



ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT

2023-2024

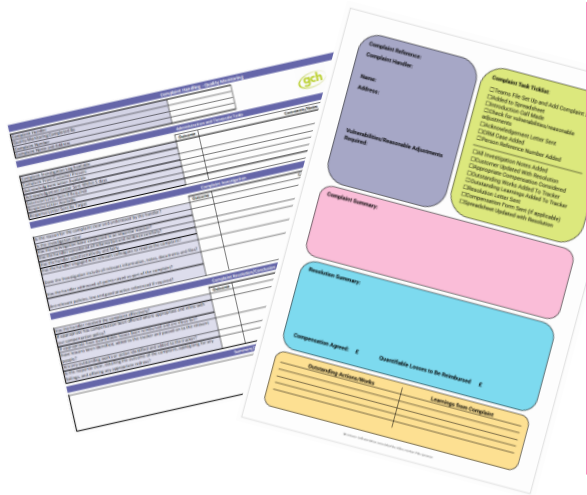
Pride. Quality. Integrity. Innovation.

INTRODUCTION

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION TEAM

GCH has worked hard throughout the year to overhaul its approach to complaints and complaint handling. This started with the introduction of the Customer Satisfaction Team in July 2023 with the current team in place from September.

This dedicated team oversees the majority of complaint investigations with an end to end service which allows for more thorough and impartial complaint handling than was previously delivered.



The Customer Satisfaction Team has developed and implemented Complaint Investigation and Quality Monitoring Templates to ensure we handle complaints effectively and remain compliant with the Ombudsman's complaints handling code.

A new learnings tracker was devised and implemented in July 2023 and has helped address and monitor over 140 learnings from complaints

A new outstanding actions tracker was developed to monitor works outstanding from complaints. Since July 2023 this has seen over 200 outstanding actions monitored and tracked to completion

INTRODUCTION

OVERSIGHT

All complaints received are recorded in one central database and all relevant files relating to our complaint handling are stored centrally to maintain consistency and oversight.

A quarterly complaint report is presented at the Customer Experience Committee which includes data relating to complaints as well as insights on the complaints received, trends on themes, and addresses lessons learnt.

As required by the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code a Self-Assessment was completed last year and also following the forming of the Customer Satisfaction Team. A further self-assessment was undertaken following the revised code which came into effect on 1st April which confirmed we remain compliant with the code.

In March 2024 the Chair of the Board, and Chair of the Customer Experience Committee carried out an audit of complaints handled by Customer Experience Team to provide assurance that these were dealt with in line with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.

Publications relating to complaints and complaint handling, such as the Housing Ombudsman's spotlight reports are shared both internally and with the relevant Boards and Committees.

Complaint data is presented at the internal Customer Voice and Influence board so that key leaders of the business are aware of current trends and themes.

INTRODUCTION

HEADLINE FIGURES

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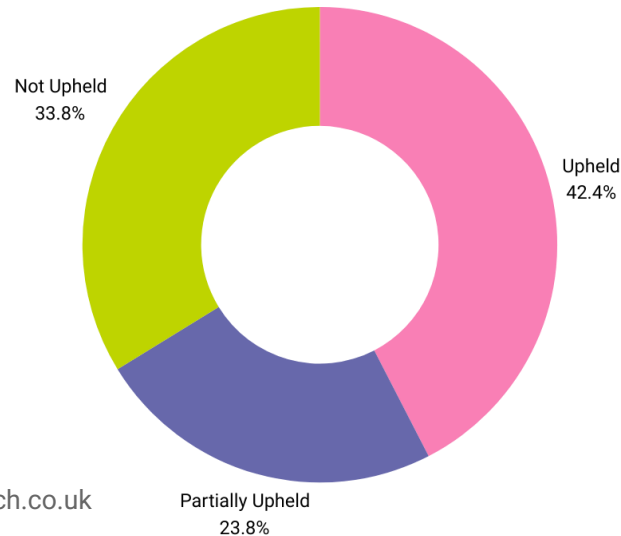
Stage One Complaints Received

Decrease of 4.1% on last year

38

Stage Two Complaints Received

Increase of 5.6% on last year



The total number of stage 1 complaints received decreased compared to the previous year by 10, equating to a 4.1% reduction.

