

Complaints Handling Procedure Report 2022 / 2023
(1 April 2022 – 31 December 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 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 let us know 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 2022 and the 31st of December 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
 - 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.

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 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 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.

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 eighteen complaints were received and investigated by the Association between the 1st of April 2022 and the 31st of December 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.

	01/04/22 - 31/12/22	01/04/21 - 31/12/21	Trend
Stage 1 Only	17	11	↑
Stage 1 & Stage 2	1	-	↑
Stage 2 Only	-	1	↓
Total	18	12	↑

The total number of complaints received between the 1st of April 2022 and the 31st of December 2022 is significantly greater 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 2022 and the 31st of December 2022 by quarter for 2022 / 2023.

Quarter	Stage 1 Only	Stages 1 & 2	Stage 2 Only	Total
01/04/22 to 30/06/22	3	-	-	3
01/07/22 to 30/09/22	7	-	-	7
01/10/22 to 31/12/22	7	1	-	8
01/01/23 to 31/03/23	-	-	-	-
Total	17	1	-	18

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 eighteen complaints received, eight (44.4%) were received by telephone, eight (44.4%) were received by email and two (11.2%) were received 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. Between the 1st of April 2022 and the 31st of December 2022, one complainant 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 a complaint closed at Stage 2 of the procedure, is provided with details of the SPSO. The one complaint investigated under Stage 2 of the procedure during the reporting period was not forwarded to the SPSO for 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. Sixteen (88.9%) complaints were received from tenants of the Association. Of the Association's total social rented stock of 648, the sixteen complaints relate to 2.5% of the Association's stock.



One (5.6%) complaint was made by an owner-occupier who lives below one of Association's long-term void properties on Dumbarton Road. This property is located in a tenement property that is not factored by the Association, therefore this complaint does not relate to any of the Association's 275 factored properties.

The one (5.6%) 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 eighteen complaints were concluded within the target timescales.

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

	SPSO Target	Performance 01/04/22 – 31/12/22	Performance 01/04/21 – 31/12/22	Trend
YHA Stage 1 response	5 days	1.4 working days	1.8 working days	
YHA Stage 2 response	20 days	8.0 working days	19.0 working days	

The average time taken to conclude complaints investigated at Stage 1 of the procedure is lower than for the equivalent period last year while the average time for Stage 2 complaints is significantly lower compared to the corresponding period last year.

Complaints relating to issues of equality and diversity

The Scottish Housing Regulator previously requested information from the Association regarding the number of complaints that relate to issues surrounding equalities. Equalities complaints refers to any 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.

None of the complaints investigated during the reporting period referred to discrimination, victimisation or harassment in relation to the protected characteristics defined by legislation.

The types of complaints that were received

Thirteen (72.2%) complaints investigated between the 1st of April 2022 and the 31st of December 2022 were made in relation to the services provided by Association’s Maintenance Department. The remaining five (27.8%) complaints were made in relation to the service provided by the Association’s Housing Services Department.

Ten (55.5%) complaints related to dissatisfaction with the service that the complainant had received from the Association, six (33.3%) complaints related to dissatisfaction with a contractor, one complaint (5.6%) related to dissatisfaction with a staff member and one (5.6%) complaint related to dissatisfaction with communications the complainant had received from the Association.

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

	Maintenance Services	Housing Services	Finance Services	Total
Dissatisfaction with Contractor	5	1	-	6
Dissatisfaction with Staff	1	-	-	1
Dissatisfaction with Service Provided	7	3	-	10
Dissatisfaction with Policy / Procedure	-	-	-	-
Dissatisfaction with Communications	-	1	-	1
Total	13	5	-	18

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 ten complaints related to dissatisfaction with the service provided. However, these complaints related to different issues. A summary of the ten complaints are detailed below:

