



North Wales Housing

Annual Complaints Report 2015-2016

Contents

1. Executive summary	3
2. The complaints process at NWH	3
3. What is a complaint and how complaints are made	3
4. Number of complaints	4
5. Complaints by service	5
6. How the complaints were made	5
7. Complaints escalation	6
8. Type of complaints	7
9. Managing complaints	9
10. Star Survey results	10
11. Lessons learnt and difference made	11
12. Conclusion	12

1. Executive summary

Effective complaint management is an important part of maintaining North Wales Housing's (NWH) reputation. Complaints are also a valuable tool in helping to understand the residents' and customers' expectations of service delivery and should be an essential part of identifying service improvement across the organisation.

Information on complaints received has been extracted from our contact management system on IBS.

2. The complaints process at NWH

Our complaints procedure has two stages with the following timescales:

- Stage 1 – Acknowledge within 2 working days, and respond within 10 working days
- Stage 2 – Acknowledge within 2 working days, and respond within 20 working days

The complaints procedure is based on guidance provided to public bodies by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

3. What is a complaint and how complaints are made

A complaint is where a customer is unhappy with the service they have received from NWH or any of our contractors. This includes occasions where you believe that:

- We have done something we should not have done
- We have not done something we should have done
- an employee of NWH's (or any of our contractors) behaviour has been inappropriate
- A service we provided has not been delivered to the quality, safety, frequency or cost expected
- Our decision making process has been flawed
- NWH have worked outside policy or protocol

What is not covered by our complaints procedure?

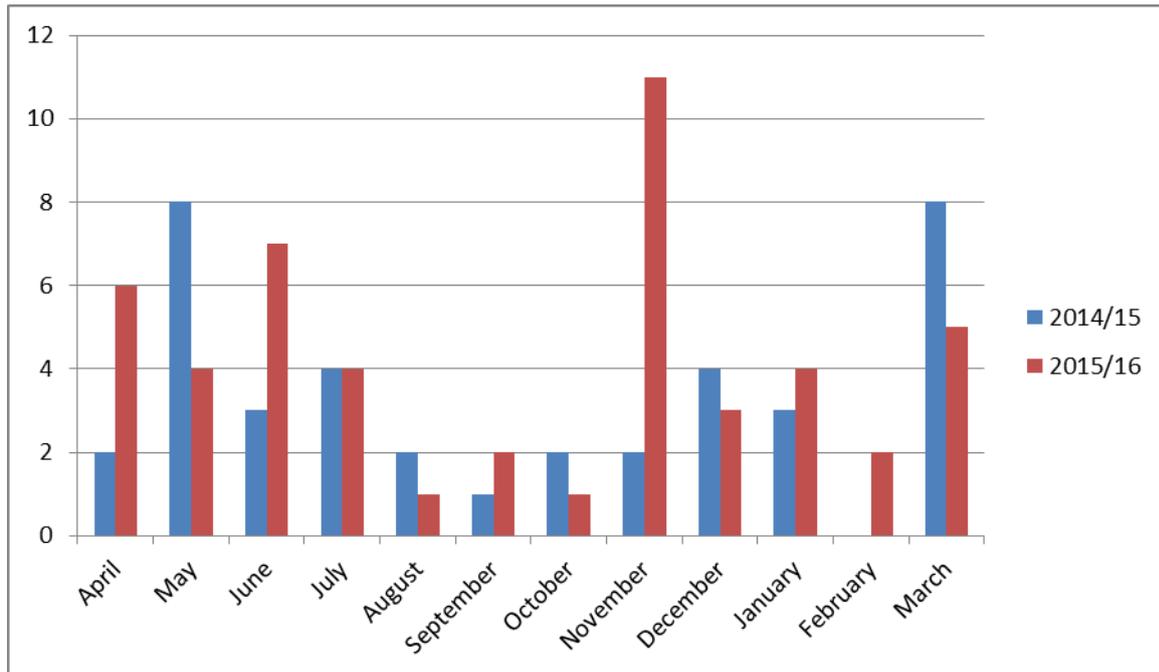
- This is the first contact regarding the issue
- The correct department has not had the opportunity to address the issue
- Issues regarding anti-social behaviour

A complaint may be made by letter, digitally, verbally in person, or verbally over the phone.

