

# Housing Complaints



## Quarter 3 Report

October 2025 - December 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 2 we advised you that the Housing Resolution Team had been divided into 2 teams, with one team dedicated to their complaints backlog (complaints received before 18<sup>th</sup> August 2025) and the other team working on new complaints.

We are pleased to advise that this plan of action was successful, the Housing Resolution Team have cleared all of their back log of complaints and are all now working on new complaints received.

It has been highlighted that other teams within the service are not in this position and there are a number of complaints that are outside of timescales. The Housing Resolution Team have put in some additional monitoring and support these teams to ensure that you receive responses to your complaints and to help other teams to respond to your future complaints on time.

This report shows an improvement in our acknowledgement and response times, this has been from a combination of improved managing of complaints timescales, use of adjustments to reporting to include extension time and ensuring all none working days are excluded and improved recording.

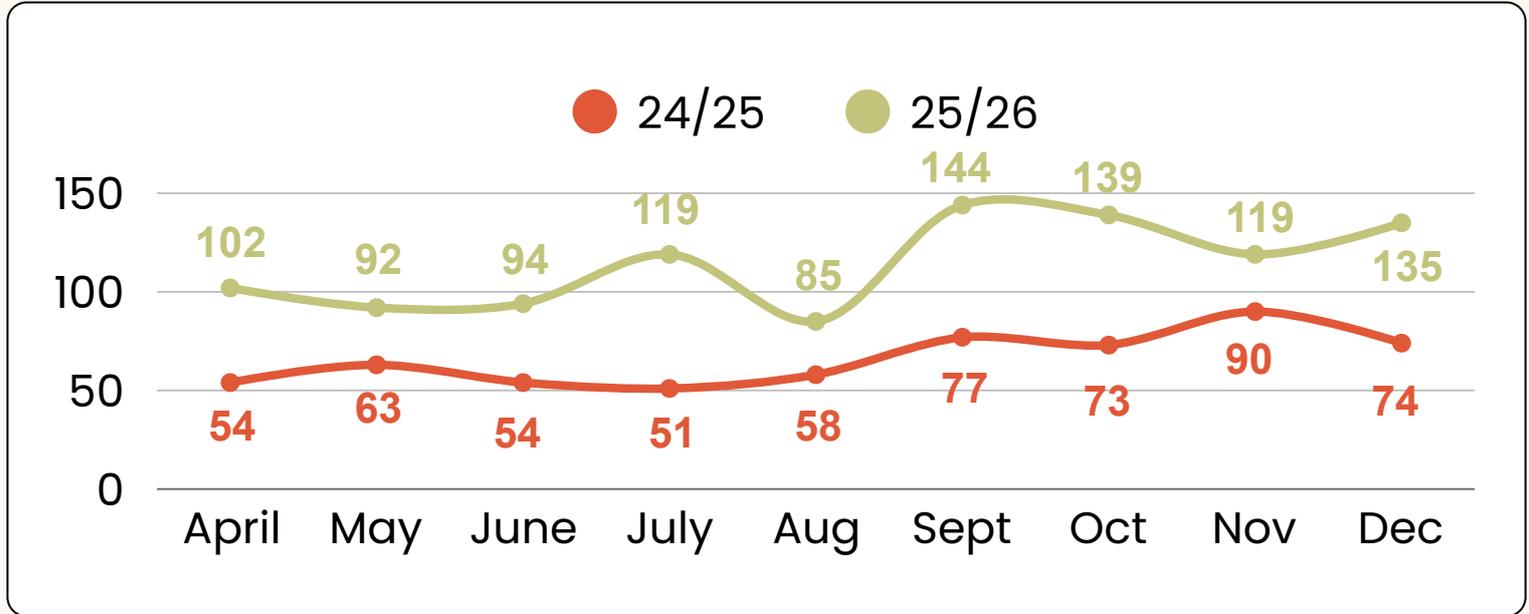
We acknowledge that there is still some work to be done, the Housing Resolution Team will be dedicating time to provide additional checks on complaint responses and recording and additional training where needed.

## 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.

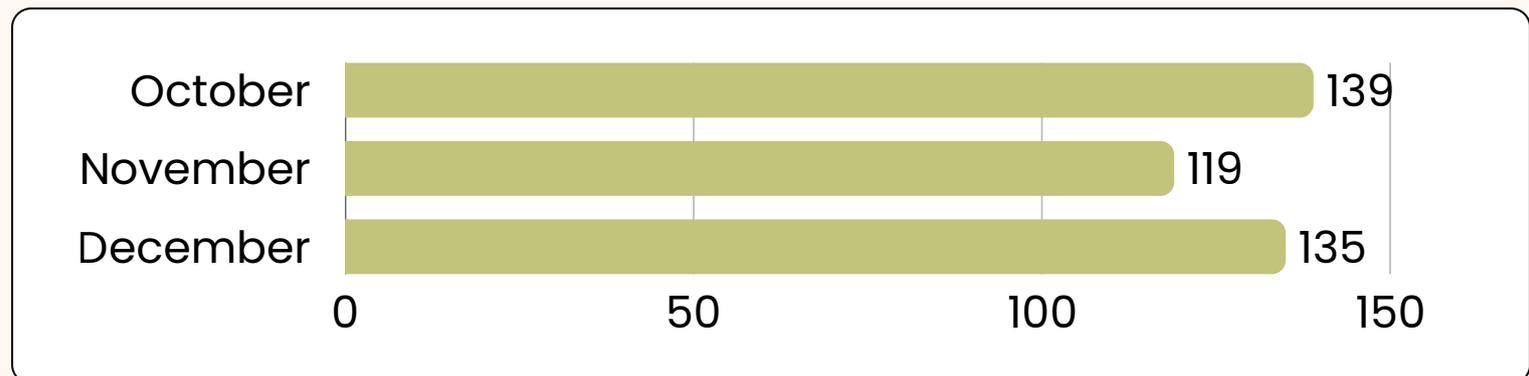
### Stage 1 complaints received so far this year compared to last year



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.

