

OTHA Annual Complaints Report 2018-19

This report tells you about the type of issues that have been raised, dealt with under the Complaints Procedure for OTHA. This covers how we handle and report on complaints about service. This report is part of our reporting to tenants.

Complaints are used to improve our service. We welcome your feedback and your comments, compliments and complaints are used to make sure our service meets the needs of our tenants, factored owners and other customers.

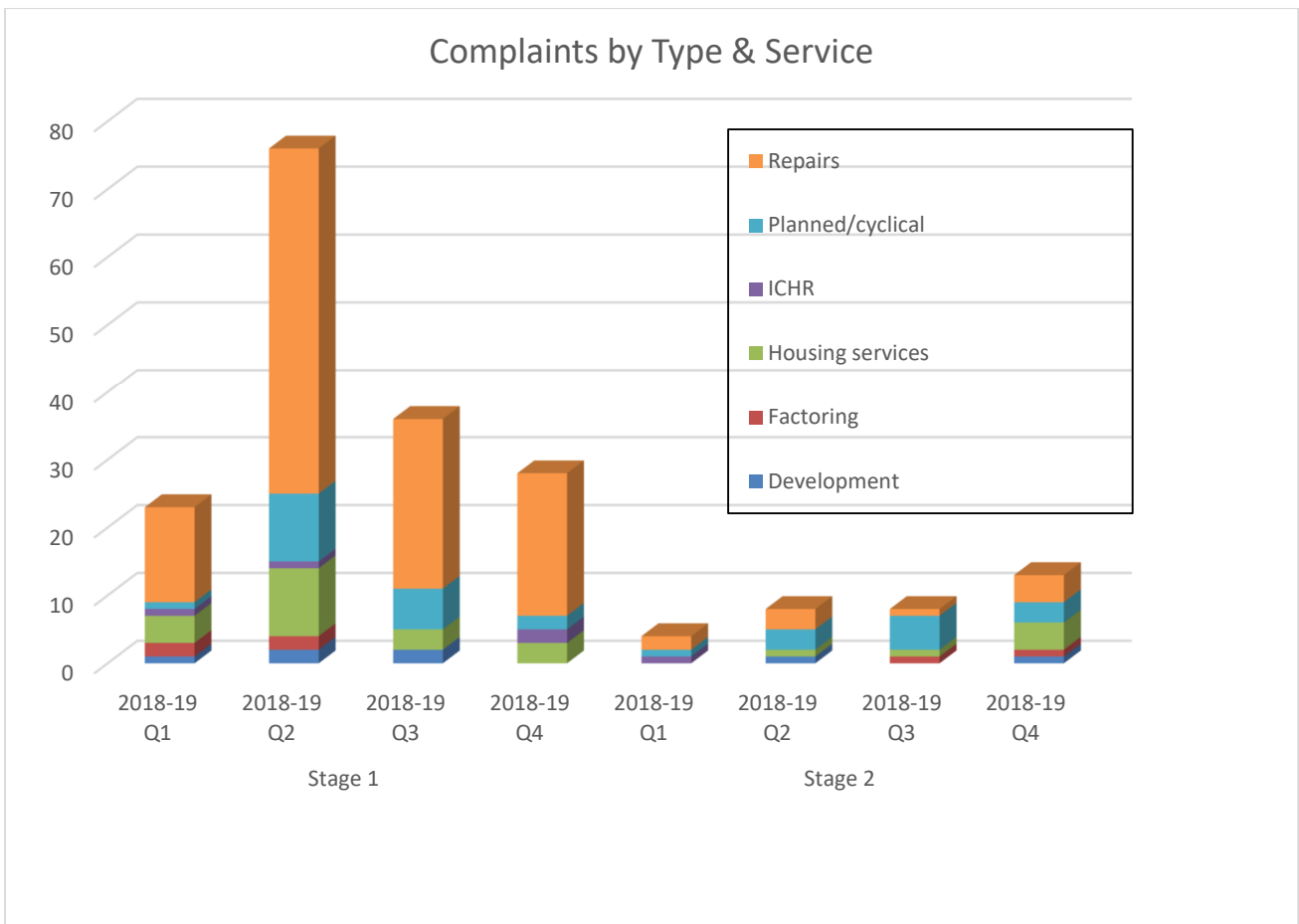
1. Complaints Reported by Quarter

There are 2 types of complaint:

Stage one – frontline resolution. These are simpler complaints which can be easily resolved.

Stage two – investigation. Stage 2 deals with two types of complaint: those that have not been resolved at stage 1 and those that are complex and require detailed investigation.

The chart below shows the number and type of complaints by service area.



The number of complaints overall submitted was higher than last year - 196 compared to 110.

