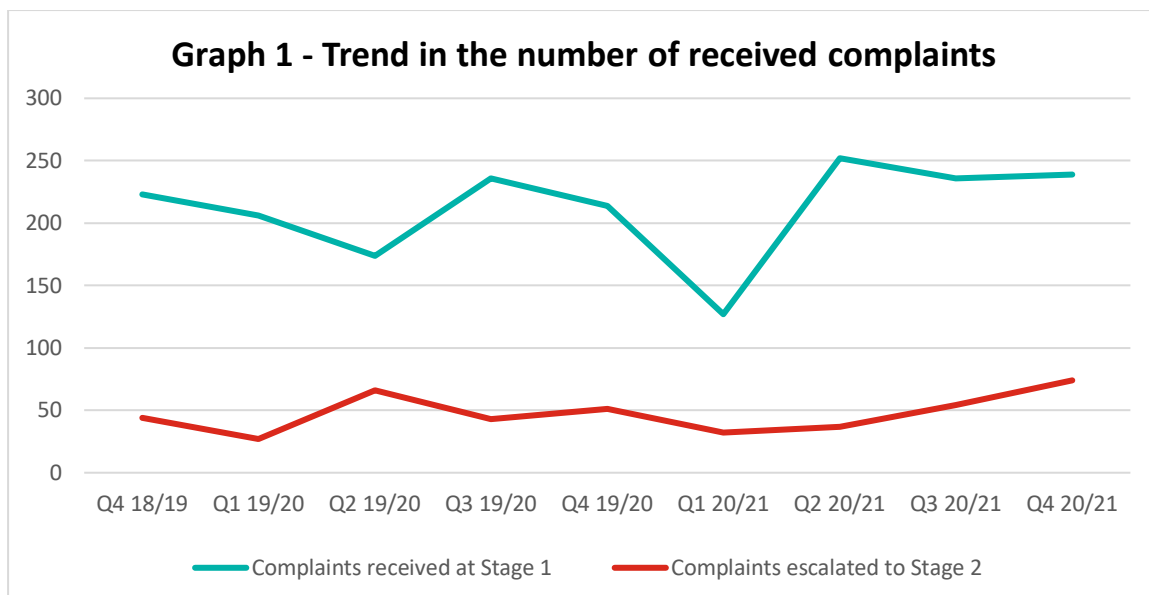


Complaints report for Quarter 4, 2020/21 (1 January to 31 March 2021)