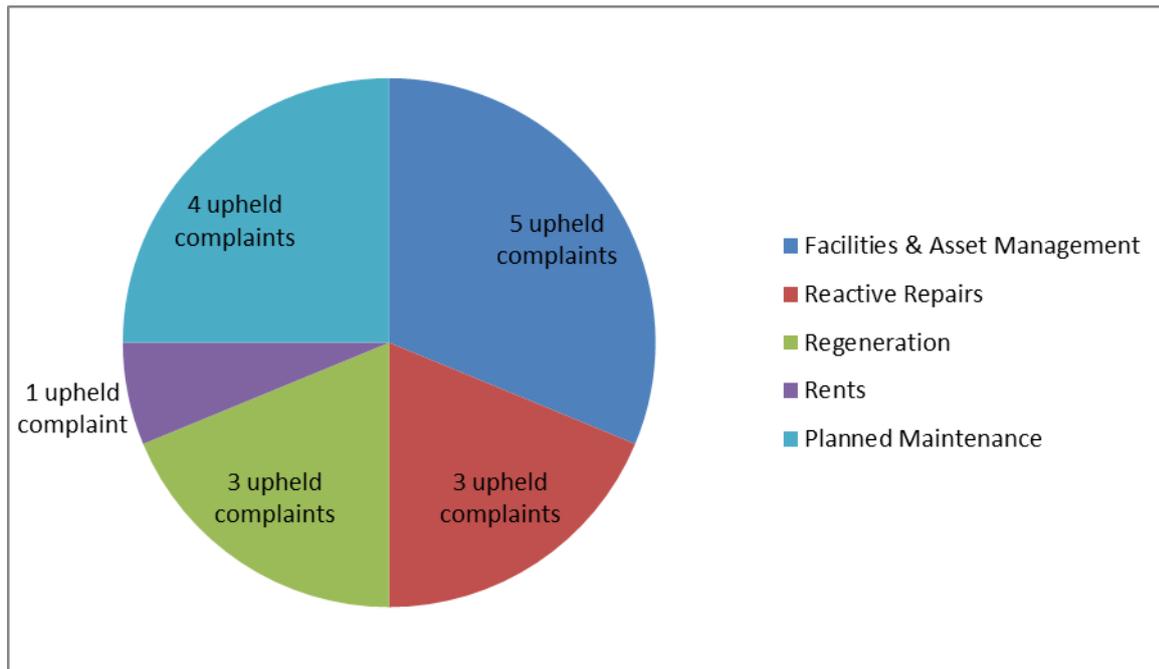
4. Number of complaints

	2014/15	2015/16
Number of complaints	39	50
Number of complaints upheld	9	16

A total of 50 complaints were received during the 2015-2016 period, 16 of which were upheld.

