

23/24 ANNUAL COMPLAINTS PERFORMANCE AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT REPORT

A REVIEW OF COMPLAINTS AT CO-OP HOMES IN 2023-2024

During 2023 to 2024 we received 11 complaints from 10 residents living in the (300) homes owned by Co-op Homes.

- Seven complaints related to our repairs and maintenance service.
- Two complaints related to how we dealt with anti-social behaviour issues.
- One complaint related to rents and utility supplies after moving into a new home.
- One complaint additionally related to how we dealt with rent.

In 50% of the cases, the complainant was not satisfied with Co-op Homes’ reply at Stage 1 of the Complaints Policy and they asked for their complaint to be escalated to Stage 2.

None of our complaints were referred to or investigated by the Housing Ombudsman Service in 2023/24.

Learning from complaints to improve services

Issue	Learning point
The majority of complaints were about our repairs and maintenance service. In one case a contractor hadn’t completed the work to the resident’s satisfaction. In another, we closed a repair too early. In both these cases we hadn’t kept the customer updated.	We realise that not knowing what’s going on has a big impact on customers, so we’ve increased the number of people in our customer services team to ensure we’re better at keeping customers updated in future.
In a complaint about a rat infestation in a flat we initially treated the individual flat. Sadly, this didn’t resolve the problem and the resident had to escalate their complaint to Stage 2. We then treated the whole block.	We realise the stress caused by a vermin infestation so we’ve now changed our repairs policy to ensure that we treat the whole block whenever there is a report of vermin in a flat with shared spaces.
In a complaint about the poor condition of the windows, front door and gutters, our surveyor confirmed repairs were needed so we raised a repair for each job. The complainant subsequently reported damp. As the repairs hadn’t fully resolved the issues, we progressed the complaint to Stage 2. We commissioned a second opinion from a specialist damp surveyor. The surveyor diagnosed the causes, provided clear explanations, and identified comprehensive actions to eradicate damp and mould.	We now respond to any report of damp and mould with a comprehensive damp survey, monitor actions to completion and carry out a follow up survey to ensure the problems have been resolved.
Anti-social behaviour (ASB) is excluded from our complaints policy as we deal with it under a separate ASB policy, however, 2 complainants felt that we weren’t keeping them up to date on progress with their ASB cases.	We investigated how those ASB cases were being handled. We realise the importance of keeping customers up to date and that people’s needs can be different. We will carry out additional monitoring to ensure we’re aware of all developments and will improve our communications.
A resident complained that their rent payments were taking time to show up on their rent account. We upheld this complaint.	We update rent accounts manually, which can cause delays as transactions are not as immediate as they are generally with the high street banks. We are investigating digital banking as a future option but implementation will not be soon.

Conclusions:

The complaints we received covered a range of issues, but the common themes of dissatisfaction which we will attempt to resolve are:

- Not keeping customers up to date
- Not replying to emails

We should be easy to contact via telephone on 020 3166 2608 and always reply to an email within 48 hours. We’re keen to know if we fall short and we’re grateful for any feedback on our complaints process.

Please let us know at homes@coophomes.coop.

BOARD'S RESPONSE TO THE ANNUAL COMPLAINTS PERFORMANCE AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT REPORT

On 27 June 2024 the Board received:

- the 2324 annual complaints performance and service improvement report for residents living in homes owned and managed by Co-op Homes.
- An update to the complaints policy for consumer complaints from residents living in homes owned and managed by Co-op Homes to meet the requirements of the new Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code 2024
- A self-assessment against the new Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code 2024

The Board has a Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC) who provides additional assurance to the Board on the effectiveness of Co-op Homes' complaints system. The MRC and the Board have considered and approved the self-assessment that Co-op Homes complies with all aspects of the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code 2024.

Throughout the year the Board has challenged the data and information provided to the Board. Co-op Homes adopts the Housing Ombudsman's definition of a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction. This gives the Board assurance that Co-op Homes are recording an accurate volume of complaints, as the Board does not believe that a low volume of complaints would be a positive sign. A new complaints management system has been in place throughout 23/24. This has provided the Board with additional assurance on the accuracy of data on complaint handling.

One of Co-op Homes values is 'we learn'. As a small provider owning and managing 300 homes the Board considers a summary of each complaint and the lessons learned from individual complaints. Given our size, Co-op Homes does not have enough complaints to learn from trends. But our learning from individual complaints shows that communication is a key factor across complaints. Training, expectations, and systems have all been improved during 23/24. The Board will monitor the feedback on communication through the individual complaints reported to the Board during 24/25.