



Learning from Complaints and Involvement Quarter 1 and 2 2023/24



Customer Voice and Value Team
October 2023



Learning from complaints

Learning from complaints

Sector context

As part of the Housing Ombudsman Service approach, routinely there are 'Spotlight' reviews undertaken by the Housing Ombudsman Service to identify key issues within the sector. From those, by combining information from complaints and asking for information from landlords and customers a review is undertaken with the Housing Ombudsman Service highlighting key areas and recommendations. Where landlords have seen a number of complaints referred to the Ombudsman then they can choose to undertake a more systemic review. Learnings are also produced from these. Previously these have included damp and mould learning which was incorporated into our services.

In the first half of 2023/24 the report produced by the Ombudsman was on Knowledge Information and Management. The key recommendations fell under the following categories:

- **Governance and culture** – linking to a Strategy as one part
- **Devise key recording standards** – have key standards in place and all staff are trained on the Equality Act 2010
- **Mergers and other structural changes** – that key approaches should be in place
- **Repairs** – including how missed appointments are recorded and analysed

Wrekin position

Of the 21 recommendations, 4 are specifically where a merger is being considered. Of the remaining 17, all are underway for further action. These include holding a Knowledge and information Management Strategy which will be a part of the Positive Change Review Programme including other recommendations on training and reviewing approaches. There are none of the recommendations where we are non-compliant, or poorly positioned but the learning will be incorporated through the customer insight data work through the Wrekin Learning Model (a group of staff who oversee customer insight work and digital enhancements) and the Positive Change Programme, particularly on digital.

Learning from complaints

Insight Reports -

Housing Ombudsman Service Insight Reports are routinely published and for this period contained the following:

- **Pest control** – focussing on ensuring an empathetic approach is at the heart, the Ombudsman also said repeat reports should prompt different actions and promoted the importance of customer vulnerabilities being recorded and used. Timeliness in reacting and communicating effectively were also referenced.
- **Gas Safety** – Learning from a landlord not capping a vulnerable customers' gas when it was creating a danger for other tenants.
- **Mutual Exchange** – highlighting a case handled positively the Ombudsman stressed the importance of following policies effectively whilst being sensitive to customer circumstances.
- **Staff** – a case was used to emphasise the importance of call recordings and/or comprehensive note keeping for landlords staff to offer a clear service.
- **Tenancy warning letters** – highlighting a positive case to show how actions to a tenancy breach were proportionate to the potential breach
- **Drainage** – the importance of ensuring underlying issues are dealt with and using contractors to support with this.

The learning from these cases have been shared on the intranet with staff and will be used as examples within future training and awareness sessions also.

Learning from complaints

Wrekin complaints

Following each complaint, staff are asked to identify a root cause and any actions they will take to learn and reduce the chance of these happening again.

During Quarters 1 and 2 of 2023/24, 190 complaints have had learning actions outlined. In each 'Customer Feedback' report to this Committee, specific examples of learning actions are included.

These can be categorised in the following ways:

Type of action	Number of learning actions
Process improvements made	56
Customer communication enhancements such as changing letters, adding information to website	56
Employee discussion (individual discussions and cases to inform training)	40
Not upheld	11
Availability of staff/appointments	11
Positive change programme actions	5
Staff communication improvements	4
Contractor management discussions	3
Timeliness of actions improved	2
Follow up works required	2
Grand Total	190

Process improvements have included things like changes to the follow on or material ordering. Customer communication has included changes to the website, individual letter templates and sharing information about grounds maintenance.

A number of actions will be included within Positive Change Review work.

Staff discussions have taken place to embed the culture of learning from complaints. Equally, these will inform the design and delivery of a customer care project and training during the financial year.

Learning from complaints

Wrekin complaints

Repairs - Seeing a pattern in complaints relating to follow on works, the process was changed to ensure that this was consistent and reduced any need for tenants to “chase”. Initial indications are showing this is working well.

Acknowledged that better communication with the tenant needed so as not to raise expectations when planned work requested.

Grounds Maintenance – A positive change review and in-depth scrutiny by the Manager has been carried out on the service over the last 12 months. From this a new rota will start in March 24 and will be communicated with all staff and residents.

Housing – A customer care session pilot has been delivered to all housing staff and future events will be taking place. This will ensure the consistency of customer experience being customer focussed.

Customer Care Project – recognising an underlying theme across complaints, a Customer Care Project will be undertaken during 2023/24 to introduce service standards and deliver staff training.



Actions from involvement

Summary Quarters 1 and 2

Opportunities for involvement

here does feedback suggest we can strengthen – need to keep ourselves really focussed on how we got to that conclusion and what we feel it will deliver if done

100

Opportunities to engage during this time. This has combined a mix of online, formal events and community events.

3,697

Customer Voices heard and included in a range of work whether informal activities or more formal reviews.

6

Policy Reviews have been shaped before the Policy was drafted through customer survey feedback, for example. Once drafted the policies have also had customer feedback incorporated.

5

Engagement projects covering damp and mould, major works, neighbourhoods, rent consultation and Complaints service improvements.

Improvement Actions

Improvements driven by involvement



Strategic – insight to inform locality plans, early major works improvement, assurance on damp and mould approach

Operational – merging of 4 tenancy policies to make service standard clearer. Tone of Policies enhanced, such as Domestic Abuse Policy

Individual – advice and support given to individuals such as at drop ins

Expect impact to be seen through Tenant Satisfaction Measure scores and the work enhances compliance with the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard.