

# Complaints

## Annual Report

*2020/21*

trust

Affordable homes.  
Exceptional care.



Data & insight

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# We Value Complaints

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At Trust, we aim to provide high quality services to all tenants and service users. But we recognise that sometimes there may be occasions when people receiving or affected by our services are dissatisfied.

That is why we value complaints. By listening to our customers, we can learn from mistakes, put things right and continuously improve our services.

Our Complaint Investigators review, resolve & learn from complaints at the time they are made. But we also look more widely at all the complaints made monthly, quarterly & annually.

Trend analysis is reviewed by the Trust Board's 'Audit & Performance Sub-Committee' each Quarter, which is published [here on our Website](#).

Our Service Design Team review user research and customer journeys with Trust to identify and deliver on continuous service improvements.



In 2020/21, we updated our Complaints Handling Procedure to comply with new SPSO Guidance.

We provided an intensive training programme throughout 2021 to update all our employees on the key changes.

Our employees across Scotland took advantage of the 18 x 2 hour refresher training sessions, offered live via Microsoft Teams.

This included a focus on supporting our customers to make a complaint and on improving accessibility to our Complaints Handling Procedure for our vulnerable tenants and service users.

A recording of this session, alongside other key learning & complaint handling materials are available internally on our Complaints Microsite – a 'go to' hub for our new employees starting with Trust and also for those looking for a refresher.



*We aim to empower all of our employees with the right knowledge and tools to ensure our customers experience a simple, streamlined and effective process, when voicing their concerns.*

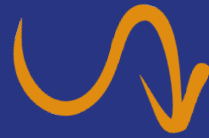


*Gail Gourlay, Director of Customer Experience*

# What is the Complaints Process?

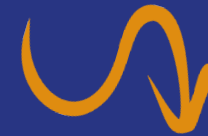
## *Stage 1 'Frontline Resolution'*

A complaint is made directly by the complainant, via any staff member. Frontline resolution aims to quickly resolve straightforward customer complaints that require little or no investigation. We aim to resolve Stage 1 complaints within 5 working days.



## *Stage 2 'Investigation'*

Complaints handled at this investigative stage are typically complex or require a detailed examination before we can determine an outcome. These complaints may already have been considered at Stage 1, or they may have been identified from the start as needing immediate investigation. 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 Trust's final position, within 20 working days.



## *Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO)*

Complainants have a right to raise concerns regarding Trust with the SPSO, who provide administrative justice and scrutiny, after the conclusion of our above complaints process. You can contact the SPSO directly on 0800 377 7330.

