

# 3C'S 2023/24 – QUARTER 1 REPORT

## JACQUIE BEACROFT CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND INSIGHT MANAGER



Nottingham  
City Council

Housing  
Services

### SUMMARY

Following on from a strong Q4 and a successful 2022/23, Quarter 1 has seen us maintaining focus on key areas such as performance, communication and learning from complaints. As a result, Q1 has seen performance remaining at a high level.

Continuing work on handling of issues in early stages (i.e. before the complaint process) also appears to be working to reduce overall volumes of Stage 1 complaints, though future quarters will indicate whether this is a trend or a temporary reduction.

Escalations to Stage 2 of the complaint process have remained disproportionately high, suggesting improvements are needed in the way we respond to, and follow up, Stage 1 complaints. Learnings have already been put in place to tackle this, explained in further detail in the Stage 2 section of this report.

Housing Ombudsman determinations has seen an influx this quarter, with many more than usual received. As general queries from the Ombudsman have not increased, this suggests the influx is the result of the Housing Ombudsman's ongoing work to clear the backlog of cases, rather than any indication of an increase in issues being raised with them from our customers.

## SECTION 1 – COMPLAINT VOLUMES

Table 1 below shows Stage 1 complaint volumes by service area over the last 5 quarters for all NCC Properties.

Table 1	Service Area	2022/23 Q1	2022/23 Q2	2022/23 Q3	2022/23 Q4	2023/24 Q1
Property Services	Asset Management	7	18	9	9	14
	Business Services	23	35	46	55	49
	Commercial Services	3	0	0	1	0
	Development and Acquisition	3	0	0	0	0
	Mechanical and Electrical	30	24	38	35	20
	Planned Maintenance	19	20	17	30	19
	Responsive Repairs	159	170	114	132	109
	<b>Property Services Total</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>211</b>
Housing and Customer Services	Customer Excellence	23	25	19	18	16
	Estate Caretaking	0	0	0	1	1
	Independent Living	0	2	0	0	0
	Lettings (inc homeless / dispersed)	3	8	3	3	4
	Nottingham On Call	2	0	1	2	2
	Rents & Leaseholders	2	5	3	4	1
	TEM	33	35	18	29	21
	Voids	3	3	3	6	3
	<b>Housing and Customer Services Total</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>48</b>
Corporate Services	Risk Management, Governance	5	5	0	0	0
	<b>Corporate Services Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
NCC	NCC Garden Assistance	5	8	1	0	2
	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>261</b>

Quarter 1 has seen a reduction in complaint volumes across almost all service areas within the business. While a drop of this level for just one quarter is an anomaly rather than a trend, these figures do appear to suggest improvements in the way we handle dissatisfaction prior to entering the complaint process is having a positive impact on customer satisfaction and the logging of Stage 1 complaints.

