ExtraCare
Charitable Trust

Annual Complaints & Service Improvement Report 2024/25

Message from our Board: Response to Annual Complaints and Service Improvement Report

Our Annual Complaints and Service Improvement Report provides a comprehensive overview of the number of complaints we have received and our complaint handling performance. Whilst we have experienced a 20% year-on-year increase in complaints, the timeliness of our complaint responses has improved.

We acknowledge that we need to resolve complaints in a timelier manner and improve our overall complaints experience. To help with this, we have engaged the views of our residents, with a Scrutiny Group currently reviewing our complaints processes. This exercise will provide us with valuable customer insight and recommendations for improvements.

In line with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, a self-assessment has been completed. This has determined that we meet the code requirements.

We recognise that trust is built on transparency (one of our ExtraCare values) and we are committed to continuing to improve over the coming year by:

- Seeking views on the complaints experience following a complaint conclusion
- Requiring complex complaints to be handled by more senior managers
- Monitoring data and reporting
- Continuing to review and refine our processes

Kim Wootton
Member Responsible for Complaints
On behalf of ExtraCare Charitable Trust Board

Complaint numbers

We have experienced an increase in complaints compared to last year. The number of Stage 2 complaints raised has increased by almost 75%, indicating that we have work to do in managing complaints effectively at Stage 1.

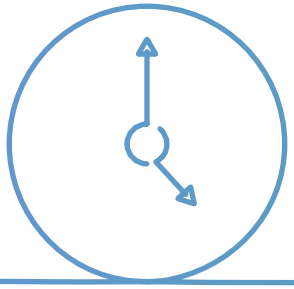
Year	Stage 1	Stage 2	Total
2024/25	148	38	186
2023/24	133	22	155

20%
increase
year on year

Complaint timelines

We have improved the timeliness of our complaint resolution in year but still have more work to do to improve this and meet our policy timescales.

Following last year's Annual Complaints and Service Improvement Report we took action to improve our complaints processes including reporting and escalation of complaints. This has started to have a positive impact on our performance.



74.1%
of complaints resolved on time.
Up from 61.3% year previous

72.3%
of Stage 1 complaints resolved on time. Up from 57.9% year previous

81.6%
of Stage 2 complaints resolved on time. Down from 90.9% year previous

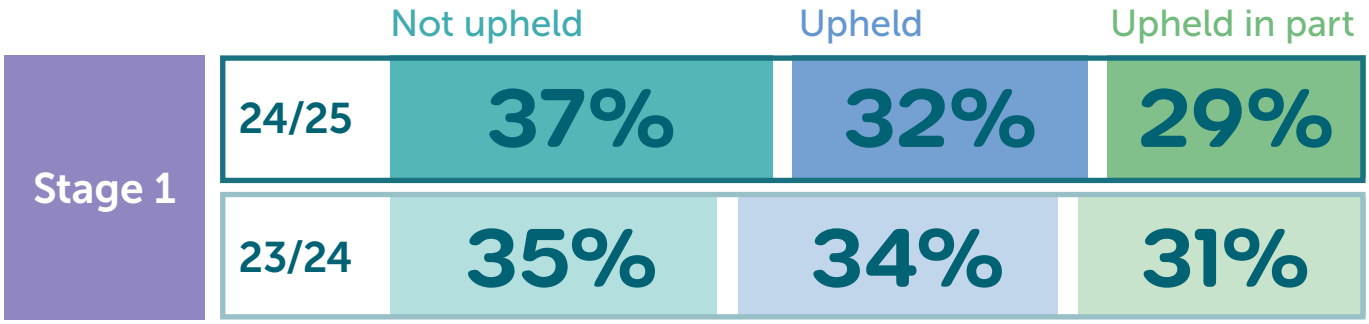
14.34
average working days to resolve Stage 1 complaints. Down from 17.58 year previous

23.5
average working days to resolve Stage 2 complaints. Up from 18.27 year previous

