



# Annual complaints performance and service improvement report

2023-2024





I am proud to Chair the Customer Service Committee at VIVID which gives me the opportunity to work alongside our customers and colleagues, ensuring that everything we do is focused on improving the service we offer customers.

This is about making sure customers know what to expect from us more clearly than ever before, keeping them updated, and it being effortless to interact with us. We want to prevent issues arising in the first place, but when customers do complain, we want to get to the root cause and do more to communicate with our customers as to the status of their issue - keeping people informed is really important even when there isn't much 'new news'.

The complaints report shows that we're making improvements and are on our way and highly committed to resolving the issues customers raise, with plenty more to do.

I am looking forward to working with the team to continue to improve our handling of complaints and learning lessons as we go.

#### **Jo Moran, Board member responsible for complaints**

We're committed to developing our services to improve customer experience, to build trust and confidence in everything we do. If we do get something wrong, we recognise the need to own it and put it right.

Our repair service has been the biggest source of complaints this year and since January 2024 we've been driving a service improvement programme. We end 2023/24 with falling volumes of complaints and rising transactional satisfaction for our repair service. We have more work to do and plan to continue to work with customers to develop our programme of service improvements throughout the year ahead.

We now have a centralised team that manages Stage 1 complaints, improving the quality and timeliness of our responses and ensuring learning from complaints is at the heart of our organisational culture.

We want to continue to hear the voices of all of our customers so they can influence everything that we do as we seek to deliver **more homes, bright futures**.

#### **Margaret Dodwell, Chief Operating Officer**







We review our complaints policy and processes at least annually and ensure we meet the requirements as set out in the Housing Ombudsman Scheme and accompanying code which became statutory on 1 April 2024.

Our annual self-assessment of our complaints service against the Housing Ombudsman code has been published on our **website** and we are compliant in all areas.





# Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)

The Regulator of Social Housing requires all registered providers of social housing to collect and report annually on their performance using a core set of defined measures. These are called the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs). The TSMs provide tenants with greater transparency about their landlord's performance.

The TSMs include 4 measures to demonstrate our complaints performance. For more information on the definition of these measures, [\*\*click here\*\*](#).

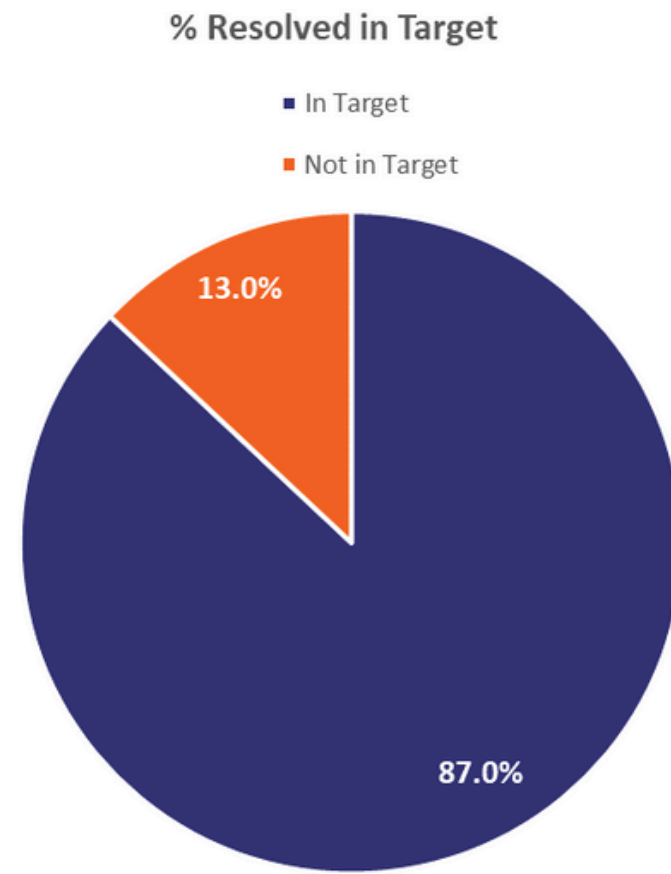
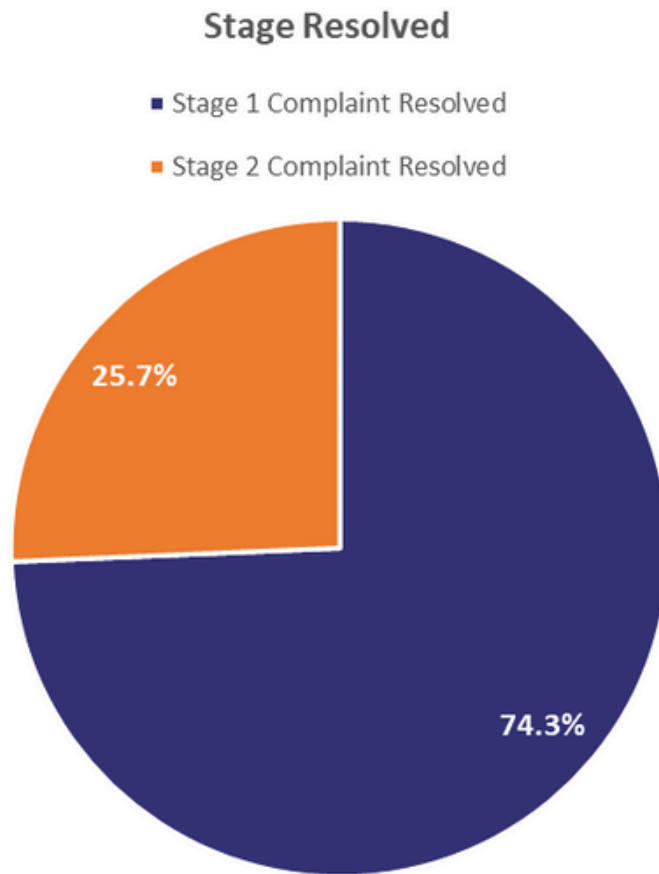


