

Annual Complaints Review 23/24



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Volume and nature of complaints

- We received a total of **648** complaints, averaging approximately 162 complaints per quarter. This was a decrease of 243 complaints compared to the previous year. Service requests have been removed from the total number of complaints, which explains this decrease.
- Residential complex needs services (hostels; semi-independent housing, and assessment centres) received the most complaints, which aligns with the previous financial year.
- The regions who received the most complaints were Housing Services (20%), South Region and Criminal Justice (20%), West London and ETE (19%), Westminster and Rough Sleepers & Migrants (18%), and East Region and Resettlement & Move on (14%).

Directorate	Complaints received	Complaints overdue (due and still open)	Complaints closed	Complaints closed within timeframe		Complaints closed and upheld		Stage 2 complaints received	Stage 1 complaints received
	in period	in period	in period	in period		in period		in period	In period
	No.	No.	No.	No.	%	No.	%	No.	No.
East Region and Resettlement & Move On	88	1	89	68	75%	33	37%	8	80
Finance Directorate	12	0	11	8	73%	0	0%	2	10
Housing Services	130	0	135	85	63%	70	52%	22	108
People	0	0	0	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	0
South Region and Criminal Justice	132	4	130	88	68%	38	29%	5	127
Strategy & Development	0	0	0	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	0
Transformation	2	0	2	1	50%	1	50%	0	2
West London and ETE	121	9	122	86	76%	28	23%	5	116
West of England and Substance Misuse & Mental Health	47	0	49	30	63%	5	10%	6	41
Westminster and Rough Sleepers & Migrants	116	3	126	80	67%	31	25%	11	105
Total	648	17	664	446	69%	206	31%	59	589

Responding within timescales as set by the Housing Ombudsman

- **% of complaints responded to within the timescale by directorate:**
 - **West London and ETE:** 76% (an increase of 7% compared to 22-23)
 - **East Region and Resettlement and Move:** 75% (a decrease of 4% compared to 22-23)
 - **Finance Directorate:** 73% (a decrease of 27% compared to 22-23)
 - **South Region and Criminal justice:** 68% (a decrease of 2% compared to 22-23)
 - **Westminster and Rough Sleepers & Migrants:** 67% (a decrease of 5% compared to 22-23)
 - **Housing Services:** 63% (an increase of 33% compared to 22-23)
 - **West of England and Substance Misuse & Mental Health:** 63% (a decrease of 4% compared to 22-23)
 - **Transformation:** 50% (New directorate)

At the end of the financial year:

- The percentage of complaints completed within timescales is **69%**.
- The percentage of complaints acknowledged within the timeframe is **51%**.

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Key Themes

- The top four themes remained the same throughout the year:
- **Behaviour of staff** (320 complaints); including Staff ability (16) and Staff discourtesy or conduct (43). The themes of these complaints vary from staff and contractors missing appointments, lack of support or poor communication, to complaints about processes. Increase of 7% compared with previous year.
- **Environment (hygiene/tidiness/cleaning/quality of accommodation)** (87 complaints): The predominant themes concerned pests, including mice, rats, and cockroaches. Additionally, a significant majority of complaints were linked to repair issues and requests for compensation, which were not appropriately categorized.
- **Anti-social behaviour** was present in 144 complaints; the majority (116) were related to noise, and 28 were related to rubbish. Decrease of 6% compared with previous year.
- **Repairs** (55 complaints); themes of these complaints included disrepairs, delays to repairs, leaks, dampness and mould. Decrease of 12% compared with previous year.

As St Mungo's works with clients with complex needs suggests a potential correlation between the recurring themes and the specific challenges clients face.

Maladministration and Service Failures

This financial year, we received 2 cases of maladministration and 4 instances of service failures relating to 3 cases that were investigated by the Ombudsman:

- Main reasons: Handling of a resident's decant from its emergency hotel, rent advice failure, handling of the complaint and the compensation offered, and a complaint concerning reactive repairs.
- Across all 3 cases, there was a common theme of delays in complaint responses, something we need to improve as an organisation.
- The total amount paid was £4570. Additionally, we paid circa £16K for damp and mould work related to one complaint.
- **As a result, we:**
 - Enhanced our complaints procedure.
 - Conducted best practice learning sessions from ombudsman cases for all managers.
 - Shared learning with the respective teams.
 - Published blogs and other communications.
 - Promoted the complaints e-learning.

NB. We currently have two cases with the Ombudsman that are awaiting an outcome 6

- Most regions' compliance with response timescales decreased, with the exception of West London and ETE, and the Housing Services directorate.
- The prolonged strike during the year are likely to have impacted compliance rates.
- An action plan can be found in the 2024–2025 Forward Plan section.

Conclusions

Main Service Improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints and from the Internal Audit on Complaints in July 2023

- Improvements in the way we coordinate repairs, manage subcontractor performance, and monitor overdue repairs.
- Improvement in the way we deal with complaints that involve two different teams.
- Improvements to several policies and procedures, such as Complaints, Anti-Social Behaviour and Opening and Closing Buildings.
- We have launched the Working with Clients policy and several procedures that outline case working requirements, which clearly sets out what good support looks like.
- New guidance and resources have been created regarding pests and how to prevent and manage them.

