

# **Complaints Annual Performance and Service Improvement Report 2023/2024**

Mosscares St Vincent's Housing Group (MSV) is committed to providing a high-quality service to all our customers. However, despite our best efforts, things can sometimes go wrong and result in complaints regarding service failure across a range of service areas.

A full review has been carried out on our complaints and compensation policies, this follows a review undertaken by the Housing Ombudsman last year in respect of our level of compliance against their complaint code.

Implementing a new policy was an integral part of achieving full compliance. Both the complaint policy and the compensation policy have been checked against the new statutory HOS complaints code/self-assessment requirements as well as the action plan following the complaints internal audit and self-assessment from last year. This integrated approach to improving our response to complaints has enabled us to address any previously identified areas of non-compliance.

As well as feedback from our customer groups, the new policies have been subject to extensive colleague engagement. They have been presented to Exec and Senior Leadership Team for comments and approval as well as the HOS, following our engagement with them as we worked through the action plan following their findings around the complaints handling code compliance.

We have also reported our complaints performance extensively at both Board and Customer Committee meetings including the progress with the action plan to achieve full code compliance. In March 24 we appointed a Complaints Board Champion to the main Board. The appointed Board member is Michelle Hill who also chairs our Customer Committee.

Our website and 'Have your say leaflet' have also been updated with the new policies and the new self-assessment against the complaints handling code will also be updated and added to the website in time for the HOS deadline of the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024. The self-assessment was originally completed in December 2023 and approved at the Board, but as of the 01/04/24, the new updated version of the complaints handling code went live. This is aligned with the complaints code becoming statutory and is the reason why the new self-assessment has been completed again.

## **Performance for 23/24**

During the financial year 2023/24 we received 280 complaints, a reduction from the previous year (393.) Monthly reports on complaints are issued to Executive Team and Senior leaders, as well as quarterly reports to our Customer and Communities Committee and main Board. Weekly exception reports for overdue responses are also now provided to the Executive Team as a matter of course.

The focus of reporting has shifted towards how we are learning from and changing as a result of the insight our complaints provide. Following a comprehensive review of our

complaint categories, responsive repairs are still generating the most complaints year to date, and this is reflected sector wide. Of the 280 stage 1 complaints we received last year, 56% were related to Repairs and 18% were around damp and mould.

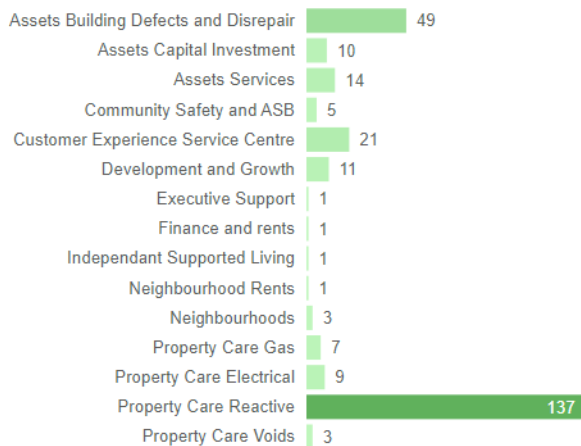
This represents 74% of our complaints in total and with the introduction of the new consumer standards and Awaab’s Law, it is crucial we start to use our customer insight to shape services and drive improvements in these key areas.

The complaints summary for 2023/24 is shown below. We recognise that our response times were not at the level expected for a significant part of the year. There were some mitigating factors behind this as previously reported to the Board. Renewed organisational focus and additional resources were mobilised and we saw a marked improvement on response times since December 23. This upward trend has continued to improve into 24/25 with over 90% of complaints responded to within target timescales.

