Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2024-25 Housing and Safer Communities (HSC)

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Overview

We received more complaints this year than the year before, although the number per month has now stabilised. We also received more determinations from the Social Housing Ombudsman – this is partly because we have had more complaints, and because the Ombudsman has been working through a backlog of past cases. Our Tenant Satisfaction Measures show that our tenants are more satisfied with our service than last year, especially for repairs, so we think that this increase in complaints is because people are more aware of the options they have, not because our service is getting worse.

We know we need to respond to complaints more quickly. The changes we made last year allowed us to maintain our performance even as the number of complaints was increasing, and now we need to improve it. We have recruited more staff in our Repairs and Investment and Tenancy services while also making improvements to the systems we use to manage complaints and other types of casework.

In particular, we have been working hard to reduce the problems which lead our residents to complain. Our repairs transformation programme has improved the way we manage repairs, especially for complex situations, which need different trades to resolve them, and our award-winning damp and mould team is responding to problems more quickly. We are very grateful to the residents who have worked with us to make these improvements. This year, we will continue to improve our repairs service, and we are also developing our tenancy service so it can best meet the needs of our tenants.

These operational changes fit alongside a broader programme of work to rethink our tenancy services. The Rethinking Tenancy programme aims to use tenant insights to inform people-centred improvement to our tenancy service. So far, we have spoken to several RBG tenants about their understanding and experience of our current service, and their priorities for a future service. We will continue to work with tenants and staff to design and deliver a more responsive and people-centred tenancy service that meets the needs of tenants.

Alongside this, we are developing a new resident engagement framework to ensure that tenants have more meaningful opportunities to shape the services they receive. This framework will build on the lessons from our recent engagement work and help us embed resident voice more consistently across our decision-making and service design.

About this report

This report provides a comprehensive overview of the performance related to complaints and Ombudsman cases handled in Housing and Safer Communities that are within the remit of the Housing Ombudsman ("landlord complaints"). These include:

- Leasehold services
- Moving to a property
- Rent and service charges
- Occupancy rights
- Property condition (including repairs)
- Tenant behaviour
- Estate management (including caretaking)

NOTE
In line with the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman, this data is based on complaints received in the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

All data used to produce this report is per the Dynamics complaints management system as at 29 and 30 May 2025.

This report details performance across the "Housing" complaints policy (until December 2024) and the "Corporate" complaints policy (from December 2024). The change was made to comply with the Housing Ombudsman's and Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's aligned Complaint Handling Codes, which set out how we should handle complaints. The two policies are largely the same; a key change was to allow an additional five working days to acknowledge complaints, extending the timescale for us to respond to complaints from our tenants by a further five working days from receipt.

September 2025 update on Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs)
TMOs are independent legal bodies that operate their own complaint processes; we have 265 properties in TMOs in Royal Greenwich: Walpole Estate Management Board and River Heights Tenant Management Co-operative. Due to the age of the legal agreements governing the relationship with our TMOs, we are assisting Walpole and River Heights to update their complaint processes to comply with the Housing Ombudsman's complaint handling code. There were no formal complaints against either TMO in 2024-25; however, all TMO tenants continue to have access to redress through complaints, including support from the Housing Ombudsman Service.

Summary

Type	2023-24	2024-25	Change
Stage 1 Complaints received	1,283	1,843	43% ↑
Stage 2 Complaints received	203	349	72% ↑
Housing Ombudsman determinations	33	44	38% ↑

- Annual demand has increased since 2023-24, but monthly volumes received during 2024-25 have remained relatively consistent through the year, indicating that demand has stabilised.

- We receive complaints about a wide range of issues, and the largest group are about the condition of people's homes.

- Our response times were broadly unchanged from last year. We responded to 38% of stage 1 and 2 complaints within target timescales. This increases to 45% of stage 1 complaints and 46% of stage 2 complaints when we include the use of holding responses.

- The Regulator of Social Housing sets a specific complaints measure in their Tenant Satisfaction Measures, based on a subset of the complaints included in this report. Using this measure, we responded to 54% of stage 1 complaints and 57% of stage 2 complaints within target timescales, which is an improvement on last year. For more detail on our TSM performance, please see our website.

