

Housing Complaints



Quarter 2 Report

July 2025 - September 2025

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To ensure that high standards are reached and maintained, we need you to have your say

1. Introduction

At the end of quarter 1 we advised you that we had started to build up a backlog in complaints and were looking at our options to tackle them.

During this quarter we have divided the Housing Resolutions Team, with 2 officers working through the complaints backlog and 8 officers dedicated to working on new complaints to ensure new complaints are responded to within the set timeframes.

Complaints received before 18th August 2025 and allocated to the Housing Resolution Team will be considered backlog and will be worked through by the 2 dedicated officers and any complaints received after this will be considered new complaints.

The backlog numbers will be included in the performance reporting of these reports, however there is now a dedicated section for the backlog to show our progress on investigating and responding to these.

All of the backlog complaints will be responded to by December 2025.

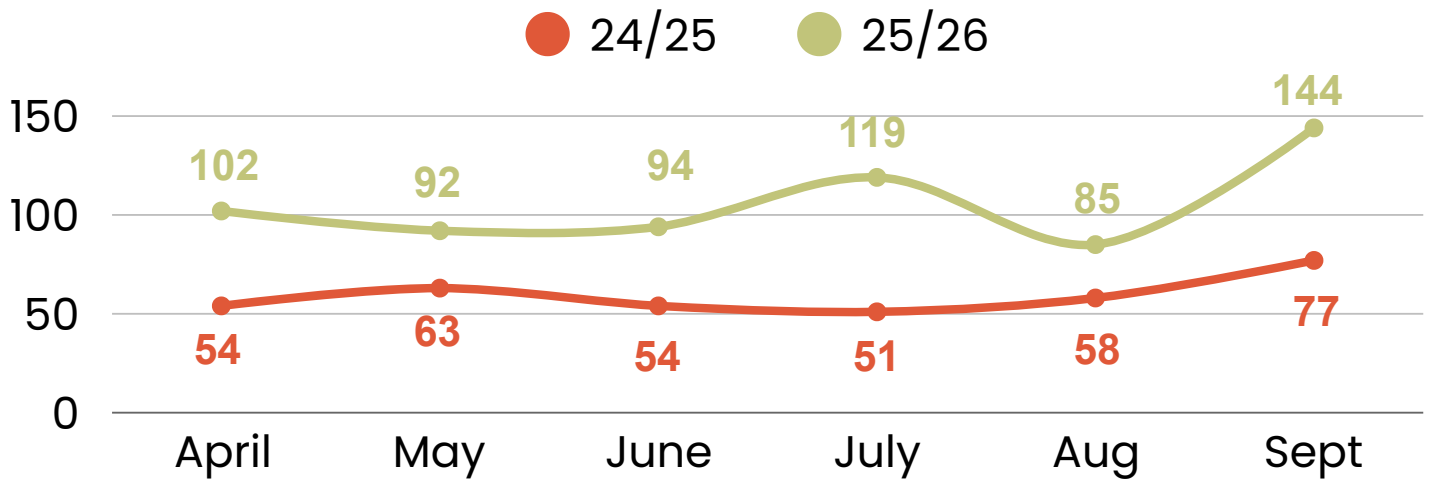
We appreciate your patience and understanding as we work through investigating and responding to your complaints.

2. Complaints performance

Stage 1 complaints

Stage 1 is the investigation stage. We will try to resolve your complaint straight away - when we can't, we will investigate and provide you with a formal response.

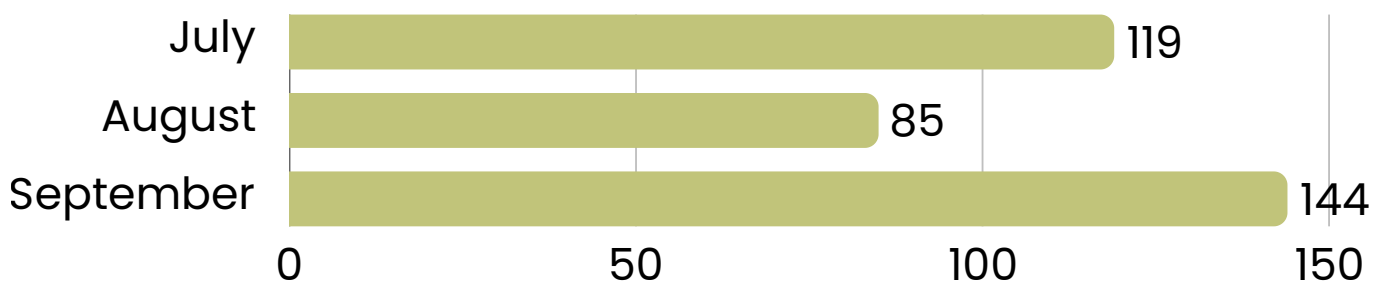
Stage 1 complaints received so far this year compared to last year



While the complaints numbers have increased, this shows a healthy complaints culture where our residents are able to raise concerns with us allowing us to learn from their experiences and improve services. In response to increasing complaints we have expanded the team dedicated to resolving your complaints to meet the demand.

348 Stage 1 complaints were received in quarter 2

Stage 1 complaints received

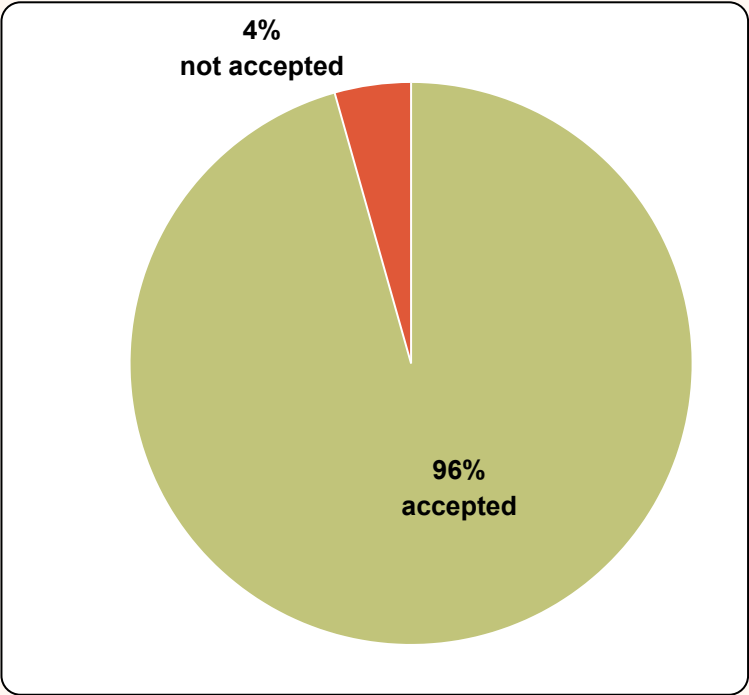


**The following information relates to closed stage 1 complaints that were received in quarter 2. 53 complaints received in quarter 2 are still open.*

