

Report to: Housing Review Board



Date of Meeting 29 April 2021

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Complaints and Feedback Report – Property & Asset

Property & Asset are committed to providing a high-quality repair, maintenance and void service. We welcome both positive and negative feedback and view each as an opportunity to learn and improve our quality of service, provided by both East Devon District Council and by our Contractors.

Property & Asset recognise that being a reactive service working on and within people's homes there will always be occasions when we get things wrong or residents are unhappy about aspects of our service and the service we provide.

The Property & Asset complaint policy and report applies to all staff members, contractors and sub-contractors employed by or acting on behalf of East Devon District Council, carrying out work or instructing work to our properties.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes No

Policy Framework Yes No

Recommendation:

- (1) That Housing Review Board recognise our process, policy and plan in the management of all feedback whether negative or positive in regards to the service provided within Property & Asset

Reason for recommendation:

To update all relevant parties, Officers and Councillors to the management of Complaints and Satisfaction within the department

Officer: Sophie Davies – Housing Business and Customer Improvement Manager

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action and Emergencies
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- Culture, Tourism, Leisure and Sport
- Democracy and Transparency
- Economy and Assets
- Finance
- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities

Equalities impact Low Impact

Climate change Low Impact

Risk: Choose a risk level; Low risk

Links to background information Appendices: (1) Annual Report for Property & Asset Complaints 2020 (2) Ian Williams Compliment and Complaint Report (3) Complaints Policy

Link to [Council Plan](#):

Priorities (check which apply)

- Outstanding Place and Environment
 - Outstanding Homes and Communities
 - Outstanding Economic Growth, Productivity, and Prosperity
 - Outstanding Council and Council Services
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1 Report in full

- 1.1 Whilst customer feedback provides a valuable insight into how both East Devon District Council alongside our contractors have been performing, complaints and compliments figures do not reflect the full picture. This report should therefore, be understood within the context of the number of customers interacting with our repairs service, averaging all repairs to 4200+ properties.
- 1.2 Within Property & Asset, as a service we want to make sure that:
- We listen to people's views and experiences of our services and act accordingly.
 - We learn from every complaint made and use them to improve our services and ways of working.
 - We ensure that there are always simple and effective ways for people to make a complaint.
 - We manage and discuss complaints fairly and consistently.
 - All residents who report a complaint receive a full response within the agreed timescales from East Devon District Council and, if required, the contractor involved (unless there is a valid reason as to why this is not possible or the complaint requires further investigation).

2 Complaint Type

- 2.1 *Informal complaint:* An expression of dissatisfaction made by the resident, directly to our Business and Customer Improvement Manager, which may be resolved by offering a solution or explaining the reason behind the dissatisfaction. An example would be a resident who telephones to report that a contractor has failed to meet a dedicated appointment slot and we can liaise with the contractor to arrange an alternative appointment at a time convenient to the resident. The close monitoring of informal complaints help Property & Asset, as well as our contractors, understand issues that could escalate if not dealt with appropriately at an early stage.
- 2.2 *Formal complaint:* An expression of dissatisfaction that is not able to be resolved informally. Formal complaints require investigation and a full response to be issued, managed by our Housing and Customer Improvement Manager
- 2.3 *Stage 1 and 2 Formal Complaint:* Complaint managed as above and a coordinated response and action plan provided to our corporate complaint team to provide the response.
- 2.4 *Compliment:* An expression of gratitude for the service, repair or operative provided on instruction from Property & Asset.

3 Response Times

3.1 In line with the Housing White Paper, we aim to acknowledge, respond and action all complaints, questions, comments and queries within the appropriate timescale/s.

We aim to:

- Acknowledge complaints within 5 working days

Advise residents that we have received their complaint and this will require further investigation

- Acknowledge Councillor queries in 5 working days

Advise Councillor that we have received the query and this is being investigated

- Investigate, comment and action complaints and queries with a full response inclusive of closure within 10-15 working days

3.2 Whilst we highlight the above timeframes, this is not always possible. We aim to keep the resident fully updated throughout the process.

3.3 Most complaints require further work plans and programmes, we aim to provide these within the context of our action plans.

3.4 If further works are required and to ensure works are completed to a high standard, our Business and Customer Improvement Manager will post inspect all of the works carried out, subject to the complaint, to ensure this matches our resident's requirements and all parties are satisfied.

4 Learning from our complaints

4.1 Every resident's opinion is really important to us and vital for us to learn and grow as a service. We learn from complaints and use them to improve our services across the team, both within East Devon District Council and our Contractors. Our Business and Customer Improvement Manager records all compliments, complaints and comments made.