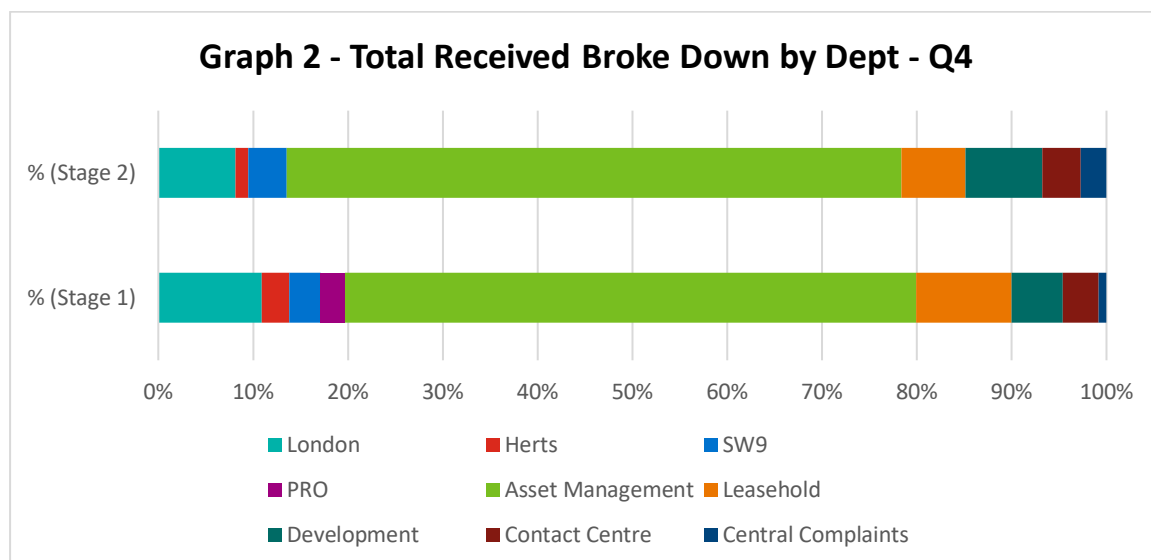


Quarter	Complaints received at Stage 1	Complaints escalated to Stage 2	Proportion of escalated complaints	Target
Q4 18/19	223	44	19.73%	10%
Q1 19/20	206	27	13.11%	10%
Q2 19/20	174	66	37.93%	10%
Q3 19/20	236	43	18.22%	10%
Q4 19/20	214	51	23.83%	10%
Q1 20/21	127	32	25.20%	10%
Q2 20/21	252	37	14.68%	10%
Q3 20/21	236	54	22.88%	10%
Q4 20/21	239	74	30.96%	10%

Graph 1 and the accompanying table shows stage 1 and 2 complaints received covering the period 1 January 2019 to 31 March 2021. Between April 2020 and March 2021, a total of

854 stage 1 complaints were received, this compares with 830 received for the equivalent period 12 months earlier.

We received 25 more Stage One complaints in the most recent Q4 2021 quarter compared to the previous Q4 quarter in 2020. There is not a large spike in complaints raised and can be expected as people are still working and spending more time at home, so repairs and neighbour disputes will still on the rise.

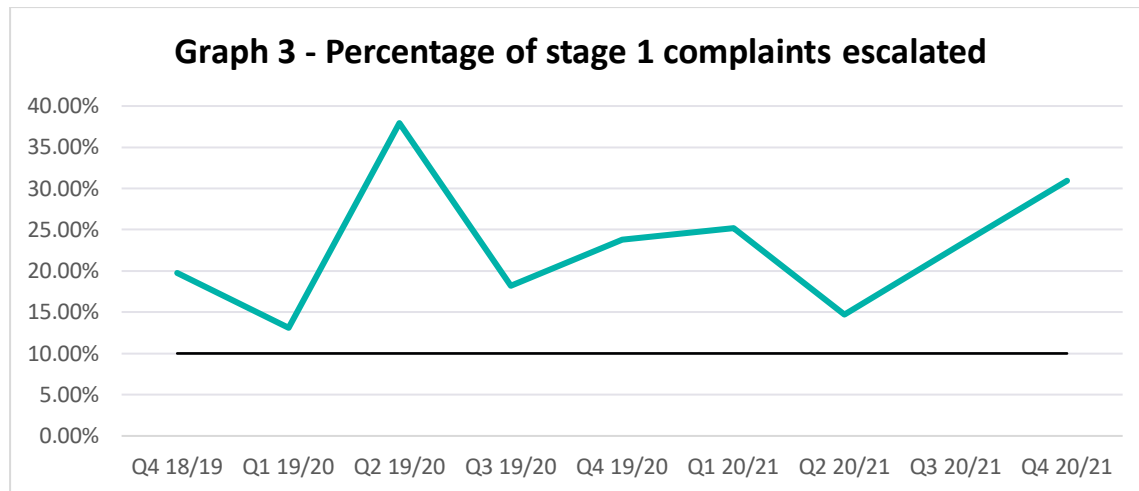


Total Received Broke Down by Dept - Q4	Stage 1	Stage 2	% (Stage 1)	% (Stage 2)
London	26	6	10.88%	8.11%
Herts	7	1	2.93%	1.35%
SW9	8	3	3.35%	4.05%
PRO	6	0	2.51%	0.00%
Asset Management	144	48	60.25%	64.86%
Leasehold	24	5	10.04%	6.76%
Development	13	6	5.44%	8.11%
Contact Centre	9	3	3.77%	4.05%
Central Complaints	2	2	0.84%	2.70%

A departmental breakdown of complaints received in the quarter is set out in graph 2 together with the accompanying table. Because of the nature of the work they are involved in, Asset Management accounts for at over 60% of the total complaints received. 90 of the Asset Management complaints are in respect of Responsive Repairs, followed by 49 from Planned Works and M+E with the remainder from Estate Services and Voids and Lettings. This quarter 62.5% of Asset Management complaints came from Responsive Repairs compared to 59% last quarter, this can still largely be to do with Covid-19 and still recovering from a backlog of repairs, and the fact that we are in the winter months so we can expect more rainfall and harsher weather causing repairs, and any outstanding repairs already delayed could cause people thinking about a complaint to raise one.

