

Annual Complaints & Service Improvement Report 2024/25

Introduction

We want to make it easy to complain to Housing Solutions if things go wrong, let you know how we'll respond if you make a complaint, tell you how we're performing when it comes to complaints and finally what we're doing to improve if you make a complaint to Housing Solutions.

This report looks at how we performed when it comes to complaints from April 2024 to March 2025 (2024/25). It looks at the numbers and types of complaints we received, how quickly we resolved them, how many complaints were escalated by residents to stage 2 of our complaints process and our performance generally in dealing with complaints compared to last year.

This report is one of the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman Complaint-Handling Code [The Complaint Handling Code | Housing Ombudsman Service](#) (April 2024). The Code says that this report should be reviewed by the Housing Solutions Board every year and that there should be a 'Member Responsible for Complaints' on the Board who takes lead responsibility for complaints, helping the Board make sure we're meeting our obligations and upholding a positive complaint handling culture at Housing Solutions. Housing Solutions' Member Responsible for Complaints is Martha Desmond [Executive team and Board members - Housing Solutions Maidenhead](#)

This report was received and discussed by the Board at a Board meeting on 21 May 2025. Martha Desmond (Housing Solutions' Board Member Responsible for Complaints) commented, on behalf of the Board, that :

The Board welcomes this detailed report and acknowledges the significant progress made by the Complaints Team and the Resident Complaint Scrutiny Panel (CSP) over the past year. We are pleased to see that our commitment to the Resident Engagement Strategy 2023–2026 is being realised, with residents placed at the heart of our decision-making and service improvement processes.

We note the slight increase in Stage 1 complaints, which reflects both the successful promotion of our complaints process and the growth in our resident base following the acquisition of new homes. Importantly, the reduction in Stage 2 complaints demonstrates improved resolution at the initial stage, and the achievement of 100% compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code's target timeframes since November 2023 is a testament to the team's dedication and efficiency.

The Board is particularly encouraged by the 68% reduction in contractor-related complaints and the marked increase in satisfaction with complaint handling (97.5%) and outcomes (89.7%). These improvements are clear evidence of the positive impact of enhanced communication, robust training, and the collaborative work between staff and residents. The CSP's quarterly engagement and quality checks have been instrumental in raising standards and ensuring accountability.

We also recognise the areas where further improvement is needed. Persistent challenges with first-time fixes, increased complaints about pests in communal areas, and ongoing tenancy management issues—including overcrowding and neighbour disputes—highlight the need for continued investment in support systems and dispute resolution mechanisms. The rise in complaints regarding kitchen and bathroom repairs underlines the importance of

prioritising these upgrades and maintaining transparent communication about planned works.

The maladministration order received in September 2024 serves as a critical reminder of the need for strict adherence to our communication, follow-up, and complaint handling policies. The Board is committed to ensuring that lessons from this case are fully embedded in our processes, with a renewed focus on timely repairs, clear communication, and support for vulnerable residents.

We are encouraged by the increased participation in resident satisfaction surveys and the positive trajectory of our Tenant Satisfaction Measures, which place us in the upper quartile for the sector. The Board thanks all colleagues, residents, and panel members for their ongoing commitment to learning and improvement.

In conclusion, while we celebrate the progress made, we remain focused on continuous improvement and learning from feedback. The Board reaffirms its dedication to delivering responsive, transparent, and resident-centred services, ensuring that every complaint is viewed as an opportunity to enhance the experience of all residents.

Martha Desmond, Housing Solutions' Board Member Responsible for Complaints

This report was also reviewed by the Chair of our main resident scrutiny group, the Scrutiny & Improvement Team, Brian Rayner, who said:

As chair of Housing Solutions' core resident involvement body, we're also pleased to note fewer complaints escalated from stage 1 to stage 2 over the year. This demonstrates the effort being undertaken by Housing Solutions and the specialist complaints team in trying to resolve the complaints at first point of contact.

