

# Housing Complaints



## Quarter 4 Report

January 2026 - March 2026

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

# 1. Introduction

The Housing Resolution Team have continued to work on improving acknowledgement and response times to your complaints, making improvements each quarter.

From March, the team have taken on the responsibility of investigating and responding to your tenancy management complaints.

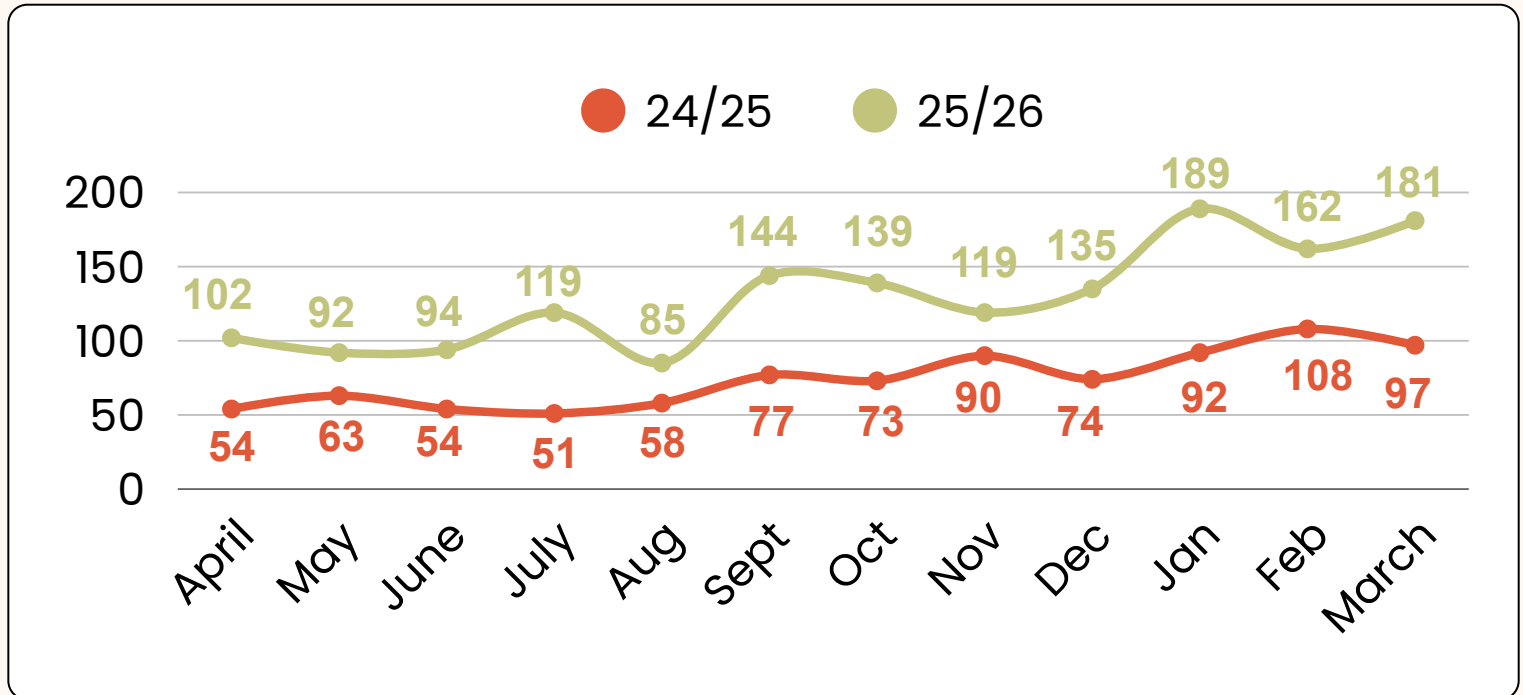
The number of complaint responses that included an award of compensation has increased, this is a result of the compensation policy being used more consistently.

## 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.

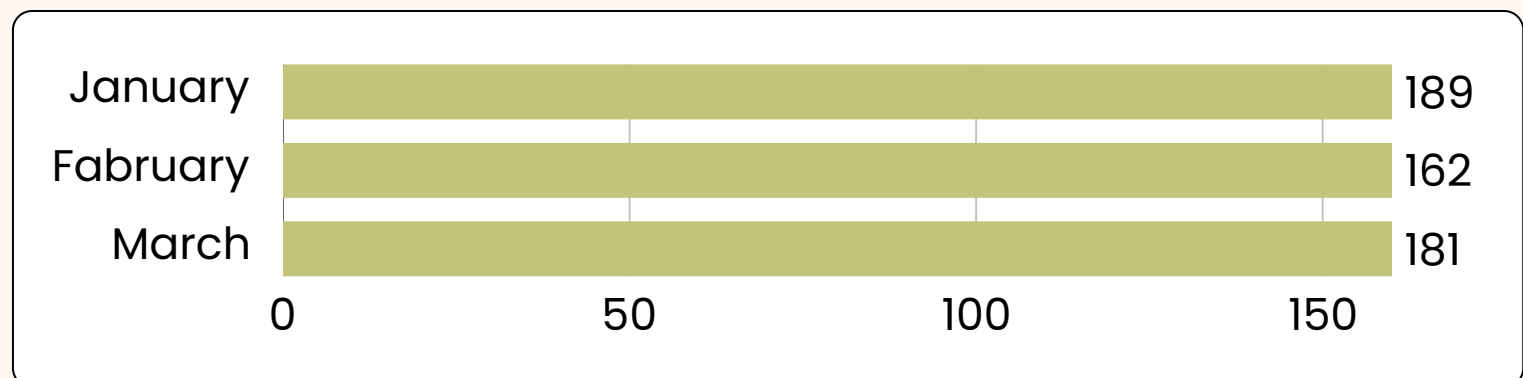
### Stage 1 complaints received each month compared to last year



A higher number of complaints 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.