A total of 38 complaints were escalated to stage 2 of the complaints process. This was an increase of 2 on the previous year, an increase of 5.6%. A higher proportion of these escalations were seen in the first half of the year with 62.7% received in quarters 1 and 2. It is thought that this is due in part to the more effective complaint handling from the Satisfaction Team, with more in depth complaint investigations carried out, an emphasis on communication throughout the complaints process and an increased monitoring of works required following a complaint.

66.2% of complaints were either fully or partially upheld. This was down from 73% seen the previous year. It is thought that this decrease is due to the work being undertaken by the Customer Satisfaction Team to carry out comprehensive complaint investigations, which get to the root cause and identify if there has been any service failure.

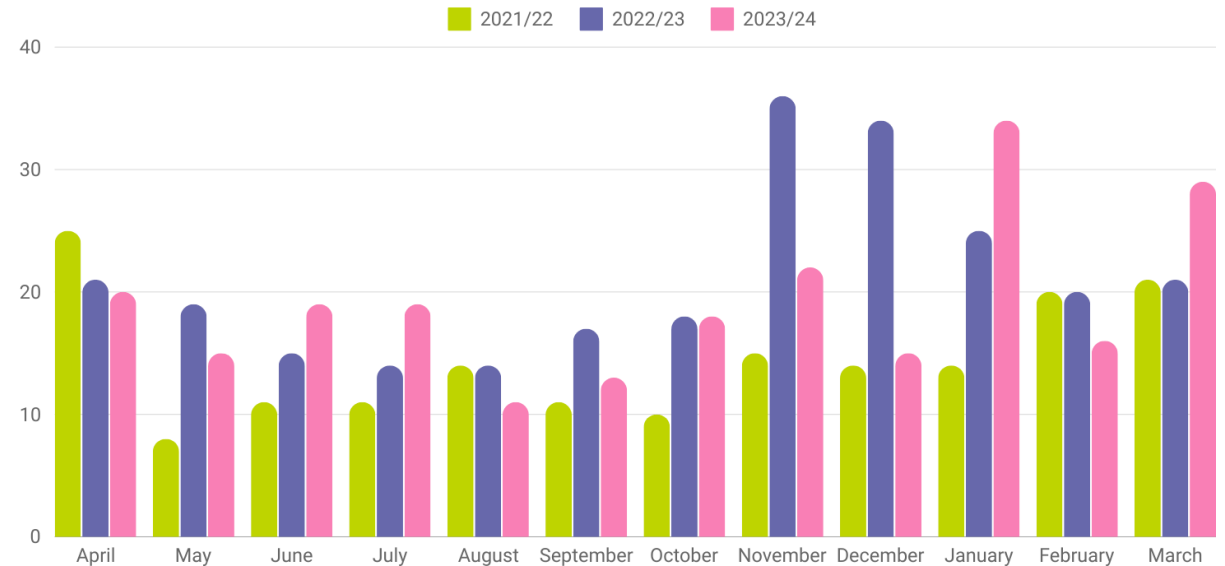


COMPLAINTS YEAR ON YEAR

The graph and table show the numbers of complaints received across the past three years.

As with previous years, complaint volumes have varied throughout the year with the most complaints received this year in January 2024 with 34 complaints. These complaints varied in nature with no clear indicator for the reason for this peak. The month with the lowest number of complaints received was August 2023 with 11 complaints which appears consistent with previous years.

Trends within complaints received by month continues to be monitored so as to monitor trends, gain insight and track our complaints along with what is being seen within the sector – such as the increase in complaints in November and December 2022 which were linked to the tragic reporting of the death of Awaab Ishak.



