

WEAVER VALE HOUSING TRUST

BOARD

REPORT FOR INFORMATION

Title:	Complaints Review Panel Annual Report 2017/18
Item Number:	
Report Classification:	Open Unrestricted
Date of Meeting:	14 th August 2018
Author of Report:	Linda Caslin, Regulation & Assurance Manager
Person Responsible:	Barbara Dean, Complaint Review Panel Chair
Report Type:	Oversight (fiduciary)
Corporate Strategies	Good Governance

1 Purpose of Report:

- 1.1 To report to the Board on the work of the Complaints Review Panel and the Trust's performance on complaints handling during the year 2017/18.

2 Recommendation:

- 2.1 That the report be noted.

3 Complaint Review Annual report 2017/18

Compliance with the RSH's Regulatory requirements

- 3.1 The Trust's 2017/18 Self-assessment on adherence to the RSH's Consumer Standards concluded that it is compliant with all the customer complaints related requirements stipulated in the Tenant Involvement Empowerment standard - Appendix A details the relevant extracts.

Customer Complaints Policy review

- 3.2 In August 2017 the Board requested that a fundamental review be conducted on the Customers Complaint policy, with a view to reducing the time taken to resolve complaints.

3.3 The following main changes were made to the Customer Complaints policy:

- the introduction of an informal complaints stage - to enable complaints of a non-complex nature to be resolved as quickly as possible
- the removal of the Director Review stage - reducing the formal complaint stages from three to two - once again to facilitate complaints being resolved as quickly as possible.

Note that a panel of involved customers, the Customer Voice Panel and the Board Members nominated as Complaint Review Panel members, were consulted regarding the above changes.

3.4 The revised Customer Complaints policy was approved by the Board in March 2018, with a view to it being implemented in April 2018, subject to a six monthly performance review being provided to the November 2018 Board meeting.

3.5 The revised Customer Complaints policy incorporates the recommendations made by the Scrutiny Panel during its 2016 review of the Customer Complaints policy - the Chair of the Scrutiny Panel has reviewed the policy and is satisfied that the relevant recommendations have been incorporated into it.

Volume of Customer Complaints received:

3.6 During 2017/18 a total of 80 customer complaints were received - the table below shows that the total number of complaints received has continued to fall, whereas the split of complaints between the three complaint co-ordinator areas was unchanged from 2016/17.

	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15
Total Complaints received	80	93	110	133
Property Services	52 (65%)	61 (66%)	80 (73%)	103 (77%)
Neighbourhoods & Wellbeing	25 (31%)	30 (32%)	26 (23%)	28 (21%)
Finance & Business Services/ Skills & Enterprise	3 (4%)	2 (2%)	4 (4%)	2 (2%)

Reasons For Complaints and Lessons Learnt:

3.7 Of the eighty customer complaints received during 2017/18:

- 41% related to communication issues
- 15% related to the quality / standard of work
- 9% related to staff conduct
- 15% related to administration error
- 20% related to customer expectations exceeding the policy.

Appendix B analyses the above figures into Directorates. It should be noted that there were thirty three complaints relating to communication issues, of which twenty four related to Property Services. During 2017/18 the Scrutiny Panel commenced a

scrutiny review of Property Services complaints relating to communication issues, the outcome of which will be reported to the October 2018 GAAC meeting.

- 3.8 Complaints are an important source of information from customers which enable the Trust to learn from its service failures and thereby improve services. Any lessons learnt from the initial complaint stages (eg for 2017/18 Stage 1 and Stage 2) are detailed in the response letters to the complainants and are recorded on the Trust’s corporate Complaints Monitoring spreadsheets, for monitoring by the Directorate Complaint Co-ordinators.
- 3.9 The implementation of the recommendations made, and lessons learnt, by the Complaints Review Panel are monitored via the Self-certification process on which the GAAC receives twice yearly updates.

As at 31.3.18 there were no outstanding out-of-date Complaints Review Panel recommendations.

Appendix C provides examples of “lessons learnt” during 2018/19.

Complaint Handling Performance

- 3.10 The table below shows that Trust’s complaint handling performance for 2017/18 is consistent with that of recent years, with 87% of complaints being resolved at Stage 1.

