



Annual Complaints Handling Report

1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018

Prepared by the Human Resources and Corporate Services Department

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Section 1 Executive Summary

This is the third Annual Complaint Handling Report for Argyll Community Housing Association Ltd (ACHA), covering 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.

We have been providing quarterly updates to our Board of Management since our Complaints Handling Procedure was implemented, in October 2012. Our procedure is based on the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) Model which was required to be adopted by all Registered Social Landlords in Scotland.

We report on our annual complaints performance to advise staff, Board of Management members, tenants, other customers and the public, on our performance. It also allows us to facilitate benchmarking and improvement for ourselves, and across the sector.

Effective `Complaints Handling` is a key element of the Scottish Social Housing Charter, with Outcome 2 (Communications) having a direct relationship with complaints handling.

1.2 Key achievements

We attend the Scottish Complaint Handlers Network, which is attended by representatives from across the sector on a six monthly basis, and members promote and share best practice.

We issue complaint satisfaction surveys, following the conclusion of all complaints, to assess the performance of our complaints process. We have undertaken this process since July 2016.

1.3 Performance

Scotland`s Housing Network has provided a Performance Analysis update to our Board members annually over the last few years and was run again on 25th September 2018. Acknowledgment was given that performance has significantly improved in the last four years, and we are now in line or above many of the Scottish Average figures for customer satisfaction and complaints.

1.4 Continuous Improvement

A data validation exercise took place in November 2017, to ensure we were accurately reporting Complaints data for submission of the Annual Return on the Charter to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

Further areas of improvement have been; tracking and improving the way we monitor feedback in terms of suggestions and satisfaction with complaints, tracking and demonstrating learning outcomes from complaints, and tracking and communicating suggestions and compliments, and considering the IT to support these processes.

Section 2 Introduction

2.1 How to make a complaint

Anyone can make a complaint if they are unhappy with the service they have received by using the Complaints Handling Procedure. Copies can be obtained at any ACHA office or by contacting us. The procedure and associated information is also available on our website www.acha.co.uk home page by clicking on the button “Make a Complaint or Suggestion”

Any customer can also make a complaint in writing, in person, by telephone, by email or online, or by having someone complain on their behalf.

2.2 Training / learning and development

All new staff members receive Corporate Induction training, and a mandatory training session on complaint handling.

Refresher training is provided to every staff member on at least a two yearly basis, or sooner where required.

2.3 Complaints Governance

The Association’s Senior Management Team hold a monthly review meeting to review performance at both corporate and departmental level.

They review the effectiveness of responses and the process, monitoring progress and response times.

Further tracking and monitoring arrangements are being considered to assist management in further reviewing solutions that have been put in place, and ensuring key learning actions are implemented effectively.

Section 3 Complaints Analysis – 2017/18 Overview

3.1 Comparison of complaints received

Comparison of complaints received	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	Trend
Stage 1 complaints	99	87	104	98	75	Lower
Stage 2 complaints	37	33	70	48	39	Lower
Stage 3 complaints	5	5	4	7	4	Lower
Total	141	125	178	153	118	Lower

Complaints received in 2017/18	1 st Quarter	2 nd Quarter	3 rd Quarter	4 th Quarter	Total
Stage 1	28	16	15	16	75
Stage 2	12	14	4	9	39
Total	40	30	19	25	114

- 3.1.1 Of the 39 Stage 2 complaints during 2017/18, 13 were customer requests to escalate their complaint due to dissatisfaction with their complaint at Stage 1. The other 26 complaints were directly escalated to Stage 2 as a result of the requirement for further investigation, due to the complexity or serious nature of the complaint.
- 3.1.2 Since the Complaint Handling Procedure (CHP) was implemented in October 2012, there has been 4 equality related complaints recorded.
- 3.1.3 Every complaint closed at Stage 2 of the complaint handling procedure, is signposted to the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman (SPSO), if a person wishes to have their complaint independently reviewed.

3.2 Historical Information

- 3.2.1 **In 2013/14**, in 2 of the 5 complaints sent to the Ombudsman, the Ombudsman advised they were unable to assist further.

The other 3 were all investigated and not upheld, although 1 recommendation was made, in terms of following up an issue with Scottish Water relating to sewage issues.

- 3.2.2 **In 2014/15**, in 4 of the 5 complaints sent to the Ombudsman, the Ombudsman advised they were unable to assist further.

The other 1 was investigated and not upheld, this related to the Ombudsman feeling ACHA acted appropriately when dealing with repairs relating to dampness and a front door.

- 3.2.3 **In 2015/16**, in 2 of the 4 complaints sent to the Ombudsman, the Ombudsman advised they were unable to assist further. Both related to disputes over grounds maintenance/grass cutting charges.