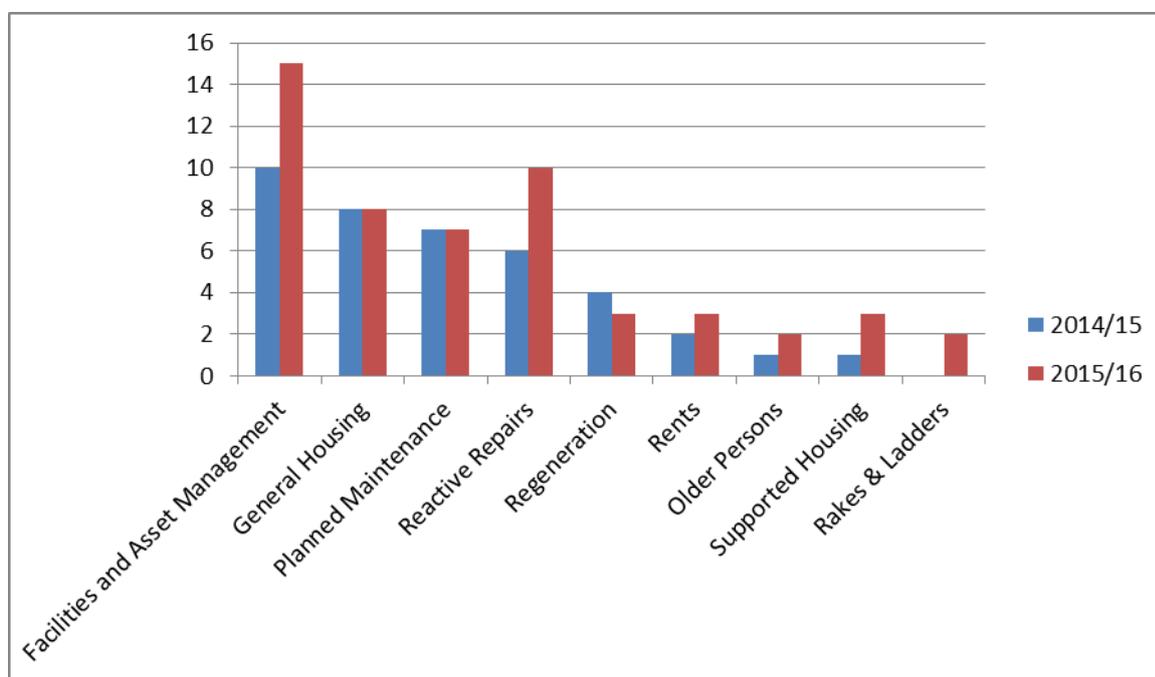


Upheld Complaints by Service Area 2015/16



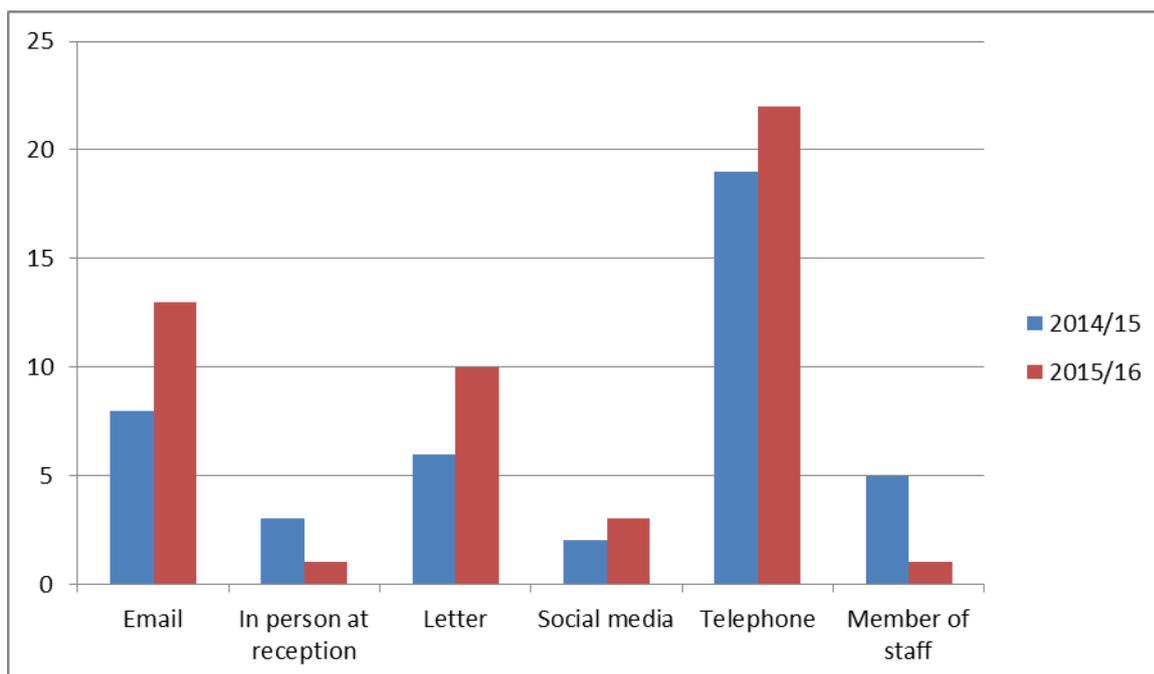
5. Complaints by service area

	2014/15	2015/16
Facilities and Asset Management	10	15
General Housing	8	8
Planned Maintenance	7	7
Reactive Repairs	6	10
Regeneration	4	3
Rents	2	3
Older Persons	1	2
Supported Housing	1	3
Rakes & Ladders	0	2



6. How the complaints were made

	2014/15	2015/16
Email	8	13
In person at reception	3	1
Letter	6	10
Social media	2	3
Telephone	19	22
Member of staff	5	1



7. Complaints escalation

2015-2016

Service Area	Escalated from stage 1 to 2	Escalated to the Ombudsman
Facilities & Asset Management	3	
General Housing	2	1
Regeneration	1	
Reactive Repairs	1	
Planned Maintenance	1	
Supported Housing	1	
Older Persons	1	1

n.b -We no longer have a stage 3 (complaints panel) in our complaints procedures.

