



# Field Improvement Group **Scrutiny Report**

Review of the **complaints handling** process



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### **Appendix 1:** BIG Members



## Executive Summary

### Introduction

The Bield Improvement Group [BIG] was launched in 2016 and has become an **award-winning customer scrutiny group recognised for excellent partnership work with Bield Housing and Care** [Bield], to ensure continuous improvement of services. BIG are delighted to present its fourth scrutiny report which focuses on **complaints handling** within Bield. The BIG team in consultation with Bield, agreed that complaints handling was an area that required further scrutiny, so that the process becomes more transparent for customers.

### Aims

The following key aims were set for this scrutiny task:

- To review Bield's complaints process, to identify what works well and what could be improved.
- To check that Bield meets all legislative, regulatory and good practice requirements with regards to complaints.
- To review how Bield informs customers about complaints.
- To seek customers' views on their experience of making a complaint.
- To seek Bields' staff views on how the complaints handling process works.
- To identify how well-informed customers and staff are regarding the complaints process.
- Finally, to make recommendations to Bield on future improvements based on robust evidence from the scrutiny review.

### Our approach

As part of our scrutiny project, we carried out the following key exercises:

- A policy and procedural review.
- A review of performance, Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) and satisfaction survey results.
- A focus group and survey of housing staff.
- A survey of customers.

**Our scrutiny review had four definitive steps for each exercise carried out:**

1. Summary (of activities)
2. Findings
3. Positive practice
4. Areas to be developed



## Key findings

There were **common themes** identified by Bield staff and customers throughout this scrutiny exercise.

## Positive Practice

- Bield's Complaints Handling Procedure is based on the Model Complaints Handling Procedure for Registered Social Landlord's (RSLs) and meets all legal and statutory requirements.
- The Employees Guide is a useful summary document providing advice and support for staff.
- The Cirrus management system operates well in terms of handling complaints.
- Staff have a good knowledge of the complaints handling policy and processes.
- Staff have valued the training opportunities that have been provided around complaints.

## Areas to be developed

### Operational

- To encourage a culture where complaints are embraced as a positive process and customers' voices and opinions are heard and acted upon.
- To ensure that the values of Bield are embedded in all the work that the Association does.
- To consider introducing a comments, complaints and compliments process.
- To improve complaints performance to meet targets set.
- Complaints handling to be an integral part of all staffs' induction and ongoing training to ensure a consistent approach.
- All complaints received by Bield should be recorded.
- Regular updates to be provided to staff on how to use the Cirrus system.
- Staff to be clear about who deals with a complaint.
- To ensure that Bield records and reviews complaints information and that lessons learnt are shared with staff and customers.
- To have a central point of contact for complaints.
- Bield to encourage and support a working environment where complaints are handled straight away to avoid the situation escalating.



## Customers

- The complaints handling process should provide customers with an opportunity to state at the onset what outcome(s) they are hoping for.
- Bield's Complaints Handling leaflet to be reviewed to ensure it is a useful, visual and an easy-to-use document.
- Customers need to be provided with information on the key stages of the complaints handling process.
- Improved communication from Bield to customers at every stage of the complaints handling process.
- Bield to look at the scope to introduce the "Power of Apology" in its approach to customer care.

## Recommendations

**BIG are proposing 18 recommendations** to improve complaints handling within Bield. We have considered the thematic study produced by the Scottish Housing Regulator in 2017, on Complaints Handling by Social Landlords, in Scotland in our recommendations.

Bield to embed a culture, led by the top of the organisation, which welcomes and values complaints as a way of improving services and values the importance of listening to customers and acting respectfully.

Bield to review its complaints handling leaflets and all associated information to customers to ensure that information is useful, visual, clear to read and easy to understand.

Bield to ensure that front line staff are empowered and well trained to understand the complaints handling process and their role within it.

Bield to make improvements to meet targets set for complaints handling, with a priority for early action to avoid the situation to escalate.

Bield staff to record every complaint on the Cirrus management system.

All customers should receive a unique reference code when they lodge a complaint.

Bield to introduce a Comments, Complaints and Compliments process which recognises areas of good practice and areas requiring development.