**532 Stage 1 complaints were received in quarter 4**

### Stage 1 complaints received

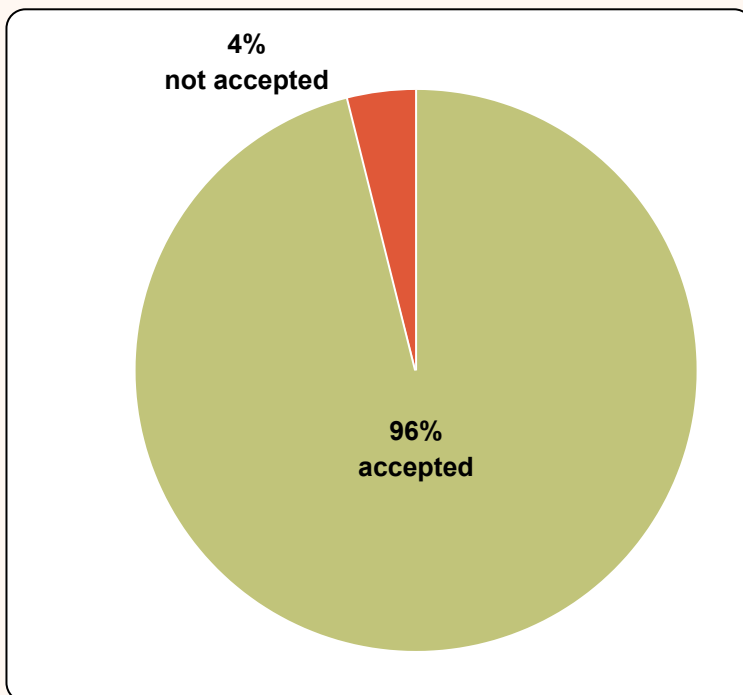


\*The following information relates to closed stage 1 complaints that were received in Quarter 4. 19 stage 1 complaints received in Quarter 4 are still open.

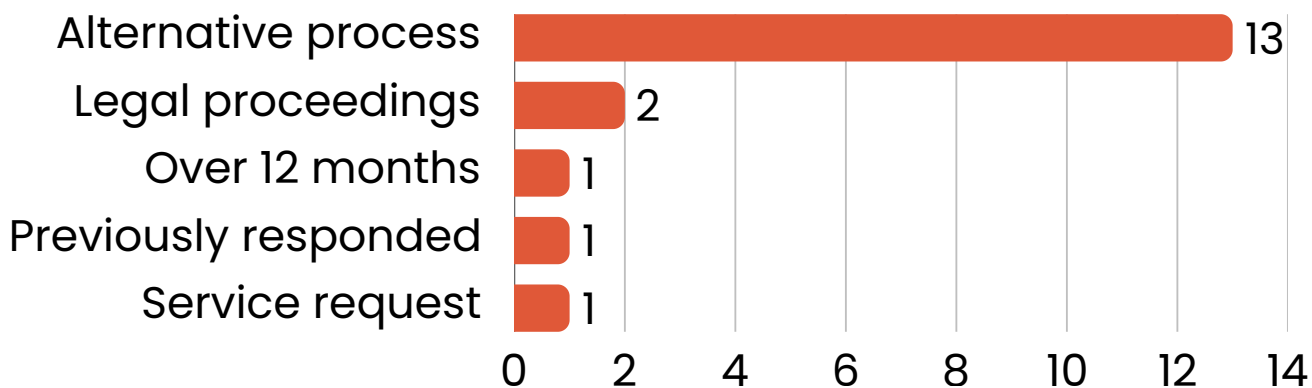
## 513 Stage 1 complaints were closed

### 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.

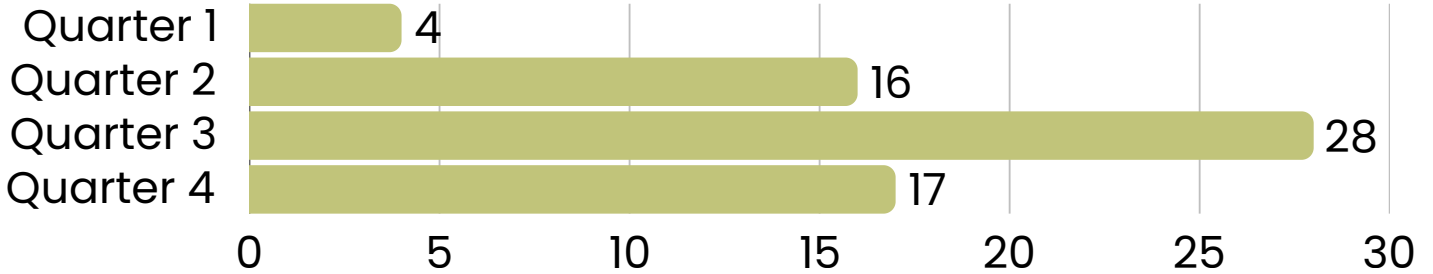


### Reasons complaints were not accepted



## Closed as fast fix

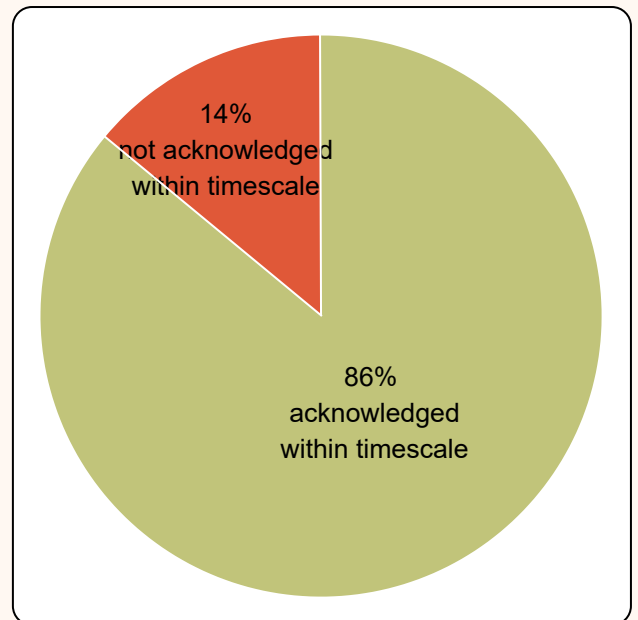
Where your complaint is resolved to your satisfaction and you do not wish to continue with the formal investigation, the complaint will be closed as a fast fix.



**478 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.



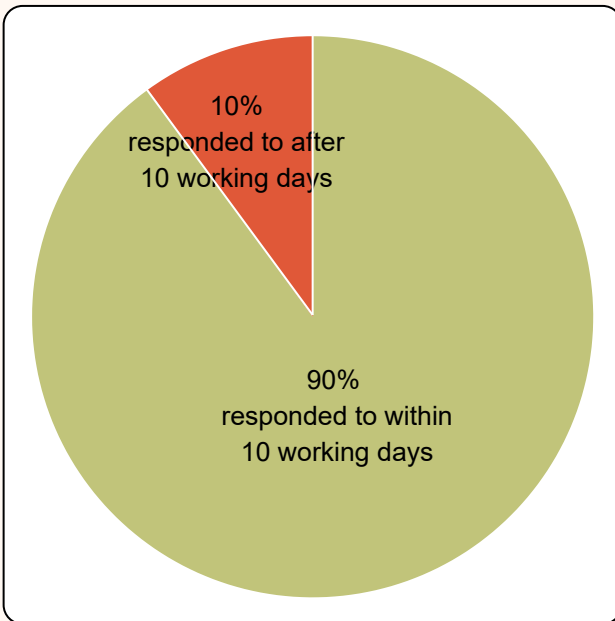
**86%** of stage 1 complaints were acknowledged within timescales, compared to **78%** in quarter 3.