General Housing Complaint

The Ombudsman found no cause to further investigate the complaint, and advised the tenant it was satisfied with our response.

Older Persons Complaint

The Ombudsman advised us to apologise to the complainant and offer an ex gratia payment of £100 for an unauthorised entry to the complaints flat by a carer. The Ombudsman also

advised that we make a further payment of £150 for the inconvenience caused to the tenant to make a complaint.

An apology had been made to the complainant for the unauthorised entry, however following the recommendation made by the Ombudsman a further letter of apology was issued along with the above payments.

8. Types of complaints

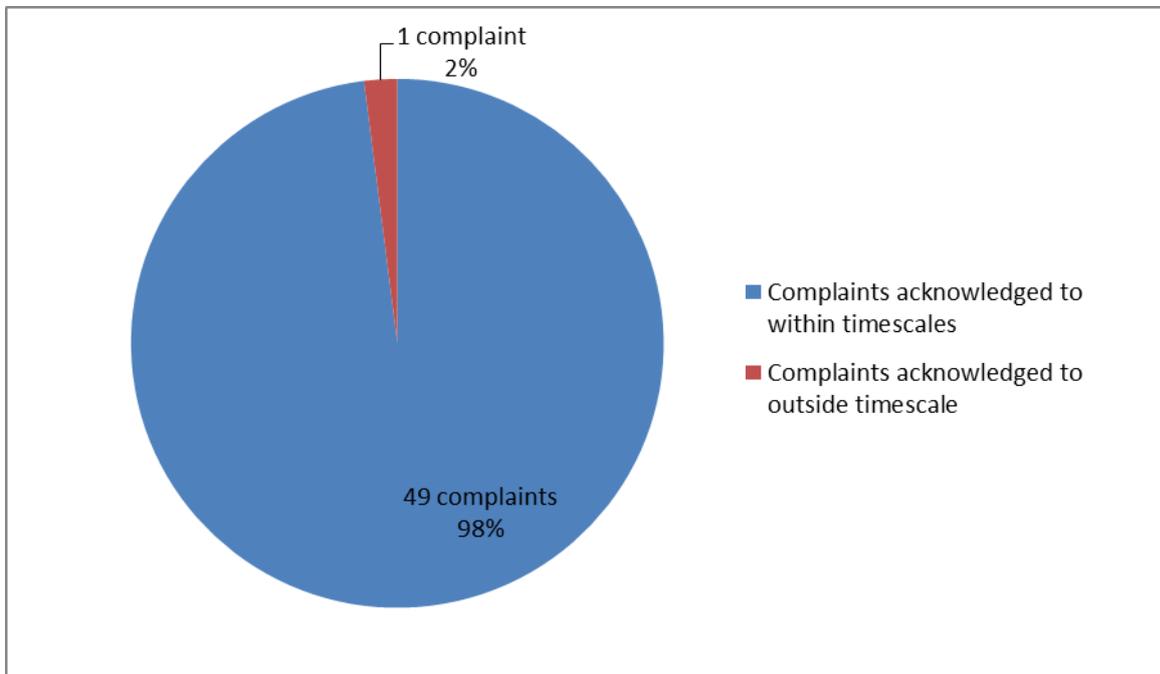
The following details the types of complaints received during 2015/16

	Type of complaints	2015/16
Facilities and Asset Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work not being carried out x9 • Lack of response/communication x5 • Disputing charge for clearing rubbish from former property x1 	15
General Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support worker disputed NWH's decision regarding client's tenancy & conduct of staff member x1 • Standard of cleaning in communal area & staff member not returning phone calls x1 • How NWH dealt with ASB x3 • Not satisfied with allocation of property and advice received x1 • Being unfairly treated by NWH and unhappy neighbour allowed to install a gate x1 • Lack of response from NWH x1 	8
Planned Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard of work x4 • Standard of work & communication x3 	7
Reactive Repairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of response/communication x10 	10
Regeneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work not being carried out & lack of response x3 	3
Rents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical difficulties with payment system x1 • Complaint after receiving another tenants rent statement x1 • Rent arrears letter sent in error x1 	3
Older Persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care in worker entering property in error and catering x1 • Complaining on how NWH dealt with an accident suffered by resident x1 	2
Supported Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Services disputed NWH's decision not to cover cost of residents having to 	3

