



NLM Housing Association

Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement report

2023 - 2024

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Background

The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 (the Act) empowered the Housing Ombudsman to issue a code of practice about the procedures members of the Scheme should have in place for considering complaints. With these increased powers the Ombudsman also has a duty to monitor compliance with the code.

Landlords from April 2024 will now need to ensure they have a complaints policy that complies and procedures that comply with the code. To evaluate compliance all landlords must now show that it has scrutinised and challenged the compliance.

Therefore NLM will produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report with the oversight and commentary of the board.

Purpose

This report summarises NLM's performance and learning from resident complaint during the period April 2023 – March 2024. This includes all complaints, for all departments covering stage 1, stage 2 and from the Ombudsman.

At NLM we recognise the importance of using the information we gather from our customers, and we are constantly striving to improve our services and we welcome complaints, comments and compliments.

Handling complaints effectively is not just about processes and time limits. It is also about the culture within our organisation and the behaviour and attitudes we display. We will ensure complaints are handled quickly and efficiently and making any improvement and changes where required.

We empower our staff to look at complaints positively, viewing them as an opportunity to put things right quickly, promote positive relationships with customers and provide a learning opportunity.

Our complaint policy has a two stage complaint handling process with reasonable timescales to ensure complaints are handled in an efficient and fair way. This can be found at:

<https://www.nlmha.com/policies-and-procedures/>

As part of the review into complaints NLM has carried out analysis of the number and nature of complaints as well as assessed its compliance against Ombudsman’s The self-assessment form, which is at the end of this report.

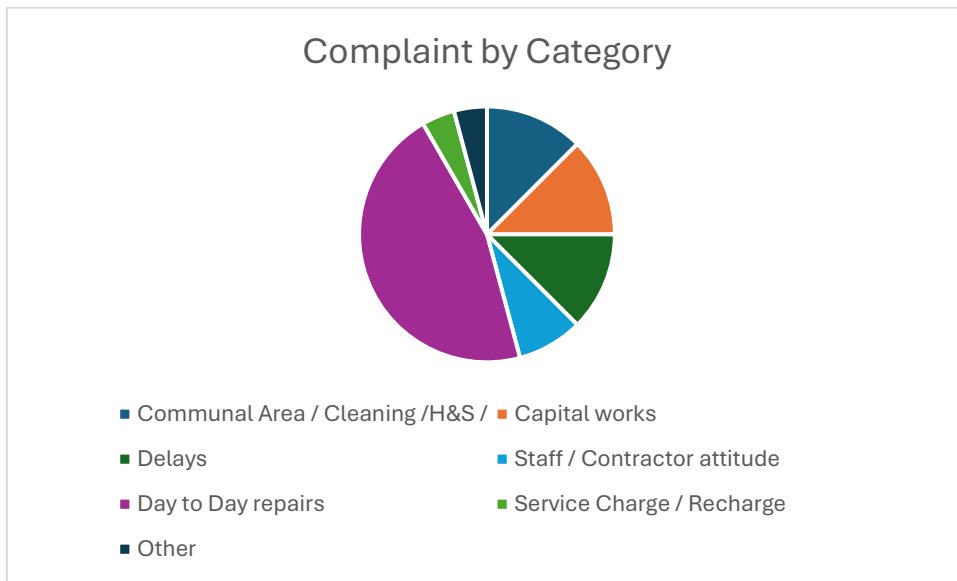
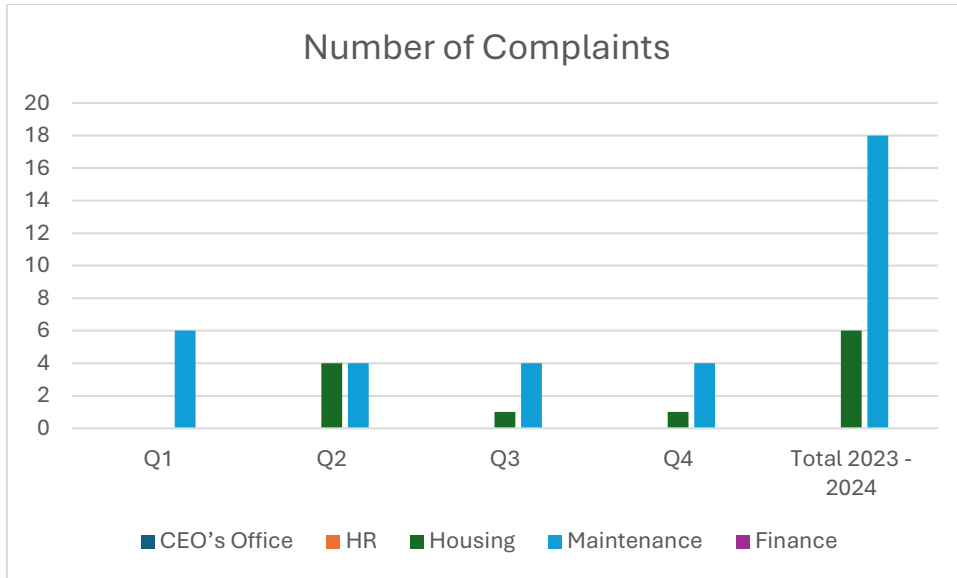
NLM also has a duty to report our performance on complaints through our governance arrangements and publish a copy of the annual complaints report on our website.