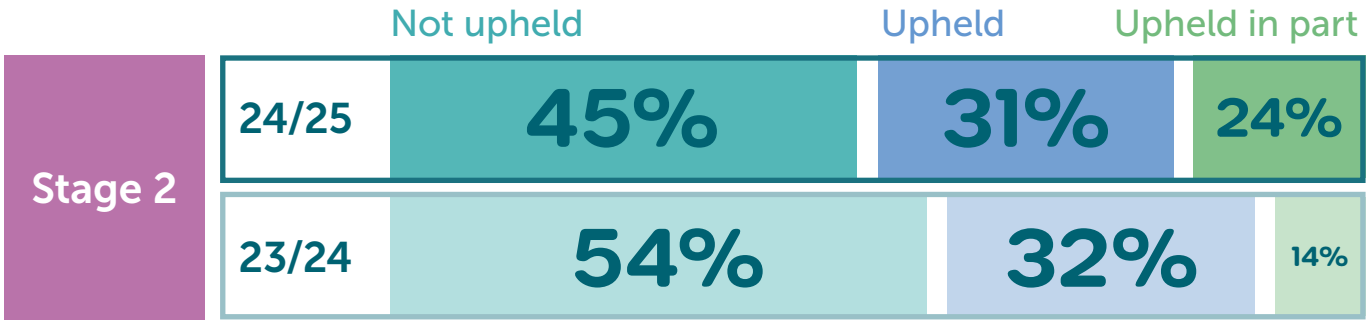
Policy timescales: 10 working days Stage One and 20 working days Stage Two.

Complaint outcomes

Stage 1 outcomes are broadly similar to the prior year, with many complaints being upheld or upheld in part. This indicates that the majority of complaints are valid and improvements to our service are required. Regarding Stage 2 complaints, since last year there has been a reduction in the number of complaints that were not upheld.



Note: 2% of Stage 1 complaint outcomes were deemed to be 'Inconclusive'. These were complaints where we could not conclude an outcome due to insufficient evidence. Moving forward we will avoid using inconclusive as an option.



