

Complaints Handling Procedure Report 2023 / 2024
(1 April 2023 – 30 June 2023)

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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 achieve this and fall short of the standards we wish to attain. When customers are unhappy with any 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 tell us about their concerns, and for us to inform them of what we are doing to resolve them.

To ensure that a customer complaint can be dealt with as effectively as possible, all Association staff have received important training in relation to dealing with complaints.

This report provides customers with an overview of the complaints handling procedure and information relating to complaints that were received and investigated between the 1st of April 2023 and the 30th of June 2023.

The report provides information under the following headings:

The Complaints Handling Process

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

Complaints Report

- The number of complaints received.
- Escalation of complaints to Stage 2 of the complaints handling procedure.
- Complaints investigated by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO).
- Who made complaints?
- The time taken to respond to complaints.
- Complaints relating to issues of equality and diversity.
- The types of complaints that were received.
- The outcome to complaints.
- Customer Satisfaction.
- Learning from complaints.

How to Access the Complaints Handling Procedure

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. All registered social landlords in Scotland were required to adopt this prior to October 2012. The Association implemented the new procedure on the 17th of September 2012.

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

A requirement of the complaints handling procedure is for the Association to publish, on a quarterly basis, the details of all complaints received and investigated.

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. A complaint can also relate to dissatisfaction about the service that is 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:

- Delays in responding to enquiries and requests;
- Failure to provide a service;
- The Association's standard of service;
- Dissatisfaction with Association policy;
- Treatment by / or attitude of a member of staff;
- Complaints relating to issues of equality and diversity;
- The Association's failure to follow proper procedure.

The Complaints Handling Process (continued)

How are complaints investigated?

The Association's complaints procedure has two stages. How a complaint is investigated depends on the nature and complexity of the issue(s) raised.

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. 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 you remain dissatisfied after your complaint has been dealt with, you can ask for your 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, your complaint will be investigated fully and you will be issued with a full response within twenty working days.

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO):

If you remain dissatisfied after your complaint has been investigated under Stage 2 of the procedure, you can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman to independently review the complaint.

Complaints Report

The number of complaints received

A total of four complaints were received and investigated by the Association between the 1st of April 2023 and the 30th of June 2023. The table below shows the number of complaints received and investigated at each Stage of the complaints handling procedure compared to the corresponding period last year.

	01/04/23 - 30/06/23	01/04/22 - 30/06/22	Trend
Stage 1 Only	3	3	↔
Stage 1 & Stage 2	-	-	↔
Stage 2 Only	1	-	↑
Total	4	3	↑

The total number of complaints received between the 1st of April 2023 and the 30th of June 2023 is slightly higher than the number of complaints registered for the equivalent period last year.

The table below gives a breakdown of the number of complaints received and investigated between the 1st of April 2023 and the 30th of June 2023 by quarter for 2023 / 2024.

Quarter	Stage 1 Only	Stages 1 & 2	Stage 2 Only	Total
01/04/23 to 30/06/23	3	-	1	4
01/07/23 to 30/09/23	-	-	-	-
01/10/23 to 31/12/23	-	-	-	-
01/01/24 to 31/03/24	-	-	-	-
Total	3	-	1	4

Service users can express dissatisfaction in a number of ways which include telephone, letter, complaint form, email or by reporting a complaint in person. Of the four complaints received, three (75.0%) were received by email and one (25.0%) was received by letter.

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. The three complaints investigated at Stage 1 of the procedure between the 1st of April 2023 and the 30th of June 2023 were not escalated to Stage 2 of the procedure.

Complaints Report (continued)

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 a complaint closed at Stage 2 of the procedure is provided with details of the SPSO. The tenant who had their complaint investigated under Stage 2 of the procedure did not ask the SPSO for an independent review.

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. Three (75.0%) complaints were received from tenants of the Association. Of the Association's total social rented stock of 648, the three complaints relate to 0.5% of the Association's stock.

The one (25.0%) remaining complaint was received from an owner occupier who lives within a property factored by the Association. Of the Association's 275 factored properties, this complaint relates to 0.4% of the Association's factored stock.

The time taken to respond to complaints

Complaints investigated at Stage 1 of the procedure should be investigated and concluded within the statutory timescale of five working days while complaints investigated at Stage 2 of the procedure should be investigated within twenty working days. All four complaints were concluded within the statutory timescales.