The other 2 were both upheld and recommendations were made and put in place as follows;

- 3.2.3.1 Dampness – rent charges removed, independent dampness survey commissioned, further rent reduction applied until repairs completed.

- 3.2.3.2 Tenancy termination issues – cancel charges for rechargeable repairs to a previous property, feedback to staff regarding the importance of checking evidence available before responding to complaints, remind staff of the pre-termination procedure and the importance of thorough record keeping, cancel two weeks rent following the termination of a tenancy, apologise for the failings identified in Ombudsman's letter, reflect on how to inform tenants of possible recharges and further rent charges after termination.

- 3.2.4 **In 2016/17**, in 2 of the 7 complaints sent to the Ombudsman, the Ombudsman advised they were unable to assist further. Both related to disputes over repairs charges.

The other 5 were all investigated. Of these, 4 were not upheld, with 3 relating to anti-social behaviour issues and 1 relating to repairs charges.

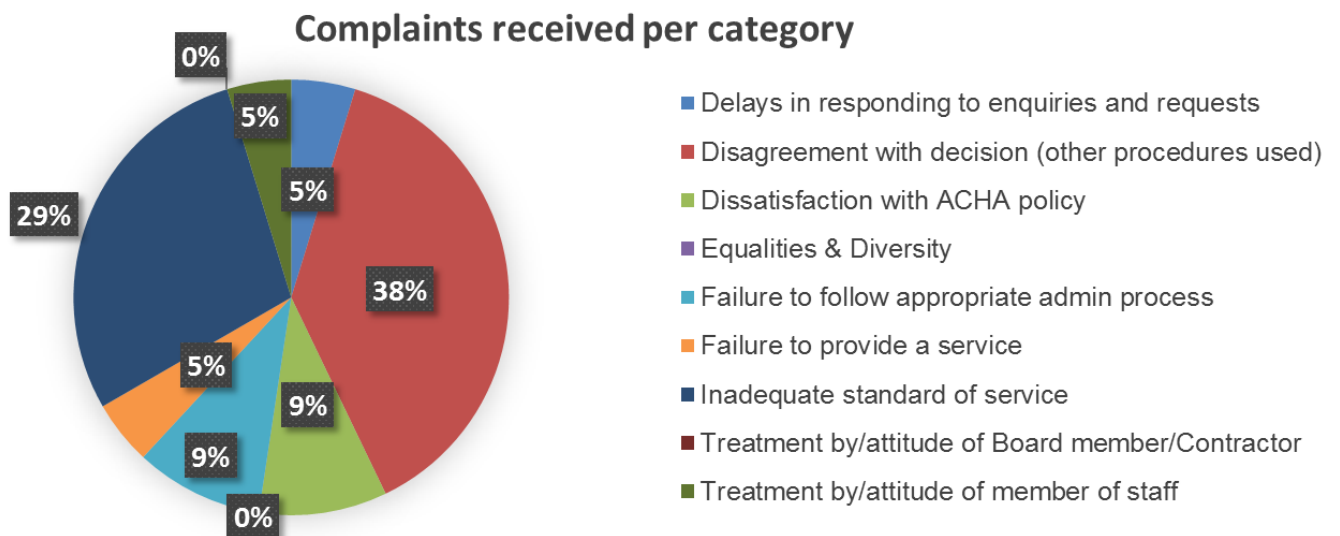
1 complaint was upheld and recommendations were made and put in place as follows;

3.2.4.1 Repairs deadlines – ensure that we adhere to the deadlines for repairs as laid out in the organisation’s repairs and maintenance policy. Review of current repairs work to ensure works are completed within appropriate timescales.

3.2.5 In 2017/18, in 3 of the 4 complaints sent to the Ombudsman, the Ombudsman advised they were unable to assist further. The other 1 was investigated and not upheld.