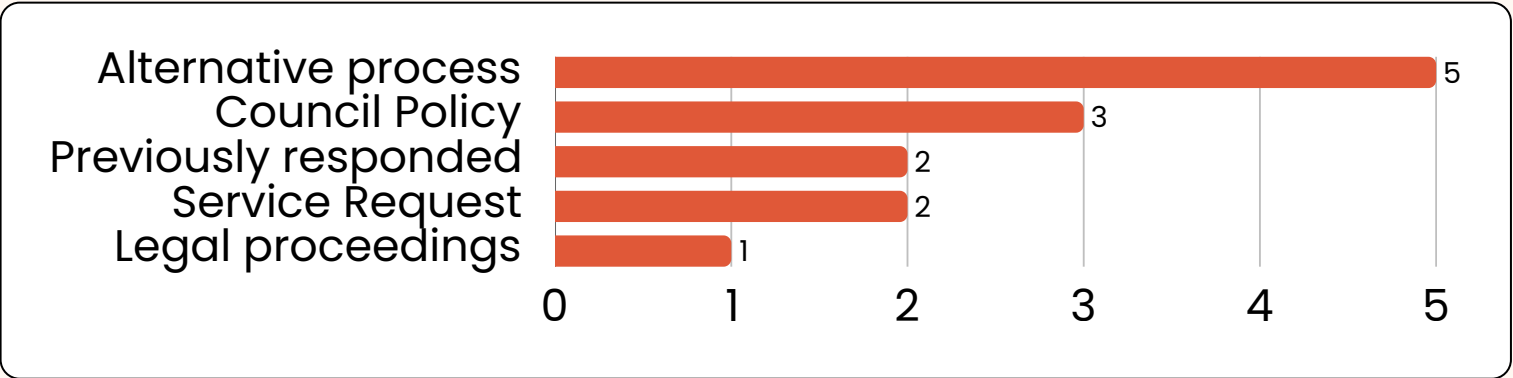
295 Stage 1 complaints were closed

Accepted stage 1 complaints

There are some complaints that we do not investigate, these are set out in the Housing Ombudsman Service’s Complaint Handling Code.

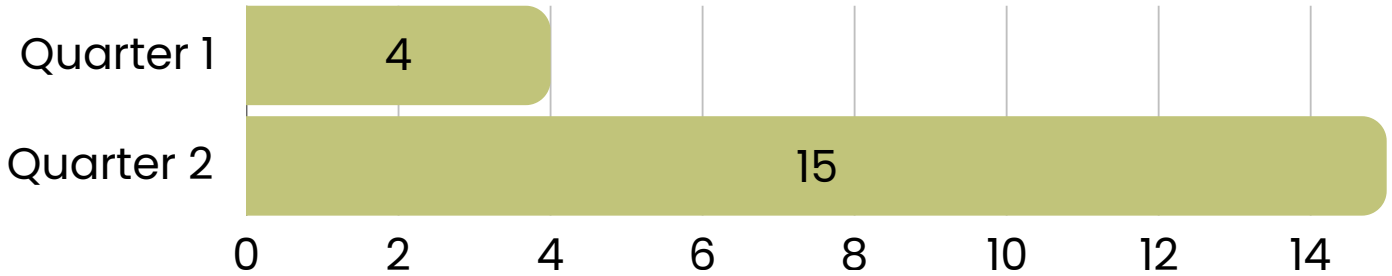


Reasons complaints were not accepted



Closed as fast fix

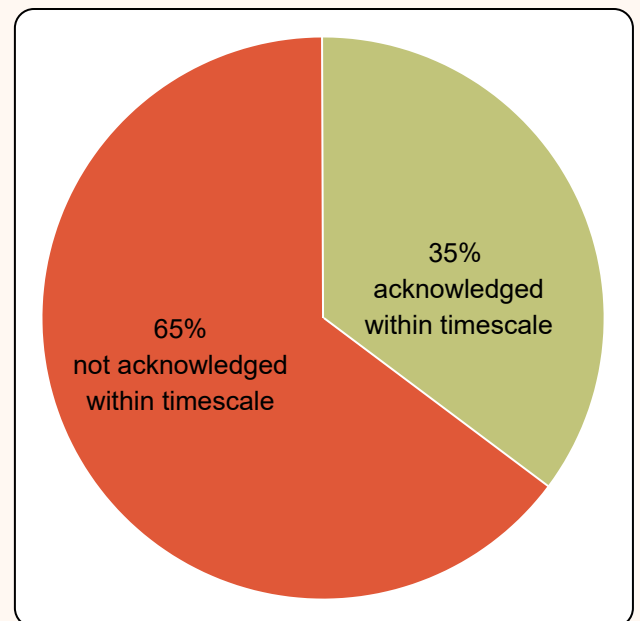
Where your complaint is resolved to your satisfaction and you do not wish to continue with the formal investigation, the complaint will be closed as a fast fix.



267 stage 1 complaints were progressed for formal investigation

Acknowledged stage 1 complaints

Where your complaint progresses for formal investigation, the Housing Ombudsman Service's Complaint Handling Code allows 5 working days for a stage 1 complaint to be accepted and acknowledged.



Acknowledging your complaint is very important to us and was a new measure that we have introduced to be able to monitor our performance and it is taking some time to embed the importance of entering accurate dates into the system.

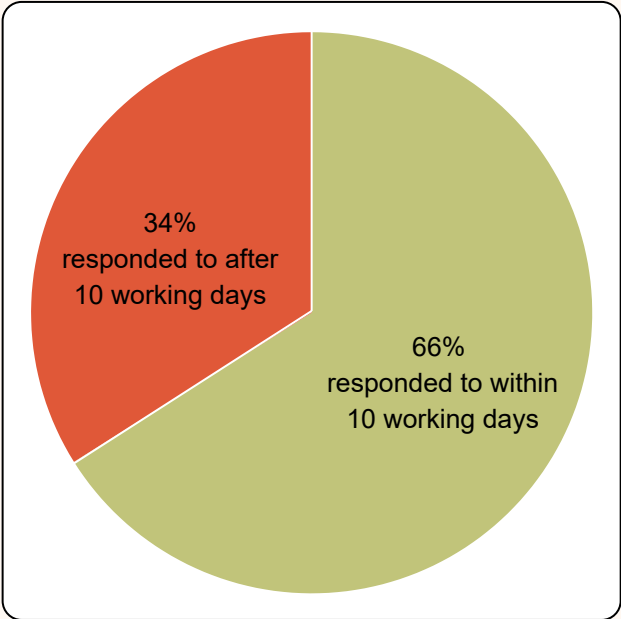
We have put checks in place to ensure that everyone is following the process correctly. The checks include ensuring acknowledgement letters are sent within the 5 working days and entering the correct dates into the system to ensure accurate reporting.

