

**Brief description of Directorate and Service Framework**

Caerphilly Homes is the brand name for the council's housing division. Some of the services delivered by Caerphilly Homes include: Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS), Estate Management, Tenancy Enforcement, Rents and Tenancy Support, Tenant and Community Involvement, Older Persons' Housing, Housing Repair Operations, Housing Advice, Homeless Prevention and Common Housing Register, Private Sector Housing, Grants and Loans, Housing Strategy, Affordable Housing and Adaptations

**1. Number of complaints by stage type, service, and targets met****Table showing summary of complaints by stage type reference**

Stage Type	Count	Count Completed in Target Times	Percentage Completed in Target Times
Stage 1	58	41	70.7%
Stage 2	2	2	100.0%
Escalated from Stage 1 to 2	13	8	61.5%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>69.9%</b>

**Tables showing summary of complaints by service, for each stage type**

Service	Count Stage 1	Count Completed in Target Times	Percentage Completed in Target Times
Adaptations	1	0	0.0%
Allocations	8	5	62.5%
Antisocial Behaviour	3	2	66.7%
Grants	2	2	100.0%
Homelessness	1	0	0.0%
Housing Management	16	10	62.5%
Leaseholder	1	1	100.0%
Heating	3	3	100.0%
Private Landlord	1	1	100.0%
Response Repairs	20	16	80.0%
WHQS External	1	0	0.0%
WHQS Internal	1	1	100.0%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>70.7%</b>

Service	Count Stage 2	Count Completed in Target Times	Percentage Completed in Target Times
Allocations	1	0	0.0%
Grants	1	1	100.0%
Housing Management	7	5	71.4%
Heating	2	1	50.0%
Response Repairs	4	3	75.0%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>66.7%</b>

Where target response times were not met, it has been identified that generally it was due to awaiting further information from other officers, other departments, or the complainants themselves. The Head of Housing – Nick Taylor Williams previously undertook a review of all Stage 1 and Stage 2 responses to ensure consistency and customer focus. Due to the number of responses requiring review and redrafting, this has impacted negatively on the target rates however it is anticipated undertaking this exercise will have a positive impact on customer service, quality of complaint investigations and ultimately reducing escalation of complaints. Going forward, data will be provided monthly to managers and directors who attend Senior Managers Briefing (SMB) and Higher Management Team (HMT) to discuss cases which fall short of meeting the target deadlines and to establish if trends can be identified in this area. Key members of the Housing Management team have also been involved in the planning and implementation of the changes required for Caerphilly Homes to successfully introduce the Renting Homes Act 2016. This was initially due to be completed by the 15th of July 2022 however this had been postponed until the 1st December 2022 and has now been successfully implemented. The introduction of this legislation is paramount and therefore has taken priority over some other duties. The Housing Department has also commissioned a new computer system called CX. Managers and officers have been involved with the building and testing of the system via workshops and group meetings, this new system was introduced in October 2022 and ongoing testing, adjustments and implementation continue to ensure Caerphilly Homes has an efficient housing recording system. These changes have been managed whilst operating on a reduced staffing capacity due to recruitment challenges which are being experienced nationwide. Managers/Officers will be provided with a list of open cases for their section on a fortnightly bases which will include brief details of the case when it was received and the target date for closure. This approach will be monitored to see if this has a positive impact on our target time percentages.

**Table showing how the complaints were received.**

<b>By source</b>	<b>Count Stage 1</b>	<b>Count Stage 2</b>	<b>Count Escalated Stage 1 to Stage 2</b>
Telephone	23	2	2
Email	26	0	11
Letter	3	0	0
On-line	6	0	0
Contact Centre	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>13</b>

## **2. Key complaints - identified by type or theme**

Resident unhappy with the quality of works completed in back garden following WHQS upgrade.

Delay in payment for decoration allowance.

Missing information on completed housing application, possibly jeopardising opportunity to be allocated a property.

Residents concerned with delays in visible action following reports of a neighbour's garden being overgrown and time it takes to implement the garden procedure.

Incorrect information provided by Housing Advice Officer.

Resident unhappy with the service they have received from the Housing Repairs Operations team.

Resident concerned with delay in considering succession application and the impact it has claiming housing benefit payments.

### 3. Number by Category (Commissioner Case Type)

Table showing complaints by Commissioner Case Type, for prescribed Categories

Category	Count Stage 1, Stage 2 & Escalated 1 to 2
1 Collaborative Working	0
2 Decision Making	9
3 Delay in Service Provision	9
4 Officer/Contractors Conduct with public (including sensitivity/empathy of staff/politeness)	6
5a Following Council Policies	1
5b Following relevant Legislation	0
6 Accessibility of Services	0
7 Clarity/Accuracy/Timeliness of information	5
8 Quality of Work	42
9 Openness/ Fairness and Honesty	1
10 Compliance with Complaints procedure	0
11 Combination	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>73</b>

### 4. Number by Outcome and lessons learned comments

Table showing complaints by Outcome Data sets as categorised by the Complaints Standards Authority.