# How Many Complaints Received? trust

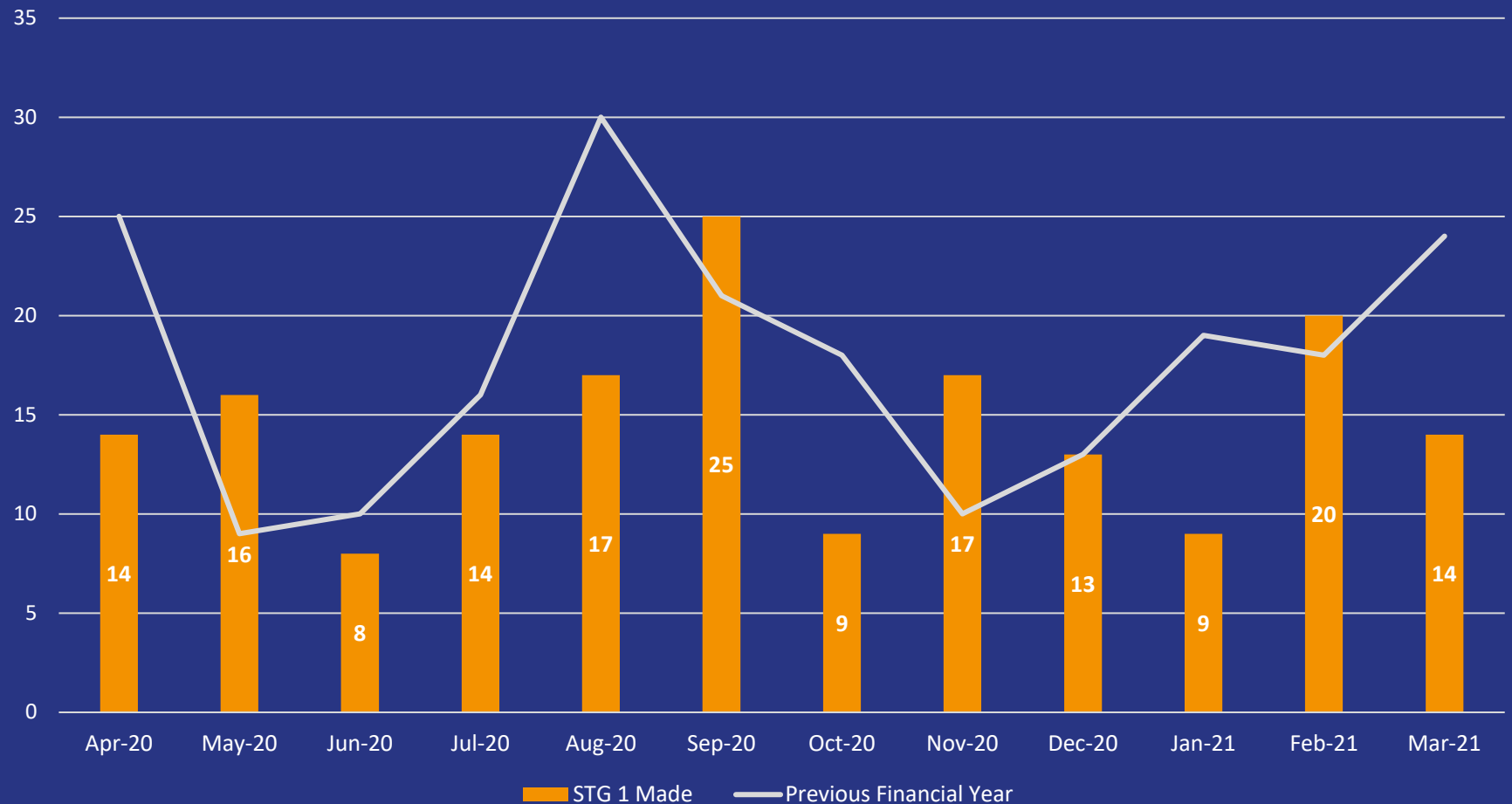
**Total:** 176 Stage 1  
Received in 2020-21