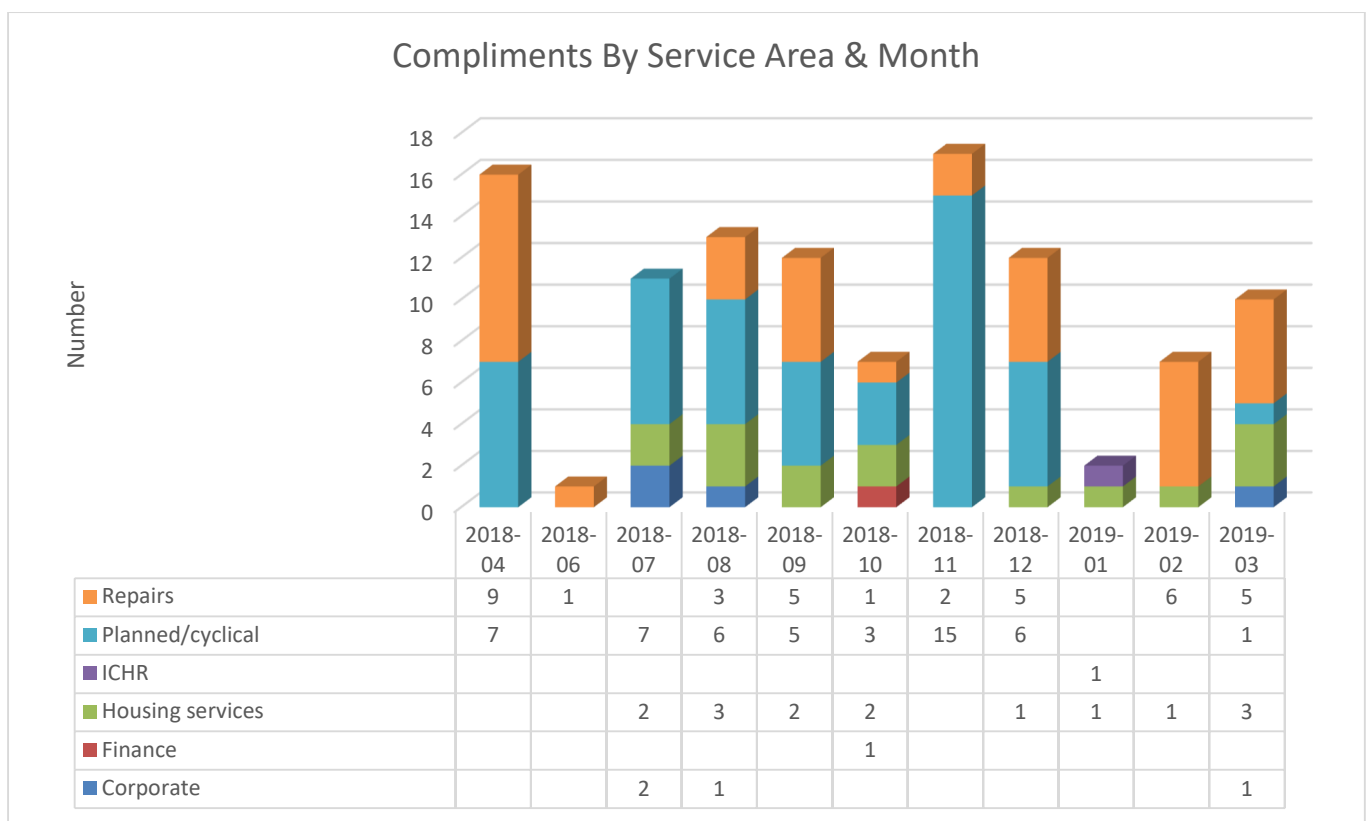
- Stage 1 complaints increased from 75 to 163 although
- Stage 2 remained fairly stable (28 up to 33 this year).

The main factor in the increase was the poor performance of the repairs contractor. This led to the contract being terminated.

Some complaints are taken straight to stage 2, if complex or requiring detailed investigation from the outset and this is seen as good practice. The fact that stage 2 complaints have increased may reflect the quality of complaints handling at the first stage or the complexity of issues raised with more cases being taken straight to a stage 2.

