

**Board Meeting:** 1<sup>st</sup> November 2018

**Report for Information**

**Title:** Complaints Update Report

**1 Purpose of the report**

- 1.1 To provide the Landlord Services Committee (LSC) with an update regarding Complaints.

**2 Action Required / Recommendations**

- 2.1 Members are asked to approve the updated Complaints Policy attached and note the update report contents.

**3 Background**

- 3.1 Landlord Services Committee received the Annual Complaints Report 2017-18 in August 2018. Following approval of the report, Landlord Services Committee requested a further six-monthly update report be brought to the next meeting.

**4 Complaints Policy**

- 4.1 Appendix 1 contains the recently reviewed and updated Complaints Policy. Members are asked to approve this Policy.
- 4.2 The complaints procedure is based on guidance provided to public bodies by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

**5 Complaints Procedure**

- 5.1 North Wales Housing (NWH) have a complaints leaflet available on the website detailing the Complaints Procedure, along with details of how to make a complaint.
- 5.2 The first stage of NWH's Complaints Procedure is informal resolution, where we try to resolve any issue raised at the point of contact. If it is not possible for the issue to be resolved immediately, then the complaint moves to Stage 1 of the process. For Stage 1 we will investigate the complaint and visit or contact the complainant within 10 working days with a proposed resolution or response. If the complainant is not happy with the response or proposed solution, this then moves to a Stage 2 complaint, where we aim to resolve complaints within 20 working days.
- 5.3 Following a Stage 2 complaint response, if any complainant is still not happy with the response or proposed solution, they are then asked to complain to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales which will look at the complaint independently.
- 5.4 The vast majority of complaints are resolved at Stage 1 of the complaints process.

**6 Internal Audit**

- 6.1 TIAA conducted an internal audit on Complaints in July 2018 which resulted in 'reasonable assurance'. All recommendations arising from the internal audit have been completed.

**7 April to September 2018**

- 7.1 There have been 36 complaints received during the above period. These can be broken down by department as follows:

Department	Number of Complaints Received
Rents	2
Finance	1
General Housing	10
Older Persons	1
Supported Housing	3
Shared Ownership	2
Customer Service	1
Asset Management	5
Repairs	8
Rakes & Ladders	2
Planned Maintenance	1

- 7.2 Of the above complaints received during this period, 14 were upheld, as shown in the below table:

Department	Number of Complaints Upheld	Number of Complaints Upheld
Rents	2	-
Finance	1	1
General Housing	10	3
Older Persons	1	-
Supported Housing	3	1
Shared Ownership	2	1
Customer Service	1	-
Asset Management	5	1
Repairs	8	6
Rakes & Ladders	2	1
Planned Maintenance	1	-

- 7.3 The above table highlights two specific areas where further detailed analysis has been undertaken; General Housing and Repairs.

- 7.4 The below table gives further analysis of the complaints upheld in these two areas, along with details regarding any changes that have occurred as a result:

Service Area	Details of Upheld Complaint	Outcome/Changes as a Result?
General Housing	Communication failure – not getting back to Email sent by tenant	Member of staff reminded of need to respond promptly back to all tenant enquiries received
	Personal items removed from communal area	Staff reminded of need to follow-up on the communal area zero tolerance stance.  Staff reminded of need to

		properly itemise items before removing to storage area, if any doubt as to whether items have been left or stored.
	Wanted larger fence putting up between neighbouring property	Member of staff reminded of need to respond promptly back to all tenant enquiries received
Repairs	Issues with wrong glass size being ordered. Tenant had to stay in property for two failed visits	Right glass size ordered
	Tenant took annual leave for electrical test, but NWH did not turn up	Matter followed up with Customer Services to ensure correct times are relayed to tenant and NWH engineer
	Not responding promptly enough to a report of a leaking/faulty tap	Isolated issue with poor contractor response
	Poor response from NWH to repairs reported	Repairs issues resolved.  Lack of clarity between repairs operatives/contractor and Customer Services team. Discussion has taken place to ensure this issue does not happen again.
	Poor service from Repairs Team due to issue with wrong number being taken by our-of-hours company and then issue with the out-of-hours calls not working bank holiday	Issue with out-of-hours calls not being transferred was due to a human error in wrong dates being inserted into the system by IT. IT to ensure dates are properly checked in future.
	Leak to wet room not attended to and unhappy with our emergency repair threshold	The emergency repair threshold has been reviewed, which would now mean the repair in question would be classed as an emergency repair

