

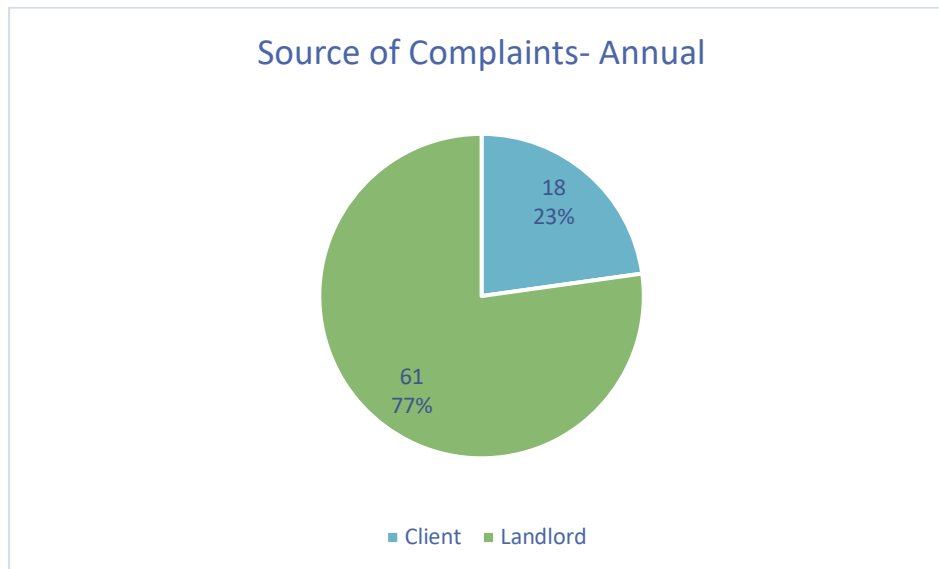
## COMPLAINTS SUMMARY REPORT: ANNUAL FY 22-23

### 1. Executive Summary

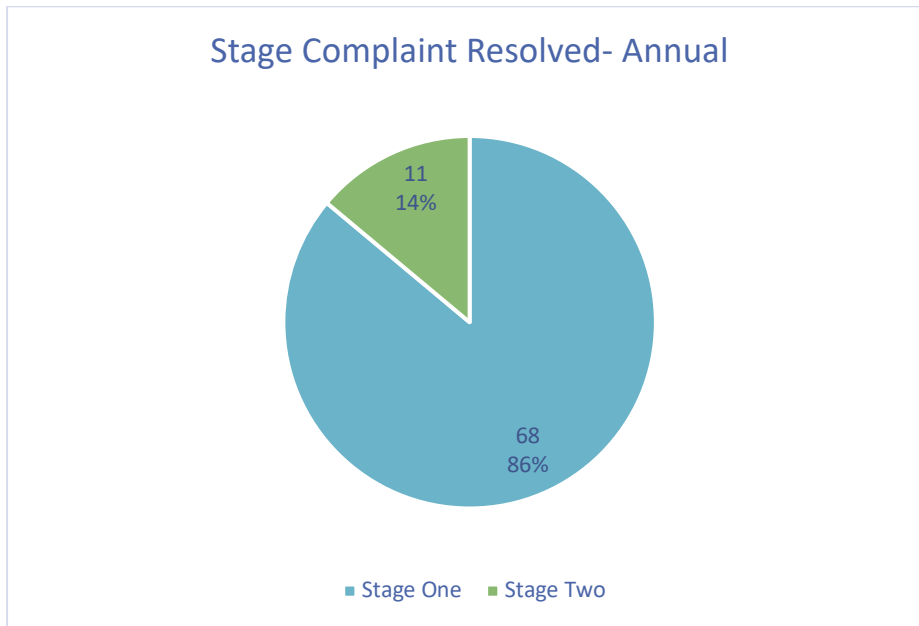
- 1.1 The Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code expects Boards to review the learning from complaints annually.
- 1.2 This report provides a summary of the year's complaints, including reasons for complaints and the learning from them.

