

CSP Review of the Complaint Service

1. Why we chose the Complaint Service

SHG set out a Service Expectation for tenants with regard to complaints, it is 'We will ensure you are satisfied with the handling of your complaint'. In 2019-20 89.4% of customers were happy with how their complaint had been handled, whereas in 2022-23 it dropped to 63%. To address this reduction in satisfaction the CSP chose to explore the customer journey through the complaint process to identify any areas requiring improvement.

The CSP note that additional work is being undertaken with regard to the effectiveness of complaint handling; this review seeks to complement that work.

2. Scope of the review

Following a briefing from staff on the service we chose the following areas for review:

- How tenants can make a complaint and how easy this is to do.
- How effectively customers are communicated with throughout the complaint handling process.
- How customer satisfaction information is obtained and used to improve the service.

3. Our approach to the review

The following activities were undertaken:

- Customer journey mapping of the complaint service.
- Review of letters from the service.
- Discussions with staff on how the service operates.
- Review of information on the website and social media.
- Review of current policy and procedure.
- Review of tenant satisfaction survey and results.

Our findings underpin our judgements and recommendations detailed below.

4. Overview of CSP findings

The complaints service is a responsive service that is easy to access. When complaints are logged there is a clear procedure in place that ensures complaints are responded to in a timely manner. Customers are provided with clear responses that follows a SHG template which is then tailored to the individual need of the customer.

Whilst it is easy to report a complaint, we have found improvements can be made if a complaint is made to a member of staff who isn't part of the Customer Feedback team, to ensure that a complaint is taken at first point of contact.

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Currently there is insufficient customer insight data to inform how the service can improve further. Whilst Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) do collect data in relation to complaints, it doesn't provide enough insight specifically into the complaint processes and doesn't collect data from all customers who raise a complaint.

5.1 Ease of reporting a Complaint

We examined the range of ways that customers can make a complaint.

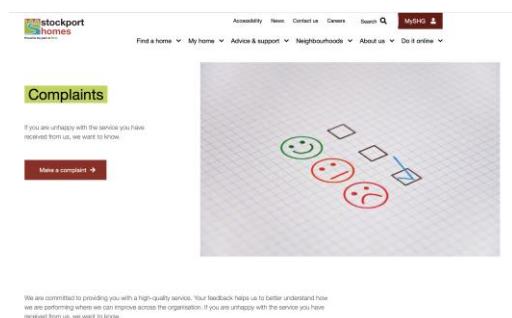
5.1.1 Strengths

Customers are easily able to access a range of channels to make a complaint, these include in person, over the telephone, in writing, by email and digitally.

5.1.2 Areas for improvement

Customers receive an inconsistent response if they raise a complaint with a member of staff who is not in the Customer Feedback Team. It is variable as to whether staff signpost customers to the Customer Feedback Team or make a note of the complaint and pass it on to the team. This means that some customers are not able to report their complaint at first point of contact.

Visitors to the complaint's webpage may not notice there is a range of information available on complaint stages. When visiting the page customers will see the 'make a complaint' button and a large image (see picture below). Customers may not realise that they need to scroll down the page for further information.



One Number does not offer a telephone menu option to be put straight through to the Customer Feedback Team.

5.1.3 Recommendations

1. Ensure that every front-line member of staff and reception take details of a complaint at first point of contact with a customer. Consider the option of offering a printed form at reception, so that customers are able to raise their complaint in an alternative method if they choose.

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2. Update the complaint webpage to enable easier access to the information on complaints, including making the telephone number and email address for the Customer Feedback Team more prominent. We would like you to present your ideas for the webpage to the Customer Assurance Panel.
3. Consider a Customer Feedback Team option on the One Number telephone menu.

5.2 How effectively customers are communicated with throughout the complaint process.

We examined how customers are communicated with when they have made a complaint.

5.2.1 Strengths

A letter template is used to ensure that customers receive clear plain English responses to their complaints. Each letter from the service has been put through a plain English assessment tool (First Word) and the results provided assurance that they are easy to read.

Customers are clearly advised that they can contact the Housing Ombudsman throughout the complaint process.

5.3 How customer satisfaction is obtained and used to improve services

We reviewed satisfaction survey questions and the data that SHG holds on satisfaction with the complaint service.

5.3.1 Strengths

Analysis is being undertaken of Tenant Satisfaction Measure (TSM) data to assess if respondents have made a formal complaint in the last 12 months. This informs accuracy of the data and identifies where further customer insight is needed.

5.3.2 Areas for improvement

Currently customer insight data is collected via the TSM on complaints. This data will not capture data from all those who have made a complaint, and it only gives an indicator of satisfaction with the overall service. Tenants do not get the opportunity to give further information if they are not satisfied with the service and how they think it can be improved.

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5.3.3 Recommendations

4. Consider how to obtain further customer feedback in a way that is not onerous for customers. (We note a previous complaint satisfaction survey was too long and therefore may be off putting for some customers to complete.) For example, a short text message question on satisfaction, with customers who report dissatisfaction being contacted to find out more. We would like you to present your ideas on how you will gather customer insight to the Customer Assurance Panel.

6. Support provided for the scrutiny

We would like to thank Chris Czyzyk and Jonathan Kelly for their support and assistance with this scrutiny review.

We have been assisted by Jayne Boote from Engage for Change who has acted as our independent mentor. Jayne has provided advice and guidance on scrutiny activities and facilitated the production of this report to ensure our independence.