**393 Stage 1 complaints were received in quarter 3**

### Stage 1 complaints received

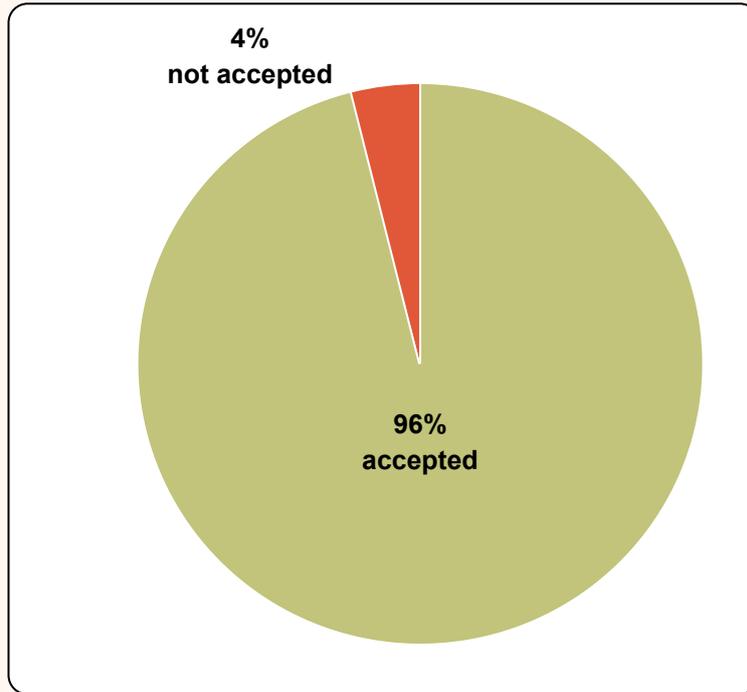


\*The following information relates to closed stage 1 complaints that were received in Quarter 3. 28 stage 1 complaints received in Quarter 3 are still open.

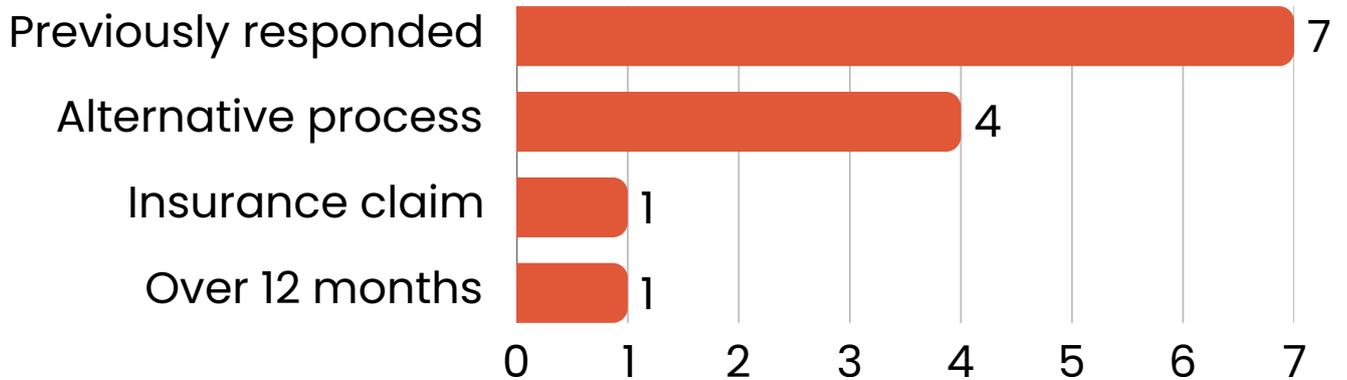
## 365 Stage 1 complaints were closed

### 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.

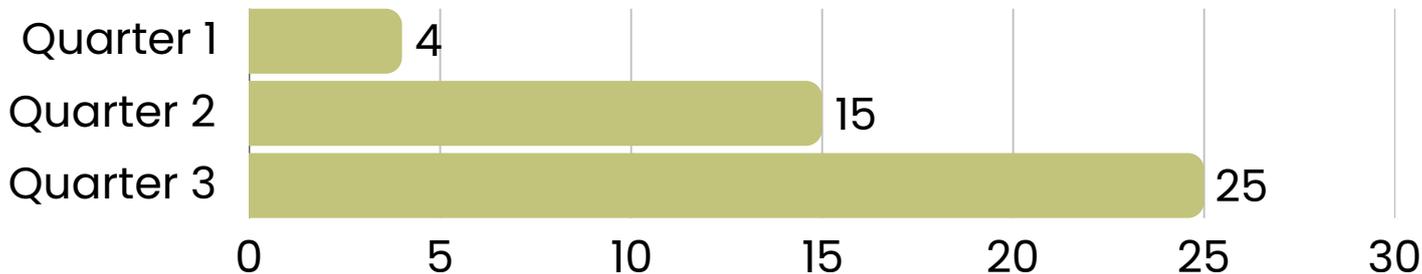


### Reasons complaints were not accepted



## Closed as fast fix

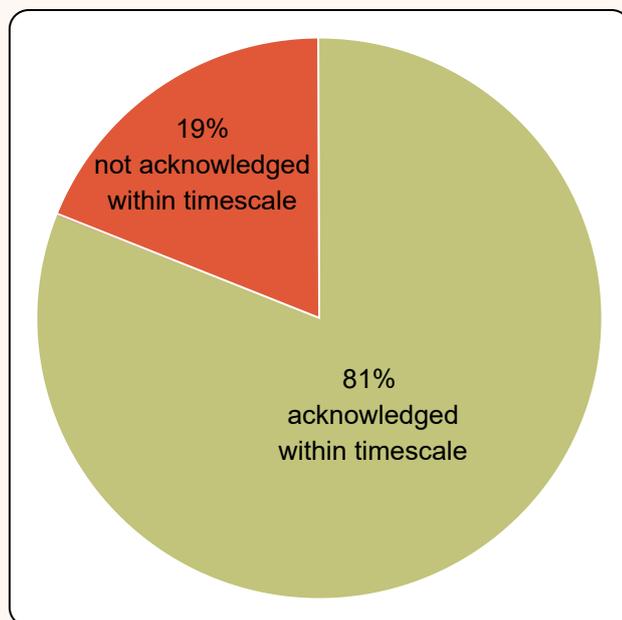
Where your complaint is resolved to your satisfaction and you do not wish to continue with the formal investigation, the complaint will be closed as a fast fix.