### 2. Summary of complaints – annual

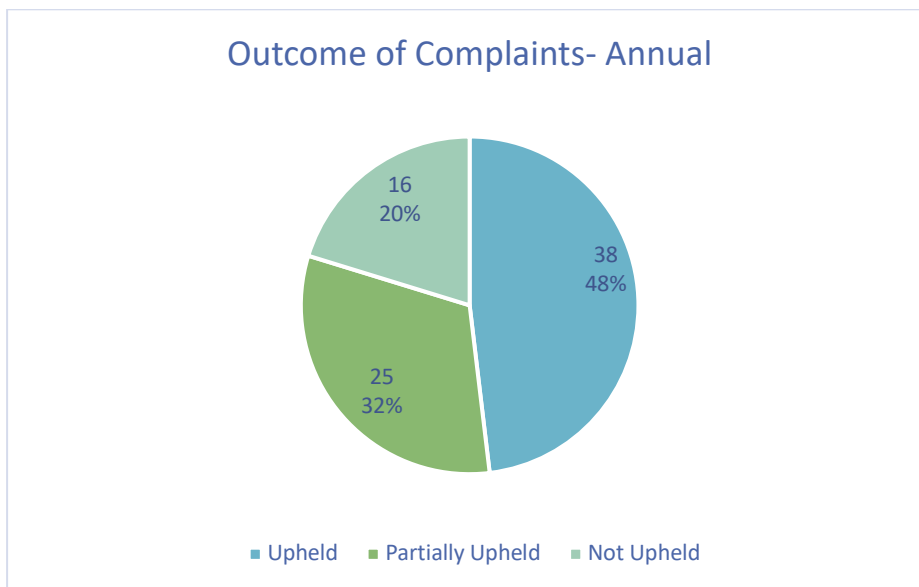
- 3.1 We registered a total of 81 new complaints in 2022 - 23 compared to 45 in the previous year and 65 in 2020 - 2021.
- 3.2 61 of the complaints closed (77%) were from residents of CDS properties. 18 were from residents or committee members of client co-operatives.



- 3.3 68 of the complaints closed in the year (86%) were resolved at Stage One and 11 were escalated to Stage Two.

