



**Delivering an
exceptional
housing service**



**Trends arising from complaints, comments and
dissatisfaction during quarter 2**

1. TRENDS ARISING FROM COMPLAINTS, COMMENTS AND DISSATISFACTION DURING QUARTER 2

As mentioned above the main underlying issue arising from feedback throughout this quarter related to delays. Poor quality of work and poor customer service were the next two highest concerns. Below these issues are explored in more detail:

i) **Delay in providing service**

Repairs

Over 80% of feedback about delays in this quarter related to the repairs service. Some of the delays were due to lockdown and the effect this had on all jobs once the restrictions were relaxed. In most cases tenants were understanding of the issues and were satisfied once an appointment was arranged therefore such complaints were not, in most cases, upheld.

However, some delays related to the time taken to raise follow on work, as requests from operatives were not always picked up in a timely manner. Some tenants who made contact, several times, regarding follow on work resorted to providing feedback or dissatisfaction through surveys to get their repairs progressed. It was clear that the backlog and ways of working to tackle this, whilst at the same time taking reports of and appointing new repairs, contributed to this. However, this will continue to be monitored to ensure there is improvement in this area.

Tenancy Management

Tenants felt they were not hearing back from their Housing/Rents Officers in a timely manner and on one occasion a tenant raised feedback twice about the same issue.

Another tenant complained about the delay in resolving an insurance issue and what was perceived as a lack of support. Unfortunately, when insurance companies became involved this can cause delay, however it was clear that the tenant concerned had been kept as informed as much as possible.

ii) **Poor quality work / damage**

Repairs

Tenants raised 13 complaints about the quality of work carried out by Bernicia and/or its contractors in this quarter. This resulted in further appointments being needed to inspect and complete repairs.

Complaints were also received from tenants requesting compensation for damage to decoration or flooring following repairs. Where this has been due to wear and tear the customers are advised to approach their own insurer, however there has been one occasion where a contractor did not take care and new flooring was required.

Technical Services

There have been two complaints received this quarter about the quality of work carried out by contractors working on our behalf.

Estate Services

Just under half of the feedback raised about quality of work related to estate services. Tenants felt that the estates had not been maintained correctly. On investigation this was mostly due to contractors not being able to carry out work due to the lockdown restrictions. Once the contractors were able to return to schemes work was progressed as quickly as possible. However due to safety requirements and backlogs there was some unavoidable delays in attending sites.

In this quarter there has also been a higher than usual number of queries concerning the cut and drop policy which was made more obvious due to time between cuts. Nearly 40% of these queries came from tenants in the same area as their queries were being logged as feedback, rather than the policy being explained. Once tenants were contacted, it was clear that the majority just wanted updates as to when work would be carried out or clarification of the policy. There were a couple of tenants who stated they were still not happy with the policy but accepted explanations and did not take matters any further. These issues were brought to the attention of the Housing Manager and the Housing Officer concerned has since been reminded that they should be explaining Bernicia's policy in these instances.

It must be pointed out that we are not attempting to prevent tenants raising complaints if they wish to do so, as tenants have the right to raise a complaint. However, Housing Officers are expected to address or help resolve issues for tenants without having to go down the complaint route.

iii) **Poor customer service**

Repairs

Appointments were missed by tenants as they were not called and did not receive texts to alert them that an appointment had been arranged. The schedulers at the PMD have been reminded recently that they must call tenants to arrange appointments and, also, to ensure letters/texts are issued. This primarily occurs when appointments cannot be made at the first point of contact or where work is being reappointed or rearranged.

Tenants made contact due to operatives not arriving for appointments. Initially while the backlog of repairs was being dealt with through the triage process, the Scheduling team were unable to monitor these. However, going forward they will be starting this again to ensure they are communicating with tenants when operatives are running late, or the appointment needs to be changed.

Both of these issues were also highlighted through satisfaction surveys during the quarter.

