



Complaints, Compliments and Concerns Annual Report

1 October 2021 to 30 September 2022



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THE GIFT OF FEEDBACK

Brunelcare is committed to continuously improving the quality of services it provides by understanding the experiences of people accessing those services. The Board of Brunelcare recognises that in order to continue to make improvements, it is essential to encourage, value, engage with and learn from all types of feedback.

The Charity has a learning culture and a strong commitment to putting things right when a need for improvement has been identified. This is done by acknowledging any mistakes and assessing the need for change, whether that be a review of any relevant procedures or addressing training requirements for employees that have been identified as part of the complaints process.

THE GIFT OF FEEDBACK

In September 2021, we established the role of Complaints Officer in order to provide our customers with a neutral contact and to support our customers to voice their opinions - for example helping tenants access advocacy services, helping tenants formulate and submit their complaint and offering communication in different formats and languages.

Our Complaints Officer oversees the complaints process and ensures that complaints and concerns are reviewed, resolved and learnt from. The Board's Performance, Quality and Safety Committee review trends and compliance with the key performance measures set out in our Managing Comments, Concerns, Complaints and Compliments Policy on a quarterly basis.

Brunelcare takes the approach that complaints, concerns and compliments raised are gifts. Without feedback from our customers, we have fewer opportunities to develop as an organisation and as individuals.

To bring Brunelcare's process in line with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, our policy and process for handling complaints was reviewed in 2020-21. As a result, an updated Managing Comments, Concerns, Complaints and Compliments Policy and Procedures were agreed by the Board in March 2021.

A new centralised approach to the management of Comments, Concerns, Complaints and Compliments went live in September 2021. Brunelcare's website provides easy read information for our customers on our complaints process, as well as forms so feedback and complaints can be easily submitted. This information can be found at our Contact Us page.

Brunelcare's Complaints Officer provided briefings and training on the updated Complaints Policy and Procedure to colleagues across all of Brunelcare's services, and new colleagues are provided with an overview of the complaints process on joining the Charity.

OUR POLICY AND PROCEDURE

We created materials like posters to highlight that Brunelcare values complaints, and to help raise awareness with tenants on how to complain, where to get help making a complaint and what they can expect from the process.

Complaints, concerns and compliments are reported to the Senior Leadership Team and the Performance, Quality and Experience (PQ&E) Committee on a quarterly basis. The full Board is provided with complaints information through the PQ&E Committee Chair's assurance report to the Board.

Phil Hope, Trustee and Senior Independent Director (SID), is the Trustee Lead for Speaking Up and Complaints.

OUR POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Our Policy states that colleagues will be:

- Empowered and trained to deal with concerns as they arise with the aim of resolving issues immediately. This training will be provided during their induction period;
- Trained to recognise the seriousness of a concern and understand when it should be referred to more senior members of staff;
- Trained and encouraged to provide appropriate information on advice and advocacy support at Stage 1 of the process. However, it is recognised that they may not have (nor could they be expected to) have the breadth of knowledge of all organisations for all types of help available, particularly when operating in a specialist field themselves. Nevertheless, a housing officer, for example, should be sufficiently knowledgeable to advise a complainant with a housing complaint about the services of organisations such as Shelter.

Definitions



Complaints

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction (written or verbal), about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by Brunelcare, its employees, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual customer or group of customers



Compliments

Brunelcare recognises that compliments are also a valuable source of feedback. Positive feedback received regarding services can provide an opportunity to acknowledge improvements and successes, to recognise good practise, and to apply this across other areas.



Concerns

Concerns are defined as issues which may require further enquiry, advice or information in order to resolve them. These are best dealt with by the service in which the concern originated. When a concern is raised which cannot be satisfactorily resolved without an investigation, then it is to be processed as a complaint.

THE COMPLAINTS PROCESS

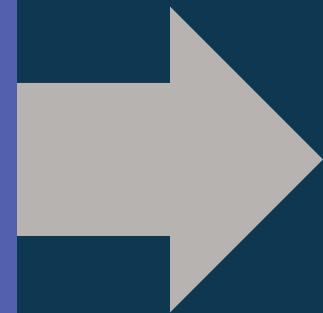
Brunelcare is committed to making its complaints procedure as easily accessible as possible. We recognise that some customers may find it difficult to engage with the complaints process and explain their concerns. We will:

- Offer advice and support to customers to ensure that the complaints process is fully accessible to customers.
- Consider all requests for reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010 and will implement adjustments where it is practicable to do so.
- Share information in a way that meets the customers' individual needs.

