



Here for young people
Here for communities
Here for you

Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report

September 2023 - August 2024

Southend YMCA

SOUTHEND YMCA ANNUAL REPORT

**In September 2024,
Trustees read and
approved the
'Southend YMCA
Annual Report' for
the period of Sept
2023- Aug 2024.
This included
Complaints and
Service
Improvements
made at Newlands.**

**SEPTEMBER 2023
AUGUST 2024**



INTRODUCTION

Southend YMCA (SYMCA) is a registered charity and a registered provider of social housing based in Southend on Sea. Since 13th May 1995, when the foundation stone at Southend YMCA “Newlands” was laid, opening a new supported housing project for Southend’s youth, we have been here for young people. The building has housed hundreds of young people since its opening, and Southend YMCA has grown and developed to become Southend’s biggest young person’s charity.

In addition to providing housing we also work with children, young people, families and the wider community providing high-quality education, and positive activities and projects. These aid personal, social, and cultural development as well as improved health and wellbeing to the young people of Southend and surrounding areas.

The first section of this ‘Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report’ includes a section from the Annual Report alongside additional data together. This Covers:

- Service Improvements to our building
- Service Improvements to resident care
- Service Improvements extending the range of partnerships which benefits residents lives

In the annual report, service improvements were made as a result of learning from both service requests and complaints all in response to request made by residents through various forum. We have not refused to accept any complaints during the annual period.

The second section of ‘Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report’ provides survey data and analysis from our Tenant Satisfaction Measures which look at residents assessment on how we respond to complaints and service requests.

The third section includes with a summary statement from Trustees regarding this report. And an appendix which is the ‘Trustees Feedback Statement’ to the Housing Ombudsman setting future actions.

Section 1



SERVICE IMPROVEMENT TO OUR BUILDING

SYMCA houses 35 residents. 30 residents live in their own self contained flats, and 5 of our residents live in our shared accommodation provision, The Tom Moulton Suite. We are always considering how we can improve the lives of young people in response to their expressed aspirations needs and requests. To enhance the environment, recently we have made improvements and added value to our services. A recent energy audit was completed and we were able to secure funding for loft insulation to support energy efficiency. We have also been able to upgrade our CCTV to ensure that we keep residents safe. Further to this, we have also been able to give our stairwells a bit of a makeover with new flooring improving the appearance of the building.



SERVICE IMPROVEMENT TO RESIDENT CARE

At the SYMCA we recognise that many of our residents are on a low income or struggle to get by on the money they receive. Others, struggle with healthy choices. Recent work by staff in housing and fundraising mean that we have been able to work with Love Grace, a women's empowerment charity, to give all our female residents a handbag with toiletries. We have also participated in local food drives, and the general public have been extremely generous in their donations of food.



With thanks to:



Some young people move into our accommodation with very few personal belongings, and some only have the clothes they are wearing. Also, many new residents, have not yet signed up for benefits, so they have no money. We make sure that when residents move in, if required, they are offered a move in package that contains the vital necessities required for living independently. This includes, food, toiletries and some items of clothing if we have them. We are grateful for our donors who enable this vital work to take place, and recently we were fortunate to be offered some clothing from C2C train operating company.



With thanks to:



SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS IN PARTNERSHIP WORKING

SYMCA is committed to partnership working in Southend and the local area. There are various ways in which enhanced partnership working greatly improves the lives of our residents, including through specialist support, in and around Southend.

Some of the many agencies we work with include:

The Department of Work and Pensions
 The Rough Sleepers Mental Health Team
 Safe Steps
 Open Roads Drug and Alcohol Service
 CM16+ Care Leavers Service
 Social Services
 Essex University
 Therapy for You
 MIND
 St Vincent's
 The Trussell Trust Food Bank
 The Whittingham Project
 NatWest Bank
 Helenore
 Trust Links
 YMCA George William's College
 Sanctuary Supported Living
 South Essex College
 Southend City Council
 Turning Tides - SAVS
 YMCA England and Wales
 West Leigh Baptist Church
 Essex Youth Service Essex County Council
 SAVS
 Southend School Nursing Service
 ABSS Breastfeeding Support