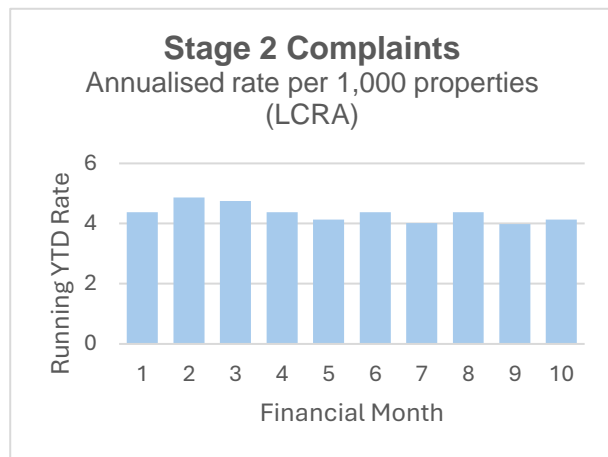
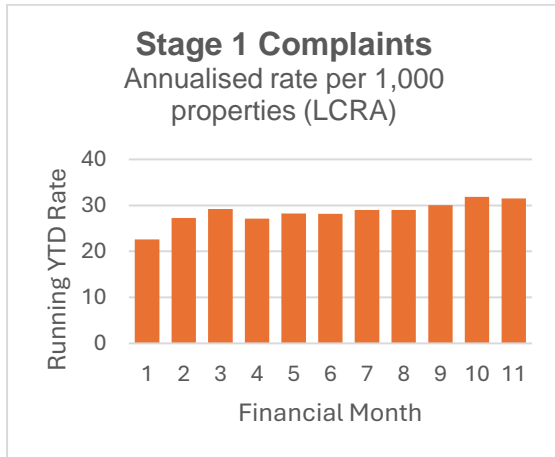
### Stage 1 Complaints

Month	Reported	Responses	Avg Days	In Target	Extensions	Not Due
April 2023	19	19	21.4	47.4%	0	0
May 2023	16	16	26.8	37.5%	0	0
June 2023	26	26	21.5	46.2%	0	0
July 2023	26	26	14.0	53.8%	0	0
August 2023	13	13	26.8	23.1%	0	0
September 2023	26	26	7.6	76.9%	0	0
October 2023	20	20	13.1	55.0%	0	0
November 2023	26	26	9.1	65.4%	0	0
December 2023	20	20	6.5	95.0%	0	0
January 2024	32	32	8.7	84.4%	0	0
February 2024	36	36	10.7	77.8%	0	0
March 2024	20	20	7.4	90.0%	3	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>13.4</b>	<b>65.7%</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>

### Complaint Categories

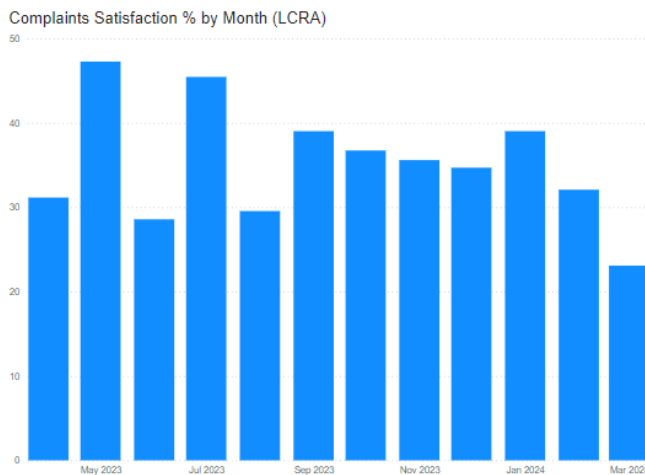


The number of complaints per 1000 properties is shown below for both stage one and two complaints over the period:



## Satisfaction

Whilst data is non transactional we are getting around 50 respondents a month to questionnaires.

