



North Wales Housing

Annual Complaints Report 2017-2018

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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.

All complaints are recorded on our contact management system on IBS. Records are also kept on the z-drive.

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

If we are unable to resolve the complaint, the complainant may complain to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

Our 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?

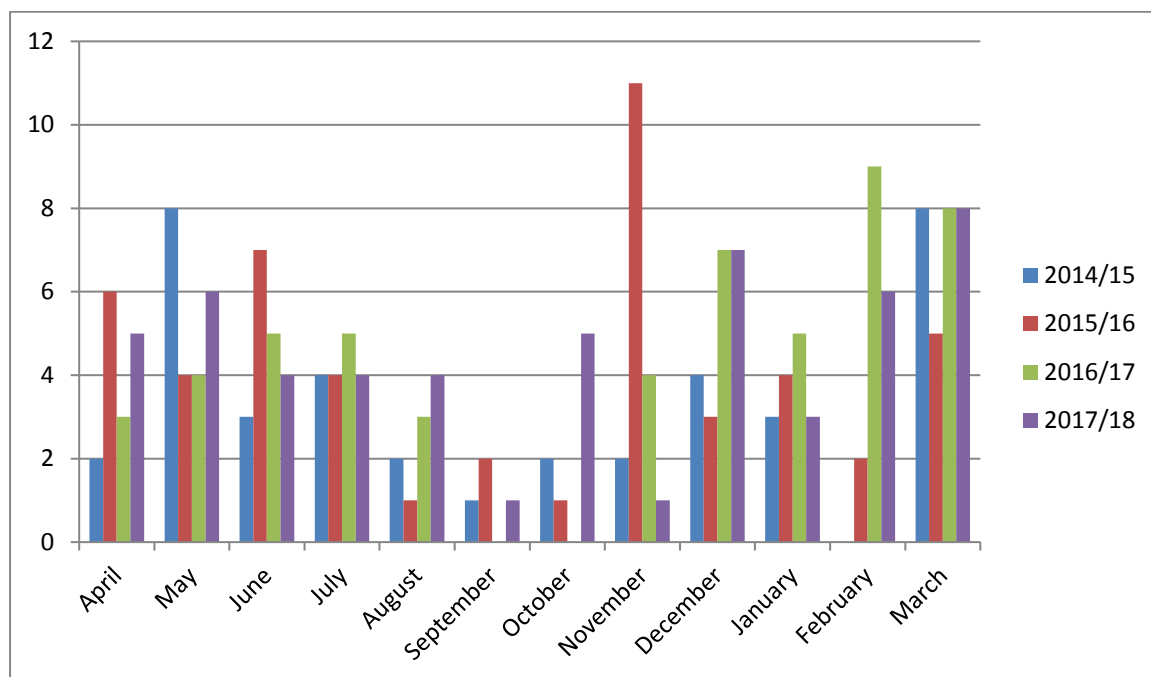
- This is the first contact regarding the issue
- The correct department has not had the opportunity to address the issue
- Issues regarding anti-social behaviour

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

4. Number of complaints

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Number of complaints	39	50	55	54
Number of complaints upheld	9	16	16	13

A total of 54 complaints were received during the 2017-2018 period. The below graph shows the number of complaints received, month-by-month since 2014/15.