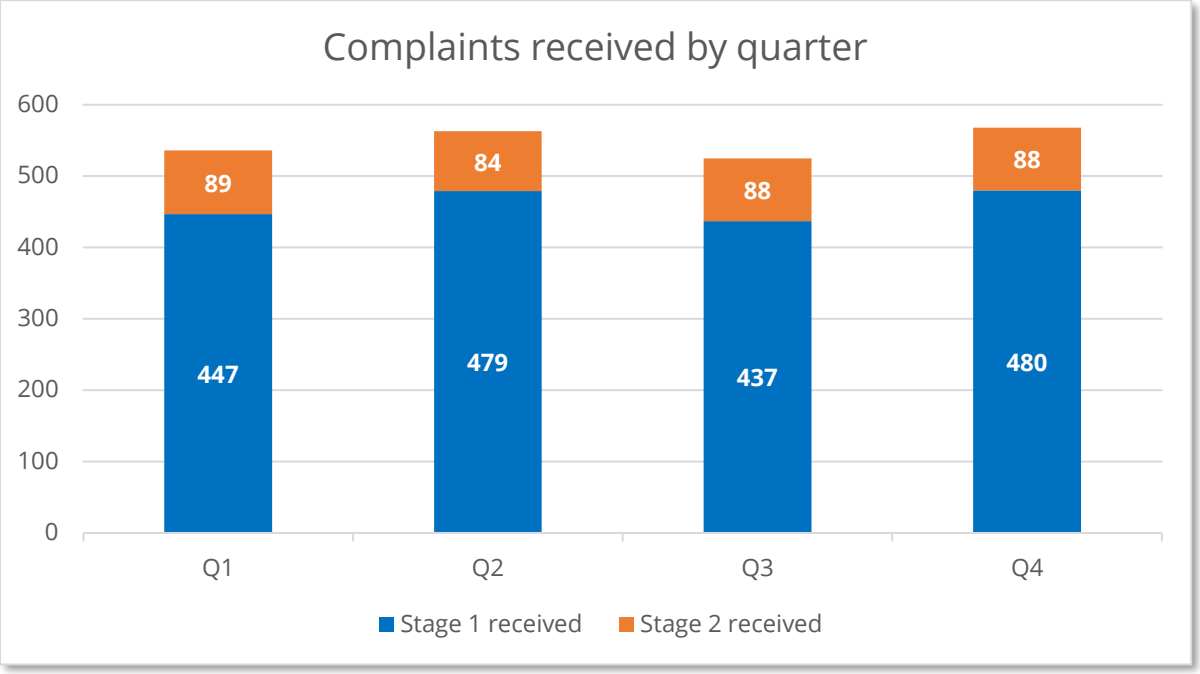
- The majority of complaints are upheld. The proportion of complaints upheld at Stage 1 is unchanged from last year (73%) and has dropped slightly at stage 2 (70%, down from 72%).

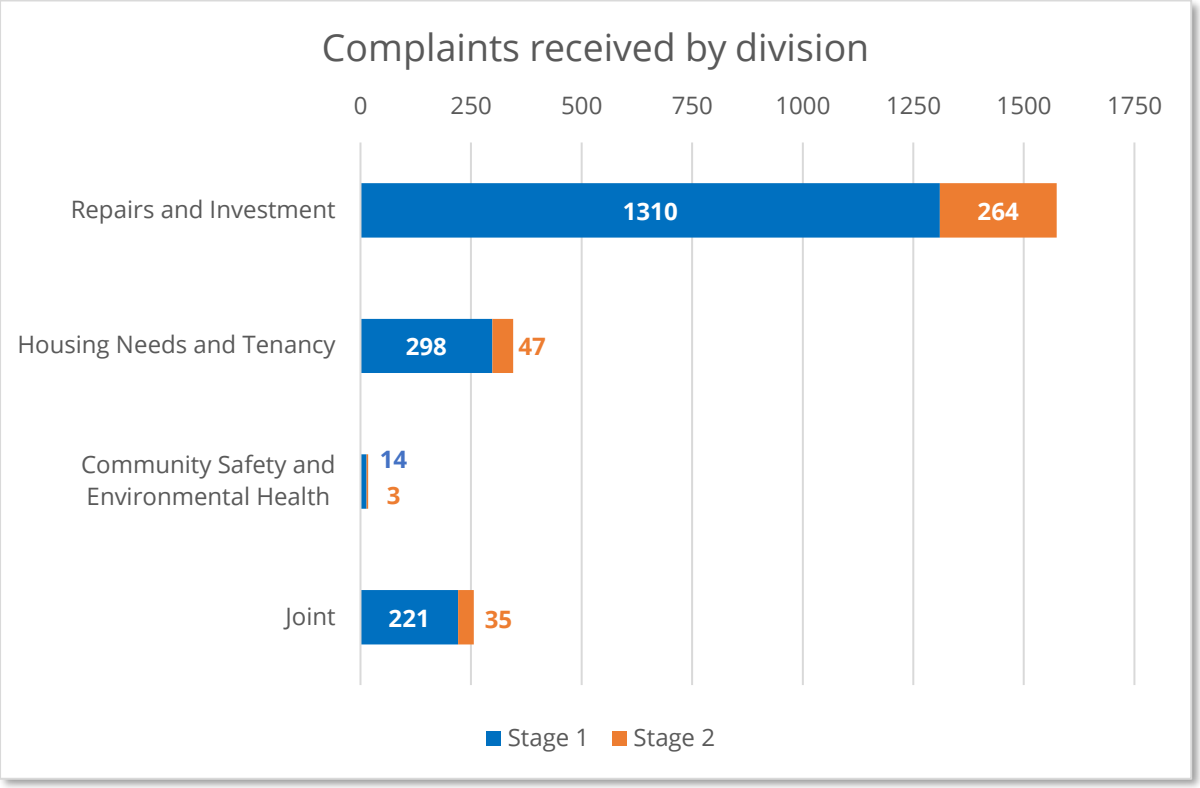
- We excluded 12 complaints this year, 0.5% of complaints received

- As for most social Landlords in London, we have seen an increase in Ombudsman determinations on last year. However, these have been stable during the year. We received two Severe Maladministration decisions and four Complaint Handling Failure Orders (CHFOs); we have complied with all of these.