4.2 With this information, we discuss each complaint and compliment in detail with the relevant teams in Property & Asset on a monthly basis. Not only do we discuss this with our teams, we ensure that we report and action lessons learnt in the following contractual meetings:

- Weekly discussions between both Management teams in the council and contractors
- Operational Group with Ian Williams (Monthly)
- Core Group, senior members meeting (Monthly)

4.3 We provide information about complaints to senior managers across the council. We also track the learning and changes made as a result of complaints in our reviews.

4.4 An annual report is created at the end of each calendar year summarising compliments and complaints received throughout the year. **Annexe 1**

4.5 The report identifies trends of complaints that we receive and highlight's any action taken as a result of feedback given. The annual report also covers 'Lessons Learnt' at the end of each report, actions are highlighted to help improve the service, working closely with our contractors to achieve this.

5 KPI (Key Performance Indicators) within the IMAC Contract

5.1 Within our monthly Operational Group with Ian Williams, we discuss the KPI report. Within the KPI report is a section on complaints and satisfaction; this is measured against a target score that we closely monitor MLAP (Minimum Level of Acceptable Performance).

5.2 The six KPIS which are in direct relation to customer service; i.e. complaints, service and satisfaction are as follows (examples extracted for February 2021):

KPI 3	Complaints
TARGET	0.5%
MLAP	2%
Performance 0.2%	

EDDC figure used – 2 complaints in direct relation to Ian Williams (work, service, performance, and attitude) against 1097 jobs raised for February 2021; in comparison to 8 complaints received in January.

KPI 4	Complaints escalation to Stage 1
TARGET	5%
MLAP	10%
Performance 50%	

EDDC figure used – 1 Stage 1 complaint, out of 2 complaints for the month which is why it shows at 50%; no complaints were escalated for January.

KPI R1	Customer satisfaction – Repairs
TARGET	95%
MLAP	90%
Performance 98%	

The KPI for February has been scored using EDDC's & IWS data combined.

Breaking the data down;

- EDDC completed 74 satisfaction surveys, 65 happy with work and 9 were not – 88%
- IWS Issued 684 issued with 684 satisfied - 100%

KPI R4	Post Inspection Quality
TARGET	100%
MLAP	90%
Performance 70%	

EDDC data used; February EDDC completed 49 Post Inspections; these are automatically generated and we passed 34 as satisfied.

Typical reasons for Ian Williams failing Post Inspections being;

- Contractor told tenants job couldn't be completed due to missing a part but hasn't returned.
- Didn't turn up to do work on the slotted appointment.
- Temporary repair completed, hasn't returned to complete the job.

This is a drop of 10% on January's figures which was disappointing to see.

KPI R6	Average Repair Completion Time
TARGET	8
MLAP	12

For February the average repair completion time has dropped by 1 day since January. Ideally, we still need to bring this number down to the national average of 10 days as per House mark, but it is pleasing we are moving in the right direction.

KPI V1	Post Inspection Quality (Void)
TARGET	100%
MLAP	95%
Performance	100%

EDDC data used; for February there were 18 post inspections completed and all 18 passed. This is an improvement of 5% on the figures for January.

- 5.3 Within our satisfaction survey, both paper and telephone versions, we have a 'call back from management' option, where tenants have the option to request that management call back directly, our recent report highlighted that a ratio of 1/24 residents wanted to discuss their service further.
- 5.4 With all telephone surveys where the residents are reporting bad service or workmanship, we will discuss this further with both the resident and provide the data to our contractor to also discuss this further with their Customer Liaison Officer and Operative who carried out the work.

6 'In House' complaints

- 6.1 Complaints made by residents about the direct service of the Property & Asset team are managed and discussed monthly via team meetings.

We discuss:

- Nature of Complaints
- Service within Property & Asset
- Complaint Resolution
- Lessons learnt

Annexe 1 Annual Report for Property & Asset Complaints 2020' highlights the complaints received, nature of the complaints and in relation to which area of the service.

