



# OUR COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS REPORT

AUGUST 2023



Every year we publish this summary of our complaints and compliments highlighting the feedback that customers have given to us. Customer feedback is incredibly important to us and ensuring that we learn from complaints is a key focus for our business.

We also believe that it is vital that we remain open and transparent about how we’re doing. Every year we publish a summary of our complaints performance and give an update on the actions we’re taking to reduce the number of complaints and improve our complaint handling service.

This Report presents the information about how we have handled your complaints between April 2022 and March 2023. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all our customers for the feedback you have provided over the past year and would reassure you we will continue to listen and value your views.

Performance indicator	2021/22 Performance	2022/23 Performance	Difference
Number of complaints received	1,027	1,380	+ 34%
Complaints closed within 10 days	95%	90.2%	- 4%
Average time taken to resolve complaints	Average 8 working days	Average 9 working days	1 Day
Number of complaints upheld	67%	76%	+9%
Number of customer compliments received	509	459	-10%
Complaints per 1,000 properties	33.6	45.5	+35%

### THE THREE MAIN THINGS YOU HAVE COMPLAINED ABOUT.

Your top reasons for complaining to us will help us focus on improving where we need to.



Time taken to complete repairs  
(**466** 2021/22, **516** 2022/23).



Inaccurate and inadequate information being provided  
(**66** 2021/22, **151** 2022/23).



Property condition or damage  
(**91** 2021/22, **146** 2022/23).

Your top reasons for complaining to us will help us focus on improving where we need to. In 2022/23, inaccurate and inadequate information being provided replaced missed appointment performance as a top reason for customer complaints.



# OUR PERFORMANCE AT A GLANCE.

- After a small increase of 4% in 2021/22, the number of complaints received this year has risen by 35%.
- We have achieved our target of resolving 90% of your complaints within 10 days.
- 60% of our customers told us that they were satisfied with the way in which their complaint was handled.
- This year we received 445 compliments as well as 906 WOW Award nominations from our customers. The WOW Awards allow customers to nominate someone who has provided excellent customer service.

## How we're responding to complaints

Whilst we are disappointed to receive more complaints than we did last year, we are using your feedback to make our services better. We have a clear idea of where we need to improve and have plans in place to get better and reduce the number of complaints we receive. Our plans include:

- A new approach to identifying and resolving problems soon after you report them, so we can sort them out quickly and you don't need to complain.
- Delivering customer service training to all our colleagues, so they have the skills, knowledge and confidence to help you with problems big or small.
- Improving how we handle informal complaints by setting up new regional teams that aim to resolve matters at the first point of contact.

Whilst it has taken us slightly longer to deal with complaints this year, we are confident that our new and improved approach to investigating and responding to complaints will improve the service in the future. Sometimes, complaints can be more complex in nature and for this reason can take longer to reach a solution. In these cases, we will let customers know in advance.

Improving communication with any customers using our complaints process is a key area of focus for us, as we recognise how important it is that customers are kept informed and up to date on the progress of their complaint. This year we have sought to address this by improving how we acknowledge complaints; increasing the quality, quantity and frequency of our case progress updates; and by contacting customers by telephone to explain the outcome of their complaint before we confirm the outcome in writing.





## How have we improved our service?

We have made a number of improvements in the past year in response to customer feedback. This includes:

- Providing new information for customers about the cause of their complaint and the actions we are taking to learn from their experience.
- Introducing new and more convenient ways for customers to communicate with those handling their complaints, such as by text message. These additional communication channels enable a direct point of contact between complainants and our Customer Resolutions Team.
- At the point of acknowledging a complaint, we attempt to contact all complainants by telephone to help get more detail about the complaint and to understand what the customer would like to see from us.
- Before issuing our written complaint responses, we always attempt to contact customers by telephone to explain the outcome of their complaint and confirm that they are completely satisfied with our response.
- Where a complaint is about a repair, we do not close this until any works to address this have been completed and the customer has confirmed that they are satisfied with the outcome.
- Improving our written correspondence by removing excessive detail making the content simpler, particularly around how we have reached our conclusions and any follow up actions.
- Developing a new approach to ensure that our complaint handlers are delivering a consistently high standard of service when dealing with complaints.
- Continuing to improve how we report and gather insight from the complaints that we receive, so that we can use this information to inform our learning and and deliver continued improvements for customers.