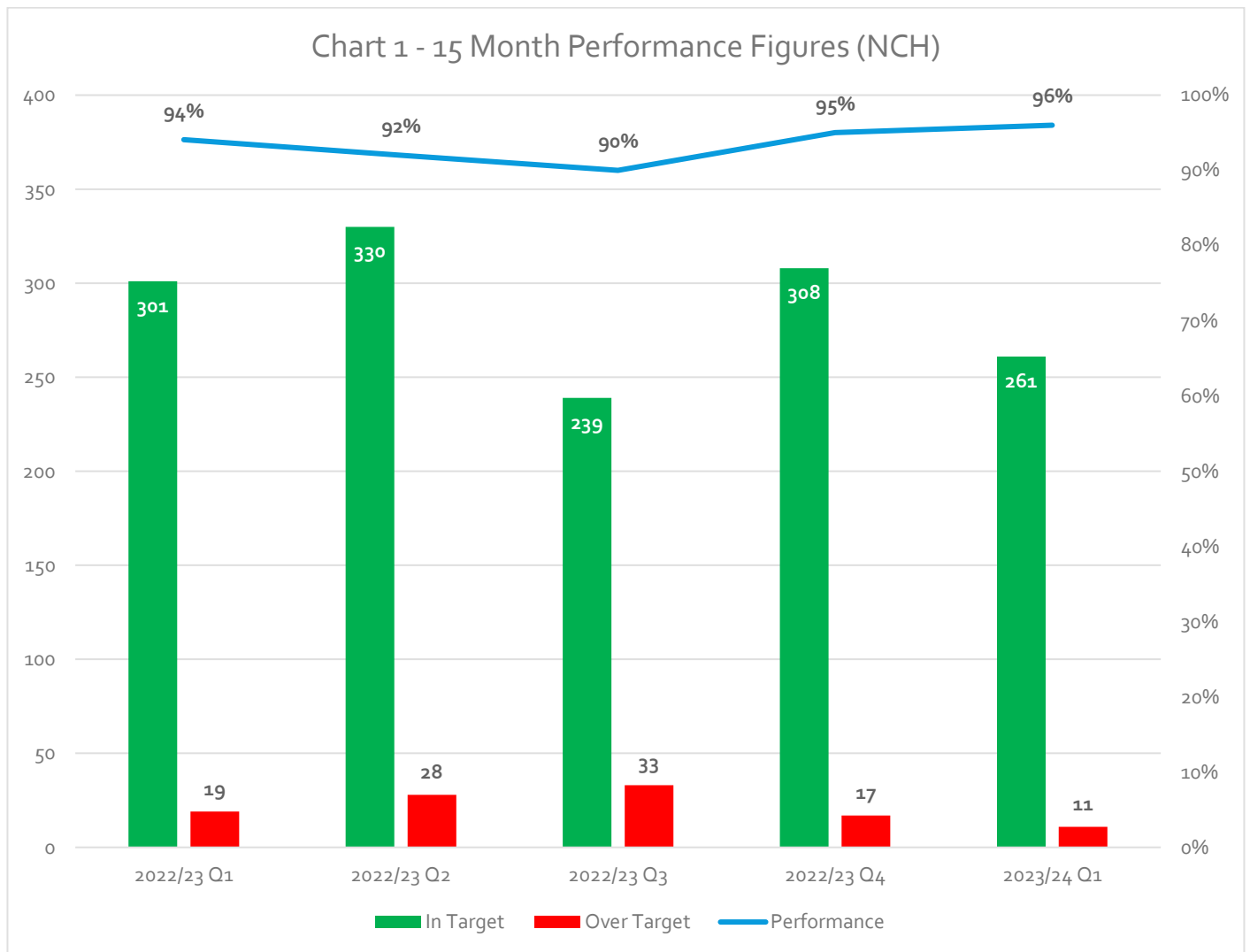
As one of the only areas to see an increase, Asset Management complaints have been reviewed for this report but there is no specific indication of an over-arching trend or driver of these complaints and, as shown in 2022/23 Q2, anomalous figures can occur, especially when overall volumes are so relatively low. Although no specific issue was prevalent throughout these complaints, as with the wider business, issues with communication were mentioned several times.

Both Responsive Repairs and Mechanical & Electrical have seen significant reductions in volume compared to the same quarter of 2022/23, which does suggest an overall improvement in these areas. Quarter 2 will be a good indication of whether this can be maintained, but for now their successes should be noted. TEM has also seen improvements on the previous quarter, but also show overall improvement compared to the same time last year, which is likely the result of actions carried out to improve communication and contactability of TEM staff.

## SECTION 2 – COMPLAINTS PERFORMANCE

### Overall Performance

Chart 1 below shows Stage 1 complaint volumes responded to in and out of target and overall performance for the previous 5 quarters for NCC Properties. The blue Performance line indicates the percentage of complaints answered in target (10 working days) for each quarter.



## Performance by Service Area

Table 2 below shows performance by service area for the previous five quarters. The figures represent the percentage of complaints allocated to that area which were responded to within the 10-working day target. To provide context, an additional column is included which shows the number of 'over target' complaints for the latest quarter.