We must then investigate and respond to your complaint within 10 working days from the date of acknowledgement. We can extend the response time to 20 working days if needed and with your agreement.

Where complaints were not formally acknowledged, the working days to complete has been calculated from the date we accepted/received the complaint.

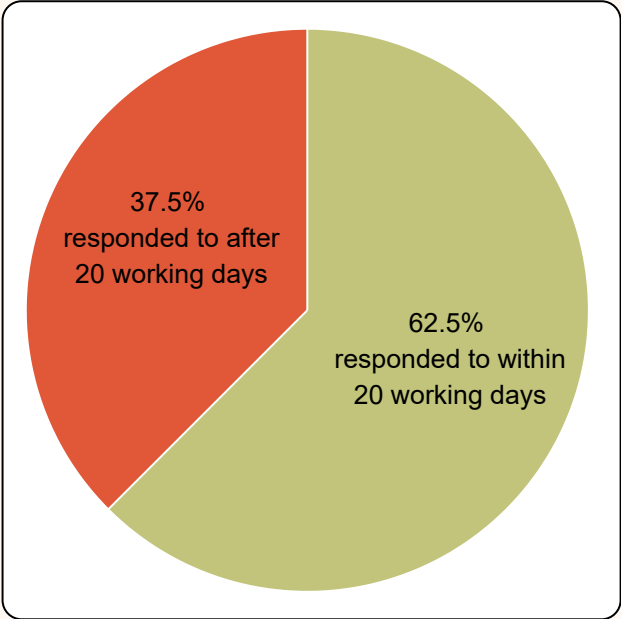
**171 stage 1 complaints
were not extended**


Not extended stage 1 response



**96 stage 1 complaints
were extended**

Extended stage 1 response





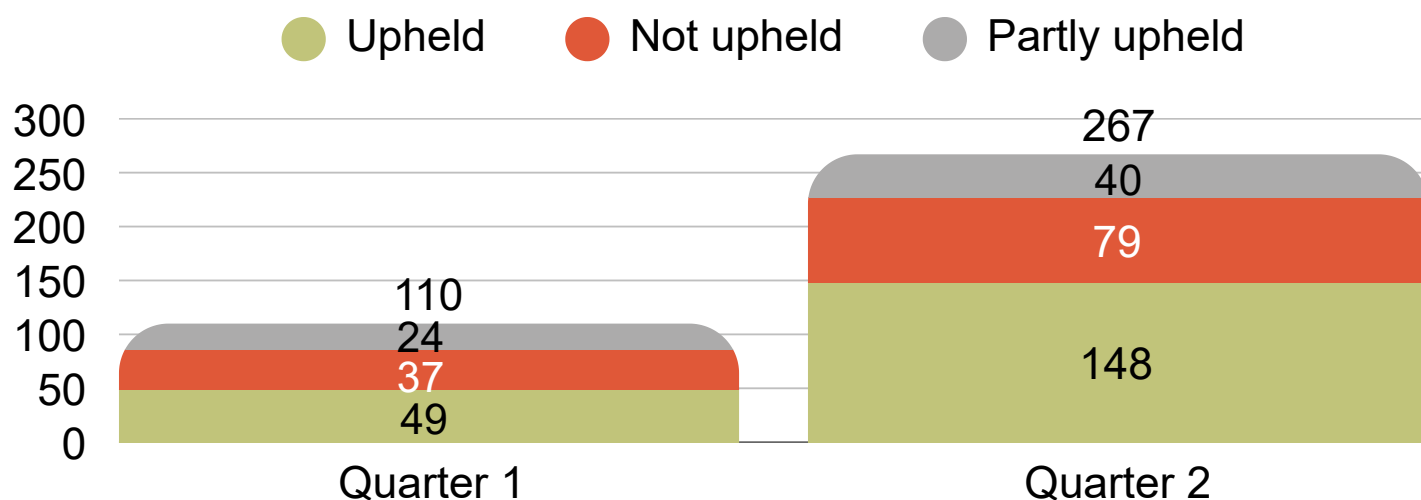
Average time to respond to stage 1 complaints

17 Working Days

These numbers are impacted by our backlog, we are looking to train officers to ensure processes are followed correctly, we expect to see improvements in these numbers by December 2025 when the backlog is cleared.

148 (58%) stage 1 complaints were upheld

Outcomes of accepted and closed stage 1 complaints



70% of stage 1 complaints were upheld or partly upheld, this allows us to see where improvements can be made to our services.

As part of our response to a complaint we may offer compensation, in the form of a compensation payment to recognise loss, suffering or inconvenience.

12

**Stage 1
complaints
were offered
compensation**



£ 2981.00

**Total
compensation
was awarded**



Case Study

Resident complained that sewerage was flooding their garden, which created a health hazard for them and their family. A number of repairs were raised between July and September, but works were unable to commence due to a lack of scaffolding at the property, resulting in time wasted for both the operatives and the resident. Following the complaint, scaffolding was arranged within two days, and the repair completed four days later.

An apology was given, and due to the delay and impact on the wellbeing of the family, £300 compensation was offered.

