

## Annual Complaint Performance and Service Improvement Report 2023-24

### Overview of Service and Analysis of Service Requests and Complaints received

YMCA Exeter is a specialised supported housing provider with 85 units of supported accommodation across four stages of support level. These stages move through a progression format of very high intensity support available 24 hours a day through to lower stage where staffing is just through the daytime and early evening, all the way to stage 4 where young people are able to call upon support as and when they need and want it around their working lives.

This progression pathway is based upon creating excellent communication and being present with our young people, where this is physically impractical, we have developed digital methods of keeping the conversation active, with an app that allows regular messaging and chat.

The operation of our housing service runs very much in line with this way of engaging our young people and often the same staff delivering the support services are the same ones passing on practical reports and any issues with repairs, often it will also be the same staff member who uses the report as an opportunity to demonstrate how to repressurise a combi-boiler or fix a running cistern to the young person as a method of increasing their practical skills in independent living.

We have various methods of reporting service requests and for making complaints. There is a complaint form available for young people to use in each project and submit, an email address to send complaints to electronically and a web form on our website to report any matter in regard to their accommodation or support service.

Alongside this we operate a smartphone app that all young people are helped to sign up to when they join the support service and this has many areas in which to communicate an issue or a complaint, including posting in dedicated channel for each project or service and the ability to directly message the staff team about any matter.

In addition to this, every staff member is given a work mobile phone, and the mobile number is shared with the young people the staff member works with for direct communication such as phones calls and SMS.

For the staff team, each member of staff has a smartphone and a smartphone app that enables them to quickly input a repair or issues report, including photos and description directly to our facilities team. In reviewing the maintenance workloads this is one of the most common ways in which a repair / issue report is made in Stages 1

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and 2 of our service. For Stage 3 & 4, young people more commonly used the digital app, closely followed by speaking to a staff member who reported it on their smartphone app and then after this, the webform on our website.

In the year 2023 – 2024 there were no recorded complaints against any reported service requests.

Whilst this does sound very plausible, and the way support workers engage daily with the young people results in issues being reported quickly. We are also aware that that our facilities and support teams are very proactive in addressing issues and using them as opportunities to “teach” practical home/life skill and so it is likely that some complaints have gone unrecorded other than into the young person’s support file.

In 2023, we opened a new Stage 4 project of 26 flats and there were certainly snagging issues that needed attending to. The tenants in the building formed their own small committee to engage with the snagging process and with ourselves in a very positive way which also may have resulted with some matter that could have been recorded as complaints, being reported by the young people to the member of the building and grounds committee and these not being recorded due to them being regarded as “ongoing snagging” that was being addressed.

Through this analysis, we’ve recognised that some of the very positive peer work, good communication and quick response of support workers, whilst positive in itself, may be causing reported repairs and possible complaints to not be accurately recorded.

### **Improvement and development plan**

From our analysis we will develop what we do in the following ways:

- Without wanting to remove the ability of support workers to take advantage of the practical and educational opportunities of getting a household problem fixed with their young person we will ensure that all support workers receive additional training to understand the importance of reporting service requests and to recognise and enquire about the timescales of the service request and if it has been previously mentioned, in order to log this as a complaint. This training will also introduce the new methods and tools that follow.
- The staff team’s smartphone app will be updated to better capture if the report is a service request, complaint (including asking if it had already been reported and how long ago) and if the staff member attended to it immediately or with

the young person and it is therefore completed. This will assist our recording methods to better capture data accurately.

- The digital app will include a separate complaints section for submitting a complaint which will be simple and quick to complete. Young people reporting matters that could be complaints will be asked to complete the complaint if they report matters within the direct messaging or chat areas where they might otherwise not be recorded.
- Our Web Form will be updated to include a clearer method for reporting a matter that has previously been reported and these will be reviewed as possible complaints. A new web form specially for complaints will be introduced to give more opportunity for complaints to be reported.
- The Building and Committee group will receive some specialist training on reporting and how the expectations on how to deal with service requests and complaints. Their feedback will form the way in which the committee develops how we jointly respond to this to enable better reporting coming out of the Committee.

### **Quantitative Report**

Due to no complaints being received within the financial year, no complaints were sent to the Housing Ombudsman.

Consequently, no complaints resulted in Ombudsman action.

### **Table of results**

	<b>Service Requests through web &amp; paper forms.</b>	<b>Stage 1 complaints</b>	<b>Stage 2 complaints</b>	<b>Complaints sent to the Housing Ombudsman</b>
Total	112	0	0	0

## **Response from YMCA Exeter's Board of Trustees**

We shared this report with our Board who responded as follows:-

*“We recognised that the supportive way in which the staff team at YMCA Exeter work with the young people that live within their projects can lead to a prioritisation of support and education over reporting on housing related matters. We are proud of the quality of the housing that we provide and this is an important part of the service we give in our supported housing projects. We believe that the suggested actions to improve and rebalance these priorities will be effective and will be monitored them going forward.”*

**Si Johns & Gareth Sorsby**

**Joint Chief Executives**

**11<sup>th</sup> October 2024**