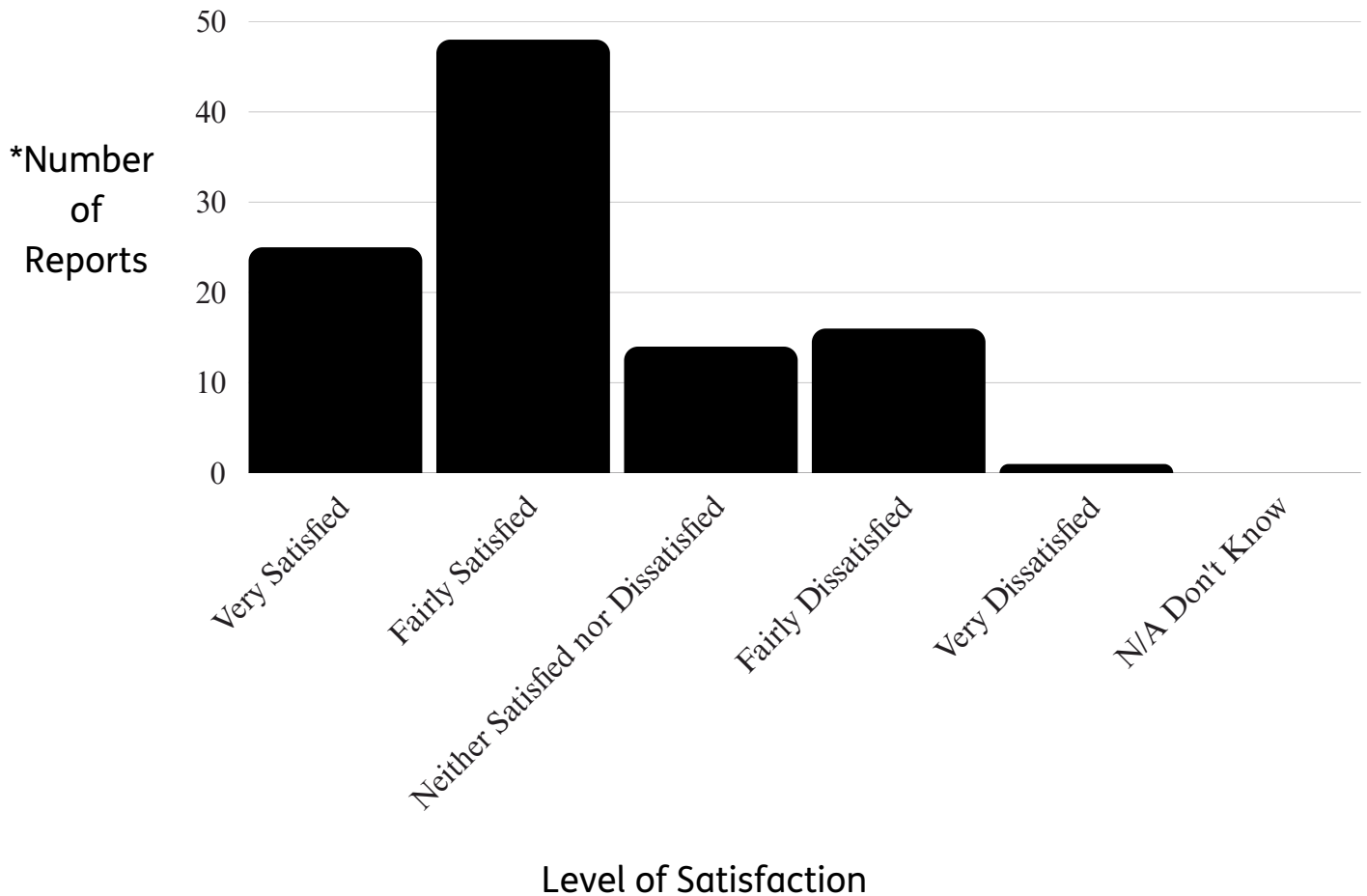


SECTION 2

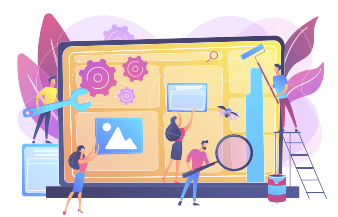


Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service provided by SYMCA?

