

# Newark and Sherwood District Council

## Customer Feedback - Housing Services Complaints Annual Review

April – March 2023/2024

### 1. Overview of feedback

Table 1 illustrates the total feedback received for 2023-24 for Housing Services for Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints.

Table 1

Stage 1 Complaints	Stage 2 Complaints
209	19

All figures shown exclude complaints that were withdrawn. These tend to be enquiries which are submitted as complaints but upon investigation, were found to be service requests. The customer is contacted and if they agree with this approach then the complaint is withdrawn and treated as a service request.

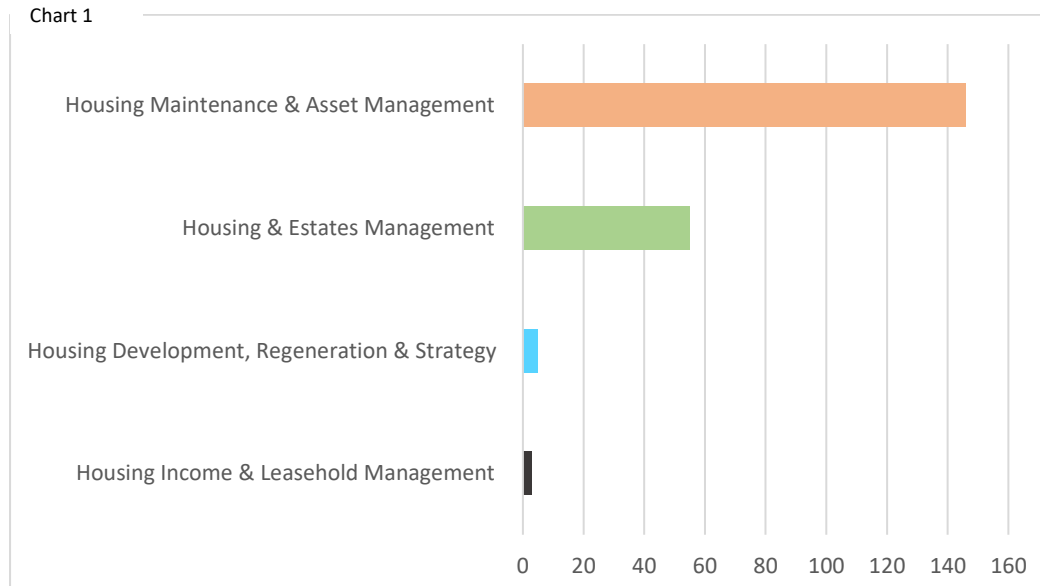
In future years, the performance set out in the annual report will be compared to examine trends or areas for improvement.

### 2. Complaints by Business Unit

The largest proportion of complaints received in the period (Chart 1) were for Housing Maintenance and Asset Management.

- Housing Maintenance & Asset Management receiving 70% of all reported issues.
- Housing & Estates Management 26.5%
- Housing Development, Regeneration & Strategy 2%
- Housing Income & Leasehold Management 1.5%

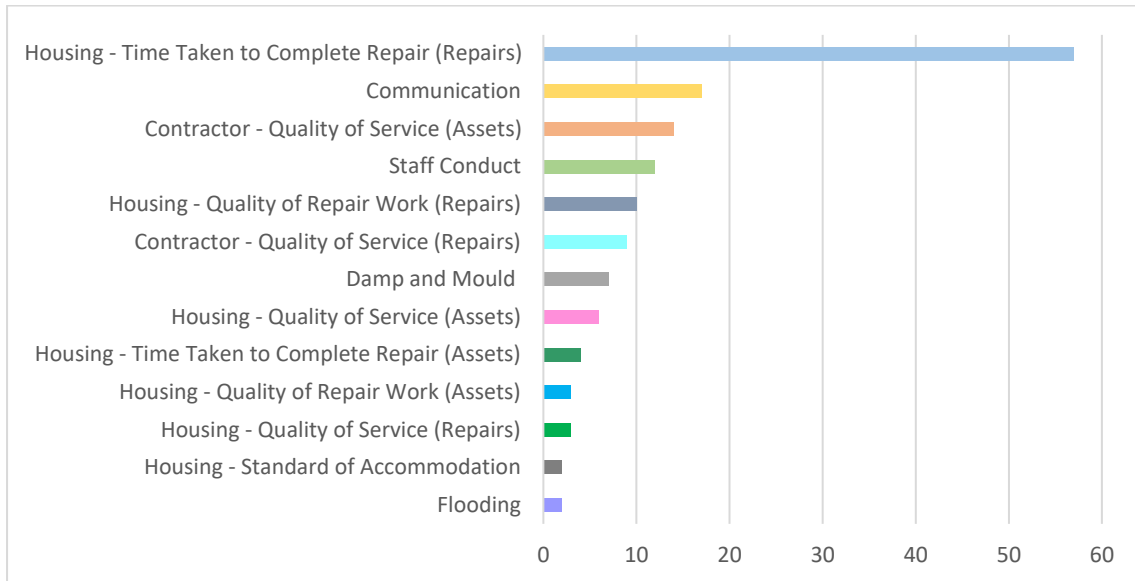
Chart 1



## 2.1a Housing Maintenance & Asset Management

Of the 146 complaints received, the chart below set out how these are broken down into different areas.

