

Annual Complaints Performance & Service Improvement Report 2023/24

1. INTRODUCTION

YMCA St Paul's Group is committed to ensuring that there are effective means to review, respond and act on complaints in relation to our service delivery and providing services that meet the standards agreed with customers (including residents, service users, young people and stakeholders).

Through the implementation of our [Complaints Handling Policy](#), we aim to address situations where we do or do not meet expectations and need to understand, learn and identify how we can improve our services.

In relation to our landlord services, the **Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code 2024 (the Code)** sets out requirements which all landlords must follow by law. One of the key requirements of the Code is that we issue an annual report on our complaints performance and service improvements made as a result of the learning from the complaints. Whilst the Code only looks at our landlord services, we feel it is important that all our complaints handling is reviewed annually, so this annual report sets out our performance in relation to complaints received across all our services.

As a regulated social landlord we are also required to collect and submit annual Tenant Satisfaction Measure data (TSMs) to the Regulator of Social Housing. Complaints data forms part of this annual TSM submission.

In addition to the Code and the TSMs, our own Customer Charter also sets out our commitment to our customers that we will ensure they have access to the information they need to make informed decisions and hold us to account. This report forms part of this commitment.

This report covers:

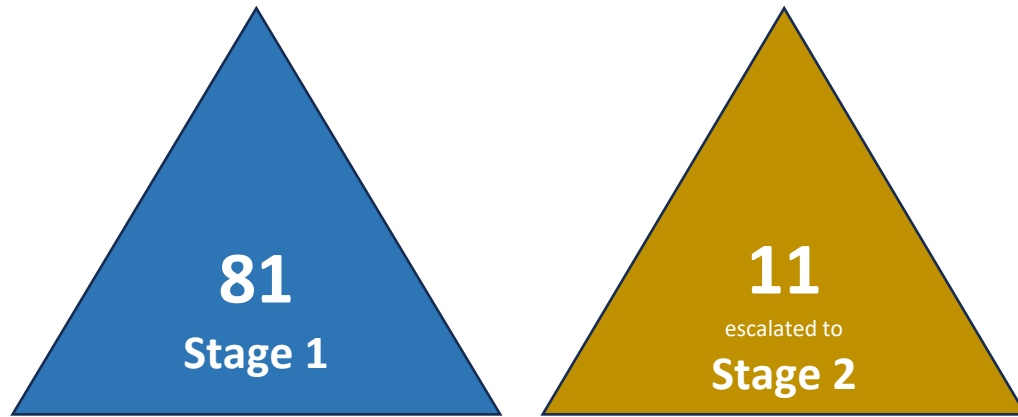
2. *Performance: a qualitative and quantitative analysis of our complaint handling performance including a summary of the types of complaints we have refused to accept;*
3. *Service Improvement: the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints;*
4. *Housing Ombudsman: any findings of non-compliance with the Code by the Ombudsman and **any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman as well as any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to our work***
5. *Annual Self-Assessment against the Code: a link to the annual self-assessment against the **Code to ensure our complaint handling policy remains in line with the Code's requirements;***
6. *Our **Board's response to this report:** our board have reviewed this report and the self-assessment, and in line with the code, provided a response.*

2. PERFORMANCE

2.1 Number of Complaints Received

All Services

From 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024 we received the following number of complaints across all our services:



Compared to previous years, this is a slight decrease from complaints received in 2022/23:

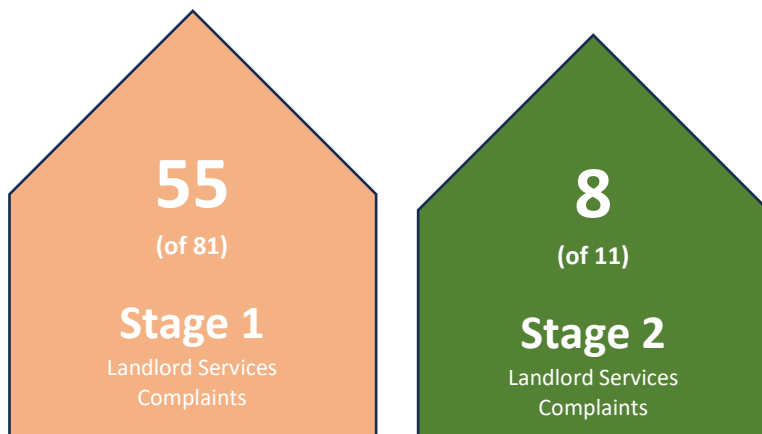
Table 1

	Annual 21/22	Annual 22/23	Annual 23/24
Complaints All Stages & All Services	88	112	92

Some of this decrease is attributable to us being clearer during 2023/24 when a customer submission was an actual complaint and when it was a service request. During 2022/23, anything that was reported via our complaint portal was recorded as a complaint (even if it was a service request), so the figures are not completely comparable.

