

OVERVIEW OF COMPLAINTS RECEIVED - ANNUAL UPDATE

Executive Summary

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed that it would be helpful to receive a regular report giving brief details of formal complaints received by the Council. This would enable the Committee to identify whether there are any common themes arising from the complaints. If so, the Committee could then consider whether it should scrutinise the area(s) of activity identified.

This report sets out brief details of complaints received between 1 January 2022 and 31 December 2022. Appendix 1 details the complaints received by Woking Borough Council and Appendix 2 sets out information of complaints received by Joint Waste Solutions and Appendix 3 sets out information of complaints received by the Council's Housing.

Recommendations

The Committee is requested to:

RESOLVE That the report be noted.

The Committee has the authority to determine the recommendation set out above.

Background Papers:

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 It has been agreed that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should have a regular report giving brief details of formal complaints received by the Council. This would enable the Committee to identify whether there are any common themes arising from the complaints. If so, the Committee could then consider whether it should scrutinise the area(s) of activity identified.

2.0 The Council's Complaints Procedure

- 2.1 A copy of the Council's Complaints Procedure can be found on the Council's website at:-

[Customer care and feedback | Woking Borough Council](#)

- 2.2 A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction. It could relate to:

- A failure to deliver a service.
- A delay in providing a service.
- A poor quality of service.
- A failure to comply with Council policies, or
- The conduct or behaviour of a member of staff.

- 2.3 Not everything is considered a complaint. For example, a first time request for a service. The complaints procedure will not apply to any correspondence received in respect of planning applications and the merits of the application. These will be treated as objections to the planning application in question.

- 2.4 The complaints process was reviewed in 2022 and the process was amended. When a complaint is received, it is allocated to a manager within the relevant service. This is called Stage 1. The complaint is acknowledged within five working days of receipt, and details of the Officer who will investigate it are provided to the complainant. Subject to any exceptional complexity about the complaint, the target date for a response to be provided is twenty working days. If this is not possible, the complainant will be advised of the date by which he/she will receive a full reply.

- 2.5 There is a right of appeal to Stage 2 if the complainant has reasons to believe that the complaint should be reconsidered. In order to proceed to Stage 2 the reasons for a reconsideration must fit the specified Stage 2 criteria. The following now applies:

- The complainant has 28 days to submit a Stage 2 appeal.
- The review will be undertaken by a member of the Corporate Leadership Team.
- The criteria for a Stage 2 appeal must meet at least one of the following criteria:
 - we made our decision based on inaccurate facts that could change our decision;
 - the complainant has new and relevant information that was not previously available and which might change our decision:
 - we overlooked or misunderstood parts of the complaint or did not take account of relevant information which could change our decision.

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- 2.6 If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome under the Council's Complaints Procedure, he/she can refer the matter to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman or Housing Ombudsman (as appropriate).
- 2.7 If a complaint relates to a service provided by a contractor, the complainant must submit it to the contractor under the contractor's complaints procedure. Once this process has been completed, the complainant can request a review under the Council's Complaints Procedure as outlined above.
- 2.8 Under the Council's Constitution, the following arrangements exist for dealing with decisions of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and Housing Ombudsman:
- (i) The Monitoring Officer deals with compensation payments which are neither disputed nor significant. This is subject to oversight by the Standards and Audit Committee.
 - (ii) Full Council has responsibility for compensation payments which are disputed or significant.

3.0 Complaints received by the Council in 2022

- 3.1 A table containing a summary of the complaints can be found at Appendix 1. Together with a graph illustrating trends and a comparison with complaints received in 2021.
- 3.2 In the period of 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022, the Council received 81 complaints through its Complaints Procedure. The previous year the Council received a total of 93 complaints.
- 3.3 Of the above complaints a total of seventeen (17) complainants have made a request for a review of the original response to their complaint since January 2022.
- 3.4 It should be noted that it would not be appropriate for the Committee to review the circumstances of, or decisions reached in respect of, individual complaints. The purpose of submitting this report is to assist the Committee in identifying possible topic areas for future scrutiny.
- 3.5 It is pleasing to report that there was a decrease in complaints during 2022.
- 3.6 Ombudsman complaints are reported to the Standards and Audit Committee annually.

