

Newlon's Annual Complaints and Service Improvement Report 2023-24

The Housing Ombudsman Service's (HOS) complaint handling code has been in place since July 2020 and has acted as a guide to good practice since that time. We have carried out annual assessments of our performance against the code and have published them on our website.

On 1st April 2024 the Complaint Handling Code became statutory, meaning that we are now legally obliged to follow its requirements. As part of this the Ombudsman will monitor compliance and we will therefore submit our self-assessment to the Ombudsman annually, as well as publishing it on our website.

This report is our Annual Assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This has been a challenging year with an increased level of complaints. We have coped well with this increase, with responses largely on time.
- 1.2. We would like to reduce the proportion of complaints escalated to stage two, as this is a good indicator of how effectively our complaints process works and we want to minimise the effort required from residents to get their issues resolved. We are extremely disappointed in the increase in negative determinations from the Ombudsman. As a result we are committing significant time and resources into learning from these cases, swiftly applying the resolutions required for individual cases and applying the wider lessons to the way we deliver services going forward.
- 1.3. We have trained all staff this year on empathy and collaboration and have worked hard to improve communication between teams, to ensure that learning from complaints is properly embedded in the organisation. We recognise there is more we can do on this. We have a wealth of data that can help us identify and fix the cause for repeat complaints and this has been a major focus of our Trust Newlon customer service improvement initiative and will continue to be so.
- 1.4. We believe that over time this will improve services and reduce the need for residents to complain to get issues resolved. Our commitment to achieve this is firmly rooted in the day to day work of all Newlon staff, our leadership and Executive Team, our Resident Forum and our Board.

2. PERFORMANCE

- 2.1. The table on the following page shows the volume and performance for complaints in 2023-24. It shows that stage 1 and stage 2 complaints

increased to their highest level last year. Against a backdrop of rising levels of resident satisfaction and a significant reduction in those who are dissatisfied, it might feel counterintuitive to see increased complaints. We believe the increase is due to a few factors, including the abolition of stage zero complaints, a number of which will have been translated into stage 1 complaints, as well as the publicity campaign undertaken by the Ombudsman which has led to an increase in complaints across the sector.

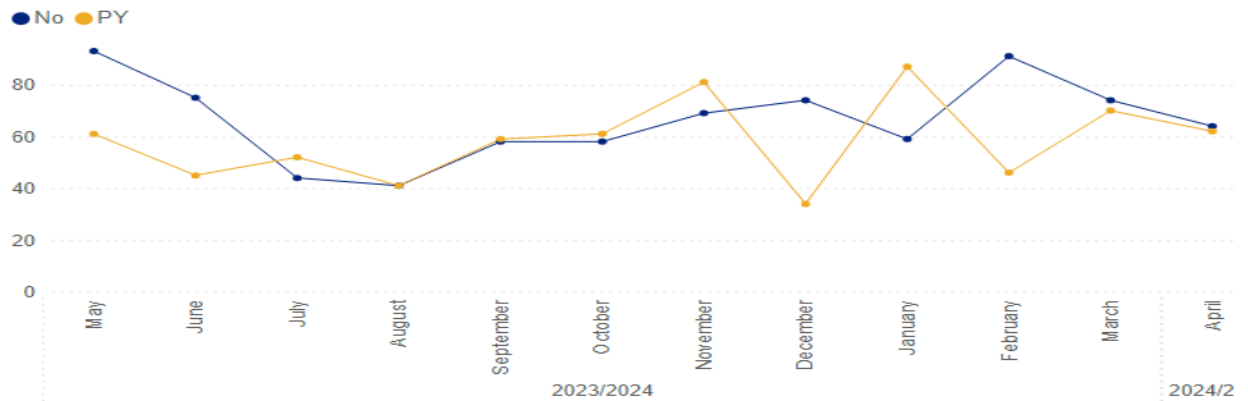
- 2.2. We also know that our services are not always as consistent as we would like and that our communication is not as proactive as it needs to be. We welcome complaints and always want our residents feel confident to complain and for this process to be open and fully accessible. We are then able to work to put things right, rebuild resident confidence and learn and embed from when we havev got things wrong.
- 2.3. Response targets have not quite been met this year, although these were only narrowly missed. Given the increase in complaint numbers, the Service Resolution team has coped quite well and we have recently increased resources in this area to ensure we can consistently meet demand.
- 2.4. It is disappointing that there has been an increase in the escalation to stage 2, as this indicates that we have not been as effective at resolving complaints at stage 1 as we would like. We want to minimise the effort that residents make, so tackling this will be a priority for the year.