In the London region of the 26 Stage One complaints received which is 20 down from the previous quarter, 24 complaints were for Neighbourhood and the rest were for building safety.

Complaints that escalated from Stage 1 to stage 2



A total of 74 Stage 2 complaints were received in the Q4 quarter, 23 more than Q4 19/20 and 20 more than the Q4 quarter in 2018/19. These numbers can still largely be attributed to the Housing Ombudsman code of conduct, and will possibly be the trend going forward, where as we would like to keep this number low, we have not completed 2 years of a two stage complaints procedure, and with the Central Complaints Team taking ownership of the final stage, we have seen an increase in satisfaction and being able to put it right at stage 2 to resolve the complaint. Recently as well we have been receiving more development complaints regarding our builders as they have struggled throughout the pandemic in accessing their sub-contractors they would usually use; this played a part in an increase.

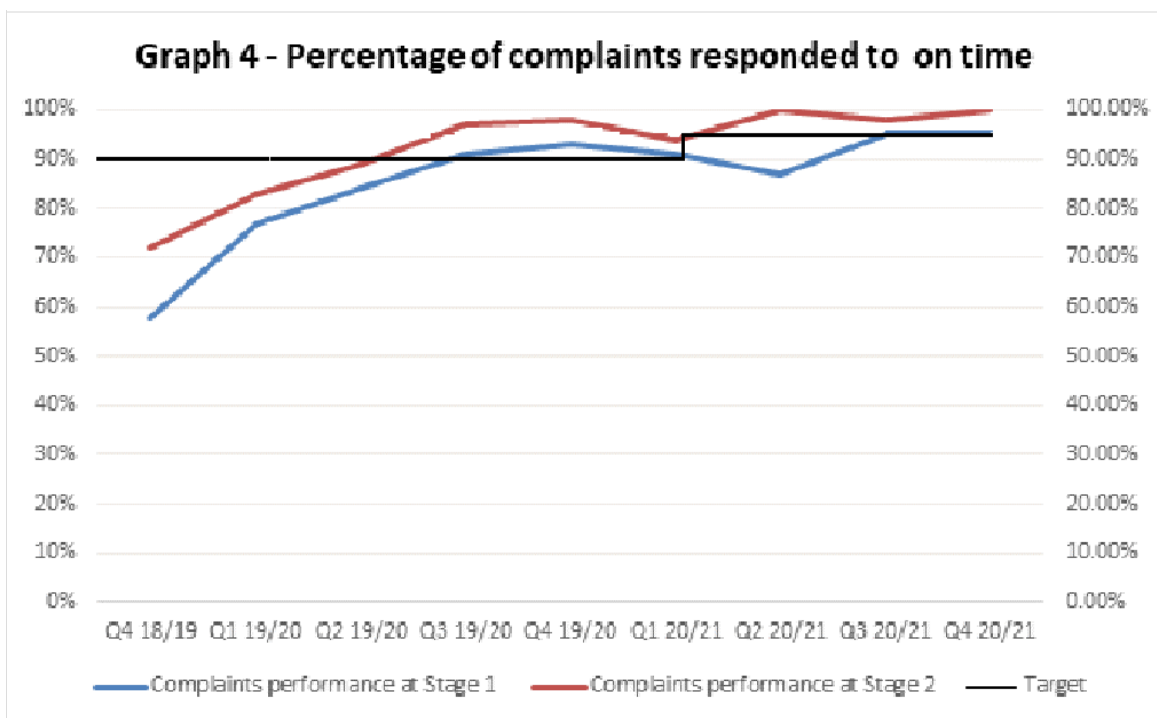
Performance - complaints responded to on time

Performance stayed at 95% for Stage One, and Stage Two increased back to 100%. For Stage 1 it is good to see that the hard work has continued, and we have met target for the second time in a row which builds on the great achievement of last quarter. The overall figure on total responses at stage 1 and 2 being issued on time increased from the last quarter to 96%, which is the first time we have gone above the target and the second (concurrent) quarter where our 95% target have been achieved/exceeded.