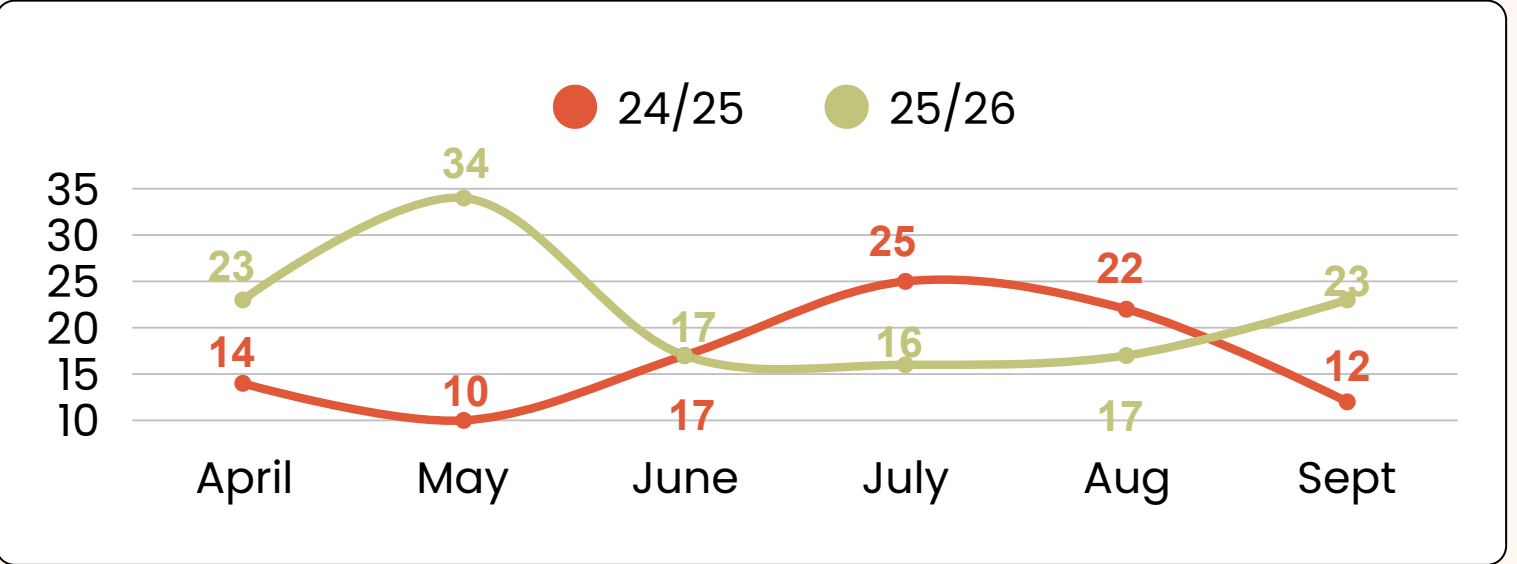


Stage 2 complaints

Stage 2 is the review stage - if you are not happy with the outcome of your stage 1 complaint, you can ask for the outcome to be reviewed.

You will need to tell us why you were unhappy with the stage 1 response that you received - a different officer will review your stage 2 complaint.

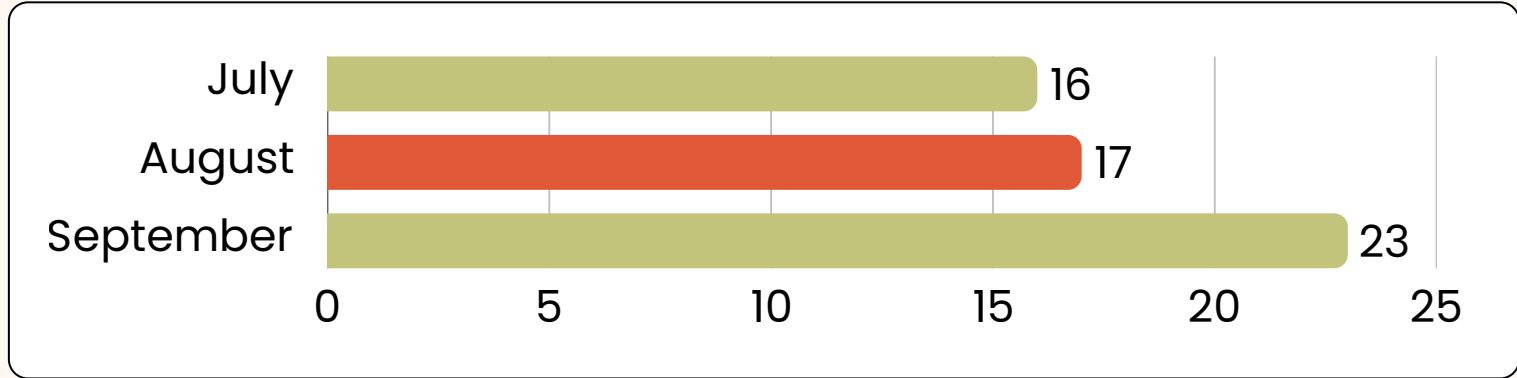
Stage 2 complaints received so far this year compared to last year



We are reducing the number of complaints escalated to Stage 2 by continually learning and reflecting on our Stage 1 responses, as well as addressing the Repairs backlog which causes delays in resolutions.

56 Stage 2 complaints were received in quarter 2

Stage 2 complaints received



**The following information relates to closed stage 2 complaints that were received in quarter 2.
11 complaints received in quarter 2 are still open.*

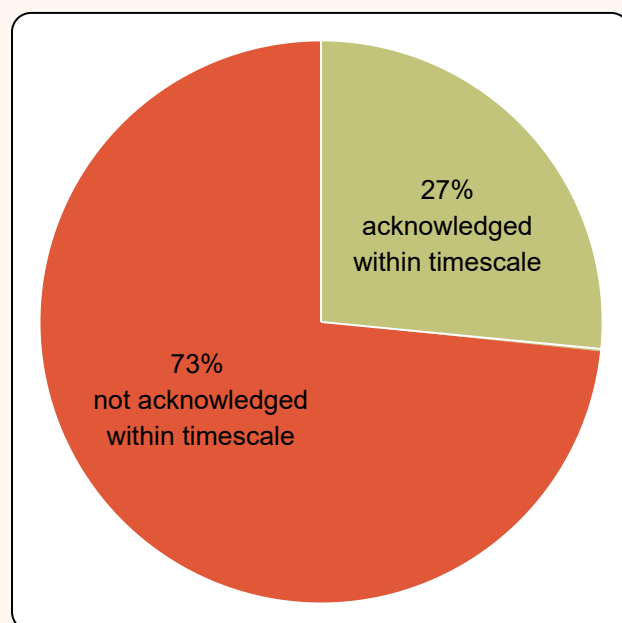
45 Stage 2 complaints were accepted and closed

1 fast fix closure

44 Stage 2 complaints were progressed for formal investigation

Acknowledged stage 2 complaints

Where your complaint progresses for formal investigation, the Housing Ombudsman Service's Complaint Handling Code allows 5 working days for a stage 2 complaint to be accepted and acknowledged.