TSM		Measure*
CH01 (1)	Number of stage one complaints received per 1,000 homes	61.5
CH01 (2)	Number of stage two complaints received per 1,000 homes	12.6
CH02 (1)	Proportion of stage one complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales	80.4%
CH02 (2)	Proportion of stage two complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales	77.9%

\*Combined Low Cost Rented Accommodation and Low Cost Home Ownership score

# Resolved complaints

Overall, we resolved 1,999\* complaints, 74.3% at Stage 1 and 25.7% at Stage 2. We resolved 87% within target and our customers rated us 4.4 out of 10 for how we handled their complaint.



\* Includes Low Cost Rented Accommodation, Low Cost Home Ownership and all other tenures

# Declined complaints

In certain circumstances, we may decline to investigate a complaint. These are outlined in our complaints policy. We have only been able to capture information on complaints we've declined since the launch of our new housing management system in November 2023. Since that time, we have declined to investigate 18 issues raised to our complaint process. These were for the reasons below:

Policy reason for declining complaint	Volume
An initial request for a service, information or explanation of how a decision's been made	3
Matters relating solely to services or decisions outside of our control	2
Attempts to reopen previously concluded complaints	5
Dissatisfaction regarding the level of rent or service charge or increase	3
A claim for damages or a personal injury	4
Matters which are the subject of legal proceedings	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>

# Managing agents complaints

We have strengthened the requirements on managing agents who provide services to our customers within our **Complaints Policy** and also written to them to outline their responsibilities on complaint handling for services provided on behalf of us.

## Complaints themes

We categorise complaints so we can understand which of our services customers are not happy with, enabling us to focus on those areas and develop actions to improve.

### **This year's top 3 themes were:**

- Customer service
- Appointments
- Standard of work



# Top theme: customer service

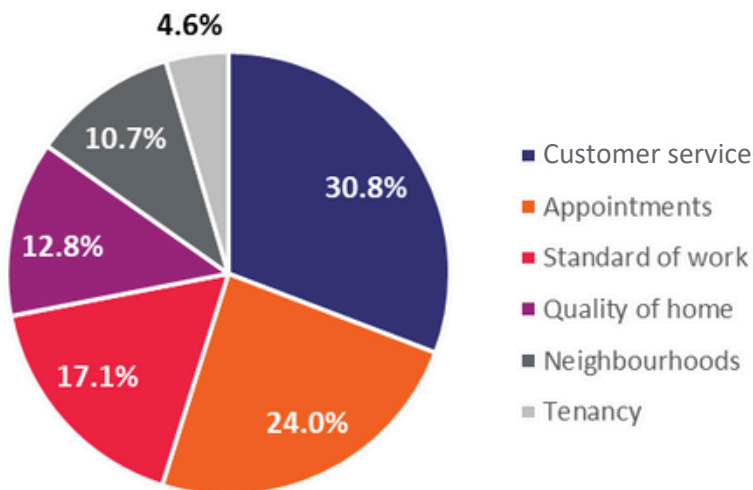
The largest theme is 'customer service'. Within each theme we capture sub-categories and the largest sub-category is 'repair request' at 22.7%.