The complaints process

Frontline Resolution

We encourage all our staff to deal with issues or concerns at the earliest opportunity to avoid necessary stress for our customers and to ensure the issue is dealt with efficiently and effectively. This is part of frontline service delivery. However, there will be matters that can't be addressed quickly and will need a full investigation.



Stage 1

'Investigate once, investigate well' is the principle for this stage of the process. An investigation aims to establish all the facts relevant to the points made in the complaint and to give the complainant a full, objective and proportionate response that represents Brunelcare's final position.

All Stage 1 complaints will be:

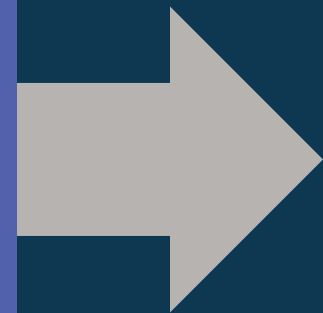
- Formally acknowledged in writing by the Complaints Officer as soon as is possible, but within a maximum of three working days.
- Responded to within 10 working days of the date of acknowledgement. Where a longer time is needed, the complainant will be advised of the reasons for this.

The complaints process

Stage 2

If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction at stage 1 it will be progressed to stage 2.

Stage 2 complaints will be responded to within 20 working days.



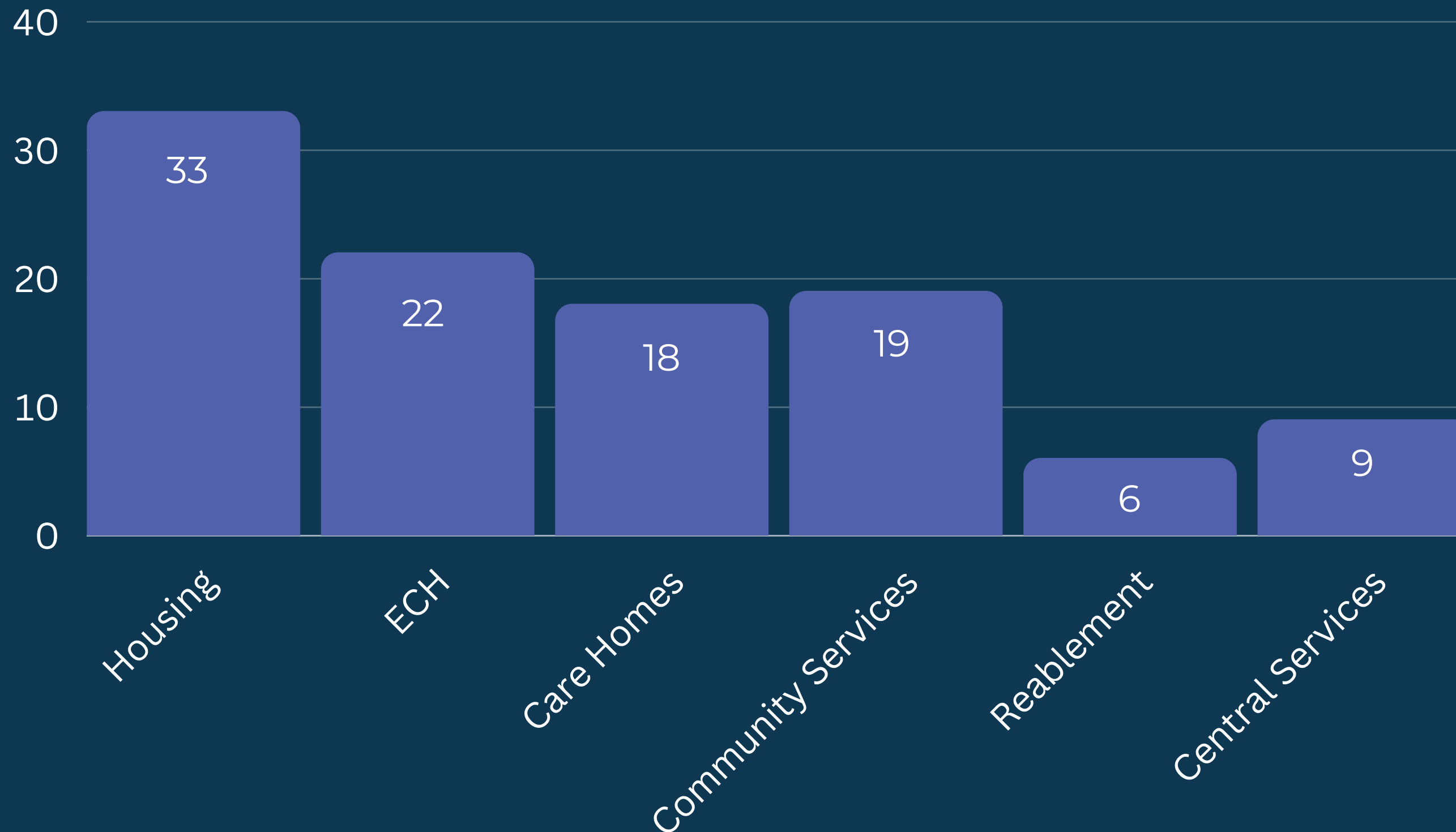
Ombudsman

Complainants have the right to raise concerns with the relevant ombudsman:

- [Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman](#)
- [Housing Ombudsman](#)
- [Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman](#)

Number of complaints received

Number of complaints by service



Between 1 October 2021 and 30 September 2022, 107 Stage 1 complaints were received.

Four complaints received in relation to Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) were dealt with by the Tenancy Services Manager under the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and not reported as a complaint. Only in the event that the complainant feels the issue had not been dealt with appropriately would it then be considered as a complaint.

Brunelcare has 916 (this includes 4 general needs, 7 shared ownership and 12 leasehold properties) sheltered housing properties, and on average we received:



0.037 complaints per household



1 x stage 1 complaint for every 27 households



1 x stage 2 complaint for every 451 households

Brunelcare has 234 Extra Care Housing properties, and on average we received:



0.036 complaints per household



1 x stage 1 complaint for every 27.76 households



1 x stage 2 complaint for every 458 households



Brunelcare has 334 care home beds and on average we received:



0.053 complaints per place



1 x stage 1 complaint for every 18.55 places



1 x stage 2 complaint for every 37.11 places



How we received complaints

So that our customers can raise an issue with us easily and quickly, we have a number of mechanisms in place by which they can contact us to raise a concern or make a complaint.

Between 1 October 2021 and 30 September 2022 we received:



79 complaints by email either direct to a colleague or via or our complaints or feedback email boxes