The table below shows the Association's performance, in relation to the time taken to conclude complaints, compared to the corresponding period last year.

	SPSO Target	Performance 01/04/23 – 30/06/23	Performance 01/04/22 – 30/06/22	Trend
YHA Stage 1 response	5 days	2.3 working days	1.3 working days	
YHA Stage 2 response	20 days	17.0 working days	n/a	n/a

The average time taken to conclude complaints investigated at Stage 1 of the procedure is higher than for the equivalent period last year. Despite this increase, the average time taken to conclude Stage 1 complaints remained significantly lower than the statutory timescale of five working days.

There is no comparable performance figure for Stage 2 complaints for the corresponding period last year. However, the average time taken to conclude Stage 2 complaints during the reporting period is within the statutory timescale of twenty-working days.

Complaints Report (continued)

Complaints relating to issues of equality and diversity

The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) previously requested information from the Association regarding the number of complaints that relate to issues surrounding equalities. Equalities complaints refers to any complaints that makes reference to discrimination, victimisation or harassment, or any policy that has a detrimental impact on any of the nine protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. These protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex or sexual orientation.

The complaints investigated during the reporting period did not refer to discrimination, victimisation or harassment in relation to the protected characteristics defined by the Equality Act 2010.

The types of complaints that were received

Two (50.0%) complaints investigated between the 1st of April 2023 and the 30th of June 2023 were made in relation to the services provided by Association's Property Services Department. The remaining two (50.0%) complaints were made in relation to the service provided by the Association's Housing Services Department.

Three (75.0%) complaints related to dissatisfaction with the service provided by the Association while one (25.0%) complaint related to dissatisfaction with a contractor.

The table below illustrates the nature of complaints received by each department during the reporting period.

	Property Services	Housing Services	Finance Services	Total
Dissatisfaction with Contractor	1	-	-	1
Dissatisfaction with Staff	-	-	-	-
Dissatisfaction with Service Provided	1	2	-	3
Dissatisfaction with Policy / Procedure	-	-	-	-
Dissatisfaction with Communications	-	-	-	-
Total	2	2	-	4

Complaints Report (continued)

The types of complaints that were received (continued)

An analysis of the complaints investigated has been conducted with a view to determine whether or not any trends exist in relation to the nature of the complaints received. The analysis confirmed that three complaints related to dissatisfaction with the service provided. However, these complaints related to different issues. Details of the three complaints are presented below:

- **Complaint 1** – This complaint was investigated in accordance with Stage 1 of the procedure. The complaint was received from an owner occupier who believed that tenants within the close were being allowed to ignore their responsibilities with regards to the upkeep of the common areas. The complainant was also unhappy at incurring charges relating to invoices raised in connection to the clearance of blocked drains in the backcourt. The Association confirmed that individual tenants had been lettered and interviewed regarding their responsibilities in relation to the common areas. The Association also confirmed that a close cleaning consultation exercise was currently underway. In regards to the property management invoices, the owner was advised that he had been subject to his share of charges in accordance with the title deeds. The Association also confirmed that where a particular household is identified as being responsible for the blocked drains, they would be recharged the full costs of any associated invoices. The complaint was not upheld.
- **Complaint 2** – This complaint was investigated in accordance with Stage 1 of the procedure. The complaint was received from a tenant who was unhappy after receiving a letter regarding her rent arrears balance rather than being contacted by email or telephone. The tenant was advised that the letter was only issued after she had failed to respond to a telephone message left a couple of days earlier. The tenant was also unhappy because the letter had been issued with the incorrect name stated. The Association accepted responsibility for this error and issued an apology to the tenant. Based on the letter containing the incorrect name, the complaint was upheld.
- **Complaint 3** – This complaint was investigated in accordance with Stage 2 of the procedure. The complaint was received from a tenant who was unhappy at receiving a rechargeable repair bill following the replacement of his bathroom which had been subject to large-scale damage. The tenant stated that the shower was subject to wear and tear and was not damaged. However, the tenant provided different accounts of how the damage had occurred. Furthermore, given the extent of the damage, the Association sought a report from the contractor regarding the possible cause. The contractor confirmed that owing to the safety specification of the shower cubicle glass, the damage noted could not have been caused by the reasons provided. The contractor confirmed that such extensive damage could only be the result of deliberate vandalism. This aspect of the complaint was not upheld.