Table 2	Service Area	2022/23 Q1	2022/23 Q2	2022/23 Q3	2022/23 Q4	2023/24 Q1	Q1 over target #
Property Services	Asset Management	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	0
	Business Services	96%	80%	74%	89%	88%	6
	Planned & Replacement	100%	-	-	100%	-	-
	Development & Acquisition	100%	-	-	-	-	-
	Mechanical and Electrical	97%	100%	97%	97%	95%	1
	Planned Maintenance	100%	100%	100%	90%	95%	1
	Responsive Repairs	95%	94%	93%	98%	98%	2
<b>Property Services Total</b>		<b>93%</b>	<b>96%</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>91%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>10</b>
Housing & Customer Services	Customer Excellence	83%	80%	63%	89%	100%	0
	Estate and Caretaker Services	-	-	-	100%	100%	0
	Independent Living	-	100%	-	-	-	-
	Lettings	100%	100%	100%	67%	100%	0
	Nottingham On Call	100%		100%	100%	100%	0
	Rents and Leaseholders	50%	60%	100%	100%	100%	0
	Tenancy and Estate Services	91%	97%	72%	100%	100%	0
	Voids	100%	100%	100%	83%	67%	1
<b>Housing &amp; Customer Services Total</b>		<b>77%</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>1</b>
Corp. Services	Corp. Services inc. CRT	100%	80%	-	-	-	-
<b>Corporate Service Total</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
NCC	NCC Garden Assistance	80%	75%	100%	-	100%	-
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>89%</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>96%</b>	<b>11</b>

As shown above, many areas achieved performance of 100% for the quarter, which is a significant achievement. In areas where 100% was not achieved, this was mostly due to just 1 or 2 complaints answered out of target, which shows why every complaint matters when it comes to improving performance figures.

The primary area of concern is Business Services, which experienced issues in complaint handling due to unexpected absence of key staff members during the quarter. Actions have already been taken to address this and process put in place to allow for improved oversight of complaints allocated to that service area and ensure targets are met.

## SECTION 3 - COMPLAINT OUTCOMES AND CAUSES

### Complaint Outcomes

Table 3 below shows the outcomes of all complaints from NCC Properties for the past 5 quarters.

Table 3	2022/23 Q1	2022/23 Q2	2022/23 Q3	2022/23 Q4	2023/24 Q1
Upheld	178 58%	213 59%	151 56%	175 54%	132 51%
Part- upheld	91 28%	92 26%	78 28%	96 30%	86 33%
Not upheld	51 16%	53 15%	43 16%	54 16%	43 16%

Percentages of complaints that have been Upheld, Part-Upheld and Not Upheld have remained consistent throughout the year and appears to reflect 'normal' distribution. Recent determinations and guidance from the Housing Ombudsman have suggested that some refusals to record matters as complaints have not been fair and/or reasonable. As such, we will continue to follow best practice, which may have a subsequent impact on complaint outcomes, with more 'Not upheld' matters being recorded to ensure fair access to the complaint process for all customers.

### Learning Outcomes and Complaint Drivers

Table 4 below shows the reason selected at the conclusion of complaints for the previous 5 quarters.

Table 4	Complaint Reason	2022/23 Q1	2022/23 Q2	2022/23 Q3	2022/23 Q4	2023/24 Q1
Delay	Caused by Customer	7	11	9	13	14
	Caused by Process	101	122	73	72	64
	Caused by Staff	42	42	35	45	26
	Caused by Sub-contractor	22	20	17	26	7
Staff	Accidental Damage	0	3	0	0	0
	Administrative Error	1	12	4	8	12
	Behaviour (Conduct)	23	19	13	20	16
	Communication	41	47	32	34	27
Service	Missed Appointment	10	10	22	22	20
	Recurring unresolved issue	24	18	29	34	37
	Work not completed	30	34	32	36	19
Quality	Quality of individual's work	7	7	1	2	5
	Dissatisfied with service standards	4	3	1	3	5
Policy	Dissatisfied with policy decision	8	10	4	10	9

Top Reason

Second Reason

Third Reason

In line with previous quarters, we have continued to see large numbers of complaints driven by delays in carrying out works and with communication, which should both remain key focuses for the wider business. However, an emerging trend in complaint drivers is the gradual increase in complaints categorised as 'Service – Recurring unresolved issue' which became one of the top causes in Q4 and has now risen to the second most prevalent cause.

