



**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

Recurring issues – complaints, comments and dissatisfaction

As mentioned in 'Feedback reason identified by customer' the main underlying issues arising from feedback so far this year relates to delay in providing a service.

Poor customer service is the second highest reason followed by property condition. These trends are explained in more detail below:

Headline themes and trends from complaints made during Q2

The main themes that can be deduced from complaints are as follows:

i) Delays providing service

Repairs

Again the majority of reasons why tenants made contact related to delays in the repairs process.

There were a number of examples where tenants had chased an outstanding repair, were promised a call back but had received no response or where longer waiting times had lapsed for follow on repairs. In addition there were examples where repair appointments had been rearranged for later dates without advising the tenant or where the appointment had not been kept. With regard to the latter this was particularly frustrating when time off work had been taken to allow access.

It has been a particularly challenging quarter for the repairs service as self isolation (the 'pingdemic') resulted in higher levels of absence, materials became harder to obtain and the recovery from the period when only emergency and urgent repairs were undertaken continued. This has inevitably impacted on the length of waiting time for appointments and certain follow on work dependant on materials in short supply.

Despite this there are still issues with follow on jobs not being raised in a timely manner but this will improve with operatives being able to raise follow on work from handhelds. Again the volume of jobs coupled with some of the issues mentioned above has placed significant pressure on the scheduling team.

Customer Contact

A number of complaints related to expectations that repairs should be classed as emergency / urgent as opposed to routine / appointable repairs. Therefore perceived as waiting too long. Additionally there has been a small amount of intolerance that waiting times for repair appointments are longer for certain trades as a result of genuine resource issues mentioned above.

ii) **Poor customer service**

Repairs Team

The main issue in respect of repairs is communication, tenants have complained because they weren't at home when an operative attended or an operative turned up unexpectedly. Both usually being because the tenant wasn't aware of the appointment.

The text alerts for appointments rely exclusively on correct telephone numbers, on investigation it was found that 8% of repair orders did not include a telephone number. Measures have been implemented to address this.

Now that repair appointments can be booked online more tenants are registering with and using the My Bernicia portal and this will increase further as the app is made available and promoted.

Technical Services

Complaints were made about a letter sent by a contractor regarding an outstanding solar panel service. It turned out that the panels had been serviced therefore an apology was made.

iii) **Property Standard**

Repairs and tenancy management

Most complaints in this category related to dampness and condition of plasterwork.

Additionally a complaint was made about outstanding snagging work in a new build property.

iv) **Staff member issues**

Tenancy management

Complaints have been made about the attitude of Housing Officers. On investigation, in most cases, this resulted from disagreeing or not liking what was being said or explained. A number of cases were not upheld in this respect. Where poor service was evident, an apology was offered and the officer in question was encouraged to reflect on and learn from their experience.

Repairs Team

A complaint was received about the standard of driving of a Bernicia van.

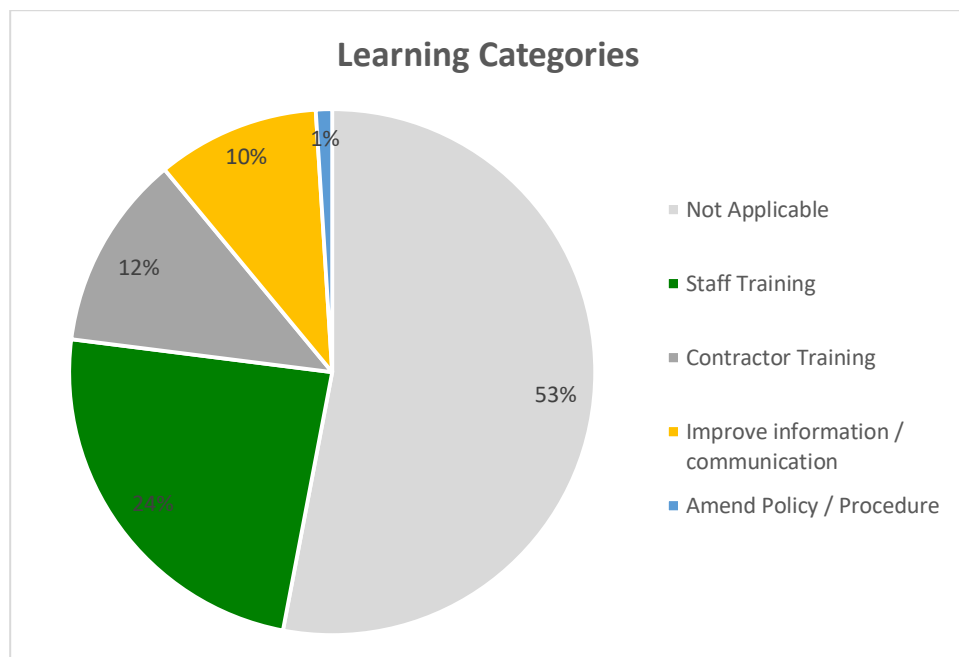
Another example relates to a tenant being verbally informed of an appointment time over the telephone, but then this was not booked on the system.

Contact Team

Examples include complaints about the manner of staff working in the contact centre. Again where there is evidence of poor customer service this is used as training and support to help colleagues reflect on their performance and make improvements.

2. LEARNING

With regard to the trends highlighted above, the learnings that can be taken from these are categorised below:



2.1 The main learning that can be taken from feedback is to improve communication and information and remind staff and contractors of policies, procedures and service standards, for example:

- Make sure tenants are aware of appointments that have been made.
- Make sure tenants are aware of any changes to appointments and follow on jobs.
- Follow on jobs are raised in a timely manner / real time and that any potential changes or delays are communicated to the tenant.
- Ensure that customers are called back where this is promised or requested.