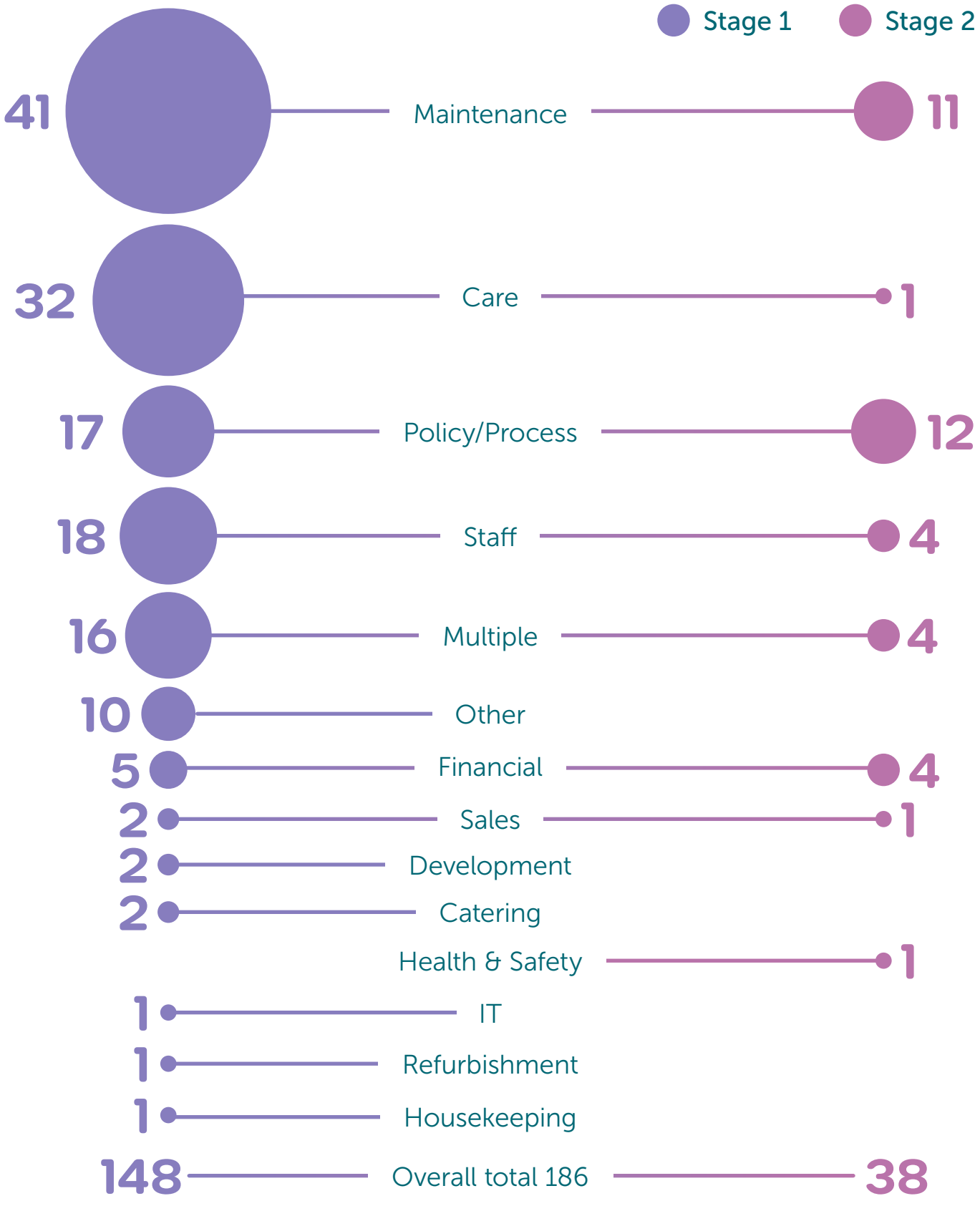
Escalations from Stage 1 to Stage 2

25.6%
of complaints escalated

which is up from
16.5%
in 2023/24

Complaint types

The highest number of complaints (by count) relate to maintenance, followed by care and policy/process complaints. Most maintenance complaints related to repair issues or delays. The lessons learnt from these complaints have resulted in ExtraCare improving the way we resolve repairs.



Complaint extensions

The number of response extensions issued has increased year on year. These extensions have a detrimental effect on our complaint resolution times and we will be providing a greater focus on deadline extensions to understand why these are arising.

Year	Extensions Issued	% of complaints
2024/25	55	29%
2023/24	39	25%

A complaint provides an opportunity for learning

Our complaint handlers are encouraged to communicate any learnings identified in a complaint investigation in the response we provide. In addition our Learning & Improvement Group is responsible for agreeing and co-ordinating any 'organisational learnings' identified in the complaint process. This has enabled ExtraCare to introduce a number of service improvements.

We have improved the way that we can be contacted by:

- Adding a Complaints option to the switchboard when people call ExtraCare's Head Office telephone line
- Making improvements to the 'Contact Us' page on the ExtraCare website

We have improved the way we resolve repairs by:

- Restructuring the Maintenance Team to enhance the service that we can provide
- Improving communication with our residents in relation to repairs to communal areas
- Improving our repair job tracking through our Maintenance Reporting System

Resident feedback

In year we started to issue questionnaires to seek resident feedback on their complaint handling experience to help inform and refine our processes and training. This is some of the feedback we received:

> *I'm happy with the way the Village Manager managed this complaint as I felt heard, which previously did not happen*

> *I would like ExtraCare staff members to improve communication and complete all actions agreed, such as attending appointments*

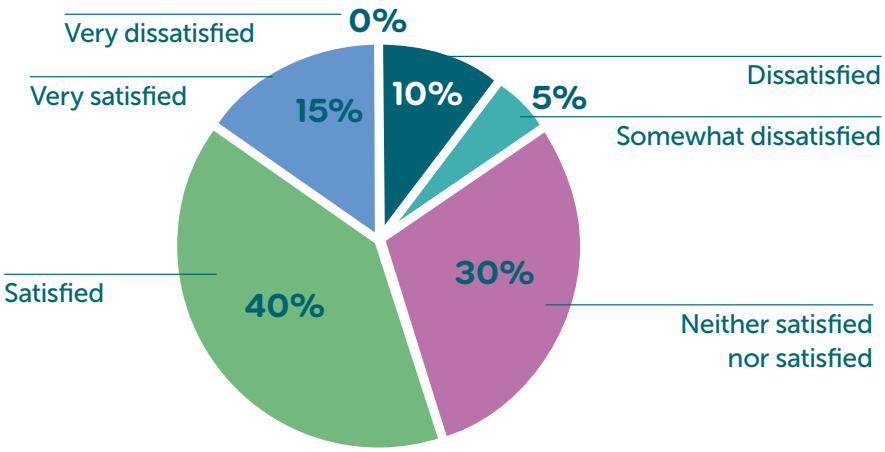
Complainant satisfaction

Complaint Journey: The majority of complainants expressed that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the complaint journey (55%).

