

2023/24 Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report

We believe that every relationship matters, choices can make a difference and we can change things for the better.

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To provide customers and the Housing Ombudsman Service assurance that we have analysed our complaints service and included any service improvements as a result of feedback from customers.

At Thirteen, we value feedback from all of our customers, as it helps us identify areas where our services can be improved.

Annually, we conduct a self-assessment of our complaints handling against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint (HOS) Complaint Handling Code (CHC) to ensure compliance, and to drive continuous improvement.

[You can view our self-assessment here.](#)

To make a complaint or share concerns, our customers can contact us via email, phone, in person, or through our social media channels.

For more information about making a complaint to Thirteen please visit our website www.thirteengroup.co.uk

This report has been published to provide an overview of Thirteen's complaints performance and the service improvements we have made in the year 23/24.

2 Self Assessment

- 2.1 We completed our self-assessment during March to June 2024 against the Complaint Handling Code as outlined by the Housing Ombudsman. The new Code has been developed following consultation with more than 600 individuals and landlords nationally.

The new code is aligned with the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Act (LGSCO) and follows the Social Housing (Regulation) Act in an effort to provide a single set of standards for complaints procedures. The Code aims to achieve earlier resolution of complaints directly by the landlord. Our assessment ensures that our complaint handling policy and process remains fully aligned with the provisions set out in the Code.

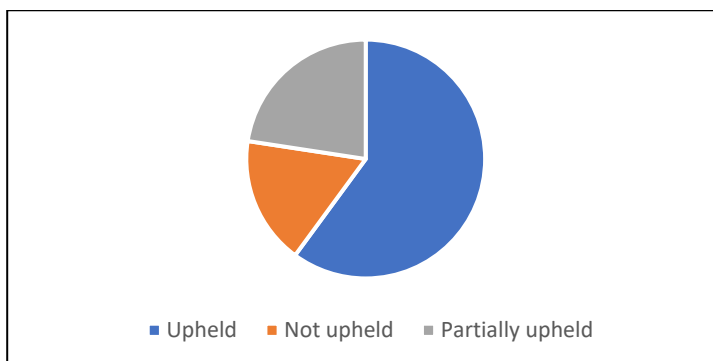
3 2023/24 Performance Information

3.1 Thirteen carry out an analysis of complaints every month, with this information being shared to our Leadership Team, Service Directors and Heads of Service. This information is also shared quarterly with our involved customer group and Customer Committee so that all stakeholders are kept informed of complaints performance, as well as any trends and learning. As part of our commitment and drive to improve continuously we also have introduced separate meetings with our Board Chair and Chair of the Customer Committee to keep the voice of the customer at the forefront of all our discussions and decisions.

3.2 We have monitored our performance over the last financial year 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024. The following details relate to this time period. Below shows our performance against the timescales for closing complaints which are five working days for a stage 1 complaint and 10 working days for a stage 2 complaint.

	Stage 1	Stage 2
Total number of complaints received (including low level claims)	1634	160
% of complaints closed within timescale (5 working days for S1 and 10 working days for S2)	92%	99%
Average time to respond (in working days)	4.83	9.32

Of the above complaints 60% were not upheld, 17% partially upheld and 33% upheld.



3.3 Complaints vs. 22/23

The number of complaints received by Thirteen has increased significantly when measured against the financial year 22/23. In 22/23 we received 986 stage 1 complaints and 54 stage 2 complaints. This represents a 40% increase of stage 1 complaints from 22/23 to 23/24 and a 66.25% increase for stage 2 complaints in the year 23/24.

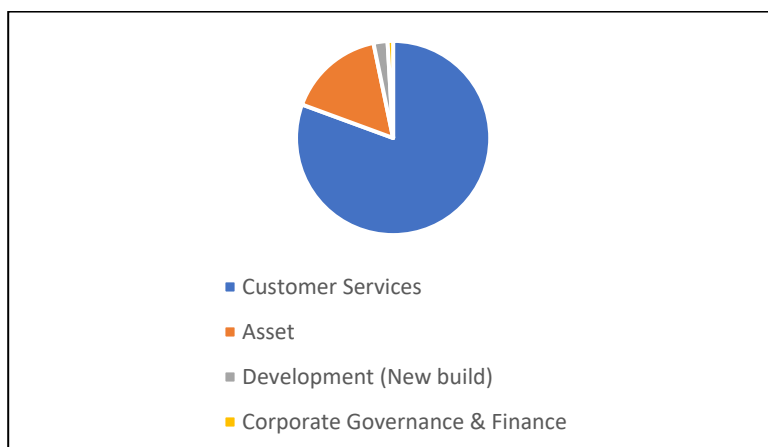
There are a number of reasons why complaints have increased this year including:

- The increasing importance of hearing your views and acting on your concerns. Both the Housing Ombudsman and the Regulator of Social Housing have made this a priority for landlords.
- The government’s ‘Make Things Right’ campaign was launched last year, empowering social housing tenants to report issues and make complaints as part of efforts to improve social housing conditions.
- Media coverage of landlords across the country where their services have failed tenants nationally.
- Increased communication between Thirteen and customers raising awareness of how to complain about our services.
- Increased awareness raising amongst Thirteen colleagues about complaints and the Housing Ombudsman Service.
- Our drive to do more and better for our customers and stakeholders.