4.0 Contractor Complaints/ Key Performance Indicators

- 4.1 Joint Waste Solutions have provided an overview of the complaints received in 2022 which is set out for information in Appendix 2. Members had an opportunity to consider some of the Joint Waste Solution complaints at the Committee meeting on 23 January 2023 when Joint Waste made an oral presentation.
- 4.2 The Council's Housing stock has been brought in-house from New Vision Homes. Housing Services have provided an overview of the complaints received in 2022 which is set out for information in Appendix 3.

5.0 Corporate Strategy

- 5.1 This report supports the Corporate Plan and emerging Corporate Strategy. This report into the Council's Corporate Complaints supports both openness and transparency in the Council's governance procedures.

6.0 Implications

6.1 Financial

None.

6.2 Legal

Whilst there are no specific legal implications, it is noted that the Monitoring Officer reviews and assesses the annual complaints and as such is able to ensure the council's powers are being exercised within the required legal parameters.

6.3 Equalities and Human Resources

There are no human resource or training and development implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

7.0 Engagement and Consultation

7.1 It would not be appropriate to undertake a consultation or engagement exercise on the content of this report.

8.0 Conclusions

8.1 Submitting an annual report to the Committee on complaints received will enable the Committee to identify whether there are any common themes arising from the complaints. If so, the Committee could then consider whether it should scrutinise the category or area of activity identified through the data.

REPORT ENDS

Summary of Complaints Received.

Date of Complaint	Summary	Complaint Classification
14.01.22	service provided re being housed in private rent accommodation	Housing
16.01.22	poor case management of planning application	Planning
17.01.22	claiming never received first PCN in post	Parking
02.02.22	behaviour of Parking Attendant in car park	Parking
09.02.22	Council did not provide correct information in pre-application response.	Planning
06.02.22	Band on housing register	Housing
18.02.22	way council tax arrears has been handled, and service from debt collectors	Revenue And Benefits
03.03.22	complaint against Tenancy Support Officer	Housing
10.02.22	Not happy with NVH Stage 2 Response re repairs in house	Housing
08.03.22	complaining about treatment by Council Officers	Housing
07.03.22	Lack of communication re Council Tax bill and added court costs	Revenue And Benefits
08.03.22	Harassment and data breach from NVH	Housing
09.03.22	poor customer service received from council tax department	Revenue And Benefits
17.03.22	complaint re treatment from Benefits team when trying to complete a form.	Revenue And Benefits
21.03.22	Appeal against NVH Stage 2 response	Housing
21.03.22	harassment by neighbour who is a NVH Tenant	Housing
24.03.22	conduct of a member of staff in Building Control	Planning
30.03.22	not happy with communication regarding council tax liability	Revenue And Benefits
23.03.22	Behaviour of WBC staff, re LIAISE Women's Centre	Other
04.04.22	Not content with way subject access request was handled	Legal

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16.04.22	not happy with constant changes to council tax liability	Revenue And Benefits
06.04.22	complaining council did not have legal power to assign lease of property	Legal
26.04.22	Not happy with NVH Stage 2 Response re repairs	Housing
03.05.22	Alleged harassment from staff re monies owing to council	Legal
05.05.22	unhappy with way treatment at polling station by Poll Clerk	Elections
28.04.22	signage around GWP and Heather Farm	Other
05.05.22	claiming non-receipt of communication of PCN	Parking
16.05.22	not happy with FOI response	Legal
17.05.22	treatment by Rent Office, and staff	Housing
23.05.22	Council Tax records not updated correctly	Revenue And Benefits
23.05.22	decision not to allow to join the housing register	Housing
25.05.22	conduct of staff in housing	Housing
04.06.22	Continuous leak reported but not actioned	Housing
06.06.22	Planning application - officers appear to be showing an unfair prejudice	Planning
07.06.22	Dispute over funeral funding relating to resident with no next of kin.	Other
09.06.22	Lack of communication over delayed fencing repairs	Housing
12.06.22	carpark payment machines not working	Parking
13.06.22	communication from Benefits team	Revenue And Benefits
07.06.22	Review of FOI request	Legal
16.06.22	advice from Building Inspector re newest building regulations	Planning
17.06.22	communication re dangerous tree	Other
20.06.22	handling of housing register application	Housing
21.06.22	Behaviour of Parking Enforcement Officer	Parking
23.06.22	alleging lack of duty of care from Mental Health worker	Housing