The tenant also stated that the Association had failed to action previous repair issues in relation to his shower. The Association responded by confirming details of all repair reports received and the subsequent repair works that were undertaken. This aspect of the complaint was not upheld.

Complaints Report (continued)

The types of complaints that were received (continued)

The tenant stated that he was unhappy with how the Association responded to his report of damage to the shower and advised that the Association had failed to clean up the smashed glass. However, Association staff visited the property within thirty minutes of the report being received. Furthermore, during the visit an appointment was arranged, with the tenants agreement, for the contractor to attend the following morning. The contractor confirmed that upon his arrival the smashed glass had already been removed. This aspect of the complaint was not upheld.

The tenant stated that he was unhappy that the Association had failed to recognise that the previous shower cubicle had been unsuitable for his needs. The Association had provided the tenant with information explaining how he could obtain permission to change the shower cubicle. The tenant was also provided with information on how to apply for a medical adaptation. This information was also given to the local MP who was liaising with the Association on behalf of the tenant. The tenant failed to apply for permission to replace the bathroom or provide information to support a medical adaptation. This aspect of the complaint was not upheld.

The tenant was unhappy at being removed from the kitchen replacement programme owing to his outstanding rechargeable repairs. The tenant had been notified by letter and also during a home visit of the outstanding rechargeable repairs and invited to enter into a suitable repayment arrangement that would allow inclusion within the replacement programme. The tenant refused to enter into a suitable repayment arrangement. This aspect of the complaint was not upheld.

The analysis confirmed that one complaint related to dissatisfaction with a contractor. Details of the complaint are highlighted below:

- **Complaint 1** – This complaint was investigated in accordance with Stage 1 of the procedure. The complaint was received from a tenant who expressed dissatisfaction with the emergency contractor service. The tenant reported that his keys had been stolen and he had therefore contacted the emergency contractor to obtain access to the property. The emergency contractor advised the tenant that he had telephoned the incorrect number and terminated the call. The tenant attempted to contact the contractor on a second occasion and was unsuccessful. The tenant was able to access the property after obtaining spare keys from a friend. The Association confirmed that telephone number provided on the answering service was correct and issued an apology to the tenant. Following the complaint, The Association appointed a new emergency contractor for joinery work. The complaint was upheld.

When analysing complaints, the Association assesses the risk level that complaints pose to the Association. When assessing the risk level, the Association considers factors including whether or not complaints are a result of the Association's non-compliance with legal or regulatory obligations or whether the complaint could lead to reputational damage. All four complaints investigated during the reporting period are considered to be of low risk to the Association.

Complaints Report (continued)

The outcome to complaints

Of the three complaints investigated at Stage 1 of the procedure, two (66.7%) were upheld. The one complaint investigated solely at Stage 2 of the procedure was not upheld.

Of the two complaints upheld, one (50.0%) related to dissatisfaction with the service provided by the Association and one (50.0%) related to dissatisfaction with a contractor.

Customer satisfaction

Following investigation at Stage 1 of the procedure, two (66.7%) of the three complainants were satisfied with the outcome to their complaint. The one remaining complainant failed to provide feedback.

Following investigation at Stage 1 of the procedure, two (66.7%) of the three complainants were satisfied with how their complaint was dealt with following conclusion of the investigation. The remaining one complainant failed to provide feedback.

Following investigation at Stage 2 of the procedure, the complainant failed to provide feedback regarding their satisfaction in relation to both the outcome of their complaint and how their complaint was dealt with.

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 actions need to be taken in order to improve services provided by the Association.

During the period from the 1st of April 2023 to the 30th of June 2023, the Association successfully implemented the SPSO's Complaints Handling Procedure and investigated four complaints in accordance with this procedure. All complaint information was collected and recorded accordingly, and the complaints were investigated and concluded within the published timescales. The information collected has been analysed with a view to identifying the cause of complaints, learning opportunities and any necessary service improvements or staff training requirements.

During this process, it was noted that three complaints related to dissatisfaction with the service provided by the Association. These complaints related to different issues and in one case the complaint was upheld. In this case, a meeting was held with staff to emphasise the importance ensuring that all correspondence is thoroughly checked before being issued to service users.

It was also noted that one complaint related to dissatisfaction with a contractor. This complaint was upheld and following an investigation into the complaint, a new emergency contractor was appointed for joinery work.

Following the analysis of complaints, no further training needs for staff were identified.

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 on 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 to Significant Performance Failures; and
- Information relating to Whistleblowing Complaints.

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