Bield to have a central point of contact to co-ordinate the complaints handling process.
Bield to ensure that every customer receives an information leaflet that explains the process, when they lodge a complaint.
Customers should have the opportunity to state what outcome(s) they are looking for when they lodge a complaint.
Bield to ensure that customers are kept well informed throughout the complaints process.
Bield to introduce “the Power of Apology” in its approach to delivering successful customer care.
Bield to ensure that’s its core values (caring; honesty; equality; dignity; inclusion; ambition) underpins the complaints handling process and all communication and customer service standards throughout Bield.
Bield to ensure that an effective system is in place for recording management and performance monitoring of complaints are in place.
Bield to ensure that it has appropriate reporting methods in place to inform senior management teams and Board on complaints handling performance including reviewing trends in complaints and to help to identify service failures.
Bield to report regularly to the Senior Management Team and Board on service improvements to ensure a strategic and joined up approach.
Bield to publish good quality, up-to-date information for customers on complaints handling performance including how complaints have been used to improve services.
Bield to consider these recommendations and produce an action plan outlining how these recommendations will be delivered, providing clear timescales. Bield to present the action plan to BIG.



## Foreword

Welcome to the Bield Improvement Group's (BIG) **fourth scrutiny report**. This year we have undertaken a review of Bield Housing and Care's (Bield) complaints handling process. Through tracking the "*Life of a Complaint*" we have been working with Bield staff to identify where improvements can be made to improve the complaints handling process.

BIG was launched in 2016 and has become an **award-winning customer scrutiny group** recognised for excellent partnership work with Bield, to ensure continuous improvement of services.

Since March 2020, BIG have held virtual meetings to ensure "*it's business as usual*" during Covid-19 lockdown.

BIG would like to take this opportunity to thank **Zhan McIntyre and Laura Mulholland** from Bield for their support in carrying out this review. We would also like to thank **Ilene Campbell** from the Tenants Information Service (TIS), who has provided independent training and support to our group throughout this process. Last but not least, we would like to acknowledge the hard work and commitment of the BIG volunteers, who have made this scrutiny report a reality.

We hope that the findings and recommendations from this report, will support Bield to make service improvements to its complaints handling process.

## Background to BIG

In planning for the *Scottish Social Housing Charter*, Bield in discussion with customers, formed a service user group, which would have a role in scrutinising the services provided by Bield.

BIG was launched in 2016, and is made up of Bield customers from across Scotland who **independently review** Bield's services to seek continuous improvement

The BIG team successfully completed the TIS national "*Scrutiny Making it Happen Programme*" in 2016. The group have completed three scrutiny exercises to date which includes.

- Ending a Tenancy
- Reporting Repairs
- The "*Life of a Complaint*"

Following on from the third scrutiny report, the BIG team decided that complaints handling required further review, and this has been a priority for the group in 2020.

BIG have 12 tenant members and a list of our group can be found in **Appendix One**.



### **The main role of BIG includes:**

- To independently review and scrutinise the performance of Bield's housing services to support service improvements.
- To commission and review scrutiny activities through an annual work programme and development of actions and improvement plans.
- To make recommendations and report progress on actions to Bield's Senior Management Team and Board of Management.
- To report to customers on progress being made.
- To review the Annual Charter reporting.

### **Our work is based on the following core standards:**

- Being accountable to customers.
- Being transparent.
- Reflecting the needs and aspirations of customers.
- Respecting the decision-making role of the Board.
- Making recommendations based on robust evidence.

TIS provides our group with a **specialist independent advice and training** to develop our skills and knowledge to be effective. The training programme included the following modules:

- Understanding the role of the Charter and the Scottish Housing Regulator.
- The Annual Return on the Charter Report and report to customers.
- How to understand performance information and data.
- The role of benchmarking.

Laura Mulholland and Zhan McIntyre from Bield, are the link officers, who ensure that we have access to the relevant information and contact with Bield colleagues to deliver our scrutiny work.

The Link Officers are also responsible for keeping Bield colleagues up to date with the group's scrutiny work.

### **Scope of the scrutiny task**

The BIG team in consultation with Bield, agreed that **complaints handling was an area that required further scrutiny**, so that the process becomes more transparent for customers.

The **key aims of our scrutiny task** are as follows:

- To review Bield's complaints process, to identify what works well and what could be improved.
- To check that Bield meets all legislative, regulatory and good practice requirements with regards to complaints.
- To review how the Association informs customers about complaints.



- To seek customers' views on their experience of making a complaint.
- To seek Bield's staff views on how the complaints handling process works.
- To identify how well-informed customers and staff are regarding the complaints process.
- Finally, to make recommendations to Bield on future improvements based on robust evidence from the scrutiny review.