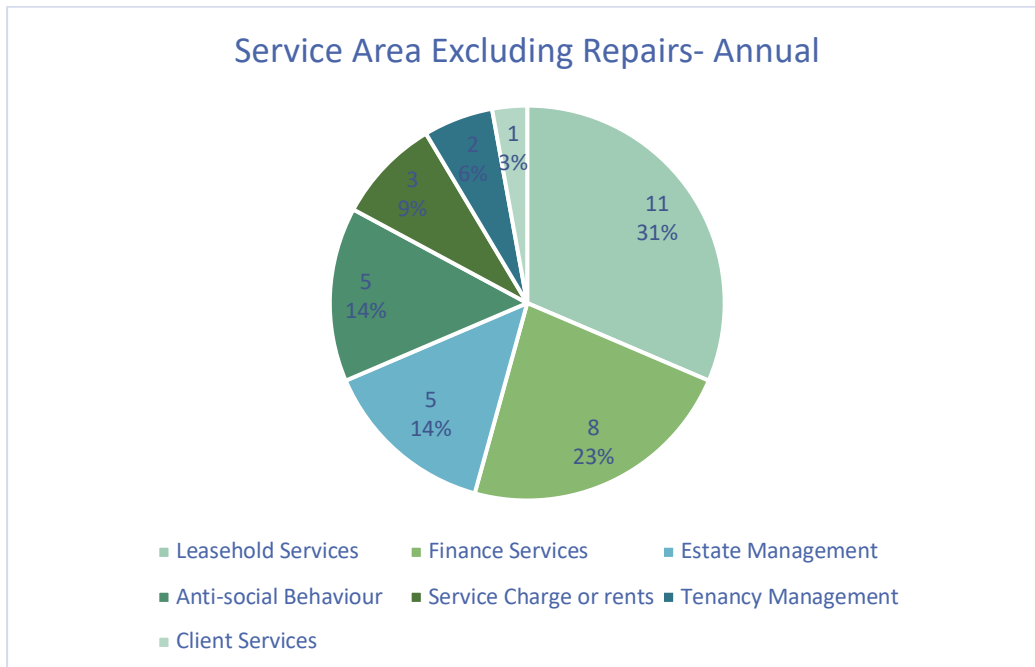
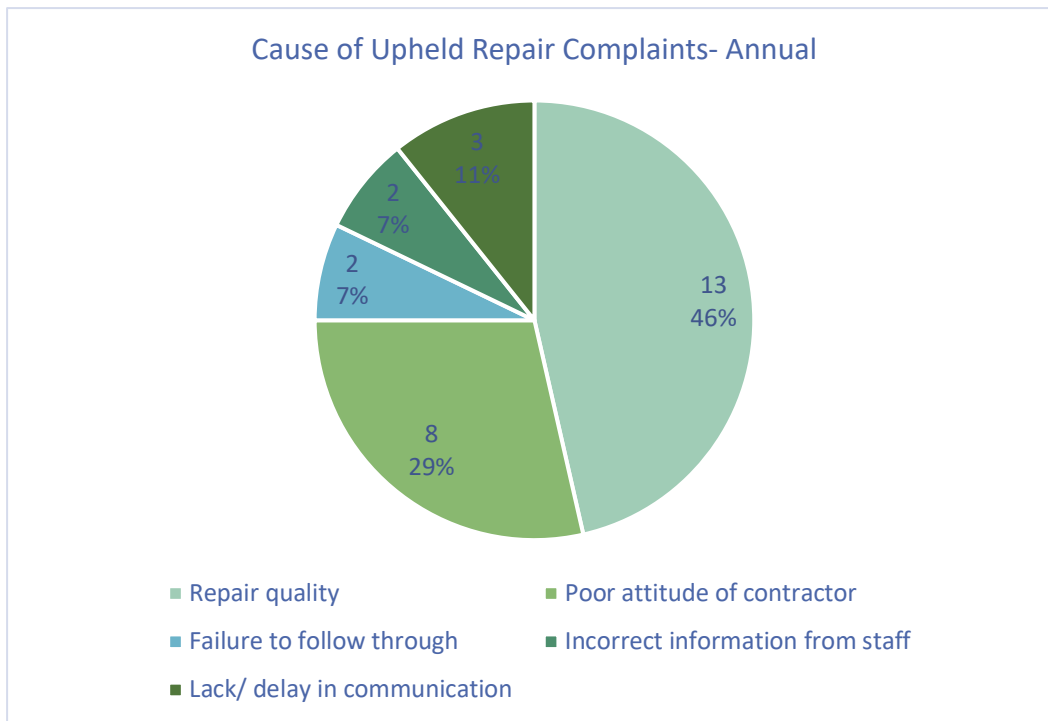


3.4 63 complaints (79%) were fully or partially upheld. 38 of these were fully and 25 partially upheld. The remainder of this report provides analysis of these complaints.



3.5 49 of these complaints (78%) were from residents of CDS properties and 14 were from co-op residents or committees. This means that 80% of all complaints about our landlord service were fully or partially upheld. For our managing agent service, 78% of complaints were fully or partially upheld.

3.6 Repairs quality was the largest single category of repairs complaints. Of these 2 were about lack of heating and hot water, 3 were about lift breakdowns and 3 were about the time it took to fix a leak or roof. The remaining 5 complaints were about a variety of issues including a parking space being fenced off, a request for a new front door, repairs to a back gate, repairs to a window and the condition a back garden was left in by contractors.



