



Scrutiny Group

- Review of Complaints March 2024

Who is Scrutiny Group?

- Scrutiny Group is a group of involved tenants, chaired by Branda Stirling
- CX Committee approved the role of the Scrutiny Group in March 2023, including:
 - Monitoring service performance to agreed standards
 - Reviewing services to provide an independent view of their performance
 - Making recommendations for improvement
 - Reviewing complaint handling

Work completed

- The Scrutiny Group has recently completed a review of stage 2 complaints
- 30 stage 2 complaints from the six months period (April – Sep 2023) were reviewed in detail
- Complaints related to a wide range of WCHG service areas – Surveyors 6, Other 6 (Living Well, Facilities, Adaptations, Multi-Service), External Contractors 4, Allocations 3, Neighbourhoods 3, Grounds Maintenance 3, Voids 2 Day to Day Repairs 2, Garden City Homes 1
- All cases were anonymised by the Customer Feedback Team and reviewed individually by Scrutiny Group members or in small groups during January and February 2024

Cases were reviewed against a compliance checklist

- ✓ Was the complaint acknowledged within 2 working days?
- ✓ Was the complaint referral copied to next level of management?
- ✓ Was the complaint response provided within 10 working days?
- ✓ If responses could not be issued within 10 working days was the customer notified and interim responses provided?
- ✓ Is there evidence of communication with the customer as part of the investigation?
- ✓ Was the standard final paragraph provided to inform the customer of next steps?
- ✓ Was a complaint learning form completed?
- ✓ Was there overall compliance with policy?

Scrutiny Group findings

Compliance with policy is good –

- ✓ Acknowledgement & responses were all within required timescales
- ✓ Where response times were extended customers were notified accordingly & kept within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales
- ✓ There was evidence of communication with customers in all cases as part of the complaint investigation/resolution at stage 1 & 2
- ✓ In all cases complaints were always shared with the next level of manager on referral from the Customer Feedback Team
- ✓ In all cases customers were notified of next steps if they remained dissatisfied
- ✓ Learning forms were present in 25 cases and where complaints were upheld managers identified key learning points from complaints

Quality checks

The stage 1/2 response was reviewed in some cases against a quality checklist to assess –

- ✓ Is there evidence of a thorough investigation?
- ✓ Did WCHG apologise?
- ✓ Did WCHG put things right?
- ✓ Did the stage 2 response address all issues?
- ✓ Have WCHG offered reasonable redress for what went wrong?
- ✓ Is there evidence of communication with customer as part of investigation in the complaint response?
- ✓ Does the complaint response inform the customer what WCHG have learned from the complaint if learning was identified?

Quality of responses is good

- ✓ Managers did apologise to customers in all cases
- ✓ Managers always tried to put things right, although, in one case a manager concluded that this was not possible in adhering to the Allocations Policy
- ✓ Responses to customers at stage 2 especially were well structured, covered all issues that had been raised & additional concerns that had been identified during the investigation
- ✓ Reasonable redress was offered to customers in the form of an apology, actions or compensation
- ✓ There was evidence of communication with customers in all stage 2 complaint responses through face-to-face or by telephone and in some cases multiple attempts were made to engage with customers
- ✓ Evidence of learning was shared with customers in responses where it was identified

Areas for improvement

- Where complaints enter WCHG via other service areas they need to be directed to the Customer Feedback Team to be processed at the earliest opportunity
- Where apologies are made in all complaint responses, they need to have an associated explanation and be meaningful
- When the resolution to a complaint at stage 1 depends on a claim for compensation and dissatisfaction with the amount offered at stage 1, this needs to be discussed with the relevant Senior Manager to prevent escalation unnecessarily

Scrutiny Group findings summary

- WCHG complaint handling is of **good quality** with complaints recorded, monitored and tracked promptly in line with the complaint procedures
- Managers are completing investigations of customer complaints which includes - communicating with customers, identifying & acknowledging where things have gone wrong & working with customers to put this right & resolve complaints
- Managers are listening to customers and responding to complaints with understanding, respect and empathy and making reasonable adjustments where required
- Managers are identifying learning and service improvements as a result of customer complaints
- Managers are providing good quality responses to customers particularly at stage 2 which is expected as the final response from the Group