## The Scrutiny Process: Approach

As part of our scrutiny project, we carried out the following **key exercises**:

- A policy and procedural review.
- A review of performance, Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) and satisfaction survey results.
- A focus group and survey of housing staff.
- A survey of customers.

Our scrutiny review had **four definitive steps** for each exercise carried out.

1. Summary (of activities)
2. Findings
3. Positive practice
4. Areas to be developed

**Section 10** of this report provides a summary of our key recommendations.

## Policy and procedure review: Findings

### Summary

BIG undertook a desktop review of Bield's Complaints Handling Policy, to check that the policy fulfils all legal and statutory requirements.

The following documents were reviewed as part of this process:

- Bield's Complaints Handling Procedure (2017)
- Bield's Employees Guide to Complaints Handling Procedure (2018)
- The Model Complaints Procedure for Registered Social Landlords - The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO).

BIG also received a presentation from Bield outlining the "life of a complaint" and the Cirrus management system that is in operation for complaints handling.



## Findings

- The Complaints Handling Procedure was last revised by Bield in March 2017.
- Appendix 5 of the policy provides a very useful flow chart detailing the key steps involved in handling a complaint.
- Bield's Complaints Handling Procedure is based on the SPSO Model Complaints Handling Procedure for Registered Social Landlords (RSLs).
- Bield revised and updated its Employees Guide to the Complaints Handling Procedure in March 2018.
- The Employees Guide provides a useful document to support staff in handling complaints. This document provides clear guidance on the following aspects:

What constitutes a complaint and what does not?
What to do when a complaint is received.
The key steps in the complaints handling process.
Roles and responsibilities of key parties.
Recording and monitoring.
A useful reference guide to using the Cirrus management system.

- Bield's policy document highlights the importance of learning from complaints and states that the Senior Management Team will regularly review the information gathered from complaints to consider whether services could be improved, or policies and procedures updated.

## Positive Points

- Bield's Complaints Handling Procedure is based on the Model Complaints Handling Procedure for RSL's and meets all legal and statutory requirements.
- The Employees Guide is a useful summary document providing advice and support for staff.
- The Cirrus management system works well in terms of handling complaints.

## Areas to be developed

Bield is due to review its Complaints Handling Procedure.



## A review of performance information: Findings

- **170 complaints** were recorded with Bield over 2019-20, which represents an 11% decrease on the same period in the previous period.
- During 2019-20 Bield responded to 74% of Stage 1 complaints within the timescales and 63% of Stage 2 complaints within the timescales. This is below the targets set.
- 64% of complaints were upheld or partially upheld.
- During 2019-20 complaints were received by various methods:

<b>Email</b>	39%
<b>In person</b>	25%
<b>Telephone</b>	22%
<b>Writing</b>	14%

- Follow up and communication continues to be the cause of the majority of complaints.
- One complaint was taken to the First Tier Tribunal Housing and Property Chamber by an owner. The First Tier Tribunal found that Bield did not fail to comply with Property Factor Code.

### Positive Points

- Bield customers are provided with useful data on complaints handling in the Customer Bulletin.

### Areas to be developed

- Bield to work to make improvements to meet the complaints targets set.
- Bield to work to make improvements in how it communicates with customers.



## Staff Survey: Findings

### Summary

BIG conducted a staff survey to gather staff's perspective on how well the complaints handling operates at Bield. The staff survey was delivered through Bield's intranet and 32 staff members took part.

### Findings

- 52.7% of staff taking part in the survey have worked for more than 10 years at Bield.
- A good cross section of staff took part; 54.8% from Housing; 19.2% from Asset Management; 9.6% from Strategic Support and 9.6% from Care; 5.5% from Human Resources and 1.4% from Finance and ICT.
- Staff have a good understanding of what they consider to be a complaint, with reference to the terminology used in the complaints procedures documents.
- 52.8% of staff agreed that if someone is unhappy with a Bield service that the complaint should always be recorded. With 47.2% noting that it does not need to be recorded. The main reasons given for not recording a complaint on Cirrus includes:

Staff should be trusted to resolve simple, low level informal complaints themselves and only formal complaints should be recorded.
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If a complaint can be resolved at 1st point of contact, there is no need to record on Cirrus.
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Sometimes the issue can be resolved before it becomes a complaint.
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- 69.9% of staff had received training on complaints. Staff found the online training programme to be very useful.
- Just over 30% of staff have had no training on complaints handling.
- 84.7% of staff were familiar with the Employees Guide to Complaints Handling. 93.4% of whom had read it. 88.1% found it easy to understand.
- 76.7% of staff were aware of the "How to log A Complaint" guide. 87.3% of whom had read it. 91.2% found this guide useful.
- 93.2% of staff are clear who they contact if they have an inquiry about handling a complaint.



