

Annual Complaints Report



April 23 – March 24

Measuring customer complaints

This report provides an annual summary on complaints performance for the period April 2023 – March 2024, in accordance with our obligations under the Housing Ombudsman’s Complaint Handling Code. Concept Housing Association (CHA) views complaints as an important way of capturing feedback from our residents about the services we provide.

An efficient and effective complaints policy and a positive culture towards complaints are critical to ensure we listen and hear the feedback of residents and ensure their views are taken account of in the design and improvement of services, which should increase resident satisfaction and reduce service failure.

What is a complaint?

At Concept we define a complaint as:

“An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents.”

Complaint Handling Process

‘Own it sort it’

This applies to informal complaints that can be dealt with through little or no investigation, with the expectation that each service area is responsible to investigate and resolve this form of complaint. Examples include missed appointments or missed call back requests.

Stage One

These complaints require formal investigation. This can be an escalation from the ‘own it sort it’ stage, for example if a rescheduled repair was missed again or via a directly reported stage one complaint.

CHA acknowledges all complaints within two working days and the Complaints Officer will respond formally when the investigation is complete and within 10 working days.

Stage Two

Stage two complaints are escalated from stage one where a customer has provided further information or remains dissatisfied with the stage one response.

These complaints are investigated by a senior manager who has not been involved in the stage one process. CHA acknowledges stage two complaints within two working days and respond formally once the investigation is complete and within 20 working days.



Annual complaints summary

Resident complaints received	2023/24
Total Complaints	334

Resident complaints logged by stages	2023/24
Stage 1	331
Stage 2	3
Cases escalated to the Housing Ombudsman Service	1

Stage 1 complaint category	No.	%
Property Condition /Outstanding repairs	112	34%
Support related	83	25%
Provider/Support Worker conduct	32	10%
Pest control issues	30	9%
ASB response	26	8%
Damp & Mould	13	4%
Licence termination process	7	2%
No internet	6	2%
Removal of personal belongings	4	1%
Utility bill in residents' name	4	1%
Miscellaneous	14	4%

Stage 2 complaint category	No.	%
Managing Agent/Support Worker conduct	3	100%

Complaint outcomes	Stage 1	Stage 2
Upheld	68%	33%
Not upheld	32%	66%
Total	331	3

Complaints performance

Stage 1 responses	Response issued within 20 working days	Response issued outside 20 working days
331	66%	34%

Stage 2 responses	Response issued within 20 working days	Response issued outside 20 working days
3	33%	66%

Adherence to response timescales performance reflects the September 2023 March 2024 period, September 2023 being the date when the revised policy was implemented. This performance is reflective of an initial period of training the team on the new processes in preparation for the Complaint Handling Code becoming statutory on 1 April 2024.

Since 1 April 2024, additional performance monitoring has been implemented alongside increased performance feedback and communication to raise awareness across complaints handling staff and managers. This has driven an improvement in response times.

Housing Ombudsman Service

One of our residents engaged the Housing Ombudsman as CHA had initially declined to investigate due to the length of time between the cause of the complaint and the complaint being raised. Upon review CHA did investigate and issue a stage 2 response. Subsequently the resident has escalated their complaint to the Housing Ombudsman, which has been accepted for investigation. The case has been assigned to an adjudicator and we are awaiting their findings and investigation outcome.

Lessons learnt:

Some residents told us they did not always feel comfortable to complain to their managing agent and found it confusing when there was a different complaint process for the provider.

So we...

- Reviewed our complaints policy removing the requirement to complain to a provider to ensure all complaints come directly to CHA with a simpler two stage process.

Some residents told us that they did not always feel comfortable giving feedback or completing satisfaction surveys during property inspections as representatives of the provider may be in attendance.

So we...

- Commissioned an independent resident perception survey to ensure every resident could express their views and feedback.

Some residents told us that they were not clear about the type of accommodation they were moving into and what their rights and responsibilities are.

So we...

- Introduced a settling in call, undertaken by the Customer Services team who introduce CHA and ensure residents are fully aware of the services we provide and their rights and responsibilities.
- Updated the standard license agreement to ensure that it provides clear information about resident's rights including how to raise concerns with CHA and the Housing Ombudsman Service.

Feedback from complaints is used to inform our Provider Performance Management Framework and monthly provider review. CHA takes steps where required to identify improvement actions and tracks these via assurance improvement plans to ensure providers take the required actions. In the most serious of cases CHA has taken steps to off-board providers who have not achieved required improvements with the provision and quality of support.



Complaints themes

The highest volume of complaints relates to repairs and property conditions. CHA has implemented a new performance framework for providers to ensure compliance with timescales for repairs and is trialling innovative solutions to enable CHA to undertake repairs and charge back the costs to providers where these are not completed within contractual timescales.

Support related complaints represent the second highest volume of complaints. The new provider performance framework enables provider compliance with support provision. Where audits undertaken by CHA identify concerns related to the provision of support these are addressed through the framework. Where support failures are identified through complaints, reactive support audits are conducted across a sample of provider residents by CHA. These audits range from all support files in the property where a complaint originated, to all files across a range of provider properties.

Where poor provider conduct is established through complaint handling, Action Improvement Plans (AIPs) are implemented to hold providers to account and ensure future compliance with the required standards of behaviour and conduct.

Complaints themes

A review of the Complaints Policy was undertaken in September 2023 to reflect the principal change that all complaints are reported to Concept Housing Association and not to managing agents working on our behalf. A full list of changes made to the policy are noted below. In addition, following the new Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code which was published in April 2024, a further review is currently underway will be completed by no later than October 2024 to reflect items identified on the self-assessment and we will re-submit the self-assessment and publish our revised policy at that stage.

- **Clarifies that the policy is aimed at resolving resident complaints and signposts providers and employees to alternative means for resolution of any issues**
- **Defines a service request as separate from a complaint**
- **Clarifies that residents do not need to use the word complaint for it to be treated as such**
- **Separates resident reports about anti-social behaviour from resident complaints about how CHA or the provider has responded and dealt with reported anti-social behaviour**
- **Supports 'early resolution' of issues directly via their provider in the first instance if preferred but requires all complaints to be logged, investigated, and responded to by CHA rather than the provider.**