

Annual Complaints Performance and Service improvement Report 2023/24



Message from Jo Moran, *Chair of the Operations Committee and Board Member*



Our residents are at the heart of everything we do at Dolphin Living. Our primary charitable objective is to support London's workers on modest incomes who cannot afford to rent or buy near their place of work. We're proud of our close relationship with our residents and the role they play in making our organisation what is it today.

This year we launched our new three year strategy which has customer service at its core. We want to deliver improvements in customer experience where it matters most to our residents and embed a resident centric culture across the organisation.

A fundamental part of our service to our residents is how we handle things when they've gone wrong and ensuring we put things right as quickly as possible. Effective, efficient complaint handling is key - we want our residents to feel their concerns are heard, acted on and the issue is resolved to their satisfaction using our best efforts.

To support this focus we have employed a Customer Services Director and grown our customer service team to include a new Resident Experience Manager. Our customer service, asset management and property management teams have also undertaken training on complaint handling.

It is crucial that we learn from complaints and use this information to continuously improve our services. We view complaints as an opportunity to learn, reflect and make improvements for the future.

This year we've made many advances across all areas of our organisation as a result of learnings from complaints. In particular we carried out a thorough review of our repairs process; repairs are our biggest single cause of complaints so it's vital we drive improvements in this area. This has led to a new action plan which is being implemented. I am confident this is going to make a real difference to our residents experience in this area.

It's also important that we reduce residents need to complain by ensuring we spend as much time as possible in-person with our residents; in their homes and on our estates. We received a resident satisfaction score of 39% for complaint handling in 2023/24. This is clearly not where we want to be – we want our residents to feel confident raising issues with us and in the way that we handle them.

During the year we review all our complaints received at our quarterly Customer Operations Meetings with Board Members and our Member Responsible for Complaints. We analyse the main causes of complaints, how these have been handled and the improvements we are making in relation to them. Our 'Complaint Performance and Service Report' provides details of our findings and work in this area.

Finally thank you to all residents who have given feedback this year. It is only through working with you that we can continue to improve so thank you for your time and your openness.

Jo Moran

Chair of the Operations Committee and Board Member

Complaints Performance 2023/24

Performance measures 2023/24					
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
A)	% of complaints escalated to stage 2	0%	16%	10%	7%
B)	% of complaints upheld and partially upheld	60%	94%	70%	93%
C)	% of complaints responded to within 10 working days	100%	95%	100%	100%
D)	% of complaints responded to within 20 working days	100%	100%	100%	100%
E)	Customer satisfaction % with complaint handling	29%	40%	43%	44%

Summary of complaints received in 2023/24

- A. **Stage 2 escalations:** 10% out of a total 52 complaints made in 2023/24 were escalated to Stage 2. All stage 2 complaints were accepted and dealt with in line with our Complaints Policy set out by the Complaints Handling Code 2024. Of these complaints 3 had been partially upheld and 2 had not been upheld. Where necessary, we have made offers of goodwill or compensation where applicable.
- B. **Upheld and Partially upheld:** 81% of all complaints were upheld or partially upheld.
- C. **Response time:** In 2023/24, 1 complaint at Stage 1 was not responded to within the set time frame. This failing has been reviewed and rectified.
- D. **Response time:** All stage 2 complaints received in 2023/24 were responded to within 20 working day with 1 extension requested and agreed by both parties.
- E. **Customer Satisfaction:** Our resident satisfaction score for complaint handling was 39% for 2023/24. We will continue to focus on complaint handling in collaboration with our managing agent to drive improvements in this area.
- F. **Determinations:** We received 0 determinations from the Housing Ombudsman during 2023/24.

