

Housing

Ombudsman Service

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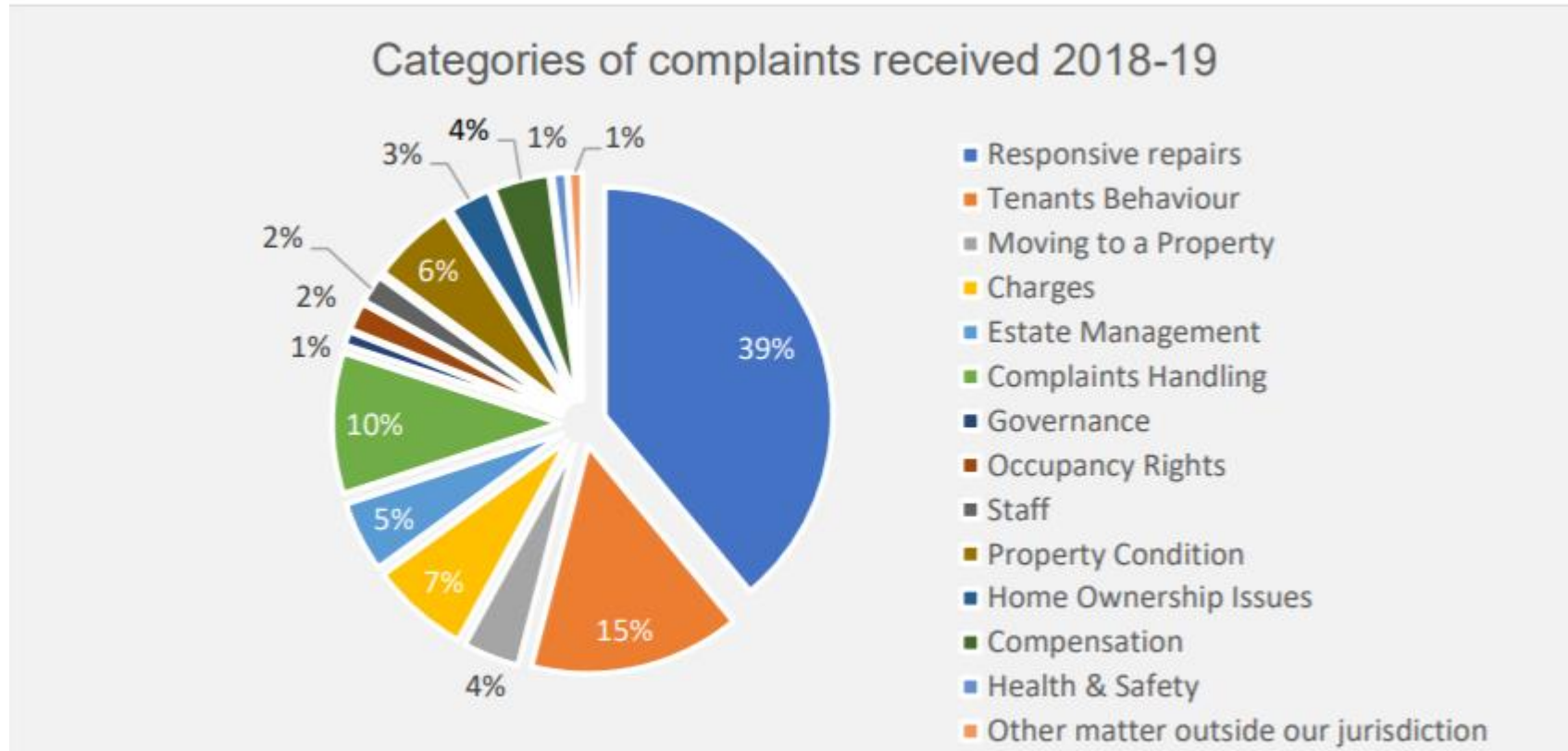
Where else to start?

- ▶ Covid-19 a test for tenant-landlord relationships
- ▶ Complaints offer insights during a crisis and help to identify emerging issues
- ▶ Most landlords have maintained complaint handling but not all – complaint volumes have reduced but issues like ASB increased
- ▶ Moving to next phase where many landlords tell us they are rethinking engagement – timely with Housing Ombudsman's new powers

Before the crisis....

- ▶ Improving lives – each day making around 10 orders or recommendations to put something right
- ▶ Rising complaint volumes with 17% annual increase in formal caseload
- ▶ Maladministration findings increasing from 25% in 2015-16 to 39% in 2019-20
- ▶ Late evidence submission to investigations
- ▶ More dialogue with the Regulator
- ▶ Agreed new powers with the Secretary of State to increase our impact and be comprehensive Ombudsman service

What residents complain about



*Complaints may have multiple categories

New Scheme

- ▶ Covid-19 postponed 'go live' of our revised Scheme to 1 September
- ▶ It gives us extensive new powers – to set a complaint handling code, issue complaint handling failure orders, conduct systemic investigations and escalate issues to regulatory bodies
- ▶ Promote positive change to bring about improvements to housing services

Complaint Handling Code

- ▶ The Code will be published early summer
- ▶ It aims to set a consistent framework for complaint handling across all 2,300 members of our Scheme
- ▶ It has been developed in dialogue with landlords, resident groups and professional bodies
- ▶ It aims to set the right culture; be relevant to boards as well as frontline staff; and be prescriptive only where it matters most

New powers – expanded role

- ▶ Later in 2020 we will publish our framework for systemic investigations into individual landlords and sector-wide issues – extend access to fairness for all residents, including those who do not complain
- ▶ Early 2021 publish our decisions as part of being a more transparent and accessible service
- ▶ During 2020-21 we will publish more data and landlord performance reports
- ▶ In-depth report on leasehold issues

How we are changing

- ▶ More resources – a key part of our independence
- ▶ Reducing investigation times to three month average
- ▶ Specialist mediation adjudicators
- ▶ Dedicated team to conduct further investigations
- ▶ More sector development tools
- ▶ Champions of quality

Working with the Regulator

- ▶ Strong and developing relationship
- ▶ Formal referral will expand beyond non-compliance into compliant handling failure and systemic investigations
- ▶ Recommending landlords to self-refer
- ▶ Informal sharing of data such as landlord reports and cases of interest
- ▶ Consideration of regulatory judgements
- ▶ Proposed Building Safety Regulator

How our work informs services

- ▶ Insight into your organisation
- ▶ Encourages organisational learning – use of best practice guidance and implementing recommendations
- ▶ Our data should be considered alongside customer feedback
- ▶ Landlord reports – and benchmarking against peers
- ▶ Reputation

Rebuilt landlord relationship

- ▶ Mr G complained about disruption during estate regeneration works. Throughout the works his intercom would cut out requiring him to contact the landlord to reset. This caused frustration as Mr G was reliant upon carers accessing his home
- ▶ Whilst happy with compensation offered, he was dissatisfied by the way landlord had made him feel
- ▶ **Ombudsman facilitated resolution through a conference call between Mr G and Director of Housing. An apology was given and resident was invited to join landlord's scrutiny panel**

Five years of disruption

- ▶ Ms S complained after major works were undertaken without the benefit of damp proofing. These works failed, leaving no accessible bathing facilities and restricted water supply in the kitchen
- ▶ Extensive repairs agreed but were incomplete by early 2017. Ms S was unable to live in the property for extended periods (sometimes years) but no alternative accommodation offered
- ▶ In 2019 the landlord suggested it would offer compensation – none made
- ▶ **Ombudsman found severe maladministration and ordered compensation of £10,000**

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