

Complaints Handling Procedure Report 2021 / 2022
(1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022)

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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 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 highlight 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 2021 and the 31st of March 2022.

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.
- 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.
- The types of complaints that were received.
- The outcome to complaints.
- Learning from complaints.

As part of the reporting process, the Association's Management Committee are, on a quarterly basis, provided with key information relating to the indicators published by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) in their documents 'SPSO Complaints Self-Assessment Indicators for the Housing Sector' and 'Complaints Key Performance Indicators for the Model Complaints Handling Procedures'.

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 housing associations in Scotland were required to adopt this prior to October 2012. The Association implemented the 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 Association implemented the revised complaints handling procedure 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 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 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:

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

How are complaints investigated?

The Association's complaints procedure has two stages. How your complaint is investigated depends on the nature and complexity of your 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. 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.

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

Complaints Report

Number of complaints received

A total of fifteen complaints were received and investigated by the Association between the 1st of April 2021 and the 31st of March 2022. The table below shows the number of complaints received and investigated at Stages 1 and 2 of the complaints handling procedure compared to same period last year.

	01/04/21 - 31/03/22	01/04/20 - 31/03/21	Trend
Stage 1 Only	14	16	↓
Stage 1 & Stage 2	-	2	↓
Stage 2 Only	1	-	↑
Total	15	18	↓

The total number of complaints received between the 1st of April 2021 and the 31st of March 2022 is less than the number of complaints registered for the same period last year.

The table below gives a breakdown of the number complaints received and investigated between the 1st of April 2021 and the 31st of March 2022 by quarter for 2021 / 2022.

Quarter	Stage 1 Only	Stages 1 & 2	Stage 2 Only	Total
01/04/21 to 30/06/21	3	-	-	3
01/07/21 to 30/09/21	3	-	1	4
01/10/21 to 31/12/21	5	-	-	5
01/01/22 to 31/03/22	3	-	-	3
Total	14	-	1	15

Of the fifteen complaints received, eight (53.3%) were originally received by telephone, five (33.3%) by email, one (6.7%) by letter and one (6.7%) 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. None of the complainants who has a complaint investigated between the 1st of April 2021 and the 31st of March 2022 asked for their complaint to be escalated to Stage 2 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 2 of the procedure is provided with details of the SPSO. Between the 1st of April 2021 and the 31st of March 2022 one complaint was investigated in accordance with Stage 2 of the procedure. The complainant did not ask the SPSO to review their complaint following conclusion of the investigation.

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. Twelve (80.0%) complaints investigated between the 1st of April 2021 and the 31st of March 2022 were received from tenants of the Association. Of the Association's total social rented stock of 647, the nine complaints relate to 1.9% of the Association's stock. Three (20.0%) complaints received were made by owner-occupiers who receive a factoring service from the Association. Of the Association's total factored stock of 275, the three complaints relate to 1.1% of the factored stock.

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 fifteen complaints received were concluded within the target timescales.

The table below shows the Association's performance compared to the same period last year.

	SPSO Target	Performance 01/04/21 – 31/03/22	Performance 01/04/20 – 31/03/21	Trend
YHA Stage 1 response	5 days	1.6 working days	1.9 working day	↓
YHA Stage 2 response	20 days	17.0 working days	19.0 working days	↓

The response time for complaints investigated at Stage 1 between the 1st of April 2021 and the 31st of March 2022 is less than it was for the same period last year.

The response time for complaints investigated at Stage 2 between the 1st of April 2021 and the 31st of March 2022 is less than it was for the same period last year.

Equalities

The Scottish Housing Regulator asked the Association to provide information regarding the number of complaints that relate to issues surrounding equalities. Equalities complaints are those that makes 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. These are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex or sexual orientation.

Of the fifteen complaints investigated none related to issues surrounding equalities.

The types of complaints that were received

Ten (66.7%) of the fifteen complaints that were received between the 1st of April 2021 and the 31st of March 2022 related to the services provided by the Association's Maintenance Department. The remaining five (33.3%) complaints related to Housing Services.

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

	Maintenance Services	Housing Services	Finance Services	Total
Dissatisfaction with Contractor	1	1	-	2
Dissatisfaction with Staff	2	1	-	3
Dissatisfaction with Service Provided	7	3	-	10
Dissatisfaction with Policy / Procedure	-	-	-	-
Total	10	5	-	15

Customer satisfaction

Following investigation at Stage 1 of the procedure, four (28.6%) of the fourteen complainants were dissatisfied with the outcome to their complaint. Five (35.7%) complainants were satisfied with the outcome to their complaint while the remaining five (35.7%) complainants failed to provide feedback. In the case of the Stage 2 complaint, the complainant failed to provide feedback in relation to their satisfaction with the outcome to their complaint.