Key reasons for complaints for 2023/24:					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2023/24 total
Repairs & maintenance	2	9	1	10	22
Dissatisfaction with service	1	2	2	2	7
Financial e.g compensation	2	0	5	1	8
Building cleanliness & upkeep	4	1	1	1	7
ASB/Noise disturbances	0	4	0	0	4
Other	1	2	1	0	4



Complaints Summary – *Our findings*

We strive to offer our residents a positive experience, but we are aware that sometimes things can go wrong. Our aim is to resolve all residents' concerns as quickly as possible, ensuring that we learn from each experience and take proactive preventative measures for the future. Our reports show that some of the issues that had caused an increase in our level of complaints this year were due to the following areas:

- Building security and parcel theft
- Cleanliness and maintenance of communal areas
- Cleanliness and maintenance of refuse areas
- Lift breakdowns
- Heating & Hot water outages
- Time taken to complete repairs and no. of contractor visits
- Lack of communication during repairs

Complaint Handling

We must improve our handling of complaints. Our resident satisfaction score to the question "How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with how your complaint was handled?" was 39% for 2023/24. Clearly, we need to do better.

How we handle residents' complaints is really important to us as it's a fundamental part of our service to them. It is an opportunity for us to learn, reflect and to make improvements for the future.

We understand that the way we handle complaints is equally important to our residents as it ensures their concerns are heard, acted on and the issue is resolved to their satisfaction using our best efforts. It also affects how likely they are to inform us of any changes to their circumstances (which we might be able to help with), any issues arising with their building, or other concerns they may have. We want residents to feel confident raising issues with us and in the way that we handle them.

Complaints handling will be one of the main focuses of the Customer Service team in 2024/25 to ensure we see improvements in this important area.

Lesson learnt and improving our services

In response to the areas that are the greatest causes of complaints we are taking the following actions:

- **Building security and parcel theft**

We are looking into replacing our front and communal doors with enhanced security versions, ensuring that they comply with accessibility needs and fire regulations. We continually send residents security notices, reminding them about tailgating and ensuring they only allow access to known residents. We have also provided residents with further information about parcel collection points near their homes. In addition we are working with the Metropolitan Police on further security measures across our portfolio.

- **Cleanliness and maintenance of communal and refuse areas**

During 2023/24, we conducted a thorough review of our cleaning suppliers and found a significant improvement after switching suppliers in a number of buildings, which has led to an increase in positive feedback from residents. We also increased the frequency of our communal cleaning and refuse areas. In addition we conducted a review of our gardens and have commenced a capital works programme to replant our gardens and increased the frequency of visits by our gardening teams.

- **Lift breakdowns**

Our Asset Management team have taken a number of proactive steps to reduce lift breakdowns such as pre ordering parts to reduce lead times and increasing the number of contractors skilled in these repairs. We are also carrying out a full lift audit across our portfolio.

- **Heating & Hot water outages**

Our Asset Management team have taken a number of proactive steps to reduce these outages including reviewing our building management, pre ordering parts to reduce lead times and putting a greater number of failure plans in place. We are also applying these leanings to our new developments.

- **Time taken to complete repairs, no. of contractor visits & lack of communication during repair**

In collaboration with our managing agent and an external consultant we have conducted an end to end review of our repairs process. This has led to a number of process changes which we are confident will greatly improve our service in this area. For example we have reduced the number of contractor visits to residents homes and given our staff greater autonomy to make quicker decisions.



Our new cleaning team who are receiving positive feedback from residents and driving a reduction in complaints

Changes to complaint handling – *Improving the journey*

We will also look at making improvements to how we deal with complaints, ensuring that communication throughout the residents' complaints journey is efficient and they are kept informed.

The themes of our complaint's improvement approach are:

- Complaints handling staff: Ensuring that complaint handling staff are offering telephone calls or face to face visits when a customer has raised a complaint (if necessary) whilst carrying out their investigations
- Repairs: Our managing agent has been given more autonomy to action work orders for repairs reducing the amount of time required to carry out repairs.
- Response: Ensuring that residents can further discuss their complaint responses and explore the issues further if required.
- Carrying out annual complaints audits with residents to discuss how their complaint went and how we can improve their experience.

For a copy of our 2023/24 Self Assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's 'Complaint Handling Code' please visit our website [For residents | Dolphin Living](#)