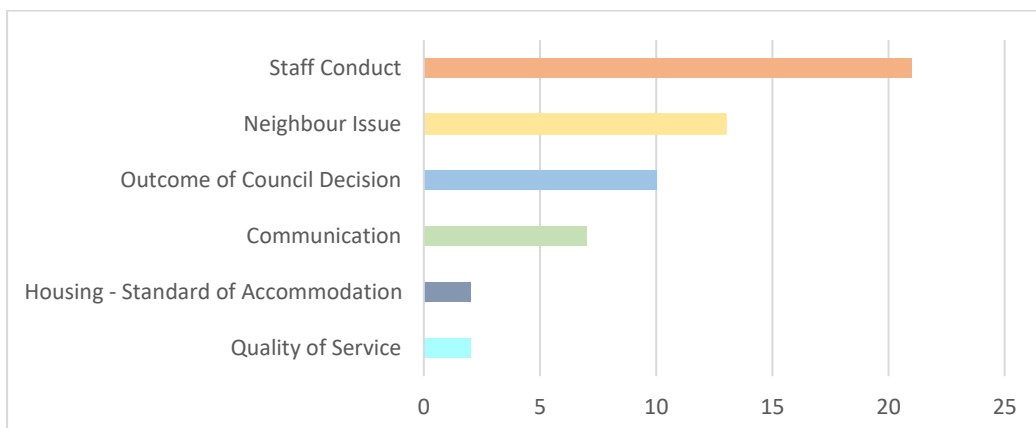
Chart 2



- 57 were for the category, Responsiveness (Delay/Lack of action) (Repairs), making it 39% of the overall total
- 17 were for Communication issues
- 14 for Quality of service from contractor (Assets)
- 12 for Staff Conduct
- 10 for Quality of Repair Work (Repairs)
- 9 for Quality of service from contractor (Repairs)
- 7 for Damp & Mould
- 6 for Quality of Service (Assets)
- 4 For Time Taken to complete repairs (Assets)
- 3 each for Quality of Repair Works (Assets) and Quality of Service (Repairs)
- 2 each for Quality of Service (Repairs) and Flooding

## 2.1b Housing & Estates Management – 55 complaints received

Chart 3



- 21 were for staff conduct making it 38% of the overall total.
- 13 for Neighbour issues
- 10 for outcome of Council Decision
- 7 for Communication
- 2 each for Quality of Service and Standard of Accommodation

### 2.1c Housing Development, Regeneration & Strategy – 5 complaints received

- 2 were from customers unhappy with the road closures due to the Tour of Britain Bike Race
- 2 for Outcome of a Council Decision
- 1 for lack of communication from officer

### 2.1d Housing Income and & Leasehold Management – 3 complaints received

- 1 for Staff conduct
- 1 for Outcome of a Council Decision
- 1 for Communication

## 2.2 Complaint Processing Time

To ensure compliance with the Housing Ombudsman’s complaint handling code, our policy sets out specific timescales for responding to complaints. The code changed on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024, this report covers the code prior to that.

**Stage 1** - acknowledge the complaint within 5 working days of the request being received and provide a full response within 10 working days of the complaint being received.

**Stage 2** -acknowledge the complaint within 5 working days of the escalation request being received and provide a full response within 20 working days of the complaint being escalated.

Table 2 below details the number of complaints which haven’t met our statutory deadlines.

Table 2

Period	Met Deadline	Missed Deadline	Total completed	% on Target
April 2023 – March 2024	198	11	209	94.7%

## 2.3 Outcome of complaints

Once the officer responsible for responding to a complaint has undertaken the appropriate research they will determine if the complaint was fully upheld, partially upheld, or not upheld. In writing the response they clearly state the outcome and record this within the ESB system.

Often complaints contain more than 1 issue, complaints partially upheld include some elements of the complaints, but not all.

Complaints that haven’t been decided may be addressed after the reporting period and will be included in future reports once their decision process is complete.

Table 3 shows the decision status of the Stage 1 complaints received in the period.

Table 3

Complaints Upheld	Complaints Partially Upheld	Complaints Not Upheld
105	60	44

## 2.4 What have we learned?

Analysis of stage 1 customer feedback enables us to identify and tackle specific issues:

Table 4

Housing Maintenance & Asset Management	
Area of concern	Action taken to improve
Repairs timescales	Most of these repairs were allocated to a contractor, as these works were unable to be completed by the inhouse team due to resource issues. Work is ongoing to procure additional contractors to spread the load. The Repairs Policy is scheduled for review in 2024-25 to refresh categories, time frames and to accommodate changes relating to damp and mould in particular.
Staff Conduct	Customer care training has been undertaken by teams, including training on reasonable adjustments to ensure colleagues adapt their approach to the different needs of our tenants based on vulnerabilities and disabilities.  Driver conduct – this incident was investigated and appropriate action was taken.
Contractor - Customer Service (Assets and Repairs)	Contractor management training is being delivered to relevant officers. Contractor meetings will be carried out on a more regular basis to strengthen the communication and improve relationships as well as monitoring compliance with the terms of the contract.