Whilst there were fewer complaints about communication in 2024/5 due to the efforts of the Complaints team, it is recognised as an issue where there is a clear need to do more. This issue is also frequently discussed in the wider Scrutiny and Improvement Team Meetings. In 2024/5 57% of complaints were upheld compared to 44% the following year. Whilst this shows a welcome improvement, it also demonstrates the need for continuous improvement throughout the whole organisation.

The Tenant Satisfaction Measures benchmarking exercise puts into perspective how well the Complaints team are handling the formal complaints process. In all of the 5 metrics they have outperformed the benchmark.

Chair, Brian Rayner, Housing Solutions' Scrutiny & Improvement Team

Annual Complaints & Service Improvement Report 2024/25

PROVIDING EXCELLENT SERVICES

As part of our *Resident Engagement Strategy 2023 – 2026* ([Working with Residents - Housing Solutions Maidenhead](#)), we're focused on putting residents at the heart of our decision-making and listening to what residents tell us about where we need to improve.

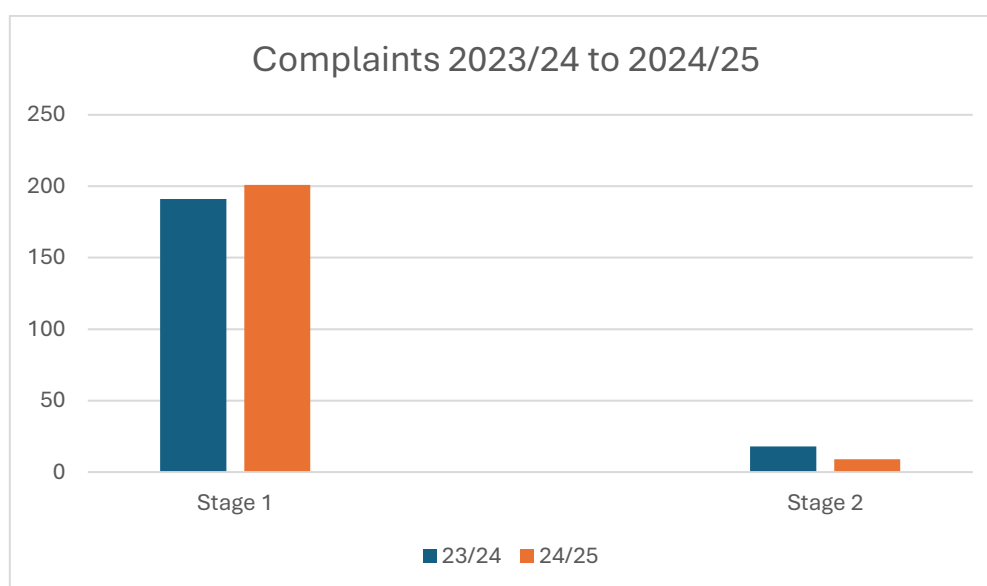
We have a resident Complaint Scrutiny Panel (CSP) who meet with our own Complaints Team every 3 months. They help make sure we respond to complaints well and raise standards for residents across all our services. They do this by carrying out quality checks on our complaint-handling and performance, looking to understand why residents might be complaining and suggesting areas they want to look at in more detail.

COMPLAINTS RECEIVED OVER 2024/25

The table and graph below shows the total number of complaints we received over the year at stage 1 and stage 2 of our complaints process.