COMPLAINTS RECEIVED AT EACH STAGE	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Informal Complaints	19	932	388	91	n/a
Stage 1	550	520	601	568	790
Performance Stage 1s	89.82%	98.08%	98.67%	98.06%	90.89%
Target for Stage 1	96%	90%	90%	95%	95%
Stage 2	129	162	93	65	171
Performance Stage 2s	89.82%	98.82%	79.57%	87.69%	93.57%
Target for Stage 2		90%	100%	100%	100%
Percentage of escalations to Stage 2	23%	31%	15%	17%	22%
No of Ombudsman case where Determinations have been issued. (When the Ombudsman issues their landlord reports they do not include cases they have deemed outside their jurisdiction.)	7	13	21	15	13

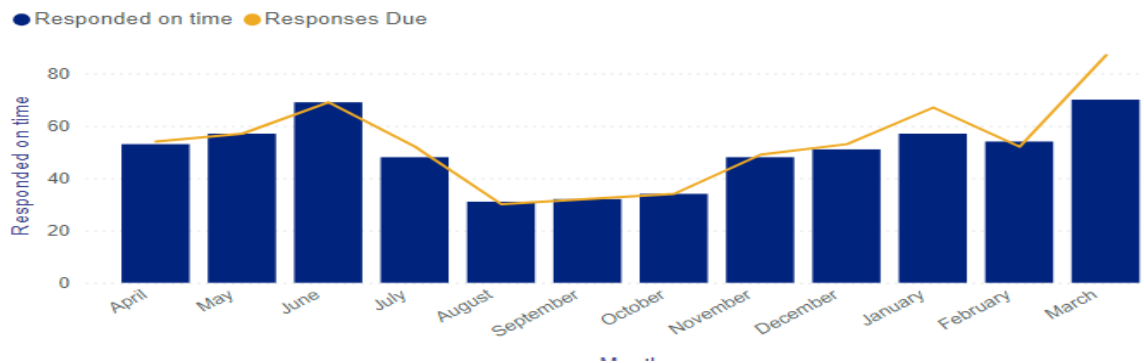
2.5. It should be noted that complaints may be escalated in a different year to when they were originally made, which would account for some variance in the escalation levels.

2.6. The graph here shows the volume of complaints received by month across the past year, compared with the previous year.

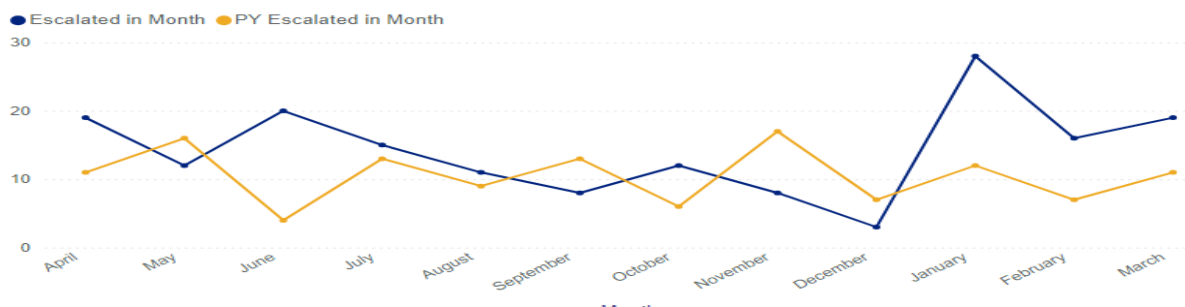
No of complaints



2.7. The chart below shows complaint responses due vs those responded to on time. We can see that our Service Resolution team generally cope well with demand, but as a small team are vulnerable to staff absence. As a response to this we are increasing resources in the team.



2.8. The graph below shows the level of complaints being escalated each month, the overall level this year has been 22% in comparison with last year when it was 17%. This is an area that we aim to improve upon.



