

## Volume of Stage 1 and stage 2 Complaints received for Plymouth Community Homes 2023/2024

The table below shows the volume of Stage 1 complaints and stage 2 complaints received in 2023/2024.

<b>Stage 1</b>	<b>488</b>
<b>Stage 2</b>	<b>41</b>

The table below shows the top 5 departments who have received the most Stage 1 complaints over 2023/2024.

	<b>Directorate</b>	<b>Responsible Service</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>2023/2024</b>	<b>Homes and Communities</b>	<b>Repairs</b>	<b>159</b>
	<b>Various</b>	<b>Cross Departmental</b>	<b>81</b>
	<b>Homes and Communities</b>	<b>Contractors - Staff/Work</b>	<b>53</b>
	<b>Homes and Communities</b>	<b>Plumbing</b>	<b>34</b>
	<b>Homes and Communities</b>	<b>Damp &amp; Condensation</b>	<b>20</b>

The table below shows the top 8 departments where the stage 1 complaint escalated to stage 2 2023/2024.

	<b>Directorate</b>	<b>Responsible Service</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>2023/2024</b>	<b>Homes and Communities</b>	<b>Repairs</b>	<b>18</b>
	<b>Various</b>	<b>Cross Departmental</b>	<b>8</b>
	<b>Homes and Communities</b>	<b>Tenancy Management</b>	<b>6</b>
	<b>Various</b>	<b>Contractors</b>	<b>4</b>
	<b>Homes and Communities</b>	<b>Damp &amp; Condensation</b>	<b>2</b>
	<b>Business Services and Development</b>	<b>Development</b>	<b>1</b>
	<b>Business Services and Development</b>	<b>Shared Ownership</b>	<b>1</b>
	<b>Homes and Communities</b>	<b>Plumbing</b>	<b>1</b>

## Volume of out of time complaints 2023/2024

<b>Volume of stage 1 complaints received</b>	<b>488</b>
<b>Volume out complaints out of target</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>1%</b>

The table above shows the volume and percentage of out of time complaints over the past year.

We will continue to record and report on any complaints that go out of target so any failures can enable a full investigation to take place to find out why it happened and allow a detailed explanation to be provided. This will pick up any training issues, or internal processes which were not adhered too or could be enhanced.

The new complaint code requirement says where a response to a complaint will fall outside the timescales set in the code, the landlord must agree with the resident suitable intervals for keeping them informed about their complaint.

## Themes and trends of the complaints received 2023/2024

Examples of how we have reviewed trends is included below to provide suggested future improvements which should make a difference.

To be able to really understand certain trends within the repairs section and what area's we can improve and focus on, we identified it would be beneficial to have a separate Damp and Mould category, which was added at the beginning of Q3 2023/2024. Prior to this, these types of complaints were included in the overall 'repair' total.

This allows us to now report separately for this particular area and be able to recognise what we need to improve on. We have already picked up some of the trends from receiving these types of complaints which primarily include chasing outstanding work recommended on any surveys completed and continually communicating to our residents whilst we wait for surveys to be actioned.

By Identifying the root cause and focussing on how we can make things better, a solution has been found by recruiting a damp, mould and disrepair co-ordinator. The main purpose of the role is to track every case that comes through, provide support with contractor management, resident liaison and reporting performance.

Another area of concern detected, was the volume of staff complaints received. There is a variation of different reasons recorded, that has ultimately led to our residents complaining because they have received a poor customer experience.

All staff complaints received, should be shared and discussed with the staff member involved to allow a full investigation to take place. The outcome also needs to be communicated to enable the staff member to understand the bigger picture and if the complaint was 'Upheld' the impact it has on our business.

To support Supervisors and Managers, conduct monthly meetings to look at staff complaint data, to allow discussions to be held about behaviours, culture, displaying our values and customer service and how we can work together to improve this. This will highlight any training needs, if customer service training is needed, and ensure standards and procedures are understood by the staff member before visiting and entering anyone's homes. This is relevant for PCH staff and staff working for our contractors.

Another key trend identified looking at the annual complaint data, is the outstanding work following the closure of a complaint. It is so important to retain communication with the resident once the complaint is closed but work is still waiting to be completed.

Sometimes, specialist work needs to be completed which is outside of our repair section scope, and it will go to one of our contractors. Once the work is agreed to be completed by them, it is important our contractor lets us know if there are any issues. This might include not being able to gain access, or they are unable to contact our resident. The contractor could have problems sourcing materials or have internal resource issues which could delay the works.

Without us knowing any of these issues it can quickly result in the complaint escalating if the resident is not kept informed and has had to contact us to find out what is happening. Especially if the agreed appointment date has been missed, and there is no explanation or reason provided.