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.

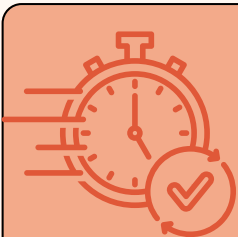
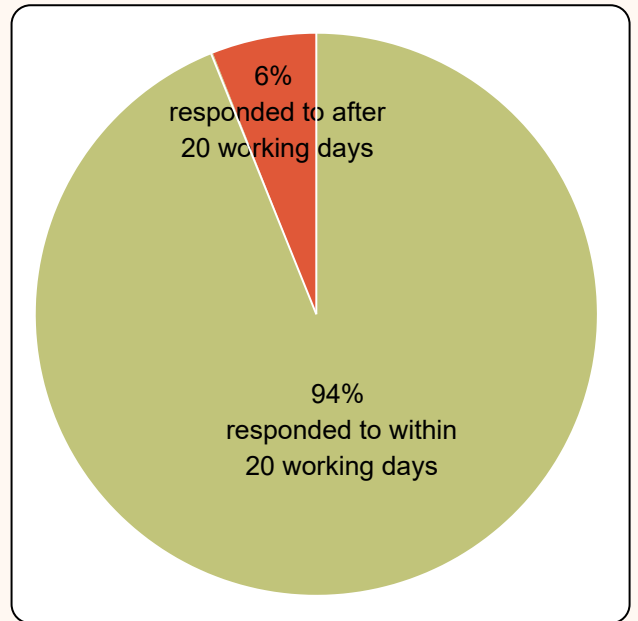
**380 stage 1 complaints  
were not extended**

### Not extended stage 1 response



**98 stage 1 complaints  
were extended**

### Extended stage 1 response



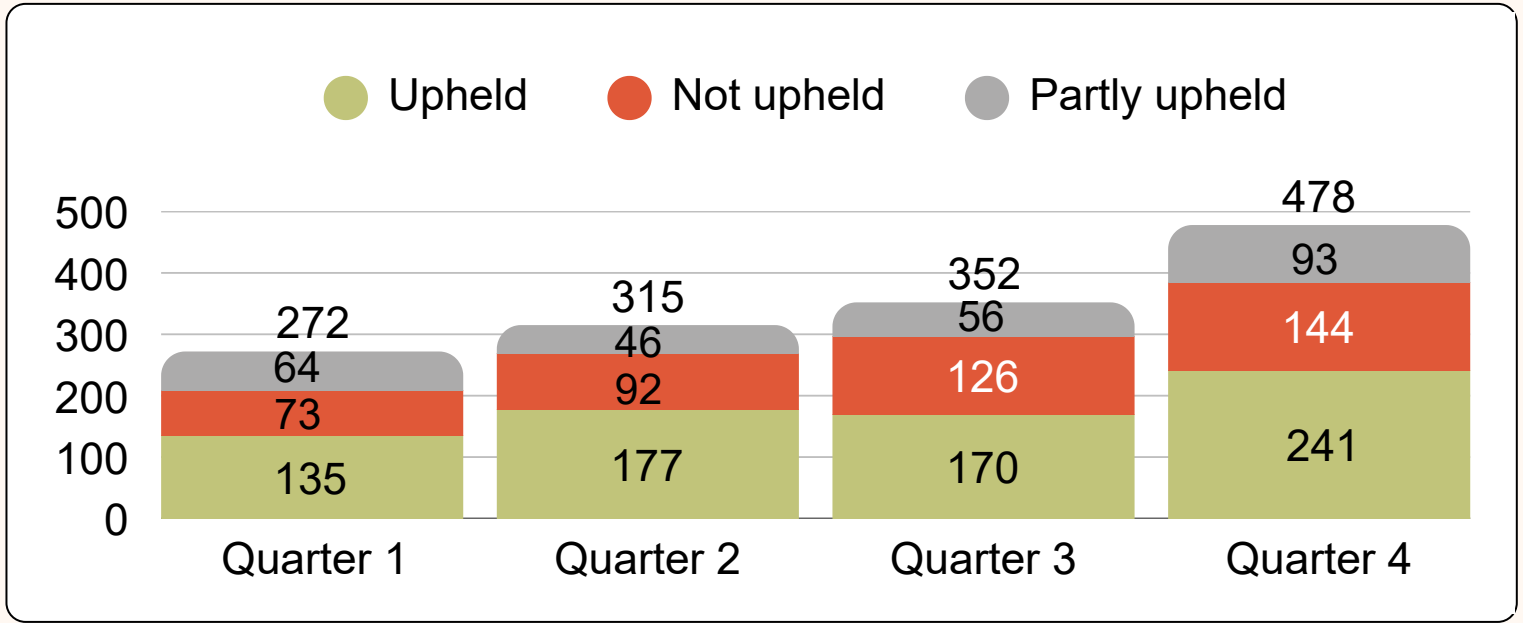
**Average time to respond to stage 1 complaints**

**7 Working Days**

**241 (51%) stage 1 complaints were upheld**

## Outcomes of accepted and closed stage 1 complaints

Below are the figures for outcomes of stage 1 complaints as at the end of quarter 4.  
*Previous quarters figures will change as complaints are responded to.*



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.

