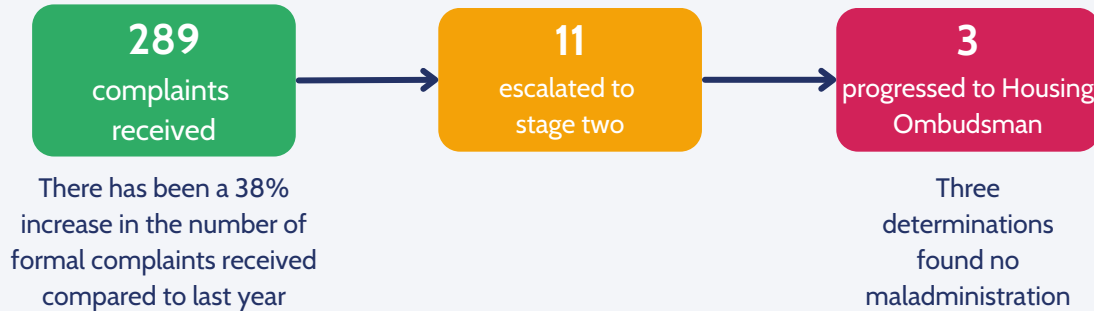


Annual complaints performance and service improvement report

2023-2024

This report details all complaints received by SLH between April 2023 – March 2024, including low cost rental accommodation (LCRA), low cost home ownership (LCHO), homeowners and waiting list applicants. (This differs to our Tenant Satisfaction Measure (TSM) reporting requirements – in line with NROSH guidelines, SLH report on LCRA only)



We received three Housing Ombudsman determinations from cases from 2022/23:

- Case 1 – maladministration identified with how we handled repairs and complaint handling.
- Case 2 – maladministration and service failure identified with how we handled a tenancy related issue and service failure identified with complaint handling.
 - In both cases above, we responded to the Housing Ombudsman determinations and complied with orders made.
- Case 3 – no maladministration.



 99% of stage 1 complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales.

(Three complaints were acknowledged outside of timescales.)

 91% of stage 2 complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales.

(One (of 11) complaint escalated to stage 2 was acknowledged outside of timescales.)

Corrective actions have been taken to improve the process of acknowledging complaints, including:

-  raising awareness across the business of our customer feedback email inbox.
-  changes made to how post is administered internally.
-  automated acknowledgement of emails sent to our email inbox. In addition, complaint emails are now forwarded from this inbox automatically to the Quality and Performance team.

The new Complaint Handling Code

The Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code became statutory on 1 April 2024, meaning that landlords are obliged by law to follow its requirements. The Code aims to achieve best practice in complaint handling and ultimately to provide a better service to residents.

 SLH has completed a self-assessment against the new statutory code. SLH's customer feedback policy is in line with the new code. This is available on our website.

Satisfaction with complaint handling



53%

satisfaction with **approach**
to complaints handling
(complaints made in last 12 months)

We are in the top quartile for
performance, compared to other
housing associations

Complaints refused

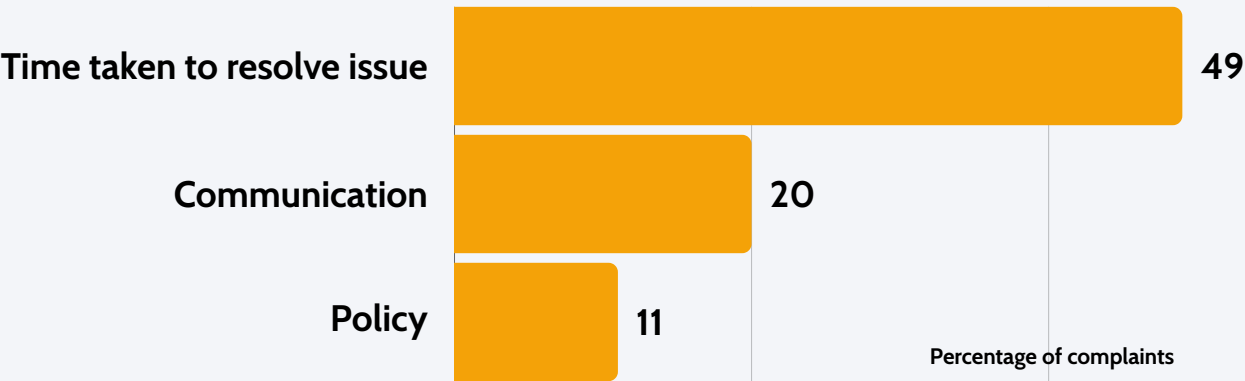
Reasons where complaints have been refused include:



- Three cases where repair related issues raised had already been dealt with previously at stage 2 and so had therefore exhausted our formal process.
- Two cases where the issues raised related to anti-social behaviour (ASB). Both cases were referred to the Neighbourhood and Community Safety Teams to progress.

In these cases, the residents were written to, to advise them why we were unable to handle the matter in line with policy and their right to approach the Housing Ombudsman about this decision.

Top three key themes for complaints



Complaints by service area

Service areas that received the most complaints in 2023-24
(equating to 90% of all complaints)



173

complaints

60%

of complaints
received

Responsive repairs

Asset management – responsive repairs has received 173 complaints, accounting for 60% of all complaints received. Almost half of complaints received relate to outstanding repairs. The most common themes when reviewing the root cause of these complaints are the timescale for repairs to be completed and communication.

A complaint was received as a customer had been waiting a year for replacement doors. Following visits from surveyor, the customer had to contact multiple times for updates on when works would be completed. Following a review of the customer journey, a new process has been implemented for replacement doors. These will now be ordered from the manufacturer directly by the operative who completes the measurements. The operative will then remain in contact with the customer to ensure they are kept informed of the progress of the order and when the fitting can take place.

We recognise the importance of clear communication. Going forward, we will be providing detailed schedules for operatives' visits to improve transparency. A text messaging service is now in place to confirm appointments.

A recent review of the transactional repair operatives' diaries revealed that they were being scheduled into full-day jobs instead of single trade/single visit tasks. This pushed the next available appointment further down the line. To address this, the jobs were rescheduled, and diary capacity was improved.

Complaints by service area (continued)



72

complaints

25%

of complaints
received

Planned works

Asset management – planned works has received 72 complaints, accounting for 25% of all complaints received. The common themes when reviewing the root cause of these complaints are again the timescale for repairs to be completed and communication.

A resident engagement and consultation procedure has been developed for planned maintenance. The procedure is in place to provide clear and concise guidance on how SLH identifies when and what planned works will be carried out each financial year and how SLH and its contractors will engage and consult with tenants when planned works are required in their home.



14

complaints

5%

of complaints
received

Neighbourhood services

Neighbourhood services has received 14 complaints, accounting for 5% of all complaints we have received.

Most complaints relate to tenancy management, with policy decisions the most common theme. We are in the process of developing a neighbourhood management policy. Via this policy we will communicate with customers regarding the service they can expect from us. By defining what we are responsible for through this policy, we can meet expectations from the start of any investigation and where the responsibility falls outside the scope of the policy, we will sign-post to relevant agencies.

We will develop a ASB handbook that will set out what our approach is to ASB, what service customers can expect from us and what tools are available to manage different types of ASB complaints.

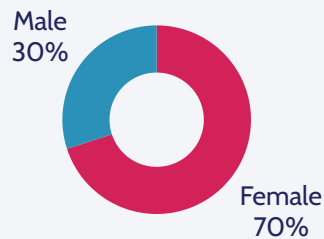


Demographics

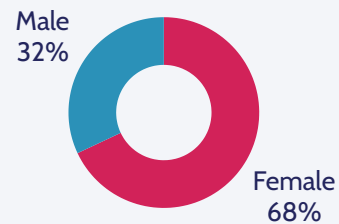
Further analysis has been completed to understand the demographic makeup of the formal complaints we have received in 2023/24 (for SLH customers and residents only).