- **Complaint 1** - The complainant was unhappy that a member of staff had visited her father to complete a direct debit mandate in order to cover his rent payments. The complaint was not upheld because the home visit was arranged after the tenant and another one of his daughters had requested assistance with completing the mandate.
- **Complaint 2** - The complaint was received from a private owner who was subject to water penetration. The property is located directly below an unimproved property owned by the Association. On receipt of the report, a contractor inspected the property and provided both a report and photographs confirming that no water was present within the Association's property. Following the contractor's visit, the Association, in the absence of a property factor, referred the case to Glasgow City Council Environmental Health. The owner was then advised that no water was noted within the Association's property and the case had been referred to Glasgow City Council. The owner was unhappy with the explanation and was adamant that the water was emanating from the Association's property. The complaint was not upheld based on the outcome of the property inspection and the subsequent referral to Glasgow City Council.
- **Complaint 3** - The tenant returned his keys to the Association after submitting a termination notice. On inspection of the property, it was noted that a number of items had been left in the property. The tenant was contacted and advised that the Association would charge for the removal of these items. The tenant was therefore provided with an opportunity to collect the keys in order to remove the remaining items. The tenant accused the staff member of being aggressive and insensitive. The complaint was not upheld on the basis that the Association was giving the tenant an opportunity to avoid rechargeable repair charges. The tenant subsequently made an arrangement to remove his belongings and apologised for his conduct.
- **Complaint 4** - The tenant complained following a maintenance visit to her property in relation to a fault with her shower. During the visit it was determined that parts were required. These parts were ordered but no update was provided by either the Association or the contractor. The tenant was unhappy after not receiving an update. Following investigation, it was determined that there had been no communication with the tenant since the contractor's initial visit. The complaint was upheld and the tenant was issued with an apology and access arrangements were made for the contractor to return and complete the repairs.
- **Complaint 5** - The tenant had previously contacted the Association to advise that he had been directly subjected to anti-social behaviour within the close but confirmed that he did not wish to formally complain due to concerns that he may antagonise his neighbour. The tenant stated that the Association had taken no action following his complaint. It was confirmed to the complainant that he had decided not to pursue the complaint at the time. The Association offered to seek advice from Glasgow City Council's Community Relations Unit (CRU). Following discussions with CRU, the complainant maintained that he did not wish to make a formal complaint against his neighbour. The complaint was therefore not upheld.

The types of complaints that were received (continued)

- **Complaint 6** - The tenant had been served with a notice of proceedings in relation to rent arrears and subsequently entered into a repayment arrangement. However, he failed to adhere to the repayment arrangement and court action was initiated. The tenant expressed dissatisfaction with the Association's decision to initiate legal action and advised that he should have been given an opportunity to address the missed payments. The complaint was not upheld on the basis that prior to the court action being initiated, the tenant had not responded to a warning notice issued regarding his failure to maintain the repayment arrangement.
- **Complaint 7** - The tenant advised that he was unhappy after the Association refused to replace his shower cubicle with a larger cubicle. The tenant was advised that the cubicle would not be replaced on the basis that it was not faulty or damaged. He was advised that if the shower was unsuitable owing to medical needs, he could apply for these facilities to be replaced in accordance with the Association's Stage 3 Adaptation Policy. The complaint was not upheld.
- **Complaint 8** - The tenant advised that she was unhappy after being advised that she would be recharged for the installation of a replacement carbon monoxide alarm after it was reported during the annual gas safety check that this had been removed. During the investigation it was noted that the alarm was present when the boiler was serviced twelve months earlier (2021). In response, the tenant advised that the emergency contractor had removed this during a callout. A further investigation was carried out during which it was noted that the last emergency callout to this property was during 2020. The complaint was not upheld.
- **Complaint 9** - The tenant was unhappy that a contractor failed to attend an arranged appointment. She confirmed that she had been advised by the member of staff answering the telephone that the repair order line contained the correct appointment details. Following investigation with the contractor, it was confirmed that the contractor had allocated the repair to the incorrect date resulting in the engineer failing to attend. The complaint was upheld and an apology was issued to the complainant. An alternative appointment was also arranged for the contractor to attend.
- **Complaint 10** - The tenant was unhappy that a heating engineer had failed to provide her temporary heating following a repair visit during a period of very cold weather. She was also unhappy with the length of time taken to arrange the installation of a replacement boiler following a further visit by a second heating engineer. It was explained to the tenant that the original engineer did not leave temporary heaters as the boiler was fully operational when he attended. It was also noted that the tenant had reported a further issue with no heating a few days later. A second heating engineer attended and confirmed that a replacement boiler was required and temporary heaters were provided. It was explained to the tenant that owing to the high demand for new boilers during the cold period, an appointment to replace her boiler would be arranged for as soon as reasonably possible. Further temporary heaters were also provided to assist the tenant until the replacement boiler was installed. The complaint was not upheld.

The types of complaints that were received (continued)

Six complaints received related to dissatisfaction with contractors. However, these complaints related to a range of different issues. A summary of the six complaints are detailed below:

