that have not been resolved at Stage 1 and those that are complex and require a detailed investigation.

When using Stage 2, the complaint will be investigated fully, and the complainant will be issued with a full response within twenty working days.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied after their complaint has been investigated under Stage 2 of the procedure, they can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) to independently review the complaint.

The diagram below provides an overview of the complaints handling process.

Complaints Procedure

You can make your complaint in person, by phone, by email or in writing

We have a **two-stage complaints procedure**. We will always try to deal with your complaint quickly. But if it is clear that the matter will need investigation, we will tell you and keep you updated on our progress.



Stage 1: Frontline Response

We will always try to respond to your complaint quickly, within **five working days** if we can.

If you are dissatisfied with our response, you can ask us to consider your complaint at stage 2.



Stage 2: Investigation

We will look at your complaint at this stage if you are dissatisfied with our response at stage 1. We also look at some complaints immediately at this stage, if it is clear that they need investigation.

We will acknowledge your complaint within **three working days**.

We will confirm the points of the complaint to be investigated and what you want to achieve.

We will investigate the complaint and give you our decision as soon as possible. This will be after no more than **twenty working days** *unless* there is clearly a good reason for needing more time.



Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

If, after receiving our final decision on your complaint, you remain dissatisfied with our decision or the way we have handled your complaint, you can ask the SPSO to consider it.

There are some complaints about housing that have an alternative route for independent review. We will tell you how to seek independent review when we give you our final response on your complaint.

Annual Complaints Handling Procedure Report

Number of complaints received

A total of eighteen complaints were received and investigated by the Association between during the reporting year. This compares to the sixteen for 2019 / 2020 and nineteen for 2018 / 2019. The table below shows the number of complaints received and investigated at each Stage of the complaints handling procedure for the last three years.

	2020 / 2021	2019 / 2020	2018 / 2019
Stage 1 only	16	16	16
Stage 1 then escalated to Stage 2	2	0	1
Stage 2 only	0	0	2
Total	18	16	19

Performance: The number of complaints decreased from 2018 / 2019 to 2019 / 2020. However, the number of complaints received during the reporting year was greater than in the previous year.

How complaints were received

Customers who are dissatisfied with a service that they receive from the Association are encouraged to complain and can do so in a number of ways. Customers have reported complaint using a variety of methods. Of the eighteen complaints received during the reporting year, fifty-six percent were received by telephone, twenty-seven percent by email, eleven percent by letter and one six percent by complaint form. The table below provides a comparison of how complaints have been registered for each of the last three years.

	2020 / 2021	2019 / 2020	2018 / 2019
Telephone	10	11	11
Email	5	3	4
Letter	2	-	-
In person	-	2	2
Complaints Form	1	-	2
Total	18	16	19

Performance: Over the last three years telephone has been the most used method of complaint. During the reporting year the Association's offices were closed to the public in line with Scottish Government guidance in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic. This prevented customers from being able to lodge complaints in person.

It is anticipated that the Association will be able to re-open its offices during 2021 / 2022 which in turn will allow customers the opportunity to register complaints in person.

Escalation of complaints to Stage 2 of the complaints handling procedure

Complainants who are unhappy with how their complaint was dealt with under Stage 1 of the procedure have the right for their complaint to be considered and investigated in accordance with Stage 2 of the procedure. Of the eighteen complaints originally investigated at Stage 1 during the reporting year, two (11.1%) complainants asked for their complaint to be escalated to Stage 2 of the procedure.

This compares 0.0% of complainants during 2019 / 2020 and 6.3% of complainants during 2018 / 2020 asking for their complaint to be escalated to Stage 2 of the complaints handling procedure.

Performance: The Association experienced an increase in the number of complainants asking for their complaint to be escalated to Stage 2 of the procedures during reporting year compared to the previous year. The Association aims meet customer expectation by resolving all frontline complaints at Stage 1 of the procedure.

Complaints investigated by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO)

Complainants who are unhappy with how their complaint was dealt with under Stage 2 of the procedure have the right for their complaint to be independently reviewed by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). In line with SPSO recommendations, every complainant who has their complaint closed at stage two of the procedure is provided with details of the SPSO.

During the last three years no complainant has asked for the SPSO to independently review their complaint.

Who made complaints?

Complaints can be made by any person who receives a service from the Association. Those who receive a service from the Association include tenants, owner occupiers who receive a factoring service and housing applicants. During the reporting year sixty-seven percent of complaints investigated were received from tenants of the Association while the remaining thirty-four percent were received from owner occupiers. The table below provides a comparison of who has registered complaints for each of the last three years.