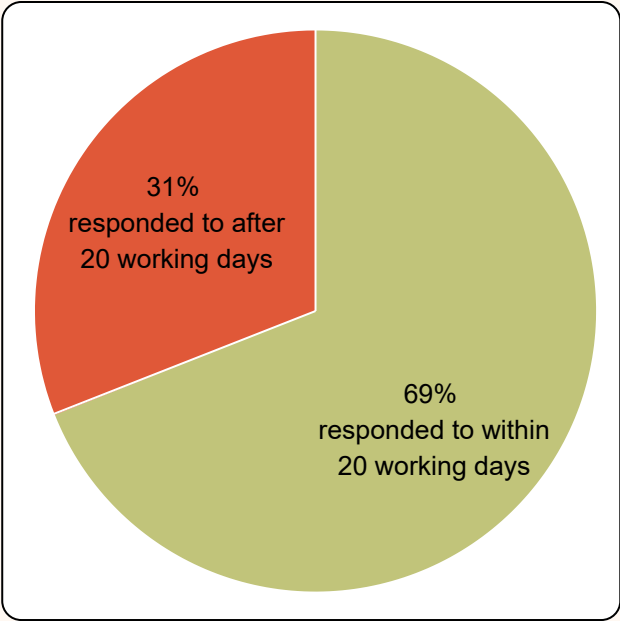


We must then investigate and respond to your complaint within **20 working days** from the date of acknowledgement. We can extend the response time to **40 working days** if needed and with your agreement.

Where complaints were not formally acknowledged, the working days to complete has been calculated from the date we accepted/received the complaint.

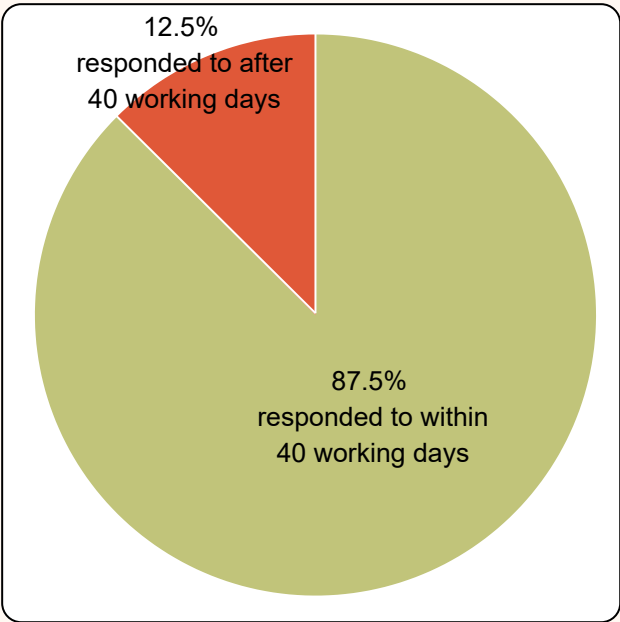
**29 stage 2 complaints
were not extended**

Not extended stage 2 response



**16 stage 2 complaints
were extended**

Extended stage 2 response

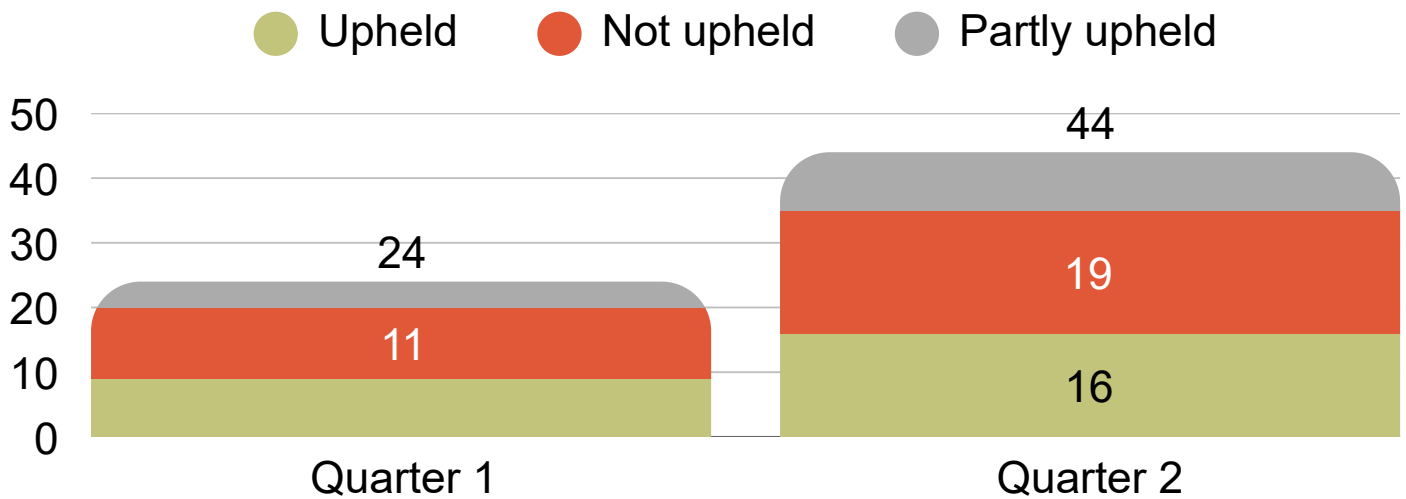


Average time to respond to stage 2 complaints

18 Working Days

16 (36%) stage 2 complaints were upheld

Outcomes of accepted and closed stage 2 complaints



56% of stage 2 complaints were upheld or partly upheld, compared to **54%** in quarter 1. Completing more thorough investigations at stage 1 means that we are providing better responses and aren't able to uphold so many complaints when they are escalated to stage 2.

As part of our response to a complaint we may offer compensation, in the form of a compensation payment to recognise loss, suffering or inconvenience.

10

**Stage 2
complaints
were offered
compensation**



£1850

**Total
compensation
was awarded**



Case Study

A resident complained that they had been waiting 6 months for a repair to be completed to the guttering and downpipe at their home. They had chased this repair numerous times, but had not received any updates from the repairs team. At the time of making their Stage 1 complaint, a scaffolding contract was not yet in place to allow the works to be completed. However, when the complaint was escalated to Stage 2 an appointment was able to be arranged for the work to be completed.

An apology was given for both the delay and the failure in communication. The reasons for the delay were explained. The repair was completed swiftly once the contractor was in place and the resident was satisfied with the outcome of his complaint.

3. Complaints backlog

The complaints backlog includes complaints logged on or before **18th August 2025** and allocated to the Housing Resolution Team.

192 stage 1 backlog complaints were closed

49 stage 2 backlog complaints were closed

92

**Stage 1
complaints in
backlog**

15

**Stage 2
complaints in
backlog**

We are reducing the backlog of complaints steadily and expect all overdue complaints to have received a response by December 2025.

