

**Report Title: Quarterly Complaints / Compliments Overview – 2020/21 Quarter 3**

We hope that the services you receive from us are of the quality you would expect. However, we realise there will be times when you may want to complain, tell us how we can improve our services, or perhaps compliment us on something we have done well.

Your complaints, comments and compliments are important to us as they help us improve our services – this short report details the nature of the complaints and compliments we have received and the actions we are taking as a result of them.

## 1. Overview

During the third quarter of the 2020/2021 year we have logged 48 Early Stage Resolutions, 12 complaints and 34 compliments, which compares with 32 Early Stage Resolutions, 33 complaints and 23 compliments in the third quarter of the 2019/2020 year.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Date
<b>Complaints</b>	05	06	12	-	<b>23</b>
<b>Early Stage Resolutions</b>	14	29	48	-	<b>91</b>
<b>Compliments</b>	29	27	34	-	<b>90</b>

As of the 31<sup>st</sup> December, of the 12 complaints raised, nine had been closed having been upheld and one had been closed having not been upheld. The remaining complaints were still ongoing at various stages of the process.

Of the 48 early stage resolutions received in the third quarter:

- 76% of the Early Stage Resolutions were issued with a response within the three-day target, *and*
- two Early Stage Resolutions were escalated to Stage 1 complaints.

Of the 12 complaints received in the third quarter:

- 100% of the complaints received were issued with a written confirmation of their complaint within the three-day target, *and*
- 91% of the complaints received were issued with a formal response to their complaint within the ten-day target.

## 2. Key Themes

Total Figures 2020/21	Staff Attitude	State of Property	Customer Service	Policy	Totals
Complaints	00	10	11	02	23
Early Stage Resolutions	07	46	34	04	91
Compliments	40	00	50	00	90

## 3. Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes recorded in the last quarter include:

At completion, this repair will have taken 20 weeks with three separate repair tickets. All routine repairs should be completed within 28 days, with the correct parts being ordered following the initial visit. In this instance, the wrong parts had been ordered following the initial visit causing a significant delay to the repair.

Contractors should adhere to the same standards of customer service as we expect our own operatives to. Any delays or missed appointments should be communicated to tenants (and their point of contact at Freebridge) as promptly as possible. Updates should be offered to tenants for any work that is delayed.

The port-a-loo empty had been missed due to a failure with internal processes. The Head of Service Delivery has completed a review and will implement changes to ensure that this does not happen again. The tenant had reported that the contractors told her *“that the pipes are blocked by roots, it is to be an expensive and big job, and that you (Freebridge) are reluctant to pay for it.”* Contractors represent Freebridge when attending repairs and comments such as these are unacceptable as they can be damaging to the relationship and trust between Freebridge and tenants. It is essential that our expectations are reiterated to the contractor to prevent any further miscommunications on their part.

As previously stated, contractors should adhere to the same standards of customer service as we expect our own operatives to. These expectations should be reiterated to the contractors and if they are unable to meet the standards that Freebridge expect, considerations should be made for whether an alternative contractor should be sought.

It is important that we correctly manage our tenant’s expectations by offering appropriate timeframes for works to be completed in. If a timeframe that has been given cannot be met then the tenant should be contacted promptly and offered a full update to reduce

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their frustration. At no point should tenants feel they need to call contractors directly for information.

There are several areas of this complaint in which communication (both internal and with the tenant) has fallen short. The operatives account states that he requested that the parts were ordered following his first attendance. When he had re-attended the parts had still not been ordered. He had then heard that Stores were unable to source the parts he needed. The operative felt that attending would be a waste of time as he wouldn't be able to complete the repair. He emailed his Team Leader and PS Admin but the message had not been picked up and the most recent appointment was left open, resulting in it being missed and the complaint being raised. Operatives and Team Leaders should have clear, open means for communication and should not rely solely on emails to ensure that updates regarding work are received promptly. Any issues in ordering parts should be communicated to the Team Leader so that an assessment can be made on whether alternative arrangements need to be made. Missing multiple appointments is unacceptable and should be investigated further to find why the appointments were not met, or why they were not cancelled with the tenant.

It is important that tenant's expectations are managed correctly to avoid frustration. In this instance, the tenants were led to believe that the garden would be cleared, however this work had not been authorised. Then, when the decision was made not to move forward with the clearance the tenants were left dissatisfied, resulting in the complaint. The tenants were also advised not to touch their garden following a home visit in March. This meant that the condition of the garden continued to worsen over the summer, resulting in the quotes that had been obtained being redundant and a much bigger job to clear the garden effectively. As previously stated, contractors should adhere to the same standards of customer service as we expect our own operatives to. These expectations should be reiterated to the contractors and if they are unable to meet the standards that Freebridge expect, considerations should be made for whether an alternative contractor should be sought.

Although decoration is generally not completed following repairs, each case must be considered by its own merits and tenants own vulnerabilities/circumstances taken into account before making a decision.

All routine repairs should be completed within 28 days. On 31/10/2019, a note was left on the job that the operative was not confident that the damage to the doorframe was caused by the explosion. Regardless of the source of the damage, this repair should have been completed within the timeframes set out in our service standards.

This complaint highlights what problems poor communication can have the effect that that it can have on both tenants and colleagues. The French doors should have been picked up during the mutual exchange inspection and a decision should have been made as to whose responsibility the upkeep was prior to the exchange completing. The decision that Freebridge would maintain the doors should have been communicated to the surveyor prior to his appointment to avoid undue confusion and frustration for the tenant. Any held jobs should be passed to the Scheduling Manager to release so that they can be appointed promptly, avoiding unnecessary delays.

Advisors to receive additional in regards to supporting tenants with benefit applications. This complaint should be used as a case study to illustrate the importance of offering the correct advise, and to ensure that this same error does not reoccur.

Head of Service Delivery to revisit the process for follow on works, ensuring all jobs that cannot be completed have a follow on appointment and review jobs on a regular basis through the property services dashboard. Additional training should be given to Team Leaders regarding the importance of contacting tenants to offer progress reports as well

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as what is appropriate communication, and appropriate means of communication, to ensure an improved service moving forward.

This complaint stems from a decision by a member of our Tenancy Team, leading to the tenant's expectations being unmanaged and subsequently, their disappointment. Having been in the property for almost eight years, the responsibility for maintaining the garden is the responsibility of the tenants and should have been treated as such, as per their tenancy agreement.

The working relationship between Development & Property Assets teams should be reviewed to ensure that they could work closely to check and enforce warranties. Additional information should be taken at the point of installation to ensure that we are fully aware of what is and isn't covered by warranties, so that any disputes can be resolved quickly and with as little inconvenience to the tenant as possible. Considerations should have been made sooner regarding whether this work could be completed in-house and the costs claimed against the warranty to reduce the severe delays experienced by the tenant.

Freebridge to consider what works are essential during future lockdowns or similar situations. It may be prudent to offer the tenants the opportunity to opt out of appointments if they are particularly vulnerable. Our expectations regarding maintaining the safety of our tenants should be reiterated to all contractors to ensure all procedures, including wearing full and correct PPE, are followed.

#### 4. Our Complaints Process

Details of our Complaints process can be found within our leaflet called Compliments, Comments and Complaints which you can get a copy of from our office at Juniper House in King's Lynn or from our website at [www.freebridge.org.uk/complaint.html](http://www.freebridge.org.uk/complaint.html)

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