

# ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT 2020-21



## Maryhill Housing Complaints Procedure

We are regulated by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO), and follow their model complaints handling procedure. This specifies response times of a maximum of 5 working days for frontline complaints and 20 working days for more serious investigations. A full customer guide to our complaints procedure is available on our website:

[www.maryhill.org.uk/about-us/make-a-complaint](http://www.maryhill.org.uk/about-us/make-a-complaint)

## Complaints Received in 2020-21

The complaints we received between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 are summarised in the tables below. The trend arrows indicate whether this year's figure is better (↑), worse (↓) or has remained about the same (→) compared to last year.

The table shows that we received 42 fewer complaints this year. However we had 2 more investigations than last year, which indicates that these complaints were more serious and were not resolved fully at frontline stage.

Level	Number received	Compared to last year
Frontline	157	201 ↑
Investigation	49	47 ↓
Total	206	248 ↑

## Time to Respond to Complaints

Our average times to respond to complaints are shown in the table below. This shows overall improvement, with quicker average response times for both frontline and investigation complaints. This improvement has been brought about by an increased focus on complaints through weekly reminders and reports to managers. There was also additional training provided for some teams.

However 90% of frontline complaints were responded to on time, which is slightly worse than 93% last year. This is due to the 5 working day timescale being particularly challenging during the first few months of the year when COVID-19 led to our offices being shut and a small number of staff furloughed.

Level	SPSO Target	Our performance this year	Compared to last year
Frontline	5 working days maximum	3.4 working days average	3.8 ↑
		90% on time	93% ↓
Investigation	20 working days maximum	17.2 working day average	17.5 ↑
		91% on time	84% ↑

## Categories of Complaints

The tables below show the complaints resolved during 2020-21 by service area and type, sorted by those that have been most common. The number of these complaints that were upheld is also shown.

Service Area	Frontline	Investigation	Total	As % of all complaints	Upheld
Reactive Repairs	72	15	87	43%	67
Housing Management	20	3	23	11%	17
Estates & ASB	19	3	22	11%	19
Factoring	2	18	20	10%	19
Applications / Allocations	13	4	17	8%	7
Communal Cleaning	9	1	10	5%	10
Planned & Cyclical Maintenance	7	1	8	4%	4
Customer Contact Team / Corporate	7	0	7	3%	5
Rent Account / Financial Support	5	1	6	3%	3
Gas Servicing	2	0	2	1%	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>152</b>

Type	Frontline	Investigation	Total	As % of all complaints	Upheld
Poor quality service	64	19	83	41%	65
Long standing issues not addressed	32	17	49	24%	40
Poor comms / lack of info provided to customer	19	4	23	11%	18
Disagreeing with previous decision	12	3	15	7%	9
Staff attitude / professionalism	11	2	13	6%	7
No response to previous enquiry / complaint	8	0	8	4%	7
Difficulty accessing service/person	7	0	7	3%	2
Missed appointment	3	1	4	2%	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>152</b>

This shows that reactive repairs is the largest category of complaints again this year. There were extended periods of lockdown during 2020-21 when non-emergency repairs were not being carried out. This led to an increase in complaints as some work could not be completed within our normal timescales. Since launching the contract with our new reactive repairs contractor on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 we have seen an improvement in performance and our tenants are reporting greater satisfaction, so we expect to see the number of complaints fall slightly over the coming year.

Poor quality service is the largest grouping when looking at the type of complaint. While almost half of the poor quality complaints related to reactive repairs, a large number also related to communal cleaning. This was a service that we changed during the COVID-19 outbreak, replacing our usual communal cleaning service with a service focused on touchpoints such as door handles and lift buttons. This was not well received by all our tenants, resulting in an increase in complaints, however it did improve the safety of the tenants in our blocks.

### Learning from complaints

Staff are encouraged to consider learning outcomes from every complaint that they manage, and to identify improvement actions that can be taken to help prevent a similar issued happening again in future. Our Learning from Complaints Group meets every three months to discuss areas for improvement and to agree the actions to be taken.

We include a 'You Said, We Did' section in every edition of our customer newsletter, in addition to reporting lessons learned to our Board. The table below outlines a selection of the learning and actions taken as a result of complaints received during 2020-21.

Customers Said	We Did
<p>Repair appointments are not always being offered or are sometimes being missed.</p>	<p>This was discussed with our contractor during our routine meetings with them and the lead planner on our account was changed as a result. This led to an improvement in appointments performance.</p> <p>We have also now launched our new repairs contract from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021, which includes a move to using 2-hour appointment windows in place of the previous morning or afternoon options. Customers also have direct access to the appointment system through our My Home portal. Both of these improvements have been introduced in response to customer feedback.</p>
<p>Long standing issues are not always being addressed leading to dissatisfaction.</p>	<p>This was an issue identified through our customer survey in 2018 as an area the Association needed to improve. We have continued to emphasise to staff the importance of taking responsibility for customers' issues and following through on these to ensure they are fully resolved. This was included in the complaints refresher training provided for staff this year, and was also covered in training on escalation and what staff should do if they identify a problem that needs to be addressed.</p>

Customers Said	We Did
<p>Some communication has been poor in relation to the impact of COVID-19 on our services.</p>	<p>There were a number of complaints during the year relating to service levels during periods of COVID-19 restrictions that related to customers not having understood a change or reduction in service. One example area was customers not being aware of us having re-focused the close cleaning service to focus on touchpoints. Other examples related to issues where changes in Glasgow City Council services had an impact on our developments, where the customer saw this as our responsibility, particularly in relation to waste and the surrounding environment.</p> <p>We continue to provide updates on our services via our website and social media, also sending direct communications via letter and text where appropriate. We have also made more use of our newsletters to provide an update for all customers on our services and the ongoing impact of COVID.</p>
<p>When I have reported Anti-Social Behaviour in the past, I have not always heard exactly what action has been taken to address it. Communication is not always great.</p>	<p>We will be providing refresher training on handling Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) for all of our Housing Officers in the next few months. This will include guidance on what communication is expected with customers and when, and how this can be managed within data protection rules.</p>
<p>When the Association carries out planned work – such as new kitchens or bathrooms – it is not always clear what customers should expect, which can mean people are unhappy with the end result.</p>	<p>Improvements will be made in communications around this year's Investment Programme (which is currently on hold due to lockdown restrictions but will start back up later in the year). Our new communications will include more information and photos/videos being shared with customers before work begins, making clear exactly what they can and can't expect from the works.</p>
<p>Some members of staff are not good at calling customers back when this is promised.</p>	<p>A new call back system has been put in place which should help improve this issue. It also makes it easier to identify any staff members who are not completing call backs as requested, so these can be raised with them by their manager before it reaches complaint stage.</p>