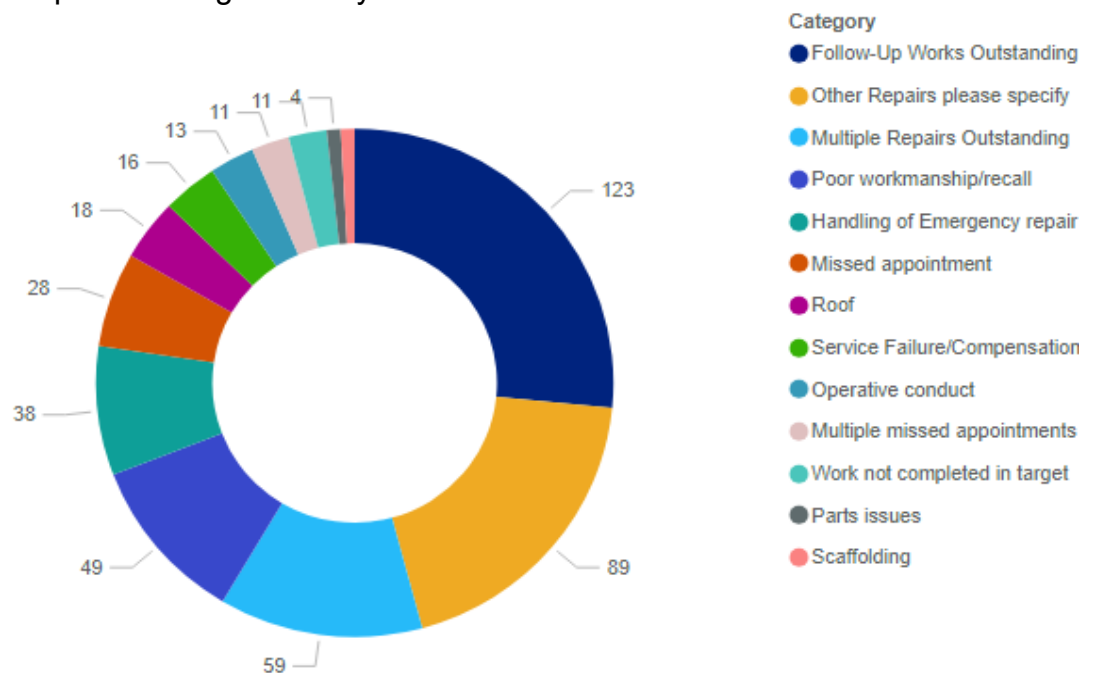
3. What are our complaints about?

3.1 The table below provides a breakdown by service area. The most complained about services are those that residents may broadly recognise as 'repairs' (Repairs, Building Services, Building Safety, Property Services and Asset Management.) These account for 78% of all stage 1 complaints and 73% of all stage 2 complaints. Against the background of restricted funds, meeting resident expectations will continue to be a challenging area.

BY CATEGORY, FINAL STAGE

Final Stage Category	Stage 1		Stage 2		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
STIR Team	1	0.2%			1	0.1%
Special Projects (Complaint)	3	0.5%	2	1.2%	5	0.6%
Service Charges	10	1.6%	7	4.3%	17	2.1%
Sales & Development	2	0.3%	4	2.5%	6	0.8%
Repairs	378	59.3%	85	52.8%	463	58.0%
Property Services	4	0.6%	1	0.6%	5	0.6%
Outward (Complaint)	7	1.1%			7	0.9%
Other	15	2.4%	2	1.2%	17	2.1%
Lettings	17	2.7%	5	3.1%	22	2.8%
Income and Recovery	6	0.9%	3	1.9%	9	1.1%
Estates	48	7.5%	9	5.6%	57	7.1%
Customer Care	21	3.3%	6	3.7%	27	3.4%
Building Services	71	11.1%	15	9.3%	86	10.8%
Building Safety Works	12	1.9%	6	3.7%	18	2.3%
Asset Management	33	5.2%	11	6.8%	44	5.5%
Total	637	100.0%	161	100.0%	798	100.0%

3.2 When we look in more detail into repairs complaints the chart below shows the impact that uncompleted works have on residents, with around 40% of repair complaints being driven by this.



3.3

4. How long is it taking us to fully deal with complaints?

4.1. The table below shows how long complaints have been open for, broken down by stage. (This is as of 28th May 2024.)

Length of time Open	Stage 1	Stage 2
Less than 1 month	48	n/a
Less than 3 months	90	16
3-6 months	67	25
6-12 months	41	16
Over 1 year	13	27
Total	259	84

4.2. This table shows the volume of complaints that the Service Resolution team are overseeing currently. This will include complaints requiring responses, as well as those waiting for the resolution to be completed. Whilst the number is a snapshot in 2024-25, this gives a picture of how many complaints are open at any point in time.