Table 5

Housing & Estate Management	
Area of concern	Action taken to improve
Standard of Temporary Accommodation	Investigation identified several concerns resulting in a full review of the lettable standard for temporary accommodation. All remaining properties were reinspected to assess the condition and carry out any necessary work to ensure this issue was not repeated.
Staff conduct	Five of the complaints were upheld and eight were been partially upheld. Staff conduct was dealt with individually and training provided to improve communication and passage of information. Further Customer Care training has implemented across the council and this continues to be a focus for improved service.
Neighbour Issues	Neighbour complaints have individual and unique circumstances and can include private tenants/homeowners complaining about council properties. Enforcement action can take time and it is understandably frustrating when it

appears no action is being taken. Anti-social behaviour is an area of focus for 2024-25 to see how the service can be improved further.

### 3. Complaints – Stage 2

During this period there were Stage 2 complaints : Housing Maintenance & Asset Management receiving 12 and Housing & Estates Management receiving 7.

Table 6 shows the decision status of the Stage 2 complaints received in the period.

Table 6

Complaints Upheld	Complaints Partially Upheld	Complaints Not Upheld	Complaints not decided
8	3	7	0

#### 3.1 What have we learned?

Analysis of stage 2 customer feedback enables us to identify and tackle specific issues:

Table 7

Housing Maintenance & Asset Management	
Area of concern	Action taken to improve
Officer communication and council outcome	Adding a community impact assessment to improvements so tenants can see what will change e.g. a parking project won't necessarily improve the number of parking spaces. A review of the impact of the car parking improvement scheme to see if it achieved its objective of improving parking.
Quality of repair works	Customer care training delivered.
Damp and mould	If family is overcrowded in temp accommodation for any time, provide mechanical ventilation or dehumidifiers and recompense for additional electrical costs.
Staff conduct	Officers have been reminded about timely and accurate record keeping. A process has since been issued to all officers and adherence with the process is being monitored by managers.

Table 8

Housing & Estate Management	
Area of concern	Action taken to improve
Mishandling of application	Training on Mental Capacity Assessments delivered.

### 4. Ombudsman complaints

The Housing Ombudsman outcomes for the past 4 years, including this year are shown in Table 9.

Table 9

Year	Decided by the HO	Number Upheld
April 2023 – March 2024	1	0
April 2022 – March 2023	1	0
April 2021 – March 2022	1	0
April 2020 - March 2021	1	0

1 complaint was taken to the Housing Ombudsman during 2023-2024 and the findings from the Housing Ombudsman confirmed no maladministration in relation to the landlord’s handling of the complaint.

**5. Putting it right**

Compensation is considered to be a remedy for inconvenience or distress caused by a service failure within the council’s social housing, and claims are be considered on a case-by-case basis. The amount of compensation paid will reflect the level of inconvenience, disturbance and distress caused by not getting things right sooner and the extent to which the Council is solely responsible. The Council also takes into account, the time taken to resolve the problem and whether this is excessive.

39 claims were awarded compensation throughout the period, amounting to a total of £10,416.64. Chart 4 shows the number of awards to each category and percentage of the total awards. Table 10 displays the the costs awarded in each category.

Chart 4

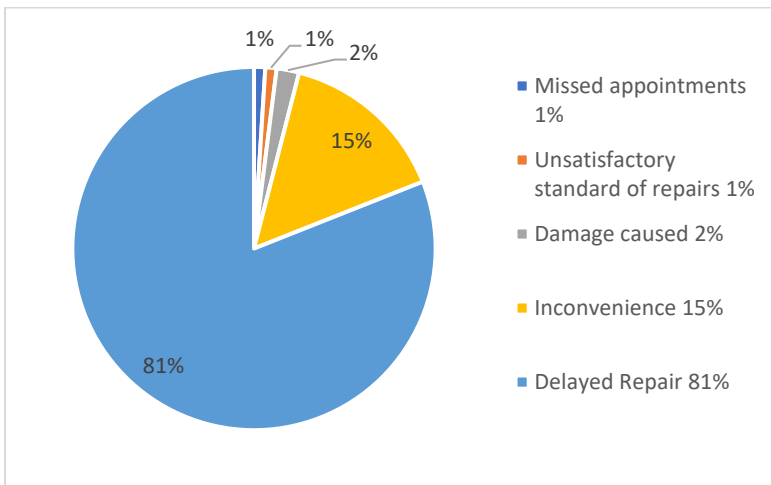


Table 10

Category	Awarded
Delayed repair	£8,380.75
Inconvenience	£1,590.89
Damaged caused	£200.00
Missed appointments	£145.00
Unsatisfactory standard	£100.00
Grand Total	£10,416.64