**327 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.



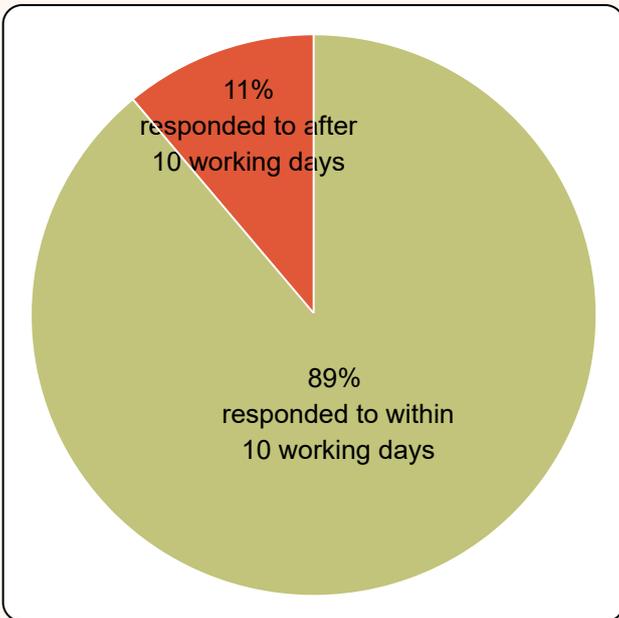
We acknowledged **81%** of your stage 1 complaints within timescales compared to **35%** in Quarter 2.

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.

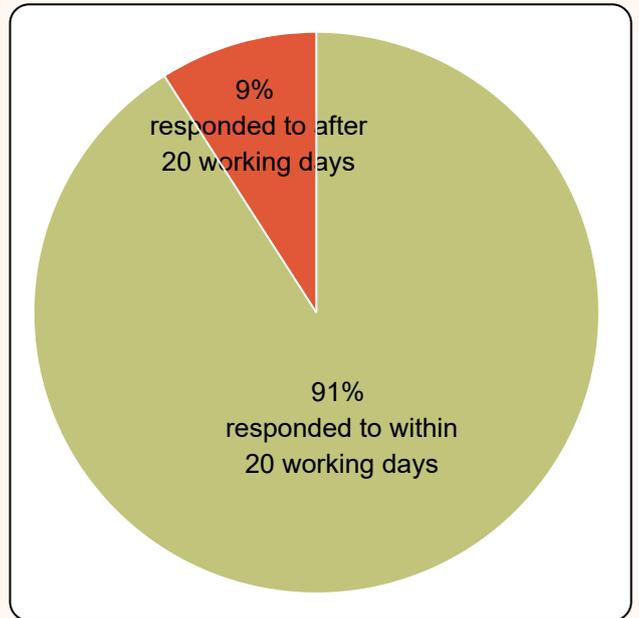
**261 stage 1 complaints  
were not extended**

### Not extended stage 1 response



**66 stage 1 complaints  
were extended**

### Extended stage 1 response



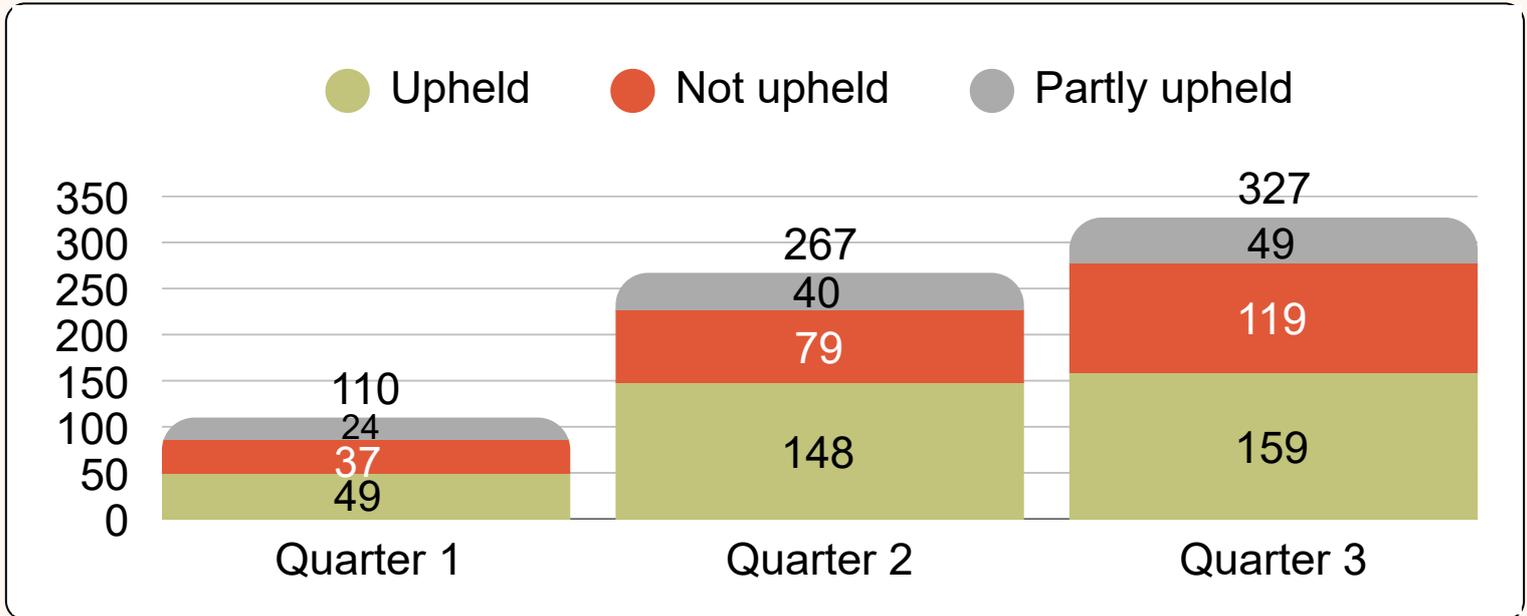
**Average time to respond to stage 1 complaints**

**6 Working Days**

The improvement of both acknowledgement and response times will be a combination of improved recording of your acknowledgements being sent along with the Housing Resolution Officers no longer having a back log and being able to focus fully on new complaints received.