Landlord Services only

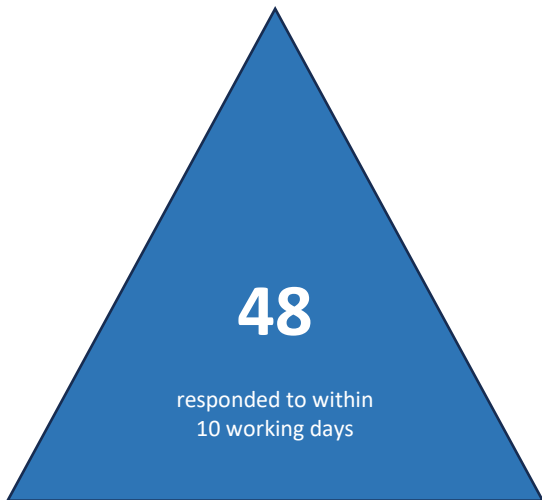
Of the 81 x Stage 1 complaints received, 55 were in relation to our landlord services (so made by a resident customer in relation to the services they received from us as a landlord). Of the 11 that were escalated to Stage 2 complaints, 8 were in relation to our landlord services.



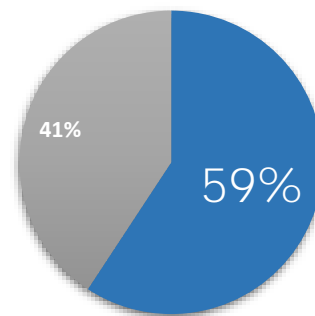
2.2 Complaints Handling Response Times

All Services – Stage 1

Of the 81 x Stage 1 Complaints received across all services, 48 were responded to within 10 working days. This represents 59%.



Stage 1 - All Services



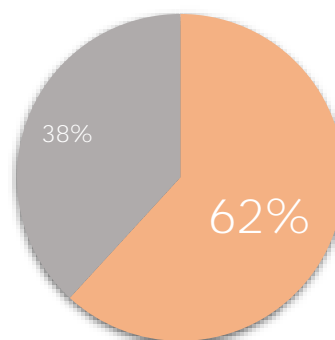
- Stage 1 (all services) % responded to within 10 working days
- Stage 1 (all services) % not responded to within 10 working days

Landlord Services Only – Stage 1

Of the 55 x Stage 1 Complaints received in relation to our landlord services, 34 were responded to within (our target timescale of) 10 working days. This represents 62%.



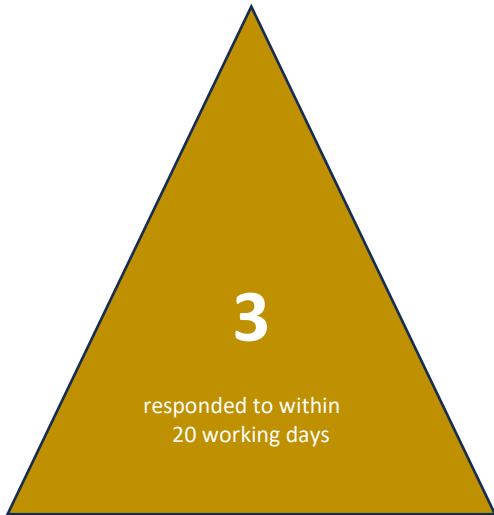
Stage 1 - Landlord Services



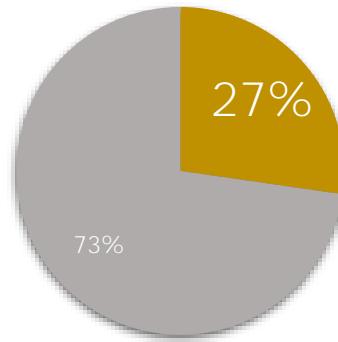
- Stage 1 (all services) % responded to within 10 working days
- Stage 1 (all services) % not responded to within 10 working days

All Services – Stage 2

Of the 11 x Stage 2 Complaints received across all services, 3 were responded to within (our target timescale of) 20 working days. This represents 27%.



