**ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT – 2019/20**

**INTRODUCTION**

This report provides the key figures about our customer complaints recorded by Rosebery from **1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020**.

Rosebery views complaints as an important way of capturing feedback from our customers about the services we provide. Complaints let us know when we have got something wrong and allows us to work with customers to put things right and learn important lessons from feedback to improve our service offer.

**EXPRESSION OF DISSATISFACTION**

In April 2018, we offered customers the opportunity to log ‘Expressions of Dissatisfactions’ (EODs). Taking this option does not stop customers being able to log formal complaints but allows the chance for Rosebery to clear up any misunderstandings, service failures and resolve these issues within a faster timescale.

The benefits for customers are that they can avoid the need to go through our formal complaints process and provides the opportunity to agree an earlier resolution. The implementation of EOD’s has proven to be a successful method for quickly resolving service failures to the satisfaction of our customers. We have seen the use of EOD’s increase by 46.15%; of the 19 EOD’s that were logged, 95.24% were responded to within our target timescale and only 1 went on to be escalated to a formal complaint.

**SUMMARY OF COMPLAINTS/EOD’s RECEIVED**

This report highlights the cumulative performance achieved by Rosebery, against the following areas:

* Number of complaints/EODs recorded
* Number of complaints/EODs handled at each stage of the process
* Complaints by type/service area
* Reasons for complaints
* Complaints/EODs performance

On average, including EODs, we received 4.5 complaints per month. This represents an increase of 14.89% compared to 2018/19. A key factor for this was the increase in recorded EODs. We believe this has been useful for offering quick resolution and capturing feedback on service failures so that we can learn and offer service improvements.

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| **Complaints received****(stages 1 & 2)** | **2018/2019** | **2019/20** |
| **Total complaints**  | 34 | 35 |

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| **Complaints logged by stages** | **2019/20** |
| Expressions of Dissatisfaction (EOD) | 19 |
| Stage 1 | 28 |
| Stage 2 | 7 |
| Cases escalated to The Housing Ombudsman | 0 |
| \*Informal enquiries from The Housing Ombudsman | 2 |

\*We received two correspondences from the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) regarding residents that had approached them directly. Neither of these cases had previously raised a complaint directly with Rosebery. Both cases were not subject to an HOS investigation, but we were required to investigate and provide HOS with updates.

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| **Complaints received by type/service areas****(stages 1 & 2)** | **2019/20** |
| Repairs | 6 |
| Gas | 3 |
| Estate services | 1 |
| Rent & service charge | 1 |
| Anti-social behaviour | 4 |
| Communications  | 9 |
| Tenancy management | 4 |
| Staff conduct/performance | 7 |

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| **Reasons for complaints** | **2019/20****figure** | **2019/20****%** |
| Delays with repairs | 4 | 11.42% |
| Failure or refusal to agree to something a resident wants us to do  | 1 | 2.85% |
| Delay in responding to service enquiries | 8 | 22.85% |
| Tenancy management/ dissatisfaction with level of service provided | 5 | 14.28% |
| Dissatisfaction with the quality of repair (gas and responsive repairs)  | 4 | 11.42% |
| Issues with anti-social behaviour | 4 | 11.42% |
| Staff conduct/performance | 7 | 20.05% |
| Miscellaneous  | 2 | 5.71% |

**OUR PERFORMANCE**

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| **Number of complaints answered on time****(stages 1 & 2)** |  |
| Target (within 10 working days) | 90% |
| Performance  | 56.04%\* |

**\*** This figure represents the performance for our final responses. However, in all cases a holding response was sent out within 10 working days indicating that either more time would be required to complete the investigation or there would be unfinished actions that could not be completed within our target time, i.e. repairs before the complaint could be closed.

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| **Number of EOD answered on time** |  |
| Target (within 5 working days) | 90% |
| Performance  | 95.24% |

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| **Complaints** | **Target** | **Performance** |
| % of complaints resolved and closed at stage 1 | 90% | 81.02% |
| % of all complaints escalated and resolved at stage 2 | 90% | 100% |
| Complaints acknowledged within timescales (2 working days) | 90% | 95% |

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| --- | --- |
| **Complaints****(stages 1 & 2)** | **Outcome** |
| Upheld | 8 |
| Partially upheld | 10 |
| Not upheld | 15 |
| Open | 2 |
| **Total** | **35** |

At the end of March 2020, we had 2 complaints still being investigated and remained open, so the outcomes could not be determined.

**ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES**

We have continued to receive a relatively low level of complaints which makes it difficult to note any significant trends and root causes as result of the complaints received. We therefore managed this on an ‘individual’ case review basis, once a complaint has been closed, to ascertain whether there were any lessons to be learnt.

Our Virtual Scrutiny Panel (VSP), carried out a review of the complaints service and reported their findings to Rosebery’s Board in May 2019. The VSP recommended five service improvements. These included being more open and transparent about our performance, looking at lessons learnt and how complaints are used to improve service.

Following the review, we implemented a number of internal changes, which included the assignment of a lead officer for complaints. This role takes the lead on the management of all customer complaints. We believe this adds increased accountability, more focus on reducing response times and an improvement to the overall service offered. This role is still being embedded into the service but has already proved helpful.

During the year we experienced a significant increase in the number of complicated cases all relating to a pest control issue. These cases required detailed investigation and an increase in support being offered to the complainants. Due to the issues raised, extended time was required to resolve these issues and sadly this impacted on our overall performance for answering complaints within our target time.

Another issue, that we have experienced is limited feedback from customers when cases are closed. In all cases when complaints are closed we send out satisfaction surveys so that feedback of their experience can be used for service improvement. Sadly, we have not received the level of responses that we would like, so we have reviewed our approach to making better use of our digital channels to make it easier for customers to provide feedback.

Whilst we acknowledge a decrease in our response times for answering complaints compared to the previous year, there have been a number of achievements that have helped us to deliver positive improvements in our complaints service. These include:

* The management of ‘Expressions of Dissatisfaction’ (EOD’s), which has helped to offer faster resolution and log service failures, not previously recorded.
* The Virtual Scrutiny Panel’s review of our complaints service which has helped us to better understand our service. We now have clear policies in place to manage complaints more effectively.
* All frontline staff received in-house complaints training, to support our customer centric approach to better understand complainants and their concerns.
* The assignment of a lead complaints officer to co-ordinate and manage all customer complaints across the organisation.

**KEY PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT 2020/2021**

The complaints received within the past year has been a useful source of customer insight, along with a number of other activities, to receive customer feedback. Some of the key actions planned as a result are set out below:

* Better engagement with customers and receipt of regular satisfaction feedback when cases are closed, to support continuous service improvements.
* Improve our response to complaints performance replying to at least 90% of all complaints within target timescale
* Ensure ongoing complaints training opportunities are provided for frontline staff so they feel empowered to reduce complaint volumes and encourage early resolution
* Improve the way we utilise lessons learnt from complaints to transform services and improve customer experience
* Offer more support to the lead complaints officer and improve our outbound communications with complainants, ensuring we manage their expectations better and fully engage with them through to the closure of their case.