Gender

New formal complaints 2023-24

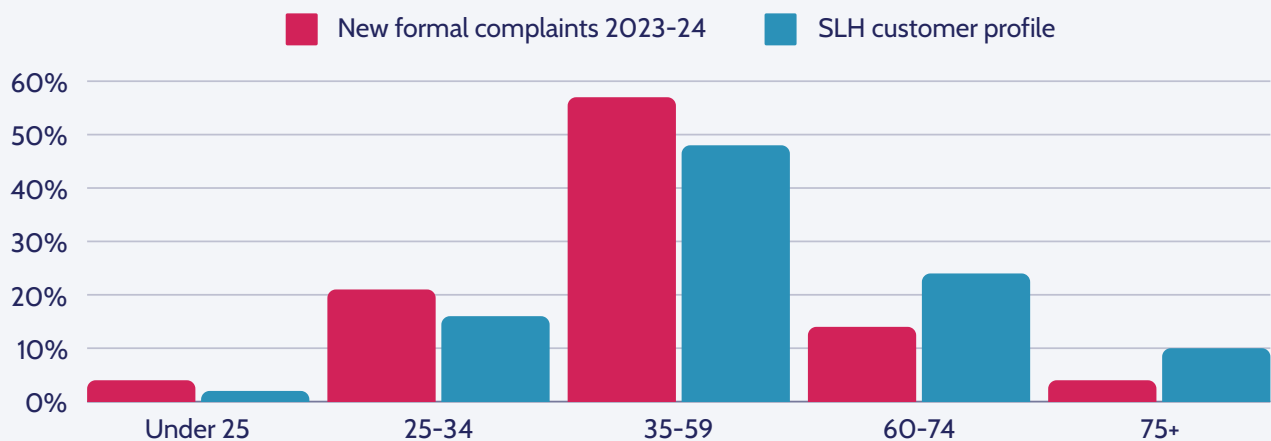


SLH customer profile



The percentage of complaints received by gender is consistent with our overall customer profile. This remains consistent across asset management responsive repairs and planned and programmed works, which account for 85% of all complaints. However, more females have made complaints in relation to community safety and allocations and lettings compared to the overall customer profile.