- 77.8% of staff know how to log a complaint on Cirrus. 84.3% have a username and login. 63.5% have logged a complaint using Cirrus.
- 77.8% of staff found Cirrus a straightforward programme to use.
- Staff identified the following suggestions that Bield should consider improving the complaints handling process:

Have comments, complaints and compliments.
Listen to customers.
More staff training to ensure a consistent approach.
Deal with complaints as soon as possible to avoid (where necessary) the complaint escalating.
Bield should have a central point of contact for dealing with complaints.
Staff should be mindful, patient and understanding and be ready to support customers.
Complaints handling training should be an integral part of induction and ongoing training.

### Positive Points

- Staff consider the Complaints Procedures and Employee Guide are useful documents.
- Staff find the Cirrus system easy to operate and efficient.
- Staff who have had training on complaints handling have found this to be useful.

### Areas to be developed

- Complaints handling to be an integral part of all staffs' induction and ongoing training to ensure a consistent approach.
- All complaints received by Bield should be recorded.
- Introduce a comment, complaints and compliments process.
- Have a central point of contact for complaints.
- Ensure the values of Bield are embedded in all the work that the Association does.



## Staff Focus Group: Findings

### Summary

BIG held a focus group for Bield staff in September 2020, to seek their views on the complaints handling process.

Ilene Campbell from TIS independently chaired and facilitated this meeting. Staff were given advance notice of the questions to be used. Five staff members attended this event along with three representatives from BIG. Staff represented a range of departments within Bield.

### Findings

- It is a supportive place to work.
- Positive about the future.
- A new Chapter lies ahead which is positive.

Staff were asked:

#### **How well does Bield communicate with customers? And, what needs to be in place to improve communication?**

- Bield should review all of its written information to customers to ensure that it is in Plain English and “fit for purpose”. The current tone of communication appears to be a bit outdated.
- Communication needs to be improved in every aspect of the work Bield does. Staff should always be patient, respectful and listen to customers to find a resolution to an issue.

Staff were asked:

#### **How do you use the information gathered through complaints?**

- All staff who participated stated that they do not receive information or feedback about complaints and key trends.

Staff were asked to:

#### **Identify recommendations they would like to see in place to improve complaints handling.**

##### **For Staff**

- Regular training for staff on complaints handling.
- More e-learning opportunities.
- Regular training on customer care and communication skills.
- Regular updates on how to use the Cirrus system.
- Clarity to customers and staff on what constitutes a complaint.
- To ensure that all complaints are recorded.



- To encourage a culture where complaints are embraced as a positive process and customers' voices and opinions are heard and acted upon.
- To share and learn from information about complaints and compliments.
- Staff to be encouraged to address complaints quickly to avoid an escalation of the situation.
- Staff to be clear about who deals with a complaint.
- All staff to use a consistent approach to complaints handling.

#### **For Customers:**

- Bield's Complaints Handling leaflet to be reviewed to ensure it is a useful, visual and an easy-to-use document.
- Customers to have the opportunity to state what outcome they are hoping for.
- Customers need to be provided with information on the key stages of the complaints handling process.

#### **Positive Points**

- Staff consider the Complaints Procedures and Employee Guide to be useful documents.
- Staff find the Cirrus system easy to operate and efficient.
- Staff who have had training have found this to be useful.

#### **Areas to be developed**

Regular training to be in place for staff on:

- Complaints handling and using the Cirrus management system
- Customer service standards
- Complaints handling to be an integral part of all staffs' induction and ongoing training to ensure a consistent approach.
- Further information to staff on what constitutes a complaint and what does not.
- To ensure that every complaint is recorded onto the Cirrus system.
- To ensure that Bield records and reviews complaints information and that lessons learnt are shared with staff and customers.
- To introduce a comment, complaints and compliments process.
- Bield to encourage and support a working environment where complaints are handled straight away to avoid the situation escalating.
- To have a central point of contact for complaints.
- To encourage a culture where complaints are embraced as a positive process and customers' voices and opinions are heard and acted upon.