**76**

**Stage 1  
complaints  
were offered  
compensation**



**£9910.36**

**Total  
compensation  
was awarded**



## Case Study

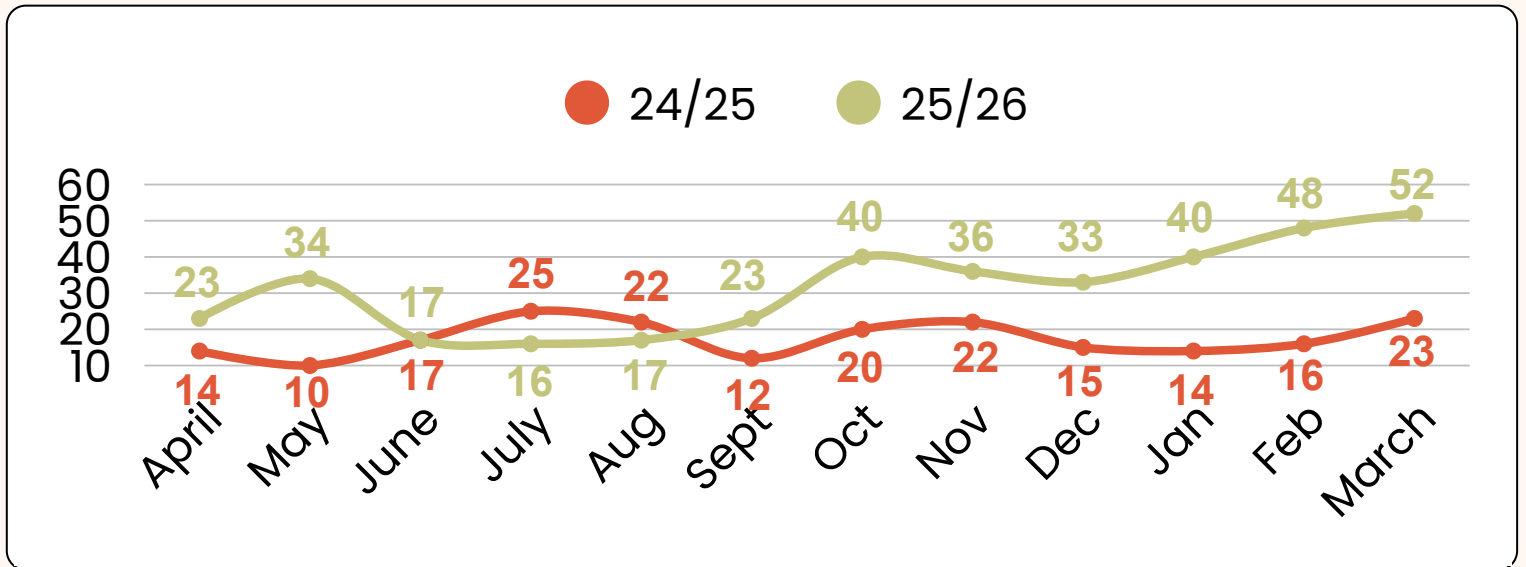
A resident reported that she had a large number of outstanding repairs, including a hole in her ceiling which had been outstanding for a substantial amount of time. Our investigation found that the length of time she had been waiting for this repair was a service failure, and an appointment was quickly made for an inspector to attend to determine what work needed to be completed, as well as inspect the rest of the repairs at the property. In recognition of the service failure, and the distress and inconvenience caused, we awarded £175 in compensation.

## 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.

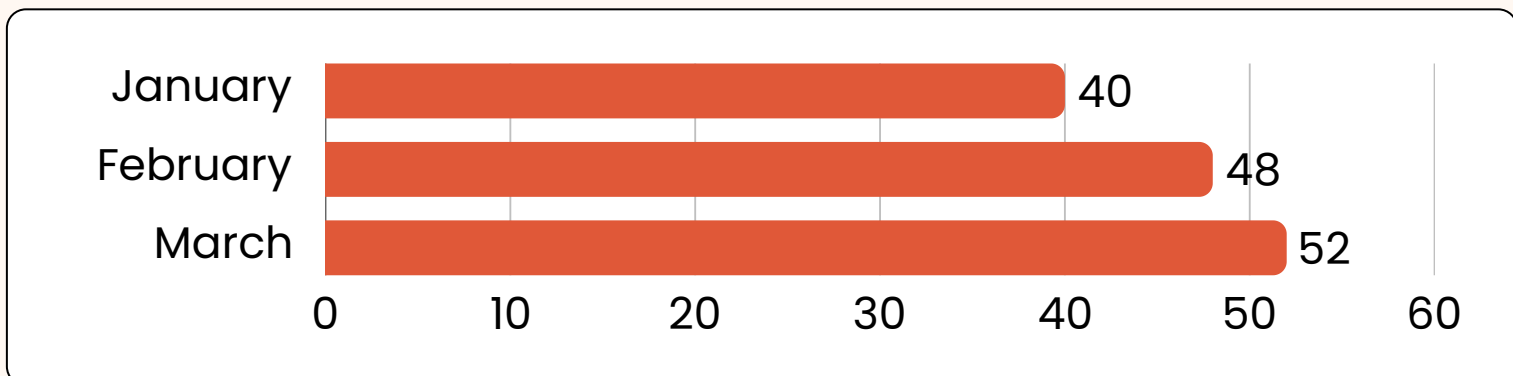
### Stage 2 complaints received so far this year compared to last year



There is ongoing work to identify the reasons for complaints escalating to stage 2, we look to reduce the number escalated through continued learning and improving our stage 1 investigation and responses.

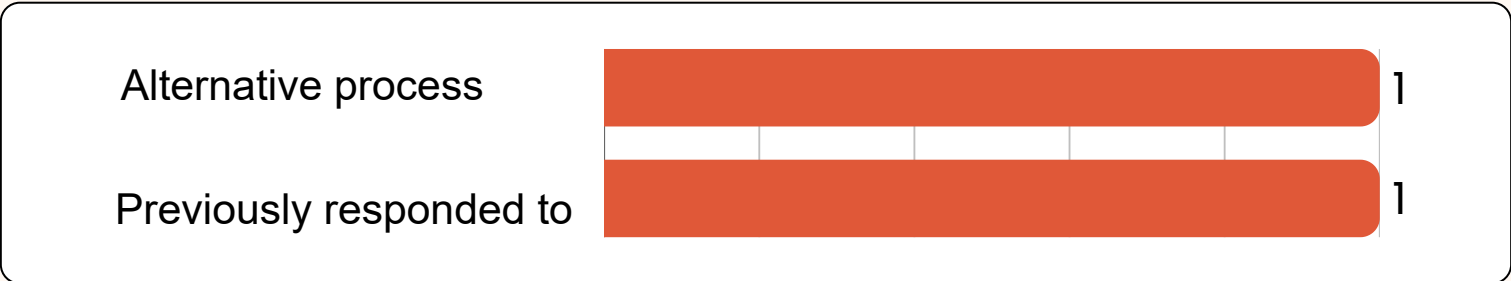
**140 Stage 2 complaints were received in quarter 4**

### Stage 2 complaints received



\*The following information relates to closed stage 2 complaints that were received in Quarter 4. 20 stage 2 complaints received in Quarter 4 are still open.