	Stage 1 Complaints	Stage 2 Complaints
2021-2022	174	18
2022-2023	241	36
2023-2024	231	38

COMPLAINT TIMESCALES

Stage 1

231 Complaints Received

186 responded to within 10 working days – 80.5%

43 responded to within 20 working days with an extension applied – 18.6%

2 responded to out of target timescales – 0.9%

99.1% stage 1 complaints were resolved within the Housing Ombudsman's timeframes. This was an increase from 95% the previous year. No complaints handled by the Customer Satisfaction Team were resolved out of target.



Stage 2

38 Escalations Received

30 responded to within 20 working days – 78.9%

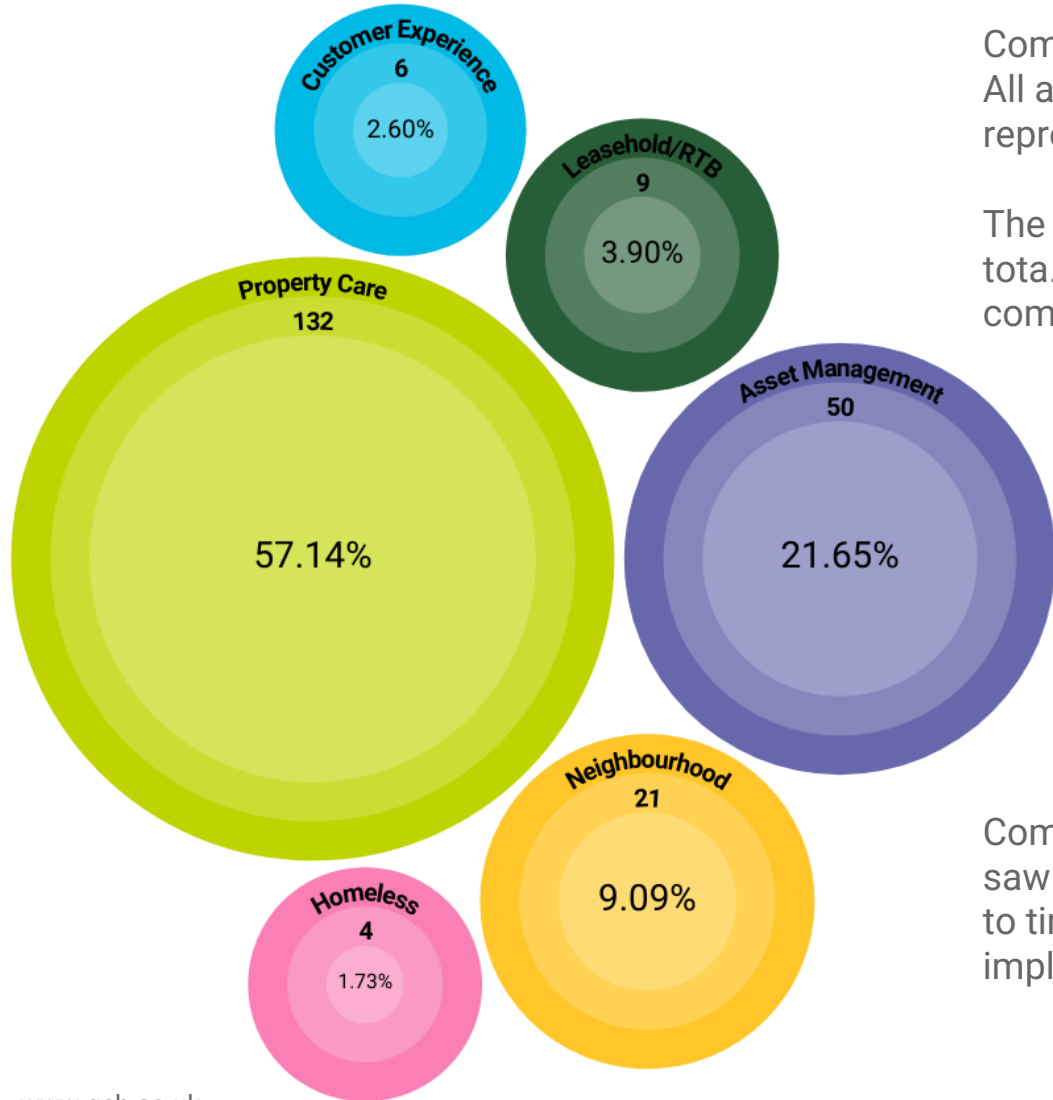
4 responded to within 30 working days with an extension applied – 10.5%