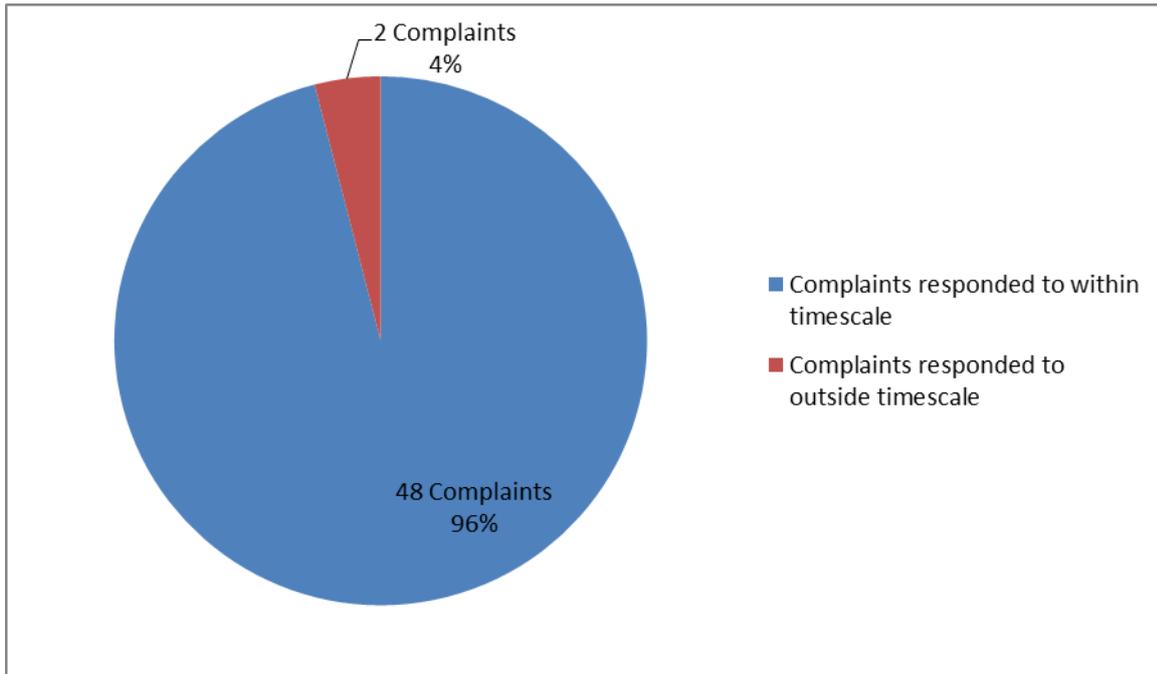
	live elsewhere while specialized baths fitted x1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complaint against staff member x2 	
Rakes & Ladders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complaining against time of day work being carried out x1 Questioning work being carried out x1 	2