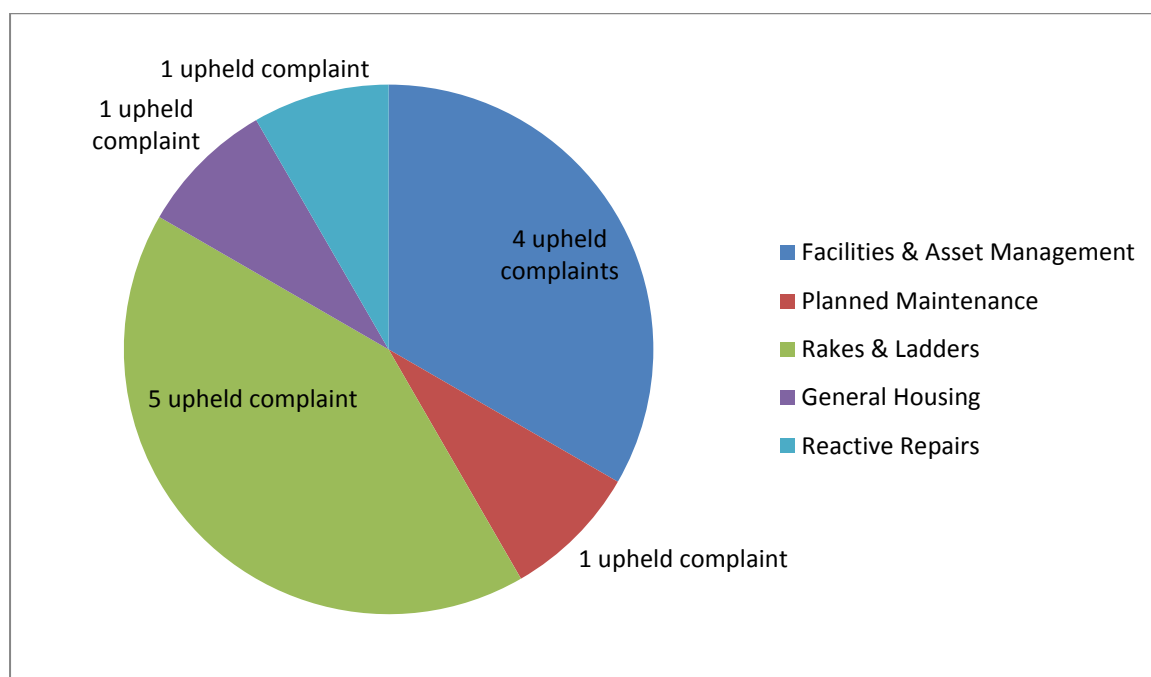
There was a significant rise in complaints after 2014/15. During 2015 we began the process of raising awareness with staff of the importance of recording and management of complaints. This accounts for some of the increase in number.

We will continue to look at ways to raise awareness with staff. Staff inductions now include sessions on complaints.

During 2017 the Residents' Advisory Panel recommended that NWH published articles in the tenant's newsletter on how to make a complaint. This needs to be looked at again as we need to ensure that our tenants know what is classed as a complaint and how to make a complaint.

Upheld Complaints by Service Area 2017/18

Of the 54 complaints received during 2017/18, 13 of these were upheld. The below pie chart gives a breakdown by department:

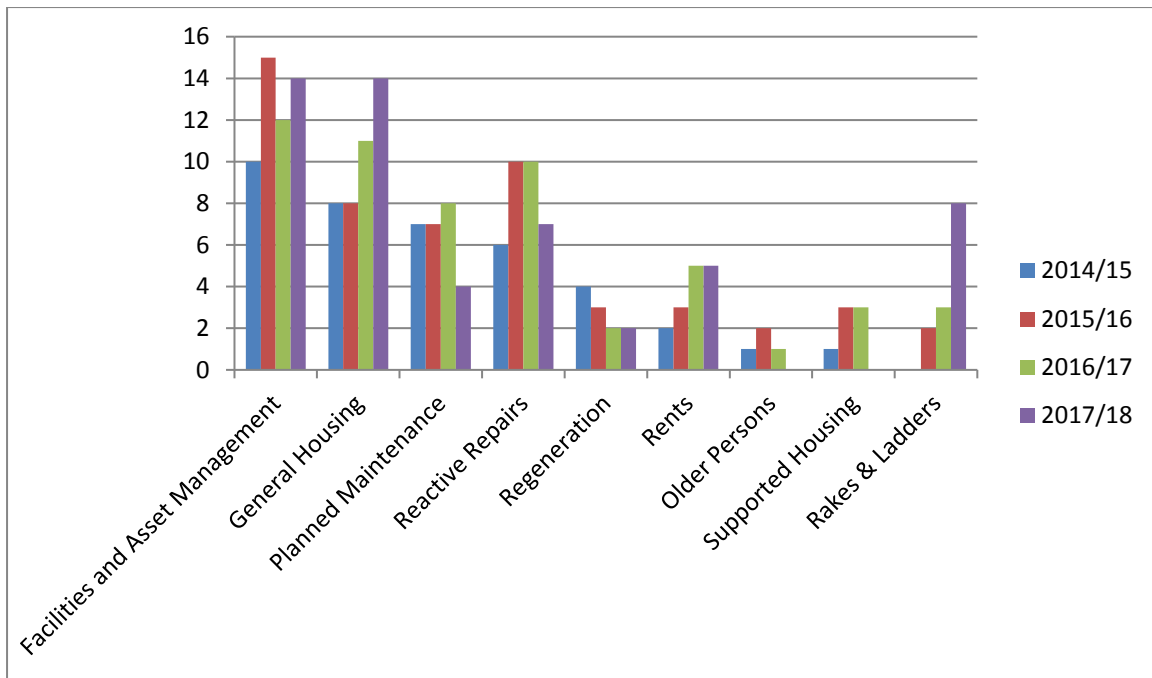


5. Complaints by service area

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Facilities and Asset Management	10	15	12	14
General Housing	8	8	11	14
Planned Maintenance	7	7	8	4
Reactive Repairs	6	10	10	7
Regeneration	4	3	2	2
Rents	2	3	5	5
Older Persons	1	2	1	0
Supported Housing	1	3	3	0
Rakes & Ladders	0	2	3	8

*1 Complaint for both Facilities & Asset Management and General Housing.