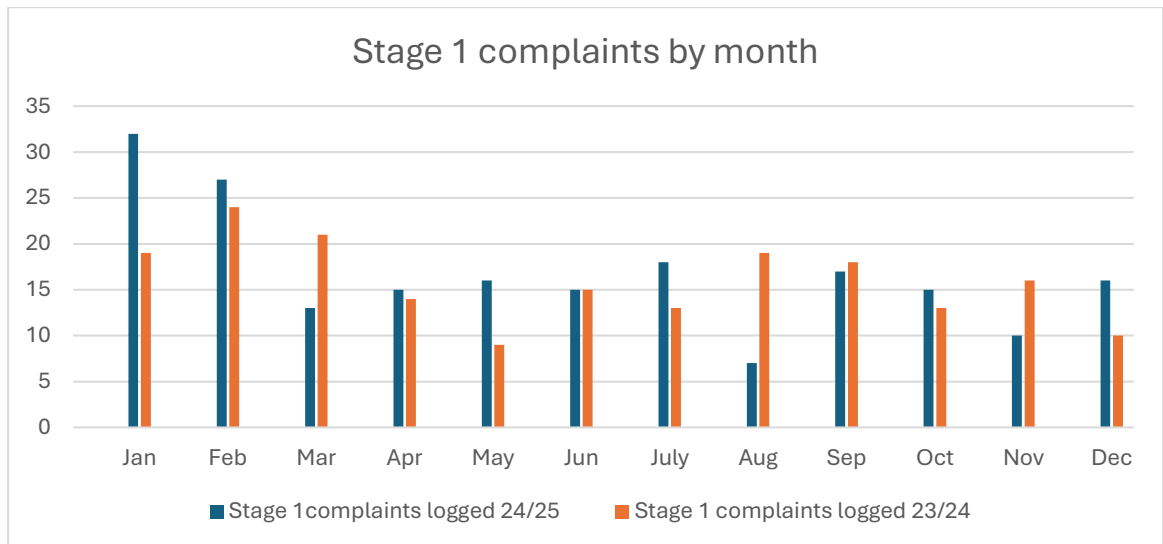
	2023/24	2024/25
Stage 1	191	201
Stage 2	18	8

We saw a slight increase of around 5% in Stage 1 complaints made in 2024/25 compared to 2023/24 after we acquired more homes and residents in 2023 and we promoted our complaints process to residents. Social landlords also generally reported an increase in complaints they received in line with work done by the Housing Ombudsman Service to improve social housing services and residents' awareness of their role. We want residents to be able to complain to us when things go wrong so we can see how to put things right and make improvements to our services.



The number of complaints residents took from stage 1 to stage 2 of our complaints process fell by about a half. We're pleased more residents were happy with their outcomes at stage 1 of the process.

The graph below shows stage 1 complaints logged monthly over 2023/24 and 2024/25 to compare monthly/seasonal trends.



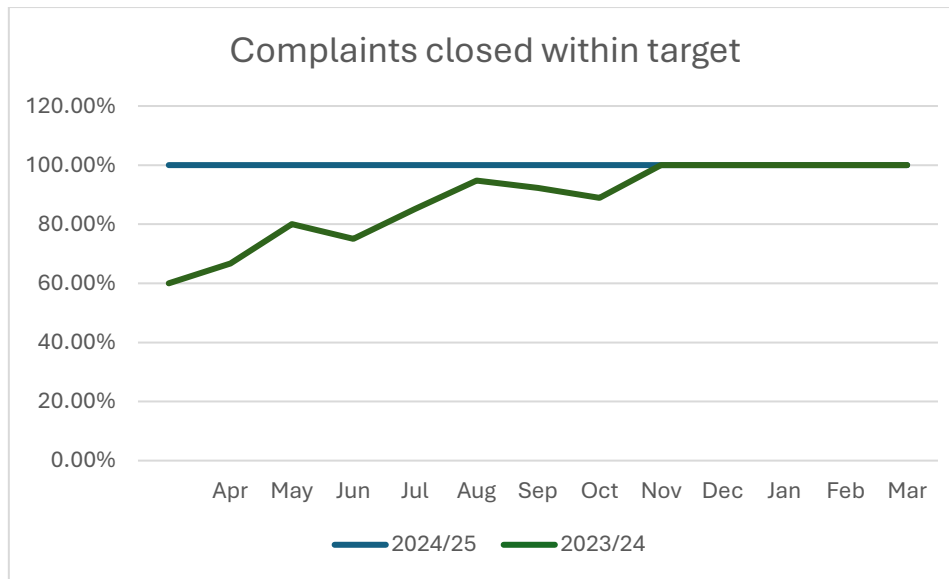
The highest number of complaints we received in 2024/25 were in January and February. This was similar to the previous winter when we expect complaints to increase slightly due to bad weather. We had more complaints for instance about roofing, blocked drains/ gutters and damp and mould.