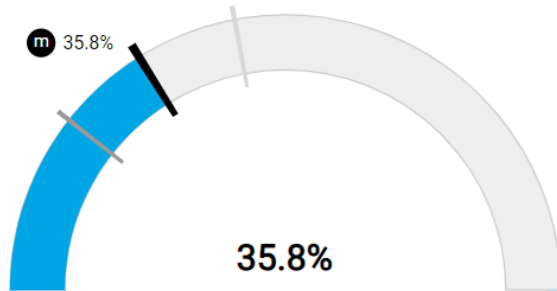


38.5% satisfaction in Housemark shows MSV at quartile three (borderline with Q2) overall currently based on the anticipated year end benchmarking outturn with Housemark

### Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling complaints - LCRA

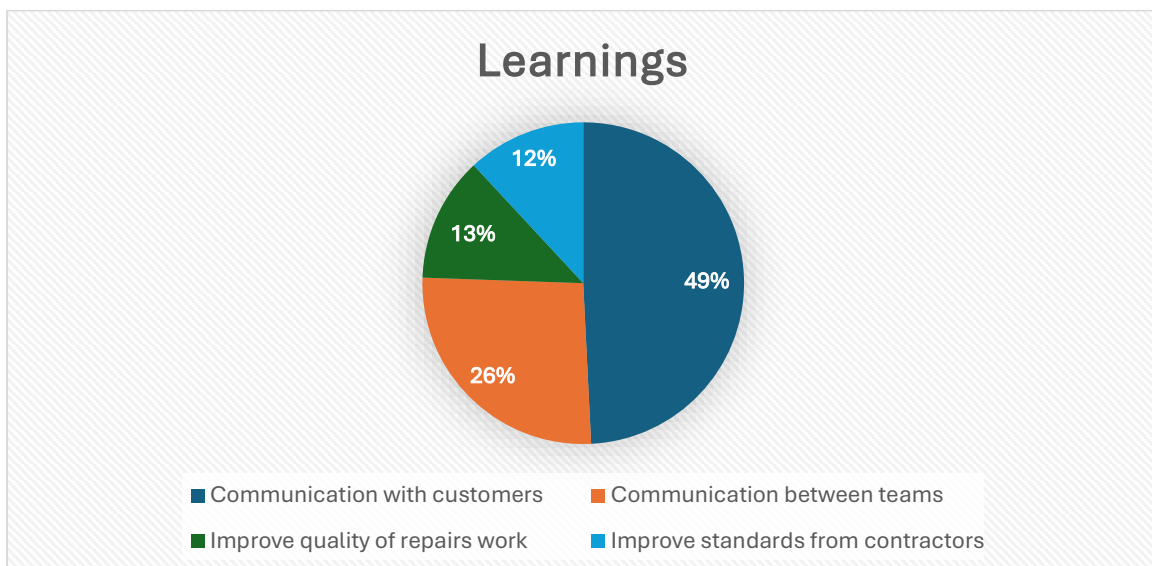
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☆ 35.8%



## Learning

As we delve deeper into our complaints data and investigate our learnings, communication is the key area that is driving our volume of complaints. We have found that 75% of our complaints relate to communication, both with customers and internally between teams. This is a basic requirement of customer service and as such we need to ensure we improve in such an important area.

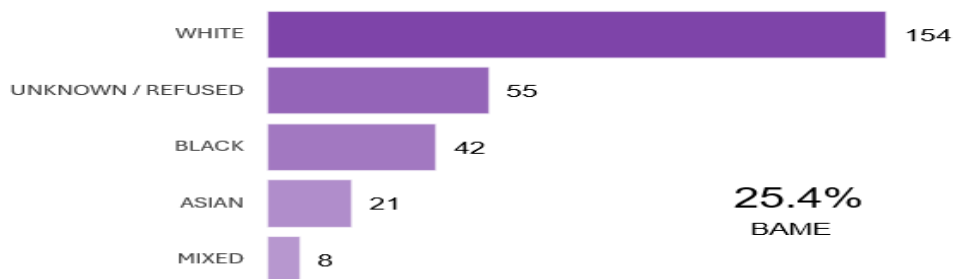


We know the headline theme is communication, but we need to understand what area of communication we are failing in. As we review the data, we have identified trends, for example we know that repair work where issues are long term, ongoing, incomplete or require multiple visits cause an inconvenience and this is frustrating to customers, this then translates to dissatisfaction and further complaints. We have identified how a lack of ownership has impacted, we see multiple hand offs, repeat contacts with customers having to chase issues, this ultimately leads to slow resolution and unhappy customers.