Section 4 Complaints received by category

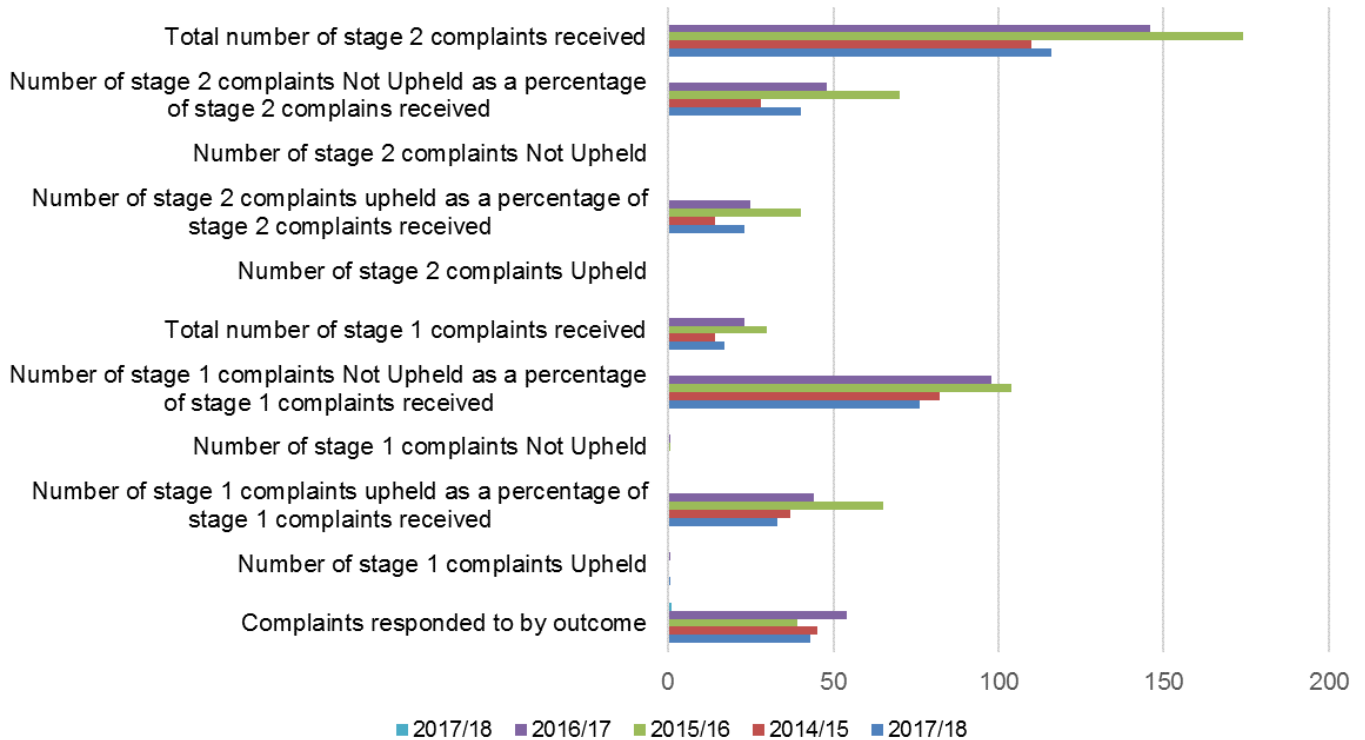
4.1 The Complaint Handling Network that we attend are looking at standardising complaint categories across all housing associations so that we can better benchmark and analyse performance. Different organisations currently categorise their complaints in different ways.



Complaint received by category	Cowal & Bute	Mid Argyll & Kintyre	Oban Lorn & Isles	Helensburgh & Lomond	All Areas
Delays in responding to enquiries and requests	1	0	3	1	5
Disagreement with decision (other procedures used)	8	4	3	0	15
Dissatisfaction with ACHA policy	2	2	5	1	10
Equalities & Diversity	0	0	0	0	0
Failure to follow appropriate admin process	2	0	0	0	2
Failure to provide a service	1	8	4	4	17
Inadequate standard of service	6	15	23	7	51
Treatment by/attitude of Board member/Contractor	0	1	2	2	5
Treatment by/attitude of member of staff	1	3	3	2	9
Total	21	33	43	17	114