# Secondary theme: appointments

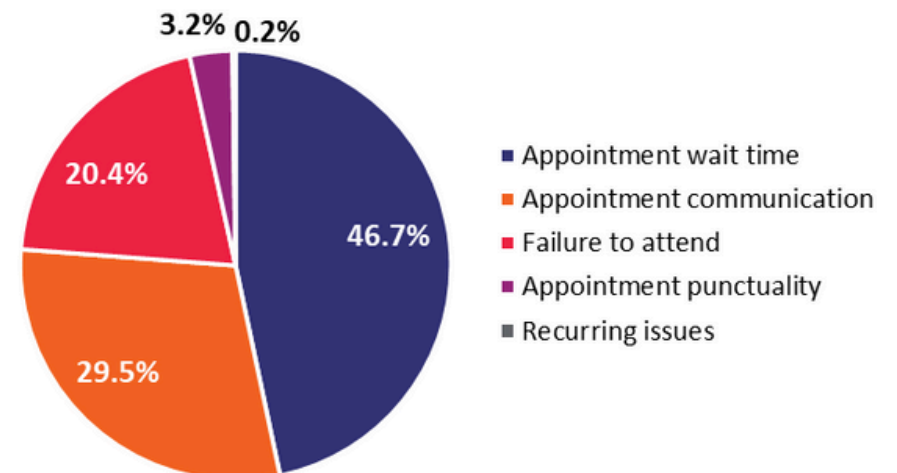
The second largest theme is 'appointments', whereby 'appointment wait time' is the largest sub-category at almost 47%.

This is related to wait times for our repairs service alongside the 'standard of work' theme. We recognise this is a priority area for our customers. We've been working hard to improve this throughout the year, and we've made good progress on reducing wait times.

Theme of Resolved Complaints



Appointments Theme: Sub-Categories





# Root cause analysis

We've explored 983 complaints to understand the root cause – to go a step further than themes and sub-themes. Across this sample, the 3 main drivers were:

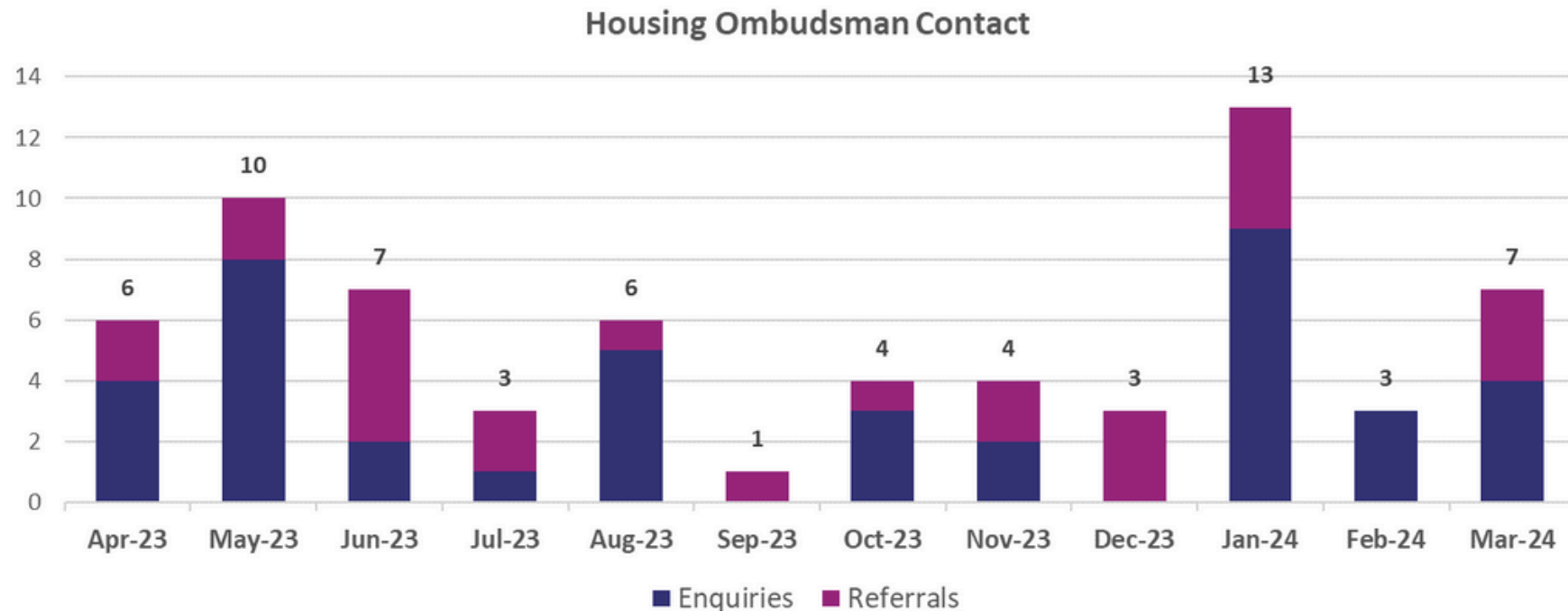
- Poor communication regarding repairs/not being updated/not receiving callbacks
- Outstanding repairs/wait time/time to resolve issue
- Multiple appointments for the same issue – inspection only/not resolved/parts unavailable