4 responded to out of target timescales – 10.5%

89.5% stage 2 complaints were resolved within the Housing Ombudsman's timeframes. This was an increase from 89% the previous year. Like stage 1 complaints, no complaints handled by the Customer Satisfaction Team were resolved out of target.



COMPLAINTS BY SERVICE AREA



Complaints were received from a range of service areas throughout the business. All areas which received more than 2 complaints throughout the year are represented in this chart. This accounts for over 97% of all complaints received.

The highest number of complaints received related to Property Care with 132 in total. Property Care completed approximately 26,000 jobs this year, meaning a complaint was received on 0.5% of all works.

Asset Management complaints equated to 50 complaints received with issues reported in a number of areas such as waiting times, communication and outstanding rectification works.

Complaints in relation to our Neighbourhood teams received just under 10% of all complaints. The two key themes in these complaints related to staff conduct and ASB case handling.

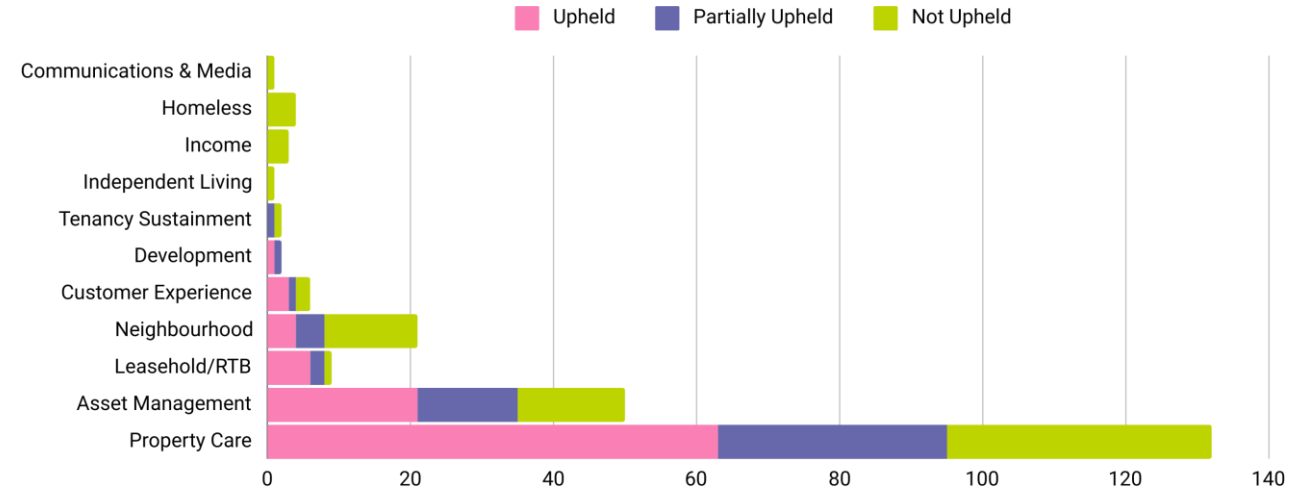
Complaints relating to Leasehold properties and the Right to Buy process saw an increase this year and equated to 9 in total. These mainly related to timeliness of responses and updates with a number of learnings implemented as a result.

COMPLAINTS BY SERVICE AREA

As with previous years, the highest number of complaints received have related to the Property Care and Asset Management Teams. The numbers received in these areas are marginal decreases both in volume and upheld rate.

Given the high volume received in these areas, regular catch up sessions between the Customer Satisfaction Team and heads of service for both Property Care and Asset Management are now carried out to review the complaints received, complaint findings, and lessons learnt. This will also be replicated with the Neighbourhood Team in the forthcoming year.

