

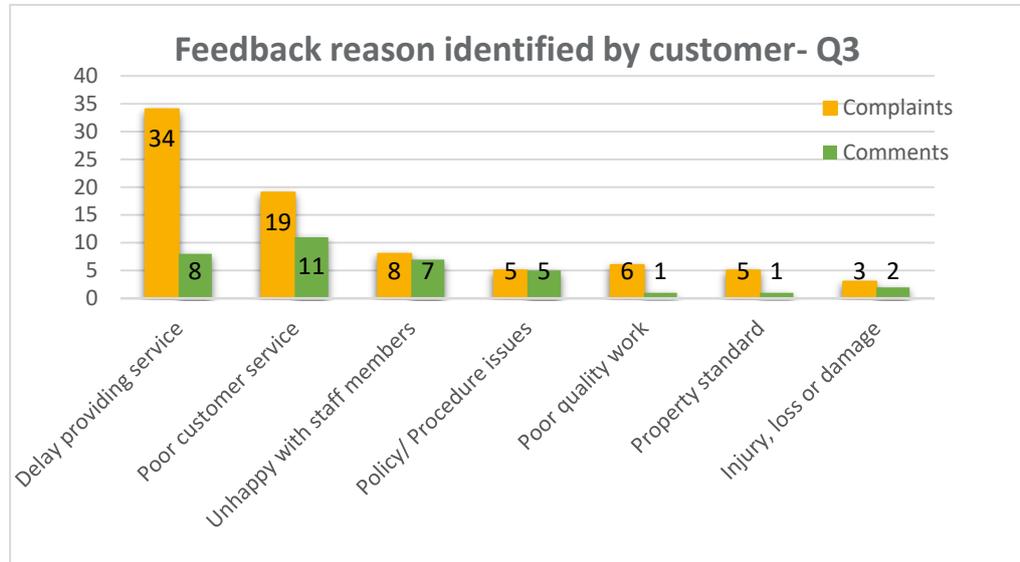


**Delivering an
exceptional
housing service**

**Trends arising from complaints, comments and
dissatisfaction during quarter 3**

1. TRENDS ARISING FROM COMPLAINTS, COMMENTS AND DISSATISFACTION DURING QUARTER 3

The following graph shows the reasons for complaints and comments during quarter 3.



After delay in providing a service, poor customer service is the second highest reason tenants made contact. This is echoed in the information gathered from satisfaction surveys which is explored in more detail below.

i) Delays in providing service

Repairs

Over 90% of complaints and comments were concerning delays in this quarter related to the repairs service. There was still some repairs that were unfortunately outstanding from the first lockdown which tenants highlighted as a concern.

As last quarter there continued to be an issue with follow on jobs not being raised in a timely manner resulting in tenants chasing updates, often on more than one occasion.

Complaints were also made by tenants because operatives had attended more than once to take measurements or identify materials needed. This appeared to be due to a lack of communication or not enough detail added to the job by an operative, such as the specific materials required, how much time was needed or whether it was a two-person job or required working at height. This meant that repeated appointments had to be made without any work being carried out, leading to frustration especially when people had taken time off work.

ii) **Poor customer service**

Repairs

There were instances when the Customer Contact Team were unable to arrange appointments for tenants, usually because they were urgent or because they were more complex jobs. In these cases, the repair was passed to the repair schedulers to arrange an appointment with the tenant. Several tenants stated that no one called them, so they missed the appointment as they were not aware of it. This has been highlighted to the schedulers who have been asked to make sure they contact tenants by phone to arrange appointments.

There were occasions when tenants did not answer or couldn't be contacted by phone and in these circumstances a text alert or letter should be issued. There was evidence that this was still not happening therefore the first time some tenants were aware of an appointment was when an automatic reminder was issued the night before the appointment. This will be improved by ensuring alerts whether they are texts or letters are issued when appointments are made. This will reduce missed appointments and therefore operatives time would not be wasted and tenants would not be frustrated.

Tenants also mentioned that some repair operatives and contractors were not calling ahead. This was an issue that had previously been raised at toolbox talks however more recently issues have been raised with individuals to ensure that they were aware of and comply with service standards.

Tenants also raised issues about lack of communication and call backs not being responded to. If the Customer Contact Team were unable to provide an update, a forward order note was sent asking that a member of the repairs team call the tenant back. Some tenants who raised complaints or comments explained they had not been called and felt ignored. High volumes of work within the repairs team undoubtedly contributed to such issues during quarter 3.

