

## WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### LANDLORD SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD

30 MARCH 2023

---

**Title:**

#### SCALE OF HOUSING HEATING COMPLAINTS AND CURRENT PRACTICE BRIEFING NOTE

---

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr Paul Rviers, Co-Portfolio Holder for Housing

**Head of Service:** Andrew Smith, Executive Head of Housing

---

#### Background

The Executive requested information regarding the scale of complaints relating to heating failures in Council homes, following a number of complaints escalated to Members and a series of social media community posts. The Executive requested the information be shared with LSAB, following the Breifing on 28 Frebruary 2023.

The Council employ specialist gas contractors to complete gas safety checks and gas heating responsive repairs. In October 2022 by mutual agreement a no blame termination letter was issue to CHS Ltd, with the contract ending 31 January 2023. The contract is now being handled by [Smith and Byford](#), who gave a presentation to [Landlord Services Advisory Board](#) on 26 January 2023 (time 6:30 to 23:30).

#### Scale of Complaints

To date in 2022/23 (1 April to 22 February) we have closed 17 complaints about CHS, with four complaints currently open (total 21). This compares with 18 complaints for 2021/22, representing a 17% increase.

94% of the complaints about CHS this year have been upheld or partly upheld. This compares to 72% in 2021/22.

Complaints about CHS represent 13% of the total number complaints closed by the landlord services so far this year (132). 58% of complaints made about landlord services this year have been upheld.

The relative increase in complaints about CHS is lower than equivalent increase in complaints about landlord services overall. So far this year 132 complaints have been closed compared with 103 for equivalent period in 2021/22, (28% increase).

An increase in complaints is welcomed to demonstrate that the service is open to feedback, listens and repsonds to tenants concerns. Providing an opportunity to identify issues and resolve systemic problems.

Contacts: Between 1 September 2022 and 31 January 2023 there were 1,199 calls to Customer Service Centre (CSC) concerning CHS – a 100% increase versus year ago. It is not possible to provide further analysis as to what the calls were about – but one could infer that dissatisfaction with CHS was an issue which fits with anecdotal evidence.

### **Scale of works**

In the first month of mobilisation, Smith and Byford have completed 332 responsive repairs and 243 annual services. 51 boilers have been replaced as part of responsive repair works.

### **Current practice**

The response time for loss of heating and hot water is explained on Waverley's [website](#). Between 31 October and 1 May loss of heating and/or hot water is treated as an emergency and should be responded to within 24 hours. The rest of the year the response should be within three days.

Leaks from hot water systems where this causes damage should always be attended to within 24 hours. If there is no heating in the home of an elderly tenant or a household member with a medical issue or disability, it is our responsibility to supply temporary heating.

If we fail to resolve within timescale and a second appointment does not result in the repair being completed the tenant(s) have the right to compensation through the Right to Repair scheme, up to a maximum of £50 – standard £10 with an additional £2 for every extra day.

### **Conclusion**

With the challenges of ending a long-established contract and mobilising a new contract combined with an ageing stock of gas boilers it, regrettably, is not surprising that this has resulted in an increase in tenants feedback. Although not significantly high numbers of complaints we recognise the significant impact loss of heating has on those affected and work to resolve problems as soon as practicable.

Annalisa Howson

---

### **CONTACT OFFICER:**

Name: Andrew Smith  
Position: Executive Head of Housing  
Telephone: 01483 523096  
Email: andrew.smith@waverley.gov.uk