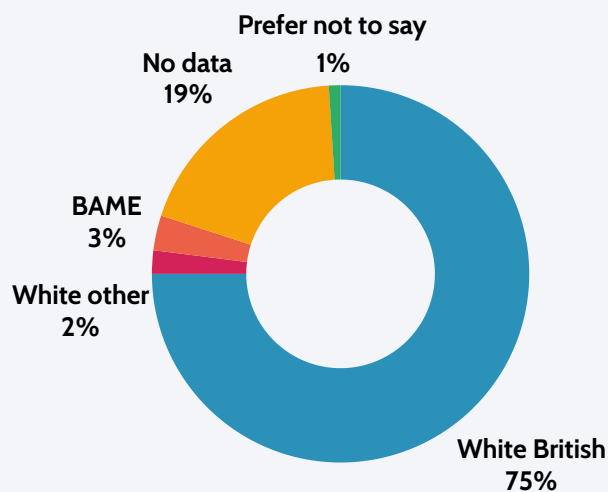
Age



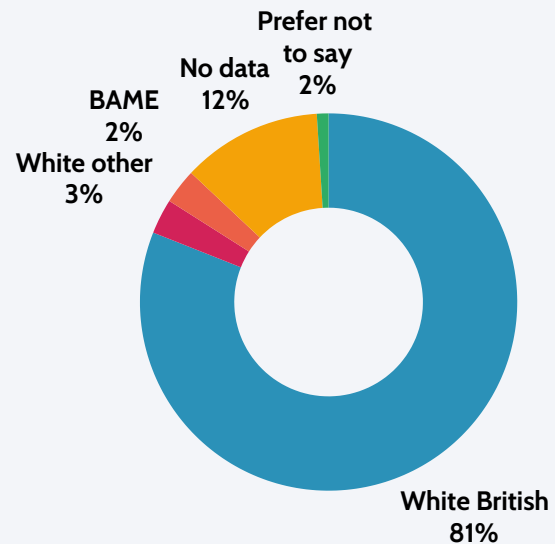
The percentage of complaints received for those aged between 25– 59 years old represents a higher proportion compared to our customer profile. In comparison, the percentage of complaints received for those over 60 years old represents a lower proportion compared to our customer profile. However, this is expected, given that satisfaction across all measures is highest for older customers.

Ethnicity

New formal
complaints 2023-24



SLH customer
profile



The majority of complaints received are from white British customers, which is reflective of our customer profile. BAME stands for Black, Asian and minority ethnic. The number of complaints we have received from BAME customers is reflective of our customer profile.

Disability

16% of our customer profile have provided SLH with details of their disabilities in comparison to 14% for customers / residents who have raised a complaint in 2023/24.

Other protected characteristics

We do not hold sexuality, transgender or religion information for almost half of our customers. Information we do hold for those making complaints in 2023/24 is largely reflective of our customer profile. We are currently completing our know our customers campaign. As part of this campaign, missing data relating to protected characteristic information will be collected, so that we can ensure that our services are inclusive of those who live in our homes.

A focus during 2024/25 will be reviewing EDI data in conjunction with complaints, to identify any trends. This will help us to review our services to ensure that customers do not receive a disparity in service.

The power of feedback



Feedback from customers has resulted in a number of changes to how we do things:

- All customer services colleagues at SLH and Avela Home Service now have full access to our planned works programme which will mean customers will receive more accurate information when they enquire.
- There is now a new process in place for repeat leaks where customers will be contacted after 24 hours and 48 hours to ensure the issue has been resolved.
- The process for scheduled works has been reviewed and an automatic scheduling system is currently being developed. This will reduce the risk of errors occurring when planning in work after inspections.
- Electrical safety check appointment letter now include details of what areas of the customers home will require access as part of the electrical check.
- A new referral process has been put in place from Avela to SLH, to reduce delays in works being completed for customers.
- In work inspections to be carried out on damp jobs and pictures taken of progress to ensure work is completed correctly.
- Process change introduced for works issued to subcontractors.
- Introduction of van stock review app to improve van stock by working with two main suppliers to reduce the number of visits/time spent in stores/suppliers and will improve first time fix rate.
- Text messaging service has been introduced; text messages are sent to customer whilst operative is on route to the appointment. The message includes the operative's name and job details. In addition, operatives are now completing telephone calls ahead of attending.
- SLH surveyor is now completing post inspections on all bathroom and kitchen planned works to confirm work has been completed to an appropriate standard.
- A process is to be set out for all planned investment works to ensure ownership and accountability.
- The follow-on works process has been reviewed and changes have been made to improve efficiency and communication with customers.
- Implementation of a 'no access' procedure to prevent orders and inspections being cancelled
- Reviewing how we manage complex repair cases with a view to implementing a specific workflow.
- A review of the boiler installation programme.
- A new process implemented for replacement doors.
- Update to the procedure for the order of specialist parts.
- A comprehensive review of standard letters that customers receive from SLH, to ensure a professional, adult-to-adult tone of voice and consistent look and feel.

In addition, there have been staff discussions, training and individual feedback provided across the service areas. Toolbox talks with Avela operatives have been held throughout the year focussing on effective communication with customers.

Our senior leadership team will be reviewing lessons learnt from complaints going forward, to ensure that a multi-disciplinary team approach is taken to identify and embed learning across the organisation.