



CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP – 3RD JULY 2013

SUBJECT: COMPLAINTS AND REPRESENTATIONS – HOUSING DIVISION

REPORT BY: ACTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide information on contacts in relation to complaints and representations received by the Authority's Housing Customer Services Section, from 1st April 2011 to 31st March 2013.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The monitoring of complaints and representations is carried out to provide information on the level of satisfaction with the service provided by the Housing Division. The results enable managers to focus on areas of concern to improve services and monitor performance and ensure that similar problems are avoided in the future.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 This report links to the Authority's 'People, Property & Places (2008-2013): Local Housing Strategy for Caerphilly, Aim 6: Housing Management, which states:

'To provide good quality, well-managed homes in communities where people want to live, and offer people housing choices which meet their needs and aspirations '

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 The annual report is usually based on the information collected during the financial year between April and March. However, following a reorganisation of the Tenant and Community Involvement Team no report was presented for the financial year April 2011 to March 2012 so this report covers the last two financial years of 2011/12 and 2012/13.

4.2 Overall Numbers

The Customer Services section of the Housing Division recorded a total of 713 contacts from the public and their representatives between 1st April 2011 to 31st March 2012 and 520 from 1st April 2012 to 31st March 2013. This is in comparison with 855 from 1st April 2010 to 31st March 2011. The contacts received represent requests for information about a service and first requests for service in addition to those determined to be actual complaints. The number recorded as actual complaints in 2011/12 was 103 and in 2012/13 it was 87. This is in comparison with 148 in 2010/2011.

- 4.3 An analysis of the total contacts received indicates there was a general decrease across several service areas provided by the Housing Division during the last two years. There were, however, some service areas where the number of contacts increased. The main changes are detailed below:-

<u>Contacts</u>			
Type of Contact	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Response repairs	331	251	172
Housing Management	130	119	80
Allocations	136	103	64
Anti Social Behaviour	69	70	49
Heating	37	23	19
Private Housing	28	18	16
Planned Maintenance	24	28	38
Empty Property Management	20	9	11
Sheltered Housing	13	14	7
Adaptations	10	9	7
Rents	16	6	7
Leaseholder Services	9	9	8
Electrical	7	8	9
Emergency Housing	0	4	0
Housing Advice	6	5	9
WHQS	0	0	7
Energy Conservation	3	2	7

- 4.4 Records are kept of any praise or thanks received by the Housing Division. In 2011/12 there were 26 recorded and in 2012/13 there were 27 recorded. This is in comparison with 29 for 2010/11. These covered a number of service areas as detailed below :-

<u>Praise or Thanks</u>			
Type of Contact	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Rents	1	8	8
Allocation	5	7	3
Leaseholder Services	0	0	5
Housing Management	4	2	3
Housing Advice	1	0	0
Responsive Repairs	17	1	4
Tenancy Enforcement	0	1	1
Planned Maintenance	0	3	0
Tenant Participation	1	0	1
Heating	0	1	0
Sheltered Housing	0	3	1
WHQS	0	0	1

4.5 **Action Requested by Service Users**

Records are kept of the action that is requested by service users. An analysis of this information includes the following:-

- The majority of contacts were looking for the delivery of a service that they have already requested. In 2011/12 this was 35% and in 2012/13 it was 28%. This is in comparison with 39% for 2010/11.

- Requests for information about a service were 18% for both 2011/12 and 2012/13 compared with 23% for 2010/11. These requests would normally be passed to the service area concerned for a direct response
- First requests for service were 16% for 2011/12 and 17% for 2012/13 compared with 13% for 2010/11. These are normally passed to the Area/Neighbourhood Offices or service area concerned for direct action.
- Improvement of a service was 16% for 2011/12 and 17% for 2012/13 compared with 13% for 2010/11 - the majority of these related to response repairs.

4.6 Service Users and Advocates

The Housing Customer Service section records details of service users and advocates acting on behalf of service users, when making representations and complaints. Below is an analysis of the numbers of contacts received directly from the service user and the types of advocate making contact on their behalf during 2011/12 and 2012/13 compared with 2010/11.

Contact	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Service User	46%	45%	54%
Councillor	30%	31%	17%
MP	10%	7%	9%
AM	8%	10%	10%
Family	4%	4%	5%
Other	1%	1%	2%
Solicitor	0%	1%	1%
Ombudsman	1%	1%	2%

In the category 'Other', examples of the types of contact received include – Support Workers, Shelter, Town Councillors, Election Candidates and friends.

The reduction in Councillor contacts for 2012/13 can probably be explained by the fact that previously all Councillor contacts were recorded for monitoring purposes but during 2012/13 this was revised to only record Councillor enquiries relating to complaints.

4.7 Ombudsman Complaints

There were 4 complaints referred to the Ombudsman during 2011/12 and 7 during 2012/13. This is in comparison with 12 during 2010/11. In relation to 2011/12, the Ombudsman decided not to investigate 2 cases, referred 1 case back to the council to follow the complaints procedure and the remaining case was resolved by the Public Sector Housing section offering an apology and paying compensation to the applicant due to the time taken to assess a Special Housing Needs Form.

In relation to 2012/13, the Ombudsman decided not to investigate 1 case, referred 3 cases back to the council to follow the complaints procedure and discontinued his investigation of 1 case, as he was satisfied with the information provided by the council. The remaining 2 cases were resolved to the Ombudsman's satisfaction on a voluntary settlement basis. In the first case the Private Housing section agreed to make a payment to the complainant as a settlement for lost rent. In the second case the Public Sector housing section agreed to reduce a recharge and make amendments to the recharge leaflet and the out of hours recorded telephone message.

4.8 Corporate Complaints by Service Area

The number of actual complaints received during 2011/12 was 103 and in 2012/13 it was 87. This is in comparison with 148 for 2010/11. As can be seen from the table below the majority of complaints relate to response repairs, with 66 in 2011/12 and 41 in 2012/13. An analysis of these response repair complaints shows that jobs being completed outside the target date accounted for 47% during 2011/12 and 10% during 2012/13, compared with 46% in 2010/11.

Complaints relating to quality of service provision and/or the quality of the workmanship accounted for 50% during 2011/12 and 62% during 2012/13 compared with 33% in 2010/11. To put these figures into perspective the Building Maintenance Section completed an average of 35,028 response repairs each year, over the last three years.

Service Area	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Response Repairs	97	66	41
Planned Maintenance	8	8	18
Housing Management	6	12	3
Rents	3	0	1
Heating	7	8	5
Allocations	4	4	2
Housing Advice	1	0	0
Empty Property	6	1	4
Leaseholder Services	3	1	1
Private Housing	3	1	4
Anti Social Behaviour	0	0	1
Electrical	3	1	4
Energy Conservation	1	0	3
Adaptations	0	1	0
Sheltered Housing	3	0	0

The corporate complaints recorded for planned maintenance related to the general quality of the service provision and/or quality of the workmanship and the timescales involved in undertaking the work. Housing management complaints related to a number of issues such as shared boundaries/chimney stacks, housing land, landlord consents and recharges.

4.9 Response Target Times

The customer service section monitors the performance in responding to all contacts recorded by the section, within the corporate timescales. In both 2011/2 and 2012/13 90% of complaints and representations were responded to within the agreed timescales compared with 94% in 2010/11.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no potential equalities implications arising from the contents of this Report. There is no requirement for an Equalities Impact Assessment Questionnaire to be completed.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 None, the compensation figures were met from existing budgets.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 None.

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Consultation responses have been considered within this report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 This report is for information purposes only.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 The monitoring of complaints forms part of the process to monitor performance and continuous improvement in the Housing Division.

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