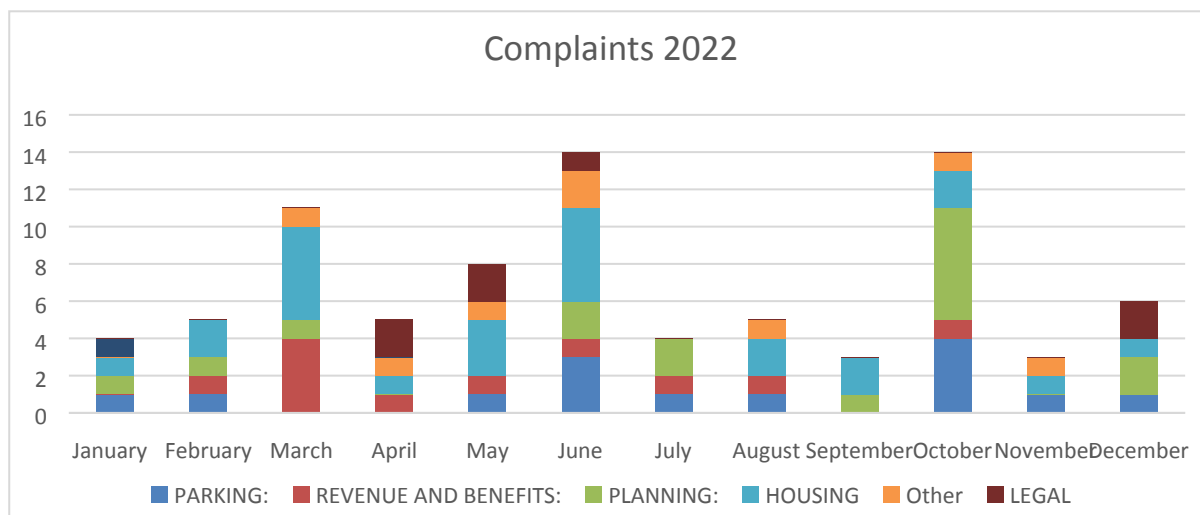
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29.06.22	allegedly staff not acting lawfully following a PCN	Parking
07.07.22	Actions of staff re possible fraud	Planning
10.07.22	lack of responsiveness around planning application	Planning
14.06.22	lack of communication regarding a Party Wall agreement	Housing
21.07.22	lack of communication re council Tax payment	Revenue And Benefits
28.07.22	parking ticket that was issued unfairly	Parking
10.08.22	alleging that council tax court summons was issued with no prior warning	Revenue And Benefits
14.08.22	difficulty in buying visitor parking permits	Parking
12.08.22	homelessness application + eviction notice impacting on mental health	Housing
22.08.22	suspension of the garden waste collection service	Other
31.08.22	alleged Harassment and theft from Council officers	Housing
12.09.22	not happy with how Planning application was handled	Planning
12.09.22	damp coming through the adjoining wall from neighbouring property	Housing
14.09.22	thinks is inappropriately housed due to disability	Housing
03.10.22	claiming original PCN was never received	Parking
05.10.22	homelessness assessor attitude and way case was handled	Housing
12.10.22	way planning team dealt with a breach of planning query	Planning
13.10.22	received debt collector emails but allege that the named person does not live at the address	Revenue And Benefits
03.10.22	planning application appeals	Planning
10.10.22	claiming had no notification of planning application that was posted	Planning
19.10.22	complaint against Civil Enforcement Officer	Parking
16.10.22	alleged discrimination by Director of Housing	Housing
20.10.22	claimed not been given notice of Planning Application	Planning
15.10.22	Accusation of neglect at Hale End Court	Other

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24.10.22	lack of response from Planning Dept	Planning
28.10.22	Penalty Charge Notice communication	Parking
21.10.22	Operational Permit scheme	Parking
11.11.22	not happy with transfer of tenancy of property	Housing
25.10.22	illegal approval of an 18m 5G mast	Planning
25.11.22	Unhappy with management of Action Surrey Green Jump Scheme	Other
30.11.22	parking enforcement officer	Parking
07.12.22	resident's parking permit expiry/renewal	Parking
12.12.22	staff behaviour in relation to taxi licences	Legal
14.12.22	lack of response following report of problem in flat	Housing
11.12.22	Review of FOI request	Legal
12.12.22	Planning application	Planning
19.12.22	handling of a planning application	Planning