Outcome Data	Count Stage 1, Stage 2 & Escalated 1 to 2
Upheld	22
Not upheld	47
<b>Totals</b>	<b>69</b>

\*Please note, of the 73 complaints received, 3 were withdrawn and 1 is still ongoing

The following table shows more information regarding the complaints counts above, that were, Upheld, Not Upheld, Non-specific, Investigation Not Merited and Investigation Discontinued, by Service Area.

#### Stage 1 Complaints

Service	Upheld	Not Upheld
Adaptations	0	1
Allocations	3	5
Energy Works	0	0

Grants	0	2
Housing Management	9	4
Leaseholder	0	1
Private Landlord	0	1
Rents	0	0
Response Repairs	7	13
Sheltered Housing	0	0
WHQS External	0	1
WHQS Internal	1	0
Heating	0	3
Antisocial Behaviour	0	3
Homeless Prevention	0	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>35</b>

## Stage 2 Complaints

Service	Upheld	Not Upheld
Allocations	0	1
Grants	0	1
Housing Management	2	5
Response Repairs	0	4
Heating	0	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>12</b>

**List of lessons learned. Comment on key findings resulting from the complaints in this reporting period, which may help curtail, prevent, or impede future repeats.**

Details of Case	Lessons Learned	Category
Resident unhappy with the quality of the works carried out under WHQS in his back garden.	Unfortunately, the poor service and quality of works received by the resident was due to the contractor ceasing trading.	8 Quality of work
Resident has raised a number of issues including delay in decoration payment - discretionary housing payment confusion - unfinished repairs - query over tenant's handbook and the meaning of it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Gas central heating system was not operational for the first 6 weeks of the tenancy - Internal systems have now been changed by the Principal Contracts Officer and these will be reviewed by Housing Operations Manager to ensure that they are robust and will prevent this happening in future.</li> <li>•Standard of the new home – discuss potential training needs and to agree the focus of awareness raising sessions with team members who are responsible for ensuring that our Lettings Standard is met and that there is a clear understanding of Tenant Maintenance responsibilities (Tenants Handbook).</li> </ul>	8 Quality of work

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Delay in redecoration BACS Payment – The current procedure for making payments to tenants will be reviewed to ensure that any payments are processed as quickly as possible.</li> <li>•Tenant Handbook change to wording – This has already been amended for the new supply that are currently on order.</li> </ul>	
Resident completed housing application, but we had missing information on our system and the information communicated was incorrect. Resident concerned they may have missed out on an offer of a property.	Discussions held with Clerical Officers to ensure they check applications before replying.	7 Clarity/Accuracy/Timeliness of information
Resident unhappy with the service received whilst having the wall between the kitchen and lounge injected with damp course and replastered - also still waiting for decoration allowance payment	Improved communication requirements identified between us CCBC, the Contractor and the Contract Holders. Housing Repair Operations (HRO) operatives will be reminded of the importance of this. The Contract Holder should have been advised of the duration of works and access restrictions to parts of her property prior to and while the works were being undertaken.	8 Quality of work
Reported neighbouring garden being overgrown and damaging his property on a number of occasions but issue is still not resolved	Covid limited any actions or investigations at that time, however Officers were reminded that photos should have been requested from the customer to see the issue and to bear this in mind to provide a more efficient service. The resident had been complaining for some time and we didn't act promptly enough to resolve it.	3 Delay in Service Provision
Incorrect information provided by Housing Advice Officer	A meeting was held with the case officer, and we talked through the information that was shared regarding Common Allocations Policy (CAP) and former tenancy debt and to ensure that they double checked facts / figures and CAP before engaging in the conversation to avoid the scenario happening again. A workshop is being held with staff to review and reinforce pathways for service delivery and as part of this a session on the CAP and a	7 Clarity/Accuracy/Timeliness of information

	refresher for all the team is being arranged	
Resident unhappy with the mess in the area and feels the garden procedure takes too long and the emo is not acting quick enough	We acknowledge the length of time to deal with this request and note Estate Management Officer (EMO's) have been less active in the community due to Covid restrictions, but meetings are being held to rectify this as restrictions are now lifted.	3 Delay in Service Provision
Contract holder contacted to advise they are unhappy with the repairs service they have received.	On this occasion we should have renewed the door earlier due to the number of repairs that were undertaken on the door. We do have a Lesson learnt procedure in place at the moment, that is if the same repair is reported on three occasions, then the Foreman would go out to check and advise if the repair has been carried out correctly. I know this did happen at least once at this property, but the number of repairs recorded against the front door should have acted as a warning for the door to be renewed.	8 Quality of work
Contract holder gained succession and it was backdated leaving them with an arrears balance and backdated Housing Benefit cannot be claimed due to receiving Universal Credit	Arrange to meet with the relevant EMO and talk about sending of the correct letters in a timely manner. This matter will be raised with EMO Teams meeting, as the introduction of Renting Home Wales Act 2016 (RHW) 1st December 2022 there will be stringent timescales	8 Quality of work
Contract holder told she could partition bedroom, but now informed consent is required so has to wait whilst her and the children are sleeping downstairs. Not happy by the way I have just been forgotten about as a contract holder and I'm not happy the way that I've been spoken to.	We receive calls from frustrated customers regularly and dealing with us as a council can be a bureaucratic process. We can't expect customers to know every one of our procedures and we need to be understanding of that, and respond supportively rather than assuming customers are trying to circumvent our procedures We need to do more training on providing excellent customer service and improving the experience of our customers who contact us. We have started this with the restorative training and I'm hoping to continue by looking at customer journeys. When we	7 Clarity/Accuracy/Timeliness of information