During 2017/18 three of the eighty complaints received were escalated to the Complaint Review Panel, of which two were not upheld (ie not agreed with) and one was partially upheld. Note a further two panel hearings were held during 2017/18, their initial complaints having been received during 2016/17.

Trust Performance*	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15
Complaints resolved at Stage 1	87%	87%	86%	90%
Complaints resolved at Stage 2	9%	8.5%	13%	6%
Complaints escalated to Stage 3 (Complaint Review Panel)	4%	4.5%	1%	4%
Complaints reviewed by Designated Complaints Panel	None	None	None	1 <i>(no local resolution found)</i>
Complaints reviewed by Housing Ombudsman	None	0	0	1 <i>(no mal administration)</i>

*Based on complaints received during 2017/18.

- 3.11 EMT monitors monthly the completion of the various customer complaint stages within the stipulated targets and any exceptions are reported to the Board on a quarterly basis. During 2017/18 there were two instances of QL (the Trust’s

Housing Management system) showing that response targets had been missed - the customer was responded to late in one of the cases and the other related to incorrect response dates being input onto QL.

Appendix to the Report:

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| Appendix A | Extract of self-assessment on adherence to the Tenant Involvement Empowerment standard |
| Appendix B | Reasons for Customer Complaints |
| Appendix C | Examples of Lessons Learnt |

Appendix A

Extract of 2017/18 self-assessment on compliance with the Tenant Involvement Empowerment standard

<u>Required Outcome 1 - Customer Service, Choice & Complaints</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providers shall have an approach to complaints that is clear, simple and accessible that ensures that complaints are resolved promptly, politely and fairly. 	
Conclusion:	Compliant
Evidence:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Trust's Complaint policy in place during 2017/18 states that complaints should be dealt with in a fair, consistent, systematic and transparent manner and within set target times in order to deliver the highest level of customer service. During 2017/18 there were two instances of QL (the Trust's Housing Management system) showing that complaints response targets had been missed - the customer was responded to late in one of the cases and the other related to incorrect response dates being input onto QL. The Complaints policy was revised during 2017/18, with an implementation date of 1.4.18. At the Board's request the Complaints process was revised in order to reduce the time taken to resolve complaints - the revised process was approved by the Customer Voice Panel and a panel of other involved customers.

<u>Specific Expectation 2 - Customer Service, Choice and Complaints:</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providers shall offer a range of ways for tenants to express a complaint and set out clear service standards for responding to complaints, including complaints about performance against the standards, and details of what to do if they are unhappy with the outcome of a complaint. Providers shall inform tenants how they use complaints to improve their services. Providers shall publish information about complaints each year, including their number and nature, and the outcome of the complaints. Providers shall accept complaints made by advocates authorised to act on a tenant's behalf. 	
Conclusion:	Compliant
Evidence:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Trust's "How do I make a Complaints leaflet" advises that complaints may be made by phone, at its offices, via the Trust's website or via a dedicated complaints email address. It stipulates the three complaints stages and their response targets and the process to follow if customers are not happy with the outcome of the complaint. This information is also available on the Trust's website. Ensuring that complaints are used as a means of service improvement is a principle in the Trust's Complaints policy. The 2016/17 Customer report said that the Trust uses complaints to put things right and uses lessons learnt to improve services. The Complaints Review Panel Annual report, which is presented to the Board and placed on the Trust's website, details the number of complaints received, an analysis of at which stage they were resolved at, an analysis of the reasons for the complaints and details of lessons learnt and the subsequent action

taken.

- The Complaints policy stipulates that complaints may be made by advocates.