A significant percentage of our residents express satisfaction with the housing services and support offered by the SYMCA. Dissatisfaction in residents includes young people wanting to move on and wanting to see capital improvements to the SYMCA. We have listened and responded to the requests and concerns from our residents and have recently received funding to make improvements to our building, and you can read about these in the section about our building.

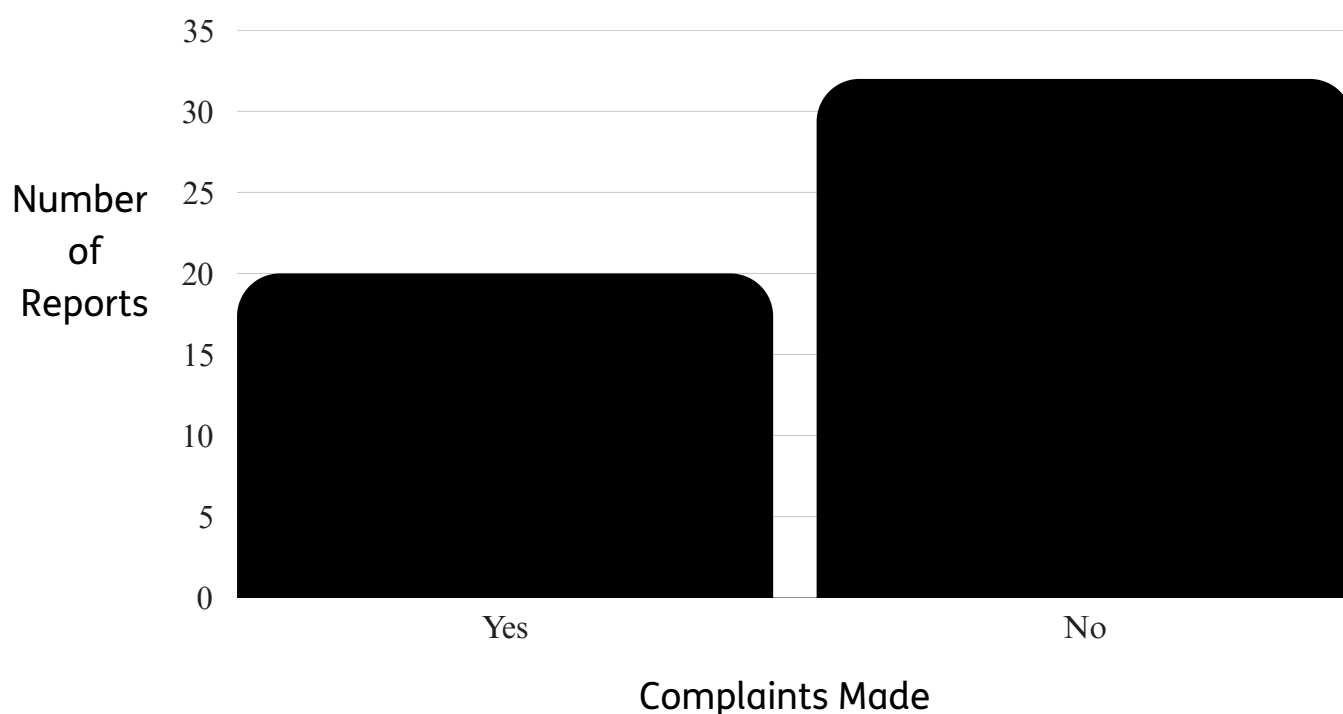


*The number of reports reflects the total number of responses collected from all residents (35 residents) through the quarterly surveys conducted over a year, which measure Tenant Satisfaction.



Have you made a complaint to Southend YMCA in the last 12 months?

Residents of YMCA are made aware during their induction of our complaints procedure. If a verbal complaint is made, residents are encouraged to formalise their complaint via our complaints form, and support is given to fill this out if needed. Managers respond to all complaints in a timely manner.