4.3. We keep complaints open until the promises we make in our complaint responses are fully delivered. Complaints can be very complex and therefore it can take some time to deliver on our promises. That said this shows that we are too routinely taking too long to deliver on our promises. Last year, the average time to close a stage 1 was 70 days and 99 days for stage 2 complaints. The longer a complaint is open the higher the risk that the resident feels frustrated, dissatisfied or forgotten. We have addressed this with increased scrutiny and reporting and have made the decision to increase resources in this important area with two new posts dedicated to seeing through the promises we make in complaint responses.

4.4. The Housing Services and Property Services Directors are working together to focus on local action to speed up the delivery of our complaint promises. In addition, the Head of Service Improvement and Service Resolution Team Leader are reviewing all cases that have been open for more than six months to ensure there are clear plans in place for each complaint to reach a resolution.

4.5. We have shared our annual complaints performance report with the Residents' Forum, who were satisfied with the breadth and content of the report. Residents questioned whether the resolution of complaints was adequately resourced given the rise in numbers. They also had questions about what we are doing to tackle the root cause of follow up repairs and how we communicate when repairs become complex or need follow on works. Lastly a discussion was had around developing better IT tools to enable improved management of cases. We have undertaken to keep the Forum updated on action taken on this feedback.

5. Ombudsman determinations

5.1. The table below shows a breakdown by service area of where the Ombudsman has made determinations. There have been 28 determinations in the last year relating to 15 cases reviewed by the Ombudsman. It should be noted for the purposes of calculating this percentage the Ombudsman does not include complaints that have been withdrawn or those outside their jurisdiction.

5.2. The Ombudsman has issued fewer determinations for us than the previous year, though there has been a higher rate of maladministration. This higher maladministration trend is common amongst landlords. The Ombudsman reported that they had experienced a 91% increase in cases coming to them in the first nine months of 2023-24 compared to the same period last year, with a maladministration rate of 72% (it was 59% in 2022-23). That said, we are far from happy with this level of performance and are dedicated to ensuring we more effectively manage our complaints reduce this rate of maladministration in 2024-25.

Category	Mal-administration	Service failure	Redress	No mal-administration	Resolved with Intervention	Outside Jurisdiction	Withdrawn	Total
ASB	2							2
Sales				1				0
Charges								0
Complaint Handling	3	4	1					8
Compensation		1	1					2
Record Keeping	1							1
Estate Management		1	1					2
Health & Safety	1					1	1	3
Moving to a Property								0
Occupancy Rights						1		1
Property Condition	9 (1 is severe)		2		1	1		12
Total	16	6	5	1	0	3	0	28
Negative and positive	79%		21%					

5.3. We had been running at a maladministration rate of around 50% for most of the year, until we had several determinations in the last few weeks of the year. This prompted us to immediately review how we can improve the effectiveness of our complaints process and bring down the rate of

maladministration. We have ensured the Resident Services Committee, Resident Forum and Board have full sight of this and our plans and actions to reduce this.

6. Ombudsman Cases

- 6.1. In our commitment for full transparency we are publishing a summary of all maladministration Ombudsman determinations for 2023-24.
- 6.2. When we receive a determination from the Ombudsman this is shared with key executive members including the Chief Executive. A meeting with service leads involved is quickly held and concerns, actions and lessons learned are identified. These are added to the overall Learning from Complaints plan and are reviewed monthly with senior managers in the monthly 'learning from complaints' meetings. We take all Ombudsman determinations extremely seriously and are committing to fully meeting all requirements of the orders promptly and making best use of the information to drive improvements to our services. Determination summaries are provided to the Resident Services Committee of the Board and included in our annual complaints report to Board.
- 6.3. We provide a comprehensive report on complaints performance to each Resident Services Committee and an annual report to Board and the Resident Forum, which is used to inform the agenda planning for this meeting. We aim to be transparent in our approach.
- 6.4. We are fortunate to have an Board member responsible for complaints (MRC) with extensive expertise gained from her involvement with our historic complaints panel as well as her membership of the Resident Services Committee and as a resident. We are developing the role of our MRC so that she can provide additional scrutiny, challenge and assurance.