16 complaints by telephone



8 complaints by letter



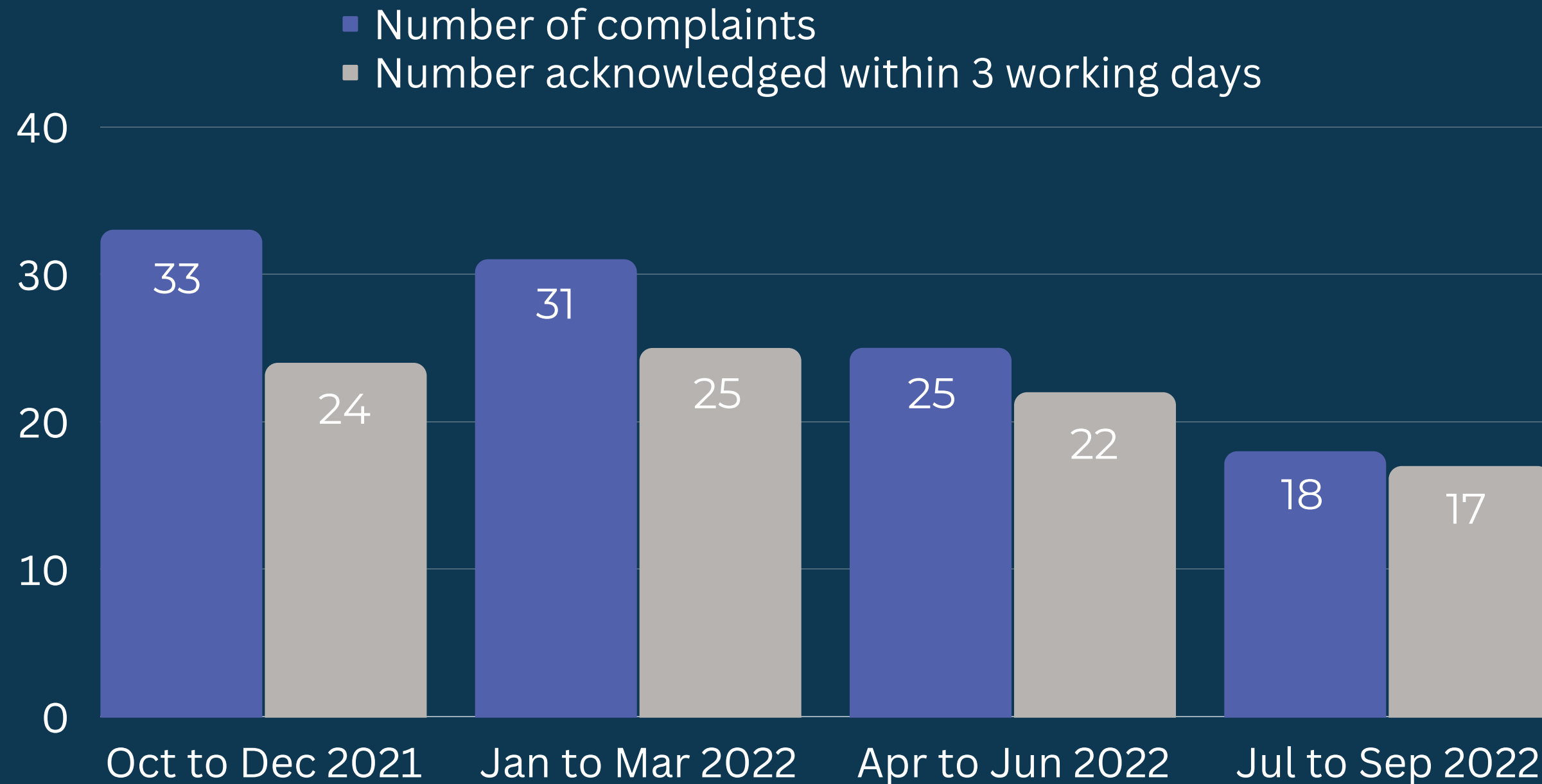
3 complaints were raised in person



1 complaint was made using Facebook

How quickly do we resolve complaints?

Number of complaints acknowledged within 3 working days



Brunelcare’s policy states that complaints will be acknowledged within 3 working days of receipt.