	2020 / 2021	2019 / 2020	2018 / 2019
Tenants	12	14	12
Owner Occupiers	6	2	7
Housing Applicants	-	-	-
Total	18	16	19

The complaints received from tenants during the reporting year related to 1.9% of the Association's rented stock. This compares to 2.2% for 2019 / 2020 and 1.9% for 2018 / 2019. The complaints received from owner occupiers during the reporting year related to 2.2% of the Association's factored stock. This compares to 0.7% for 2019 / 2020 and 2.5% for 2018 / 2019.

Performance: The number of complaints received from both tenants and owner occupiers during 2020 / 2021 relate to a very small proportion of both the Association's social rented stock and factored stock.

Equalities

The Scottish Housing Regulator previously asks the Association to provide information regarding the number of complaints that relate to issues surrounding equalities. Equalities complaints are those that make reference to discrimination, victimisation or harassment, or any policy that has a detrimental impact of any of the nine protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, which are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex or sexual orientation. As part of its commitment to the promotion of equalities the Association continues to record this information.

None of the complaints received during the reporting year related to equalities issues. This is consistent with the previous two years where no complaints recorded related to equalities issues.

The time taken to respond to complaints

Complaints investigated at Stage 1 of the procedure should be investigated and concluded within five working days while complaints investigated at Stage 2 of the procedure should be investigated within twenty working days. All eighteen complaints received during the reporting year were concluded within the target timescales. This is consistent with the previous two years during which all complaints were concluded within the SPSO's target timescales.

The table below shows the Association's performance against the SPSO's target timescales for concluding complaints that were received in the last three years.

	SPSO Target	Performance 2020 / 2021	Performance 2019 / 2020	Performance 2018 / 2019
YHA Stage 1 response	5 days	1.9 working days	1.2 working day	1.5 working days
YHA Stage 2 response	20 days	19 working days	n/a	13 working days

The average time for concluding Stage 1 complaints received during the reporting year was higher than that for the previous two years. The average time for concluding the Stage 2 complaints received during 2020 / 2021 was also higher than in previous years.

Performance: During the reporting year the Association concluded all complaints within the SPSO's target timescales. Despite being within the target timescales, the time taken to conclude Stage 2 complaints during the year was significantly higher than for previous two years.

The types of complaints that were received

During the reporting year the Association registered complaints relating to the Association's Housing, Maintenance and Finance services. Fifty-six percent of complaints received during the year related to maintenance services while twenty-eight percent related to housing services and seventeen percent related to finance services.

The table below compares the number of complaints registered against each department over the last three years.

	2020 / 2021	2019 / 2020	2018 / 2019
Housing Services	5	6	5
Maintenance Services	10	10	14
Finance Services	3	-	-
Total	18	16	19

Customers have right to complain about any dissatisfaction that they have with any aspect of the service that they receive from the Association. During the reporting year the largest number of complaints received related to dissatisfaction with a contractor which amounted to fifty percent of complaints received.

The table below details the number and nature of complaints registered against each department during the reporting year.

	Maintenance	Housing	Finance	Total
Dissatisfaction with Contractor	6	3	-	9
Dissatisfaction with Service Provided	2	1	2	5
Dissatisfaction with Policy / Procedure	2	1	1	4
Total	10	5	3	18

The table below details the number and nature of complaints registered against the Association over the last three years.

	2020 / 2021	2019 / 2020	2018 / 2019	Total
Dissatisfaction with Contractor	9	9	11	29
Dissatisfaction with Service Provided	5	5	5	15
Dissatisfaction with Policy / Procedure	4	-	-	4
Dissatisfaction with Staff	-	-	2	2
Dissatisfaction with Communication	-	2	1	3

Performance: During the reporting year dissatisfaction with a contractor was the most significant cause of complaint which is consistent with previous years. The Association works closely with contractors with the aim of providing the best possible service and therefore reduce levels of dissatisfaction.

Customer satisfaction

During the reporting year, fifty-six percent of complainants were satisfied with the outcome to their complaint. No feedback was received from the complainants who asked for their complaints be escalated to Stage 2 of the procedure. This satisfaction level is significantly lower than for previous years where eighty-one percent and ninety-four percent of complainants were satisfied with the outcome to their complaint during 2019 / 2020 and 2018 / 2019 respectively.

During the reporting year seventy-eight percent of complainants were satisfied with how their complaint was dealt with. No feedback was received from the complainants who asked for their complaints be escalated to Stage 2 of the procedure. This was lower than for 2019 / 2020 where ninety-four percent of complaints were satisfied with how their complaints were dealt with. No comparative figures are available for the year 2018 / 2019.

The outcome to complaints

During the reporting year three of the complaints registered were upheld. The two complaints that were escalated to Stage 2 were not upheld following conclusion at both stages of the complaints handling procedure. A summary of the three complaints that were upheld is provided under the "Learning from complaints" section of this report.

