

| | | |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|
| QUEENS CROSS HOUSING ASSOCIATION | | 29.09.20 |
| BOARD MEETING | | FOR DISCUSSION ITEM NO. 4 |
| Annual complaints report | | |
| Executive Lead | Director of Finance and Corporate Services | |
| Lead Officer/Author | Performance and Service Improvement Officer | |
| Action Required | It is recommended that the Board note the contents of this report. | |
| Key Points | 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 2019 to 31 March 2020, and to demonstrate performance against the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman's (SPSO) target. | |
| Financial Implications | There are no financial implications associated with this report. | |
| Risk | There are no risks associated with this report, however how the Association handles complaints from customers and implements learning; is vital to improving services. | |
| Contribution to QCHA strategy | This report contributes to the strategic aim of <i>Delivering more excellent services to suit our tenants' lives.</i> | |

1. Introduction

1.1 This report provides a yearly overview of our complaints data. It is recommended that the Board note the contents of this report.

1.2 We follow SPSO guidance and regard a complaint as 'an expression of dissatisfaction about our action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by us on our behalf'.

2. Analysis

2.1 A snapshot summary of complaints data for 2019/20 is attached as Appendix 1. It provides comparative data for three financial years (2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20). Appendix 2 outlines the yearly performance against Business Strategy Performance Indicators (PIs).

2.2 The total number of complaints received this year was 320, which is a significant increase on the previous year (204). There were a 116 more complaints received which is an increase of 64%.

2.3 The increase in the number of complaints is primarily the result of actions that stemmed from a review of complaints in March 2019. The report outlined areas for improvement such as regular auditing, changes to our customer management system, QL, and staff training, which was delivered in February 2020.

2.4 It is important to note that there has also been a natural increase in complaint trends, as we now record complaints from social media and on the back of FOI/GDPR legislation, customers have been indirectly encouraged to complain.

2.5 Complaint type

Complaints have increased for the Repairs & Maintenance service in particular. Complaints can be very specific in nature, which makes categorisation difficult.

2.6 Overall most common complaints received this year were about:

- Service (92)
- Contractor (74)
- Staff (68)

2.7 There has been a significant increase in contractor complaints; this is the result of heating issues, attendance and dissatisfaction with the quality of work. A detailed report and breakdown of complaints is sent to the Repairs & Maintenance team on a quarterly basis and is used to discuss issues at contract meetings.

Trend

2.8 The historical trend has been that complaint volumes are small; this may have been a result of under reporting due to complaints being held on two separate databases. We have worked to ensure that all complaints are recorded on our customer management software, QL. We welcome the increase in complaints this year, as an organisation who takes customer feedback seriously. Complaints are likely to reduce slightly as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and the reduction of services between March-June 2020.

2.9 Outcomes

There was an increase in the number of complaints 'upheld' or 'partially upheld' this year. 68% of complaints were 'upheld' or 'partially upheld' in comparison to 60% in 2018/19 and 54% in 2017/18. The percent of complaints 'not upheld' has

decreased over the last 3 years with, 46.4% in 2017/18, 38.7% in 2018/19 and 32% in 2019/20.

- 2.10 During the training in February 2020, staff explained that they found the terms 'upheld', 'partially upheld' and 'not upheld' difficult to use, which may account for the increase. The training did examine definitions and it is hoped that staff now have a greater understanding and feel more confident using them.

- 2.11 Timescales
46% of complaints were responded to outwith SPSO timescales, which is a 19% increase in delay from 2018/19. Queens Cross practice has been to send letters in response to stage 1 complaints, which is time consuming for staff and delayed complaint closure. As of March 2020, staff have the option to call or email the outcome of the complaint to the customer. This is in line with other housing associations' practice and the SPSO guidelines, which should reduce timescales in 2020/21.

3. **SPSO Complaints and targets**

- 3.1 In 2019/20 there have been no complaints investigated by the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman, however one person did contact the SPSO. The SPSO advised that they would not be taking the complaint forward following a request for additional information from the association.
- 3.2 The SPSO advises associations to set internal targets for complaints as a way to monitor performance. This may seem strange as we can never know how many complaints we will receive, but they are not something to aim for, rather they are a reporting measure. Complaint measures are included in the performance schedule to keep staff, directors and the board up to date with current trends. Before the pandemic, the SPSO were working to develop other targets for associations to follow, it is expected these will be introduced early next year in line with the new complaints handling procedure.

