

**Report To:** The Board of Management

**Report From:** Finance & Corporate Support Director

**Date:** 30th August 2019

**Subject:** Annual Complaints & Compliments Report 2018/19

**Classification** For Information

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**1.0 Purpose**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Board with a summary of the Association's complaint handling and compliments performance from 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019 and to demonstrate performance against the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman's (SPSO) complaints performance indicators.

**2.0 Recommendations**

2.1 It is recommended that the Board note the contents of this report.

**3.0 Risk Management**

3.1 How the Association handles complaints from customers and implements learning is vital to driving continuous improvement in the way we provide our services.

3.2 There are no risks associated with this report, however a review of complaints was conducted between February and March 2019 and identified areas for improvement across the business. The findings were reported to the Leadership Team in late August and the board will be notified of changes going forward.

**4.0 Key Points**

4.1 A snapshot summary of complaints data for 2018/19 is attached as Appendix 1. It provides comparative data for the last three financial years (2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19). Appendix 2 outlines the yearly performance against Business Strategy Performance Indicators (PIs).

4.2 The total number of complaints received this year was 204, which has increased from 179 and is comparable to our 2015/16 performance, where we had 207 complaints. The number of complaints received this year shows a marked increase of almost 14% on 2017/18. The historical trend has been that complaint volumes are decreasing since the complaint handling procedure has been brought in, although there is no obvious explanation for this.

4.3 There was an increase in the number of complaints 'upheld' or partially upheld this year. 60% of complaints were 'upheld' or 'partially upheld' in comparison to 54% in 2017/18 and with 48% in 2016/17. The percent of complaints 'not upheld' has decreased over the last 3 years with 52% in 2016/17, 46.4% in 2017/18 and 38.7% in 2018/19.

4.4 Of the 67 complaints 'upheld', the majority of these were in relation to general repair

issues and staff attitude. A high number of complaints were 'partially upheld' (28.4%), but this is a comparable performance with 2017/18 (26.2%). We are working hard to improve our complaint handling this year and will take steps to address transparency and recording of our decision making process.

- 4.5 27% of complaints were responded to outwith SPSO timescales, which is a 5% increase in delay from 2017/18. Whilst this is a negative trend, this figure also accounted for extensions where they had been granted. Extensions are granted for many different reasons; staff members may be on holiday or the complaint is complex; however this should be clearly communicated to all parties involved.
- 4.6 Ensuring the right resolution for customers is the main priority, obtaining as quick a resolution as possible is also important and we will look to improve in 2019/20. We are working on clarifying the process for how extensions are being granted and how they are incorporated into our reporting.
- 4.7 The most common complaints received this year were about:
- Staff (51)
  - Service (43)
  - Policy/Procedure (25)
  - Contractor (25)
- 4.8 Complaints against staff was the most common type of complaint this year with 51 complaints received, which is an increase of 15 compared to the 36 received in 2017/18. These complaints were aimed at individual staff members regarding their perceived attitude to tenants or their failure to communicate.
- 4.9 There were 43 complaints received in relation to service and 25 contractor complaints mainly around issues with repairs. A particular area was in relation to works carried out at Cedar. Case study analysis was reported in Q1 and Q3 addressing issues and how learning would be implemented.

## **5.0 Learning and Service Improvements**

- 5.1 The Association continues to develop and improve our services as a result of complaints received. Complaints are an agenda item at frontline service departmental meetings and improvements and learning discussed at PDCs.
- 5.2 We report learning outcomes to customers tri-annually in Focus magazine. Following a review of complaints this year, a more formal procedure will be developed to ensure we are capturing the learning from complaints more consistently.

## **6.0 SPSO complaints**

- 6.1 In 2018/19 there have been no complaints investigated by the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman, however two people did write to the SPSO in Q2. The SPSO advised that they would not be taking either complaint forward; however they did highlight issues with the Association's approach in providing information to customers and advised that we reflect on the process.

6.2 In May 2019, The Complaints Handling Network was relaunched. The Network is run in partnership with the SPSO, HouseMark and housing professionals. The group aims to share best practice, supporting complaints handling practitioners and provides a forum for benchmarking complaints performance. Participation in this network will provide an opportunity to bring best practice back to the association.

6.3 It is also important to note that the Complaints Handling Procedure rolled out across the sector in 2012 is due to be updated this year and will again require adoption by the Board. The network will enable us to be kept up to date on development and prepare for any new requirements.

## **7.0 Compliments**

7.1 In 2018/19, we received 84 compliments which is an increase from 66 received in 2017/18. The top three service areas receiving compliments were:

- Technical Services (23)
- Housing Support (21)
- Housing Services (12)

## **8.0 Financial/Budget Implications**

8.1 There are no financial implications attributed to this report.

## **9.0 Strategic Objectives**


9.1 The activities outlined in this report support the Association's strategic objectives to:





- Deliver more excellent services to suit our tenants' lives.
- Invest in our people to grow and develop their skills.
- Find more ways to ensure value for money.

## **10.0 Equality and Diversity**

10.1 The Scottish Housing Regulator requires specific reporting on the number of complaints received relating to equality issues. For 2018/19, there were no equality issues reported.

**Appendix 1- Snapshot Summary of Annual Complaints Data 2018/19**

		
<b>Our performance is higher than target</b>	<b>Our performance is lower than target</b>	<b>There has been no change. Our performance is on target</b>

Indicator	Performance			Performance against target (see appendix 2)
	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	
Total Number of Complaints received in the year	204	179	258	
Percentage of Complaints received by neighbourhood	Queens Cross (31.3%) Westercommon (20%) Woodside (33.8%) Dundasvale (14.7%)	Queens Cross (44.3%) Westercommon (16.8%) Woodside (23.5%) Dundasvale (14.6%)	Queens Cross (47%) Westercommon (22%) Woodside (16%) Dundasvale (10%)	
Percentage of Complaints Upheld	32.8%	27.4%	32%	
Percentage of Complaints Partially Upheld	28.4%	26.2%	16%	N/A
Percentage of Complaints Not Upheld	38.7 %	46.4%	52%	
Highest complaints per service area	Technical Services (94 complaints)	Technical Services (81 complaints)	Technical Services (99 complaints)	N/A
Highest complaints category	Staff	Staff	Services	N/A
Percentage of Complaints responded to outwith timescale	25%	23%	27%	
Most popular method of making complaint	Email/ Online 39%	Email/Online 46%	Email/Online 37%	N/A
Total number of compliments received	84	66	97	N/A

**Appendix 2- Business Strategy PIs**

<b>PI's</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>2018/19 Target</b>	<b>Performance</b>
<b>BST 1</b>	Total number of complaints from social rented stock, per thousand units.	46 per 1000 units (200 complaints received in total)	47 per 1000  204 complaints received
<b>BST 2</b>	Complaint escalated from stage 1 to stage 2 every quarter as a number and % of all complaints responded to in full at stage 1.	<b>7%</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>BST 3</b>	The number of complaints upheld at each stage as a % of complaints responded to in full at each stage	Stage1 Upheld/Part upheld – 45%	63%
		Stage 1 Not Upheld – 55%	36%
		Stage 2 Upheld – 50%	35%
		Stage 2 Not Upheld – 50%	64%
<b>BST 4</b>	The no. and percentage of complaints at each stage which were responded to in full within the set timescales.	Stage 1 – 80%	73%
		Stage 2 – 90%	100%