Of the total 201 complaints received at stage 1 of our process in 2024/25, we only rejected 4 complaints on the basis that these fell outside our complaints policy. These related to reports about anti-social behaviour which we resolve through our Anti-Social Behaviour policy in the first instance (unless the complaint is about how we dealt with a report about anti-social behaviour).

We distinguish 'service requests' (enquiries or first time requests like a standard repair) from 'complaints' in line with guidance from the Housing Ombudsman Service. A complaint would be logged if the initial service request is not dealt with appropriately.

SPEED OF RESPONSE

The graph below illustrates our performance in closing complaints within the target timeframe for 2024/25, compared to 2023/24. Under the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code, all stage 1 complaints should be resolved within 10 working days from our initial acknowledgment of the complaint, and stage 2 complaints within 20 working days. Thanks to the dedicated efforts of our complaints team, we have met both targets for every complaint made to us since November 2023, making sure residents don't have to wait before their issue is resolved.



Reasons for Complaints

Throughout the 2024/25 year, the key drivers of complaints remained broadly consistent with earlier years :-

Communication: this was mainly about not responding to residents within our set timescales, not being clear in our communication or not keeping residents updated about an ongoing process or request. However, we were pleased that we had fewer complaints about communication this year than last year – we’ve worked hard over the year to improve how we’re communicating with you in different ways, from our speed of response to the quality of our emails and letters.

First time fix: this is where we’ve not met our target of completing repairs or responding to a service request when you first report / request it and it remained an issue over the year in addition to not arranging follow-up repairs work as quickly as we should. But again the number of complaints about this fell in the year compared to 2023/24 as satisfaction with our repairs service increased.

Communal areas: we saw a rise in complaints relating to pests and rodents during the latter part of 2024/25, mainly in communal areas with bin stores. We continue to work with residents to try and keep schemes and estates clean, clear and tidy and have installed CCTV cameras in some of our bin areas to help with this.

Contractors: we saw a fall in the number of complaints we received about work done by contractors working on our behalf, generally carrying our routine repairs or large planned upgrade work to your homes. Previously, these related to missed or delayed appointments, quality of work & poor communication. These types of complaints fell by 68% on last year.

Tenancy Management: complaints about how we respond to overcrowding, applications for mutual exchanges and neighbour disputes continued to be a concern throughout 2024/25. Families seeking larger accommodation faced challenges due to the limited availability of suitable properties, leading to frustration and sometimes complaints. Additionally, we noticed an

increased need for support in managing neighbour disputes, which often stemmed from noise complaints and lifestyle differences.

Planned maintenance: Towards the end of 2024/25 we saw a small increase in complaints about the repair or complete replacement of kitchens and bathrooms. We know this is an important part of satisfaction with your home. We're working to prioritise repair and upgrade work based on the individual condition of items, assessed as part of our stock condition surveys.

OUTCOMES FROM COMPLAINTS

We upheld a total of 88 complaints at stage 1 or stage 2 of our process in 2024/25, compared to 112 complaints the year before. This demonstrates our commitment to continuous improvement and learning from feedback. We look carefully into every complaint we receive to understand what went wrong, how to put things right for the resident who's complained and how to make sure the issue doesn't arise again. We involve colleagues inside and outside the team concerned to understand things from different perspectives. As mentioned above, we also work with our Complaints Scrutiny Panel in learning from complaints. Any complaint provides a valuable opportunity for us to raise our standards and give residents a better experience, and we're committed to using these insights for the better.

At stage 2 of our complaints process, residents can ask for a Housing Solutions Board member and/or a representative from one of our involved resident groups to look at the complaint outcome again with a senior manager, to see if there should be a different outcome.