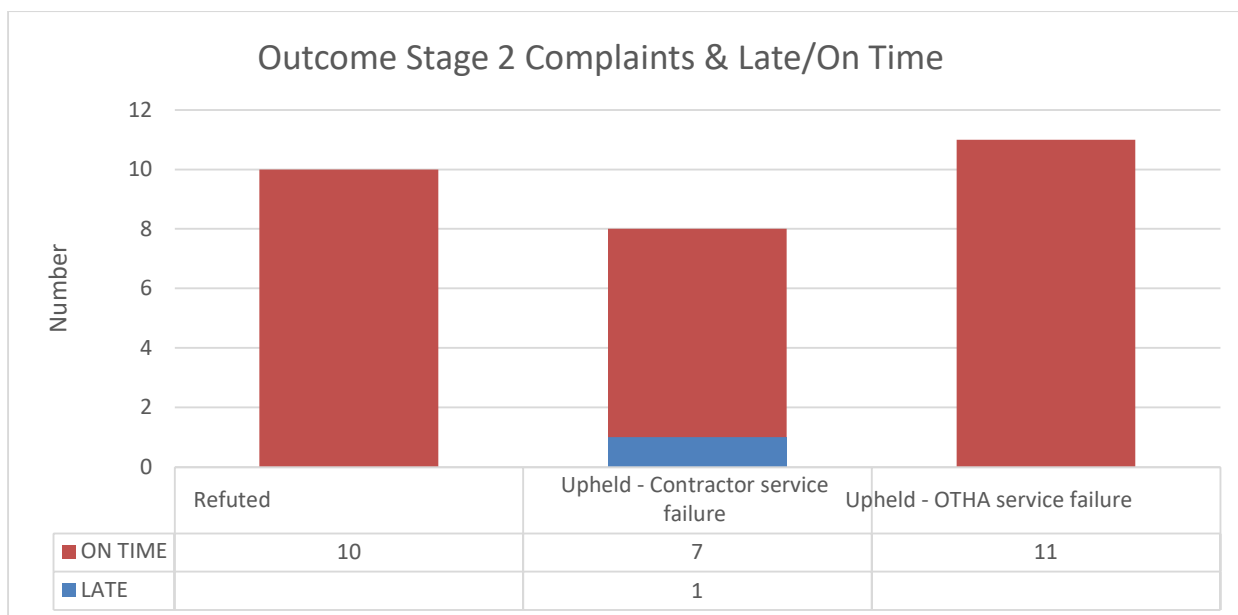
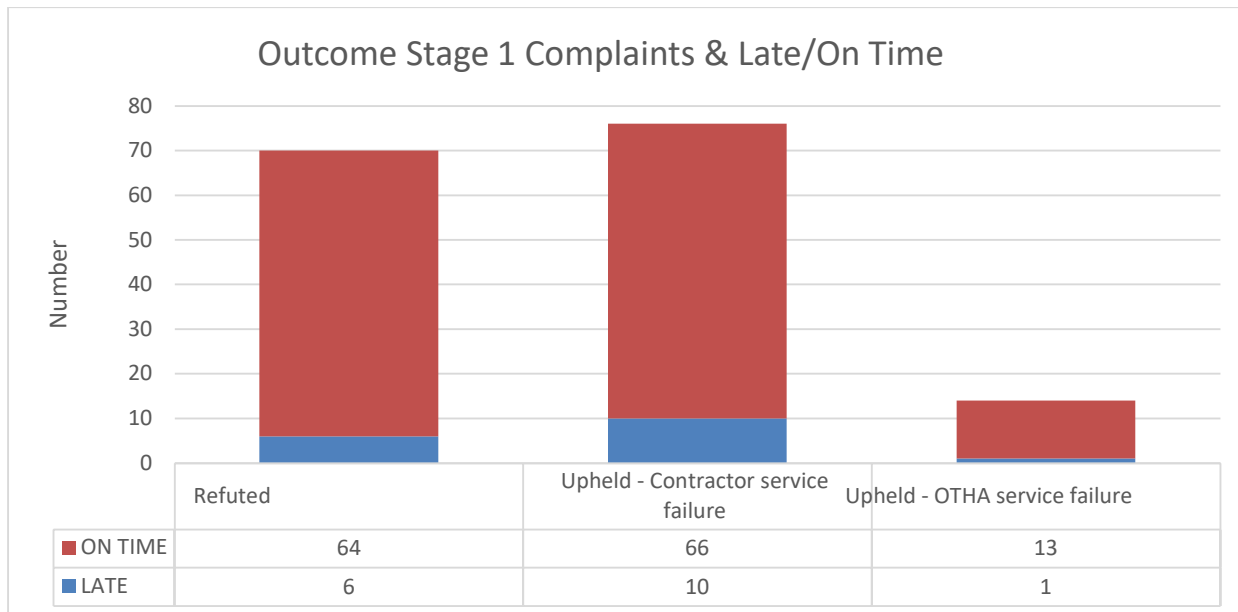
Compliments

We also record positive feedback, the chart below shows the volume of compliments received by service area. It also shows the month year the compliments were received and demonstrates the effect of the timing of work, for example in relation to planned maintenance which generates a high number of compliments, but also some complaints.