- **Complaint 1** - The complainant was unhappy that the backcourt de-littering contract had not been carried out in her backcourt. Following an inspection of the backcourt it was noted that the de-littering had not been carried out and staff removed loose litter from the backcourt area. The contract had just expired and a new contractor had been appointed. The new contractor has been advised of the issues within this backcourt and to ensure that de-littering takes place in all backcourts in accordance with their contract. The complaint was upheld.
- **Complaint 2** - The tenant was unhappy that the gas engineer undertaking the annual gas service was having to cut away the silicone of the pipe box in order to access the magnetic filter. The tenant was advised that this work was a requirement of the gas service and that any remedial works required to the pipe box on completion of the gas service would be undertaken. The tenant was happy with this explanation and the complaint was not upheld.
- **Complaint 3** - The tenant was unhappy that he and his partner got paint on their clothing when leaving their property. Following investigation it was concluded that the close painting contractor had placed signage in the close several days earlier to confirm that paint works were due to commence. Furthermore, an inspection of the close on the day the complaint was received confirmed that 'wet paint' signs were placed throughout the close. The tenant was unhappy with the response at Stage 1 of the procedure and requested that the complaint be escalated to Stage 2. The complaint was not upheld at either Stage 1 or Stage 2 of the procedure.
- **Complaint 4** - The tenant was unhappy with the response she received from the emergency contractor after reporting water penetration from the upstairs property. Following discussion with the emergency contractor, it was confirmed that they had contacted the upstairs neighbour who had confirmed that her bathroom had just been installed. Due to this being a new installation, the emergency contractor was unable to interfere and advised the neighbour to contact the bathroom installation contractor. In response to the callout, the emergency contractor notified the Association of the issue and the bathroom replacement contractor subsequently attended and repair works completed. The complaint was not upheld.
- **Complaint 5** - The tenant was unhappy at the length of time it was taking for the ceiling to be repaired following water penetration from the upper property. The contractor carried out the initial repairs but then emailed the Association to arrange a plasterer to attend. On completion of the plasterwork, the original contractor would then attend to complete the necessary decoration works. However, Association staff failed to action the email received from the original contractor which resulted in the delay. The misunderstanding was explained to the tenant and an apology was issued. Staff arranged for the plasterwork to be completed the following day. The decoration works were completed three days later after the plaster repair was given time to dry. The complaint was upheld.

The types of complaints that were received (continued)

- **Complaint 6** - The tenant was unhappy with the length of time taken to complete her bathroom installation and also unhappy that the contractor had painted her chrome light fittings. The contractor advised that the length of time taken to complete the installation was explained during their pre-start visit with the tenant at her property. The contractor also confirmed that they had maintained contact with the tenant throughout the installation process. The contractor also confirmed that they were not responsible for painting the light fittings. The Association obtained photographs of the architect's survey visit that took place during November 2021, which indicated that the light fittings were painted at that point in time. Based on the findings of the investigation, the complaint was not upheld.

In the case relating to dissatisfaction with a staff member, an arrangement had been made for a contractor to attend a property that afternoon to repair an electrical fault. The tenant was unhappy that a specific appointment time could not be confirmed and complained that the staff member was being obstructive when it was explained that they could only provide a broad timeframe for the visit and not a specific time. The complaint was not upheld on the basis that an arrangement had been made for the contractor to attend on the same day that the repair issue had been reported.

In the case relating to dissatisfaction with communication from the Association, the complainant was unhappy that she was unable to speak to a member of staff who was in a meeting at the time of the call. The tenant telephoned the Association for a second time but the staff member in question was still involved in the meeting. During this second telephone call, the tenant expressed her dissatisfaction at not being able to speak to the specific member of staff. The staff member returned a telephone call once his meeting had ended and explained that he had been unavailable at the times she called. The complaint was not upheld on the basis that the staff member had returned a call to the tenant at the earliest opportunity.

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 eighteen complaints investigated during the reporting period are considered to be of low risk to the Association.

The outcome to complaints

Of the eighteen complaints investigated during the reporting period, four (22.2%) were upheld. Of the four complaints upheld, two (50.0%) related to dissatisfaction with the service provided by the Association while the remaining two (50.0%) related to dissatisfaction with a contractor.

Customer satisfaction

Following investigation at Stage 1 of the procedure, thirteen (72.2%) of the eighteen complainants were satisfied with the outcome to their complaint while two (11.2) were dissatisfied. The three (16.6%) remaining complainants failed to provide feedback.

Customer satisfaction (continued)

Following investigation at Stage 1 of the procedure, thirteen (72.2%) of the eighteen complainants were satisfied with how their complaint was dealt with following conclusion of the investigation while two (11.2%) were dissatisfied. The three (16.6%) remaining complainants failed to provide feedback.

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 1 April 2022 to 31 December 2022, the Association successfully implemented the SPSO's Complaints Handling Procedure and investigated eighteen 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 ten complaints related to dissatisfaction with the service provided by the Association. These complaints related to different issues and in eight cases the complaints were not upheld. In the first case that was upheld a meeting was undertaken with maintenance staff to emphasise the importance of communicating effectively with tenants regarding the progress of repairs to their property. In the second case, staff highlighted the error made by the contractor in organising an appointment for the wrong date with a view to preventing similar issues arising in the future.

It was also noted that six complaints related to dissatisfaction with a contractor. These complaints related to different issues and in four cases the complaint was not upheld. In the first case that was upheld, a meeting was held with the newly appointed ground maintenance contractor to emphasise the level of service that the Association expects. In the second case, a meeting was held with maintenance staff to ensure that emails are actioned in order to prevent delays in providing a repair service to tenants.

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 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 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 by telephone on 0141 950 9052 or by email at housing@yokerha.org.uk.