From the total 201 complaints received at stage 1 of our complaint process this year, 8 complaints were escalated to stage 2 of our process. Six of these had the same outcome as the original stage 1 response, showing that a thorough investigation at stage 1 had been completed. One complaint was awarded a higher compensation amount at stage 2.

UNDERSTANDING OUR RESIDENTS

As part of our investigation into complaints we receive, and the issues residents raise as part of the complaint, we also look at the demographics and characteristics of our tenants and how they might relate to the complaints we receive:

When it comes to age, the largest group of our residents are aged 65 and over, which makes up 27.36% of the total. Typically we find a higher proportion of younger residents (aged between 35 to 44) registering complaints with us, accounting for 24.24% of the complaints.

In terms of gender, the majority of our tenants are female, representing 56.24%. This trend is largely mirrored in the complaints we receive, with 60.62% coming from female tenants.

We also receive complaints in roughly the same proportions as our residents as whole in terms of ethnicity and the first or native language by residents.

These insights into the demographic and characteristic distributions of residents who make a complaint to us help us identify areas where specific groups may be more likely to raise issues.

This understanding allows us to tailor our services to better meet the needs of all our residents, ensuring we continue to improve and provide the best possible support.

TRAINING OUR PEOPLE

Our dedicated complaints team provides induction training to all new colleagues joining Housing Solutions helping them have the right knowledge to support you. Everyone working for us also has to do compulsory complaints through the Housing Ombudsman Service. This training is crucial for equipping our team with the necessary skills to manage complaints effectively – we'll be repeating this across all teams from June this year.

Our involved resident Scrutiny and Improvement Team (SIT) and Complaint Scrutiny panel (CSP) do the same training so that everyone involved in handling complaints is informed and up-to-date with best practices.

LEARNING FROM COMPLAINTS

We ask every resident who has complained to us to complete a quick survey telling us how we dealt with their complaint and how happy they are with the outcome. In 2024/25 just under 20% of residents who used our complaints service filled in a survey - this was up from 8.5% in 2023/24. We want to increase this further for 2025/26 so we know the results we see through the surveys reflect as many views as possible.

Sometimes residents who were less happy with the outcome of their complaint wished to be given a higher amount of compensation where it was awarded for a service failure on our part (such as loss of heating or hot water). Overall, we've seen approval ratings with our complaints service increase year on year, as represented below:

Complaints Satisfaction		
	Complaint Handling	Complaint Outcome
2022/23	66%	42%
2023/24	80%	80%
2024/25	97.5%	89.7%