**Compares to:** 213  
Stage 1 Received in  
2019-20

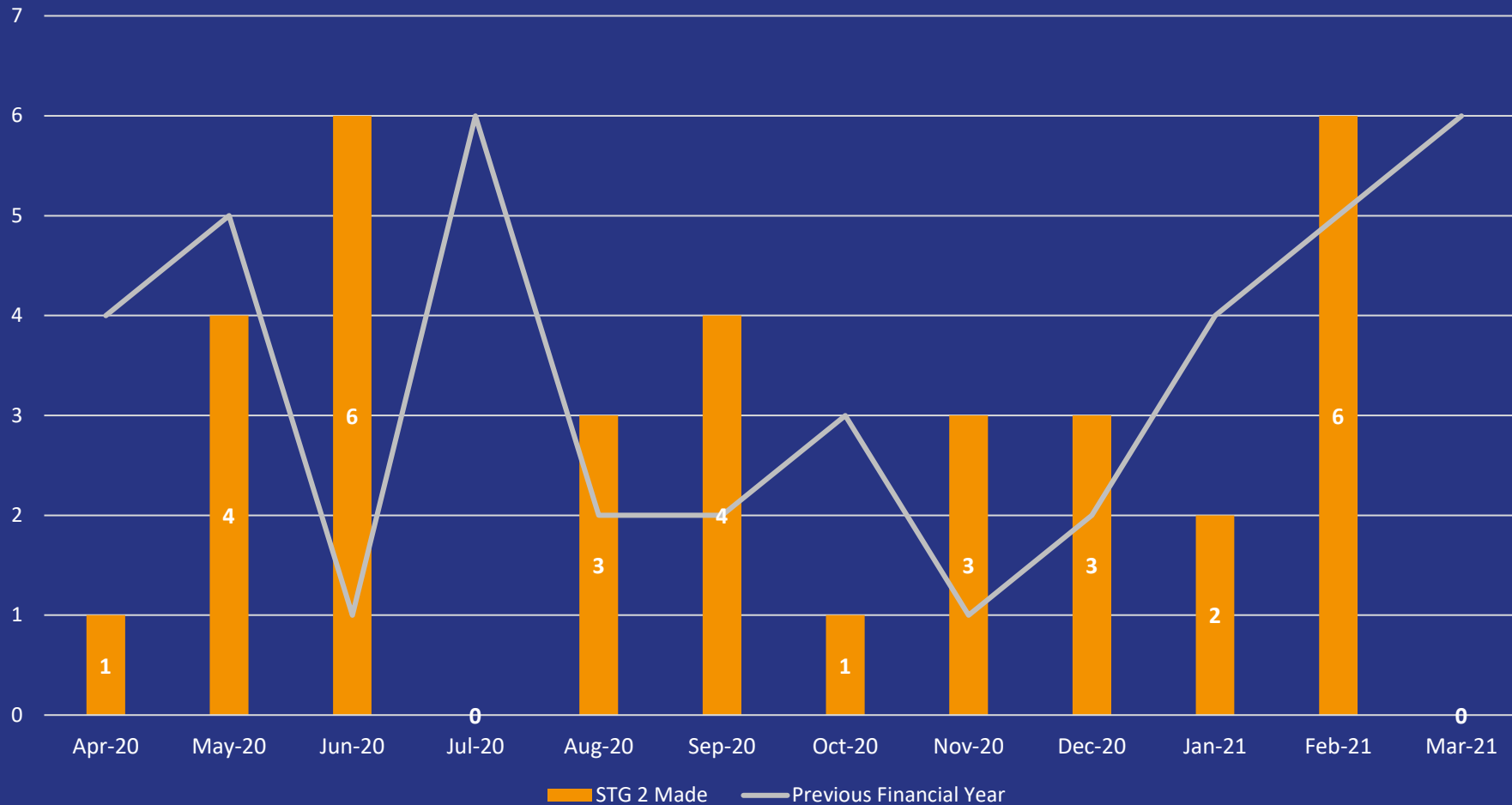
*\*This includes escalated  
complaints as they were  
first received at Stage 1*

Number of Frontline Complaints Made 2020-21



# How Many Complaints Received? trust

Number of Investigative Complaints Made 2020-21



**Total:** 33 complaints were logged directly at Stage 2 in 2020-21



**Compares to:** 41 complaints logged directly at Stage 2 in 2019-20

# How Many Complaints Received? **trust**

In 2020/21, we had 3618 social rented properties, across 23 local authority areas.

On average that's...



0.05 complaints per household.



1 x 'Stage 1' complaint received for every 21 households.



1 x 'Stage 2' complaint received for every 110 households.





# How Did we Receive Complaints? **trust**

We hear about complaints in a variety of different ways. In 2020/21, we received...