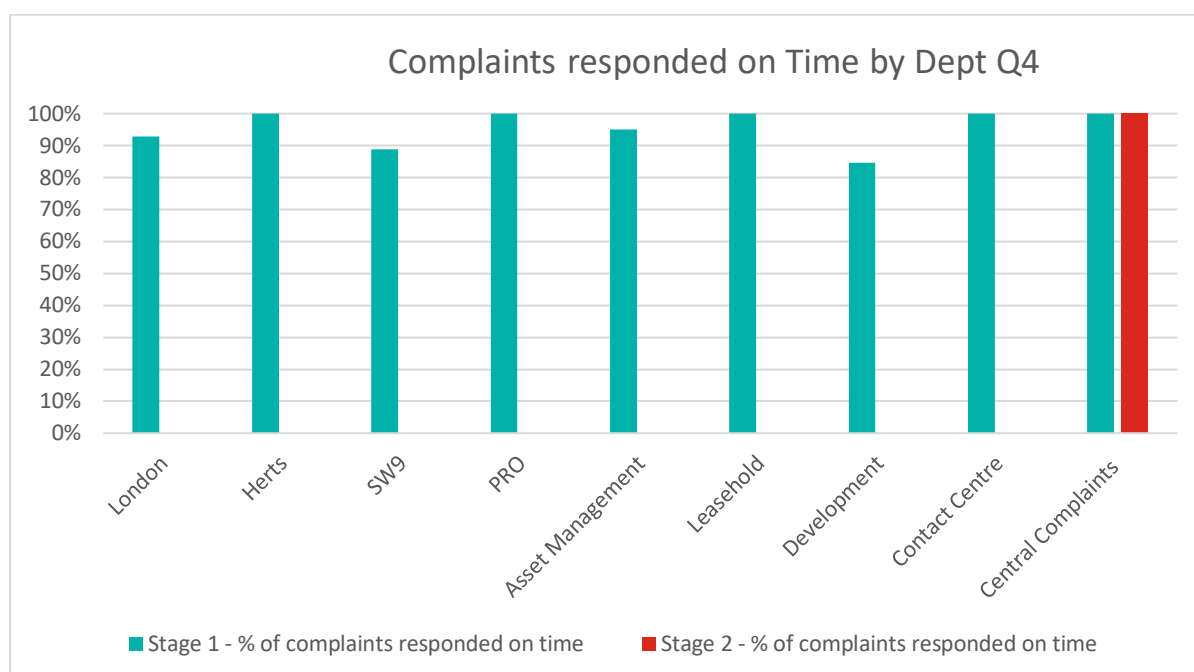
On the previous report Asset Management's overall performance was 94% which has increased to 95% this quarter. Responsive repairs who deal with complaints about our two primary contractors Wates and MCP, resolved 108 stage 1 complaints and 97% of their responses were issued on time, This is compared to Planned Works, Compliance and M & E who resolved 67 complaints where 63 were on time at a percentage of 94%, which is an increase of 7% on last quarter. This hard work by both teams who make up most of our stage 1 complaints is a major reason why we hit target for the quarter overall again.

All Stage Two complaints are responded to by the Central Complaints team and of 68 complaints all were responded to on time.

Quarter	Complaints performance at Stage 1	Complaints performance at Stage 2	Target
Q4 18/19	58%	72%	90.00%
Q1 19/20	77%	83%	90.00%
Q2 19/20	84%	89%	90.00%
Q3 19/20	91%	97%	90.00%
Q4 19/20	93%	98%	90.00%
Q1 20/21	91%	94%	95.00%
Q2 20/21	87%	100%	95.00%
Q3 20/21	95%	98%	95.00%
Q4 20/21	95%	100%	95.00%



Total Received Broke Down by Dept - Q4	Stage 1			Stage 2		
	Number on Time	Total number Closed	Stage 1 - % of complaints responded on time	Number on Time	Total number Closed	Stage 2 % of complaints responded on time
London	26	28	93%			/
Herts	6	6	100%			/
SW9	8	9	89%			/
PRO	4	4	100%			/
Asset Management	170	179	95%			/
Leasehold	23	23	100%			/
Development	11	13	85%			/
Contact Centre	12	12	100%			/
Central Complaints	2	2	100%	68	68	100%



Please note that all Stage 2 complaint responses are all completed by the Central Complaints Team.

Compensation

Compensation can be awarded where, following an investigation, it is identified that our actions or lack of action had a significantly adverse effect on the resident. Compensation was awarded at Stage 1 in respect of 186 complaints at a total cost of £15,690.