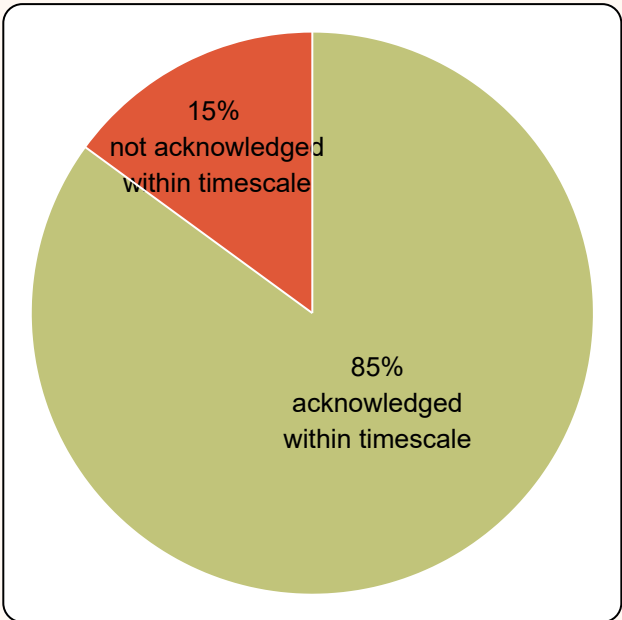
### 2 stage 2 complaint were not accepted



### 118 Stage 2 complaints 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.



85% of stage 2 complaints were acknowledged within timescales, compared to 84% in quarter 3.

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.

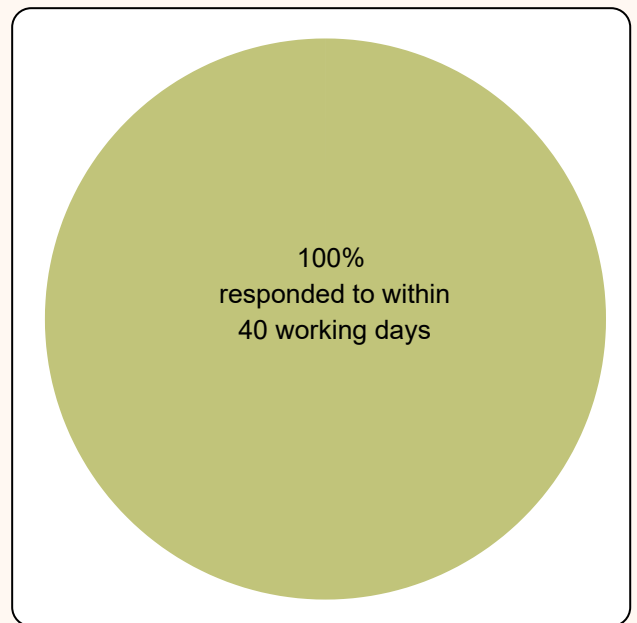
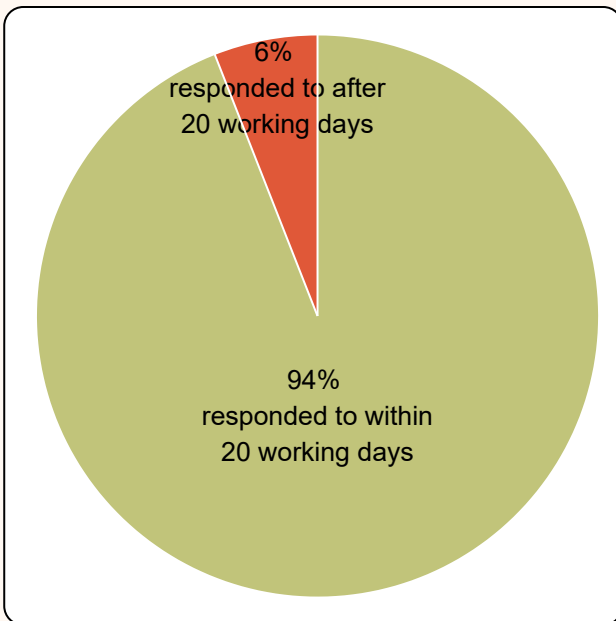
Where complaints were not formally acknowledged, the working days to complete has been calculated from the date we accepted/received the complaint.

**79 stage 2 complaints were not extended**

**39 stage 2 complaints were extended**

### Not extended stage 2 response

### Extended stage 2 response



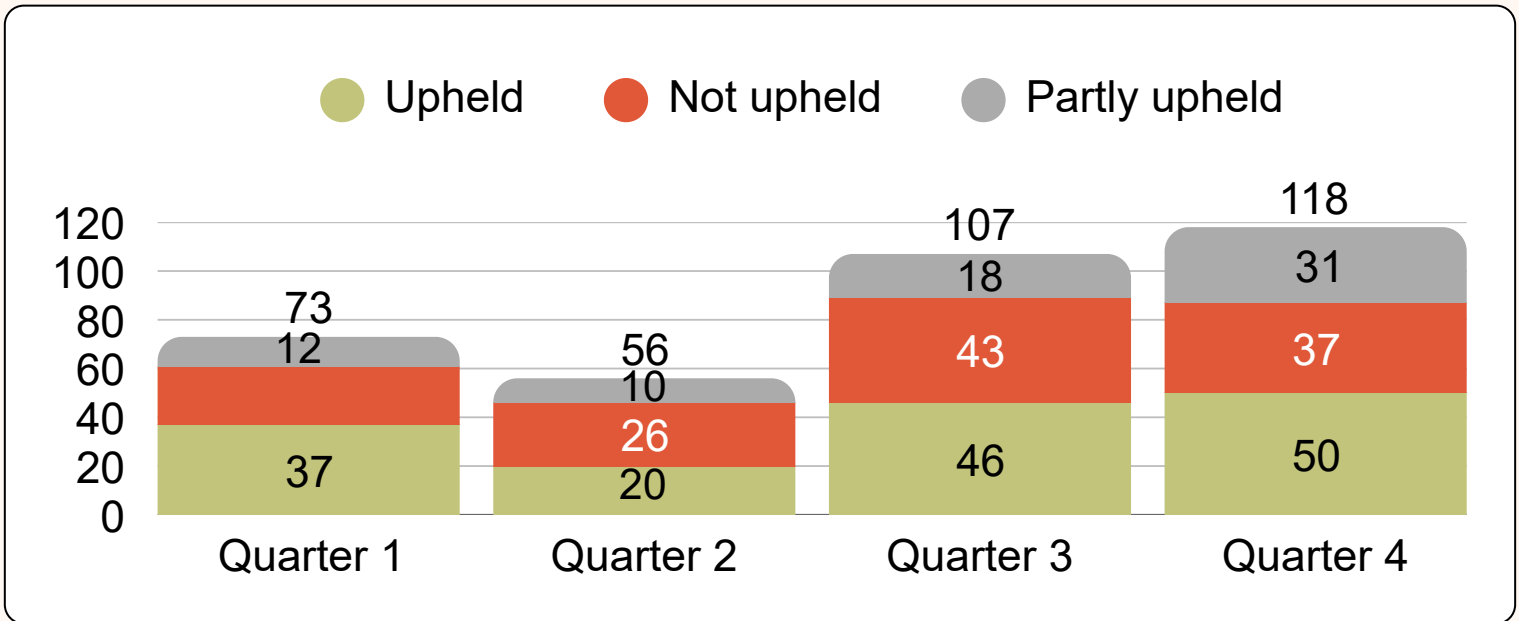
**Average time to respond to stage 2 complaints**

**13 Working Days**

**50 (42%) stage 2 complaints were upheld**

## Outcomes of accepted and closed stage 2 complaints

Below are the figures for outcomes of stage 2 complaints as at the end of quarter 4.  
*Previous quarters figures will change as complaints are responded to.*



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.