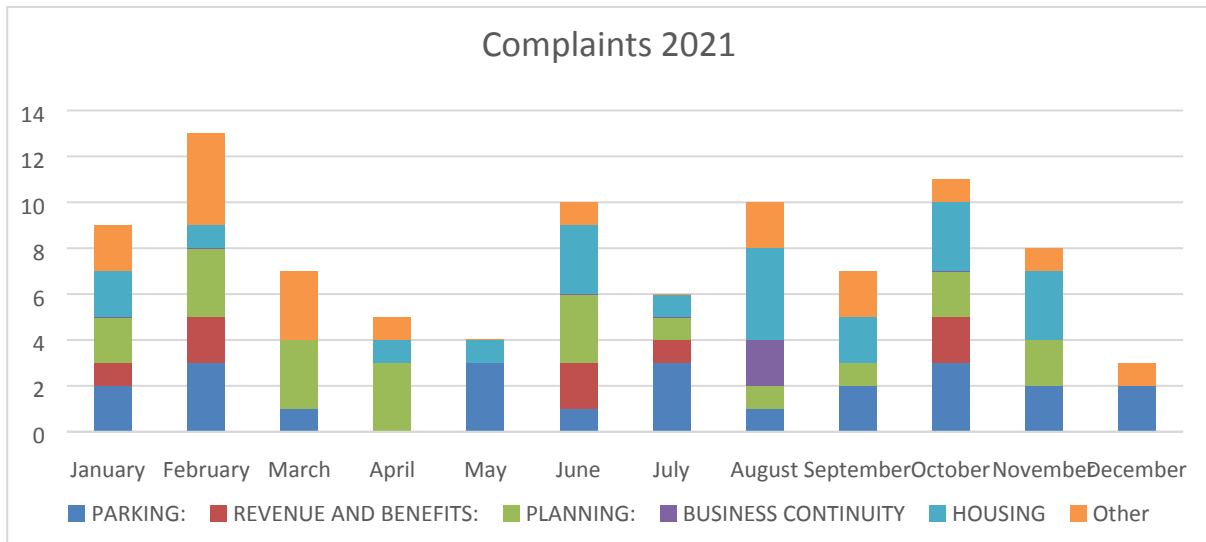
2022 TOTAL:	81
PARKING:	14
REVENUE AND BENEFITS:	11
PLANNING:	16
LEGAL	7
HOUSING	25
Other:	8



Overview of Complaints Received - Annual Update

Comparison Data 2021

2021 Total	93
Parking	23
Revenue And Benefits	8
Planning	21
Business Continuity	2
Housing	21
Other	18



Overview Of The Complaints Received By Joint Waste Solutions

07/01/2022	Repairs: Gas Service	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
04/01/2022	Repairs: Gas Service	Standard of repair
04/01/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
28/01/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Poor communication
07/01/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Poor communication
07/02/2022	Repairs: Gas Service	Standard of repair
07/01/2022	Repairs: Gas Service	Standard of repair
07/01/2022	Repairs: Gas Service	Standard of repair
04/01/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
31/01/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Standard of repair
11/01/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Standard of repair
12/01/2022	Repairs: Gas Service	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
12/01/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
21/03/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Standard of repair
17/01/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Standard of repair
18/01/2022	Housing Management	Poor communication
24/01/2022	Repairs: Gas Service	Standard of repair
28/01/2022	Repairs: Gas Service	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
28/01/2022	Repairs: Gas Service	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
31/01/2022	Repairs: Gas Service	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
31/01/2022	Repairs: Gas Service	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
15/03/2022	Repairs: Gas Service	Standard of repair
02/02/2022	Repairs: Gas Service	Standard of repair
02/02/2022	Repairs: Gas Service	Standard of repair
07/02/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
04/02/2022	Repairs: Gas Service	Repair not completed / Appointment missed