7. Ombudsman Spotlight Reports

- 7.1. The Ombudsman has produced reports on a number of areas, setting out learning from cases and best practice. This year we have carried out self-assessments against these and produced action plans which are signed off by the Executive team who receive regular updates on progress. The Spotlight reports have focussed on:
 - Damp & Mould.
 - Noise.
 - Knowledge & Information.
 - Respect, Attitude & Equality.
- 7.2. Some of the recommendations have meant some substantial changes in approach which will take time to fully complete. For Noise and Damp & Mould, Newlon is about 80% compliant with the recommendations of the

spotlight reports, but less so for the two more recently published reports. We aiming to meet all the recommendations.

7.3. Some of the older Spotlight reports will be incorporated into standalone reviews already underway or will be started. Their status is summarised here:

- Engagement with private freeholders and managing agents - our approach to this area is under review by a dedicated Managing Agent Review Group and this report's recommendations will be considered as part of their work.
- Spotlight report on dealing with cladding complaints - whilst Newlon's approach in this area has been reviewed following a negative Ombudsman determination some time ago, the recommendations in this report will be incorporated into the Quality Audit on communication in this area.
- Complaints about heating, hot water, and energy. It would be useful to carry out a self-assessment using this report to ensure that we are following best practice and ensure that any future procurement reflects this.

8. The Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code

8.1. The 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.

8.2. Social landlords are expected to complete a self-assessment against the Code and publish this, along with their governing body's response to this.

8.3. The Code has raised standards and we are working hard to achieve full compliance in all areas. To meet the Code, our complaints policy and procedures have been updated substantially to reflect the new guidance. An action plan has been developed to ensure that full compliance is achieved and those areas requiring more work have been identified. The self-assessment has been closely reviewed by the Board and the Resident Forum. The MRC was fully involved in the self-assessment process and regularly receives full information on complaints performance and understands this from a resident's perspective as well as Newlon's.

9. Service Improvement

9.1. We have dedicated significant time and resource in the last year to improving services. The Board approved our Trust Newlon plan in June 2022 which coordinates all the activity around improving resident satisfaction. This structured approach, with regular reporting to the Board on progress

has resulted in significant cultural change and improved performance. We have ensured that the learning from Spotlight reports have fed into these plans and influenced the priorities of Trust Newlon.

9.2. **Learning from complaints has resulted in some specific changes:**

- Reduced time allowed for contractors to deal with roof repairs. Previously the target time was 60 days, this has been reduced to 7 days for all emergency and make safe works and non-urgent jobs should be inspected within 7 days with a works order issued for 20 days.
- Our complaints policy and procedure have been updated and staff are clear when to log complaints, when they need to be responded to and when an extension of time can be requested. Standard templates have been updated to ensure responses are more empathetic and resident focused.
- ASB policy has been updated to improve responsiveness when ASB is being reported and the perpetrators are unknown. In addition, the policy has been updated to reflect our approach to risk assessment and working with external agencies.
- Better use of repairs data to spot potential issues – we regularly report on works orders in jeopardy (this is where the target date for completion is close and these works orders are at risk of going out of target), overdue jobs and job cancellations. These are regularly flagged to the contractors for explanation and/or prioritisation. As a result of this, the number of works orders being cancelled has reduced and there has been a reduction in the number going over target. As a significant number of calls into the service centre relate to follow up calls for works outstanding, it is hoped that this will help reduce chase up calls as well as reducing complaints in this area.
- Significant Incident Policy – following a complaint regarding a fire in a street property, it became apparent that there we did not have a clear enough process for managing the various tasks associated with the aftermath of such an incident and in particular ownership of responsibilities and communication with any affected residents. A process has now been developed involving all relevant teams to improve how such incidents are managed.
- Two all staff training courses to promote more empathetic responses from staff when dealing with residents and with each other, so communication and collaboration between teams is more effective.
- All staff training on use of our CRM system to ensure more a more consistent approach to record keeping.

9.3. **Action from Learning In progress:**

- Reviewing approach to Vulnerability and Reasonable Adjustments, ensuring that staff are clear on roles and responsibilities and how this needs to be recorded and service adapted accordingly. This is an

area we have reviewed but requires more in-depth work and training for staff.