9. Managing complaints

Stage 1

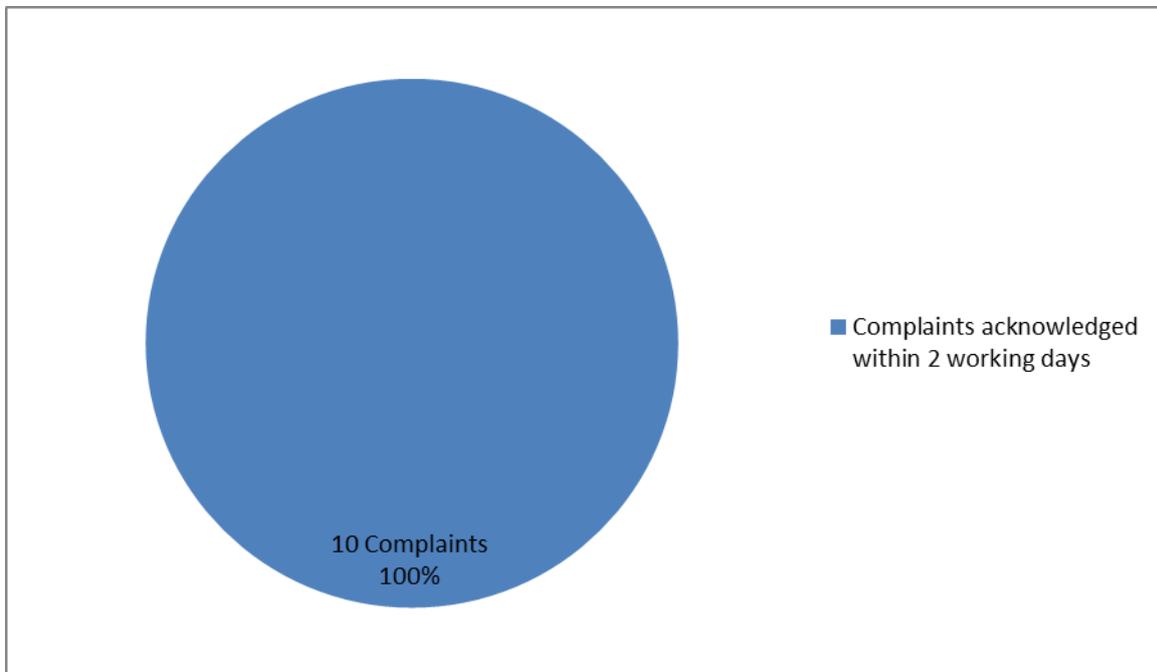


98% (49/50) Stage 1 complaints were acknowledged within 2 working days.

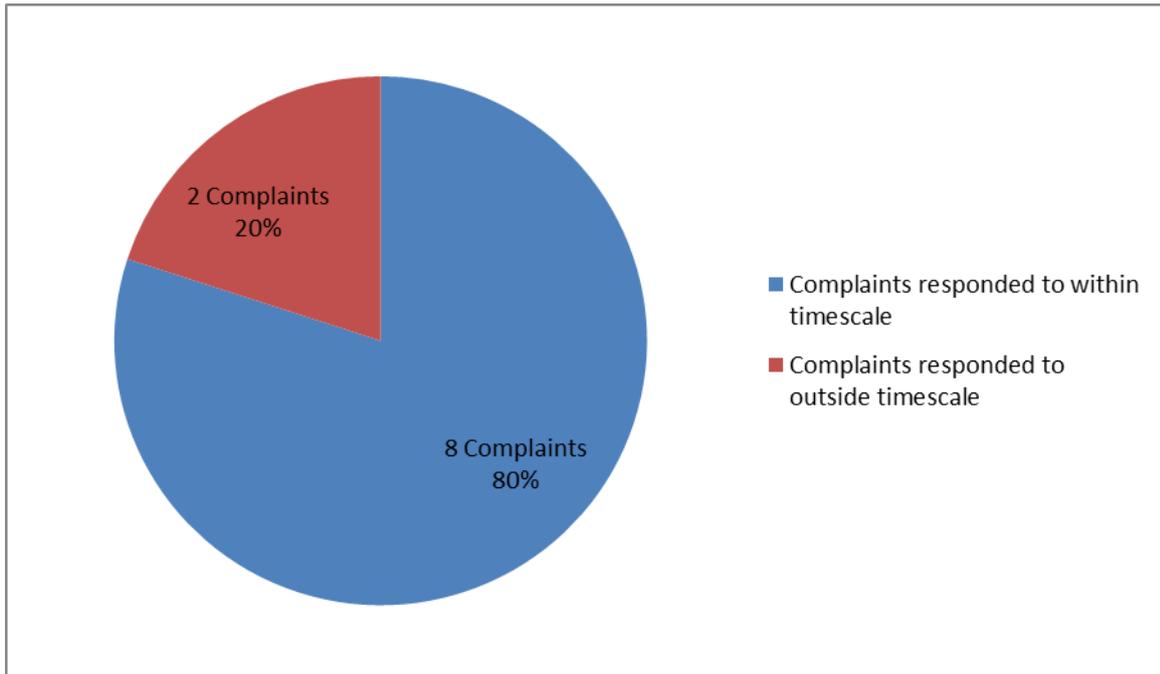


96% (48/50) Stage 1 complaints were responded to within 10 working days. The 2 complaints which did not receive a response within the 10 working days received notification that further time was required to investigate.

Stage 2



100% (10) complainants wishing to enter Stage 2 of the complaints procedure were acknowledged within 2 workings days.



80% (8/10) complaints at Stage 2 received a response within 20 working days.

The 2 complaints which didn't receive responses received notification that further time was required to investigate.