**159 (49%) stage 1 complaints were upheld**

## Outcomes of accepted and closed stage 1 complaints



**64%** of stage 1 complaints were either partly upheld or upheld , compared to **70%** in quarter 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.

**19**

**Stage 1  
complaints  
were offered  
compensation**



**£2279**

**Total  
compensation  
was awarded**



## Case Study

The resident moved all belongings out of the bedroom for a ceiling repair appointment, which was cancelled without notice. As a result, the resident who has multiple health conditions was sleeping on their sofa.

When they chased the issue, they were told the earliest available appointment would be 6 weeks later, causing further inconvenience.

The Housing Resolutions Officer apologised for the cancelled appointment and awarded compensation for the inconvenience, including having to sleep on the sofa for a week.

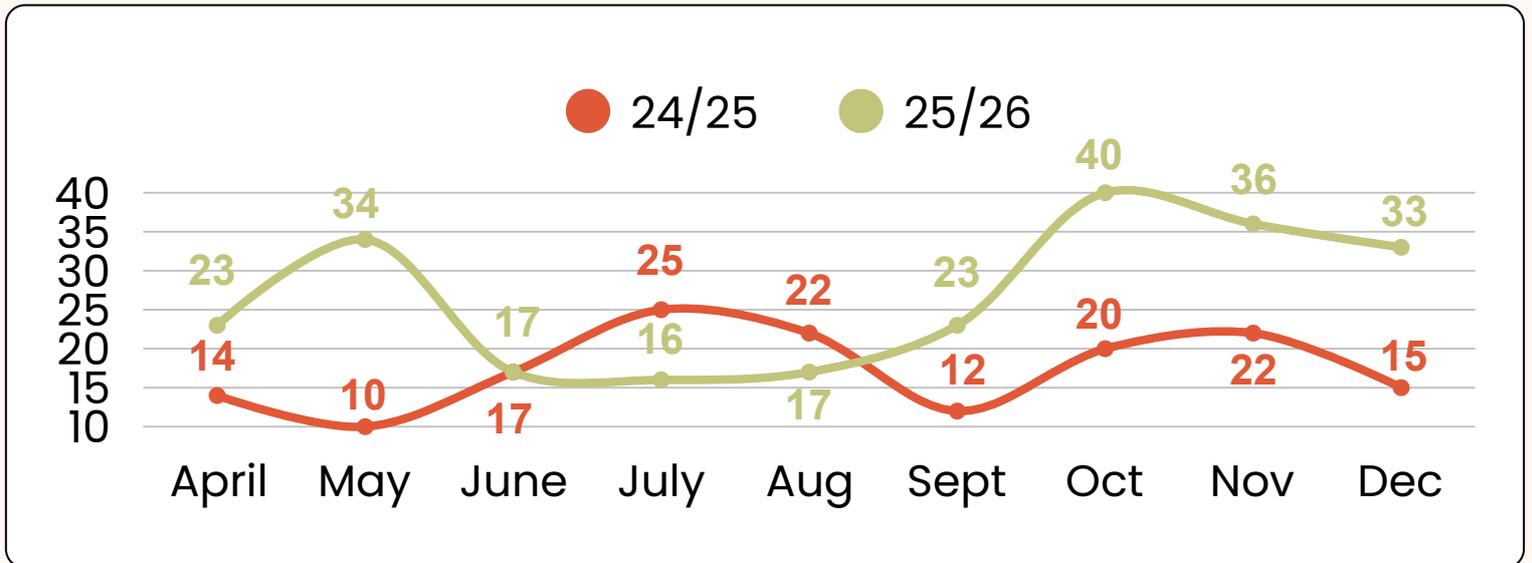
The officer liaised with the repairs team to prioritise and complete the repairs, and kept the resident fully informed throughout the process.

## 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.

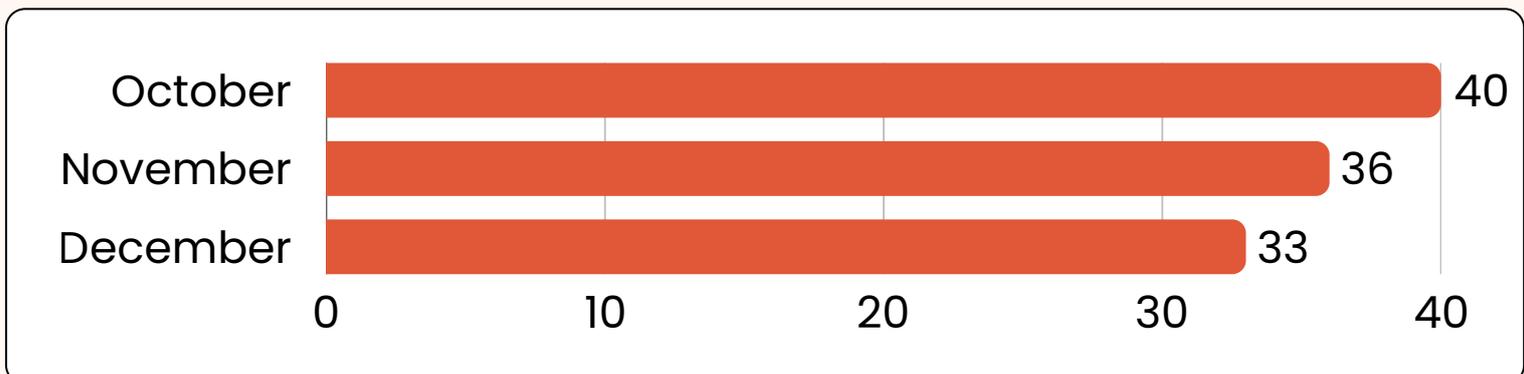
### Stage 2 complaints received so far this year compared to last year



We are looking to reduce the number of complaints that are escalated to stage 2 through continuing learning and improving from our stage 1 responses.