Main Service Improvements continued...

- We fully implement the Anti-Social Behaviour policy and procedure which was launched in May 23.
- We Initiated monthly Quality Assurance assessments of complaint handling against the procedure.
- We refined the accuracy of complaints reporting.
- We published statistics around complaints on our website.
- We have added a post-resolution satisfaction survey for all closed Stage 1 complaints to assess complaint handling satisfaction.

Objective	Responsibility	Completion
<p>Analyse complaint data during Complaints meetings with Executive Directors to identify recurring issues and root causes. Addressing these underlying problems can help reduce the frequency of complaints and improve response times.</p>	<p>Head of Quality, Safeguarding and Complaints and Executive Directors</p>	<p>Completed and ongoing discussions and monitoring in place.</p>
<p>Send the Overdue complaints report every two weeks for each Director to cascade across their Regional Heads and teams. They can help assign, monitor, and prioritise cases, ensuring faster response times.</p>	<p>Quality and Continuous Improvement Officer</p>	<p>Completed and ongoing. Plans to e-mail investigators directly.</p>
<p>Plan an automated system that enables managers to check and manage cases independently, providing greater flexibility and efficiency in handling complaints.</p>	<p>Head of Quality, Safeguarding and Complaints and Business Insight team</p>	<p>Completed, managers receive automatic notifications from Opal.</p>
<p>Cascade complaints expectation to service directors and addresses any issues in supervision sessions.</p>	<p>Executive Director of Client Services</p>	<p>Completed and ongoing.</p>

Objective	Responsibility	Completion
Service Directors to cascade this expectation to their heads and address any issues in supervision sessions.	Executive Director of Client Services	Completed and ongoing.
Heads to cascade this expectation to their managers and address any issues in supervision sessions.	Executive Director of Client Services	Completed and ongoing.
Comms reaffirming complaints handling expectations to all CSLT staff.	Head of Quality, Safeguarding and Complaints and Quality and Continuous Improvement Officer	Completed.
Comms to encourage staff to complete the complaints e-learning.	Quality and Continuous Improvement Officer	Completed. By 2023-24 171 completed the e-learning.
Publish regular complaints comms on the intranet and via Managers' Digest.	Head of Quality, Safeguarding and Complaints and Quality and Continuous Improvement Officer	Completed.

Objective	Responsibility	Completion
Continue to encourage complainants to check satisfaction before issuing a response.	Quality and Continuous Improvement Officer	Completed.
Regularly seek feedback from complainants on their experience with the complaints process. Learn from their feedback and make improvements accordingly.	Quality and Continuous Improvement Officer	Completed and we have a survey in place for all closed stage 1.
Encourage people to use the current templates and follow the procedure.	Quality and Continuous Improvement Officer	Completed.
Further improvement on investigators negotiating complaints extension when they need.	Quality and Continuous Improvement Officer and Executive Director of Client Services	Completed.
Ensure people have protected time to deal with complaints.	Executive Director of Client Services	Ongoing.

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<p>Analyse complaint data during Complaints meetings with Executive Directors to identify recurring issues and root causes. Addressing these underlying problems can help reduce the frequency of complaints and improve response times.</p>	<p>Head of Quality, Safeguarding and Complaints, Executive Director of Client Services and Director of Assets and Compliance</p>	<p>Every quarter</p>
<p>The Executive Director of Client Services is now included in the automated reminder that is sent out three days before a complaint is due. This should trigger an email from the Executive Director of Client Services to the respective manager, serving as a prompt for compliance.</p>	<p>Executive Director of Client Services</p>	<p>17/07/2024</p>
<p>An analysis of the above action is going to be carried out, and the Executive Director of Client Services is going to follow up with any investigators that did not close the complaint on time, to understand reasons and establish the importance of compliance.</p>	<p>Executive Director of Client Services.</p>	<p>17/07/2024</p>

Objective	Responsibility	Timescales
The complaints officer will continue to provide targeted training sessions for teams identified as needing this in the quarterly meetings.	Head of Quality, Safeguarding and Complaints	Every Quarter
The Executive Director of Client Services is tasked with discussing complaints with service heads to improve compliance.	Executive Director of Client Services	As needed
Complete an annual self-assessment against the Complaints Handling Code.	Head of Quality, Safeguarding and Complaints	30/06/2024
The Quality Team is going to carry out two implementation sessions for all managers on the new complaints procedure.	Head of Quality, Safeguarding and Complaints	31/05/2024
Develop our relationship with the central government programme team focussed on encouraging access and engagement with the complaint process to gain access to resources and training.	Head of Quality, Safeguarding and Complaints	31/12/2024

Objective	Responsibility	Timescales
Complaints learnings and insights from the Ombudsman cases will be published on our intranet.	Head of Quality, Safeguarding and Complaints	Every Quarter
We will continue to analyse the Learning from Severe Maladministration report published by the Ombudsman and share the learning.	Head of Quality, Safeguarding and Complaints	Every Quarter
An annual complaints report and service improvement plan will be published on the website.	Communications team	30/06/2024
The trustee's response to the report must be published alongside this.	Communications team	30/06/2024

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Thank you