- Clearer standards for contractors around communication, particularly in the key areas of making appointments, cancelling and re-arranging them, arranging follow on works and in relation to timeliness of processing variation orders. This is being progressed and should shortly be shared with all contractors.
- A Quality audit to check on quality of communication on schemes where there are cladding/fire-stopping issues. This will be completed in a short time period to provide assurance in this area.
- Better information for staff on repairs responsibilities. Highlighting where there may be exceptions is an area that needs improving, for example where a property is adapted or has white goods provided. Work has started on this to ensure that this is clearer for staff and contractors.
- Flagging properties for post-inspections/follow up calls where there have been leaks. These types of works are the most likely to require follow up works and this should assist in these works being managed in a more proactive manner. Our Damp and Mould Task Force has had success in working in this way on more complex cases and we plan to share their learning.
- Visibility of information on contractors systems is being addressed through the development of the contractors' portal.

9.4. **Action from Learning identified but yet to be commenced**

Identify individual homes and blocks where there has been 'excessive' works orders, to identify underlying issues and what approach is needed to tackle.

10. **Our priorities for the coming year will be:**

- Embedding the new Ombudsman Code and ensuring that those areas where we have identified weaknesses are strengthened.
- Reduce the level of escalation of complaints and aim to resolve more complaints at stage 1.
- Speed up the delivery of our complaint promises and keep residents well informed.
- Progress actions arising from Spotlight reports.
- Progress actions arising from learning from complaints.
- Better publicise to staff and residents where we have learned from complaints to increase confidence that we are listening and acting.

11. **CONCLUSION**

11.1. We can have a reasonable level of assurance in our complaints handling service. We believe our complaints service is accessible and we can show that we respond to the majority of complaints in a timely manner. The new Complaints Code has raised the bar around standards for complaints

management and we will need to ensure that our performance continues to improve. We need to speed up the delivery of complaint promises and keep residents well informed throughout and are adding resources in this important area. We can show how complaints have changed and improved services, but we want to do more to publicise where we have done this to increase resident confidence.

- 11.2. We are fully committed to ensuring that residents can have full confidence in our complaints service and believe that we have identified our weaker areas and have plans in place to address them.

APPENDIX 1 Summary of Newlon Maladministration Determinations 2023-24

1. Complaint A

- Complaint definition
The complaint is about:
 - a. The landlord's response to the resident request for an EWS1 form.
 - b. The landlord's communication regarding the cladding.
 - c. The landlord's complaints handling.
- Ombudsman Determination
 - *No maladministration* by the landlord in its response to the resident's request for an EWS1 form.
 - *Maladministration* by the landlord in relation to its communication regarding the cladding.
 - *Service failure* by the landlord in its complaints handling.
- Ombudsman Orders
 - The landlord is ordered within four weeks of this report to:
 - i) Pay the resident compensation as outlined in the order.
 - ii) Write to the resident with a clear roadmap, including timescales, for identifying and undertaking any remedial works that may be required to the cladding and underlying systems, and for producing an EWS1.
- Compliance with Orders -
 - All orders have been complied with.
 - Since then, all schemes where there were issues around EWS1/cladding issues have been sent clearer communication.

2. Complaint B –

- Complaint definition –
The complaint is about the landlord's:
 - a. Response to the resident's reports of damp and mould.
 - b. Response to the resident's reports of repairs.
 - c. Complaint handling.
 - d. Record keeping.
- Ombudsman Determination –
 - There was *severe maladministration* in the landlord's handling of the resident's reports of damp and mould.
 - There was *reasonable redress* in the level of compensation offered by the landlord in relation the repair.
 - There was *no maladministration* in relation to the landlord's complaint handling.
 - There was *maladministration* with the landlord's record keeping.
- Ombudsman Orders/Recommendations –

- To arrange for a senior member of its staff to apologise to the resident for the failings identified in this report, in person (or in writing if preferred by the resident) within four weeks of the date of this report.
- To pay the resident compensation as outlined in the order.
- Within four weeks of the date of this report the landlord completes an inspection of the property to assess outstanding works.
- Within two weeks of this it is to confirm in writing to the resident and this Service:
- The outstanding works in relation to damp and mould and provide target dates for these to be completed if they have not been completed.
- The measures it has put in place to monitor whether the proposed works remedy the damp and mould in the property.
- The Ombudsman orders the landlord to consider the Ombudsman's "Spotlight on knowledge and information management" and within six weeks of this report it should share its learning with this Service with a focus on its systems and process for recording repairs.
- Compliance with Orders -
The orders have been complied with.