The table below provides a breakdown of the number and percentage of complaints upheld for the last three years.

	Total Complaints	Upheld (Number)	Upheld (%)
2020 / 2021	18	3	16.7%
2019 / 2020	16	5	31.3%
2018 / 2019	19	9	47.4%

Performance: During the reporting year the number of complaints that were upheld were significantly lower than for the previous years.

Learning from complaints

A requirement under the complaints handling procedure is for the Association to analyse complaints information in order to identify the cause of complaints and to determine whether any trends occur in relation to the types of complaints being received. This information is then used to determine whether or not improvements have to be made to services provided by the Association.

This section provides information about trends and learning opportunities that were identified as a result monitoring and analysing the complaints received and investigated during reporting year.

The analysis confirmed that four complaints were received in relation to policy and procedure. However, these complaints related to different issues with one complaint relating to the cyclical maintenance programme, one relating to the waiting list and the allocation of housing, one relating to the Tenant Reward Scheme and one relating to essential works that are permitted in accordance with the Scottish Government's Covid-19 guidance. In all cases the complaints were not upheld.

Five complaints received related to the services provided by the Association's stair cleaning and backcourt de-littering contractor. Two complaints related to the stair cleaning service but following investigation by staff it was found that the service had been provided on both occasions and the complaints were not upheld. Two complaints related to dissatisfaction with the de-littering service but following discussion with the contractor and a property inspection, it was noted that the service had been carried out and these complaints were not upheld. The fifth complaint also related to dissatisfaction with the de-littering service. Following discussion with the contractor it was confirmed that the property in question had been missed. The contractor explained that this was an oversight on their part and subsequently provided the service to that property. This complaint was upheld and treated as a learning opportunity with additional monitoring processes being introduced to ensure no repeat of this in the future.

The analysis confirmed that a further four complaints related to dissatisfaction with a contractor. No trends existed as these complaints related to different issues.

Five complaints were also received in relation to dissatisfaction with the service provided. No trends existed as these complaints related to different issues. However, one of the complaints related to dissatisfaction with the Association continuing to provide backcourt services during the lockdown period imposed by the Scottish Government in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. This complaint was not upheld because the works were permitted in accordance with Scottish Government guidance.

The two complaints that were escalated to Stage 2 of the procedure were received from an owner occupier who submitted two separate complaints regarding the Association's roof maintenance contract. The complaints were fully investigated and a full response was issued on each occasion. Neither complaint was upheld.

One complaint relating to dissatisfaction with the service provided was not upheld but resulted in a learning opportunity and a change to the Association's procedures. The complainant was unhappy at not being able to access the tenement loft to arrange the installation of Sky television. The complaint was not upheld because the arrangements for connecting to the communal satellite dish were explained during the tenancy sign-up interview as well as being detailed in the tenancy agreement and resident handbook. To provide further clarity, Housing Services subsequently developed a separate advice sheet regarding television and internet services which is now issued to all incoming tenants.

Complaints that were upheld

During the reporting year three of the eighteen complaints that were registered were upheld. A summary of the nature and outcome to these complaints are detailed below:

Complaint 1 – The customer reported that the Association's contractor has failed to provide a de-littering service at their property. Following investigation the contractor confirmed that they had failed to provide the service owing to an oversight on their part. The contractor subsequently visited the property and provided the necessary service. The Association issued an apology to the customer and introduced additional monitoring process to ensure that this would not be repeated in the future.

Complaint 2 – The customer reported that the Association's contractor had left dirt in the close after access the loft area in order to carry out repair works. Following investigation the contractor accepted the complaint before returning and cleaning the common area of the property. The Association issued an apology to the customer.

Complaint 3 – The customer reported that the contractor who had previously attended their property to measure a broken window had failed to contact them to advise of when the window would be repaired. The contractor accepted that they had not kept communication with the tenant and subsequently returned to repair the window. The Association issued an apology to the tenant and reiterated to the contractor the importance of communicating with customers.

How to Access the Complaints Handling Procedure

Copies of the Association's complaints handling procedure can be collected from the Association's office or can be posted out to customers.

The following information can be viewed or downloaded from the Association's website at www.yokerha.org.uk/complaints

- Details of how to complain;
- The Association's Complaints Policy;
- The Association's Complaints Handling Procedure;
- The Association's Customer Complaints Handling Procedure;
- Complaints Form;
- Information relating Significant Performance Failure; and
- Information relating to Whistleblowing Complaints

For further information regarding the contents of this report or our complaints handling procedure please contact Housing by telephone on 0141 950 9052 or by email at housing@yokerha.org.uk.