Analysis of the 'Recurring unresolved issue' complaints has found that of the 37 complaints, three were within Planned Maintenance, three for Mechanical and Electrical and one for Lettings, while 30 of them related to Responsive Repairs. Further analysis of the 30 for Responsive Repairs identified a clear trend in complaint outcomes – two were not upheld and four were upheld, but 24 were categorised as partially upheld.

Assumptions from these findings suggest one of two possibilities – either matters that should be given a permanent fix are being given an insufficient temporary fix, or customer expectations of renewal rather than repair are not in line with current repairs policy. Analysis of the learning outcomes provided were not conclusive in determining which of these is correct, so we would recommend closer consideration of how recurring issues are handled.

## SECTION 4 – ESCALATIONS

### Stage 2 Complaints

Table 5 below shows requests made for escalation to Stage 2 during the quarter, how many were refused or withdrawn due to early intervention, how many were answered formally and the performance scores for each area. Performance refers to the percentage of Stage 2 requests resolved by either a response, withdrawal, or refusal within target.

Table 5		Service Area	Escalation Requests	Withdrawn/ Refused	Answered (In Target)	Answered (Out of Target)	Performance
Property Services	Asset Management	8	2	6	0	100%	
	Business Services	-	-	-	-	-	
	Mechanical & Electrical	1	1	0	0	100%	
	Planned Maintenance	5	2	3	0	100%	
	Responsive Repairs	32	3	29	0	100%	
<b>Property Services Total</b>		<b>46</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>100%</b>	
Housing and Customer Services	CSC	-	-	-	-	-	
	HomeLink	2	0	2	0	100%	
	Lettings	1	0	1	0	100%	
	NOC	-	-	-	-	-	
	TEM	4	1	2	1	75%	
	Voids	1	0	0	1	0%	
<b>Housing &amp; Customer Services Total</b>		<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>75%</b>	
NCC	NCC Garden Assistance	1	0	1	0	100%	
<b>OVERALL TOTAL</b>		<b>55</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>96.4%</b>	

Overall volumes of Stage 2 requests decreased from 71 in Q4 to 55 in Q1, a reduction of 23.5%. This is close to the overall reduction in Stage 1 complaints for the quarter, which reduced by 20%. Work to improve performance on Stage 2 complaints has continued to see success with performance rising from 94.4% in Q4 to 96.4% in Q1.

The top driver of Stage 2 escalations remains failure to carry out actions set out in Stage 1 responses. Of the 46 that proceeded to a final Stage 2 response, 30 were driven by failure to complete actions.

Workshops have been set up within Property Services to monitor complaints, including causes of escalation to Stage 2 and ensuring we follow up on actions set out at Stage 1. Improvements from these actions are not expected to show until Quarter 3 but are already in progress.

## Housing Ombudsman

During Quarter 2, we received 8 determinations on previous cases and 11 new contacts, up from 4 determinations and 8 new contacts in Q4 of 2022/23.