**109 Stage 2 complaints were received in quarter 3**

### Stage 2 complaints received



*\*The following information relates to closed stage 2 complaints that were received in Quarter 3. 16 stage 2 complaints received in Quarter 3 are still open.*

**1 stage 2 complaint was not accepted due to alternative process**

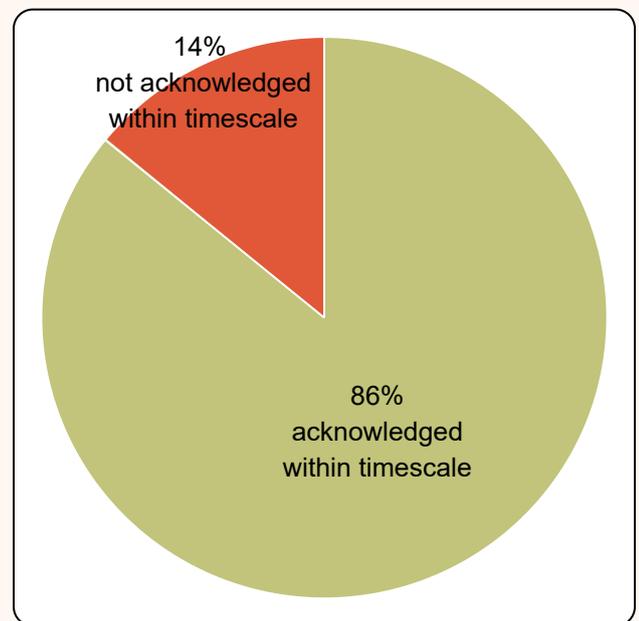
**92 Stage 2 complaints were accepted and closed**

**1 fast fix closure**

**91 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.



**86%** of stage 2 complaints received in Quarter 3 were acknowledged within timescales compared to **27%** in Quarter 2.

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.

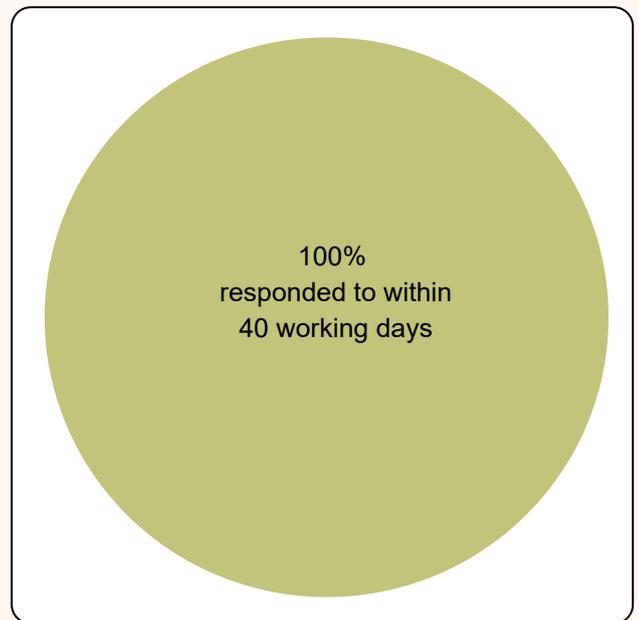
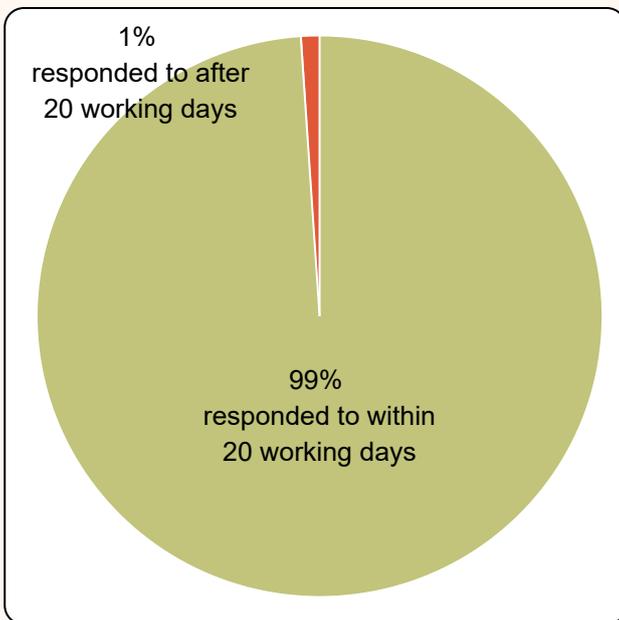
Where complaints were not formally acknowledged, the working days to complete has been calculated from the date we accepted/received the complaint.

**78 stage 2 complaints were not extended**

**13 stage 2 complaints were extended**

### Not extended stage 2 response

### Extended stage 2 response

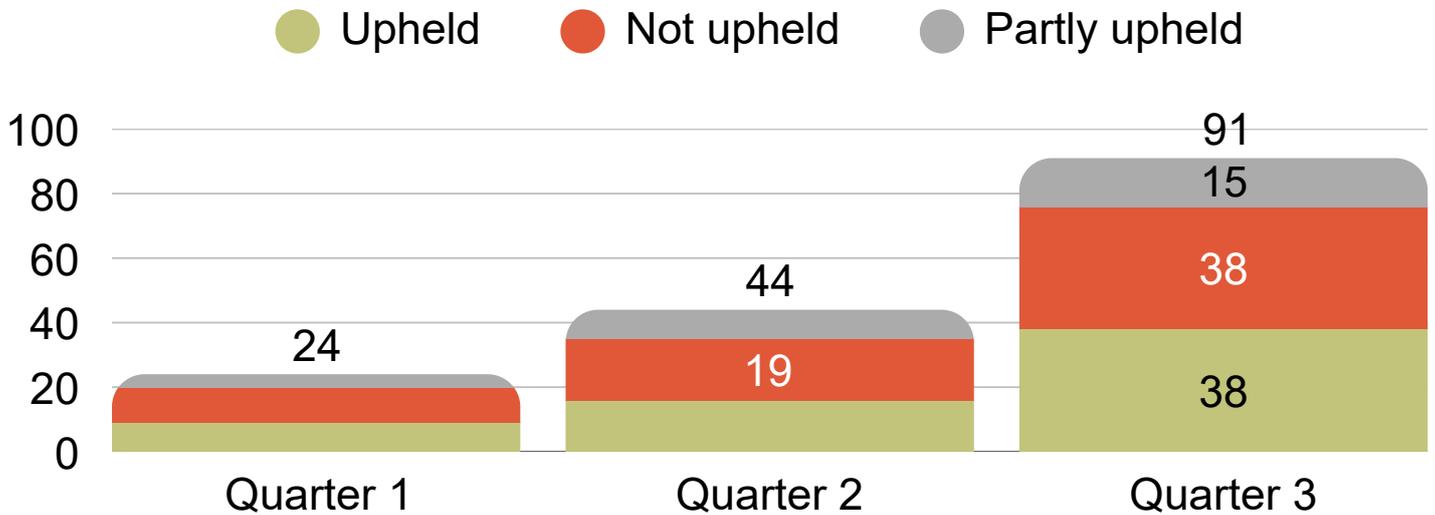


**Average time to respond to stage 2 complaints**

**12 Working Days**

**38 (42%) stage 2 complaints were upheld**

### Outcomes of accepted and closed stage 2 complaints



**58%** of stage 2 complaints were partly upheld or upheld, which is similar to **56%** in Quarter 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.