In addition to this, a weekly meeting takes place between the Property Care Team Leaders and the Customer Satisfaction Team which provides support on live complaints to ensure that they continue to be resolved effectively.

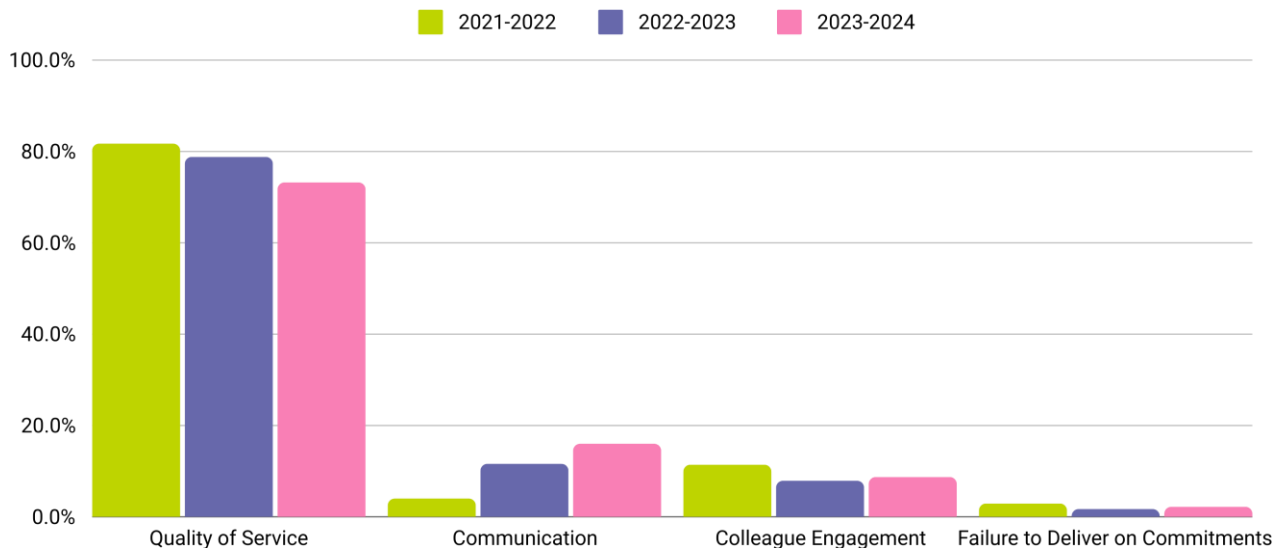


The Homeless, Income, Communications & Media, and Independent Living were all teams who received complaints, none of which were upheld.

The Development Team was the only team to receive complaints which were all upheld, either fully or partially, although these only accounted for a total of 2 complaints.

COMPLAINTS BY CATEGORY

We have continued to track themes throughout the past year and have used these to direct our complaint investigations and subsequent lessons learnt.



Complaints relating to quality of service have seen a slight decrease year on year over the past 3 years. This accounted for 73.2% of all complaints in the last year, compared to 81.7% 2 years ago. This is attributed to a number of areas of improvement within the business, many seen within the last year such as the Making Every Visit Count initiative, and the launch of the Customer Commitment in Autumn 2023.

Complaints relating to communication have seen an increase over the past few years. There were 16% of complaints categorised as issues around communication, which has steadily increased from 4% in 2021-22. This is reflected in a number of learnings identified through the complaints process and has been identified as a key area for improvement.