- Bield to review and design the complaints brochure to make it a clear and useful document for customers.
- The complaints handling process should provide customers with an opportunity to state at the onset what outcome they are hoping for.

### Positive Points

- Almost 40% of respondents prefer to speak directly to Bield staff to lodge a complaint. With 30% being made via email.
- 65% of respondents are aware of Bield's Complaints Handling policy.
- 46% of respondents consider it is easy to make a complaint.
- Respondents who were positive about their complaints experience, highlighted that staff were supportive and courteous.



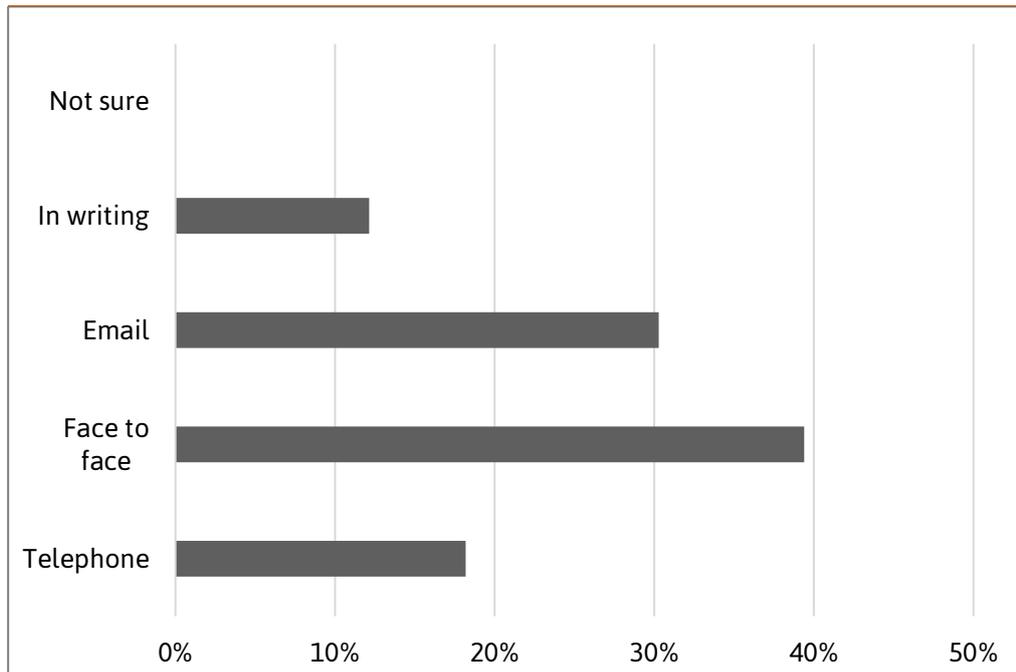
## Tenant Survey: Findings

### Summary

BIG designed a survey to gather customers' views about their experience of Bield's complaints handling process. 174 surveys were posted out with 41 responses. 68% of respondents had their complaint resolved at Stage 1.

### Findings

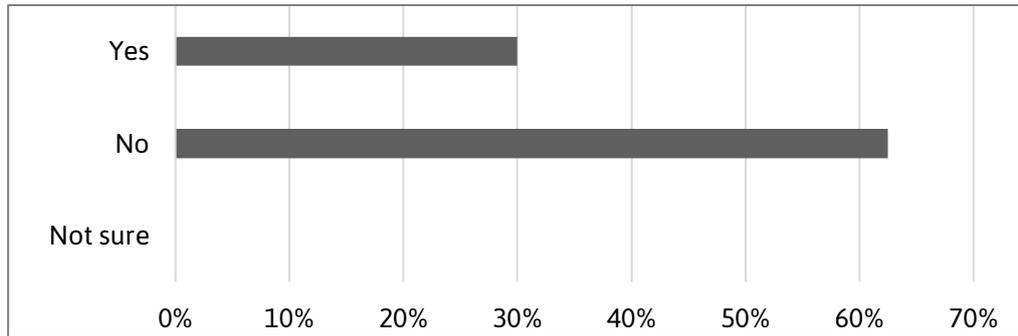
#### How did you make your complaint?