Stage 2 - All Services



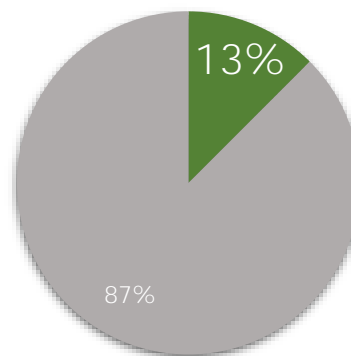
- Stage 2 (all services) % responded to within 20 working days
- Stage 2 (all services) % not responded to within 20 working days

Landlord Services Only – Stage 2

Of the 8 x Stage 2 Complaints received in relation to our landlord services, only 1 was responded to within 20 working days. This represents 13%.



Stage 2 - Landlord Services



- Stage 2 (all services) % responded to within 20 working days
- Stage 2 (all services) % not responded to within 20 working days

Our policy clearly sets out (in line with the Code) that we will respond to all complaints received within 10 working days* for Stage 1 and 20 working days* for Stage 2 and we are disappointed that our performance for 2023/24 fell behind.

**for 2023/24 we counted the 10/ 20 working days responded to from the date we received the complaint. For 2024/25, the 10/20 working days are from the day we acknowledged the complaint which we must do within 5 working days from receiving the complaint (in line with the Code).*






We have reviewed the causes for this unacceptable underperformance and believe that it is partly attributable to the following:

- ▶ a change in the system used to record complaints during 2023/24. Staff took longer than expected to get used to the new system;
- ▶ a change to the person holding responsibility for complaints within the Executive Team. This was a decision made in good faith but needed to be reversed when it was found not to be working;
- ▶ some managers not understanding the process properly and therefore not responding to the complaint until they had rectified the matter that was being complained about (rather than at the point when they had concluded their investigation and knew how they would rectify it);
- ▶ high staff absences in the teams that had higher rates of complaints received in relation to their services during the year.

We are keen to put this right, and have worked hard since the end of 2023/24 to ensure that our performance for 2024/25 is back on track. This includes the appointment of an Executive Lead for Complaints who now closely monitors complaints handling together with the Complaints Officer, the introduction of weekly monitoring meetings and additional training for complaints handling managers and staff.

2.3 Types of Complaints Received

The 81 x Stage 1 and 11 x Stage 2 complaints received can be broken down as follows:

	Stage 1	Stage 2	Service the complaint was about
	55	8	Landlord Services
	6	0	Children, Youth & Families
	9	3	Health & Wellbeing
	10	0	Non-housing related property services
	1	0	Corporate Services



Landlord Services

The complaints we received in relation to our landlord services were across a number of different themes.

Repairs

The majority (23 of the 55 x Stage 1 and 5 of the 8 x Stage 2) were in relation to repairs & maintenance, our handling of repairs, outstanding repairs, or other property related matters such as contractor performance/ behaviour.

Staff

Another theme during 2023/24 was complaints received in relation to staff attitude and support (or lack of support). This included dissatisfaction over support in relation to moving on from the YMCA and other housing management support matters. 19 of the 55 x Stage 1 and 2 of the 8 x Stage 2 complaints were regarding staff attitude or behaviour and lack of support or dissatisfaction with the support provided.

Other Residents

The third theme for complaints raised by our residents was in relation to the behaviour of other residents. This included noise, smoking of cannabis and littering. 13 of the 55 x Stage 1 complaints and 1 of the 8 x Stage 1 complaints were in relation to the behaviour of other residents. Some of the complainant residents stated that the behaviour of other residents affected their mental health and/or made them feel unsafe.



Children, Youth & Families

Cancellation of Youth Club Sessions

The majority (4) of the 6 x Stage 1 complaints received in relation to our Children, Youth & Families services were all about the same Youth Club (Ben Club) cancelling sessions repeatedly over a number of weeks due to staff shortages.

Other Service Delivery

One complaint was in relation to noise generated by another organisation hiring one of our Youth Centres and we received one complaint in relation to the service being delivered at our nursery.



Health & Wellbeing

Staff

The main theme for complaints received in relation to our Health & Wellbeing Services (which covers gyms, fitness and group classes, swimming, catering & counselling) was dissatisfaction with staff conduct, attitude and response. 7 of the 9 x Stage 1 complaints could be linked back to the customer being dissatisfied with staff. All 3 of the Stage 2 complaints received for Health & Wellbeing were about staff.

Other Service Delivery

The other 2 complaints received in relation our Health & Wellbeing were customers raising dissatisfaction around other service delivery matters such as overcrowding in the pool and a lack of hairdryers on site.



Non-housing related property services

Facility Cleanliness

5 of the 10 x Stage 1 complaints received in relation to our facilities that were not housing related were around facility cleanliness.