Of the 107 Stage 1 complaints received, 88 (82%) were acknowledged within 3 working days.

Compliance improved during the year from 72.72% in the period October to December 2021 to 94.44% in the period July to September 2022.

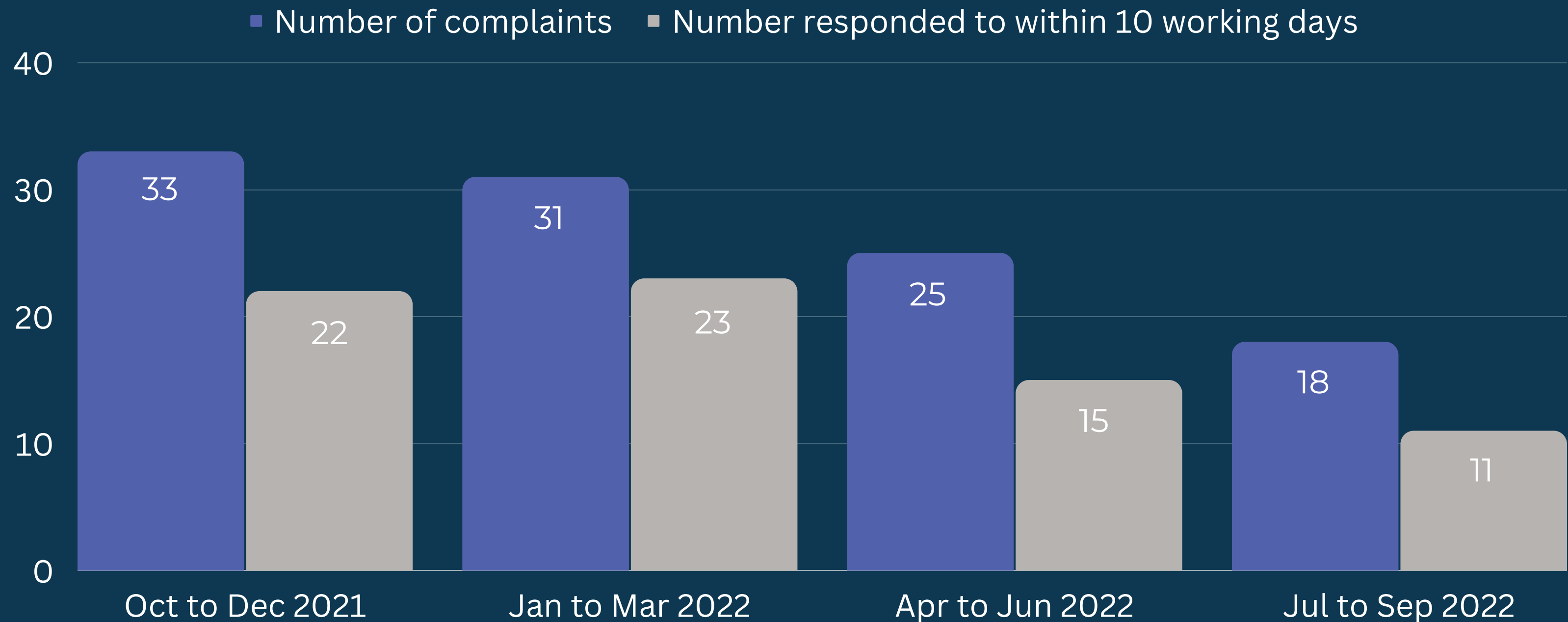
Reasons for the deadlines set in Brunelcare's policy being breached included:

- Complaints being sent to the email box of a colleague who was on annual leave;
- The initial complaint email going into the complaints spam folder in error;
- The non-recording of the date the acknowledgement was sent.

Our Policy also states that we will aim to fully respond to complaints within 10 working days of the complaint being logged.

How quickly do we resolve complaints?

Number of complaints responded to within 10 working days



This is a deadline that colleagues found difficult to meet due to a range of issues, including:

- The complexities of the complaint leading to more time required to fully investigate;
- further information needing to be sought from the complainant;
- the availability of key staff involved due to annual or sick leave.

Brunelcare's Complaints Officer will continue to work with colleagues to support improved compliance with response deadlines. Where we are unable to meet deadlines, the Complaints Officer will ensure that the complainant is kept up to date with progress.

What were the outcomes of complaints?

Of the 107 Stage 1 complaints received:

96

were resolved at stage 1

11

were escalated to Stage 2

1

resulted in the dismissal of a member of staff

1

was escalated to the Local Government and Social Services Ombudsman

During the year, 11 complaints were escalated to Stage 2:

- **Nine Care Home complaints and**
- **Two Housing complaints**

Housing cases

One of the housing cases related to utility bills. This matter was successfully resolved, but it took longer than 20 days to address due to the need to involve contractors in the investigation and resolution of the case.

The second case involved claims of noise nuisance for a neighbour and the way that Brunelcare dealt with this. Support has been offered to the individual to take their concerns to the Housing Ombudsman should they wish to do so.

During the year, 11 complaints were escalated to Stage 2:

- **Nine Care Home complaints and**
- **Two Housing complaints**

Care homes

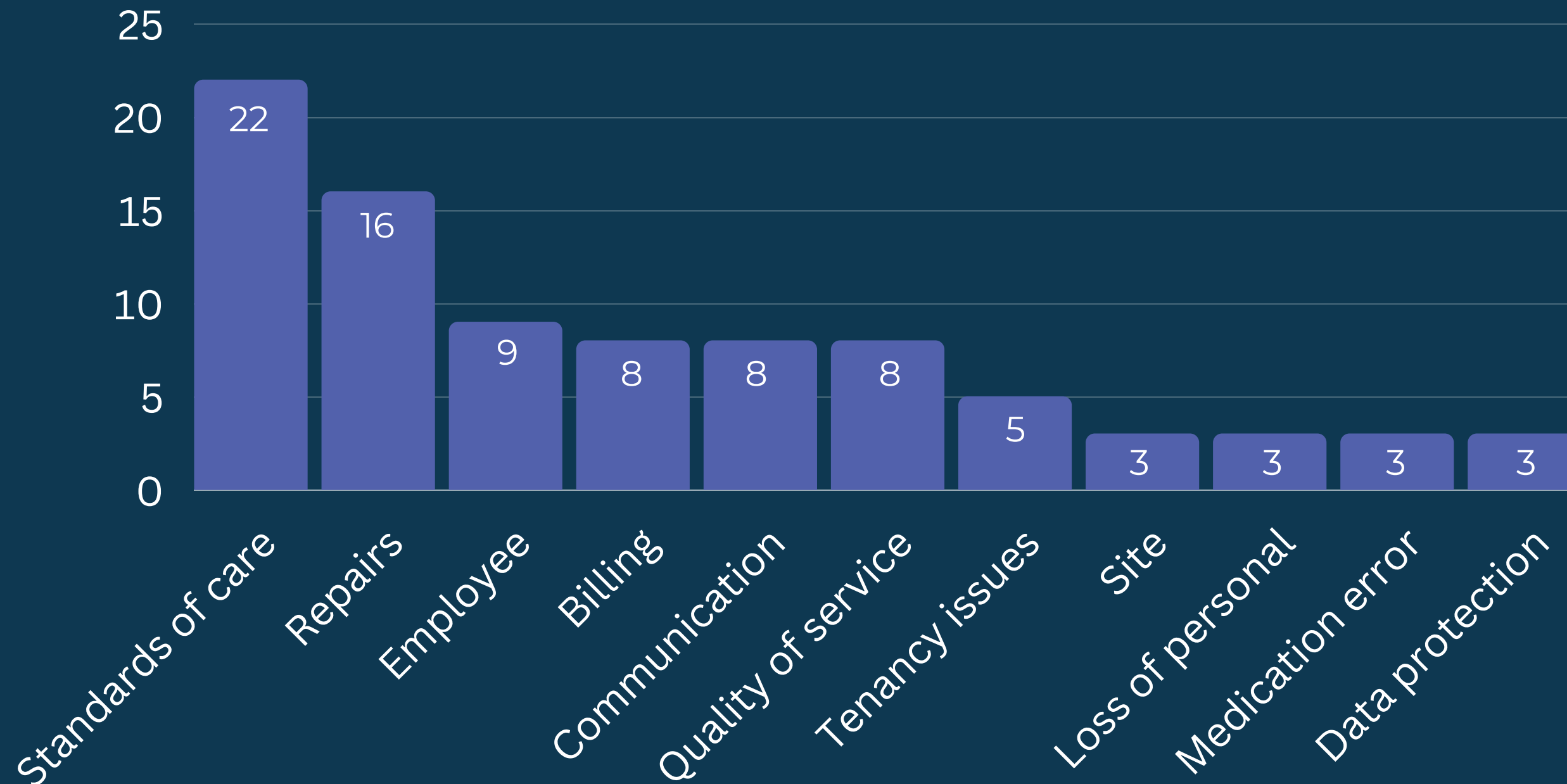
Seven stage 2 complaints related to standards of care and two related to the loss of property. In relation to the later two cases, the families were reimbursed for the property lost.

All seven complaints related to the standards of care were fully investigated and, where appropriate, the local safeguarding team and the care quality commission were notified and copied into the investigation reports.

One care home case was referred to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. The Ombudsman considered nine areas of complaint of which 5 were not upheld and 2 were upheld -1 relating to family contact at end of life and 1 relating to oral care. A series of actions were recommended by the Ombudsman and these have been implemented.

Issues raised in complaints, learning and improvement

Complaint subject areas



Brunelcare provides a range of services, and therefore the complaints received during the reporting period were similarly diverse. Issues of concern raised in more than one complaint are detailed in this chart.

* A further 19 complaints related to matters such as parking, IT systems, neighbour disputes and COVID-19 related matters

Brunelcare uses any comments, concerns, complaints and compliments received to:

- Identify what is working well through compliment trends and share good practice.
- Help identify potential service problems through trends in concerns raised, acting as an early warning system.
- Highlight potential system failure and or human error to identify need for improvement.
- Provide the information required to review services and procedures effectively, responding to requests for customer experience data for service reviews/evaluations.

Here are a few examples which demonstrate how we have learnt from the complaints, raised by our customers:

You told us:

15% of formal complaints related to Repairs and Maintenance. These included a number of complaints regarding planned works being undertaken by an external contractor.

We:

Held weekly escalation meetings with the planned works contractor during November and December. A specialist company delivering surveying and project management services, was appointed to work with the planned works contractor to address quality and communication issues.

Here are a few examples which demonstrate how we have learnt from the complaints, raised by our customers:

You told us:

7% of complaints related to Accounting/Invoicing issues. The majority of these related to the failure of the Building Management System (BMS) at Waverley Gardens new build and Saffron Gardens, which impacted on the production of accurate invoices.

We:

Investigated the BMS measurement issues and a support contract with an external contractor was put in place to ensure the timely and accurate reporting of information to inform invoicing.