As part of this, we've undertaken 10 detailed reviews into common themes of root causes, providing actionable insights to teams to learn and improve from complaints. To address these areas of dissatisfaction, we have implemented an ambitious Repairs Development Plan with the key aim of reducing wait times for repairs and raising the standard of our repairs service. We made the Regulator of Social Housing aware of our plans when they came to complete an 'in depth assessment' (IDA).



# Ombudsman performance summary and learnings

We work closely with the Housing Ombudsman where we have not been able to resolve an issue for a customer directly. The chart below indicates the level of cases where customers have contacted the Ombudsman about their issue. Enquiries are cases which have not exhausted our complaint process so are referred back to us. Referrals are cases where we have provided our final response at Stage 2 of our complaint process, but our customer is not satisfied with the outcome of our investigation.





Over the year to 31 March 2024, we received 2,329 complaints. The Housing Ombudsman carried out an independent review of 32 cases. Each case can have multiple outcomes and, within those cases, 4 were found to have been dealt with correctly, there were 18 occasions of service failure, 17 occasions of maladministration and 5 occasions of severe maladministration. We have acknowledged our failures and offered appropriate redress on a further 9 occasions.

## Determinations and compliance

If a customer is not happy with the way we've handled their complaint, they can contact the Housing Ombudsman and they'll decide if it's a case they can investigate further. Should they accept the case for investigation, their determination on the matter is published on their **website**.

There is a filter that can be used to identify all determinations relating to us. We also include a link to that page on our own **website**, alongside a summary of our complaint process, our self-assessment and our annual Ombudsman performance.

## Findings of non-compliance with the code

The Housing Ombudsman can issue orders for non-compliance with the code called Complaint Handling Failure Orders (CHFOs). We have no findings of non-compliance with the code.

# HOS performance report

Each year, the Housing Ombudsman publishes an annual summary of our performance for complaint cases escalated to them and how we compare to other landlords. The most recent report is from a previous year (April 22 - March 23) and it advises we performed very well when compared to similar landlords by size and type:

Ombudsman Outcome	Description of Outcome	VIVID	Other landlords of similar size
Severe maladministration	Serious detrimental impact on customer	0%	3%
Maladministration	Failure which adversely affected customer	4%	24%
Service failure	Minor failings – minimal impact on customer	8%	21%
Mediation	Agreed a mutual outcome with Ombudsman's help	4%	2%
Redress	Maladministration where VIVID has already put things right	17%	15%
No maladministration	VIVID acted within its obligations	58%	24%
Outside jurisdiction	Not suitable for the HOS to investigate	8%	11%

You can access the full report [here](#).

We will publish the report which covers April 23 - March 24 as soon as it has been shared by the Ombudsman.