Other Service Delivery

The other 5 complaints had no particular theme and were across a number of other service delivery issues including contractor behaviour, steam room and heating in the office not working, a branch **falling into a neighbour's property and noise from a plant room** affecting local neighbours.

2.4 Complaints Not Accepted

During 2023/24 we only refused to accept one repeat complaint raised by one individual, who had exhausted our complaints process in relation to this particular matter over 24 months ago but continues to log repeat complaints on a regular basis. We no longer accept these complaints in line with our policy and the individual has been advised of this (and continues to be reminded of this), but we still did receive and refused to accept one such repeat complaint during 2023/24.

3. SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

Throughout the year we reviewed complaints and what we could have done differently to stop them from arising in the first place, or what we could and should do differently in the future. We value complaints and see them as an opportunity to learn and improve.

Communication & Customer Service

A key learning during the year was that we needed to improve on our communication in relation to repairs and maintenance, in particular when we have larger issues within a property such as a leak affecting more than one room/ flat. This was also reflected in the resident satisfaction survey where residents told us that they wanted us to get better at communicating with them, including getting better at informing them when repair works would take place. We have taken this on board and are picking this up as part of a review of our repairs process that we will be undertaking in 2024/25. As part of this review, we will engage with residents further to take forward some of the changes they want to see.

Another key learning was that some staff needed additional training around customer service and how to better communicate with our (in some cases vulnerable) residents. We worked with residents in putting together a Compassion Focused Customer Service training package, which included real feedback from residents on how certain interactions with staff had made them feel. This training is being rolled out across all customer service teams in our housing services during 2023/24.

Counselling

We also reflected on our sign-up process for our counselling service as a result of a complaint and realised that we needed to be clearer on some aspects of the process.

Complaints Administration & Monitoring

Most importantly, we learned that we needed to improve on our handling of complaints, particularly the administrative side, ensuring that all relevant staff understood the importance of getting the right paperwork issued to the complainant within the right timeframe and added to the system.

In our 2023/24 resident survey, 42% of residents that had complained in the previous 12 months were satisfied with our approach to complaints handling. To improve on this we have appointed a new Executive Lead for Complaints who will be monitoring this closely and a Board Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC) who will receive regular performance updates. In addition, to ensure residents also get an opportunity to scrutinise our approach to complaints handling regularly, we will be training our resident representatives on this and presenting them with complaints handling data throughout the year.

4. HOUSING OMBUDSMAN

Between 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024 one complaint was raised with the Housing Ombudsman. This was a first contact and we were asked to deal with the complaint within our internal complaints process which we did. In addition, the Housing Ombudsman did inform us in June 2023 of their findings in relation to one case which had been ongoing and with them for investigation since before 1 April 2023. Their finding was that we had made redress and resolved the complaint and there had been no maladministration on our part. There were no further actions for us.

On 31 March 2024 we had no live cases with the Housing Ombudsman.

During 2023/24 the Housing Ombudsman had not made any findings of non-compliance with the Complaints Code against us and there was no annual report about our performance or any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Housing Ombudsman in relation to our work.

5. ANNUAL SELF-ASSESSMENT

In line with the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code we have completed our annual self-assessment against the code which is available on our website and can be found in the compliments, complaints & comments section:

<https://ymcastpaulsgroup.org/compliments-complaints-or-comments/>

6. BOARD RESPONSE

As a Board, with the support and scrutiny of our Performance Committee and Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC), we have reviewed and noted our self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code (2024). **We believe it provides a true reflection of the Charity's approach to meeting the requirements of the Code.**

We have also reviewed and discussed this report. We do note with disappointment that complaints handling performance was not in line with what we expected during the year. We have performance improvement as one of our foundational focuses for 2024-25 and will be tracking performance throughout the year. As a Charity we welcome feedback from all our customers, given we have a relatively small number of complaints we should be doing better in responding to these in a timely and evidenced way. We also continue to work with the staff to ensure that we learn from complaints and have a healthy culture that embraces feedback. This will be a key area of focus for the MRC to monitor during the year.

In assessing ourselves against the Code and in reviewing our performance for the year, we have been able to draw a better distinction between what represents a service request and what constitutes a complaint and have also further clarified the timelines for responding to complaints. Going forward we will continue to monitor and review this so we can deliver the right level of response. We will also monitor all our sites, listening to the silences, ensuring that all our residents know how to raise their concerns with us. **Where we haven't heard anything from residents within certain sites for an extended period of time, we will look to raise awareness of the process to do so.** We will do this with the support and challenge of our Resident Representatives Panel.