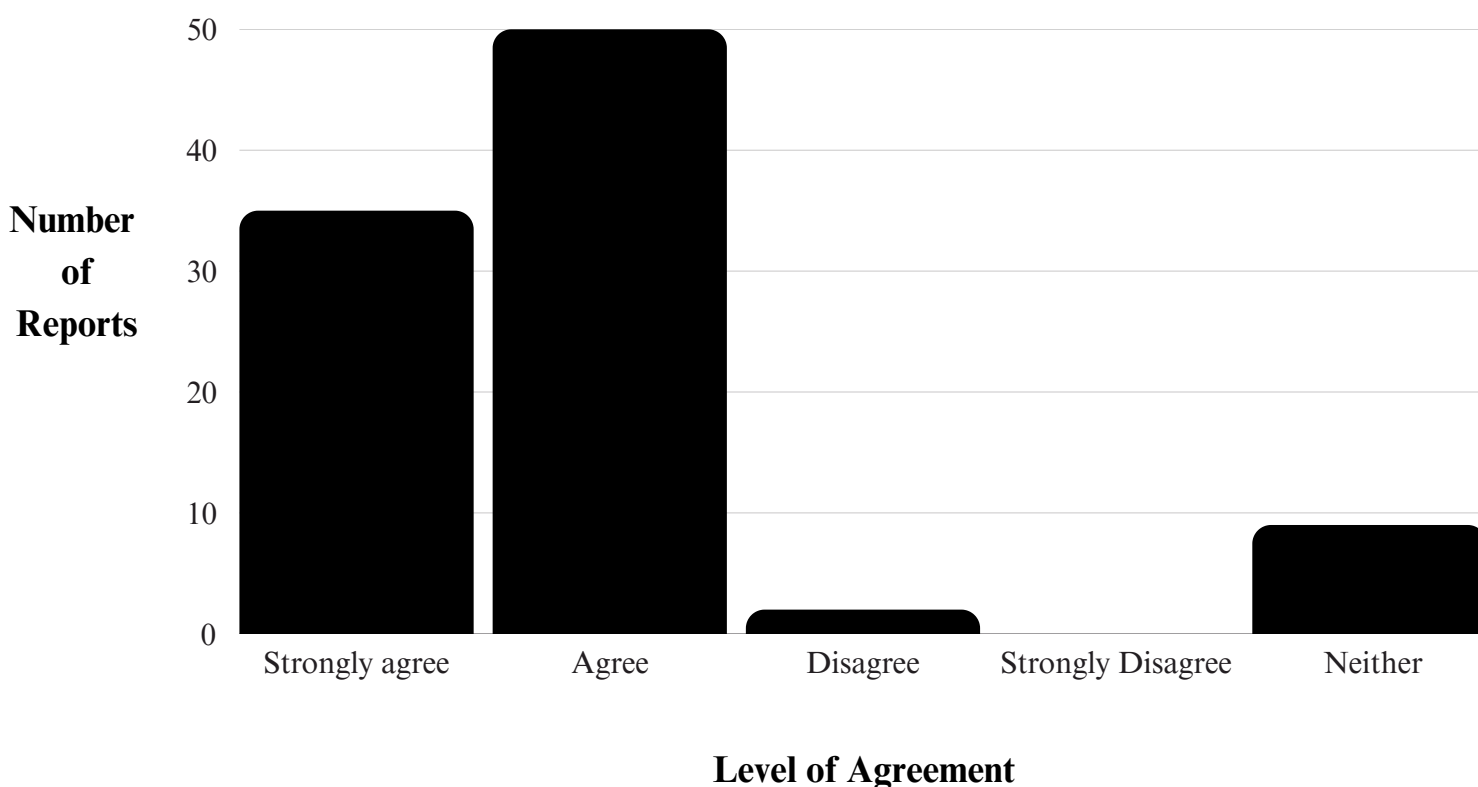


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If you have made a complaint, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with Southend YMCA's approach to complaints handling?

Residents of YMCA are able to make a complaint should it arise, and once this is done, management investigate their complaint and offer resolutions, which may include meeting with the young person to discuss a way forward. In more complex matters, some residents struggle with the time in which it takes to reach a resolution, as they seek immediate answers.