To ensure we have a better system to monitor this outstanding work and be more proactive in identifying when works are due, an outstanding tracker table has been implemented. It is shared with Managers who can then ask their supervisors about it.

Communication is key and will be continually promoted by providing feedback, discussed within training sessions, within complaint meetings, to ensure staff are always updating our residents. Case notes must be recorded on our complaint system to evidence phone calls / discussions as this will be a requirement for the self-assessment.

A new approach to our stage 2 process has been implemented. This will ensure we allow enough time and resource to investigate all aspects of the complaint in a thorough and methodical approach.

It will also enable us to review the current process and procedure of what the complaint relates too, to understand if we did follow it correctly and if it is still relevant or needs updating. This will help us to continually improve performance if we do identify shortfalls.

Our lessons learnt will capture positive changes and be communicated and shared with our residents in their response letter.

As stage 2 is now the final part of our complaint process, it is important we review what we did differently at stage 2 that was not completed at stage 1 and resulted in the complaint escalating to stage 2. This feedback will need to be communicated back, so all staff at various levels of seniority can continue to learn and develop their skills so we get it right first time.

### **Types of complaints made, that were not accepted 2023/2024**

We are confident that staff would never not accept a complaint without reference to a more senior complaint staff member. This would ensure the complaint staff member referenced our complaint policy to confirm the reason for not accepting the complaint was clearly defined within our policy and could be explained to the resident when responding to them, why their complaint would not go through our complaints process.

With the amended complaint code, we have changed our process to ensure any complaints not accepted, are recorded to provide as evidence for the self-assessment requirements.

## Root cause analysis

Ensure staff are aware of the complaints process and policy and adhere to all the necessary tasks. This is through training and feedback following auditing complaints.

Communication is continued through from the start of the complaint until it is fully resolved. This includes all outstanding works. Notes to be added and included on the complaint case.

Residents to be kept informed if plans change because of issues identified. Notes to be added and included on the complaint case.

Response letters to include all relevant information to enable residents to see all the investigatory work completed.

The implementation of the outstanding work tracker will help ensure complaints are fully resolved within the response time provided to the resident. This will allow customer satisfaction calls and surveys to be completed in a timely manner and should help to get positive feedback as everything will have been completed.

Displaying our service standards will ensure residents have a clear knowledge of expectations and what to expect.

## Benchmarking information compared to others

We collate TSM complaint data in line with the housing regulator technical requirements and when the annual 2023/2024 results are published later this year, it will enable us to compare our performance against others.

We also participate in the Housemark monthly Pulse benchmarking data collection.

## Resident scrutiny work / Peer assessment / independent review

PCH have created a virtual advisory panel of residents to discuss topics and story ideas so we can get to know what sort of advice, information and support our residents would like to see shared by PCH and ensure we're fully engaged with residents with their regular input into our publications. As well as being involved in ideas for InTouch and our other newsletters, the VRA will serve as a sense check for PCH and our communications – ensuring that we send letters and documents which read well – giving our communication a 'Tenant Tick' which we can then put on the bottom of our external documents to show they've been signed off by residents.

The VRA panel helped with the comms supporting the latest complaints process, providing relevant feedback to ensure the guides would be easy to use for all our residents.

A customer insight report is produced and provides our Board with a summary of customer insight gathered formally and informally across the organisation. It has been developed as part of the Governance Review Task and Finish Group. The report is designed to ensure the customer voice is heard at the Board and that themes, lessons learnt, and actions are clearly set out and monitored by Board.

## **Ombudsman reports 2023/2024**

The Housing Ombudsman encourages residents to link directly with them at any stage of a complaint process and not just when residents have exhausted the internal complaint policy.

Housing Associations should be able to demonstrate they signpost residents to the Housing Ombudsman at all opportunities, and not just when the complaint has reached the end of the process.

PCH make clear to residents in their complaint policy, and in complaint correspondence how to contact the Housing Ombudsman service.

The number of enquiries received via the Housing Ombudsman Service was 10. Three resulted in a complaint being raised and we received one determination of maladministration which related to how we handled an anti-social behaviour case. There were a number of recommendations, and we accepted the Housing Ombudsman advice and have acted upon it.

Of the remaining six enquiries, two were escalated to a stage two complaint, we were required to submit a copy of a complaint response letter for a further two and the remaining two resulted in requests for information, but no further action taken.

We did not receive any failure orders.

## **Service Improvements**

Below are some of the Service Improvements / Lessons Learnt from complaints received in the last 12 months.