In 2019, we introduced a new Escalation Support Team to resolve customer concerns at the first point of contact, quickly and informally. This approach has helped us to speed up the resolution process for customers and allowed us to spend more time on complex problems. We have continued to see great success from this initiative and the team has resolved 1,255 complaints in this way and resolved them on average within two working days.



# LEARNING FROM COMPLAINTS TO IMPROVE OUR SERVICES.

LEARNING AND OBSERVATIONS	IMPACT	ACTION TAKEN
<p>Our written correspondence at Stage 1 of our complaints process contained too much unnecessary detail</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our customers found the information irrelevant and confusing</li> <li>• The information was difficult to understand due to the technical information and jargon used</li> <li>• The inclusion of unnecessary information caused confusion and impacted the efficiency of our Customer Resolution Team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The structure and format of our written responses has been simplified by removing the unnecessary detail and presenting information in a more customer friendly manner</li> <li>• Customer Resolutions Specialists have received training to ensure the improved format is used when responding to every complaint</li> <li>• We have incorporated the new format into our quality management framework to ensure the highest quality standards are maintained consistently</li> </ul>
<p>Too many complaints were escalating to Stage 2 unnecessarily</p> <p>The way in which we handled and investigated Stage 2 complaints was not consistent with our approach at Stage 1</p> <p>We recognised a need to share more information with customers in relation to how we learn from complaints</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complaints which could and should have been resolved at an earlier stage were escalating through the process causing inconvenience to customers and greater demand</li> <li>• Inconsistencies in the process at Stage 1 and Stage 2 caused confusion and did not always deliver the outcomes customers want</li> <li>• Customers were unable to explain their Stage 2 complaint with the person tasked with resolving it, leading to misunderstanding and ineffective outcomes</li> <li>• Customers lacked confidence that we have learned from their complaint and made positive changes to prevent similar issues happening in the future</li> <li>• There was a lack of clarity amongst colleagues and contract partners about what was causing complaints and the action required to resolve them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details of what we have learnt and actions taken as a result of complaints is now included in our responses</li> <li>• Learnings and actions are communicated to colleagues and contract partners on a monthly basis</li> </ul>

LEARNING AND OBSERVATIONS	IMPACT	ACTION TAKEN
Opportunities for improving how we deal with complaints regarding damp and mould	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some customers were experiencing recurring problems with damp and mould over a prolonged period</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Detailed property inspections are now conducted in all complaints associated with damp and mould. This ensures that we always have clarity on the cause of the issue and the action required to resolve it</li> <li>We have updated our systems so that we can report on complaints which are specific to damp and mould and this is helping us to gather a greater understanding of the issue and how to tackle it</li> </ul>
We have identified further opportunities to improve our complaints processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The way we share information about complaints and request information from others varies across our three regions and also from team to team was causing confusion and delays</li> <li>We do not always use the information that we have about our regions to help improve our services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have improved how we communicate and request the information associated with processing and investigating complaints</li> <li>Colleagues in our Customer Resolution Team now operate within dedicated regions, improving knowledge and understanding of the regional trends driving complaints so that we are better equipped to respond</li> <li>As part of the regional approach, Resolution Specialists are more closely aligned with colleagues across our Property teams and our contract partners to give greater visibility of issues raised</li> <li>We have appointed a dedicated administrator within the Customer Resolution Team to ensure complaints are acknowledged and processed more quickly</li> </ul>
The accessibility to the information needed to investigate and resolve complaints needed improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teams outside of Customer Resolutions could not easily access complaint records in our internal systems</li> <li>Colleagues did not always know how to access information pertaining to complaints</li> <li>Customers and colleagues sometimes experienced delays in receiving the information that they required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have provided all operational colleagues with full access to our complaint case management system</li> <li>Training has been provided to colleagues on how to access and find information relating to complaints</li> </ul>

# WHAT'S NEXT IN OUR IMPROVEMENT PLAN?

- We have expanded our Customer Resolutions Team with additional team members who will use data and insight to get ahead of issues that could potentially lead to customer dissatisfaction and complaints. The team will work with customers to understand their circumstances, identify solutions and managing their complaint until they are satisfied with the outcome.
- We are bringing together our Customer Contact Centre, Customer Resolution Team and our in-house repairs contractor in the same office. This collaborative way of working will improve our ability to resolve more enquiries at the first point of contact, prevent complaints and improve how we diagnose and respond to repairs requests.
- We continue to look at how we can use technology to improve our complaint handling service for our customers, for example by introducing more ways for customers to contact and communicate with us.