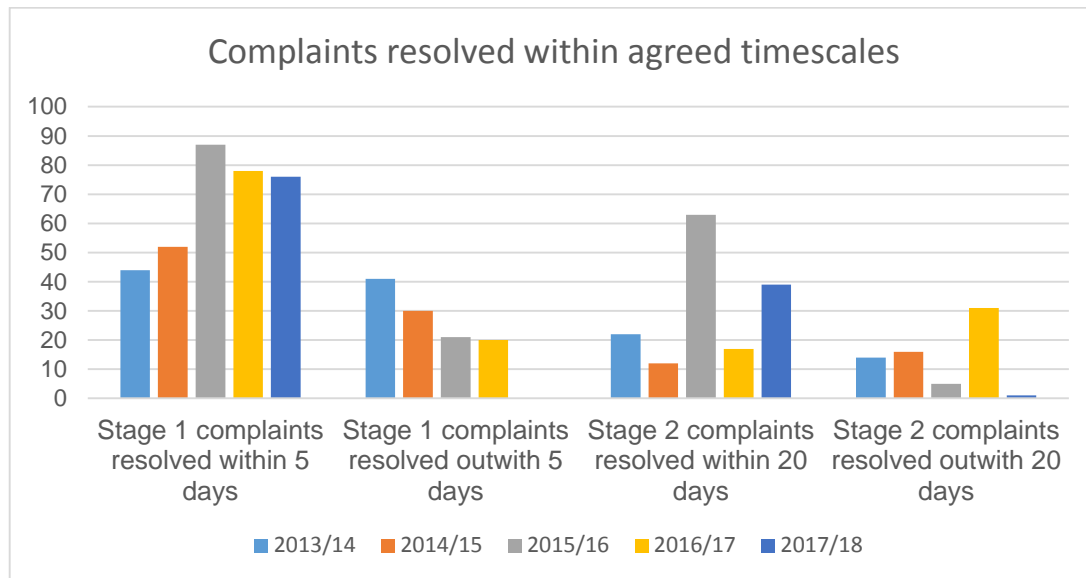
Section 5 Complaints by outcome

Complaints Responded to by Outcome



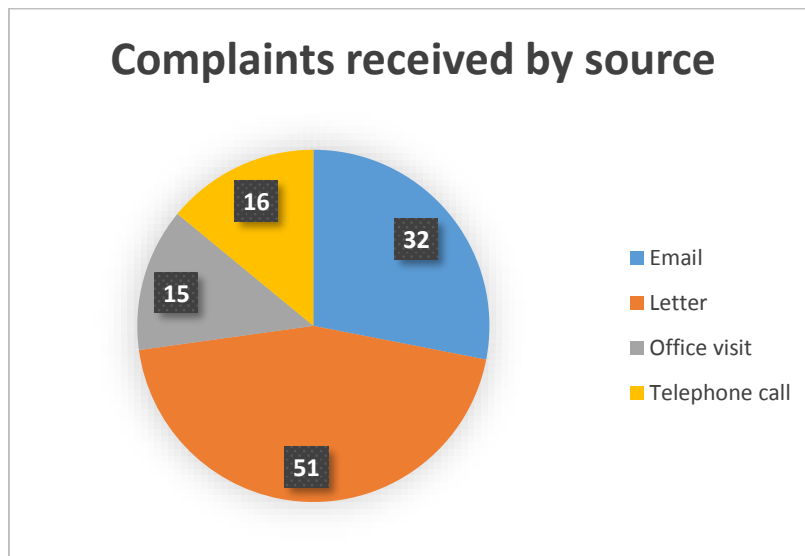
- 5.1 Where complaints were upheld or partially upheld this means that the service we provided did not reach the standard a reasonable person could expect in these cases.
- 5.2 Where complaints were not upheld, this means that in these cases, the service provided was of a standard that a reasonable person could expect, and we do not believe there were grounds for the complaint.

Section 6 Complaint resolution timescales



- 6.1 In 2017/18 - Stage 1 complaints where an extension to the 5 working day timeline has been authorised as a % of all stage 1 complaints responded to in full was nil.
- 6.2 In 2017/18 - Stage 2 complaints where an extension to the 20 working day timeline has been authorised as a % of all stage 2 complaints responded to in full was 2.5%
- 6.3 Staff are reminded that if there is a requirement to extend a complaint beyond the target timeline, approval must be sought in advance.

Section 7 Complaints by source

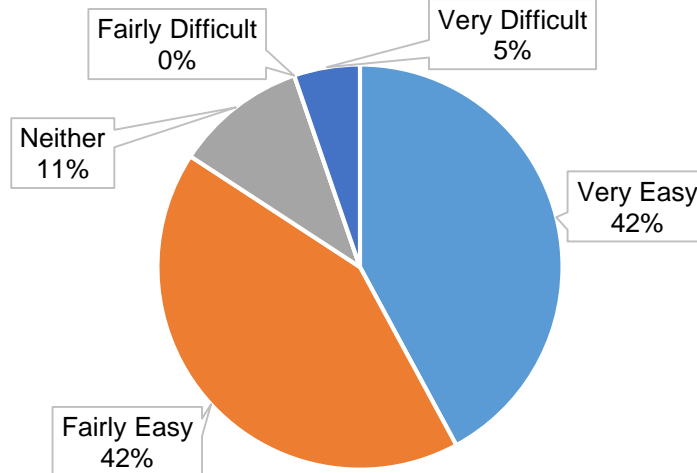


- 7.1 The most common way complaints are received is by letter, with email communication reducing during 2017/18.

