



# Landlord Complaints Annual Report

**COMPLAINTS & COMPLIMENTS 1 April 2023 - 31 March 2024**

**PORTSMOUTH CITY COUNCIL**

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## COMPLAINTS & COMPLIMENTS 1 April 2023 - 31 March 2024

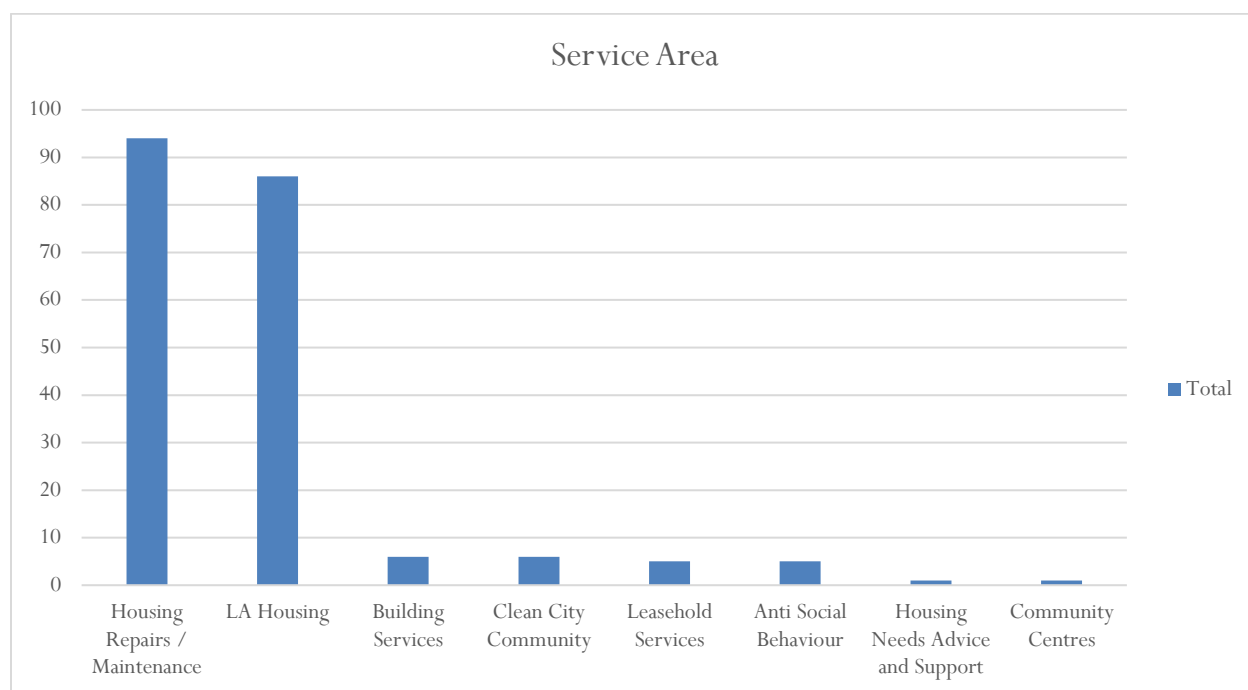
### PURPOSE

- To provide analysis of all complaints and other contacts received during the period of 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 for landlord services.

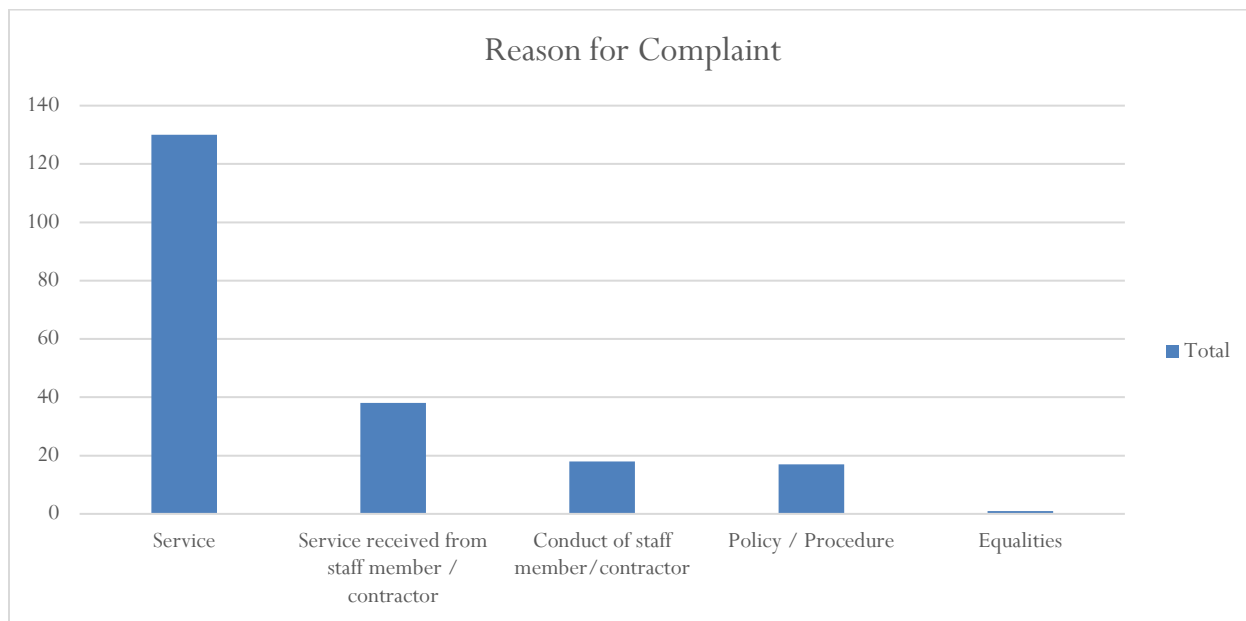
### ANALYSIS OF COMPLAINTS

For the financial year 2023/24, there were 204 complaints made about landlord services delivered by Portsmouth City Council.