Here are a few examples which demonstrate how we have learnt from the complaints, raised by our customers:

You told us:

A family member of a care home resident raised a complaint about the standard of care provided by an external agency care worker. The complainant felt that the agency worker was not fully completing the tenant's care requirements as described in their care plan.

We:

Worked with the agency to fully investigate the matter and ensure that steps were put in place to ensure that agency members of staff were fully conversant with the care needs of the client.

Here are a few examples which demonstrate how we have learnt from the complaints, raised by our customers:

You told us:

A family member of a resident of one of our Extra Care Schemes raised concerns regarding the quality and standard of food provide in the restaurant.

We:

Instigated a review of catering services across our ECH and Care Home Sites. The outcome of the review will be reported before the end of December 2022.

Case study 1: Housing

Situation

Mr A lives in a bungalow and had agreed a change to their monthly Direct Debit following a change in service charges. The tenant then complained that two direct debits, both for a month's rent, had been taken from his bank account. When the complaint was investigated, it was noticed that a colleague that changed the Direct Debit details in the AllPay system had accidentally altered the frequency from Monthly to weekly, which resulted in the monthly amount of rent being taken twice from Mr A's bank account over a 2-week period.

Outcome

It was clear that a mistake had been made by Brunelcare. The Direct Debit was corrected immediately, and the rent refunded along with a compensation payment for the inconvenience. The complaint was resolved successfully at Stage 1.

Additional training was provided to the colleague regarding amendments to Direct Debit on the AllPay system.

Standards of care complaints

20.6% of complaints related to standards of care. The majority of complaints in this category were raised by relatives and related to the care and support provided to their loved ones. All complaints were fully investigated and action taken to respond to the concerns raised. The following cases studies provide insight into how such matters were investigated.

Case study 2: Extra Care Housing

Situation

The daughter of Mrs B reported that her mother was not supported to bed one evening. Medications were administered, however no other support was carried out. This resulted in Mrs B sitting in her chair all night through to the next morning; causing a lot of stress, anxiety and discomfort.

It was found that an agency staff member had completed the visit on the evening in question, and the agency was asked for a full explanation as to why the full support needed by Mrs B was not delivered.

A review of the care worksheet highlighted that the evening call had been entered as a medication call. However, the care plan clearly details the support required by the tenant and was not followed.

Outcome

A letter of apology was sent to Mrs B, and she was advised that should she have any concerns in future she should press her alert pendant. An email of apology was sent to Mrs B's daughter, together with the action plan put in place to ensure that such an incident did not occur again.

The Care Manager System was updated to make it clear that the support plan needs to be carefully read and followed by anyone providing care and support to Mrs B. Further, the team leader asked to not allocate agency staff to Mrs B for any calls going forward.

Case study 3: Reablement

Situation

Mr C is a guest who was admitted to reablement services for a period of rehabilitation. Mr C was being supported by a physiotherapist, occupational therapist and reablement workers to improve his mobility in order to return home safely. A complaint was made by email to the centre manager by Mr C's son. Mr C's son complained about the attitude of the OT towards him and his sister when they had pointed out that Mr C was not mobilising properly. They felt the OT had been irritable and that their dad's mobility had deteriorated.

The centre manager acknowledged the email within the set time frame and informed the relative that an investigation would take place.

Outcome

It was identified the relative's concern regarding his dad's deteriorated mobility was justified, however it was also noted that Mr C did not always follow advice from the OT. The OT offered to work with the family to support the guest to follow therapy advice.

Mr C proceeded to be discharged back to his own home with support in place and the knowledge that the likelihood of falls risk remained as long as he continued not following therapy advice.

Case study 4: Community Services

Situation

Mrs D, a person living with a Dementia, had been receiving support from us for two years (she is now receiving care in a residential care setting). We were providing support every day in the morning and evening, assisting with personal care.

An email complaint was received from Mrs D's daughter raising concerns about the number of staff visiting her mother, which she believed to be causing Mrs D to be confused due to her Dementia. A further complaint was received from the son of Mrs D who stated that 6 different carers had gone in to support her in one week. He also stated that not all carers stayed the full allocated time of 30 minutes and raised concerns that not all of Mrs D's personal care needs were being addressed.

One of the first things we did was collect the communication sheets and MAR sheet from the property to see what the carers had written, All entries on the MAR sheet were correctly signed for, this also corresponded with what was written on the communication sheets where staff had documented that they had provided personal care as per the support plan.