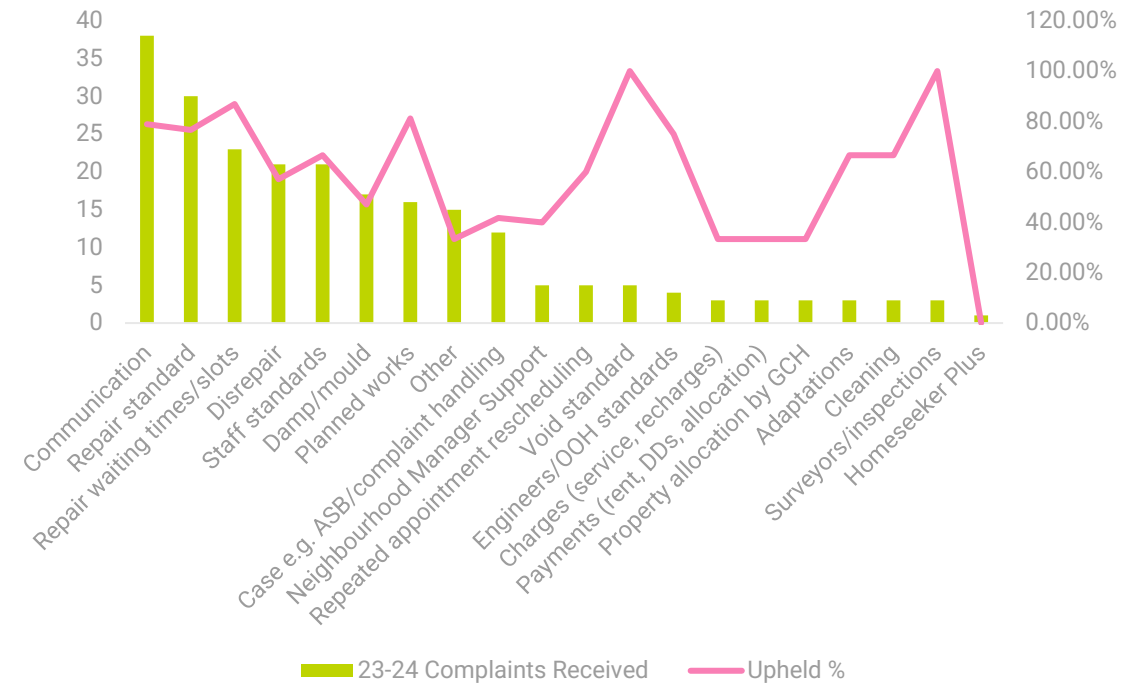
Complaints categorised as failing to deliver on commitments and colleague engagement have remained fairly static over the past year when compared to previous years.