3. Complaint C –

- Complaint definition –
The complaint is about Newlon's handling of:
 - a) A leak and subsequent repairs.
 - b) The associated formal complaint
- Ombudsman Determination –
 - There was *maladministration* in the landlord's handling of the leak in the property
 - There was *service failure* in the landlord's complaint handling.
- Ombudsman Orders –
 - To pay the resident compensation as outlined in the order.
 - The landlord is to arrange for an external contractor to attend the property and carry out a full inspection of the roof, identify the cause of the leak within two weeks of the date of this report and carry out any works identified within three weeks of the report.
 - The landlord is to carry out a full inspection of the property within four weeks of the date of this report and complete any works identified, including identifying any issues with damp and mould, within six weeks of the report.
- Compliance with Orders -
The payments have been made, roofing works have been completed and surveyor inspection took place.

4. Complaint D –

- Complaint definition –
 - a. The landlord's response to the resident's reports about repairs to her balcony door.
 - b. The landlord's complaints handling.

- Ombudsman Determination
 - There was *maladministration* by the landlord in its response to the resident's reports about repairs to her balcony door.
 - The landlord has made an offer of *reasonable redress* in relation to its handling of the resident's complaint prior to investigation which, in the Ombudsman's opinion, resolves the complaint satisfactorily.

Ombudsman Orders/Recommendations

- Pay the resident compensation as outlined in the order.
 - Within eight weeks of the date of this report the landlord is to confirm to this Service that it has reviewed its record keeping procedures in line with the Ombudsman's Spotlight report on Knowledge and Information Management dated May 2023.
- Compliance with Orders -
Compensation has been paid. A meeting has been held to draw up the key principles of effective case management which will then form part of Dynamics training for all staff.

5. Complaint E –

- Complaint definition –
The complaint is about the landlord's handling of the resident's:
 - a. Request for information about cyclical works and a kitchen renewal.
 - b. Complaint and the compensation offered.
- Ombudsman Determination
 - There was *maladministration* in relation to the landlord's: Request for information about cyclical works and a kitchen renewal. Complaint and the compensation offered.
- Ombudsman Orders/Recommendations
 - Apologise to the resident for the failings identified in this investigation.
 - Pay the resident compensation as outlined in the order.
- Compliance with Order -
The compensation has been paid and a meeting held to discuss lessons learnt.

6. Complaint F.

- Complaint definition –
The complaint is about the landlord's handling of –
 - a. Breakdown of the hot water system and the associated offer of compensation.
 - b. The landlord's complaint handling.
- Ombudsman Determination –

- There was *maladministration* in the landlord's handling of a breakdown of
- There was *service failure* in the landlord's complaint handling.
- Ombudsman Orders
 - Pay the resident compensation as outlined in the order.
 - Ensure the resident's communication preferences are reviewed and clearly logged on its internal systems.
- Ombudsman Recommendations
 - Ensure its repairs policy provides clarity on categorisation and timescales for the loss of either heating or hot water, for both vulnerable and non-vulnerable households. This will ensure all repairs are categorised and responded to with the required urgency.
 - Ensure that all staff who are customer facing receive refresher training on how to identify and log complaints at the earliest opportunity.
 - Assess how it communicates technical matters to residents. If it is informing the resident of actions that have been completed or are being attempted, this should be in plain English, free of jargon.
- Compliance with Orders -
 - The compensation has been paid and a meeting held to discuss lessons learnt.

7.0 Complaint G.

- Complaint definition -
 - The complaint is about the landlord's handling of the resident's reports of:
 - a. Antisocial behaviour (ASB).
 - b. Outstanding communal repairs.
 - c. Issues with the bin and bicycle store.
- Ombudsman Determination –
- There was:
 - Maladministration in the landlord's handling of the resident's reports of ASB.
 - *Maladministration* in the landlord's handling of the resident's reports of outstanding repairs.
 - *Service failure* in the landlord's handling of the resident's reports of the issues with the bin/bicycle store areas.
- Ombudsman Orders
 - To pay the resident compensation as outlined in the order.
 - The landlord is to consult with all affected residents on the future of the bicycle store and improvements for the bin store area. The landlord is to be clear about the available options, considering what its obligations are.
 - The landlord is to offer the resident a meeting to review any outstanding issues and discuss its plan is to stop the ASB issues from recurring.
 - The landlord is to confirm compliance with these orders to the Ombudsman within 8 weeks of the date of this report.
- Ombudsman Recommendation
 - The landlord is to consider modifying its ASB policy to differentiate between unknown perpetrators of ASB and those who it is unable to

identify. Unknown perpetrators can be identified where there is CCTV or with a little bit of work from the landlord, in these circumstances a course of action more in line with what happens when the perpetrators are known is needed.