Answer choices	Percent %	Response number
Not sure	0	0
In writing	12.12	4
Email	30.30	10
Face to face	39.39	13
Telephone	18.18	6

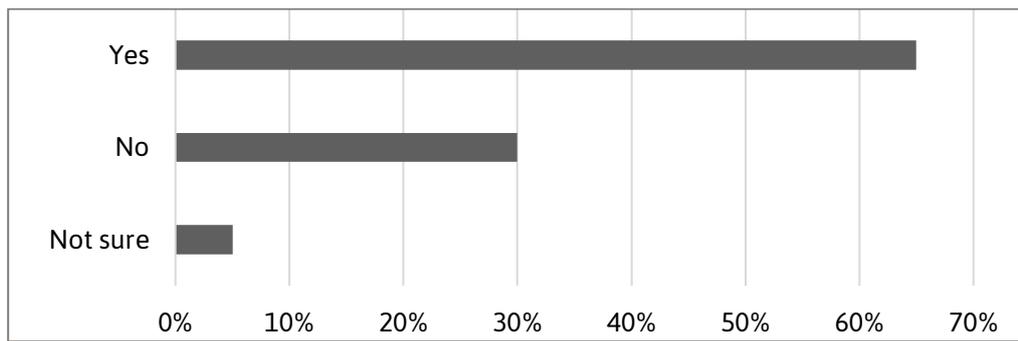


**Did you receive a complaint reference number when you made your complaint?**



Answer choices	Percent %	Response number
Yes	30	12
No	62.50	25
Not sure	0	0

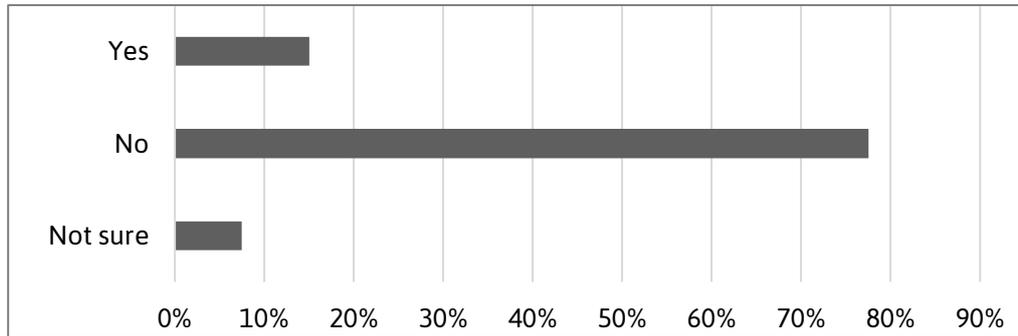
**Were you aware that Bield has a Complaints Policy?**



Answer choices	Percent %	Response number
Yes	65	26
No	30	12
Not sure	5	2

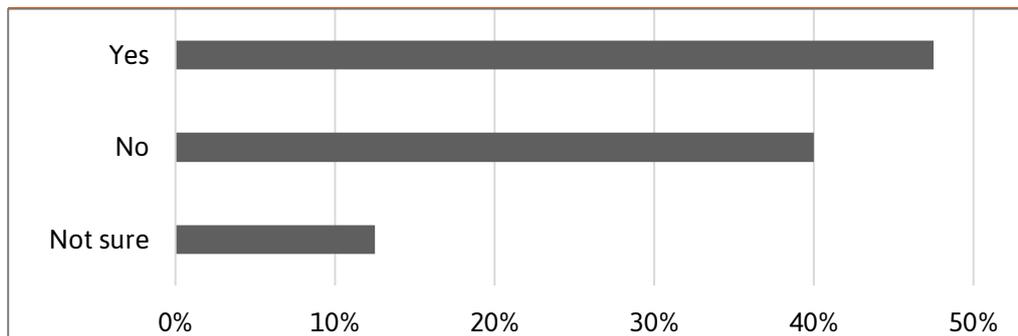


**Were you given a copy of Bield's complaints leaflet when you made your complaint?**



Answer choices	Percent %	Response number
Yes	15	6
No	77.50	31
Not sure	7.50	3

**When you first made your complaint did you receive a decision within 5 working days?**



Answer choices	Percent %	Response number
Yes	47.50	19
No	40	16
Not sure	12.50	5



**Thinking about the complaint you made to Bield, how would you rate the following.**

*How easy it was to make a complaint*

	<b>Terrible</b>	<b>Bad</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
<b>Percent %</b>	9.76	4.88	26.83	46.34	12.20	0.00
<b>Response number</b>	4	2	11	19	5	0