Customer Contact

There were complaints raised about the way in which repairs had been processed by Contact Advisors which resulted in problems with appointments. In one instance an Advisor raised an appointment on a test system in error and in another instance the tenant had not been made aware of the timescale for an emergency repair. The Customer Contact Team Leader highlighted these matters with the individuals involved and with the team.

iii) Poor quality work / damage

Repairs

A number of tenants requested compensation for time off work or damage to personal belongings during the quarter. Compensation for time taken off work is not provided for within the compensation policy. One particular tenant wanted compensation even though the repair had been attended to and completed as arranged.

In relation to cases of damage, if this was not caused by Bernicia, tenants are referred to their home contents insurance provider. Compensation was provided in three instances this quarter where it was apparent accidental damage had been caused during the course of work.

In three cases tenants complained about the quality of work however only one of these was upheld. In the other two cases the tenants wanted something that we do not offer. On those occasions the repairs were inspected and found to be of a suitable standard.

iv) Staff

Repairs

Complaints were received about the attitude of inspectors/surveyors and repair operatives while at tenants' homes. In some cases, tenants did not like what they were being told about work needed. There was also evidence that a small number of tenants felt they could speak to members of staff in an abrupt or rude manner but took exception when they were challenged on this.

There was, however, incidents when members of staff could have handled conversations and situations better. On such occasions, Managers have been informed so that they can bring this to the individual's attention to ensure they reflect and learn from such situations.

Tenants continued to raise complaints about parking and driving of Bernicia vehicles by repair operatives. This was addressed with the individuals concerned to prevent further incidents.

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

Other Departments

In this quarter, the Retirement Team and the Leasehold Team both, received a complaint about the attitude of a staff member and two tenants made contact about the attitude of Customer Contact Advisors. In each instance the Manager or Team Leader was made aware of the matter.

v) Property Standard

Tenancy Management

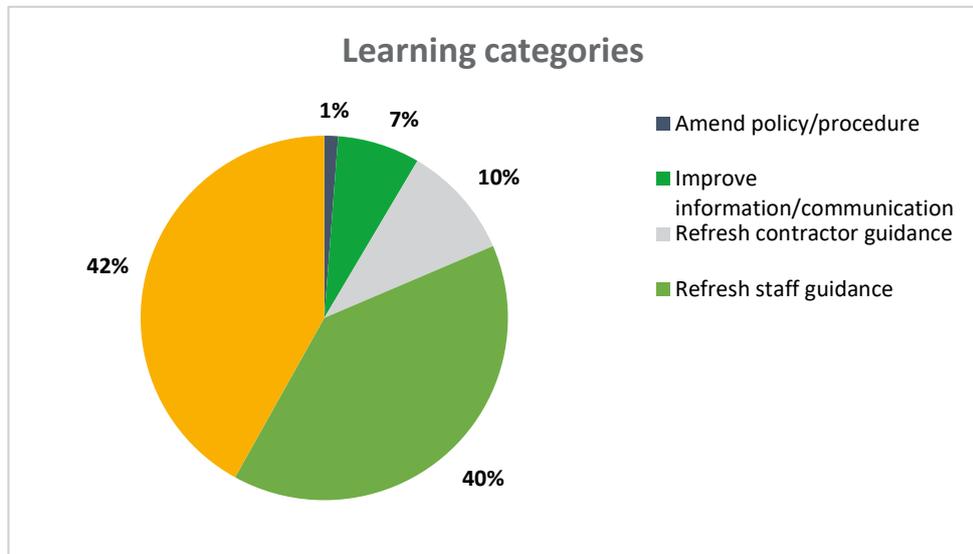
Six complaints and comments were received in relation to the condition of property at relet, as some new tenants felt that on closer inspection the property was not fit to let. In two cases, new tenants raised issues about the decoration of the property. It was explained that this was tenant responsibility and it was noted that this had not been mentioned at sign up.

In other cases, new tenants raised issues due to the number of repairs needed after they had moved into the property. In some instances, the issues would only have been noticed once someone was living in the property. However, there was also evidence of some repairs being missed by the void team such as previous tenants' belongings left in lofts and damage to fixtures and fittings that should have been addressed when the property was empty. Training around the relet standard will be considered.

Several tenants have also mentioned in satisfaction surveys that they had problems with the gas and electricity supply when they first moved in. Some related to gas uncapping but other issues related to problems caused by key meters in the property.

2. LEARNING IDENTIFIED

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



The main learning from feedback is to simply remind staff and contractors of the policies, procedures and standards already in place to ensure these are followed for example to ensure that:

- Tenants are made aware of appointments arranged.
- Tenants are kept up to date if the operative is running late or not able to attend.
- Follow on jobs are raised in a timely manner
- All staff are professional when speaking to tenants whether face to face or on the phone.