



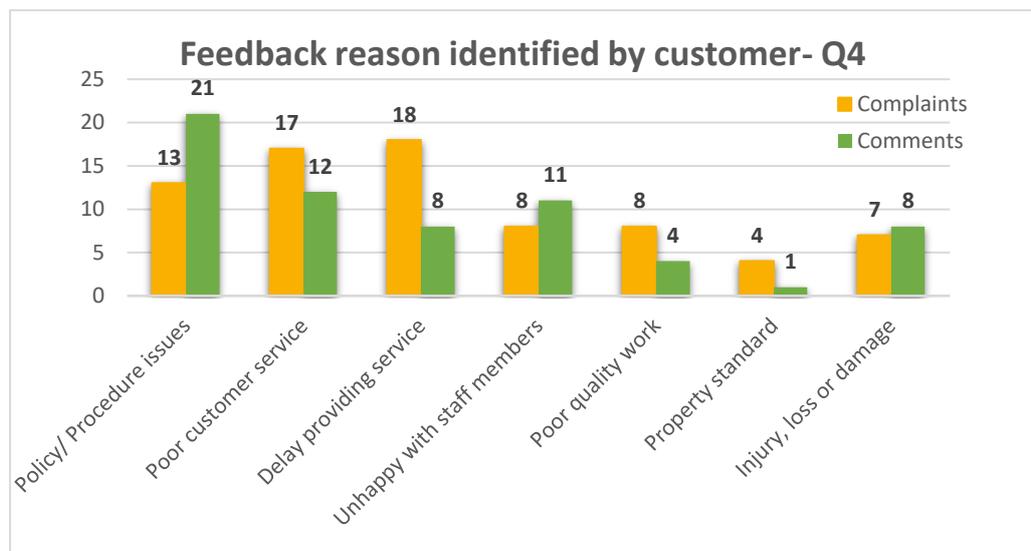
**Delivering an  
exceptional  
housing service**

**Trends arising from complaints, comments and  
dissatisfaction during quarter 4**

## 1. TRENDS ARISING FROM COMPLAINTS, COMMENTS AND DISSATISFACTION DURING QUARTER 4

As mentioned above the main underlying issue arising from feedback so far this year has related to delays, however in quarter 4 the main issue related to policy and procedure. This has been due, in part, to tenants being dissatisfied with the decision to only carry out emergency repairs during January, February and early March to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

The following graph shows the reasons for complaints and comments during quarter 4.



Poor customer service is the second highest reason tenants made contact during quarter 4 which follows the trend of the year so far. This is echoed in the information gathered from satisfaction surveys which has been explored in more detail below.

### i) Policy / procedure issues

There has been an increase in the number of complaints this quarter relating to policy issues. Just over a third of these concerned the repairs service as tenants either did not agree with the decision to only carry out emergency repairs or felt that their repair should be classified as an emergency.

Other contacts were received because tenants did not agree with the allocations policy, the rent policy, the policy on fence repairs or in some cases terms in the tenancy or leasehold agreement that they had signed. Of the cases logged as complaints none of these were upheld.

ii) **Poor customer service**

Feedback in quarter 4 has continued to highlight an issue with tenants not being aware of the appointment arranged for a repair. This was not particular to one team as Housing Officers, Schedulers and Customer Service Advisors can all raise repairs. If the person raising the appointment is unable to contact the tenant by phone, they should notify the tenant another way. The issue seems to be that, although, reminder text alerts are automatically issued the night before and the morning of the appointment they are not automatically issued when the job is first raised. The person raising the job needs to issue this manually and unfortunately this is not being done consistently.

**Repair Team**

Complaints relating to communication include:

- Appointments being cancelled or changed at short notice without any contact. This can lead to frustrations when people have taken time off work or changed plans to be available.
- Requesting call-backs for updates about repairs. In most cases the requests are processed via the QL IT system but this does not highlight the request so often it is not seen until it is too late. In some cases, the Inspector or Manager concerned has been emailed and it is clear at this point that they have taken action, however they have failed to contact the tenant to provide an update.

**Contact Team**

Tenants made contact during the quarter as they have not been satisfied with the information provided by Contact Advisors. In most of the cases, the information provided was accurate, however tenants did not agree with this. In some cases, there were some minor training issues that the Team Leader fed back to the individual or team.

iii) **Delays in providing service**

**Repairs**

Approximately 85% of contacts concerning delays during quarter 4 relate to the repairs service. There have been some repairs that were unfortunately raised at the end of last year that were delayed due to the third lockdown. In such cases the work was arranged as soon as the repair service returned to normal.

There continues to be an issue with follow on jobs not being raised in a timely manner resulting in tenants chasing for updates, often on more than one occasion. It is the intention that operatives will soon be able to raise standard follow on work directly via their handhelds, therefore reducing the pressure on the schedulers who can then concentrate on the complex follow on appointments when multiple days or operatives are required.