*The time it took to deal with your complaint*

	<b>Terrible</b>	<b>Bad</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
<b>Percent %</b>	24.39	17.07	21.95	24.39	12.20	0.00
<b>Response number</b>	10	7	9	10	5	0

*The information you were provided with during your complaint*

	<b>Terrible</b>	<b>Bad</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
<b>Percent %</b>	29.27	14.63	24.39	21.95	9.76	0.00
<b>Response number</b>	12	6	10	9	4	0

*How your complaint was handled*

	<b>Terrible</b>	<b>Bad</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
<b>Percent %</b>	31.71	9.76	17.07	29.27	12.20	0
<b>Response number</b>	13	4	7	12	5	0

*The decision that was taken about your complaint*

	<b>Terrible</b>	<b>Bad</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
<b>Percent %</b>	32.50	17.50	17.50	20.00	10.00	2.50
<b>Response number</b>	13	7	7	8	4	1

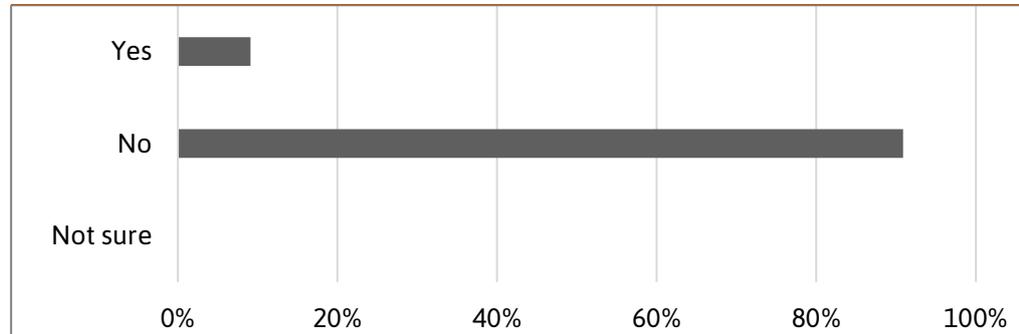
**What, if anything, do you think Bield did well in handling your complaint?**

Responses:

- A quick response was provided.
- Communication was very good.
- Spoke in easy enough terms that I was able to understand.
- Staff were professional, polite and very knowledgeable about how to resolve matters. The problem was resolved as quickly as possible and in accordance with what had been suggested and agreed upon. The member of staff who dealt with the matter was a credit to Bield.
- Staff showed sympathy and empathy in handling the complaint.



**Did you go to the Ombudsman following Bield's decision about your complaint?**



Answer choices	Percent %	Response number
Yes	9.09	1
No	90.91	10
Not sure	0.00	0

**Thinking about the complaint you made to Bield, how would you rate how well Bield demonstrated its values of caring; honesty; equality; dignity and inclusion in responding to your complaint?**

	Terrible	Bad	Neutral	Good	Excellent	Don't know
Percent %	20.51	30.77	17.95	17.95	12.82	0
Response number	8	12	7	7	5	0

**What, if anything, do you think Bield could improve upon when dealing with complaints?**

Responses:

- Respond more quickly to complaints.
- Keep the complainant updated on their decision or course of action.
- Listen and be respectful about what is being said regarding the complaint. Take responsibility to address the complaint and try not to blame other providers and most importantly work by their values and promote these values on an individual basis. The “Power of Apology” is really important.
- Speed up the complaints handling process.
- Respond quickly to complaints to stop the issue escalating.
- Clarity is required on who is handling the complaint. If the complaint is regarding a particular department it is important that it is independently handled.



- Have meetings with the customers, dealing with complaints to address these quicker.
- Every customer should receive a reference number for their complaint.
- Communication from Bield needs to be improved to ensure customers are clear about what happens next and are kept informed throughout the complaints handling process.
- Every complaint should be treated seriously.
- Staff to be mindful and patient when dealing with complaints and customer care.
- Please listen to customers and their family.
- Keep customers updated on the outcome of the complaint handling process.
- A great deal, more information to be provided to update on what is being done.
- They could “listen to us” instead of “telling us”
- Bield to provide every complainant with a leaflet so that they understand the process as it moves forward.
- Bield to utilise the information gathered from complaints and take them seriously to drive forward service improvements.
- The person receiving the initial complaint should take an immediate interest and acknowledge the complaint.

