



Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report *2023/24*



Board statement on the Annual Complaints and Service Improvement Report for 2023/24



The Board considered the Annual Complaints and Service Improvement Report and self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code 2024, at its meeting on 23 May 2024.

Effective complaints handling that drives service improvement for residents is a high priority for the Board. The Board acknowledges that complaints performance for 2023/24 for time taken to respond and resident satisfaction with the complaint handling process is not where it should be. A new local operating model, which has improving services for residents at its heart, is being embedded across Peabody. Further investment in services for residents is planned for the coming year, in the meantime additional resources have been deployed to meet the immediate challenge around complaints.

During the year, Peabody commissioned an independent review of its complaint service. This has given the organisation valuable insight into the service improvements that are needed. A comprehensive Complaints Improvement Plan has been agreed and implementation will be overseen by our Resident Experience Committee and the Board.

The Board has strengthened governance arrangements to ensure effective oversight of complaints. Board level reporting considers the root causes of complaints and the action being taken to address these, through our Complaints Improvement Plan. The Board takes its role in championing a positive complaint handling culture seriously and is supported in this by the Resident Experience Committee and the Member Responsible for Complaints.

This statement has been agreed by the Member Responsible for Complaints, on behalf of the Peabody Board.

Caroline Corby

Chair of the Peabody Board
and Member Responsible for Complaints

1 Complaints Performance 2023/24

1.1 Complaint volumes: Volume of complaints received and closed during 2023-24.

Complaint volumes 2023/24													
Received	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
Stage one complaints received	314	402	415	422	463	579	615	655	455	674	533	530	6057
Stage two complaints received	64	89	88	86	92	90	111	94	73	65	65	60	977
Total	378	491	503	508	555	669	726	749	594	739	598	590	7034
Closed													
Stage one complaints closed	322	473	415	505	441	427	539	438	442	462	542	508	5515
Stage two complaints closed	57	70	56	87	54	85	89	74	61	80	57	53	823
Total	379	543	471	592	495	512	628	512	504	542	599	561	6338

We experienced an 85% increase in the number of complaints received in 2023-24 compared to 2022-23. Due to this, the size of the central complaints team has grown in response to increased demand. This increase in capacity has allowed us to resolve and close more complaints.

1.2 Top five service areas: Top areas which drive 81% of complaints.

Service area	Reasons for complaints	% of cases
Repairs Including Gas Repairs	Time taken to resolve or lack of communication (Leaks and damp mould are the top repairs) 51% Heating and hot water and communal heating (Delays to work and lack of communication) 6%	57%
Neighbourhoods	Lack of progress or lack of communication (ASB handling or estate issues)	11%
Rents and service charges	Calculation of the charges or poor customer (queries on statements and lack of communication)	7%
Homeownership	Lease agreements and managing agents (lack of progress or contact and not following policy and procedures)	3%
Lettings and rehousing	Priority move request or service during lettings and rehousing (lack of progress made or lack of service and communication)	3%

We carry out around 250,000 each year. The most common repairs we receive are related to leaks, damp, and mould.

Neighbourhood complaints are mostly related to the way we handle antisocial behaviour issues. The primary concern is communication, ensuring that all parties are regularly updated, and managing expectations.

1.3 Top five boroughs: Boroughs with the highest number of complaints and the type of complaint.

Borough	Region	% of all complaints Rec'd in 2023/24	Complaints split by highest service areas
Hackney	North-East	10% (695)	Repairs 52% Neighbourhoods 9% Rent and service charges 8%
Islington	North-East	10% (691)	Repairs 70% Neighbourhoods 11% Gas 7%
Tower Hamlets	North-East	7% (489)	Repairs 51% Neighbourhoods 10% Rent and service charges 8% Gas 8%
Ealing	North-West	6% (431)	Repairs 65% Neighbourhoods 10% Gas 6%
Southwark	South London	5% (360)	Repairs 39% Neighbourhoods 12% Homeownership 11% Gas 9%

Route causes in key areas
<p>Responsive repairs 70% Islington - damp & mould, plumbing & external leaks 65% Ealing - plumbing leaks, damp & mould & windows.</p>
<p>Neighbourhoods 12% Southwark & 11% Islington Both boroughs report Lack of progress or communication relating to Anti-Social Behaviour.</p>
<p>Rent and service charges Only present as a top area in Hackney & Tower Hamlets with 8% of total. Both relating to Service charge calculation and cost of works showing on statements.</p>
<p>Homeownership Only area to show in top 4 for Southwark. Relating to managing agents, service charges and information around leases and costs.</p>
<p>Gas Repairs In top 4 out of 5 boroughs except for Hackney. All relates to delays in completing heating and hot water works and lack of communication in getting works completed.</p>

These top five boroughs drive 38% of all complaints, despite only making up 29% of the total homes we own. This is an area of concern, we are looking into this further to identify the underlying causes. Our initial analysis indicates that these boroughs have higher-density areas and older buildings, which could be contributing factors.

We have found that repairs are a major cause of complaints in these boroughs. Therefore, any insights we gain from analysing these areas will be incorporated into the repairs section of our Complaints Improvement Plan, as outlined in section 3.6.