87 x complaints by phone



73 x complaints by email



32 x complaints in person



15 x complaints in writing



2 x complaints via social media

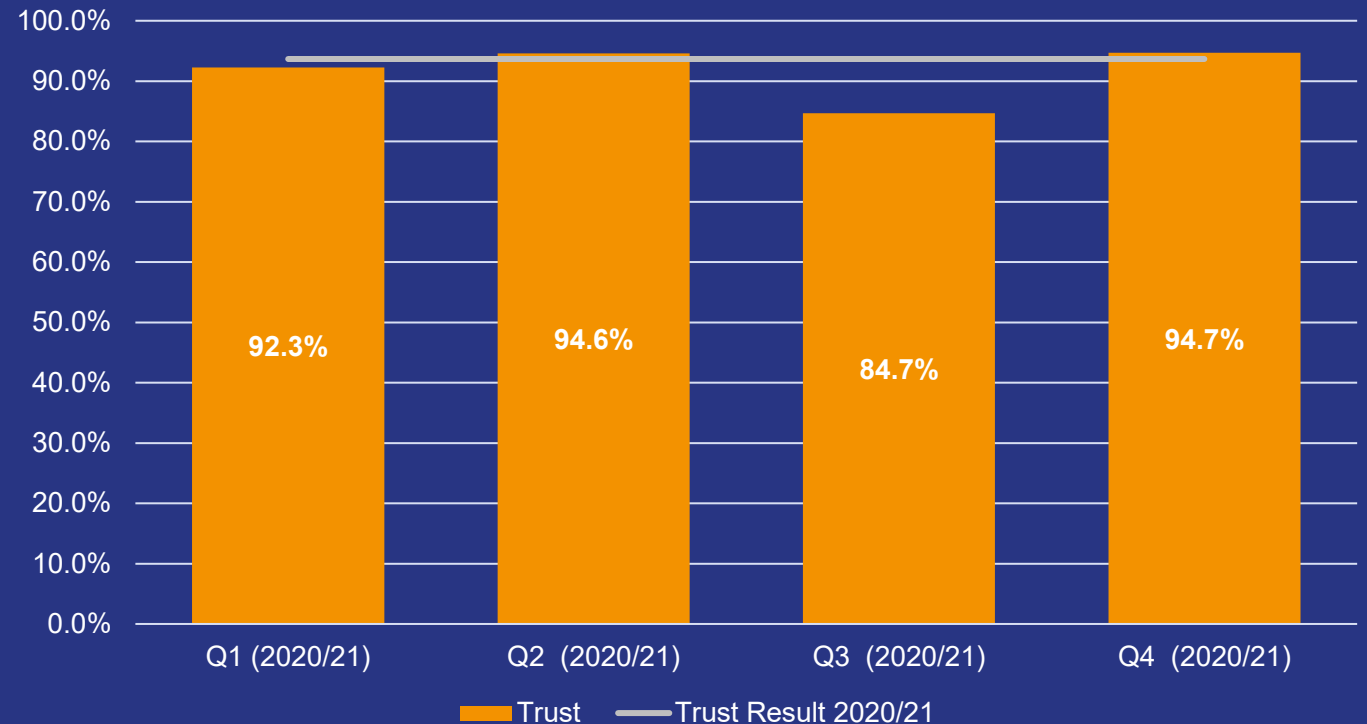


# How Quickly do we Resolve Complaints?



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% **Stage 1** Complaints Responded to within SPSO Timescales (YTD)