**42**

**Stage 2  
complaints  
were offered  
compensation**



**£6050**

**Total  
compensation  
was awarded**



## Case Study

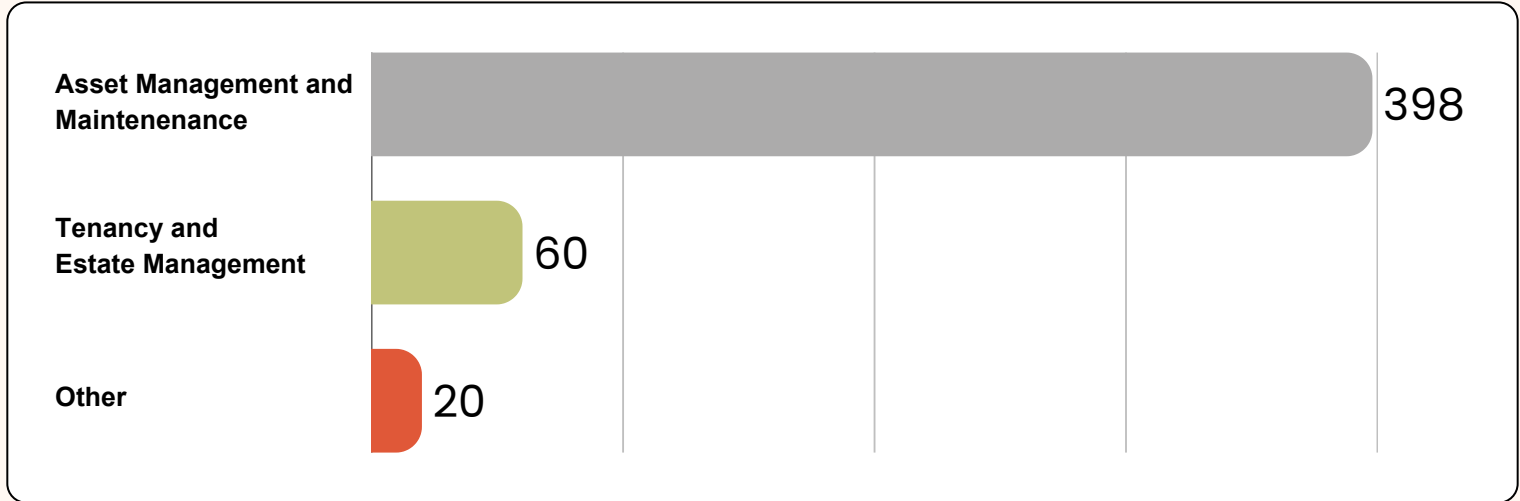
A resident reported an ongoing leak in her garage and later contacted us urgently after discovering mushrooms growing in the affected area. She was particularly worried due to her health conditions and the fact that she parks her car in the garage daily.

Due to the medical concerns we picked up the case immediately, reassured the tenant by phone, and arranged for an emergency visit to inspect the mushrooms and carry out a fungi treatment. This was completed within 24 hours. We followed up with the tenant two days later to ensure the work had been done and that she felt safe and supported. She expressed how pleased she was with the way the matter was handled and later sent written feedback thanking us for our help, empathy, clear communication, and for reducing her stress during the process. She also praised the wider team for their support.

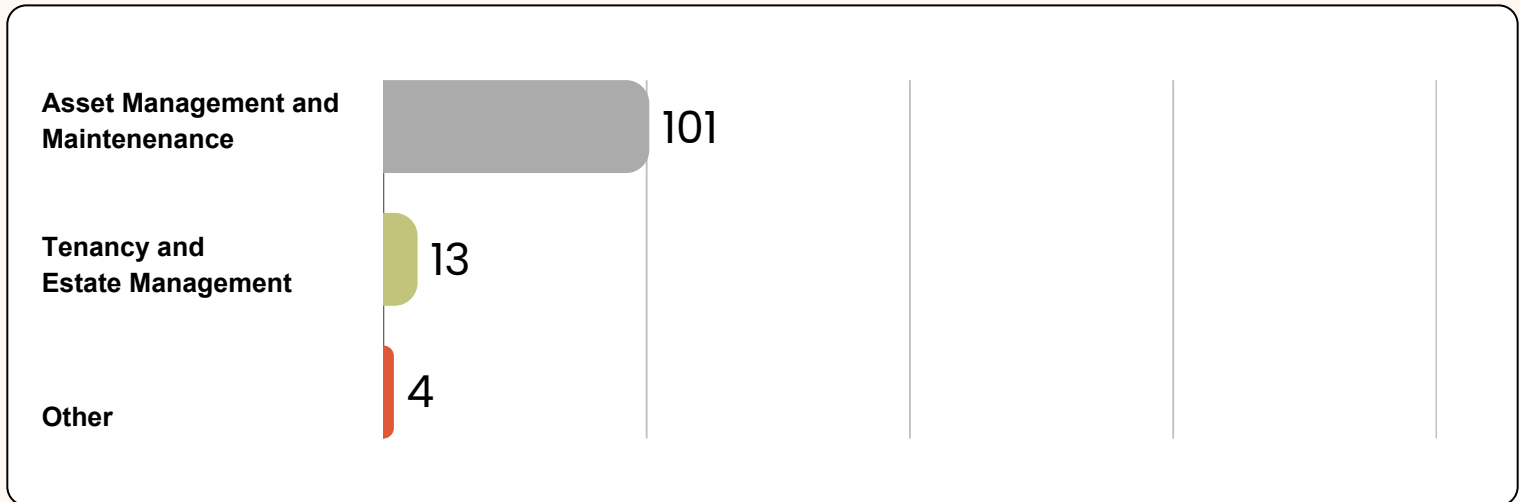
### 3. Complaints by service area

Breakdown of complaints progressed for formal investigation and closed.