1.4 Complaints performance measures: Our performance against complaint measures for 2023-24.

Complaint measures 2023/24						
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total 2023/24
1)	% of complaints escalated to stage 2	15%	14%	13%	10%	13%
2)	% of complaints upheld or partially upheld	76%	70%	78%	77%	75%
3)	% of stage one complaints responded to within 10 days	52%	62%	52%	57%	56%
4)	% of stage two complaints responded to within 20 days	93%	92%	92%	82%	90%
5)	Customer satisfaction % with complaint handling	24%	15%	15%	18%	18%

Please find below a summary of our complaints performance:

- 1) Stage escalations: 13% of our stage one complaints were escalated to stage two last year. We do not have any policy restrictions that would prevent residents from escalating their complaint to stage two.
- 2) Complaints upheld: 75% of our complaints are upheld when closing the complaints.
- 3) Stage one response rates: The percentage of responses sent on time at stage one was affected by the increase in complaint volumes and how quickly we were able to increase the resource needed during this time. We are committed to improving this performance to up to 80% on time during 2024-25.
- 4) Stage two response rates: Overall for the year, Stage two complaint responses were achieved on time 90% of the time. Going forward, we are committed to maintaining this performance.
- 5) Customer satisfaction: We are disappointed with the satisfaction results received for handling complaints. The feedback from our residents is that we need to improve our response times and length of time it takes to complete repairs. We are addressing these issues as part of our Complaints Improvement Plan, as detailed in section 3.3.



2. Housing Ombudsman determinations received 2023/24

2.1 Determinations received: The table below presents a breakdown of the 187 determinations received by the Housing Ombudsman (HOS) from April to March 2023-24.

Landlord	No maladministration	Service failure	Maladministration	Severe maladministration	Grand Total
Grand Total	32	27	100	28	187
Percentage of total	17%	15%	53%	15%	
Determinations received 2022/23	26	16	21	6	69

From the 187 determinations received, we received 477 individual case findings. This is because one determination can have multiple findings. Out of the total individual case findings, 55% were severe maladministration or maladministration, 18% were findings of service failure, and 27% had no maladministration findings.

2.2 90% (175 out of 187) of the determinations received were from complaints managed between April 2019 and March 2023.

2.3 28 cases had at least one finding of severe maladministration within the determination. The root causes of these findings of severe maladministration were:

- 1) Time taken to complete repairs.
- 2) Not following the complaints procedure fully or applying the right level of compensation.
- 3) Not following the antisocial behaviour policy, including having good record keeping.
- 4) Not taking into account enough the vulnerabilities of our residents.

These areas have been fed into our Complaints Improvement Plan, as detailed in section 3.3, along with any other areas of learning from all determinations.

2.4 Housing Ombudsman Paragraph 54f orders.

A determination from the Housing Ombudsman can include a recommendation for a review of policies and/or practice (known as a 'paragraph 54f order') if the Ombudsman believes other residents may be affected by an issue. Peabody received a finding of maladministration in November 2023 following a complaint about repairs due to damp and mould. In their determination, the HOS issued nineteen orders, including a paragraph 54f order requiring Peabody to conduct an independent review of our practice in responding to repairs due to damp and mould.

2.5 In November 2023, we commissioned an independent review, which aimed to address the Housing Ombudsman's order and prevent future occurrences of similar complaints. The findings and learning from the review were discussed at an additional meeting of the Resident Experience Committee in April 2024. The Committee agreed on arrangements for oversight of the implementation of the review recommendations, which are now included within the Complaints Improvement Plan. A progress report will be provided to the Board and the Housing Ombudsman by October 2024.

2.6 In March 2024, a further paragraph 54f order as part of severe maladministration determination received. The order highlighted failings in the handling of leaseholder meetings and the administration of our service charges. An internal independent review is currently in progress, and a report will be provided to the Housing Ombudsman in August 2024 and shared with our Board and Resident Experience Committee.

3. Complaint learning and service improvement plans

3.1 Independent complaints review

In August 2023, Peabody commissioned an independent review of the complaints service. The main goal was to assess the effectiveness of the current process, evaluate Peabody's readiness for regulatory changes, and examine the quality of assurance available to the Resident Experience Committee and the Board. This review was prompted by changes to consumer regulation and the increasing role played by the Housing Ombudsman. It's worth noting that this review was conducted before the HOS paragraph 54f detailed in section 2.5 of this report.

3.2 Addressing the root causes of complaints.

We have incorporated valuable insights from the recommendations of the independent complaints review, Housing Ombudsman Determinations, customer satisfaction survey feedback and formal complaints into a comprehensive 'Complaints Improvement Plan'. This plan includes a wide range of initiatives aimed at addressing the root causes of complaints and improving oversight and scrutiny across our operation. The current themes in the Complaints Improvement Plan are detailed below:

- **Communication:** We need to review the tone of voice in our verbal and written communications during all processes through which we interact with our residents.
- **Culture:** We need to foster accountability throughout the organisation and maintain good record-keeping to reduce complaints and support our complaints teams when a problem occurs.
- **Data insights and reporting:** We need to improve how we use data and insights to boost resident satisfaction and address root causes.
- **Governance and compliance:** We need to review and enhance our complaint-handling governance by ensuring effective oversight, resident engagement, and continuous improvement lead to informed decision-making and meeting regulatory standards.
- **IT Systems:** We need to enhance the complaint and repair processes, boosting transparency, efficiency, and resident and staff satisfaction.
- **Repairs:** We need to enhance our repair service by improving communication, transparency, accountability, and resident satisfaction.
- **Quality:** We need to strengthen our staff training to improve responses to residents, increase understanding of our policies and procedures, and implement effective leadership and quality assurance mechanisms

3.3 The comprehensive Complaints Improvement Plan was presented to the Resident Experience Committee. They were made aware of the plan and happy with the approach. Through the Complaints Governance Framework, the committee will have regular oversight of the plan's implementation. At the time of this report, there are 51 open actions within the Complaint Improvement Plan with 12 actions recently being complete.



45 Westminster Bridge Road
London SE1 7JB
Tel: 0300 123 3456
peabody.org.uk

JN: PBC_24_003/MARCH2024