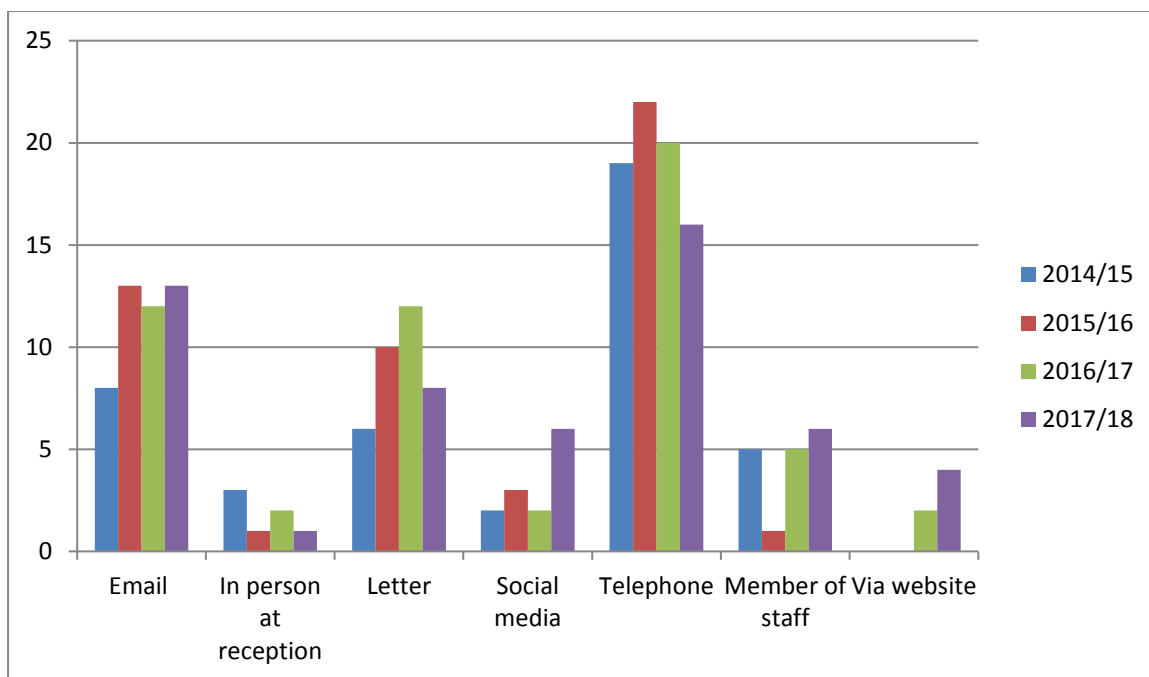
The increase in the Rakes & Ladders complaints can be explained by the notifications sent out to tenants informing them about new service charges being collected.



6. How the complaints were made

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Email	8	13	12	13
In person at reception	3	1	2	1
Letter	6	10	12	8
Social media	2	3	2	6
Telephone	19	22	20	16
Member of staff	5	1	5	6
Via website			2	4

Email, letter and telephone continue to be the most popular method of making a complaint; however there has been an increase in complaints made via social media.



7. Complaints escalation

2017-2018

Service Area	Escalated from stage 1 to 2	Escalated to the Ombudsman
General Housing	3	1
Rakes & Ladders	2	1
Facilities and Asset Management	1	
Rents	1	

A total of 5 complaints were escalated to Stage 2 for the period 2016/17. This has increased to 7 in 2017/18. Only 1 complaint was escalated to the Ombudsman during 2016/17; however 2 were escalated during 2017/18.

The Rakes & Ladders complaint escalated to the Ombudsman is concerning dissatisfaction with the maintenance of communal areas by NWH. The tenant concerned stated they were not receiving the service paid for through the service charge.

Following the investigation NWH agreed to the following actions given by the Ombudsman:

- To offer the complainant a meeting at the site with the Grounds Maintenance Manager to discuss the concerns raised about the standard of work and what is expected to be done.

- To ensure that the HA has provided adequate information to the complainant (and the other tenants at the scheme) about the service charge, what it covers and how the costs have been worked out.
- To feed back to the complainant about the repair issues raised - car park lighting and roof issue.
- To consider on a more general level the information that it provides to tenants about service charges, and whether it should have information on its website about service charges and what they may cover.