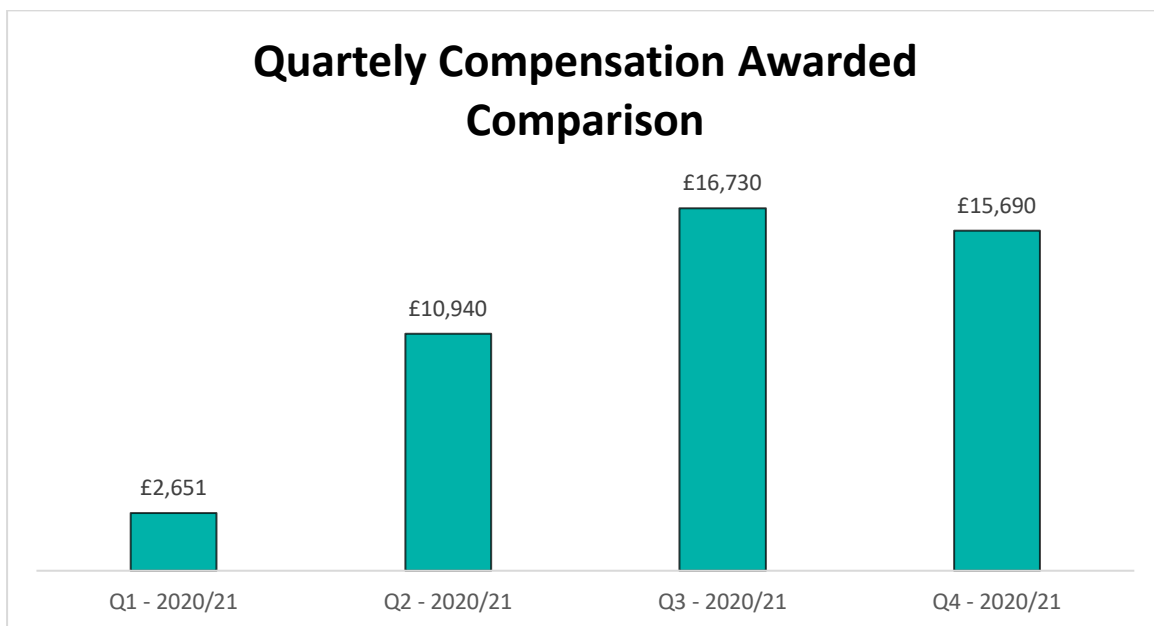
Once again delay was the highest payment with £7,145 compensation paid out although it only accounted for less than half of the total amount this quarter at 45%. Each month our

repairs team track the amount awarded for delays and request this money back from Wates and MCP, in this quarter (01 January – 31 March 2021) we are claiming back £10,754.50 worth of compensation. Full breakdown below:

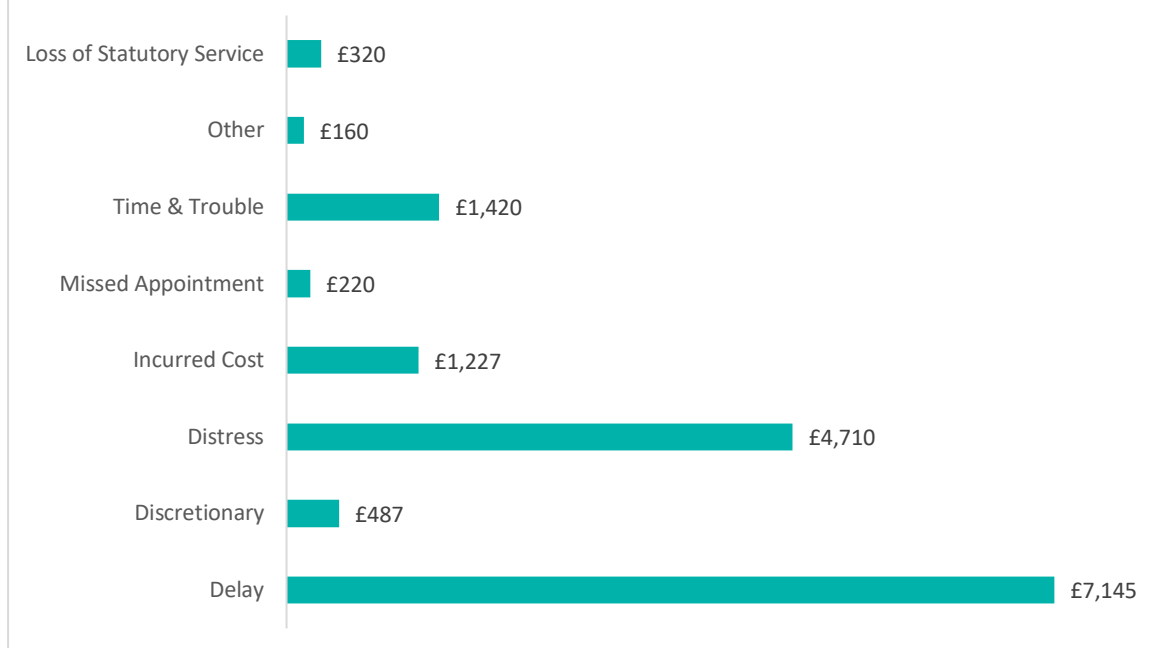
Wates	MCP
Jan £3,118	Jan £1,265
Feb £2,232	Feb £503
March £1,988.50	March £1,648
Total for Q4 £7,338.50	Total for Q4 £3,416