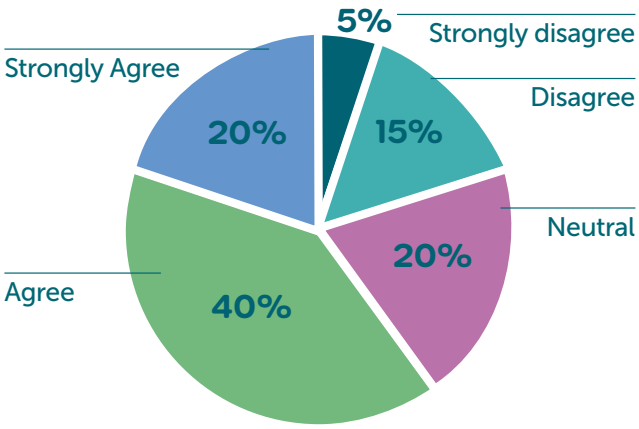
ExtraCare's approach to complaint handling: 70% of complainants stated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with our handling of complaints.

Complaint Outcome: The majority of complainants (60%) strongly agreed or agreed that the outcome reached following the complaint investigation was correct or fair, while 20% strongly disagreed or disagreed.

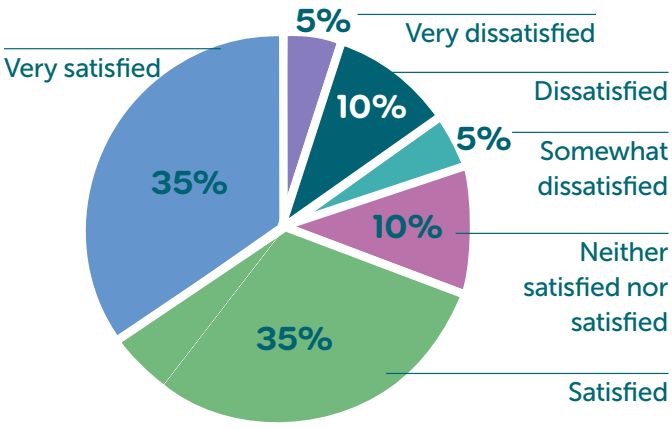
Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the complaint journey (ExtraCare)?



To what extent do you agree or dissagree with the following: "The outcome reached following the complaint investigation was correct/fair"?



How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with ExtraCare's approach to complaints handling?



Ombudsman cases, findings and reports

We received outcomes from five Housing Ombudsman cases in 2024/25:

- In three cases no maladministration was found.
- In one case no maladministration was found with the complaint outcome but was determined in relation to complaint handling timeframe. We were ordered to pay £250 in compensation.
- One case was concluded as not within the Ombudsman's jurisdiction.

Learning from complaints – future action

In the coming year we will undertake the following to improve our complaints handling and customer experience:

- We will complete a Resident Scrutiny Group review of complaints handling to gain resident insight to improve our processes.
- We will review and update our Complaints Policy, taking on board resident feedback.
- We will review our current complaint handler training materials/documentation.
- We will explore the feasibility of supplementing our current training with further e-learning.
- We will require complex complaints to be handled by more senior managers to reduce escalations to Stage 2.
- We will embed a new internal escalation procedure into our complaint handling to improve compliance with our policy timescales.
- We will define an approval process for any extensions to complaint deadlines, with clear authority.
- We will seek views on the complaints experience following a complaint conclusion to identify learnings.
- We will build complaints handling performance into our staff appraisal process.
- We will streamline our complaint categories into three categories (service, process and staffing) to better inform trend analysis and learning.
- We will explore enhancing our reporting for themes and trends e.g. by tenure type, by customer demographic, and by geographical area/cluster.
- We will establish mechanisms to assure ourselves that actions arising from complaints are implemented.
- We will enhance our complaints reporting to our Board.

Review › Learn › Improve › Implement

We will provide an update on performance against the above actions in next year's report.