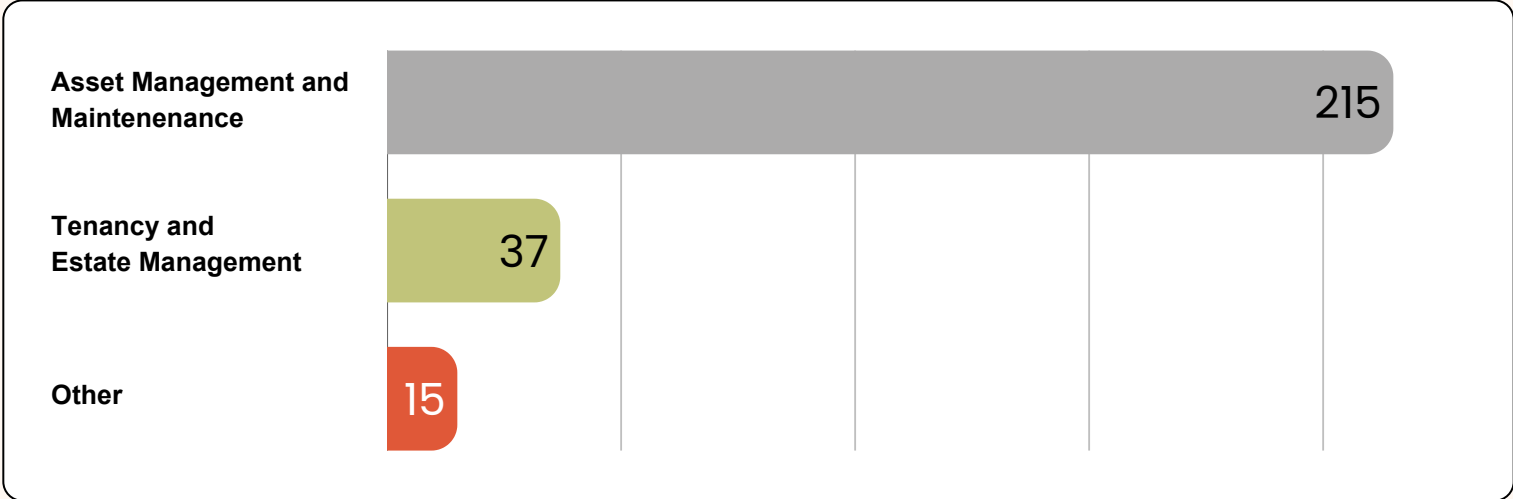


December 2025

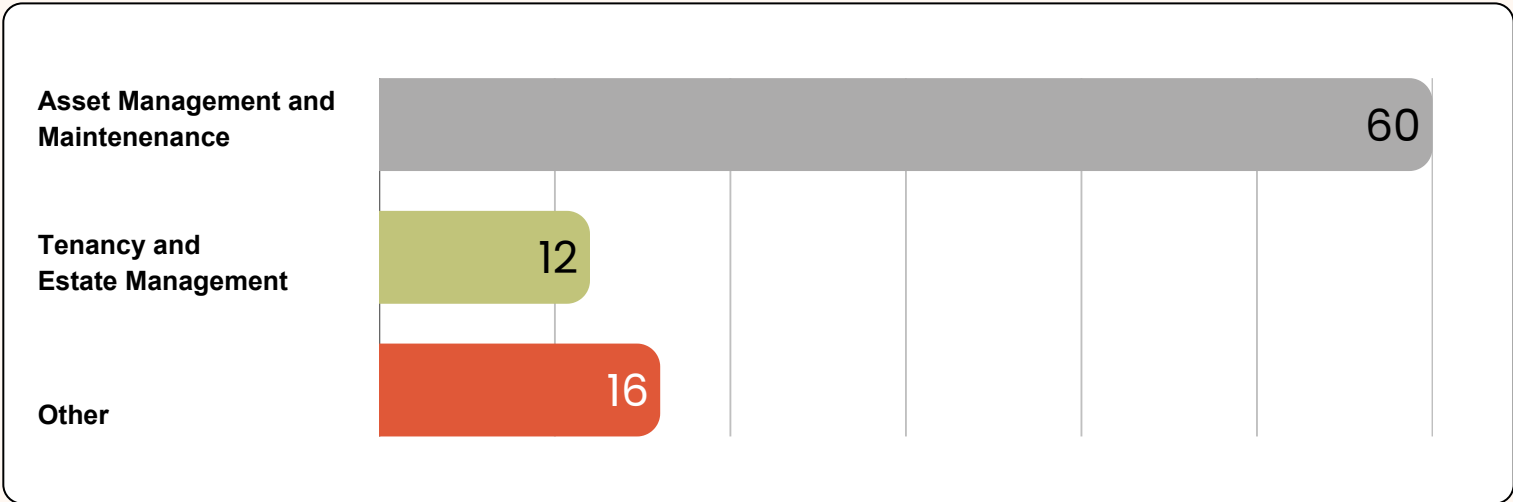
4. Complaints by service area

Breakdown of complaints progressed for formal investigation and closed.

Stage 1 complaints



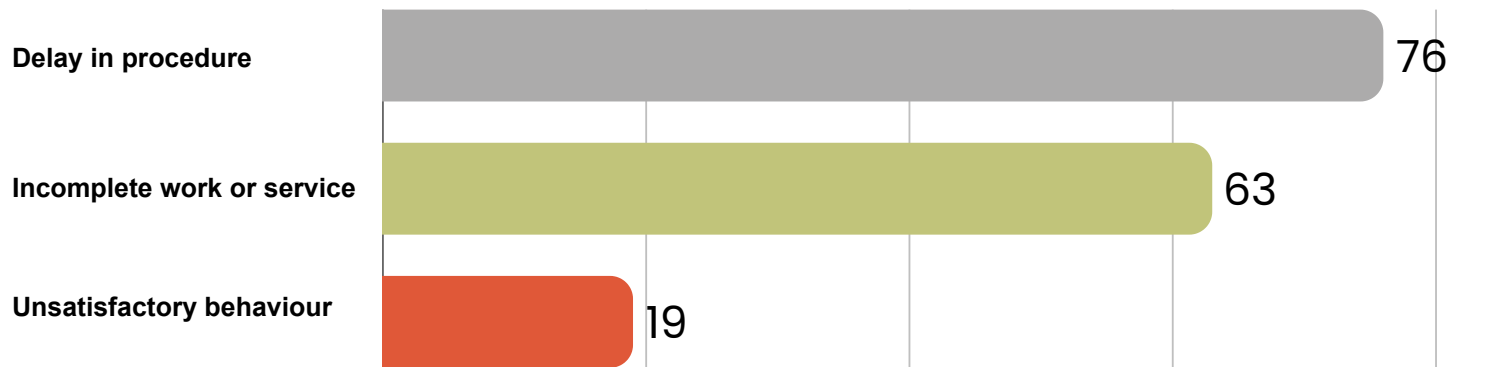
Stage 2 complaints



Asset Management and Improvement

Repairs and maintenance are carried out by our Asset Management and Improvement service. They ensure your safety, security and comfort by providing well-maintained and high-quality homes and communal areas.