**5**

**Stage 2  
complaints  
were offered  
compensation**



**£1150**

**Total  
compensation  
was awarded**



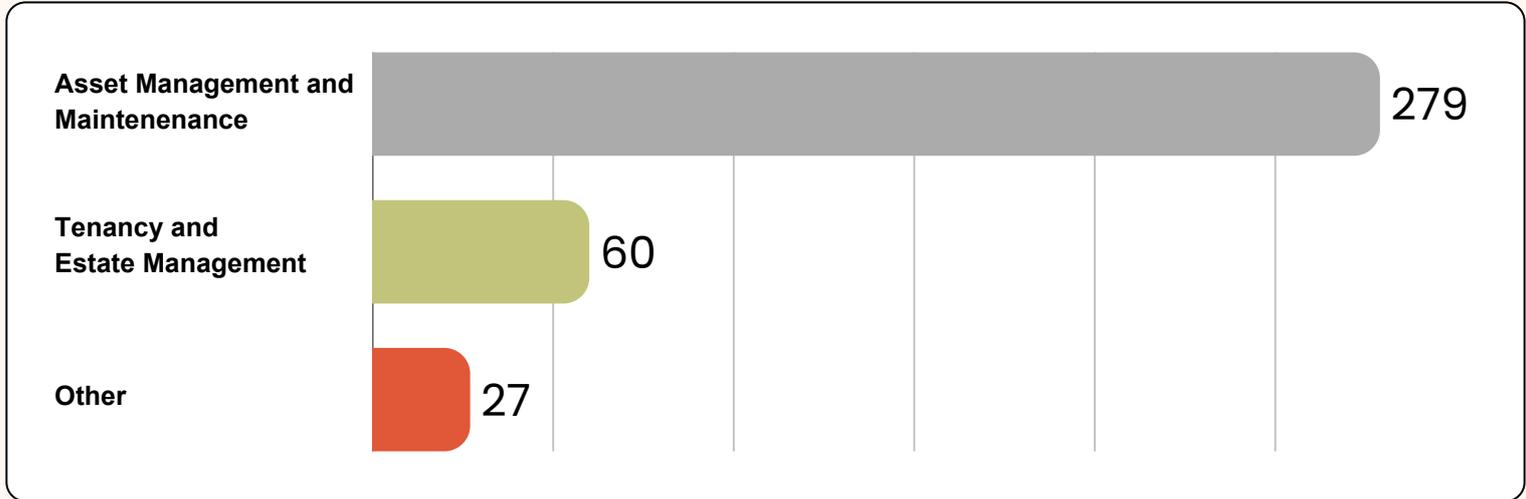
## Case Study

A complaint was made regarding the resident's shower and water flooding the bathroom when used, causing the family to have falls and also affecting the tenant's physical and mental health. The bathroom flooring required renewing and the shower required new doors installing. The Housing Resolutions team's investigation found that the replacement shower doors had gone missing, causing a potential 5-6 week waiting time. However, the team worked with repairs, who located some shower doors and then scheduled the work to be completed, as well as providing the tenant dates for the flooring. Compensation was awarded for the length of time the repair had taken.

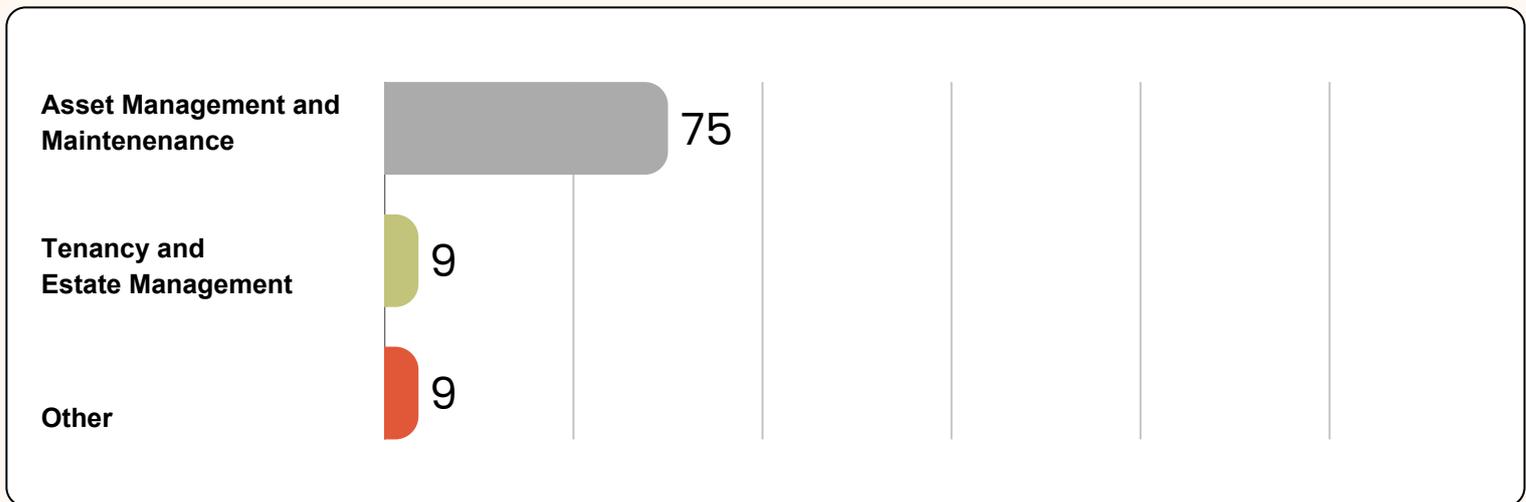
### 3. Complaints by service area

Breakdown of complaints progressed for formal investigation and closed.

