

OUR COMPLAINTS PERFORMANCE 2020/21

This is always a useful opportunity to take a few moments to look back over the last year and to share some of the work Onward is doing to improve the customer experience. It is our aim to provide the highest possible standards of service, but we recognise that on occasion, things can go wrong. Over the course of the last year, teams across Onward have been working tirelessly to improve the services we provide and reduce the number of complaints. We are pleased to say that we have seen a reduction in complaints this year and we have improved our complaint handling service too.

Our performance at a glance.



We received **991** complaints in 2020/21, down from **2,411** last year, a reduction of **59%**.



We closed **77%** of complaints within our target time in 2020/21, compared to **57%** last year.



On average we responded within **11** days of a complaint, compared to **14** days last year.



The number of complaints upheld this year was **69%**, **12%** lower than last year



Customer compliments on positive experiences increased by **15%** from **476** to **549**.

Our top reasons for complaints are the same as last year, but in much smaller numbers:



Time taken to complete repairs (1,304 last year, 423 this year).



Late or missed appointment (344 last year, 83 this year).



Property condition or damage (142 last year, 83 this year).

How did we do?

- The number of customer complaints reduced by 59% in comparison with 2019/20
- We resolved 20% more complaints within target than the year before and reduced the average time taken to resolve complaints by 4 business days
- Year on year the volume of complaints which were upheld fell by 12% from 81% to 69%
- The number of positive customer experiences which resulted in customers sending us their compliments increased by 15% from 476 to 549 compliments

What did we do?

In last year's annual complaints report we promised to improve our complaint handling service by making a number of commitments to our customers.

COMMITMENT MADE	ACTION TAKEN	COMMITMENT ACHIEVED?
We will maintain compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code	We achieved full compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code and published our self-assessment on our website	YES
We will provide customers with more opportunity to provide us with feedback and share their experiences with us by reintroducing our Customer Complaints Forum	In February 2021 we reinstated our Customer Complaints Forum. Attended by colleagues and customer representatives, these meetings now take place quarterly	YES
Our colleagues will operate as the 'customer advocate' and will focus entirely upon delivering the most appropriate resolution for our customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have embarked upon a companywide cultural change in relation to complaints, by amending our approach from one of complaint handling, to one of complaint prevention and resolution • Our colleagues are empowered and have the autonomy to implement customer focused resolutions • We have improved the way in which we support and communicate with customers throughout the complaints process 	YES
We will prevent complaints from happening instead of reacting to them after the event	In August 2020 we created our Escalation Support Team. A team of experts who can resolve customer concerns at the first point of contact, minimising the need for customers to raise complaints. On average the team prevent 60 - 70% of informal complaints from escalating into formal complaints	YES
We will use complaints insight to drive performance and continuous improvement, making our processes more customer focussed and efficient	We have developed and embedded a learning and continuous improvement framework. Representatives from teams across the business meet on a monthly basis to review data, look at trends and identify opportunities for improvement.	YES
We will drive down the number of complaints by improving the way we handle customer concerns at the first point of contact	Working with colleagues in our customer contact centre, we have increased the % of customer enquiries being resolved at the first point of contact from 65% to 77% and increased customer satisfaction with our service from 81% to 87%	YES
Our colleagues will be provided with all of the tools they require to ensure that they are able to deliver customer focussed resolutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have updated and improved our Complaint Resolution policy, and enhanced our processes and systems, making it easier for colleagues to resolve complaints • The next phase of our plan is to provide all colleagues with training on preventing and resolving customer concerns 	IN PROGRESS

What are we going to do next?

We are pleased that our performance is going in the right direction, but we recognise that there is still room for improvement and our commitment to continuously improving our service remains a priority. Here's a flavour of what's in store over the coming year.



Complaint prevention and resolution training will be rolled out to colleagues across the business.



An introductory video call with a Customer Resolution Specialist will be offered for every complaint received.



We will keep you informed by providing automated updates at key milestones during the complaint process.



We will continue to embed the work of our Customer Complaints Forum to help us improve the quality of our complaint resolutions work and written communications.



We will publish regular updates on our website regarding our performance and progress.



We will continue to evolve our processes and develop our learning and continuous improvement activity.

For further information regarding our complaints procedures and policy, please visit our [website](#)