Top 3 Reasons for stage 1 complaints



Tenancy and Estate Management

Tenancy and Estate Management services help you live in your home and community and manage surrounding housing areas. This service includes housing officers, caretakers and cleaners.

Top 3 reasons for stage 1 complaints



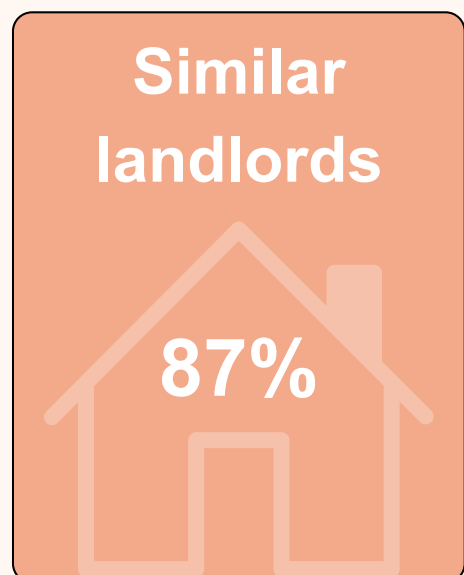
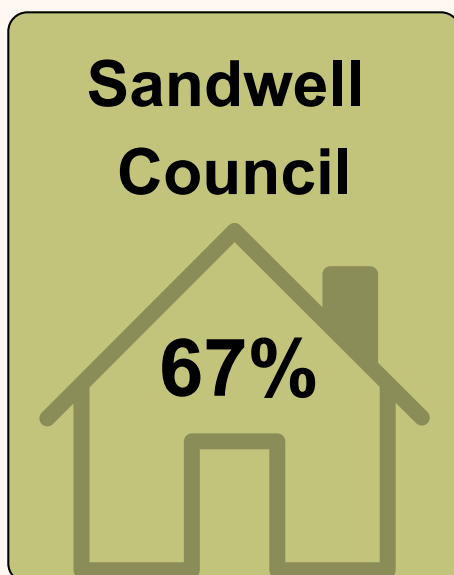
5. How are we doing?

It's helpful for us to see how we are doing compared to similar landlords.

Number of stage 1 and 2 complaints per 1000 properties



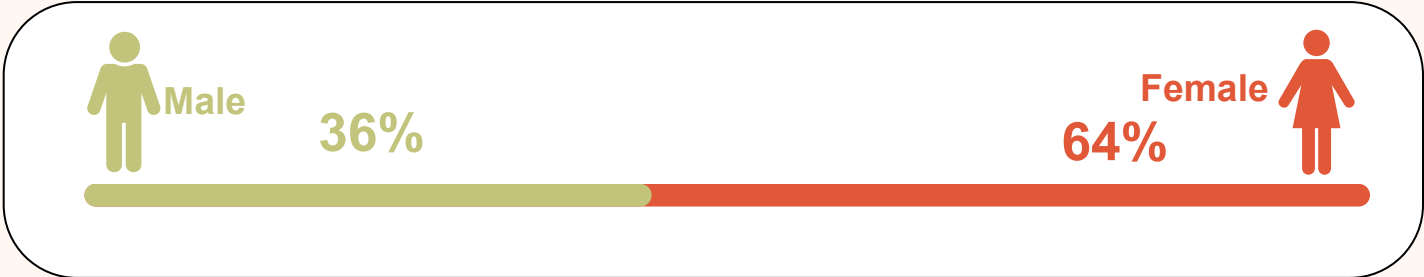
Stage 1 and 2 complaints responded to within Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timeframes



While our performance has dropped and other landlords have improved their response times in last quarter, our timescales are affected by our backlog of complaints. We are working to remove this backlog, which will allow us to respond to all complaints within timeframes and bring us into line with other landlords.