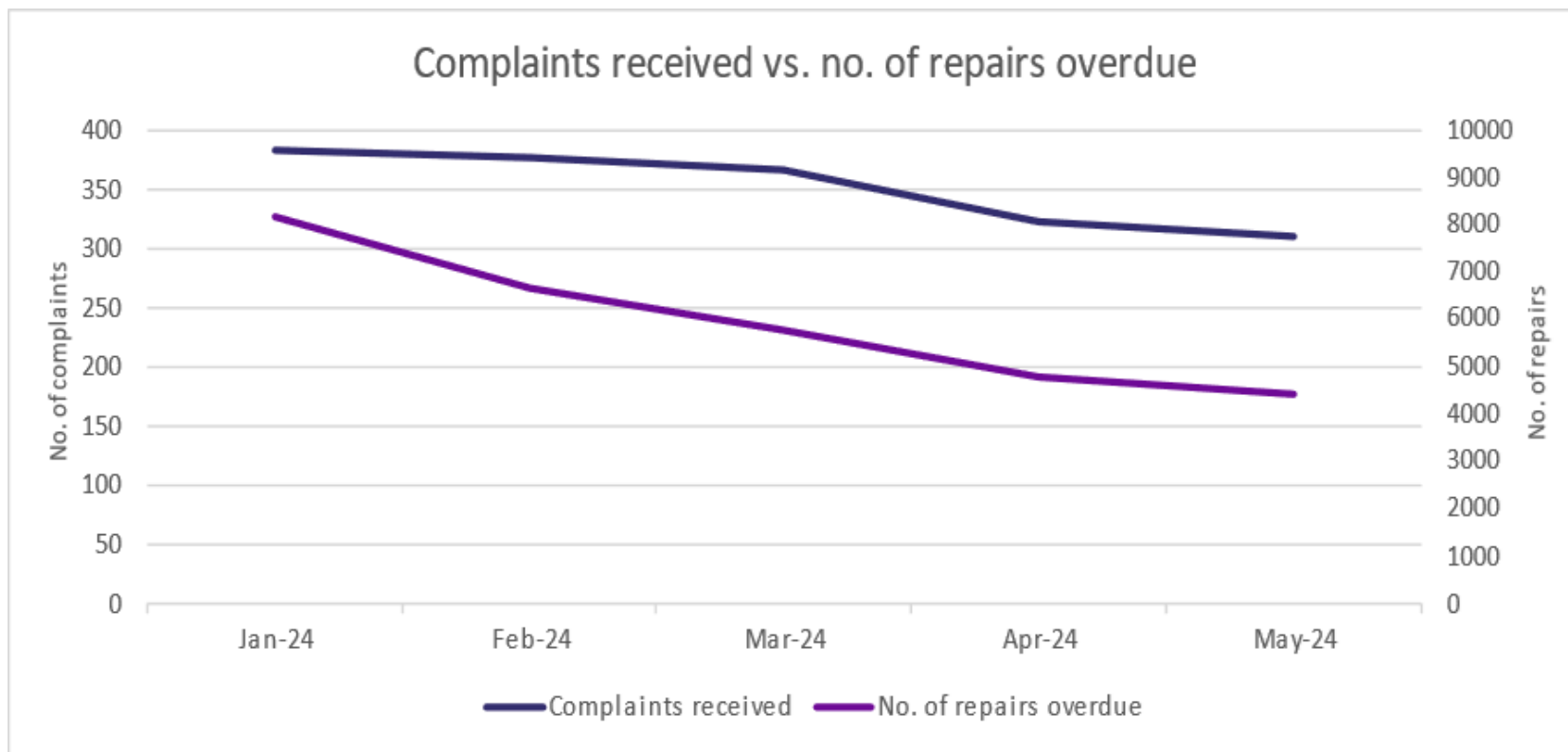
# Learning from complaints

We're committed to learning from the feedback we receive from customers and the Ombudsman to improve our services. We hold twice yearly customer feedback meetings for staff and also monthly insight meetings where we discuss customer feedback to ensure we hear our customer voice and adapt our services accordingly.