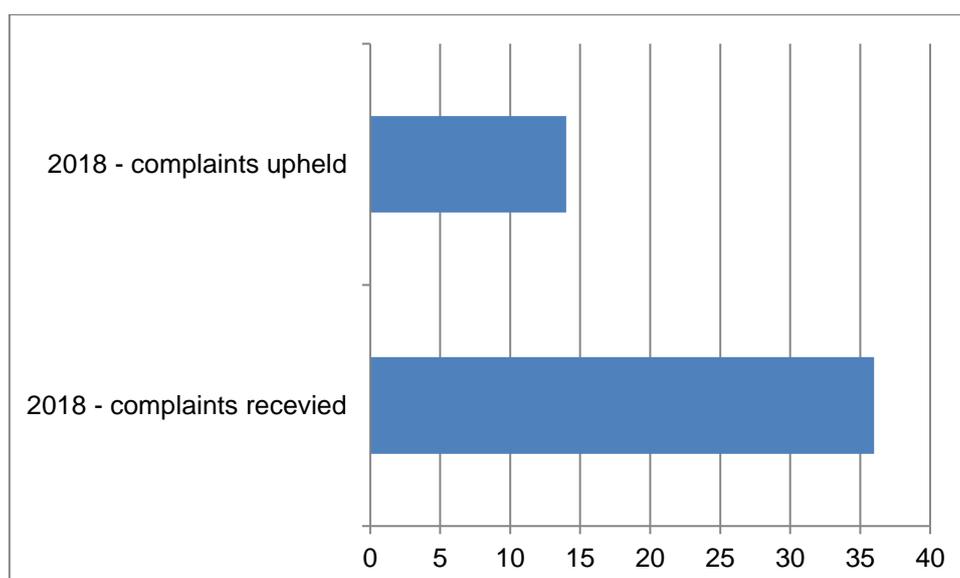
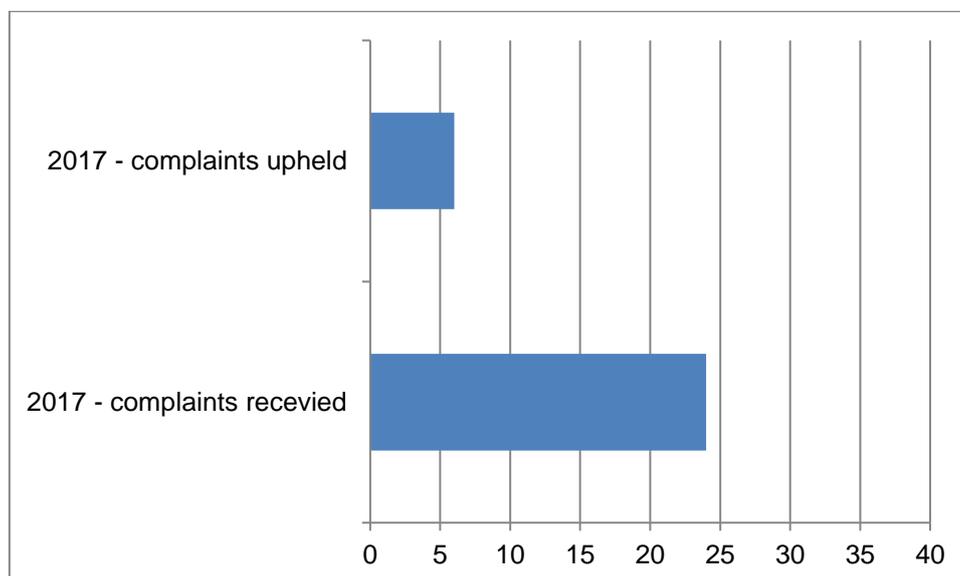
7.5 Having conducted the above analysis, a number of lessons learned/findings have been identified, including:

- Issues are being addressed with one member of staff regarding promptly responding to tenant enquiries;
- There are some inconsistencies that we need to address with how complaints have been dealt with by different officers/departments.

7.6 Related to the above, NWH's Customer Care Charter has recently been reviewed at two separate meetings by the Resident Advisory Panel, particularly with a view to addressing some of the concerns raised from reviewing the complaints received in the past year. The Customer Care Charter has now been approved by the Resident Advisory Panel, so will next be consulted upon internally with staff.

## 8 Trend analysis

- 8.1 Looking at comparative figures for the same period (April to September) for 2017 shows an increase in both the volume of complaints and the number of complaints upheld in 2018, as shown in the following graphs:



- 8.2 Looking at the detailed analysis over both periods' shows that there has been a reduction in the number of Rakes and Ladders complaints received during the same period, whereas there has been an increase in the volume of complaints for both Repairs and General Housing.

## 9 Future Actions

- 9.1 It is proposed to closely monitor all complaints received during October 2018 to March 2019, paying particular attention to consistency of response.
- 9.2 The following additional actions have been identified going forwards:

- Draft and approve a Compensation Policy;
- Assistant Director Communities to review all complaints received, to ensure consistency of response;

## 10 Future Reports

10.1 It is proposed to now bring six-monthly, rather than annual complaints reports to LSC and the Resident Advisory Panel for review.

<b>Additional Information</b>
<b>Business Plan links:</b> Strategic Objective 1: Improve the Customer Service that we provide
<b>Resource implications</b> <b>Financial:</b> Contained within current budgets <b>Personnel:</b> Contained within existing staffing
<b>Sustainability impact –</b>
<b>Equality impact assessment –</b> N/A
<b>Risk:</b> NWH do not learn from customer complaints received <b>Inherent Severity and probability:</b> Impact = [3] Probability = [2] Total = [6] <b>Risk controls:</b> Regular monitoring and reporting of Complaints <b>Further actions:</b> None
<b>Confidentiality –</b> Not a confidential item
<b>Contact Officer –</b> Brett Sadler, Assistant Director Communities Email: <a href="mailto:brett.sadler@nwha.org.uk">brett.sadler@nwha.org.uk</a> Tel: 01492 563215
<b>Appendices –</b> Appendix 1 - Complaints Policy