3.4 Complaints by Directorate

The below table shows the service areas which complaints were made about, Customer Services includes; Repairs, Touchpoint and Housing teams and is the largest directorate within the business, with 96% of complaints falling within this area.

Customer Services	1,313
Asset	263
Development (new build)	38
Corporate Governance & Finance	15



3.5 Top 10 Root Causes (determined following investigations)

When our customers make a complaint we log the reason, we then analyse this information on a monthly basis to understand and improve the services we offer. We manage complaints and liability claims in the same way (excluding personal liability) to ensure a consistent approach is adopted. The table below shows the main causes for complaints/claims based on the outcome.

Damage to property (claim)	375
Timescales (amount of time taken to complete a service request)	307
Delay in service (where agreed timescales have not been met)	211
Disagree with decision	124
Customer not kept informed (a lack of communication when a service request has been made)	124
Quality of service (work or service provided has not been to the standard we or the customer would expect)	119
Staff attitude	86
Disagree with procedure	62
Quality of work (dissatisfaction with the standard of work completed)	61
Damp, mould and condensation (claim)	45
H&S/Environmental	29

3.6 Complaints not accepted

We had one complaint that was not accepted due to the issue raised not being a service failure, a full response was provided to the customer. The response to the customer included the reasoning as to why we would not accept the complaint. The initial request from the customer was in March 2023.

3.7 Monitoring dissatisfaction

Thirteen monitor customer dissatisfaction through our Customer Feedback Log and in the year 23/24 we captured 3962 pieces of feedback which have been analysed to look for trends. From this, the following have come out as the top 3 trends:

Communication	1,627
Timescales	1,335
Quality of Service/Work	876

This information is analysed regularly and shared across the business monthly to ensure we are learning from customer feedback.

4. Housing Ombudsman Reports

4.1 The Housing Ombudsman Service investigates complaints and resolves disputes involving customers and leaseholders of social landlords (housing associations and local authorities).

Within the financial year 23/24 Thirteen received 10 determinations from the Housing Ombudsman based upon their investigations into complaints brought to them by customers and were not given any Complaint Handling Failure Orders (CHFOs).

The table below shows the outcome of the determinations provided by the Ombudsman.

Outcome	Number of determinations
Maladministration	5
Service failure	1
No maladministration found	3
Outside of jurisdiction	1

Thirteen takes all Housing Ombudsman Service decisions very seriously. We aim to ensure that the failings identified do not happen again. It is important that all our customers have access to an independent body that will investigate their complaints and we continue to cooperate fully with the Housing Ombudsman Service to make sure we're doing right by our customers and identify learning as well as any feedback as a result of complaints taken to them.

This year, we have addressed a number of our policies and processes with the aim to ensure that others do not experience similar issues. We will continue to work with our customers, colleagues and the Housing Ombudsman to put right the things that have gone wrong.

5 Involved customer review of complaints information

- 5.1 As part of Thirteen's commitment to working with our customers, the Customer Experience Manager presents analysis of complaints to our customers, who will consider the information provided and decide on any further scrutiny that is required. This meeting takes place on a quarterly basis and talks through how our complaints department is performing against our KPIs as well as analysis on trends and themes coming from complaints. Satisfaction is also reviewed as part of these meetings alongside feedback provided from our customers who have raised a complaint.

Our involved customers scrutinise this bi-annually and a report is compiled by the customer stream lead for complaints. This report is then shared with our customer committee and board.

6 Service improvement

- 6.1 Thirteen publish their performance and the service improvements they have made as a result of complaints on a quarterly basis. The below are some of the recommendations made as a result of complaints made to us and have been published on our you said, we did pages which are available on the Thirteen website.

[M01322A5 Q1 2023 Performance Update.pdf \(thirteengroup.co.uk\)](#)

[Q2 2023 Performance Update.pdf \(thirteengroup.co.uk\)](#)

[M0138709 Q2 2024 Performance Update.pdf \(thirteengroup.co.uk\)](#)

[M0138763 Q4 2024 Performance Update You said we did.pdf \(thirteengroup.co.uk\)](#)

Over the course of 23/24 repairs, which includes damp & mould, trended as the biggest driver for customer dissatisfaction. With this in mind, we have implemented the below to help improve the services we provide our customers.

Repairs timescales

Customers waiting for work to be carried out and taking longer than they expect it to take.

Solutions:

- We recruited an additional team to work within repairs to help with the increased demand which was causing delays to timescales.

Contractors

Timescales of work to be carried out by contractors and also communication once works have been completed.

Solutions:

- Introduced new contractor calling cards.
- More auditing of work completed by contractors.
- Created a role specific to maintaining the relationship with our contractors to ensure a point of contact.

Damp and mould

Damp and mould issues continue to be reported by our customers with a lack of communication being cited as the main reason for dissatisfaction.

Solutions:

- Introduced a new dedicated damp and mould team.
- Moved our administration and planning colleagues to align with the team priorities.
- New internal email inboxes introduced to help streamline processes and deal with customer queries in a more timely manner.
- We now have seven external contractors which all have appointments managed through our internal system to ensure consistency.

For more information about our complaints performance, you can visit the Housing Ombudsman's website for any annual landlord's performance reports <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/>

To contact us to make a complaint, please visit our website www.thirteen.co.uk for further details.