3.7 In 13 cases we made a compensation or goodwill payment.

### 3. Learning from complaints

3.1 The most noticeable aspect of our complaints performance over the past year is the increase in the number of complaints received. We received 80% more complaints in 2022 – 23 than in the previous

year and 20% more than in 2020 – 21.

- 3.2 The increase was spread fairly consistently across the year with 65% more in Q1, 23% in Q2, 56% in Q3 and 65% in Q4.
- 3.3 The reasons for this increase are not clear from the data. However 3 services – Repairs, Leasehold Services and Finance – account for 68% of complaints received and these are all services where we know we have had issues.
- 3.4 There has been significant staff turnover within our repairs team during the year. This has undoubtedly had a negative impact on our repairs service and in particular on the provision of support to our team of repairs call handlers.
- 3.5 Nigel Moore acted as Operations Director from December 2022 to May 2023 and Kristell Marcantoni was appointed to the position from 1<sup>st</sup> May. In Q4 we appointed a Project Manager for planned works, a Repairs Manager and a Chartered Surveyor to provide technical expertise to the team. We have recently recruited a new Repairs Manager and Compliance Manager.
- 3.6 A number of themes have emerged from complaints and repairs analysis:
  - We are too reliant on contractors for specifying repairs;
  - Contractor reliability is variable;
  - Contractors often need to inspect before quoting, resulting in multiple visits;
  - There is a high rate of quotes being varied after acceptance;
  - We need to post-inspect more repairs;
- 3.7 These will form the basis of an improvement plan when we have recruited Repairs and Compliance Managers. Roger O’Sullivan, a consultant with considerable experience of repairs, has been engaged to work with us on this.

### **Leasehold Services**

- 3.8 This was the next most complained about service area after repairs, with 11 complaints received.
- 3.9 1 of the complaints received concerned estate agent boards that we had failed to have removed. Another was about our service charge estimate which was significantly below the actual end of year figure, leaving leaseholders with a shortfall in their payments. Another complaint was about the length of time taken to issue a lease extension and management pack and 2 complaints were about the time taken by the Leasehold Officer to respond to enquiries.
- 3.10 There has been considerable instability in Leasehold Services with several temporary staff being recruited and leaving within a short space of time. We are aware that these recruitment issues caused disruption and delays at times.
- 3.11 Leasehold is a specialist area and while our Housing Manager Folake Agbaje has worked hard to provide as much continuity of service as possible this has been very challenging.

3.12 A new Leasehold Officer, Donatella Preci, started work with us at the beginning of April. Donatela has significant experience of leasehold services and, although she has joined us on a temporary basis, we are in discussions about the permanent role. We hope that this will bring expertise and stability to this area of work and will result in fewer complaints moving forward.

#### **Finance Services**

3.13 There were 8 complaints about Finance Services, making this service area the 3<sup>rd</sup> most complained about. In all cases the complaints were made by client co-ops and were about late payments or payments that were perceived to be late. Our service commitment is payment within 21 days and we paid 91% of invoices within this target over the last year, but co-ops often expect us to pay more quickly.

3.14 We replaced our existing payments system during the last financial year and we experienced significant issues following implementation. Although the new system will ultimately streamline payments there have been short term difficulties, including payment runs being missed.

3.15 The Finance Team has worked tirelessly with software developers to overcome the difficulties experienced after implementation of the new system and we continue to monitor the situation.

#### **4. Equality Implications**

4.1 There are no equality and diversity issues arising from this report. We neither specifically maintain nor analyse demographic data on the complainants.

#### **5. Risk Implications**

5.1 Our aim in managing complaints is to reduce the reputational risk of complaints by always acknowledging and apologising when appropriate. We aim to build trust with customers in this way that even if we get something wrong, we can be relied upon to make it right.

5.2 We also aim to reduce the reputational risk of complaints by learning from complaints and creating actions to reduce complaints over time.

#### **6. Recommendation**

6.1 Members are asked to consider and comment on the findings in this report.

**Report created by:** Nigel Moore

**Date:** May 2023