Performance

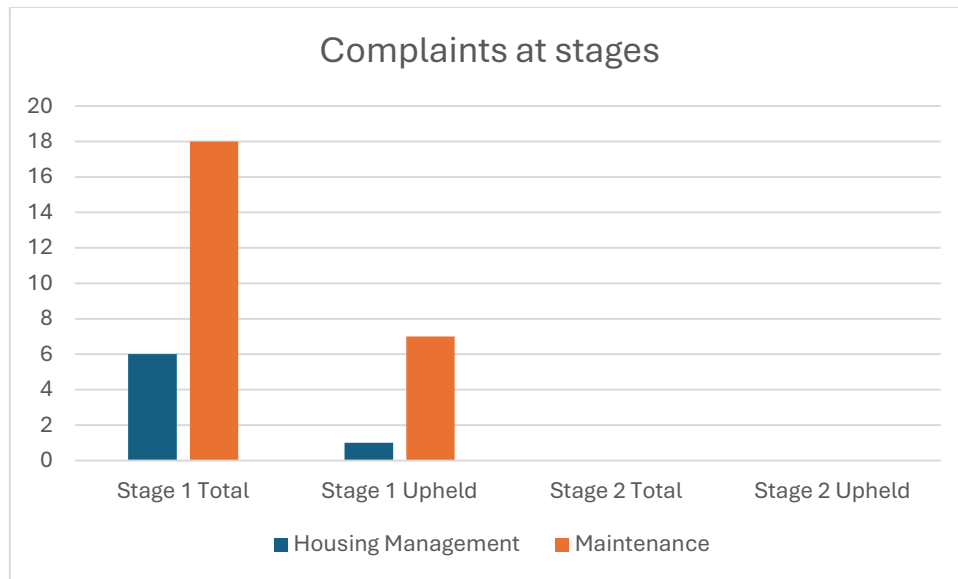
The overall number of complaints are categorised by department and highlighted below. In the year there have been a total of 24 complaints, 6 of which were for Housing Management and 18 for the maintenance department. There have been no complaints received for CEO’s department, HR or finance.

All complaints were responded within the timeframe set out in the policy.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total 2023 - 2024
CEO’s Office	0	0	0	0	0
HR	0	0	0	0	0
Housing	0	4	1	1	6
Maintenance	6	4	4	4	18
Finance	0	0	0	0	0
Total					24



	Stage 1 Total	Stage 1 Upheld	Stage 2 Total	Stage 2 Upheld
Housing Management	6	1	0	0
Maintenance	18	7	0	0



Out of all the complaints 8 were upheld at stage 1. The nature of the upheld complaints details into three main themes; poor communications, attitude of staff and contractors and delays in service.

Engagement with the Ombudsman

Two cases were taken to the ombudsman service by Tenants. Both cases were referred back to NLM to be dealt within its complaints process.

There were no decisions made or findings of fault by the Ombudsman service against NLM.

Oversight of Complaints

All complaints are received into the complaints mailbox, which is monitored by Directors and the CEO. Complaints are then allocated and monitored by the Director of the department to ensure they are actioned appropriately and within timescales.

A standing item on Weekly management meetings include the number of complaints as well as complaint casework.

The Committees and Board are updated with the number, nature and stage of complaints in the quarterly reports. The Board has also appointed a Complaints Champion to lead on the oversight of complaints.

Using insights from complaints to improve services

As NLM values its residents feedback, we have taken the approach of embracing complaints and learning from them. We have identified three main areas to improve our services and outlined some of actions below.

Theme of complaint	Examples of actions taken to improve services
Poor Communications	<p>All staff have carried out good customer care training to ensure customers get a better service</p> <p>NLM has introduced the myHome portal which allows customers to access their rent and repairs information online as well as make new requests.</p> <p>A Tenant Satisfaction working group has been setup to identify and improve services. This meets on a regular basis.</p>
Attitude of Staff and Contractors	<p>Regular meetings are carried with contractors to ensure NLM is aware of contracts and can address issues with the contractors.</p> <p>NLM has implemented call recording, to be able to review calls and improve the service.</p>
Delays in Service	<p>We have reviewed our service with contractors to ensure they can carry out repairs at the earliest convenience of the resident as well the contractor.</p> <p>Managers meetings are now carried out on a weekly basis to identify bottlenecks, efficiencies and deliver on-time services</p>

Board Statement

NLM is committed to being compliant with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. The Complaint Handling Code, introduced by The Housing Ombudsman

(HO), sets out a good practice for Social Housing Landlords to enable landlords to resolve complaints raised by their tenants quickly, and to use the learning from complaints to improve services.

This document is NLM's self-assessment against the code for the period 2023-24, to identify areas where we are doing well, and where we acknowledge the need to further improve our service.

The annual complaints performance and service improvement report shows that whilst NLM is overall compliant with The Housing Ombudsman's complaint handling code, there remain some areas where improvement is required. Complaints remain a key performance indicator that NLM monitor to ensure that the voice of the tenant is listened to and acted on to continuously improve.

June 2024