#### Stage 1 complaints



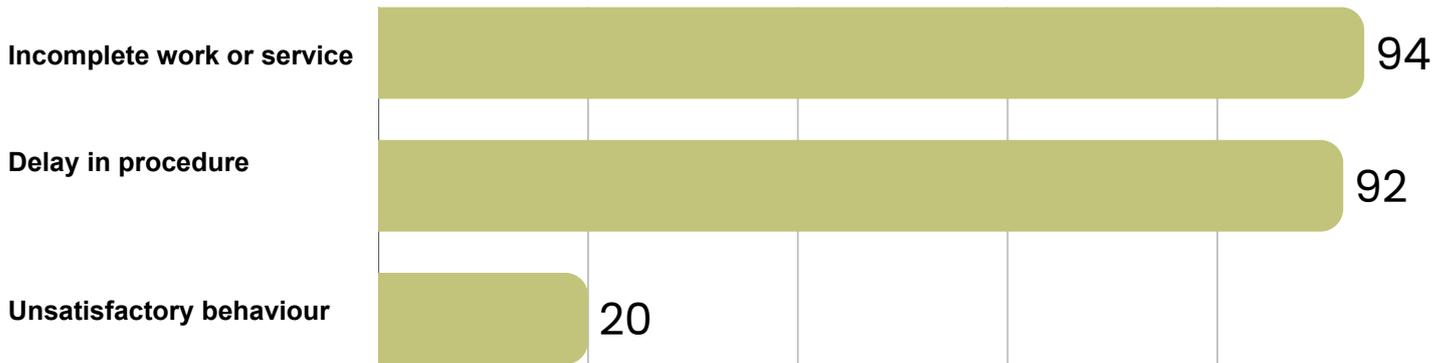
#### Stage 2 complaints



## 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.

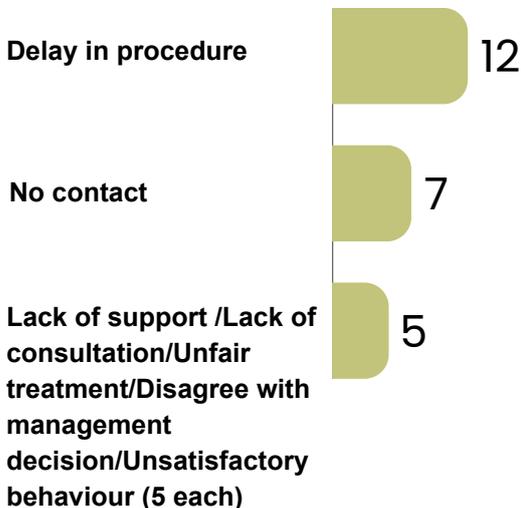
### Top 3 Reasons for stage 1 complaints



## 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.

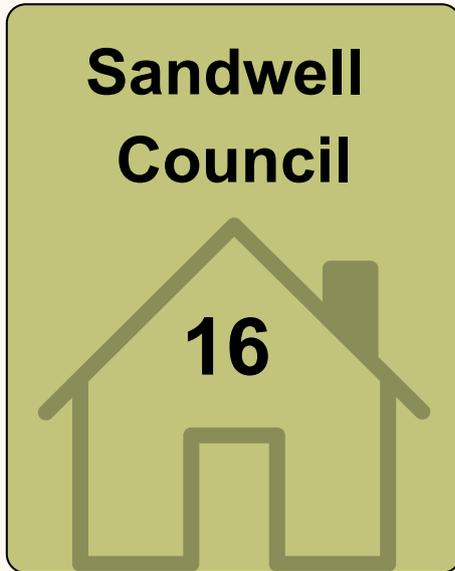
### Top 3 reasons for stage 1 complaints



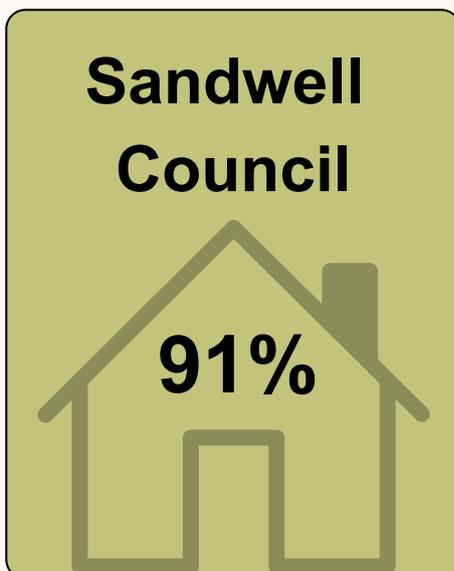
## 4. How are we doing?