### Determinations

The 8 determinations received in Quarter 4 were found as follows:

Date	Case Reference	Findings	Overview of issues	Compensation
20/04/2023	202209952	Maladministration	Repairs to shed	£200
		Maladministration	Complaint handling	
25/05/2023	202128079	Maladministration	Damp and mould	£950
		Maladministration	Complaint handling	
25/05/2023	202213680	Maladministration	Handling of ASB issues	£500
08/06/2023	202217461	Service Failure	Handling of draughts in property	£100
		Reasonable Redress	Complaint handling	
08/06/2023	202212363	Maladministration	Leak in property	£650
		Maladministration	Complaint handling	
		Maladministration	Record keeping	
20/06/2023	202203726	Maladministration	Issues with wiring of TV aerial	£500
		Maladministration	Complaint handling	
20/06/2023	202213277	Maladministration	Various repair and ASB issues	£550
28/06/2023	202128574	Service Failure	Damp and mould	£150
		Service Failure	Complaint handling	

### New Contacts

The 11 new contacts resulted in the following:

- 5 new investigations regarding the following issues:
  - Draughts in property
  - Issues with a mutual exchange application
  - Kitchen and bathroom repairs
  - Installation of a new kitchen

- Cleaning of communal areas
- 6 new matters, which resulted in the following actions–
  - 1 query which resulted in completion of work but no complaint logged
  - 3 queries requesting copies of Stage 1 or Stage 2 responses
  - 1 query on a closed case for a former tenant, no further actions
  - 1 query that required to a new Stage 1 complaint, not previously raised with us

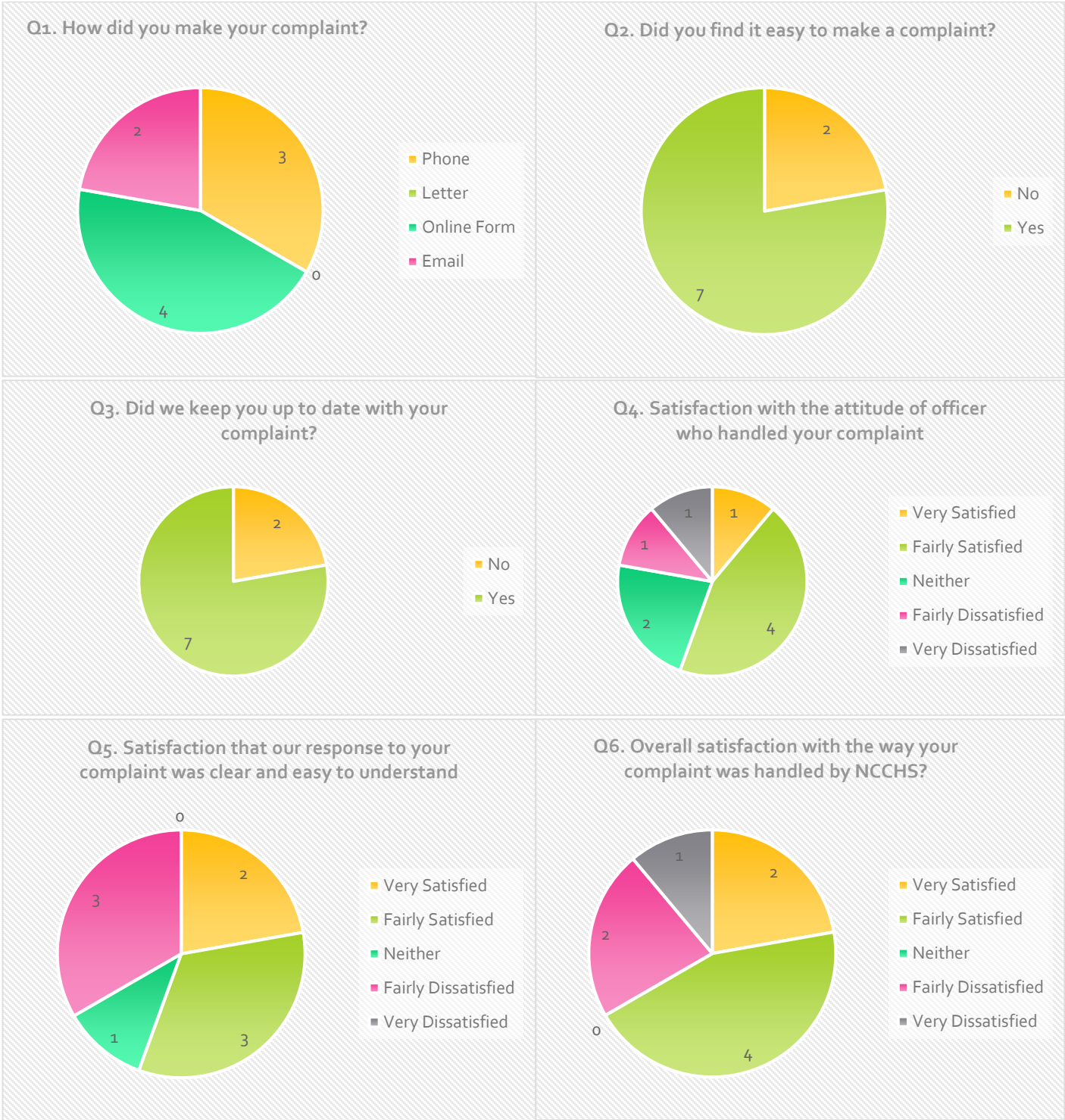
The Backlog of cases with the Ombudsman appears to be getting cleared and determinations are now arriving much quicker. For example, 2 of the 'new investigations' listed above received determinations within the same quarter.