A monthly audit of 'Lessons Learnt' is now conducted to ensure accurate, detailed and effective reasons are recorded to enable us to make improvements and prevent further occurrences.

Supervisors and Managers are engaged to ensure what has been noted under 'lessons learnt' has been communicated and embedded within the organisation to confirm continuous improvement is promoted and shared to ensure changes made following feedback we have received from our residents is acted on.

'Lessons Learnt' which result in changes being made to processes and procedures will lead to enhancements to our service improvements and standards.

We received a complaint from a resident explaining they were unhappy with the number of repairs required after they had just moved into one of our properties which they felt should have been completed prior to them moving in. They also had to receive several visits to fix a leak and they were not happy with how the garden was presented to them. After receiving this feedback, a 'Letting Standard Checklist' was created to ensure the various departments involved with signing over the void property had something to sign to confirm they had completed the necessary quality checks within their area. This checklist is left at the property and shared with the resident so they can see what has been actioned.

Following a complaint received regarding a boiler fault and engineers turning up without the correct parts, it was identified some of the properties we have recently adopted were installed with boilers PCH didn't currently use. We proactively sourced the relevant spares as part of our van stock so any further repairs wouldn't be delayed if any boiler issue faults were subsequently reported. This was only needed as an interim measure as we are in the process of upgrading the boilers.

After investigating a complaint that was raised with us, it became apparent that incorrect information had been recorded on a disclaimer and provided to our resident, following a mutual exchange. As a result of this complaint, a full review was completed, and the resident was informed in their response letter, that following their feedback, the issuing of disclaimers was stopped with immediate effect and a review of our mutual exchange process was being completed.

To ensure there is guidance for our residents regarding where they can bury their pets, this particular area will be covered off in our updated Pets Policy. This was following a resident complaining that there were alleged animals buried in her garden from a previous tenant. As this is currently not covered in any policies, a good lesson learnt was to ensure we provide detailed information we can share with our residents.

Following an increase in Damp & Mould calls requesting a visit to be completed, we wanted to ensure we were asking the correct questions at first point of contact to ensure we had considered any possible disabilities or vulnerabilities. This was following a complaint regarding how long it had taken for us to look at their damp & mould issues which had contributed to their poor health. The new process has been implemented which means the Contact Centre now ask scripted questions around this matter which were provided by the Damp & Mould Manager, to enable them to prioritise any damp & mould requests.

Some general feedback following complaints we received from residents is about our operatives leaving a card explaining we visited however no one was home. This has generated some complaints with residents informing us they were at home waiting. Team meeting minutes have confirmed this has been addressed with operatives and a reminder provided within the meeting, instructing them of the process which is to try and telephone the resident whilst outside their door, and if this is still unsuccessful to call the office and ask them to call ensuring everything has been tried before leaving a card and not completing the job.

When jobs are scheduled for outside work and access isn't required, the Contact Centre now ask the resident at the time of booking, if their appointment can be moved without the need to call them and seek agreement. If the resident agrees to this, a note is added on to the job confirming authority has been provided. This will allow the Repairs Assistants to move jobs around and give them to any operatives who are looking for work at short notice. This was as a result of a complaint received, when we scheduled a repair and provided a time and appointment date to the resident, however we rescheduled the job without contacting them first and getting their authority.

## Access and awareness

The new complaint policy has been uploaded and shared with residents and staff to ensure everyone is aware of the changes and regulatory requirements following the updated complaint code. Training to staff will be rolled out to embed the content of the policy and help them to fully understand the new requirements and continue to provide a great customer service.

Our website contains easy to use guides which have been created as a flow chart diagram and in animation format, which shows the 2-stage process and how to let us know if they are not happy about a service. We also promote language line should a resident request a copy in another language and braille. Our magazine called 'In Touch' also explains the complaints process and will regularly communicate with residents about how to make a complaint and the importance of feedback for us to continually improve.

A monthly report summary is distributed amongst our Senior Management Team and Executive Management Team, for reflection and learning opportunities, especially for cross departmental complaints.

Quarterly reports recording all complaint data is shared and discussed by the Executive Management Team and our Customer Focus Committee. There is detailed information regarding our complaint data. Some of the members on the Customer Focus Committee and Board are Co-optee's who scrutinise our reports and provide some excellent feedback.

There is full support and understanding from our Executive Management Team who have actively promoted the high focus on our customer and complaints within the organisation. This has resulted in complaints being on our strategic risk register and being regularly reviewed. All Housing Ombudsman enquiries and case work are shared with SMT/EMT and Board members so these can be used to influence best practise. The Head of Customer Experience also shares the monthly Housing Ombudsman updates.