Technical Services

There have been 4 complaints raised about the way in which property condition surveys have been conducted by a contractor. One related to the surveyor not wearing PPE however the other three related to the surveyor's insistence on entering the property when tenants had asked them to come back another time. This has been raised with the contractor to ensure it does not happen again.

iv) **Staff member issues**

Repairs

Complaints were made about the attitude of inspectors / surveyors and operatives while at tenants' homes. In some cases, tenants did not like what they were being told about what work was needed. However, in some instances the member of staff could have managed the situation better and Managers have raised this with the individuals involved. Tenants continue to raise complaints about parking and driving of Bernicia vehicles by repairs operatives. This is addressed with the individuals concerned and raised during toolbox talks.

A small number of tenants have expressed concern about the lack of masks/gloves worn by operatives when they have visited their homes as they were shielding or had health concerns. Managers have been made aware of the individuals where they could be identified so that this can be raised with them.

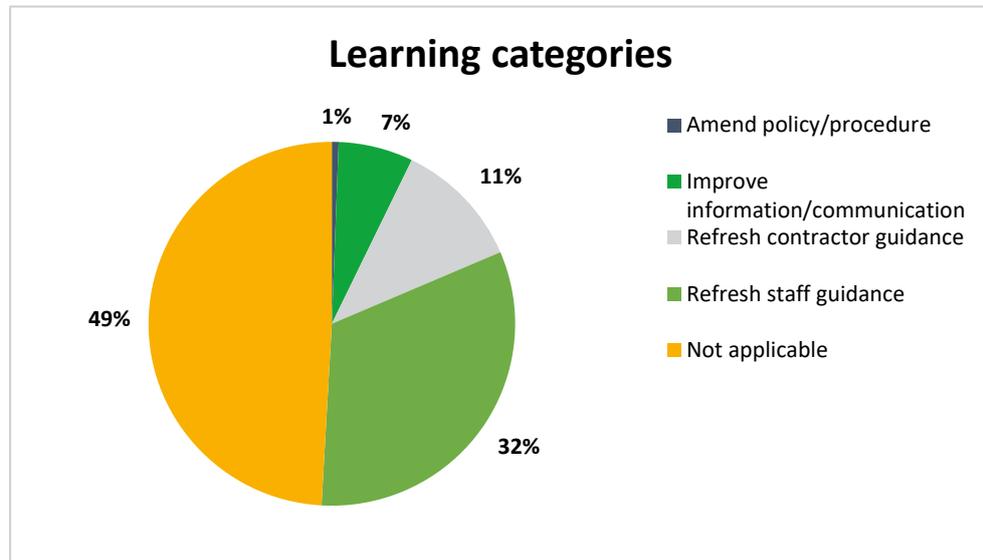
Customer Contact

During this quarter three tenants have raised complaints about the way they were spoken to by call handlers. In one case the tenant objected to the fact the call was ended.

In this case the Contact Advisor had followed procedure on terminating a call. The tenant was reminded of this when their complaint was discussed and, also confirmed in writing that we operate a zero-tolerance policy in relation to aggressive behaviour towards staff.

2. LEARNING IDENTIFIED

Section 6 above links in with the learning that was identified across all service. The chart below shows the principal categories these fall under:



The majority of learning from complaints is to simply remind staff and contractors of the policies and procedures already in place to ensure these are followed for example:

- Ensure that tenants are made aware of appointments that are arranged and are kept up to date if the operative is running late or are not able to attend.
- Ensure that follow on jobs are raised in a timely manner
- All staff to be professional when speaking to tenants whether face to face or on the phone.
- Operatives and contractors to clear up after they have completed a repair.
- Inspections to be carried out carefully to ensure that repairs needed are raised and carried out in a timely manner.
- All operatives to park and drive carefully and considerately; adhering to the law at all times.
- Housing Officers to explain policy to tenants carefully and try to achieve a positive resolution, as opposed to signposting / raising feedback.