This figure is lower than the previous quarter but still higher than both Q1 and Q2 whilst going further into the figures as before in the last quarter there was only one payment this quarter of £1,000 or higher and this was because of incurred costs totalling £1,052.41 which covered the resident paying for alternative accommodation whilst the repairs were ongoing and the cost of taxis to and from property to give access to our contractors, this complaint did not escalate to Stage 2 due to this being awarded.

In both Q1 and Q2 we were still within lockdown imposed by the government due to Covid-19 so there were fewer complaints being raised meaning less compensation that would be paid, so we was always expecting to see an increase for the final two quarters.



Q4 - Stage 1 Compensation Awarded



MP and Councillor enquiries

Total Received Broke Down by Dept – Q4	Enquiries Received	% (Enquiries)	No. on Time	No. Closed	% of enquiries responded on time
London + Building Safety	24	39.34%	21	21	100%
Leasehold + Finance	3	4.92%	3	3	100%
Repairs, estates and fire safety	19	31.15%	17	17	100%
Planned + M&E	6	9.84%	5	5	100%
Voids and Lettings	8	13.11%	7	8	88%
SW9	1	1.64%	1	1	100%
Total	61	100.00%	54	55*	98%

61 MP and Councillor enquiries were received in this quarter, compared to 66 received in Q3 2020/21. Of the 61 cases received, 55 were closed with 54 responded to on time meaning the percentage of enquiries being responded to on time was 98% which is 12% higher than Q3. *The outstanding 6 enquiries were received late into the quarter reviewed and closed in the new quarter.

Housing Ombudsman activity and decisions

3 information requests for formal investigations were received.

4 decisions were received in the quarter, a summary of each is overleaf. There were no maladministration determinations but one Service Failure which is classified as a lower form of maladministration.

Ombudsman Decision: Service Failure

This complaint related to a resident reporting antisocial behaviour from a neighbour's dog and they alleged that we had failed to take any action or update her on the progress.

The Ombudsman ordered us to pay £350 in compensation for our service failing due to an initial delay in updating the resident about her ASB after her initial report. We later advised the resident that we would act against the neighbour's tenancy to resolve their reports about the dog but did not manage their expectations throughout the investigation. The Ombudsman agreed it is understandable and in line with our data protection obligations not to disclose personal information about the neighbour, simply stating that the legal case was ongoing was insufficient as this advice was non-committal and without a timeframe. This resulted in ongoing uncertainty for our resident, escalating her level of dissatisfaction and sense of lack of action on our part.

Ombudsman Decision: Reasonable Redress

This complaint related to a resident reporting antisocial behaviour from regarding noise at unsociable hours from their neighbour and they alleged that we had failed to take any action.

The Ombudsman determined they cannot assess the nature of the noise nuisance faced by our resident and are unable to give an expert opinion on whether the noise could successfully form the basis of legal action against the neighbour. They could not therefore order us to take this action. The evidence shows that we acted upon the reports in accordance with our policies and did consider formal action. Once it was apparent that we had done what we could, the matter drifted and we had reasonably accepted that there was some delay. This delay couldn't be precisely calculated but we offered compensation which, based on a less severe service failing, equates to a number of weeks of delay and they deemed was therefore appropriate. This amount was £115.