## SECTION 5 - COMPLAINT HANDLING SATISFACTION SURVEY

Complaint handling satisfaction surveys are now sent out after 2-4 weeks after closure of all Stage 1 complaints. Response rates have continued to be low and other options for gathering feedback are under consideration.

The survey consists of six questions:





## SECTION 6 - COMPENSATION CLAIMS

Total Claim form requested and sent - 173

Total received claim forms referred to Insurance - 17 Claims for a total value of £14,208.97

Total received claim forms referred to Legal - 4 Claims for a total value of 6,577.89

Payment was made on 16 Claims for a total value of £3704.08

Of which

6 were Housing Ombudsman Payments for a value of £1950

1 was Stage 1 Complaint resolution payment for a value of £331.06

3 were Stage 2 Complaint resolution payments for a value of £955

6 were Discretionary Payments. Claims total £1058.31. Total Paid £468.02

## SECTION 7 - COMPLIMENTS RECEIVED

Table 8 below shows compliments received within each area over the last 4 quarters

Table 8	Service Area	2022/23 Q2	2022/23 Q3	2022/23 Q4	2023/24 Q1
Property Services	Asset Management	1	0	0	0
	Business Services	0	0	1	0
	Commercial Services	0	0	0	0
	Mechanical and Electrical	0	3	7	4
	Planned Maintenance	0	1	0	1
	Responsive Repairs	4	3	8	15
Housing and Customer Services	Customer Excellence	15	8	14	29
	Estates and Caretaking	0	0	1	0
	Independent Living	0	1	0	0
	Lettings	1	0	0	0
	Nottingham On Call	6	7	5	7
	TEM	2	0	4	0
	Rents and Leaseholders	0	3	1	0
	Tenant Involvement Team	0	0	5	0
	Voids	0	0	0	1
Corporate Services	Risk Management, Governance	3	0	0	0
NCC	NCC Garden Assistance	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>26</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>57</b>

### What our customers are saying

#### Compliment for Customer Relations Team

Customer stated that [Customer Relations Officer] had been really helpful, tried to get the issued resolved and grateful she had called them back, wanted Team Leader to be made aware

#### Compliment for Electrical Team

Customer called to say thank you to Electrician that attended her home regarding security lights. She said that he was a brilliant worker, advised her on the con

## SECTION 8 – NEXT STEPS

- Continue to work with Property Services as they implement changes to improve handling and monitoring of complaints at all stages
- Implement improved data gathering and collaboration for new Ombudsman Investigations, including greater oversight by senior management of information to be provided
- Consider how complaint handling satisfaction can be more effectively measured alongside the new Tenancy Satisfaction Measure surveys

## SECTION 9 - FINANCIAL / LEGAL / OD IMPLICATIONS

There are no comments from Finance/HR/Legal regarding this report.