**Thinking about the complaint you made to Bield, how would you rate how well Bield demonstrated these values in responding to your complaint?**

	<b>Terrible</b>	<b>Bad</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
<b>Percent %</b>	20.51	30.77	17.95	17.95	12.82	0
<b>Response number</b>	8	12	7	7	5	0

**What, if anything, do you think Bield could improve upon when dealing with complaints?**

Responses:

- It is important that all staff deal quickly with complaints and take these seriously.
- It is essential that customers receive regular updates on how the complaint is progressing and clear information on how it has been resolved.
- Real concern that customers do not bother to complain as they think Bield won't do anything anyway.
- Concern that there is a lack of customer face to face service which does not help with confidence for elderly residents.



- My experience of making a complaint was “like hitting a brick wall” and feeling that I had no say.
- Bield need to improve on delivery of its customer care and its communication.
- It is important to listen to the customer and have a mutual relationship based on trust and respect.

### Positive Points

- Almost 40% of respondents prefer to speak directly to Bield staff to lodge a complaint. With 30% being made via email.
- 65% of respondents are aware of Bield’s Complaints Handling policy.
- 46% of respondents consider it is easy to make a complaint.
- Respondents who were positive about their complaints experience, highlighted that staff were supportive and courteous.

### Areas to be developed

- 30% of respondents did not have knowledge of Bield’s Complaints Handling Policy.
- 62% of respondents did not receive a reference number when a complaint was lodged.
- 77.5% of respondents did not receive a copy of Bield’s Complaints Handling leaflet when they made their complaint.
- 41% of respondents were not satisfied with the length of time it took to deal with complaints.
- 43% of respondents were dissatisfied with the information provided during the complaints process.
- 47% of respondents had a response to their initial complaint within a 5-day target. This is well below the target set of 95%.
- 50% of respondents were dissatisfied with the decision reached.
- 51% of respondents did not think the values and culture of Bield were upheld in dealing with complaints.
- Communication and customer service standards need to be reviewed and improved upon throughout Bield.



## Recommendations

**BIG are proposing 18 recommendations** to improve complaints handling within Bield.

We have considered the thematic study produced by the Scottish Housing Regulator in 2017 on Complaints Handling by Social Landlords in Scotland in developing these recommendations.

Bield to embed a culture, led by the top of the organisation, which welcomes and values complaints as a way of improving services and values the importance of listening to customers and acting respectfully.
Bield to review its complaints handling leaflets and all associated information to customers to ensure that information is useful, visual, clear to read and easy to understand.
Bield to ensure that front line staff are empowered and well trained to understand the complaints handling process and their role within it.
Bield to make improvements to meet targets set for complaints handling, with a priority for early action to avoid the situation to escalate.
Bield staff to record every complaint on the Cirrus management system.
All customers should receive a unique reference code when they lodge a complaint.
Bield to introduce a Comments, Complaints and Compliments process which recognises areas of good practice and areas requiring development.
Bield to have a central point of contact to co-ordinate the complaints handling process.
Bield to ensure that every customer receives an information leaflet that explains the process, when they lodge a complaint.
Customers should have the opportunity to state what outcome(s) they are looking for when they lodge a complaint.



Bield to ensure that customers are kept well informed throughout the complaints process.
Bield to introduce “the Power of Apology” in its approach to delivering successful customer care.
Bield to ensure that’s its core values (caring; honesty; equality; dignity; inclusion; ambition) underpins the complaints handling process and all communication and customer service standards throughout Bield.
Bield to ensure that an effective system is in place for recording management and performance monitoring of complaints are in place.
Bield to ensure that it has appropriate reporting methods in place to inform senior management teams and Board on complaints handling performance including reviewing trends in complaints and to help to identify service failures.
Bield to report regularly to the Senior Management Team and Board on service improvements to ensure a strategic and joined up approach.
Bield to publish good quality, up-to-date information for customers on complaints handling performance including how complaints have been used to improve services.
Bield to consider these recommendations and produce an action plan outlining how these recommendations will be delivered, providing clear timescales. Bield to present the action plan to BIG.

### Next Steps

BIG hope that our recommendations will support Bield to continue to develop its complaints handling processes. This report will be shared with the Senior Management Team, the Audit Committee and the Board of Management.

We look forward to working in partnership with Bield to seek continuous improvement.



## Appendix 1: BIG Members

Alice Bayne  
Deborah Docherty  
Gill Matthews  
Jim Hendry  
Mary Walker  
Peter Paton  
Rosemary Clark  
Sandra Lafferty  
Sheila Hull  
Tony Keyte