To set the complaints figures in context, the following chart outlines the number of complaints for each location/team.



It is also important to consider the reasons why complaints were made so that we can identify trends and seek to address them.



Inadequate Service and service received from a staff member/contractor received the most complaints overall in the period. Limitations with the data set means that we have been unable to break down the types of complaints to each service area, but this has been addressed and going forward we will be able to provide this analysis.

### PERFORMANCE

During this period (Apr. 23 – Mar. 24) local authority housing complaints were dealt with under Portsmouth City Council’s corporate policy and process. Under this procedure, we aimed to send complainants a full reply within 15 working days if possible, or if the matter was more complicated, the target timescale was 20 working days. Staff are encouraged to ensure their responses are proportionate to the complexity and level of investigation required. However, from 1 April 2024 the Housing Ombudsman's complaints code came into force and so Stage 1 complaints now must be responded to within 10 working days in line with the code.

The extent to which our timescales have been met can be seen below:

Stage 1 Full Reply Performance (working days)	Financial Year 2023/2024
0-20 days	76%
20+ days	24%

<b>Stage 2 Full Reply Performance (working days)</b>	<b>Financial Year 2023/2024</b>
0-20 days	68%
20+ days	32%

Overall, 76% of stage 1 complaints have received a response within 20 working days. Some complaints will take longer than 15 days to investigate and reply to, particularly if the matter is complex, there is a need to interview staff or further responses or meetings are required to resolve the complaint. Of the 31 Stage 2 complaints progressed 68% were completed on time.

The Complaints Lead will continue to highlight the importance of dealing with complaints in a timely way and encourage staff to have a positive attitude to complaints handling. The Complaints Lead will also encourage managers to make a quick initial assessment of a complaint when they receive it, to enable any immediate issues to be dealt with and to establish that the right person is handling the complaint.

**HOUSING OMBUDSMAN**

There were two complainants that went directly to the ombudsman for this period. One was referred back to Portsmouth City Council to respond to and one was closed after initial enquiries.

**LEARNING FROM COMPLAINTS**

Complaints are an invaluable form of research for the department, helping it to continually learn from complaints and improve the services it provides to residents in Portsmouth. Learning can take many different forms, for example, changes in working practices, amendments to policy, changes to service, staff training etc.

A number of the complaints received related to the management of anti-social behaviour, and it was identified that more training was needed for Area Housing Office staff around managing ASB cases. As a result, staff were booked to attend ASB training courses provided by an external specialist. Regular case reviews have been increased by managers and a monthly meeting has been set up to track emerging issues in the management of ASB cases and identify solutions. Alongside this we have also commenced a programme of customer satisfaction surveys when ASB cases are closed to understand our tenants experience of the ASB service and make improvements where appropriate based on that feedback. We have also introduced the completion of a risk assessment in all ASB cases to understand the level of risk to the tenant's concerned dependant on their level of vulnerability and the seriousness of the ASB.

Buildings have taken learning forward from complaints received and improved the methods of recording and categorising these. This will help with better understanding of the reasons complaints are made and what the outcomes of these are.

A new Local Authority Housing, Landlord Complaints Service, has been in place from 1 April 2024 along with a separate area of the Respond complaints system for the sole use of this complaints team. This area is tailored to Landlord-specific complaints and has brought an opportunity for more detailed recording of complaints, with the ability to tailor the categories of data available for reporting purposes.

Learning from the analysis of data from 2023-2024 has informed the significant changes made to the new area of the system and will, as the service develops, allow for clear and specific learnings to be identified from complaints and compliments received. The opportunity to also include details from service requests and enquiries is another area of improvement, with the Complaints Lead building the ability to use the learning from the outcomes of these to inform reflective learning for service areas alongside the information and insight gained from complaints and compliments.

Our tenant satisfaction survey results for 23/24 showed that only 53% of tenants were satisfied with our approach to handling complaints. This has highlighted the need to improve our service offer around complaints and whilst our new policy and process will go some way to address this, we recognise that we need to provide more training to our staff to assist them in the effective management of complaints and continue to create the positive culture around complaints that is needed.

The Complaints Lead will continue to develop the support offering to assist operational staff and managers in handling and responding to complaints in the future. Complaints provide invaluable free market research for the department, and we aim to continue to increase our learning from complaints, to disseminate good practice and to achieve more service improvements as a result, working closely with the senior management team to keep them informed of key trends and areas of learning identified as the service develops.

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Portsmouth City Council  
May 2024