COMPLAINTS BY THEME

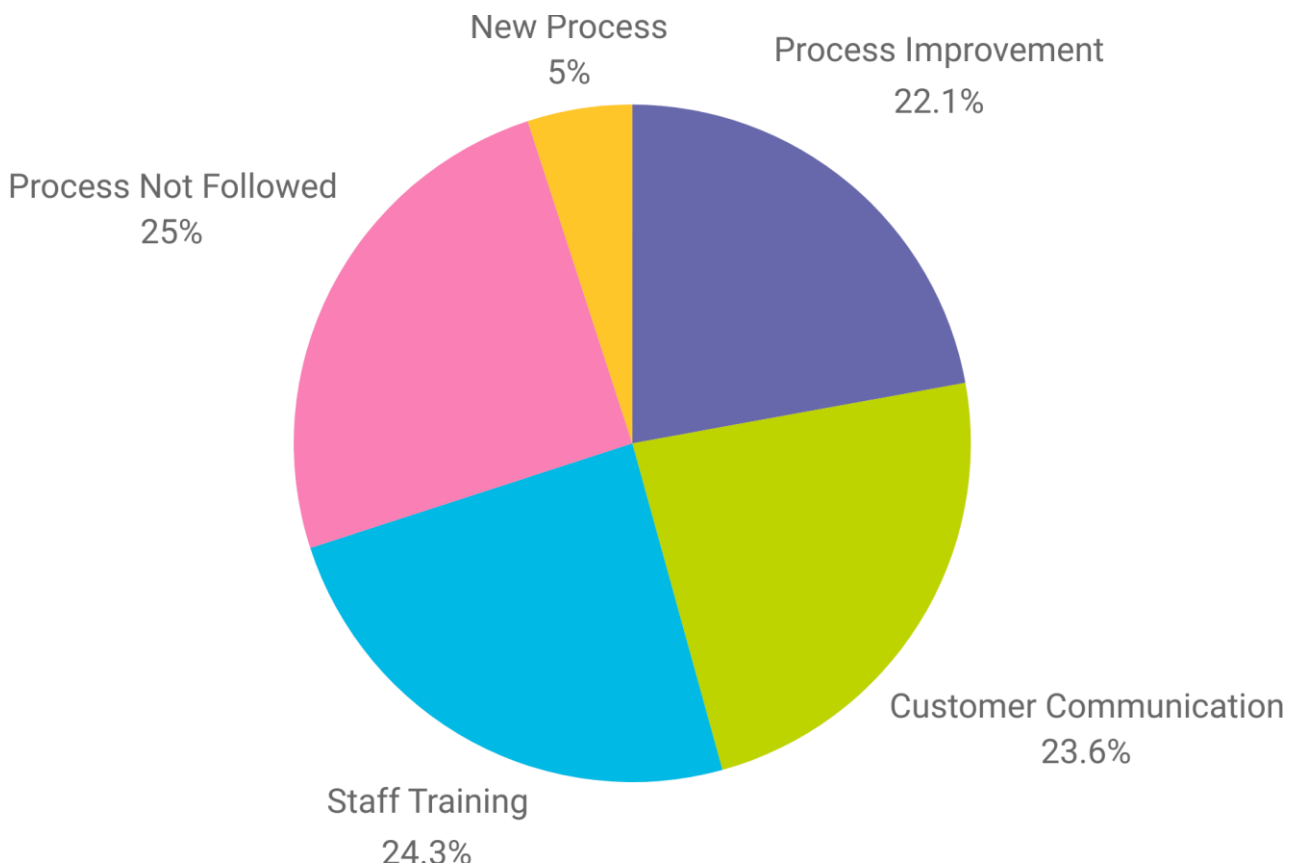
As with previous years we have continued to receive complaints across a number of themes.

100% of complaints categorised as Void Standard or Surveyor/Inspections had some aspect which was upheld. These complaints mainly related to works that were required to properties following the void period, and instances where surveyors visits or inspections took place, however follow up works had not been actioned. Learnings from these complaints have found that often works were not communicated effectively. Learnings have been identified and fed back and focus on additional communication to ensure outstanding works are picked up, raised and completed.

The theme with most complaints received was communication with 28 complaints received of which 78.95% were upheld. These complaints varied across a number of teams and related to issues such as callbacks not being made, updates not provided to customers, incorrect information being given as well as some instances around how calls with customers were handled. As with all complaints learnings have been identified and improvements have been made, such as a process for callbacks being processed through our CRM system, as well as linking into our business wide Be The Difference Training.



LEARNINGS



Our approach to learning from complaints has been further developed this year and we have developed new trackers for these which have allowed us to better deliver and implement learnings and improvements off the back of complaints. Over 140 learnings from complaints have been identified by the Customer Satisfaction Team.

Since July 2023 further insight has been gained by categorising learnings.

Learnings are regularly fed back to service area leads and other relevant colleagues and tracked through to their implementation in a continued effort to improve services and commitment to our customers.

LEARNINGS

A selection of learnings that have been identified through the complaints process and implemented as a result

Issue Identified Through Complaint Process	Learning Identified
There was nobody available to assist with queries when the Leasehold Manager was not available.	Greater visibility of cases is now available to a wider team who can assist in the event that the Leasehold Manager is not available.
Details of required follow on works were not available resulting in the follow on works not being booked in.	A new process is in place whereby Property Care engineers now no longer rely on emails etc for follow on works to be raised. These are now phoned in from site and a new appointment agreed at that point with the customer.
A number of issues identified and “over promises” were made throughout the decant of a customer whilst works were taking place.	Learnings from this complaint have fed into the review of the decant policy and a new tracker for all decants which outlines each team's responsibility, as well as holding information available to all involved.
Callbacks to customers not being made when requested.	We have enhanced our CRM system to notify officers of a callback request. This remains as a task on their task list until completed.
Property Care were making multiple visits to vulnerable customers homes but not able to gain access to carry out works.	We have implemented processes so that should we encounter this, we utilise our patch teams to help support gaining access where possible.