- Compliance with Orders -
The compensation has been paid and a meeting held to discuss lessons learnt.

8.0 Complaint H –

- Complaint definition –
The complaint is about the landlord's handling of
 - Repairs to the toilet, oven and radiators.
 - The complaint
- Ombudsman Determination –
There was *maladministration*.
 - In respect of its handling of the repairs to the toilet, oven and radiators.
 - In respect of its complaint handling.
- Ombudsman Orders
 - Within 28 days of the date of this report the landlord must:
 - Pay the resident compensation as outlined in the order.
 - Provide evidence of the extra staff training the landlord said it would organise following the stage 2 complaint.
 - Investigate why staff were not aware of the repair responsibilities for this property. Review its systems to make sure that adequate alerts are in place to make sure that repairs to this property and other similar ones are classified correctly and that repairs to all eligible appliances are attended to without delay.
 - Check that the radiators fitted in the property are compliant with current standards in this type of property and provide evidence to the resident.
- Compliance with Orders -
 - The orders have largely been complied with; the only outstanding matter is the fitting of the radiators.

9.0 Complaint I –

- Complaint Definition
 - a) The complaint is about the landlord's handling of the resident's reports of a leak and the resulting remedial works required to their home.
- Ombudsman Determination
There was *maladministration* in the landlord's handling of the resident's reports of a leak and the resulting remedial works required to their home.
- Ombudsman Orders
 - Within 28 days of the date of this determination, the landlord is ordered to:

- a. Apologise to the resident for each of the failures identified in this report. The apology must come from a senior figure in the organisation.
- b. To pay the resident compensation as outlined in the order.
- The landlord must conduct a review of this case. The review must be carried out by a senior figure at the organisation. The review must include assessments of the following issues, in light of the failings identified in this report:
 - a. Why the vulnerability policy and procedure was not followed.
 - b. Why it took more than 3 months to arrange for initial remedial works to be carried out at the resident's home following a leak.
 - c. Why the landlord refused to pay compensation at stage 1 and 2 of the complaints procedure.
 - d. Cover arrangements and workload reassignment during annual and sick leave.
 - e. Oversight of repairs contractor performance and practices.
 - f. Why the resident's complaint did not lead to learning being implemented for at least 12 months after the stage 2 response was issued.
- The review must refer to the Ombudsman's Code and the Spotlight Report on attitudes, respect and rights, published online in January 2024. Where areas for improvement are identified, the landlord should come up with an action plan to implement learning and improve its performance, and the performance of its contractors. The review and action plan must be provided to the Ombudsman and the resident within 12 weeks of the date of this determination.
- Ombudsman Recommendations
- The landlord should remind staff, where appropriate, about its obligations where infestations are concerned, to mitigate the risk of residents being incorrectly advised in future. The landlord should ensure its staff consider all relevant information and circumstances when responding to reports of an infestation.
- Compliance with Orders –
- The orders have been complied with largely and where there has been wider reviews identified these are being worked on as part of the ongoing work on learning from complaints work.

10. Complaint J -

- Complaint Definition
The complaint is about the landlord's:
 - a) Handling of the resident's reports of antisocial behaviour (ASB).
 - b) Response to the resident's reports that her patio door required replacement.
 - c) Handling of the resident's transfer request.
 - d) Complaint handling.

- Ombudsman Determination
 - Within 4 weeks of the date of the report a senior officer of the landlord was to apologise to the resident in person.
 - Within 4 weeks of the date of the report the landlord was to pay the resident the compensation as per the order.
 - Within six weeks of the date of the report the landlord was ordered to carry out a full review of its ASB training to staff with a particular focus on:
 - a) The effective use of risk assessments.
 - b) Hate-related ASB.
 - c) Handling retaliation and intimidation against victims e.g. the use of target hardening measures and temporary accommodation.
 - d) Signposting victims to the correct support.
 - e) Effective evidence gathering including the use of CCTV and professional witnesses.
 - Within six weeks of the date of the report the landlord was ordered to carry out a review of its practice to ensure that 'holding responses' in complaints. The landlord should ensure that staff provide the resident with a satisfactory explanation as to the reason for the delay within its response and an update on any substantive issues if relevant e.g., the status of outstanding repairs.