There was also evidence that communications were sent out to staff on the weekly updates, reminding staff of Mrs D's specific care needs.

A senior carer undertook spot checks after some of the visits to ensure all tasks were completed, it was reported back that all tasks were undertaken. CONT

Case study 4: Community Services

We looked at the number of staff that were going in to support Mrs D and found that she had a core team of six who supported her; this was because we did not have many staff who worked both AM and PM in that area, Mrs D had the same carer every morning Monday to Friday, but a set of carers visited in the evening.

Lastly, we looked at the times staff stayed on each visit from during a specific week. We have a new system that tells us when staff clock in and out of a call it will also inform us if staff clock in and out away from the property so the times stated are generally correct, and we could see that the majority of calls did show that staff were staying near to the full time apart from two evening visits where they stayed 18 minutes and 20 minutes.

Outcome

We found no evidence that staff were not addressing all Mrs D's personal care needs. The communication and MAR sheets showed that staff were doing this.

A core team of six staff had been identified to support Mrs D who she was happy with, and we had an agreement with the daughter to inform her if for any reason we could not supply any of those six staff then we would use a back-up staff member identified by both Mrs D and us.

Compliments received



52

compliments about the services provided by Brunelcare and its employees were received. We are working to further improve the recording and reporting of compliments.

Compliments received

Housing

"I think that all staff from Brunelcare are absolutely brilliant and have not a bad word to say about them, they provide an exceptional service.

I loved the way the flat was presented from the void. The work that was done to it was at such a high level, and I received answers to any queries I have spoken to staff about. It has all been exceptional and the best service I have ever received."

"The housing team was very helpful and understanding with an enquiry I had made for a friend. As someone who did not understand social housing, the information they gave me made it much easier to understand and help my friend with bidding."

Compliments received

Community Services

"To the team of carers who looked after my dad, we would like to thank you all for the exceptional care that you gave to him, which made his final days comfortable.

We can't thank you enough for all that you did for him and the support that you gave us. Dad welcomed the home visits of all the team and enjoyed the interaction with you all. It was thanks to them that he was so comfortable and peaceful in his final hours."

"To the wonderful carers at Brunelcare, a massive thank you for the care, joy and patience you have shown mum over the past few months. Her strong, determined attitude makes care a difficult task, you have all shown so much respect for her. Thank you is not enough."

Compliments received

Care Homes

"I wanted to drop you a line to thank you and your wonderful staff for the care you gave to my dad during his 8 months stay at the home. He was always treated with kindness, dignity, and respect. He was looked after so well and above all he was happy.

From the minute I walked through your doors, I felt as if not only dad was getting the best care, but I was being looked after too! Every person that I got to know well, and even staff that I only saw occasionally, were kindness itself."

"I have just completed a service check with the NOK for Mrs A who arrived with yourselves last week. He reported that Mrs A is really happy in the home and feels she has improved since being there. He thinks the staff are brilliant and would definitely recommend the home to others."

**RAISING
AWARENESS &
SUPPORTING
THE
CUSTOMER**

An internal review of the process introduced in September 2021 was completed by the Corporate Governance Team together with a self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code in September 2022. The outcome of this assessment is available on our website.

RAISING AWARENESS & SUPPORTING THE CUSTOMER




The assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code identified areas where Brunelcare's Policy could be further enhanced and greater clarity on the process provided. Over the coming months, we will:

- Publish quarterly complaints, concerns and compliments data on our website;
- Provide refresher training for our managers;
- Update our complaints log to make it clearer when a complaint was upheld, resolved or not upheld;
- Re-circulate posters, guidance leaflets and update our acknowledgement and complaint report templates;
- Start to produce year-on-year comparison and trend data;
- Seek ways to benchmark our performance with housing and care organisations.

More information

Anyone who receives, requests, or is affected by our services can make a complaint. This includes our customers, but also members of the public who could have access to or be affected by our services, including anti-social behaviour/neighbour nuisance.

You can raise a complaint:

-  In person at any of our offices or developments by phoning us on 0117 914 4200
-  By emailing us at complaints@brunelcare.org.uk
-  In writing to Feedback and Complaints, Brunelcare Head Office, Saffron Gardens, Prospect Place, Bristol, BS5 9FF
-  By completing and submitting the form on our website.

[Click here to see our complaints handling leaflet, where you can find more detailed information on our procedure.](#)