Some of the initiatives we put in place last year were:

- Centralised our complaints service, meaning there's an independent team to handle Stage 1 complaints and provide resolutions to customers
- Introduced an ambitious Repairs Development Plan with the key aim of reducing wait times for repairs. This has had a positive impact on wait times plus a reduction in the number of complaints we've received as shown in the chart on the next page





- A customer 'Repairs Working Group' was established to influence the focus of the Repairs Development plan and the design of our repairs service. The group discuss a broad range of topics including communication, service standards, processes, communal repairs and damp and mould. The group co-created a new 'no-access' procedure which is due to go live in June 2024 and also introduced a '60 second Round Up' whereby our trades staff spend the last 60 seconds of any repair job, checking customers understand what has been done and what is happening next
- Republished our Repairs Standard to clarify the service customers can expect from us and explained our repair responsibilities in our revised **'Repairs Matrix'**. We will make reasonable adjustments to our services to meet customer need where appropriate





- Restructured our Anti-Social Behavior (ASB) service to ensure cases are prioritised and responded to by specialist staff
- Reviewed our ASB policy, specifically considering how we record incidents of ASB and how we handle reports of threats of violence
- Held a complaints workshop with Neighbourhoods staff to ensure dissatisfaction is captured appropriately and refreshed complaint training for Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaint handlers
- Reassessed our Damp and Mould policy and procedure against the Ombudsman's damp and mould spotlight report to ensure improvements in service delivery and carried out customer consultation on the revised version
- Introduced a Damp and Mould Development Plan to ensure that any damp and mould case is managed within a single specialist team who are developing a risk led approach to addressing customer issues
- Reviewed our procedure for when customers are moved to a different home to ensure vulnerable customers receive the service they require
- Introduced a dedicated team to respond to service charge enquiries so customers receive a specialist response
- We have developed our internal systems so we can ensure we hold the correct information about our customers to enable us to adapt our services to meet our more vulnerable customers' needs
- We're further developing our Customer Influence Strategy to ensure our customers are influencing our services and our decisions, as we recognise the need to respond quickly to changing needs and expectations of customers



# Spotlight reports

The Housing Ombudsman issue 'Spotlight reports' which are designed to focus on an area of service provision where they see a high level of landlord failure, setting out learning and recommendations to avoid further complaints or service failure and let customers know more about their rights.

This year, we carried out self-assessments against the recommendations in the Housing Ombudsman Service's Spotlight report on Knowledge and Information Management, and on Attitudes, Respect and Rights.



# Attitudes, respect and rights

This report focused on what it means to be vulnerable in social housing today, and how landlords can respond effectively without stigma or marginalisation. To meet the recommendations in the report, we have carried out psychographic segmentation research which we'll use as a strategic tool to learn from our customers' attitudes and needs to better shape our services.

We're also improving our customer data collection, including holding a more robust health conditions list and recording how this impacts our customers day to day lives. We'll use this to help guide conversations to understand reasonable adjustments needed, which we'll hold on our system.

We're also taking another look at The Spotlight report Noise complaints – time to be heard, to see how we can improve further on reports of household noise.

# Knowledge and information management

This report highlighted how landlord services can be held back by weaknesses in data and information and can turn an ordinary service request into a protracted complaint. To meet the recommendations in this report, we have defined data standards and use this to inform service improvements.

We've implemented a Data Governance framework and assigned Data Owners and Data Stewards in each of our service areas.

We're reviewing our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy to ensure we recognise and deliver services to meet the needs of our diverse customers, and are rolling out EDI training to all staff to be completed by the summer.

We're also strengthening our Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) and will complete an assessment to consider the impact of our complaints policy and process on different groups.





We're also working towards TPAS accreditation as we see this as a way to support us to be more transparent, effective and demonstrate our culture across customer influence.

We will be reviewing the accessibility of this annual complaints report and our complaints information with customers. They will be directly assessing our website to ensure the information needed to make a complaint and how we are performing is accessible and easy to understand. This work will be complete by the end of July, and we will develop an action plan following any feedback. We will be considering how we expand on this further through the year for those customers who may not have access to the internet.

We will also be promoting our complaint performance and improvements to ensure we raise the profile of the Housing Ombudsman and our complaints process. An article will be published in our digital customer newsletter in June, our summer printed newsletter and will be promoted internally to staff within this same time frame. You can view our customer newsletters on our website **[here](#)**.

Customers can find out more about their rights and the services we are required to provide **[here](#)**.