We are addressing some of the fundamentals in respect of poor communication by providing customer care training across MSV throughout 2024 to ensure all colleagues have the correct customer care knowledge and understanding to deliver an excellent service to customers. This will commence with some training focusing on communication in May for all staff.

As we continue to learn from our complaints and data, it is important we understand our customer demographics. We can see that just over 25% of complainants are from a BAME background. We know from the data received in our TSM Perception Surveys that the most dissatisfied cohort are black tenants who score our service lower than other groups in 10 out of the 12 TSM measures. As part of our insight offer, we want to be able to triangulate our data in order to provide an accurate and comprehensive visual of the customer journey, validated by the customer voice.

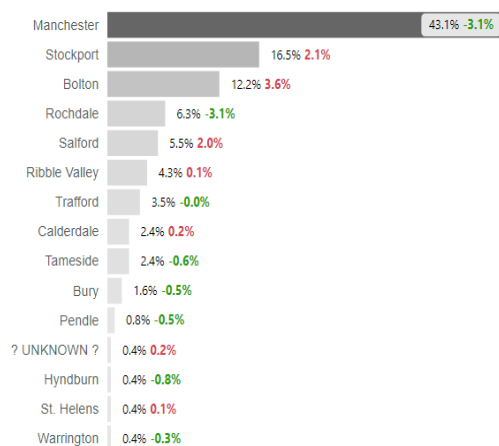
### Ethnicity Split



The high level data shows us that over 40% of complaints are generated from the Manchester area. This is in line with our stock profile in Manchester which accounts for 46% of our stock. Our aim now is to undertake a more detailed analysis into the data and understand what is driving the complaints from the Manchester area, understanding if this is a particular region, or if certain demographics are impacted more than others.

Both Manchester and Stockport have some of our oldest property stock and ultimately generate the most complaints. We know we have higher levels of dissatisfaction in the Moss Side area of Manchester, which has a large proportion of older housing stock and higher levels of BAME customers, again we need to have a better understanding of this data to enable us to become more proactive in terms of targeted interventions.

### Area



An important measure of successful complaint handling is the escalation rate i.e. where an initial response at stage 1 is issued, but where the complainant remains dissatisfied and requests escalation of the complaint to the next stage of our process, stage 2.

Lower escalation rates demonstrate improved customer satisfaction as it means complaints are resolved fully at the first stage of our process. Over the year we have escalated 13.8% of our complaints, which indicates we have work to do around our learning, not only from the themes we draw out of each complaint, but also around learnings from our complaint handling process. This is an important area and one we shall look to develop this year. Our new central Complaints Team will drive improvements in this area. We have invested in additional resource for the team to enable us to support all areas across the business in complaint handling.

We have reintroduced our Customer Complaint panel and recruitment has started with information being sent out to our involved customer database and shared at schemes and on social media. The group once formed will be reviewing complaints based on the complaint summary against the full response. Our customer scrutiny panel are also currently reviewing our complaints and compensation policies and processes. We will be working closely with our Complaints board Champion to ensure that we continue to learn and improve.

### **Next Steps for 24/25**

We will continue to focus on performance across complaints to ensure an improving trend across all indicators but particularly the time taken to provide a response. That said, quarter 4 performance for 23/24 indicated significantly improved performance but the impact on the year overall was limited due to the cumulative nature of performance calculation and reporting. This upward trend has continued into quarter one of 24/25 where our performance has exceeded 90% for complaints responded to in published timescales. We will use complaints data to identify trends and target interventions.

Our customer experience Strategy is in the process of being implemented and concentrates on improving communication with our customers and enhancing their service experience. As a result of implementing this strategy we aim to become a customer-centric organisation that rectifies issues promptly and improves satisfaction at first contact.

We will work closely with our customer complaint panel to review our closed complaints. The Panel will provide a fresh insight, with a willingness to see us learn and improve, so all our customers receive a high quality service. This includes reviewing Stage 2 complaints.

Customer communication training will be delivered to all MSV staff during the year enabling us to embed the culture that complaints start with positive resolution and the principles of customer service excellence.