Most compliments relate to the helpfulness of staff members, the quality of work done or the general quality of service. During the year, the team have been particularly encouraged to report compliments to give a more rounded picture of tenant feedback. Overall, 108 compliments were recorded.

2. Complaints Performance & Resolution – 2018-19



Resolution of complaints within the SPSO timescales is an indicator in the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC). Some complaints are complex and by their nature require time to investigate and resolve fully.

In total, 18 complaints were resolved late mainly at stage 1 – overall 10% were resolved outwith timescales (up from 7% the previous year). The stage 1 complaints handled late mainly involved issues involving investigation with a contractor, which took time to resolve. The volume of complaints is likely to have affected performance.

The stage1 timescale is only 5 days (including the day of reporting) and is challenging to meet. The procedure does allow for an extension of time to be agreed, although the ARC calculation takes no account of this so reporting follows the strict timescale.

3. ARC Comparison

<u>Indicator</u>	OTHA ARC 2017-18	Scottish Average 2017-18	OTHA 2018-19
4 - Percentage all 1st stage complaints upheld	44.7	57.6	56.3
4 - Percentage all 2nd stage complaints upheld	41.4	54.9	65.5
5 - Percentage all 1st stage complaints responded to in full within SPSO timescales	93.4	90.8	89.4
5 - Percentage all 2nd stage complaints responded to in full within SPSO timescales	89.7	89.4	96.6

OTHA has dropped in performance in handling stage 1 complaints on time, although stage 2 handling within timescale has improved.

It isn't clear whether a higher rate of complaints upheld is good or bad. It could reflect a positive spirit to dealing with tenants' concerns or many service failures. This year, the increase in complaints upheld is likely to reflect the poor performance of the repairs contractor and our acceptance that service wasn't at the levels that we would expect.

4. Main Themes Arising During the Year

The themes have varied during the year as seasonal or workload factors affected reporting. The key themes have been:

- Poor performance from our main repairs contractor which peaked in the 2nd quarter. Problems continued as the contract wound down to its end.
- Increasing levels of complaints regarding Anti-Social Behaviour handling, generally these have been refuted, but reflect high expectations in relation to these cases. Several of these relate to poor sound insulation in some properties.
- A serious violent incident occurred leading to a complaint about why the tenant was allowed to be in the property and why they hadn't been evicted. We are reviewing letting of bedsits under our asset management review partly as a result of this case.
- Landscaping contract price changes have prompted owners to complain as bills are sent out.
- Delays in issuing decoration allowances at points in the year following planned maintenance.
- The cancellation of the kitchen replacement in one area without sufficient notification.
- Increase in complaints relating to housing applications, which have generally been refuted. This may be a recording issue rather than a change in performance.
- Rent setting – the policy not being applied consistently in one case.
- Defects in one new build remain an issue for a small number of complaints.
- Planned maintenance complaints have reflected activity and contractor performance. Lengthy investigation & completion times have been an issue.
- Issues with voids, new tenants and the out of hour's service have remained at low levels.

5. Issues for the Action Plan

Remedial action was as follows:

- Main repairs contractor service failures needed to be managed proactively in the period as the contract wound down to its end.
- OTHA repairs staff to improve follow up for long jobs marked as incomplete. There are recurring issues with replacement doors taking much longer than the normal timescale – better follow up is required from OTHA to chase these up
- Issues with a stage 3 adaptation - quality of work, delays and defects as a result of contractor failure have been addressed.
- Reiteration of need for special communication/access arrangements to meet individual needs to be adhered to by all contractors.
- Defects in one development site – progress completion and pro-active communication with residents.
- Rent setting policy – procedures improved and staff training to ensure consistency.
- Cancellation of kitchen replacement in properties in one area - improve communication with tenants affected and develop a plan for the future of the area.
- Handling of ASB cases arose in several cases. A specialised newsletter on anti-social behaviour and how this is handled has been distributed on a targeted basis to manage expectations.
- Changes have been made to improve liaison on voids, to clarify standards for the tenant when viewing.
- Some administrative delays were experienced and apologies were offered. Specifically delays in issuing cheques/decoration allowances have been ironed out.
- ICHR Website security was checked and confirmed.
- Better communication for landscaping increase in charges was required.
- Staff are implementing a stricter policy for suspensions from the housing list for operational reasons as many applicants are bidding without seriously intending to accept an offer of housing.
- It was agreed to hold off letting a bedsit following a serious incident and some repeated incidents of anti-social tenants. This will be reviewed once we can review alternative options. Our Asset Management Strategy is being reviewed so we can look at low demand housing and what options there may be other than letting.