- 6.2 During the last 3 months, the highest context of complaints have been as follows:

- Mould and Damp within the property
- Lack of communication from our contractor's when follow on works are required
- Heating issues within the property

7. How do we receive complaints, compliments or feedback?

- Email: repairs@eastdevon.gov.uk sdavies@eastdevon.gov.uk
- Via telephone – 01395 517458
- Letter to our postal services within Blackdown House
- Feedback form handed out by our contractors post repair
- PDA (Personal Digital Assistant) via contractor

8 How often reports are created and distributed

- Operational Complaint Reports – Monthly
- Contractors Complaint and Compliment Report – Quarterly
- Property & Asset Annual Report – Annual (Calendar Year)

9. Conclusion

9.1 In conclusion, please see below; our 2020 Annual Property & Asset complaint report and plan.

EDDC: Property & Asset service – Annual Complaint Overview

<p>Project Start Date: January 2020</p> <p>Project Completion Date: December 2020</p>	<p>Portfolio holder: Cllr Megan Armstrong</p> <p>Service Head: Amy Gilbert-Jeans / Jo Garfoot</p> <p>Officer lead with Complaints: Sophie Davies</p>
<p>Background: Property & Asset aim to maintain a high level of performance and improve the quality of service offered to customers, who feel that they have not received a high standard. This includes providing timely responses to complaints whilst continuing to learn and improved.</p> <p>Property & Asset strive to ensure we respond to customer concerns in an open and transparent way within defined timescales that has been agreed with both ourselves and our contractors. The purpose of this report is to outline the complaints and compliments that our Housing and Customer Business Improvement Manager has received January 2020 – December 2020, highlighting key themes and trends.</p>	
<p>Complaint Objectives:</p> <p>To ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tenants feel supported and understand how they contact us to report a complaint if they are unhappy with our service - All complaints are responded to within 2 – 15 days. - Ensure we capture and communicate changes to lessons learnt throughout the service - Ensure that our communications are always open, honest, clear, concise, simple and accessible to all. 	
<p>Complaint Stats</p>	
<p>- Ian Williams January 2020 – December 2020</p>	<p>94 Complaints</p>
<p>- East Devon District Council Officers / Service January 2020 – December 2020</p>	<p>84 Complaints</p>
<p>- Planned Work Contractor Complaints January 2020 – December 2020</p>	<p>18 Complaints</p>
<p>- Liberty Gas Complaints January 2020 – December 2020</p>	<p>31 Complaints</p>
<p>- Social Media / Facebook Complaints</p>	<p>8 Complaints</p>
<p>- Airtech Complaints</p>	<p>3 Complaints</p>
<p>- Ace Complaints</p>	<p>2 Complaints</p>

<p>Primary Audiences (in order of priority):</p> <p>Internal Staff</p> <p>Senior Members</p> <p>Housing Review Board Members</p>	
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Links to priority: Meets all four council priorities

- Lessons Learnt**
- Improvement required on all communication channels throughout Property & Asset with both contractors and residents
 - Toolbox talks manors, safeguarding and customer interaction improvement to be discussed
 - Identifying the operatives correct trades assigned to the job's
 - Further training was required for the Ian Williams contract for Surveyors and Repair Advisors
 - How to manage tenant expectations training to be progressed.
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Who else is involved / should have sign-off or sight of complaints?

- Amy Gilbert-Jeans, Sophie Davies, John Golding, Jo Garfoot, Graham Baker, Cllr Armstrong

Complaints channel	Activity	Timescale	Officer responsible
<p>Internal Communications on how we manage complaints in Property & Asset</p> <p>i.e. Team brief, staff emails,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Team brief – all staff - Team Meetings 	Immediate affect	<p>Sophie Davies:</p> <p>To send out communication to DL all staff</p>
<p>External Communications</p> <p>i.e. Magazines, public meetings/events, Intranet</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EDDC Social Media - Website Information - Housing Matters magazine (housing tenants only) 	Ongoing	Sophie Davies to write
<p>Resident involvement on how we manage complaints</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Residents association meetings - Attendance at tenant Involvement Forum meetings 		Sophie Davies

Media	- See PR activities above		Sophie Davies and Alison Stoneman
Social Media	Twitter Facebook Instagram – graphics/photos – tbc. Information from relevant contractors / internal staff to be fed through, Possible joint media posts for increased coverage (key partners etc).	Ongoing	Sophie Davies with input from all of P&A
Contractor Meetings	Sophie to hold meetings with our contractors across Property & Asset to ensure Complaint and Compliment communication is acted upon as a priority.	Post Covid	Sophie Davies and Kerry Spittle
<p>Key Risks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase of complaints as awareness of how to log them would increase • Higher demand on immediate repairs required on service 			

Financial implications:

The financial implications of complaints are not only those directly related to the complaints themselves but often more significantly of the employee and opportunity cost of the time taken in dealing with the complaints.

Legal implications:

It is believed that there are no comments of a legal nature arising from the contents of this report. However, should Housing Services become concerned at the level of KPI's linked to Ian Williams' performance under the Housing Contract, then early advice on the terms of the contract should be sought by Housing Services from Legal Services.