The General Housing complaint escalated to the Ombudsman is a complaint regarding how North Wales Housing has dealt with reports of Anti-social behaviour. At the time of writing this report the complaint is still being investigated by the Ombudsman.

Complainants are advised of the complaints procedure and how to escalate to the Ombudsman.

Leaflets are available in the reception areas at Plas Blodwel and the Bangor Office. The information is also available on the North Wales Housing website.

8. Type/theme of complaints

The following details the types of complaints received during 2017/18

	Type/theme of complaints	Total complaints
General Housing	Lack of response/communication Not returning phone calls/emails Dissatisfaction with dealing with Anti-social behaviour reports	14
Facilities and Asset Management	Lack of response/communication Not returning phone calls/emails Dissatisfaction with decisions made by NWH	14
Rakes & Ladders	Standard of work being carried out Work not being carried out Questioning grounds maintenance service charge	8
Repairs	Lack of response/communication Keep informed of when work is to be carried out Length of time waiting for work to be carried out	7

Rents	Rent increase Received arrears letter in error	5
Planned Maintenance	Standard of work Dissatisfied with time waiting for planned works	4
Regeneration	Dissatisfied with incorrect information given	2
Supported Housing	Complaint against member of staff	1

9. Managing complaints

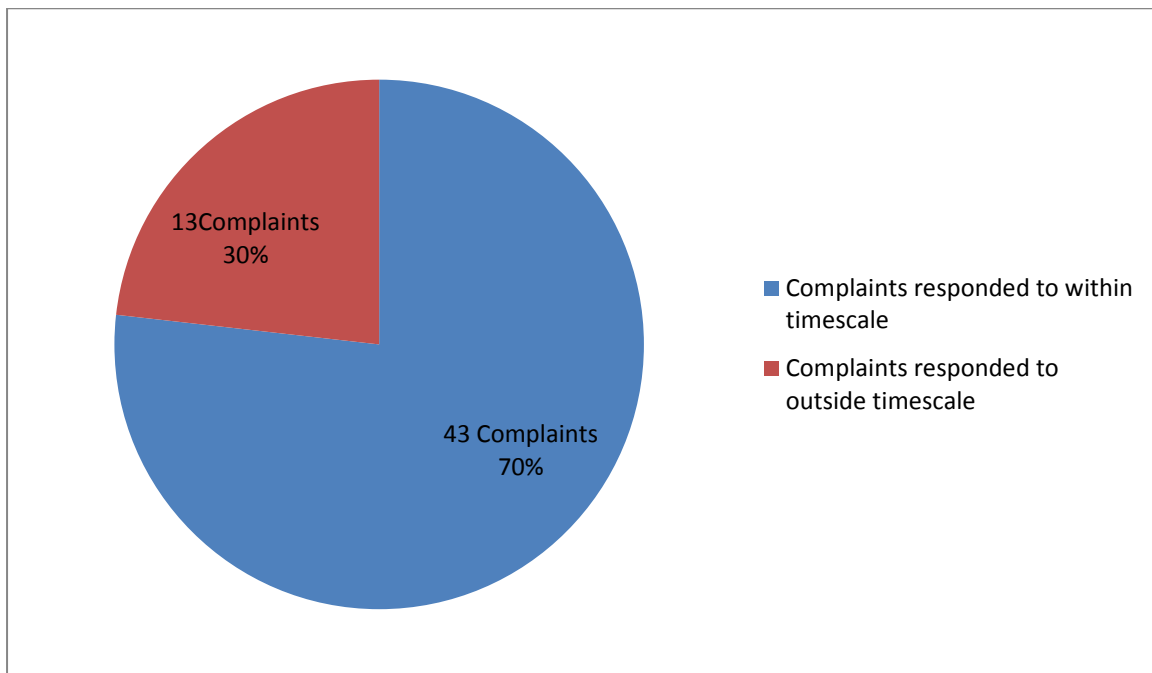
Stage 1

All complaints were acknowledged within 2 working days.

We failed to acknowledge 1 complaint within the 2 working days standard.

70% (43/54) Stage 1 complaints were responded to within 10 working days. The 13 complaints which did not receive a response within the 10 working days received notification that further time was required to investigate.