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

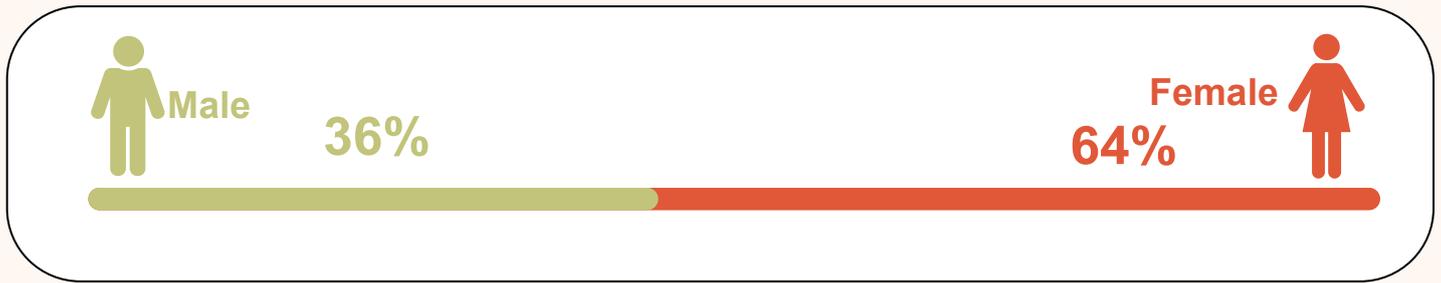


### Stage 1 and 2 complaints responded to within Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timeframes



## 5. Stage 1 demographics

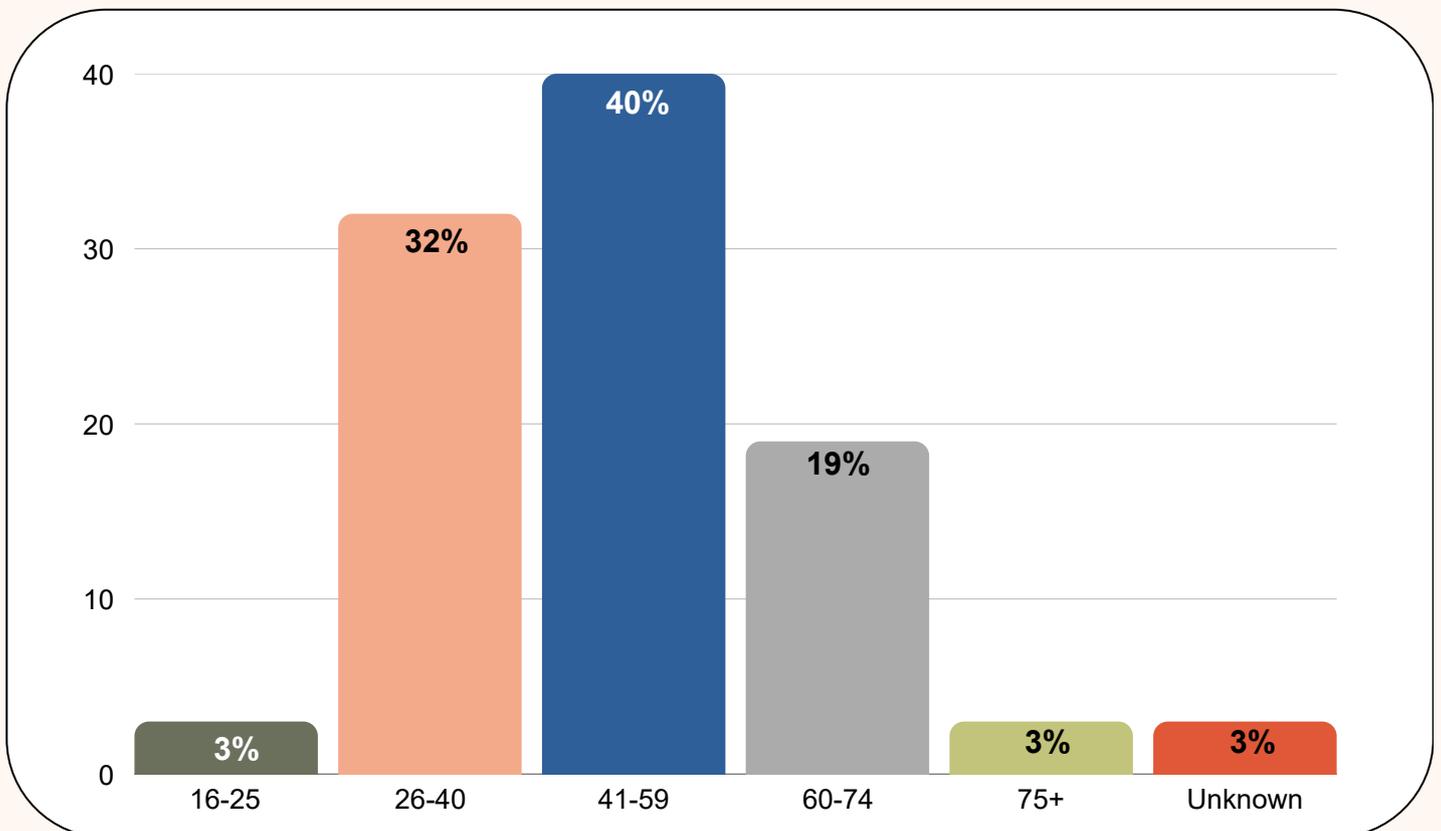
### Gender



### Ethnicity

White British	55%	Mixed White and Asian	2%
Refused	15%	Mixed Other	2%
Black or Black British Caribbean	8%	Asian or Asian British Pakistani	1%
Asian or Asian British Indian	5%	White Irish	1%
Mixed White and Black Caribbean	4%	Black or Black British Other	1%
White Other	4%	Asian or Asian British Other	1%
Black or Black British African	2%	Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi	1%

### Age



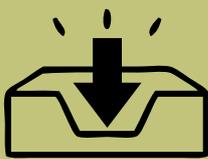
## 6. Housing Ombudsman cases

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.



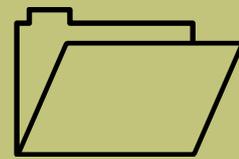
1

case were  
received



7

case were  
completed



42

case are  
still open

*\*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 7 **maladministration determinations** were received for closed cases.

1	Maladministration for complaint handling
3	Maladministration for handling of report of damp and mould
2	Maladministration for handling of anti-social behaviour
1	Maladministration for handling of report that bathroom is unsafe

### Service Failure

A total of 3 **service failure determination** received for closed cases.

2	Service failure for handling of complaint
1	Service failure for handling of anti-social behaviour

### Reasonable redress

There were no **reasonable redress determinations** received for closed cases.

## Actions

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

A total of **17 actions** were given, including **7 compensation awards** for closed cases.

<b>1</b>	<b>Damp and mould inspections</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Staff training</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Apologies</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Provide schedule of works</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Carry out agreed repairs</b>

**Total Compensation**

**£ 1950**

## 7. 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
Text messages will not be sent to you in error for appointments with contractors.	You will not be given incorrect information and will not lose time waiting for appointments.	Details of complaints and a reduction in failed appointments.
Our Out of Hours teams will now record your contact on the system rather than on paper records.	The information that you provide to our out of hours team will be recorded accurately and will be available to other teams.	Electronic records
If you have a leak the ceiling will always be checked to ensure it is safe and issues will be rectified promptly.	Prevention of health and safety issues in your property.	Quality checks of completed repairs
We will let you know if we cancel a repairs appointment.	This will prevent you waiting in for cancelled appointments.	Quality checks of completed repairs

To keep a track of our progress on the improvements that have been identified visit <https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/housing/housing-complaints-improvements>

## 8. 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 or 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](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/housingsurvey)**