LEARNINGS

A selection of learnings that have been identified through the complaints process and implemented as a result

Issue Identified Through Complaint Process	Learning Identified
<p>Customer felt that they weren't being kept up to date with the progress of their new home and wasn't able to get an updates regarding this.</p>	<p>The Customer Experience Team have now been trained and have access to the lettings information enabling them to give updates to customers directly.</p>
<p>Poor communication following a fire led to some personal items belonging to a customer were cleared from the property and disposed of in error.</p>	<p>This has been added to the Decant Policy and notes that prior to any removal of property, the customer must be made aware, and confirm that they have removed all personal belongings.</p>
<p>Following planned works to the block, the area where works was carried out was left in a mess, and the contractor needed to reattend and carry out repairs to damage caused.</p>	<p>This was addressed with the contractor directly with our expectations around any area of work being left neat and tidy for the duration of works. Any additional rectification works are to be communicated with the customer directly and updates provided.</p>
<p>An issue was identified whereby customers were not provided with all relevant information for registering solar panels with their energy providers to be able to receive the benefit of them.</p>	<p>A process was put in place identifying all information required, and who this was to be provided by. This has been relayed to the Asset Management Team who are now following this, and also applying retrospectively to customer who have had panels fitted previously.</p>

HOUSING OMBUDSMAN

We have received five requests for evidence by the Housing Ombudsman for cases it is looking to investigate throughout the year. In all cases these requests have been complied with, within the timescales stipulated by the Housing Ombudsman. We await the Ombudsman determination in four of these cases.



In the one determination that we have received from the Housing Ombudsman, it was found that there was maladministration in regards to the condition of the property at the time of letting, and the approach taken to manage the removal of asbestos at the property.



The Ombudsman ordered that additional compensation be paid to the customer, along with a full inspection to address any outstanding repairs at the property.



The order was complied with and an internal review of the complaint and subsequent determination took place to identify learnings and opportunities to improve. These included ensuring that all issues raised through the complaints process are addressed fully, and ensuring that any promises are proportionate and are not “over promising”. Issues raised with the asbestos removal have been addressed with the contractor directly.

Housing
Ombudsman Service

COMPLIMENTS

As with previous years, we have continued to record compliments received relating to services provided by GCH. A total of 90 compliments were received throughout the year across a number of service areas.

I called today and would just like to say what a pleasure this was. The person I spoke to was very friendly, extremely professional and most of all extremely helpful. Keep up the good work GCH, your staff are a pleasure to talk to and the work being carried out has become more professional. Thank you for making reporting a repair a pleasurable experience.

I just wanted to pay some compliments to a couple of locksmiths attending out of hours to a customer who frequently locks themselves out. The level of care towards the person from the locksmiths was lovely to see, especially considering they had not long previously been out to the address for a similar matter which I suppose can be frustrating. They showed nothing but kindness towards this person. Also the lady on the phone handled matters really well when the person used my phone to contact GCH.

You have literally given me a new life, and a much needed one that I never thought I would get. I've struggled with all my health conditions for many, many years and been very isolated in my previous home away from family. You have given me a beautiful new home which is far better suited to my health difficulties and close to my family. I can't tell you how much it means to me to be given this fresh start and one I shall never take for granted.

AIMS FOR 2024/25

There are a number of areas that have been identified as areas for improvement for the forthcoming year.

Increased use of EDI data to gain greater insight of complaints received, as well as identifying and knowing where we have silent customers.

A more joined up approach to the data insight from TSMs and Transactional data to further enhance learnings from complaints.

A refreshed approach to complaint themes, with the reviewed theme categories, and the ability to categorise complaints by more than one theme.

Improved cross business working to ensure that all service areas have input to complaints, lessons learnt and outstanding works.

Greater use of available benchmarking data to compare our complaints with those of our peers.