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07/03/2022	Repairs: Gas Service	Standard of repair
08/02/2022	Repairs: Gas Service	Standard of repair
11/02/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
18/02/2022	Repairs: Gas Service	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
18/02/2022	Repairs: Gas Service	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
28/02/2022	Repairs: Gas Service	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
07/03/2022	Repairs: Gas Service	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
28/02/2022	Repairs: Gas Service	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
08/03/2022	Repairs: Gas Service	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
12/04/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
09/03/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
11/03/2022	Repairs: Gas Service	Standard of repair
17/03/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
06/04/2022	Housing Management	Poor communication
22/03/2022	Housing Management	Poor communication
13/06/2022	Housing Management	Conduct (staff)
22/03/2022	Housing Management	Conduct (staff)
28/03/2022	Repairs: Gas Service	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
25/05/2022	Repairs: Gas Service	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
07/04/2022	Repairs: Gas Service	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
14/04/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
09/05/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
13/05/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
13/05/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Standard of repair
23/05/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
26/05/2022	Income Recovery	Conduct (staff)
23/06/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Standard of repair
06/06/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Standard of repair

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25/11/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Standard of repair
23/06/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Standard of repair
30/06/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
11/07/2022	Repairs: Gas Service	Conduct (contractor)
14/07/2022	Housing Management	Conduct (contractor)
18/07/2022	Cleaning	Cleaning standard
28/07/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
19/07/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
29/07/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
01/08/2022	Housing Management	Quality of home
04/08/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
07/09/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
09/08/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
12/08/2022	Housing Management	Fire safety
15/08/2022	Asset Management	Conduct (contractor)
15/08/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
16/08/2022	Housing Management	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
01/08/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
22/08/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
23/08/2022	Housing Management	Policy/procedures
23/08/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
24/08/2022	Repairs: Gas Service	Standard of repair
25/08/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
07/09/2022	Housing Management	Poor communication
17/10/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
09/09/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
13/09/2022	Housing Management	Quality of home
20/09/2022	Housing Management	Conduct (staff)

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10/10/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
27/10/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
14/10/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
21/10/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
25/10/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
27/10/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
02/11/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
18/11/2022	Housing Management	Conduct (staff)
23/11/2022	General	Poor communication
23/11/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
24/11/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Poor communication
25/11/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
23/12/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Standard of repair
25/11/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Standard of repair
29/11/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
29/11/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
06/12/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Poor communication
06/12/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
07/12/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Quality of home
12/12/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Quality of home
13/12/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Quality of home
13/12/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Standard of repair
13/12/2022	Housing Management	Conduct (staff)
14/12/2022	Housing Management	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
14/12/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
14/12/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Standard of repair
14/12/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Quality of home
16/12/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Conduct (contractor)

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19/12/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
19/12/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Standard of repair
19/12/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Standard of repair
20/12/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
20/12/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
21/12/2022	Housing Management	Conduct (contractor)
21/12/2022	Income Recovery	Conduct (staff)
21/12/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
22/12/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
22/12/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Conduct (contractor)
22/12/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Repair not completed / Appointment missed
23/12/2022	Repairs: Day to Day	Standard of repair

Overview of Housing Complaints Received January 2022 to December 2022.

- 1.1 Between 1 January and 31 December 2022 the housing team received 122 expressions of dissatisfaction. Of these, 41 were received by New Vision Homes and 81 by WBC. 0 were dealt with as service failures 102 were dealt with at Stage 1 and 20 were dealt with at Stage 2.
- 1.2. Of the 122 expressions of dissatisfaction; 63 were related to missed appointments and repairs not being completed, a further 28 were related to the standard of the repair. 13 were related to staff conduct (7 to WBC staff, 6 to contractors) and 9 were related to poor communication. 6 were related to the quality of their home and cleaning standards, fire safety concerns and our policies and procedures all had 1 complaint.
- 1.3 The repairs process was the primary source of dissatisfaction for 100 of the cases, 38 of these 100 cases were related to previous contractors Breyer and TSG, the remaining 62 relate to the new contractor Mountjoy.
- 1.4 No service failures were logged.
- 1.5 The average time taken to deal with Stage 1 complaints was 22.59 days. 64 cases were not responded to within the target of 14 days. The top reasons cited for their slippage were not receiving information from the contractor (42 cases) and workload pressures (12 cases).
- 1.6 The average time taken to deal with the Stage 2 cases was 44.15 days. 17 cases were not responded to within the target of 14 days. The top reasons cited for their slippage was workload pressures (10 cases) and not receiving information from the contractor (6 cases)