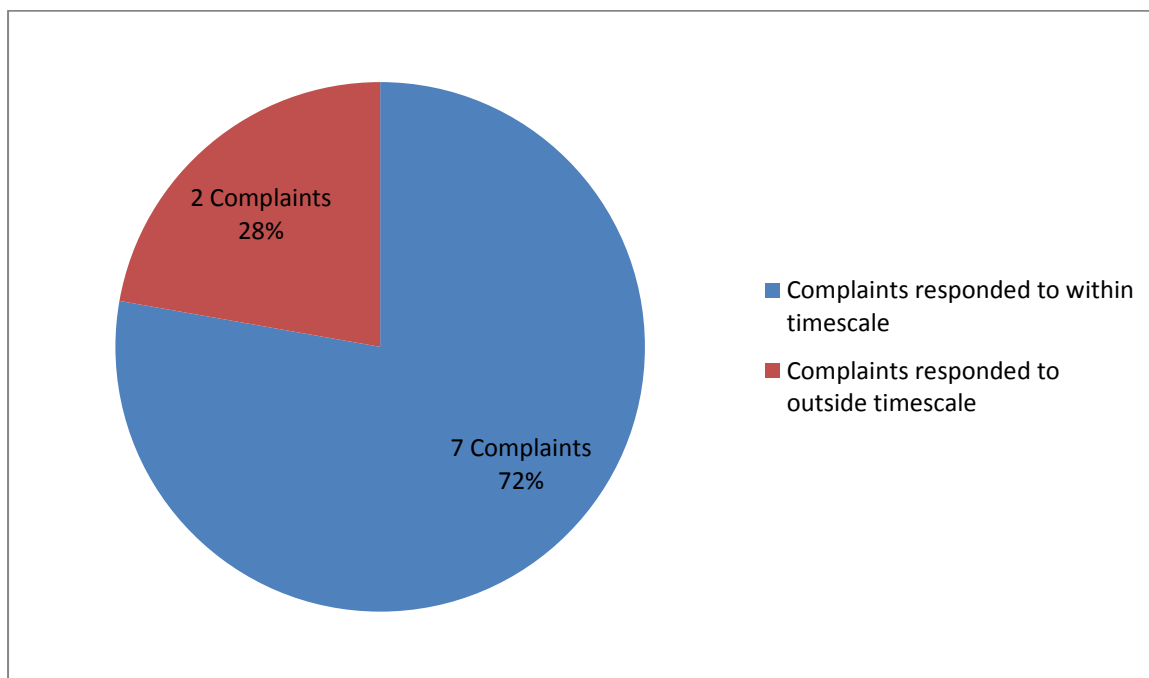
During 2016/17 the rate was 84% (46/55).



Stage 2

100% (7) complainants wishing to enter Stage 2 of the complaints procedure were acknowledged within 2 working days (Same rate as 2016/17).

7 complaints were escalated to Stage 2. 72% (5/7) were responded to within 20 working days. The 2 complaints which didn't receive responses within the 20 working days received notification that further time was required to investigate.



10. Lessons learnt

The following are the key lessons learnt this year:

- A number of complaints are about keeping tenants informed and returning phone calls
- Communication needs to be improved with our tenants
- Communication have been identified as issues in the previous two annual reports
- The number of complaints have not increased this year but the numbers are significantly higher than when we began keeping records in 2014/15
- The increased numbers over recent recording periods may have been due to the raising awareness of our complaints procedures with staff and tenants
- It will be good practice to continue raising awareness of our complaints procedure among staff and tenants
- The RAP recommended the raising awareness of our complaints procedure with a newsletter article, website news story, and Facebook post

- It will be beneficial to involve the RAP further in looking at ways of raising awareness of our complaints procedure and ensure they are accessible
- It could be beneficial to tenants and the organisation if we could provide greater evidence of how we learn from our complaints, e.g. During this period there have been a number of complaints about how we deal with reports of Anti-social Behaviour. Due to this the RAP will be looking at our Anti-social behaviour policy and practices
- The recent Star Survey showed 61% who made a complaint were satisfied with the complaints process. 44% who made a complaint were satisfied with the final outcome
- We need to develop a method to gather satisfaction from complainants about their experience of the process. Text messaging will soon be available to use and we need to identify the correct question to ask the complainant.

11. Conclusions

There are no new themes to the complaints we are receiving; however the new service charges were complained about. Communication also continues to be a theme. There also needs to be a clear use of the lessons learnt from complaints received, as at the moment this is not clearly communicated to tenants [and staff.](#)

Complaints are monitored regular basis using Sycle. Performance is measured on a monthly and quarterly basis which is reported to the Residents' Advisory Panel and Landlord Services Committee. Complaint themes are also considered as part of the self-evaluation process.

Our complaints management processes will be going through an internal audit during July 2018.

Next year's report should include customer satisfaction results on the complaints process.