Following investigation at Stage 1 of the procedure, five (35.7%) complainants were dissatisfied with how their complaint was dealt with following conclusion of the investigation. Four (28.6%) complainants were satisfied with how their complaint was dealt with, while the remaining five (35.7%) complainants failed to provide feedback following conclusion at Stage 1 of the procedure. In the case of the Stage 2 complaint, the complainant failed to provide feedback in relation to their satisfaction with how their complaint was dealt with.

The outcome to complaints

Of the fourteen complaints investigated in accordance with Stage 1 of the procedure, four (28.6%) were upheld. The one complaint investigated in accordance with Stage 2 of the procedure was upheld.

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 the services provided by the Association.

Stage 1 Complaints

Nine (64.3%) complaints investigated in accordance with Stage 1 of the procedure related to Maintenance Services while the remaining five (35.7%) related to Housing Services. Nine (64.3%) complaints related to dissatisfaction with the service provided, three (21.4%) complaints related to dissatisfaction with staff and two (14.3%) complaint related to dissatisfaction with a contractor.

The analysis of complaints confirmed that three complaints related to dissatisfaction with staff. However, these complaints related to different issues with one complainant unhappy that the Association's staff were unable to arrange for the maintenance of shrubbery on land belonging to Glasgow City Council, one complainant expressed dissatisfaction with staff implementing procedures with regards to arranging an electrical inspection of his property and one complainant was unhappy at being contacted in relation to rent arrears. In all cases the complaints were not upheld.

Nine complaints received related to dissatisfaction with the service provided. However, these complaints related to different issues. Of these nine complaints three were upheld. The first complaint that was upheld related to a complainant that was unhappy that the repairs she had reported had not been actioned. The repairs were not correctly recorded and the complainant was issued with an apology. The repairs were also prioritised and subsequently completed. The importance of effectively recording and actioning repairs was also communicated to relevant staff members.

The second complaint upheld in relation to dissatisfaction with the service related to weeds becoming overgrown within the backcourt. Following a property inspection it was noted that the weeds in this particular backcourt had not been attended to. Discussions were held with the contractor regarding the level of service and a credit was applied to the complainant's property management account to cover the charge incurred.

The final upheld complaint regarding dissatisfaction with the service provided was received from a housing applicant. The applicant was unhappy after receiving a letter from the Association confirming that her housing application had been cancelled. It was explained that the application has not been cancelled and that the letter had been issued in error. The applicant was issued with an apology.

Six cases that related to dissatisfaction with the service were not upheld. These refer to the following:

- Two complainants were unhappy that they did not qualify for tenant reward, despite not meeting the eligibility criteria stipulated in the Tenant Reward Policy;
- One complainant was unhappy that they were advised to contact Glasgow City Council directly to arrange a bulk uplift, despite this being the correct procedure for non-tenement properties;
- One complainant was unhappy when a contractor failed to attend her property. On investigation it was found that the tenant had recorded the incorrect appointment date in her diary;
- One complainant was unhappy that works to the exterior to the property had not been carried out. It was explained to the tenant that prices were currently being sought in accordance with the Association's Procurement Policy and that work would commence once the procurement process had concluded; and
- One complainant was unhappy that the Association did not agree to paint the doors within her flat despite interior decoration being the responsibility of tenants.

Two case related to dissatisfaction with a contractor of which one was upheld. In the case that was upheld, the complainant was unhappy that the contractor had failed to attend two pre-arranged appointments. The contractor accepted the complaint and an apology was issued to the tenant. A priority appointment was arranged for the day that the complaint was received and the necessary repairs were carried out. The importance of keeping to appointments was highlighted to the contractor.

The complaint of dissatisfaction with a contractor that was not upheld related to the Association's stair cleaning service. The complaint advised that the service had not been provided for several months. However, following a property inspection and interviews with other residents it was confirmed the service was being carried out on a weekly basis.

Stage 2 Complaints

The one complaint investigated in accordance with Stage 2 of the procedure related to Maintenance Services and was made in relation to dissatisfaction with the service received from the Association. The tenant was dissatisfied after the Association's contractor failed to attend her property on two separate occasions to carry out repairs to her fence. The complainant was also dissatisfied after Association staff had failed to provide her with updates after initially reporting the damage to the fence. Following investigation, it was noted that the contractor had failed to attend the property on two occasions and that staff had failed to communicate with the tenant after she initially reported the issue. The complainant was issued with an apology and the repairs were prioritised and subsequently completed. The importance of keeping to appointments was discussed with the contractor. Furthermore, the importance of communicating with service users was reiterated to the relevant staff members.

You can request a copy of our Complaints Handling Procedure by visiting the Association's office or by contacting Housing Management by telephone on 0141 950 9052.