There have also been complaints made by tenants because operatives have attended more than once but the work has not been carried out. This usually happens when a different operative is allocated the follow-on work. To prevent this, schedulers try to allocate the job back to the original operative wherever possible.

iv) **Poor quality work / damage**

**Repairs**

Several tenants requested compensation for time off work or damage to personal belongings during this quarter. Compensation for time taken off work is not provided for and in most cases the damage to a tenant's belongings was not caused by any negligence by Bernicia operatives. Tenants are informed that they need to claim on their home insurance in these circumstances.

**Assets**

There has been an increase in contacts in quarter 4 about the quality of work carried out by contractors delivering planned works. In all cases the contractor had either just finished the work, but this had not been signed off by Bernicia's Clerk of Works or the contractor was due to return. In each case the tenant was asked to allow the contractor to return to rectify any issues before the work was signed off. Most tenants have agreed to this apart from one who has requested compensation for stress caused.

v) **Staff**

**Repairs Team**

Tenants have contacted us stating they were unhappy with the attitude of some repair operatives. Upon investigation it appears the tenants have not agreed with information provided by operatives. In some cases, the manner of the operatives concerned has not helped the matter and this has been highlighted to the relevant managers to take forward. In most cases this has appeared to be a misunderstanding on the side of both parties, however, in one case a two person visit request has been added to the tenants' record to safeguard staff during future visits.

Tenants are also still raising complaints about parking and driving of Bernicia vehicles. This is addressed with the individuals concerned to prevent further incidents.

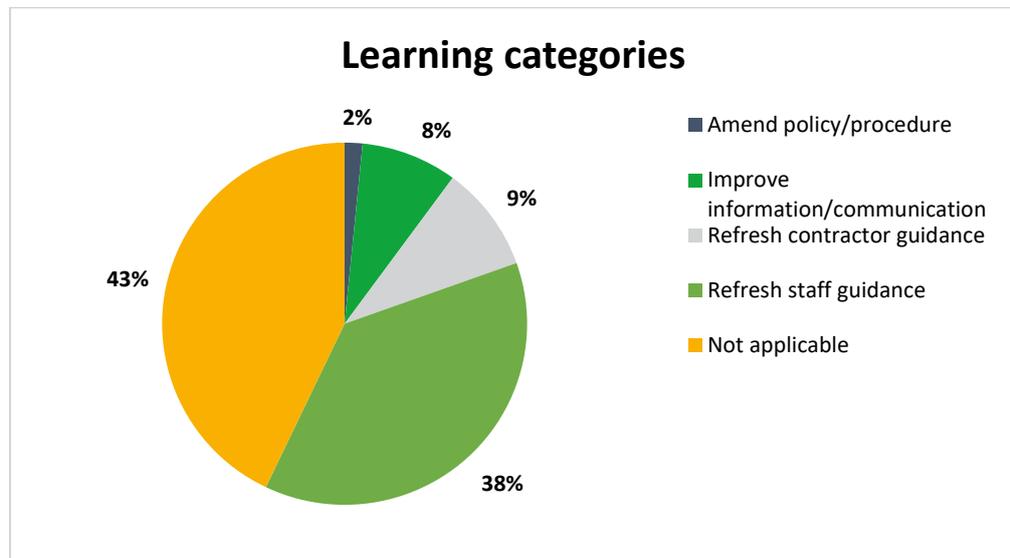
A small number of tenants have expressed concern about the lack of masks/gloves worn by operatives when visiting homes. The repair managers have been made aware of the individuals so that this can be raised with them.

**Contact Team**

There has been an increase in contacts about the attitude of staff working in the Contact Centre in quarter 4. As mentioned above, it appears this has mostly been due to tenants not being satisfied / agreeing with the information or explanation provided by the Advisors or not accepting the Advisor's explanation. For example, when Advisors could not put calls through or raise non-emergency jobs. When listening to the calls the Team Leader has not found that the Advisors were unprofessional however in some incidences, learnings have been identified and issues addressed with individuals.

## 2. LEARNING IDENTIFIED

The chart below shows the principal categories of learning identified:



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 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 telephone.

Some changes to service were also put in place this year, as detailed below:

- Boiler manufacturers to be contacted earlier when engineers are called out to recurring repairs as when having difficulty diagnosing the issue.
- Grounds maintenance contractor asked to start later to prevent disturbing tenants.
- Staff carrying out cleaning at sites were changed to remedy issues at a scheme.
- In relation to tenants who buy their property, although the tenant's solicitor should advise them of the transfer agreement, Bernicia will now do the same.
- Heating contractor will arrange their own scaffold to prevent delays to repairs, rather than relying on Bernicia to arrange this.
- New procedure put in place for schedulers to ensure that call back requests and follow on jobs are responded to each day.

- When properties are advertised for relet, the marketing text will explain the maximum occupancy number (where properties are impacted by the National Described Space Standards) so tenants can make an informed decision regarding bidding.
- In relation to leasehold properties, more detail will be provided to make it clear that valuations are valid for 3 months and what other factors will be taken into consideration.
- Contractor working on behalf of Assets to be asked to provide photograph proof that floor coverings have been used.