10. Star Survey Results

The survey was carried out between November and December 2015 with a census of all 2,435 residents. In total 744 residents took part in the survey, which represented a 31% response rate.

Around half were aware of the formal complaints procedure (52%).

14% of the residents who took part in the survey stated they had actually made a complaint.

All tenants who claimed to have made a complaint were asked about their experience when doing so. The majority of those who made a complaint were satisfied with the actual process (53%), but satisfaction was considerably lower with the way the complaint was handled overall (38%).

The total amount of the respondents who state they had made a complaint is 104; however we only have 50 complaints recorded.

Its likely concerns have been raised with members of staff and these have not been recorded as complaints; and/or some tenants may be unaware of the definition of a complaint. See page 3 for a definition of a complaint.

11. Lessons learnt and difference made

The following are the key lessons learnt this year:

- A procedure or way of working needs to be established if correspondence that could be seen as complaints is addressed to the Chief Executive
- Greater consistency and standardisation in responses to complaints are required
- Communication needs to be improved with our tenants and within NWH
- A greater understanding is required of our customers' expectations
- Customer care training needs to be made available to staff
- Following the results of the Star survey we need to raise awareness among tenants of the complaints procedure and also to clearly define what is a formal complaint
- Further complaints training is required for staff

We use our complaints to improve service delivery. The following are examples of the difference made:

A number of complaints received are about communication, so we have provided communication training to key staff.

Asset and Facilities Management – issues are addressed quickly so that they don't result in complaints.

Regeneration – the management of defects in new builds/refurbished properties. A member of staff is now responsible for the Regeneration Issues/Defects Tracker and another member of staff coordinates the Fire Risk Assessment issues outstanding on the larger schemes e.g. Hafan Gogarth and Cae Garnedd.

Planned Maintenance -

- Complaint on about time taken to install flooring – considered bringing this work in house but current staffing levels would prevent this. The flooring contract is due to be renewed in May 2016. Have agreed amongst team to specify days for laying flooring such as Monday/Tuesday for kitchens and Wednesday/Thursday for bathrooms, as a contract specification. This has worked well in the past. This also improves the service for tenants as we maintain better control when the flooring is to be installed. Tendered by May 2016 with aim to start in June 2016.
- Some tenants have complained about the amount of tiling provided. Although this is explained on the pre-visit and is in writing in the disclaimer. We wanted to try and manage tenant's expectations better. Therefore we will create a flip-book of pictures and images of what to expect and included in the property pack we will

include a drawing of typical example of a bathroom and kitchen layout with descriptive notes.

- Not wearing ID badges. The operatives have expressed a dislike of wearing the ID badges which hang around the neck; this is because they get in the way when they are working. It has been agreed to purchase armbands which can hold their ID badges.

Repairs - Team meetings to discuss importance of and improving communication .i.e. updating customers on job progress/appointments etc. and internally between teams.

Rakes and Ladders - Set up Rakes and Ladders as a result of customer complaints and comments.

Older Persons – Policy and Procedure has been reviewed and its contents been re-iterated to staff.

Rents – All staff who envelope rent statements have been asked to be careful as to ensure only one rent statement is in the envelope.

12. Conclusions

The 2014/15 Complaints Report shows an increase in complaints, however there does not seem to be trend which would explain the increase.

It may be the case that staff are more aware of our complaints procedure and the importance of consistent recording.

Since the 2014-15 report, the Tenant Participation Co-ordinator delivered complaints training to staff, and developed a 'Dealing with complaints' guide (accessible to all staff on the intranet); however the Star Survey results suggest further training is required.

A simplified version of the procedures has also been developed as a leaflet for tenants.

Our procedures have also been simplified with the removal of Stage 3. It could be seen that having 3 stages presents a barrier that puts people of making a formal complaint. When the Ombudsman recommended these changes to public bodies in Wales it was to make us more open and accountable.

The Tenant Participation Co-ordinator will be investigating whether guidance on style of language, length of sentences, plain English etc. would be beneficial for managers who respond to complaints.

The Tenant Participation Co-ordinator has delivered training to the Chief Executives Administration Team to clarify what a complaint is and what a request for service or

information is. Any complaints sent to the Chief Executive are now passed to the Tenant Participation Co-ordinator to record as a complaint. The Tenant Participation Co-ordinator will advise the complainant that it will be dealt with in line with our complaints procedures