#### Stage 1 complaints



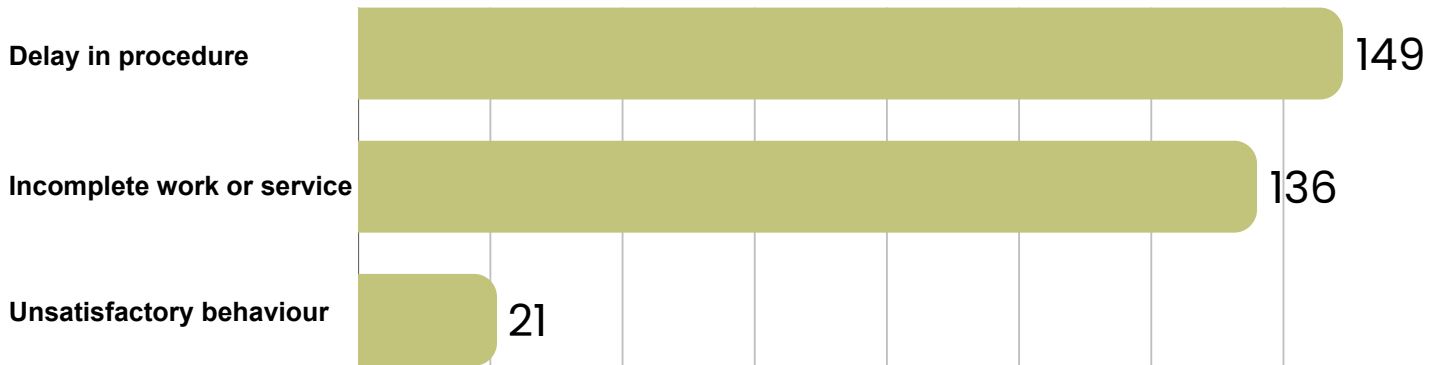
#### Stage 2 complaints



## 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.

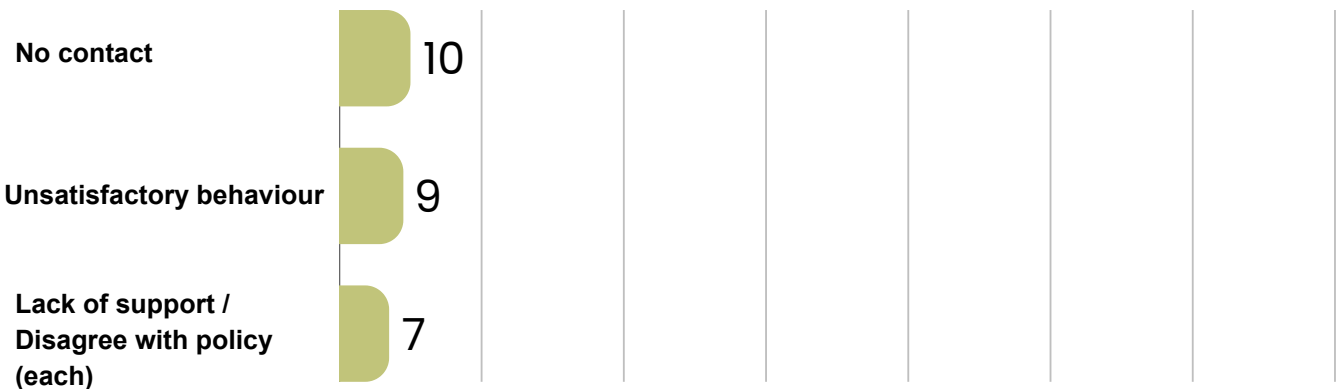
### Top 3 Reasons for stage 1 complaints



## 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.

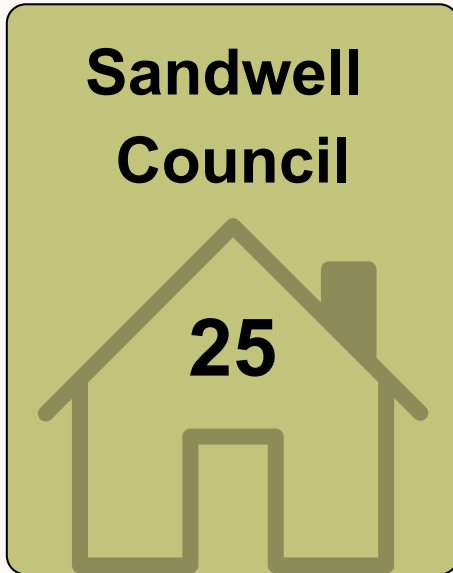
### Top 3 reasons for stage 1 complaints



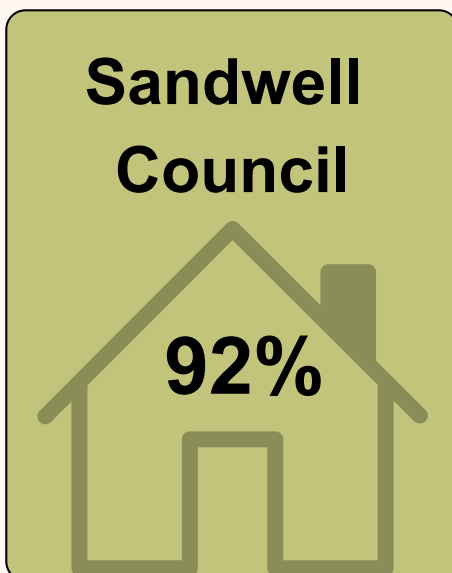
## 4. How are we doing?