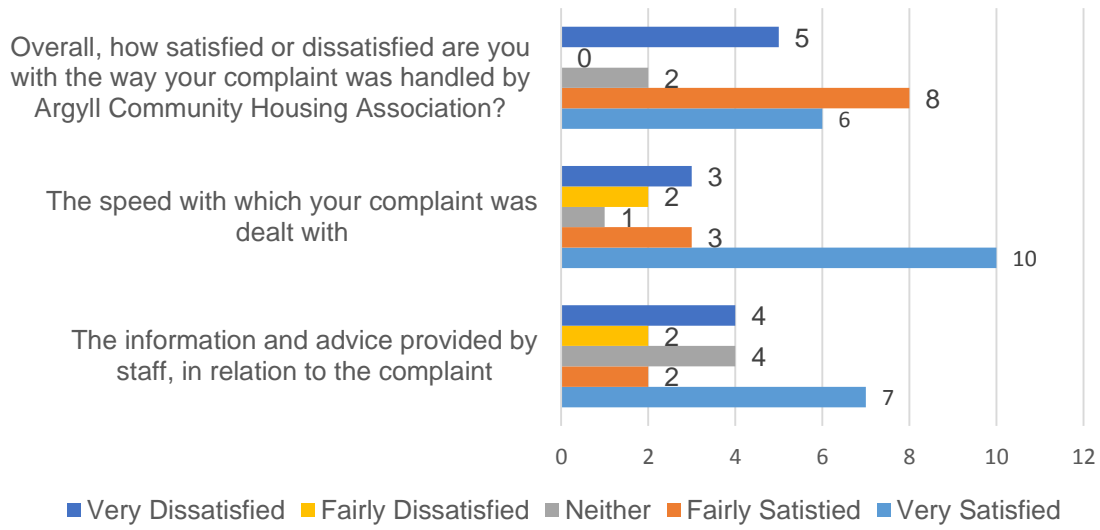
Section 8 Customer satisfaction with complaint handling

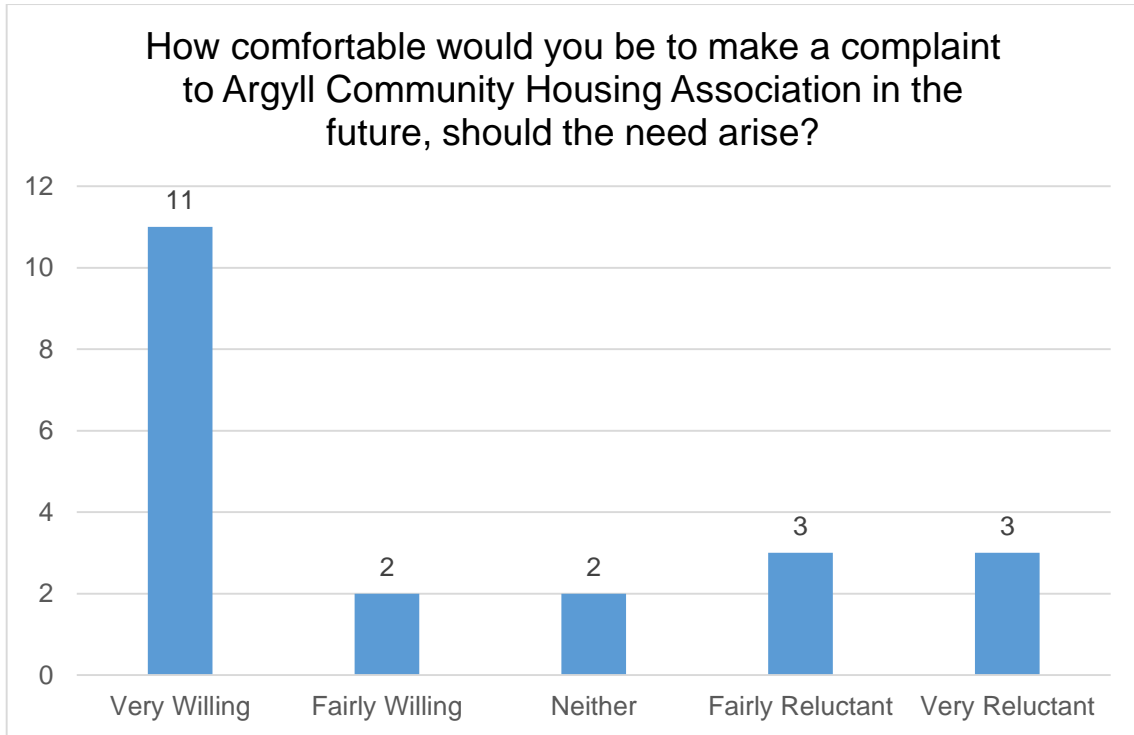
- 8.1 Since July 2016 we have been issuing Customer Complaint Satisfaction Surveys to anyone who had been through the complaint process, enclosing a prepaid envelope for their convenience.
- 8.2 Any returns we receive are acknowledged and any comments or suggestions submitted will be considered by our Senior Management team, at their monthly complaints review meeting.
- 8.3 During 2017/18 123 Customer Complaint Satisfaction Surveys were issued, with 32 being returned. This represents a return rate of 26% for the year.

How easy was it to make your complaint?