6. Stage 1 demographics

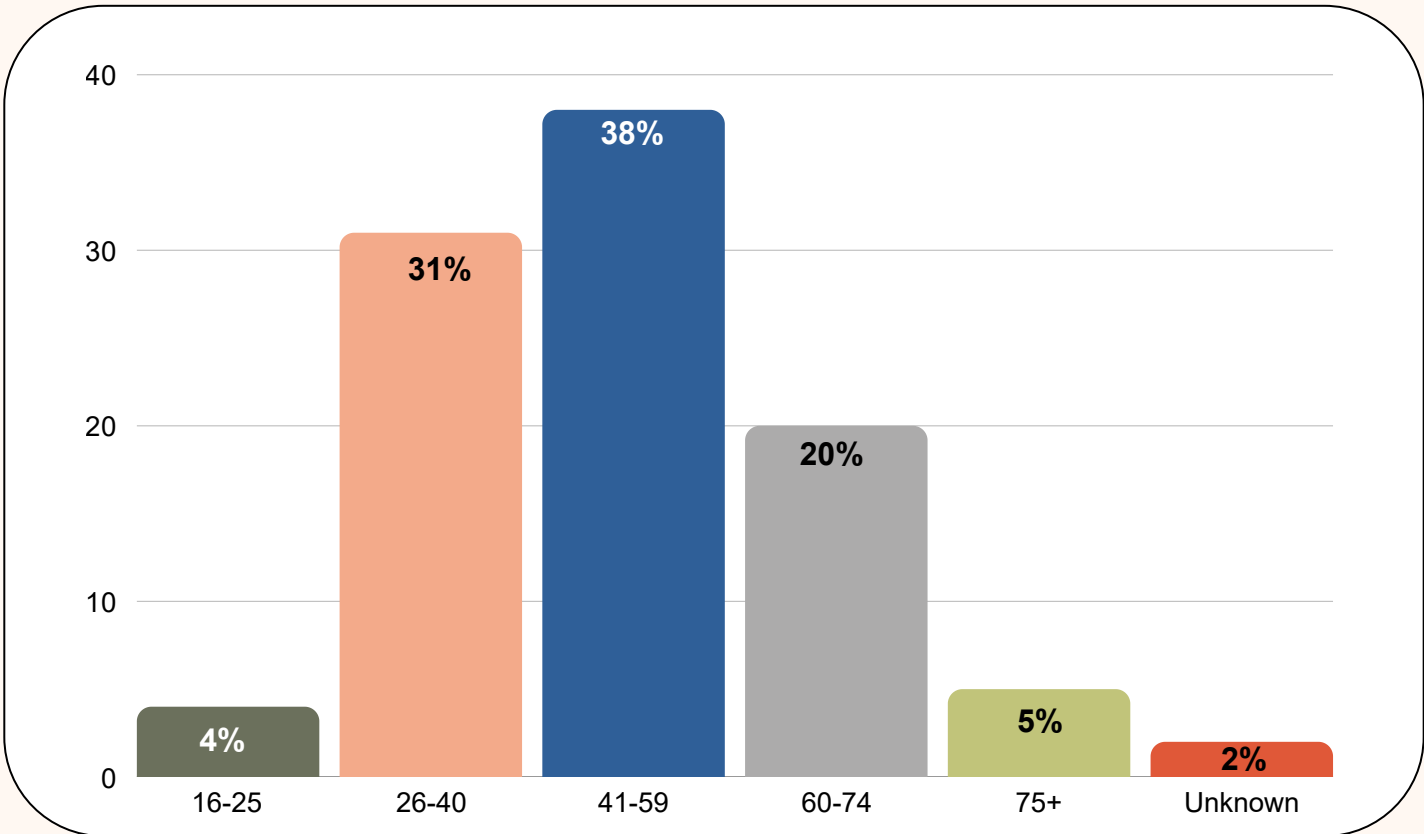
Gender



Ethnicity

White British	59%	White Other	2%
Black or Black British Caribbean	11%	Mixed White and Black Carribean	1%
Refused	11%	Mixed Other	1%
Black or Black British African	5%	Asian or Asian British Other	1%
Asian or Asian British Indian	3%	Black or Black British Other	1%
Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi	2%	Asian or Asian British Pakistani	0%
Mixed White and Asian	2%	Mixed White and Black African	0%

Age



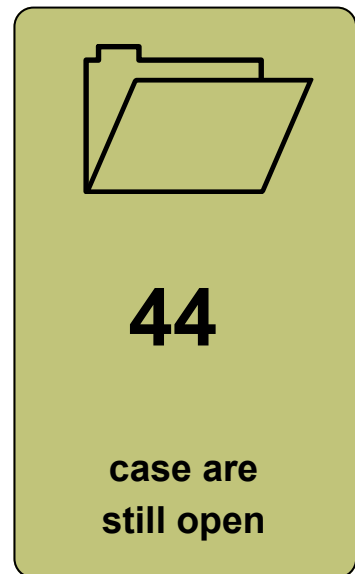
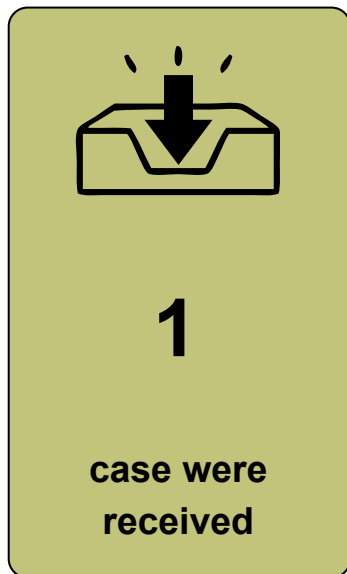
7. Housing Ombudsman cases

The Housing Ombudsman Service is an independent, impartial, and free service for social housing residents.

They make the final decision on disputes between residents and landlords that are registered members of its scheme - including tenants and leaseholders of social landlords.

The Ombudsman can only consider a complaint for investigation where they are satisfied that the complaint issues have been raised and investigated by a landlord through its dedicated complaint procedure and provided a final response.

They will also consider a complaint where they are satisfied that the resident has raised the issues and there has been failure by the landlord in its complaint handling.



**The length of time it takes the Ombudsman to investigate cases means they may not always be received and closed within the same financial year.*

Outcomes

The Ombudsman can issue determinations and / or actions following their investigations.

Determinations

Following investigations, the Ombudsman can find that there has been maladministration. This means the landlord has failed to do something, done something it shouldn't have or has delayed unreasonably.
A total of **5 maladministration determinations** were received for closed cases.

1	Maladministration for complaint handling
1	Maladministration for handling of report of a leak
1	Maladministration for handling of report of repairs
1	Maladministration for handling of report of damp and mould
1	Maladministration for handling of request for new garden gate
1	Maladministration for handling of request to be rehoused

Service Failure

A total of **1 service failure determination** received for closed cases.

1	Service failure for handling of complaint
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Reasonable redress

A total of **1 reasonable redress determination** received for closed cases.

1	Reasonable redress for handling of concerns raised by the resident about staff conduct during and after a home visit
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Actions

The Ombudsman can also issue actions that the landlord must complete to prevent similar future failings.

A total of **15 actions** were given, including **4 compensation awards** were received for closed cases.

2	Damp and mould inspections
1	Fit extractor fan
1	Confirm outstanding repairs
3	Apology
2	Provide schedule of works
1	Arrange mutually convenient appointment
1	Complete risk assessment

Total Compensation

£ 2050

8. Improvements

We see complaints as an opportunity to learn lessons and drive continuous improvement. We will acknowledge faults when they occur and take responsibility for putting things right and avoiding recurrence.

Improvement	Benefit	How we will record/measure completion
Ensure that we check 100% of repairs to arrange for parts needed before making appointments with you.	This prevents wasted appointments without correct parts.	Quality checks of completed repairs
Ensure our repairs team take photos of works before they start and when works are completed for 100% of repairs that are done in your property.	This provides accountability for the standard of work, and any mess left following repairs	Quality checks of completed repairs
We will update the leaseholder handbook with clear responsibilities regarding electrics in flatted accommodation.	This will provide clarity to leaseholders on their responsibilities.	Web page will be updated
We will ensure that 100% of staff visiting properties are trained to identify damp and mould.	This will help to ensure a proactive response to damp and mould issues.	Staff training records
Give 100% of repairs inspectors damp meters.	This will help to ensure a proactive response to damp and mould issues.	Equipment issue records Quality checks of completed inspections

9. Get involved

As a council tenant, or leaseholder, you have the right to be consulted on matters affecting your tenancy and the housing services you receive.

There are a number of methods available for you to have your say.



Volunteer as part of a regularly meeting group



Get involved with specific subjects and tasks for a short term



Attend work shops for group discussions



Complete surveys and feedback requests

If you would like to get involved would like more information on what is available, please call us on 0121 569 2537.

**You can also complete a short survey to express your interest.
www.sandwell.gov.uk/housingsurvey**