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

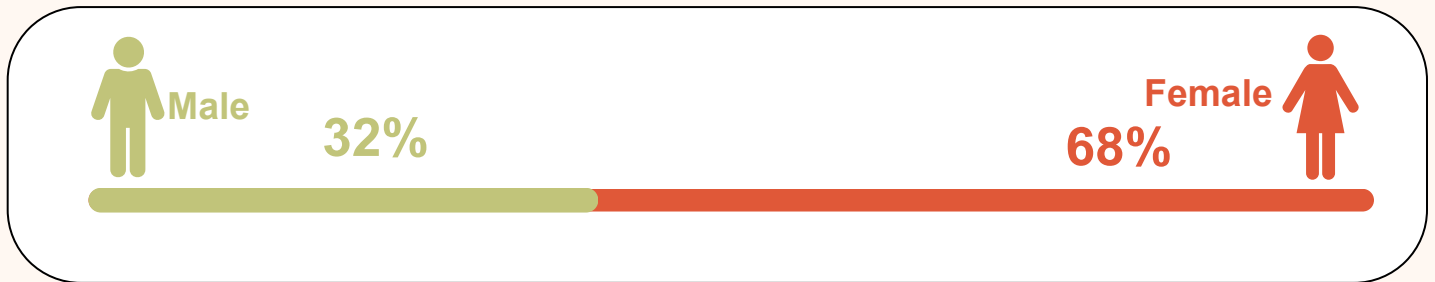


### Stage 1 and 2 complaints responded to within Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timeframes



## 5. Stage 1 demographics

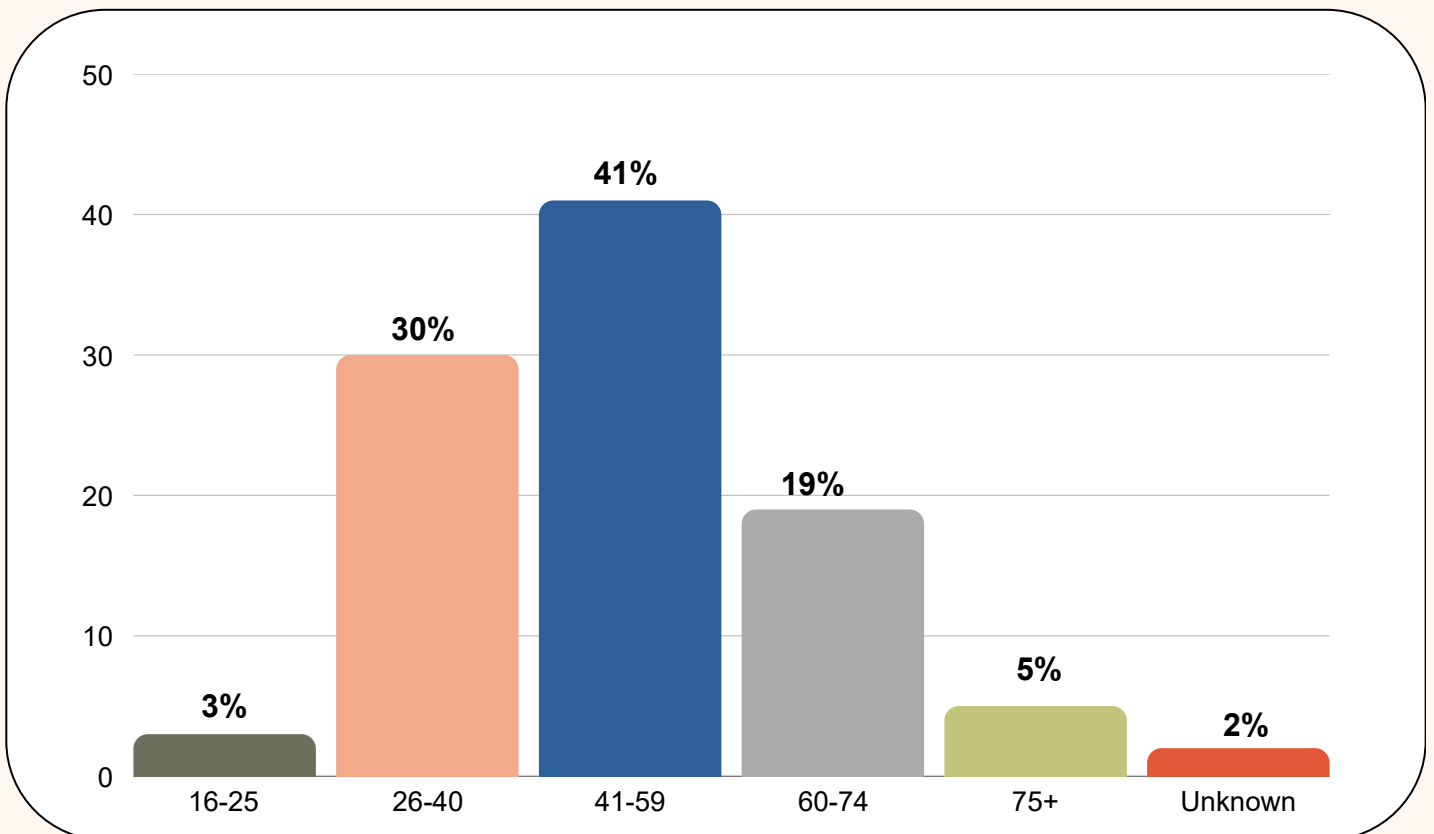
### Gender



### Ethnicity

|                                  |     |                                    |    |
|----------------------------------|-----|------------------------------------|----|
| White British                    | 56% | Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi | 1% |
| Refused                          | 13% | Mixed White and Black Caribbean    | 1% |
| Black or Black British Caribbean | 10% | Asian or Asian British Pakistani   | 1% |
| Asian or Asian British Indian    | 4%  | White Irish                        | 1% |
| Black or Black British African   | 4%  | Mixed White and Asian              | 1% |
| White Other                      | 4%  | Mixed Other                        | 1% |
| Asian or Asian British Other     | 2%  | Chinese or Ethnic Group Other      | 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.



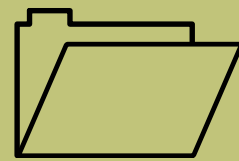
1

case were  
received



8

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 5 **maladministration determinations** were received for closed cases.

1

Maladministration for complaint handling

1

Maladministration for handling of report of a leak

3

Maladministration for handling of reports of damp and mould

### Service Failure

A total of 4 **service failure determination** received for closed cases.

1

Service failure for staff conduct

1

Service failure for handling of anti-social behaviour

1

Service failure for handling of garden clearance

1

Service failure for handling of repairs

### 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 **13 actions** were given, including 6 **compensation awards** for closed cases.

**1**

**Damp and mould inspections**

**5**

**Apologies**

**1**

**Carry out inspection / survey**

**Total Compensation**

**£**

**2320**

## 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       |
|--|--|---|
| We will ensure the Housing Resolutions Team have access to historical non-housing complaints   | This will ensure all information on previous complaints are available to the team and ensure all relevant information is considered when investigating your complaints | All team members will have access           |
| We will work with all teams across the council to ensure compliance with Ombudsman Guidance  | This will ensure quality and compliant responses as standard across all teams  | Ombudsman determinations, Complaint Reports |
| We will gather feedback from residents who have made complaints on how effective they feel our resolutions and responses to complaints are | This will ensure that residents voices are heard, and encourage continuous learning and improvement  | Complaint Panels, Survey scores.            |

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)**