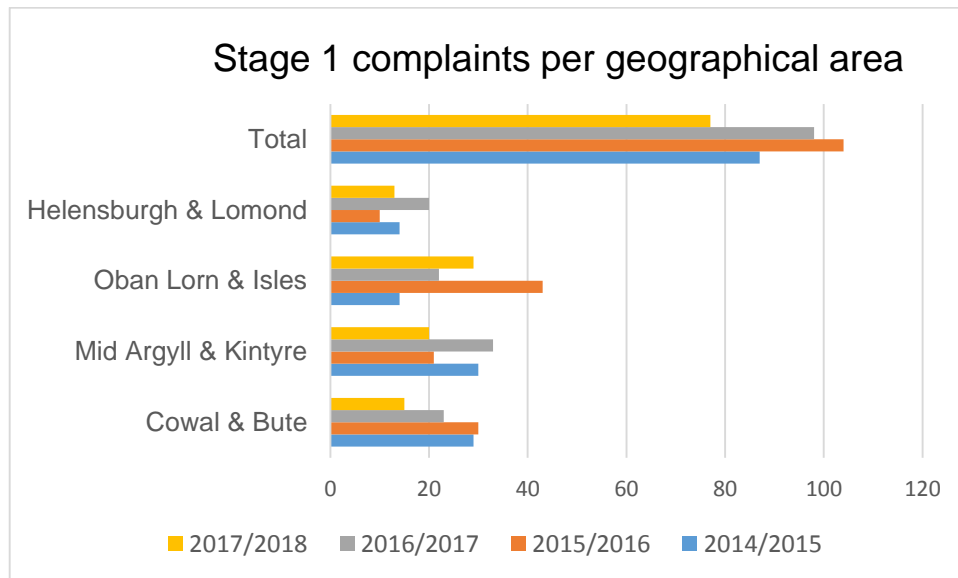


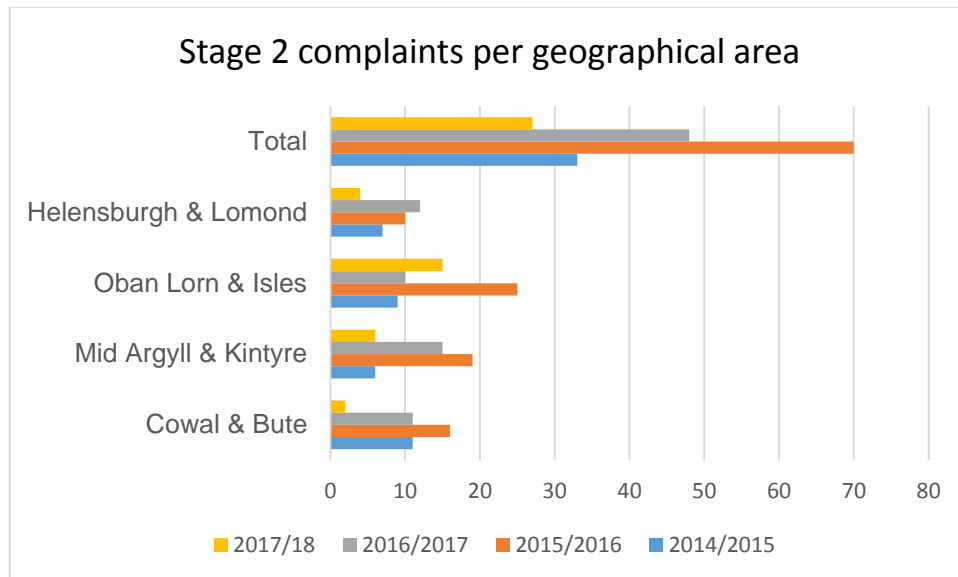
How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the following aspects of the complaints service?





Section 9 Complaints by geographical area





We have the greatest number of stage 2 complaints from the Bute and Cowal area and the smallest number from customers residing within the Mid Argyll and Kintyre area.

Section 10 Compensation and goodwill payments

Since 2015, we are now logging centrally any compensation awards offered and reasons for these. For 2017/18 we paid out approximately £4,579.

Section 11 Learning from complaints

The internal database used to log and monitor complaints was updated in February 2015 to capture learning from complaints. We have been working together with our colleagues in other housing associations to determine and develop the best way to record and report upon the lessons learned from complaints as this process is still relatively new.

For the reporting year 2017/18, we recorded 102 lessons learnt, mainly from complaints that are upheld as they typically identify a potential need for improvement in our service.

Some examples of lessons learned for the 2017/18 reporting year are as follows:

- Better explanation to be provided when we are giving an outcome, ensuring staff use the correct Stage 2 outcome letter template and consider training more staff in the use of Data Loggers
- Ensure wiring of meters is correctly installed
- Ensure that consistent message is given to enquiries and policy and procedure followed
- Ensure correspondence is answered timeously
- Agree with tenants scope of access when installs are undertaken and explain what is required and what is and isn't possible
- Staff to record appropriately all discussions with prospective tenants to avoid misunderstandings and not to make personal recommendations of local contractors