SPSO set a timescale of **5 working days** to resolve a **Stage 1 Complaint**

**Total:** 171 'Stage 1 Complaints Resolved during 2020/21

**Of these 171, 9 were resolved out with timescale**

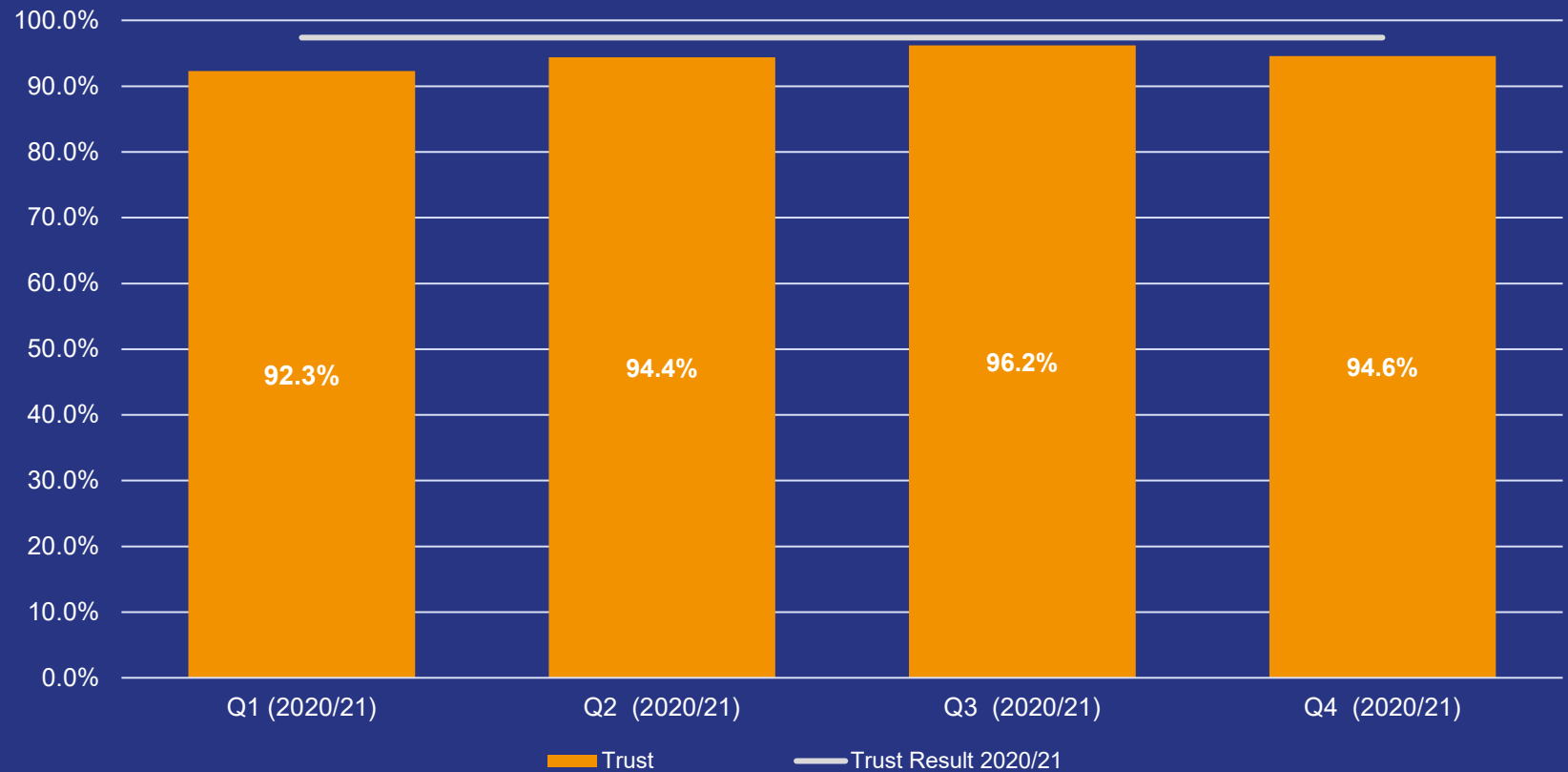
SPSO set a timescale of 20 working days to resolve a Stage 2 Complaint