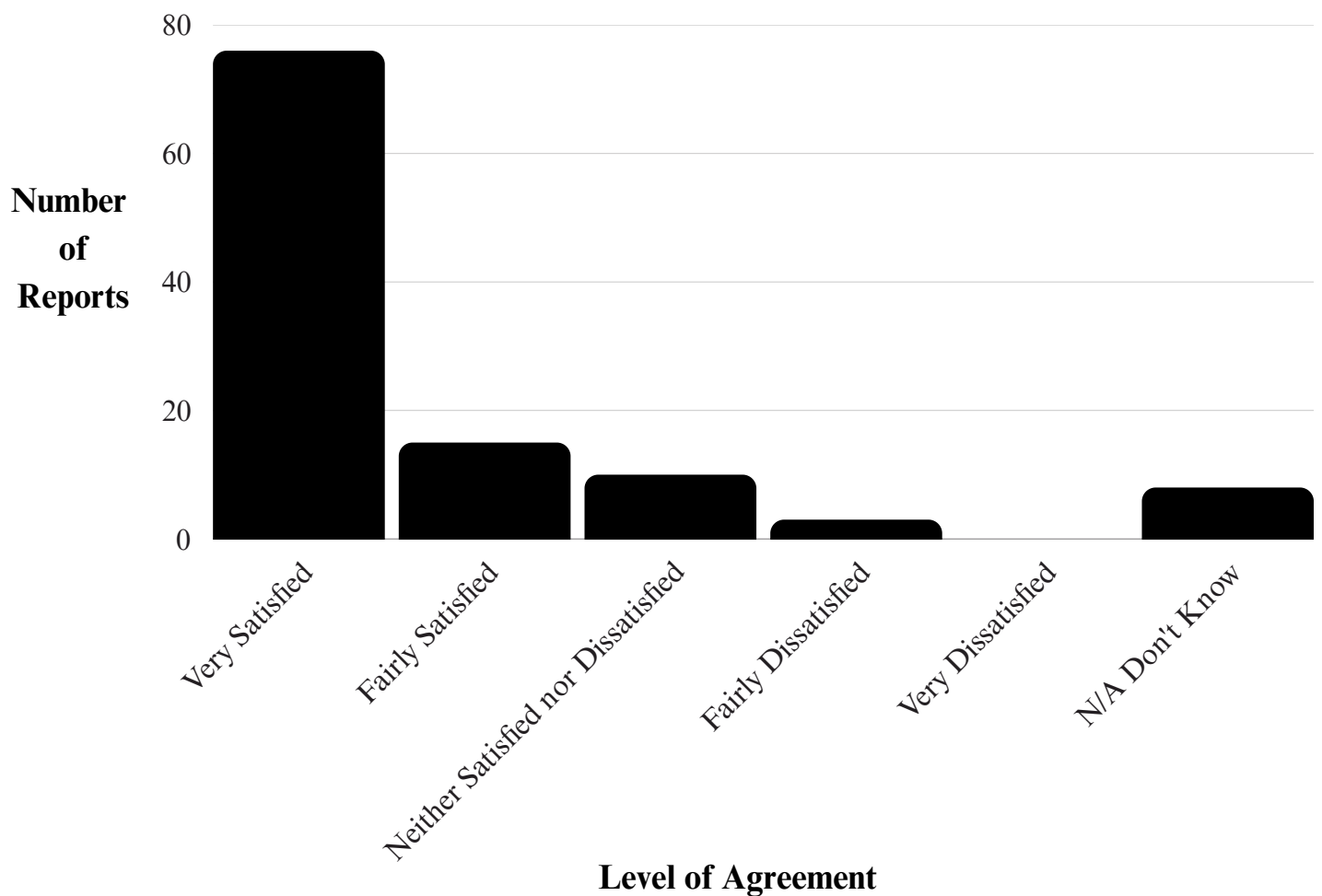


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How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that Southend YMCA keeps communal areas cleaned and well maintained?

Residents of YMCA agree that the communal areas at the YCMA are kept clean and well maintained. Our maintenance team ensure that the lounge and other communal areas are cleaned daily and kept tidy and well maintained. Residents are able to use the communal areas to relax in and focus on positive activities.

