

ANNUAL COMPLAINTS PERFORMANCE AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT REPORT DEPAUL HOUSING SERVICES 2023/24



Depaul Housing Services (DHS) has adopted The Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code as the basis of our approach to complaints.

Annual self-assessment 2024

Our annual self-assessment was conducted by the complaints officer for Depaul UK.

One area of non-compliance was identified. This was in respect of Section 5: The Complaint Handling Process which reads '5.5 Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.'

Depaul Housing Services is a growing Landlord and in 2023/24 started working with new partners and managing agents, data has not been collected from managing agents in respect of complaints for 2023/24. Therefore, the data in this report relates only to complaints received from Depaul UK managed premises with the exception of satisfaction data, which was collected from all Depaul Housing Services tenants. This will be rectified for the reporting period 2024/25.

Review of current practices

Complaints are monitored and reported quarterly to the Depaul UK Services and Business Development Committee. The Quality and Compliance Manager is the Complaints Officer for Depaul UK and is responsible for the implementation of our Complaints Policy.

During 2023 we consulted with Depaul UK client representatives via The Voice of Depaul (now known as Client Voice), about their experiences of complaints handling at Depaul UK. Their feedback was used to develop a new Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy and Procedure, as well as a new complaints management tool for staff.

At the end of 2023 we launched our new policy, updated our website to include a new webform and displayed a new complaints poster complete with QR Code in all Depaul UK services and buildings to make complaints more accessible.

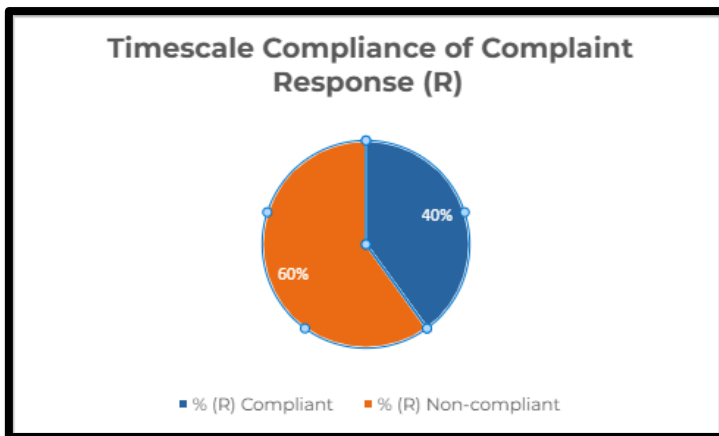
OUR PERFORMANCE

2023/24

Number of complaints received 15

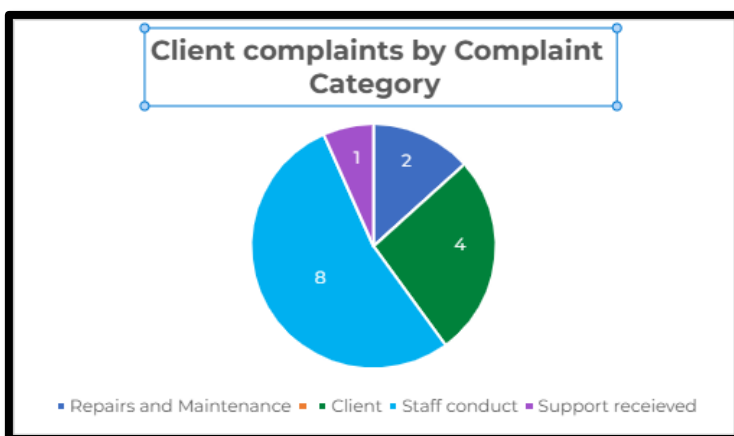
Percentage of complaints resolved at Stage 1 100%

15 complaints were made by tenants of Depaul UK managed Depaul Housing Service premises. 1 out of these 15 complaints was incorrectly handled as a complaint instead of anti-social behaviour, we have since made our policy clearer that reports of anti-social behaviour are exempt.



Timescales for compliance means that the complaint was both (a) acknowledged within 3 working days; and (b) responded to within 10 working days of the acknowledgement or within 20 working days where a written agreement is in place due to exceptional circumstances – as per Depaul UK and Depaul Housing Services Complaints Policy and Procedures.

During Quarter 2 & 3 2023/24 it was noted that timescales for complaint response were below those expected. In response we delivered a briefing session to all staff on how to improve handling and recognition of complaints. In addition, Depaul UK Quality and Compliance Officers were tasked with a fortnightly review to support staff in response to complaints according to compliance timelines.



In 2023/24 the most common reason for complaint was due to staff conduct. Upon review of these complaints 5 out of 8 related to complaints about support received. The 3 remaining complaints related to separate incidents and no trends were identified.

111 Tenants completed our Tenant Perception Survey in December 2023 of those 14 tenants responded 'yes' to the question have you made a complaint to your Landlord in the last 12 months. 72% were satisfied, 21% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and 7% was very dissatisfied with the Landlords approach to complaint handling.

LEARNING AND IMPROVEMENTS

Depaul Housing Service will receive regular complaints data in 2025 and appoint a Member Responsible for Complaints.

In 2025 we will bring forward production of this report alongside our Tenant Satisfaction Measures beyond the statutory minimum requirements to 30 June 2025 for reporting period 01 April 2024 – 31 March 2025. This will enable us to take a more proactive approach and capture learning.

Improving compliance with response timescales will be our focus for improvement. To support this, we will:

- Introduce automation to prompt staff of key milestones when handling a complaint;
- Introduce Quarterly Review Meetings with Managers of services which have received a complaint, to review performance data and to capture what has changed because of these complaints.

BOARD RESPONSE

The Board have reviewed and approved this annual report for 2023/24 at their meeting on 18th February 2025.

We are assured that, with support from Depaul UK, there is a focus on proactively dealing with complaints.

We note that, as a growing landlord, there is work to be done and that in this single area of non-compliance, Depaul Housing Services will be working closely with the new partners and managing agents for the next reporting period, as well as completing a deeper dive to identify and deliver service improvements.