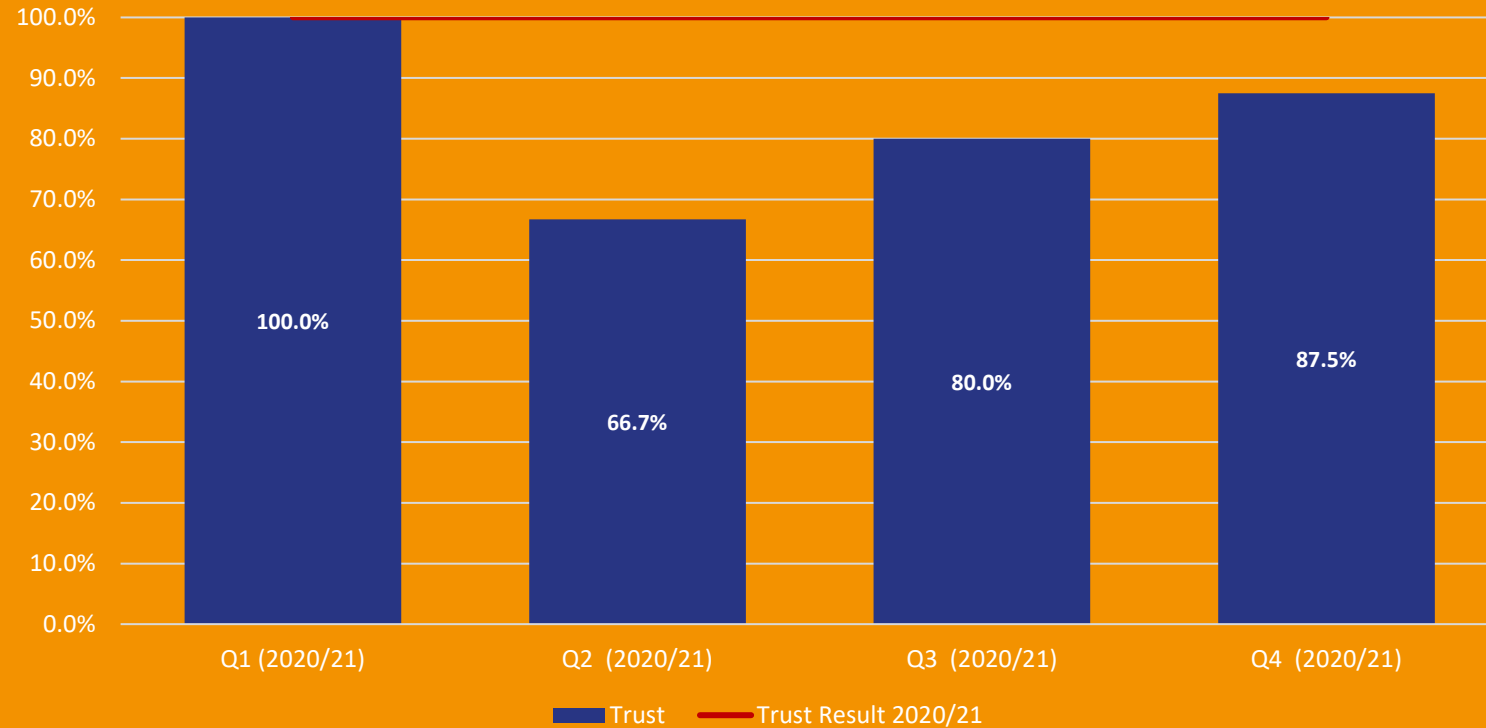
Total: 37 x 'Stage 2 Complaints Resolved during 2020/21

Of these 37, 2 were resolved out with timescale

% Stage 2 Complaints Responded to within SPSO Timescales (YTD)



**% 'Stage 2 Escalated from STG 1' Complaints  
Responded to within SPSO Timescales (YTD)**



**Total: 8 x 'Stage 2 Escalated from Stage 1' Complaints Resolved during 2020/21**

**Of these 8, 1 was resolved out with timescale**



*We always aim to resolve complaints within their SPSO timescales, however we also focus on providing quality resolutions to our customers which can sometimes take a little bit longer. We will always work with the complainant and communicate the reasons for any delays.*



*Gail Gourlay, Director of Customer Experience*

# Average Days to Resolve



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**2.9 days**

average length of time  
taken to resolve a  
**'Stage 1' Complaint**  
(20/21)

(3.3 days, 19/20)

**15.1 days**

average length of time  
taken to resolve a  
**'Stage 2' Complaint**  
(20/21)

(14.8 days, 19/20)

**16.9 days**

average length of time  
taken to resolve a  
**'Stage 2 Escalated  
from Stage 1'**  
Complaint (20/21)