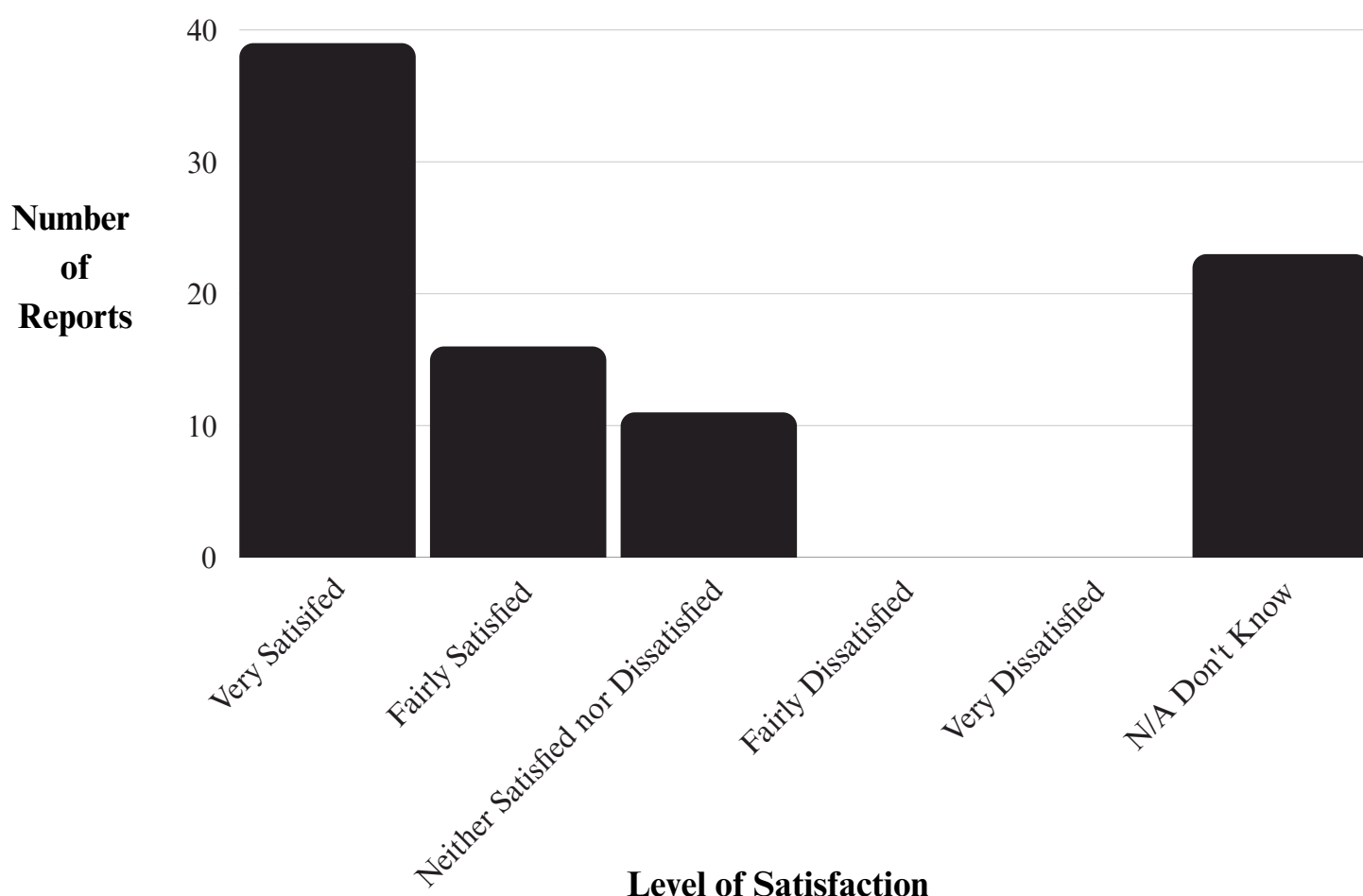


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How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that Southend YMCA makes a positive contribution to your neighbourhood?