- Be more watchful of timescales and understand the need to progress things further and faster and agree regular updates
- Direct Debit part of Rent Arrears procedure to be reviewed
- Always have identification cards while carrying out duties visiting tenants
- Review how information is passed between departments to ensure that our service is improved. Ensure property at lettable standard prior to tenant moving in
- Administrative practice across all areas must be consistent
- Ensure decanted tenants are provided with regular and set updates
- Any faults with system to be reported to Abris and staff kept up to date with the process to be followed in the interim to ensure no applicants miss out on properties
- For future projects, ensure the contractor(s) are adhering to the standards we expect towards our tenants and other parties whilst working for ACHA
- Consideration to be given to future works and possible notification. Can't be done for all jobs but if we know these are very noisy work we can consider carding neighbour
- Where floorcoverings are removed a subsequent inspection must determine that the flooring is suitable for re-letting in current condition
- Push harder on longer outstanding complicated repairs to ensure they don't drift
- Staff should explain what services are provided with a property and ensure that the lease is correct regarding this
- Ensure accurate recording of appointments and good communication with Tenants
- Tenancy offer letter needed to be amended and this has been done
- look to be creative to resolve issues
- All have been advised and reminded of the need to pay more attention diagnosing correctly.

Section 12 Compliments recording

For 2017/18, we recorded 22 compliments:

- Tenant phoned to praise contractors work following new heating and rewire installation and commented on the tidiness of their home following the installation. (Bute and Cowal)
- Tenant contacted, on behalf of himself and his wife, to say `Thank You` for the new roof and exterior cladding to their home. They stated that the men doing the work have been very quick, tidy very professional in the finish left and the carbon foot print will be slashed with the insulation that has been applied. The tenants heating bills will be next to nothing now and it was very satisfying to see all the work being done. (Helensburgh and Lomond)
- Tenant contacted with regards to the sheltered housing laundry to say `Thank you very much` for giving a clear answer to such a long drawn out problem. Well done, I'm sure all tenants will look forward to rewiring and the new machines. (Bute and Cowal)
- Note received to say `Thank You for your help`, the organisation and involvement in making the whole process for our tenant to be decanted during the period of required

repairs at her home a positive one. Staff couldn't have been any more helpful and it was very much appreciated by our tenant. (Helensburgh and Lomond)

- Message received to thank staff for all they did for the tenant and all the support provided to help with securing a tenancy. Our tenant really appreciated it and couldn't thank staff enough for all their effort and hard work. Our tenant confirmed that the move will really help her physically and mentally, and hopes that her mobility improves and she can get out more. She states that she really enjoyed our staff talking with her and invites staff to drop by anytime they are in the area for a cuppa and chat. (Helensburgh and Lomond)
- Tenant wished to say that a fantastic job was made of their new kitchen ceiling. Following the work, the kitchen was also tidied up. Our tenant reports that our tradesmen were superstars. (Mid Argyll and Kintyre)
- Tenant had a new kitchen fitted and wished to say how pleased they were with it. The workmen were very pleasant and helpful. They were tidy workers and the whole job was done in four days. Our tenant cannot thank the Contractor's workers enough and for ACHA for authorising the work. (Mid Argyll and Kintyre)
- Compliment from unknown person, during the rent consultation, who stated they were very satisfied with the present service which is as daylight after darkness compared with the former landlords.
- `Thank you` note received from tenant, saying `Thank you so much for all your help and all you've done for me. I really appreciate it. Have a lovely Christmas and a wonderful new year. (Note itself was pre-printed with 'There's no other way to say it, there's nothing else to do, but send this grateful message, filled with thanks for you. You're Wonderful!' (Bute and Cowal)
- The daughter of our tenant contacted us to say that she is based in the USA and feels her mum now needs a bit more support in her daily living, tenant has sight and hearing impairment but was adamant she would not go into residential care. Daughter was shown around our sheltered housing complex which she thought was perfect for her mum and met her mum's needs very well. Tenant will be 101 years young in January. (Bute and Cowal)
- Tenant provided her thanks to all the staff who carried out the Air Source Heating Pump installation to her property. She was very complimentary with regard to all aspects of the install. She is absolutely delighted with the savings she is now making.
- Tenant provided `Thanks` to staff for the time taken looking into an Anti-Social Behaviour complaint - thank you to both members of staff for the wholly professional and extremely empathetic way the matter was handled in both letter and telephone. (Bute and Cowal)
- Tenant sent a letter in say `Thank You` to a member of staff and her lovely staff for being very helpful and caring. (Helensburgh and Lomond)
- Tenants contacted us regarding an underfloor heating installation to say thanks again for all the work carried out at their home it was really appreciated. We have a positive 26c in the living room with no heating on, that is amazing. The under floor insulation in the house is great and a very efficient energy saving idea. The concrete floors are no longer cold to the touch. With his disability he hates being cold.

Thanks again for doing this innovative addition to our house carbon foot print cut to pieces, obliterated.