(13.9 days, 19/20)

# What are the outcomes of complaints?



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Of the 171 Stage 1 complaints resolved in 2020/21:

- 26.3% were upheld
- 24.0% were partially upheld
- 40.1% were not upheld

Of the 37 Stage 2 complaints resolved in 2020/21:

- 21.7% were upheld
- 37.8% were partially upheld
- 40.5% were not upheld

Of the 8 'Stage 2 Escl from Stage 1' complaints resolved in 2020/21:

- 25% were upheld
- 37.5% were partially upheld
- 37.5% were not upheld

From the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021, our new Complaints Handling Procedure was updated to comply with new SPSO guidance. This included a new 'outcome' category for complaints called 'Resolved'.

A complaint is resolved when both Trust and the customer agree what action (if any) will be taken to provide full and final resolution for the customer, without making a decision about whether the complaint is upheld or not upheld. This will be shown in our next Annual Report (2021-2022).

# Learning & Improvement



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Here are a few examples from 2020/21 which show how we have learnt from our customers making complaints:

- *A tenant from one of our Housing with Care developments complained that his meal one night was 'soggy'. This meal had mushy peas instead of garden peas. As our tenant had poor eyesight, this led to the conclusion the meal was 'soggy'. We agreed with the tenant that our team would spend a few minutes explaining what was on the plate each time a meal was delivered.*
- *After a fire alarm was repeatedly activated (without cause) at a development overnight, we identified that there were similar issues at other locations which were linked to the work of a specific contractor. We then sought to address this issue with the contractor, to ensure this problem did not continue.*
- *After a tenant complained that they had not received a call back from a member of the team regarding a compensation claim, the Manager investigated the situation and ensured a more proactive approach was taken by colleagues going forward. We have since designed a new 'callback' system to improve our internal communication and to ensure that our customers always hear back from us when expected.*

# Learning & Improvement

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Here are a few more examples from 2020/21 which show how we have learnt from our customers making complaints:

- *After a tenant raised that their 6ft garden hedge was not being maintained by Trust since moving in, records were updated for this & the surrounding properties - we ensured the garden maintenance contractor was instructed to cut the hedges 3 x year and we asked the contractor to take photos so that we could ensure the work was up to standard.*
- *After learning from a tenant making a complaint that they are very sensitive to skin allergens, we ensured that a washing machine was cleaned of soap residue before the tenant's laundry slot.*
- *A colleague investigating a Stage 2 Complaint observed that Trust should give consideration to implementing a new repairs process which offers more transparency for colleagues monitoring jobs that are to be completed. Since then, we have piloted a new process for our employees to log and monitor routine repairs in certain locations. After this working successfully, we are now rolling this out to all our developments.*



# Raising Awareness & Supporting the Customer



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Throughout 2020/21, we trained our frontline teams on helping to support our customers voice their opinions – like helping customers access advocacy services, helping customers formulate and submit their complaint and offering communication in different formats and languages.

We created materials like posters for developments to highlight that Trust 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.

In April 2020, we published information about our new Complaints Procedure on our website and provided an 'easy to read' guide on the changes in our Tenant Newsletter.

We provide our customers with a neutral office contact in case this is more appropriate or preferred.

We have published articles in our Tenant Newsletter which focuses on how we have recently learnt from complaints - to show tenants the value of voicing issues.

We provided refresher training for our Customer Experience Partners on our Happy to Translate Toolkit.



*Anyone who receives, requests or is affected by our services can make a complaint.*

*This includes our tenants, but also members of the public who could have access to or be affected by our services, including anti-social behaviour/neighbour nuisance.*

## Complaints Handling Procedure

### More information:

You can raise a complaint:

- in person at any of our offices or developments
- by phoning us on 0131 444 1200
- by emailing us at [info@trustha.org.uk](mailto:info@trustha.org.uk)
- in writing to Trust Housing Association, 12 New Mart Road, Edinburgh, EH14 1RL
- 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.