4. **Compliments**

- 4.1 There were 71 compliments received in 2019/20, which is a reduction from the previous year (84).

5. **Learning from complaints**

Information from Q3 (October-December)

- A small working group has been created to improve complaints and dissatisfaction received by the customer contact centre about repairs. A number of actions have been identified and an action plan has been set up to address issues.
- Following the spate of complaints in relation to our contractor OPC, a daily report has been introduced in order to monitor issues more closely. This will allow for earlier intervention by the association to any ongoing issues. Closer involvement with Housing Support has also been established to assist the contractor with gaining access to properties to rectify issues identified.

Q2 (July-September)

- A tenant complained about the noise made by caretakers accessing a property for a tenant who was locked out in the early hours. As a result of

this complaint, guidance for caretakers will be reviewed and the Estate Services Coordinator will write to residents in the block and advise that they leave keys with a neighbour where possible or arrange for a key safe to be fitted.








- As a result of the increase in environmental maintenance complaints about the quality of work and timescales, the Repairs Team have been working with McDermott's to investigate issues. It was identified that due to levels of growth from a combination of an extremely wet, warm and sunny summer, the programme proposed to tenants was behind schedule. Next year programme will have longer timescales, which will allow for weather variances and time for work to be carried out to a high standard.

6. Next steps for 2020-21

- 6.1 As a result of Covid-19, the complaints improvement programme has slowed, as has the number of complaints being received by the association. Work will be undertaken to reignite staff focus on complaints, delivering training and driving best practice.
- 6.2 The focus will primarily be on updating materials and guidance on our staff intranet, Source; developing an official process for recording and detailing the learning from complaints, and equalities. Particular focus is required to investigate and remove barriers to making a complaint.

Appendix 1- Snapshot Summary of Annual Complaints Data 2019/20

| | | |
|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |
| Our performance is higher than the previous year | Our performance is lower than the previous year | There has been no change. Our performance is similar |

| Indicator | Performance | | | |
|--|--|--|--|---|
| | 2019/20 | 2018/19 | 2017/18 | Trend |
| Total Number of Complaints received in the year | 320 | 204 | 179 |  |
| Percentage of Complaints received by neighbourhood | Queens Cross (35%) Westercommon (25%) Woodside (26%) Dundasvale (15%) | Queens Cross (31%) Westercommon (20%) Woodside (34%) Dundasvale (15%) | Queens Cross (44%) Westercommon (17%) Woodside (24%) Dundasvale (15%) | Queens cross is the area with most complaints, which is change from last year where Woodside had the most complaints. |
| Percentage of Complaints 'Upheld' | 48% | 33% | 27% |  |
| Percentage of Complaints 'Partially Upheld' | 20% | 28% | 26% |  |
| Percentage of Complaints 'Not Upheld' | 32% | 39% | 46% |  |
| Highest complaints per service area | Property Services (194 complaints) | Property Services (94 complaints) | Property Services (81 complaints) |  |
| Highest complaints category | Service | Staff | Staff | N/A |
| Percentage of Complaints responded to out with timescale | 46% | 25% | 23% |  |
| Total number of compliments received | 71 | 84 | 66 |  |

Appendix 2- Business Strategy PIs

| PI's | Description | 2019/20 Target | Performance |
|--------------|--|---|------------------------|
| BST 1 | Total number of complaints from social rented stock, per thousand units. | 46 per 1000 units (200 complaints received in total) | 74 (320 complaints) |
| BST 2 | Complaint escalated from stage 1 to stage 2 every quarter as a number and % of all complaints responded to in full at stage 1. | 7% | 7% |
| BST 3 | The number of complaints upheld at each stage as a % of complaints responded to in full at each stage | Stage1 Upheld/Part upheld – 45% | 68% |
| | | Stage 1 Not Upheld – 55% | 32% |
| | | Stage 2 Upheld – 50% | 60% (20) |
| | | Stage 2 Not Upheld – 50% | 40% (13) |
| BST 4 | The no. and percentage of complaints at each stage which were responded to in full within the set timescales. | Stage 1 – 80% Stage 2 – 90% | 54% (173) |