	get call recording, we can use this for training purposes.	
Housing register application being closed down again	Manager has raised the inaccuracies of the tenancy rent reference with the relevant department and further training will be offered to the team to hopefully alleviate any future mistakes. We will also look to update the Tenancy Reference Form which rents are sent so the information required is easy to process.	7 Clarity/Accuracy/Timeliness of information
Following chimney being removed 2 months ago bags of rubble still left on garden. Tenant has called 5 times to request removal but has still not been removed	There was a definite breakdown in communication between us and the contractor, and the tenant should have been informed that there was a possibility that the waste would not be collected within a reasonable timescale. Moving forward we will ensure tenants are kept updated with any potential delays in service.	3 Delay in Service Provision
Contractors working on property and left cans and food in house.	The Engineers that carried out the work on our behalf have failed to meet our standards within the agreed Tenant's Charter of Trust by respecting yourself and your home. To avoid any instances of this nature reoccurring the Contractor has held Toolbox talks with their Engineers and have assured us that this will not happen again going forward. We will also request that in house Surveyors carry out more spot checks and visits on future installations, this would ensure that Engineers are acting in a professional manner whilst undertaking the work	4 Officer/Contractors contact with public.
Contract holder requesting review of decision not to renew kitchen - disagrees with signing the form to opt out of new kitchen	Although the customer did refuse works previously and had signed an opt out form, this should not have stopped the surveyor as the customers' needs had changed, hence moving forward we need to focus on why the customer is now asking for the work to be done. In this instance the customer had asked for the tumble dryer to be relocated into the kitchen from a shed in the garden as a member of their family has health issues this was achievable by removing an old pantry, The surveying team	9 Openness/fairness and Honesty

	needs to understand that at any given time the customer has the right to reverse their decision. The surveyors line manager has been informed that on this occasion we failed the needs of the customer we have asked the line manager to hold a toolbox talk with all the surveyors highlighting that if an opt out form has been signed the customer is still entitled to reverse their decision, this will also be communicated throughout the Housing Technical department.	
Private owner of unhappy that the garden of a contract holder is overgrowing with grass and brambles and coming into his garden causing damage to plastic around shed this has been ongoing for many years	The need to identify whether service requests for garden conditions when received for this location, are seasonally recurring and, if so, consider previous responses/cumulative impact when determining a reasonable response to requests, whilst we identify a longer-term solution to a recognised issue. Officers reminded of the need to consider file histories when determining our responses to concerns raised about garden conditions in this location	8 Quality of work

## 5. Identified relationships to Equalities or Welsh Language

Table showing a count and list of findings resulting from the complaints in this reporting period, that specifically relate to the Equalities or Welsh Language protected characteristics.

Characteristic Strand	Count Stage 1, Stage 2 & Escalated 1 to 2
Age	0
Disability	2
Gender Reassignment	0
Marriage and Civil Partnership	0
Pregnancy and Maternity	0
Race	0
Religion/Belief or Non-belief	0
Sex	0
Sexual Orientation	0
Welsh Language	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2</b>

Extracts from cases linked to the Disability characteristic:

- Following shower being fitted the boiler was adjusted to ensure hot water was coming from shower. This has caused water from the hot water tap to be deemed too hot for her daughter



concerned daughter will scald herself. This issue was considered at both stage 1 and Stage 2 and was not upheld.

**6. Annex – Referrals to Ombudsman, complaints resulting from appeals and examples of relevant items (points to note) specific to this reporting period**

**Identify how many referrals to the Ombudsman and list and append any relevant supplementary information here, namely, points to note, or an example data set.**

Three cases were referred to the Ombudsman for Housing in this reporting period. The Ombudsman decided not to investigate and subsequently closed their records. The first Ombudsman case related to a delay in providing a Stage 2 response however even though the response was provided out of timescale, the Ombudsman felt it was justified to provide an in-depth response. The second Ombudsman case was regarding the banding for a housing application. The Ombudsman confirmed that the procedure was followed, and they will not investigate a properly made decision. The third contact was from a family member on behalf on their parents. They were disputing the 50% contribution for costs to replace the fencing. The Ombudsman confirmed they cannot investigate a complaint for which there is a remedy by way of proceedings in a court of law.

**For further information, please contact**

Gemma Hoare

01443 811436

hoareg@caerphilly.gov.uk