Ombudsman Decision: Outside Jurisdiction

This complaint was about our response to the reports of water leak from a burst pipe and damp at the property and reports of gas leak in 2019. The way we dealt with the reports of alleged unauthorised entry into property, their transfer request in 2019. And how we

handled recent reports of carbon monoxide poisoning and a further transfer request after being put in emergency accommodation by the council

The Ombudsman stated that paragraph 39 (h) of the Scheme states that the Ombudsman cannot consider complaints that:

‘Concern matters that are, or have been, the subject of legal proceedings and where a resident has or had the opportunity to raise the subject matter of the complaint as part of those proceedings’

Given this they found sufficient evidence indicating that as part of the resident’s defence, the resident had raised these concerns. Due to these reasons they could not consider the complaint.

Ombudsman Decision: No Maladministration

The complaint is about the way the landlord handled their reports of noise coming from neighbouring flats.

The Ombudsman’s reasons for no maladministration were because the resident could not provide any specific information about the source of the noise, this meant we were limited with what reasonable action we could have taken to resolve the issue. Nevertheless, we still offered appropriate advice and managed their expectations by explaining that it needed evidence to substantiate their claims

Examples of Service Improvements arising from complaints

Immediate Response

Poor communication is usually always something that is raised in a complaint and whilst the underlying issues may differ, we firmly believe that focus of communicating with residents in a timely and more focused manner should be our key target moving forwards. With this in mind, the immediate response pledge has been put together following discussions amongst all teams within Network. This action is being driven by senior management and due to go live on 01 June 2021. From this date onwards all teams will seek to provide an immediate response (within two business days) with there being more focus on teams taking ownership, being more transparent and providing meaningful responses to residents, which will help build trust with our residents.

Lesson Learnt Lectures

We have recently introduced a new initiative – Lessons *Learnt Lectures*, with the first one rolled out on 23 April 2021, and more scheduled for May, June, July so far.

These will be a monthly set-piece presentation and open discussion on a specific experience or piece of work that is felt to offer wider lessons to the organisation as a whole. On the

basis of our strong belief that *“you learn more when things go wrong, than right ”* it is more likely that these will involve examples of things we could have done better but rarely are things unmitigated disasters or successes so the process will also embrace celebration of success. We want to showcase learning opportunities as widely as possible so they can be applied to our day-to-day work.

In line with our commitment to be transparent by default we are looking to maximise the openness in which we carry out this learning and will invite colleagues from across the organisation, board and committee members and Resident Panel members to attend. Over time we will also make attendance by other residents possible. We will also post a video of the lecture, the slides and key learning points on our website.

Compensation Payments

On the back of various comments/concerns from residents, we have built and starting using a new online payments system for processing compensation. This has allowed us to streamline the process and in doing so also speed the process up. It also has meant that the resident will be kept up to date via automated email acknowledgements then the compensation has been processed, meaning the resident will not need to contact us to clarify if/when their compensation has been paid.

Repairs Complaints

Repair complaints account for around 60% of complaints received. With this in mind weekly Teams meetings are held with our two main contractors (Wates and MCP) to discuss complaints at Stage 1 and Stage 2 in an attempt to ensure that all issues are addressed and resolved promptly.

This has also helped in implementing small front-line process changes in the hope that such changes will reduce the chance of similar complaints arising again. It also assists in identifying repeat issues and/or poor contractor behaviour. The word “complaint” is now also attached to applicable jobs so that everyone is aware that concerns have been raised by a resident and will be reviewed accordingly.

Complaint escalations

The Housing Ombudsman is slowly moving towards instructing all Housing Associations to escalate a complaint (to Stage 2) upon a request from a resident – without testing the merit of the request. In recent G15 meetings this was discussed and confirmed that at this stage, the decision rests with Network, however, on the back of this we have started to be more prescriptive in escalating more complaints to Stage 2, even if this is to confirm that we consider the Stage 1 response is a true reflection of our investigation and outcome of a complaint and remains unchanged. I consider that doing this ensures that the resident will receive their Ombudsman referral rights and that the complaints process will have been fully completed.

We are however, still rejecting completely baseless escalations or escalations without any explanation from a resident as to why they want to escalate their complaint. All escalation rejections are recorded along with the reason why it was rejected.

Report completed by

James Mahaffy, Complaints Manager and Adam Tolhurst, Complaints Officer.