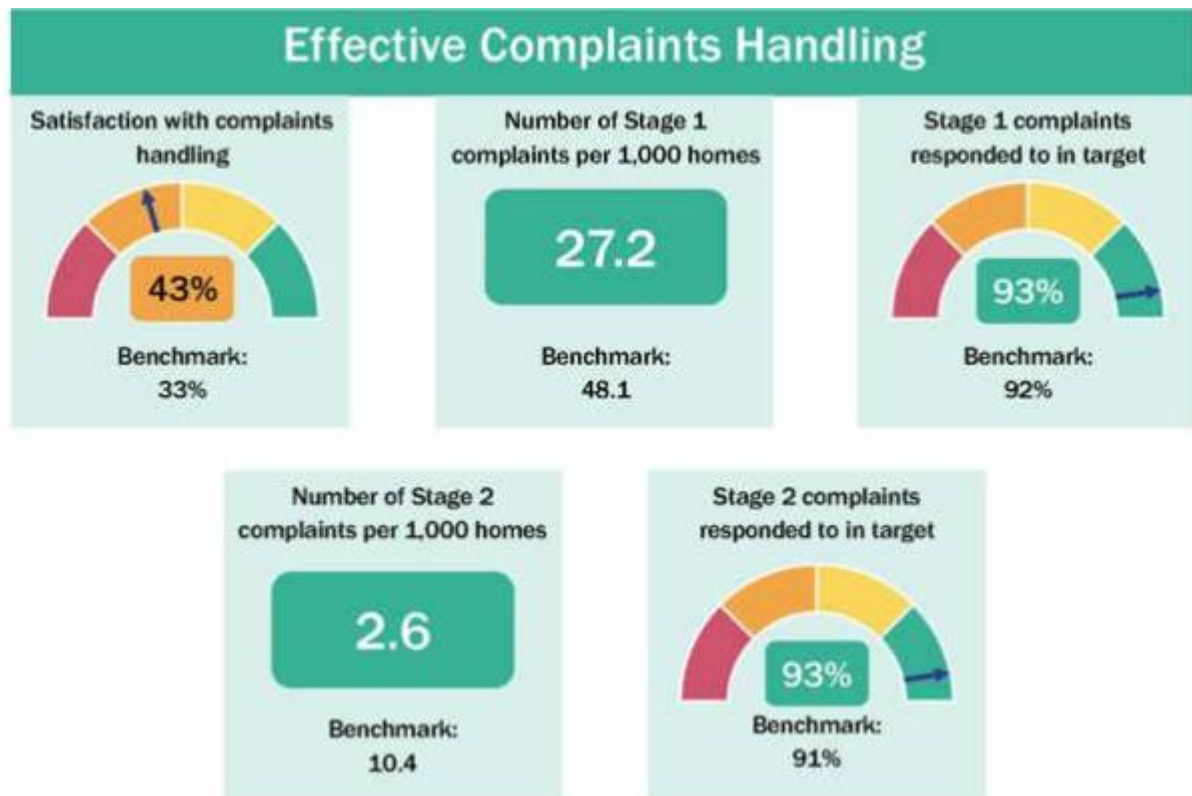
We're constantly looking for ways to improve – here's some of the specific learning we implemented following complaint made to us over 2024/25 :-

- Holding regular contract management meetings with our contractors to monitor the quality of their service to you, addressing any issues that need to improve
- Providing more training to our in-house repairs service (the DLO) on our process for booking follow-up repairs after a complaint about delays experienced by a resident
- Clarifying our policies and training for colleagues following a complaint about succession of a tenancy and similarly our mutual exchange process, where we now have a dedicated colleague leading on the process
- With some complaints still about communication complaints, monitoring the way we record and respond to contacts made to us for colleagues to follow up within our 2-day target time

TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES

In April 2023, the Regulator of Social Housing introduced [Tenant Satisfaction Measures \(TSMs\)](#), to help social housing tenants see how well their landlord is performing compared to other organisations. There are 22 measures, covering 5 themes. The data is collected through management information and a resident survey.

Whilst the full TSM results for 2024/25 will not be published until later this year, we've worked to improve residents' perception of how well we respond to complaints. The results from the latest official TSM figures (for 2023/24) are below, placing us in the upper quartile of results for the sector – we're hoping to see a significant improvement in the final 2024/25 TSM results when published.



You can read more about our performance in the TSMs at our website : [TSM - Housing Solutions Maidenhead](#)

HOUSING OMBUDSMAN ENGAGEMENT

From the total 209 complaints received over 2024/25, we were asked by the Housing Ombudsman Service to provide information about 22 cases which had been referred to them. Fourteen of these were 'evidence requests' where the Housing Ombudsman asked us to provide more information to help them look into a complaint. In half of these cases the Ombudsman asked us to take forward an issue raised by a resident as a complaint.

We received 1 maladministration order in September 2024 relating to a complaint logged in March 2023. This was for the way we communicated, the way we dealt with follow-up repairs and

our historic complaint handling. Following a thorough investigation into this case, we took the following points away as learning from the complaint:

- To ensure we always follow our compensation policy when determining the appropriate resolution to a complaint
- To tighten our processes, making sure residents are kept up to date, repairs are completed and followed up on time
- Make sure we're adapting our services and approach to take account of residents' individual vulnerabilities
- Ensuring we complete repairs/ inspections in line with our policies and procedures

The Housing Ombudsman commented in their last annual landlord report about our complaint-handling that : *"The landlord performed when compared to similar landlords by size and type."*