- Contacted to say a huge thank you to our employee who works in Lochgilphead, who stopped at the side of the road after their car skidded off the road, to check if they were okay and drove them to the local police station. Employee was so lovely and helped us out a huge deal.
- Correspondence from tenant following a burst boiler to say that he wished to extend his grateful thanks. Both ACHA and AHFA staff in Oban and Lochgilphead have all been extremely helpful, organising the different tradesmen required. But, most of all I would like to praise the plumbers who were real heroes, working like trojans from dawn to dusk 5 long days repairing the damage, installing a new stove and rectifying serious structural defects. Nothing was too much trouble and they were meticulous and precise in all that they did and extremely clean, tidy and efficient and the very best ACHA/AHFA tradesmen I have come across. Also complimented the comprehensive response he received with regard to his concerns regarding proposed external cladding following the Grenfell Tower tragedy. (Lorn and the Isles)
- Tenant emailed to say that underfloor insulation had been installed to his home and commenting "WOW what a fantastic team you have". The tenant reported excellent communication from the onset. Great work carried out, by a clearly competent team and his house was left better than it was when you came. The team was so informative and respectful. Tenant was so impressed. Never have I had the pleasure of having work done by such professionals! Better than a great job, thanks very much guys".
- Customer contacted to say that they run a group of local volunteers named 'Shoresweepers', who help to maintain Graham's Point 'park' in Kilmun. They were recently nominated, then assessed by 'Beautiful Scotland' for their 'It's your neighbourhood' scheme. A date was given for the assessment, and knowing that ACHA kindly cut the grass on this area, customer spoke to local office asking her to ensure that the grass cutting was carried out just prior to the assessment date. Thanks provided to the staff who provided kind assistance on behalf of ACHA. Group received a report from 'Beautiful Scotland', earning an impressive level 4 (out of 5) grading! (Bute and Cowal)
- Tenant made contact to thank everyone involved in getting their building looking great! Since their initial meeting at Lamont House in Helensburgh on 08/11/16 things certainly took arms and legs and moved forward quickly regarding improvements to the building. The transformation in such a short time makes our building stand out and could only have happened with our owner and tenant partnership. Tenant also wished to mention the brilliant painters who worked all day from arriving before 08.00 and done a great job, and also for the fantastic work providing a brilliant job on the roof. (Helensburgh and Lomond)
- Tenant reported that they recently had a visit from a staff member to discuss the recent issues the tenant had raised in relation to ongoing problems they had experienced with their neighbour. The tenant just wanted to say that the staff member was very helpful in relation to the on-going issues raised and that he was so understanding of what the tenant had to go through these past few months. Tenant

also added their admiration of housing staff who have dealt with the complaints with high standard of service. (Helensburgh and Lomond)

- Tenant wrote in to say thanks for all the help given over the outside inspection of the house and subsequently the problem in the bathroom. The workmen of the company doing the refurbishment have been excellent - so hard working, nothing has been too much trouble - even bringing in tenants shopping during their lunch break. All has been appreciated. Any problem however small or large had immediate attention. Well done to all the ACHA team. (Bute and Cowal)
- Tenant wrote in to say thank you to craftsmen who recently replaced the windows. They turned what could have been a stressful situation for an old lady into a pleasant one and worked both quietly and effectively. (Mid Argyll and Kintyre)

Section 13 SPSO benchmarking and self-assessment indicators

The SPSO in conjunction with CIH, HouseMark, and the Scottish Housing Network developed a range of high level indicators for monitoring complaints. These indicators provide the basis for carrying out self-assessment and benchmarking activities with other social landlords.

A number of the SPSO benchmarking and self-assessment indicators are ones that are reported annually as part of the Scottish Social Housing Charter Indicator Description
Total number of complaints received from social rented stock per thousand units
Number and % of complaints responded to in full at Stage 1 and Stage 2 that relate to equalities issues
Average time in working days for a full response to complaints at each stage
Measure of customer satisfaction with the complaints service
Measures on reporting and learning from complaints

Section 14 Unacceptable actions

Argyll Community Housing Association Ltd has an Unacceptable Actions by Complainants Policy.

This Policy sets out our approach to the relatively few complainants whose actions or behaviour we consider unacceptable. The term complainant includes anyone acting on behalf of a complainant or who contacts us in connection with a complaint.

This year restriction of contact under the terms of the policy was not placed on any complainants.

Section 15 Final overview / going forwards

This report has provided a detailed review of how well we have performed during the 2017/18 reporting year.

During 2017/18, we focussed on logging and monitoring compliments, logging and monitoring learning outcomes from complaints, and logging and monitoring comments or suggestions submitted from Customer Complaint Satisfaction Survey results.

We hope by analysing these areas further, we can address a wide range of common issues or causes of complaints, by learning from and amending our services to further meet customer needs.



Argyll Community Housing Association Limited.
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