Appendix B

REASONS FOR CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS 2017/18	
Communication Issues	
A) Customer did not understand the Trust's Policy/or it was not explained to them effectively.	
B) A breakdown of service/communication e.g. failure to return a call	
Property Services	A) 1 B) 23
Neighbourhoods & Wellbeing	A) 3 B) 3
Finance & Business Services / Skills & Enterprise	A) 3 B) 0
	Total 33 (41%)
Quality/Standard of Work	
Property Services	10
Neighbourhoods & Wellbeing	2
Finance & Business Services / Skills & Enterprise	
	Total 12 (15%)
Staff Conduct	
Property Services	4
Neighbourhoods & Wellbeing	3
Finance & Business Services / Skills & Enterprise	
	Total 7 (9%)
Admin/Office Error	
Property Services	7
Neighbourhoods & Wellbeing	5
Finance & Business Services / Skills & Enterprise	
	Total 12 (15%)
Customer Expectations exceed Policy and/or service standards	
Property Services	7
Neighbourhoods & Wellbeing	9
Finance & Business Services / Skills & Enterprise	
	Total 16 (20%)

Appendix C

EXAMPLES OF LESSONS LEARNT FROM COMPLAINTS RECEIVED DURING 2017/18

COMPLAINT ISSUE	LESSONS LEARNT	ACTION TAKEN
Property Services Complaints		
Delay in notifying the customer of the outcome of a property inspection conducted due to a transfer application.	Customers should be provided with a list of repairs identified at transfer inspections by way of a letter and be informed that until these items are rectified they will be suspended from the Housing Register.	The Trust's Surveyor has been provided with a standard letter which is issued to customers following inspections for transfers to other properties.
Delay in a call-out engineer attending to a repair boiler, due to communication issues between Orbis (Out-of-hours call-handler) and the on-call Gas Engineer.	Orbis's communication processes required review.	Feedback provided to Orbis's Account manager, who assured that no further such communication delays would occur.
Delay in repair to faulty boiler, due to time taken to order required replacement part.	"Flu-stats" need to be added to the Gas Engineers van stock.	"Flu-stats" has been added to the Gas Engineers van stock.
Poor communication regarding an appointment for a repair.	Customer Service representatives need to ensure that customers are provided with appointment slots as well as the appointment date and to ensure that they phone a customer back, when they have said they will do so.	Lessons Learnt discussed at Customer Service Team Briefing
A Contactor entered a tenant's back garden, without notice or permission, to measure a window.	The Trust's Code of Conduct when visiting Customers Homes had not been followed	The Code of Conduct was issued to the contractor.
The number of jobs needing to be raised to rectify an ill fitting front door.	Further training is required on composite door installation and maintenance.	The required training was provided at a team meeting.
Customer dissatisfied with Holdcroft's suggestion that he was tampering with the settings on his Air Sourced Heat Pump.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The installation sensor was incorrectly located Intermittent power supply affects the settings on the Air Sourced Heat Pump 	Feedback provided to Holdcroft to ensure that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> similar installation sensors are correctly located. they are aware that intermittent power supply can affect the settings.

COMPLAINT ISSUE	LESSONS LEARNT	ACTION TAKEN
Neighbourhoods & Wellbeing Complaints		
<p>The Trust arranged for a tree in a tenants garden to be cut down, due to its proximity to properties and the damage its was causing to a neighbours drive, without consulting with or notifying the tenant.</p>	<p>Staff must follow procedure when removing trees that pose a risk. Contractors must listen to customer views and act upon them or suspend work if necessary.</p>	<p>Tree maintenance procedures have been revised to ensure that tenants are consulted with, prior to tree work being conducted.</p> <p>A Code of Conduct to be issued to the contactors completing the Autumn 2018 Tree Work programme.</p>
<p>The Grounds Maintenance contractor did not cut grass outside a new tenants house, as the previous tenants had previously done this.</p>	<p>The Grounds Maintenance contractor should report any neglected areas (arising from when customers stop maintaining an area they once did)</p>	<p>Instruction issued to Grounds Maintenance contractor, who has amended its processes accordingly.</p>
<p>Adaptation requests were not actioned in a timely manner.</p>	<p>Revised processes required when adaptations work requires the input of several departments from across the organisation.</p>	<p>Processes amended so that multi-departmental meetings are held where adaptations work requires input from several departments.</p> <p>Adaptations processes are included in the 2018/19 Lettings corporate project.</p>
<p>Allegations that tenant provided incorrect advice at sign-up and termination</p>	<p>No evidence was found to support allegations, however there are learnings which can be considered with the Lettings processes are revised.</p>	<p>Lessons Learnt to be included in the 2018/19 Lettings corporate project.</p>