Residents of YMCA were consulted on their thoughts and feelings regarding Southend YMCA's contribution to the local neighbourhood. Many residents were not aware of the contribution that Southend YMCA makes beyond the building they live in, but were aware of on site activities that are attended by the wider community.



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SECTION 3



SERVICE IMPROVEMENT

During the year September 2023 - August 2024, we received service request through several routes, which included within keywork, within residents meetings, during health and safety check of residents flats, and informal interactions with residents and through repairs monitoring forms.

These were all collated in a workbook. In total there were 164 service requests over the year.

Synthesizing the data, and utilising a grounded theory approach, key themes have revealed themselves. These include minor repairs to residents flats, requests to upkeep communal areas and grounds, and preparation of flats for new incoming residents.

Complaints, including informal verbal ones, under our previous policy, totalled twenty complaints.

As a consequence of these findings, and on reflection of young people's communication preferences, we are going to consider our approach to how residents are able to report service requests, with the aim of making our approach even more inclusive. This might include forms in different languages for UAS residents, and on coloured paper for those who struggle with reading on white paper due to dyslexia neurodivergence.



TRUSTEES FEEDBACK

The report is a good illustrative indication that we are generally meeting and exceeding tenants expectations. The figures may be difficult to scrutinise due to the regular quarterly reporting being represented in an overall annual report however this overall result is clearly reflected in the bar graphs provided and provide an accurate summary.

Trustees have an action plan to continue delivering in line with the Trustees' Feedback Summary.



APPENDIX 1: TRUSTEES FEEDBACK STATEMENT

Our operating and financial year runs from the 1st September to 31st August (academic year).

The 'Complaints Handling Code' was published on 08 February 2024 with an applicable date of 1st April 2024. This means that at least 6 months of the year on which we report to the regulator operated under a different Complaints Policy and arrangements (which precede the code). This was unavoidable and attributable to transition. We ask the Regulator to take this into consideration as well as the fact we are a small provider with 35 units when considering compliance.

For social housing providers operating to a tax year 1st April to 31st March – they may be able to gather a whole year of compliant data to return and by our estimation are not required to make a return until 12 weeks after their year-end this means 23rd June 2025. And so, we question the return date set by the Ombudsman for Southend YMCA of 24th November 2024 as this is a much-shortened timescale and places huge burden on us. We know the regulator seeks to be proportionate.

Furthermore, we have contacted the regulator regarding the application of definitions concerning the year end.

Nevertheless, we find synergy between the intentions of, and many of the provisions and principles of, our then Complaints Policy with the Ombudsman's Code. A positive ethos, swift resolution, understanding of service requests and complaints and their inter-relationship all leading to proactive measures by the Board and our staff team.



We have ratified a Complaints Policy (03.12.24) which is tightly tied to and compliant with the provisions as set out in the 'Complaints Handling Code'. There is an overlay in terms of the language, structure and headings of our Complaints Policy, and the headings, clause and numbers as set out in the Code. Using this shared language and structure will make the requirements of the regulator clear to our team, and in this way, we feel that the regulators' code will have a positive impact on our practice.

We are working towards full compliance with all processes in the code, we have an action plan in place to train all staff member in new definitions and associated documentation. We are adding a complaints field within our new Management Information System for ease of data gathering and analysis.

We note that the Ombudsman distinguishes between service requests and complaints and the interrelationship between the two. We are comforted by the positive practices of the housing team, to move forward, for action, key themes affecting residents. We believe that this is in the spirit of the intention of the Ombudsman. Our relationship with themes that are important to our residents is demonstrated within our Board meetings.

Responsively, we have appointed new personal investing in:

Additional fundraisers - to secure the resources which will enable us to deliver environmental improvements with positive impacts on energy costs. This capacity is strengthened with the appointment of an accountant to support housing business planning including capital delivery, financing and grants.



In September we have appointed a staff member with responsibility for our website and they have formulated a performance page where we can put all statutory documents relating to complaints, and a residents portal for further accessibility. We have received complaints data and with the appointment of David Bland as the member responsible for complaints (MRC) and Ed Galgano as their deputy the scrutiny arrangements will develop and strengthen.