Complaints

Complaints received





Joint complaints are multiservice complaints that are administered by the HSC central complaints team working closely with the different divisions which the complaint relates to.

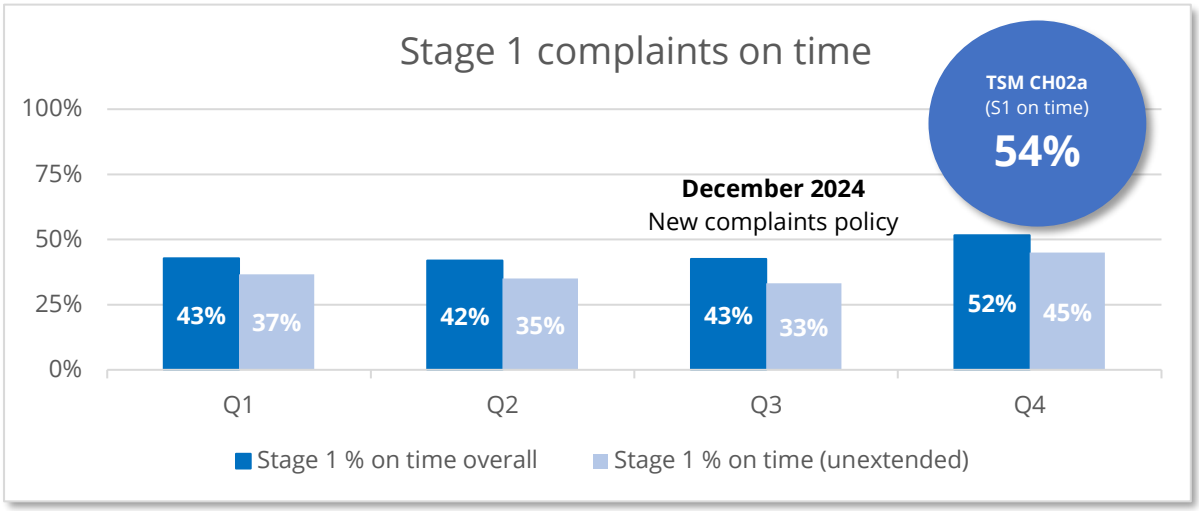
Compliance with target response times

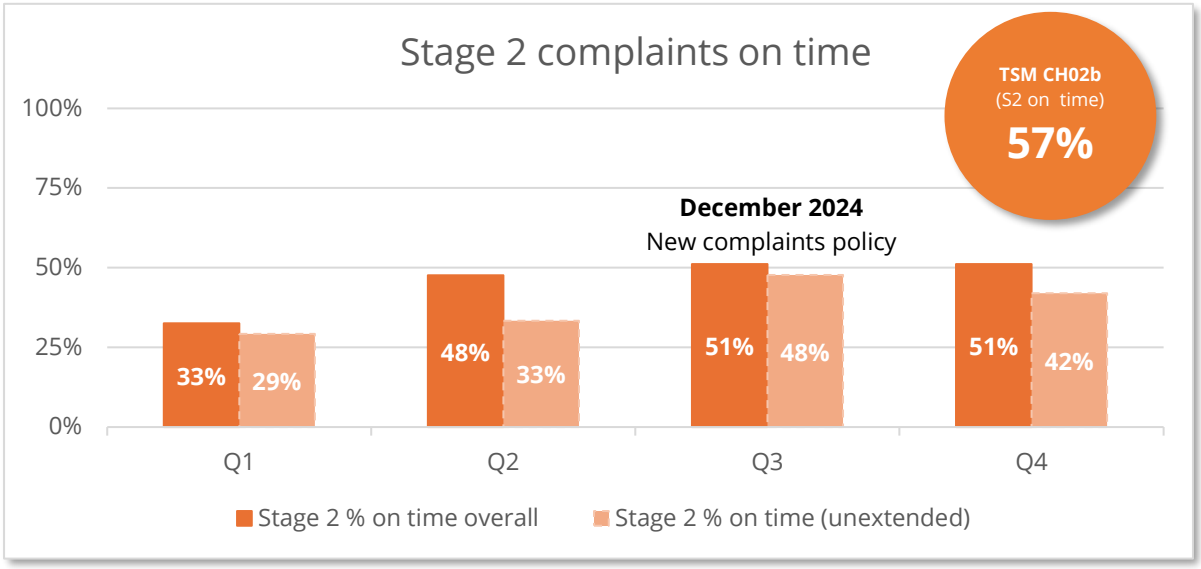
Our two stage complaint policy complies with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.

We aim to acknowledge complaints within five working days, then to respond within a further 10 working days at stage 1 and 20 working days at stage 2. If we need more time, we can extend this by a further 10/20 days respectively.

The Regulator of Social Housing monitors performance for a subset of these complaints, excluding leaseholders (Tenant Satisfaction Measures/TSMs). These are noted for context and are reported separately to the Regulator.

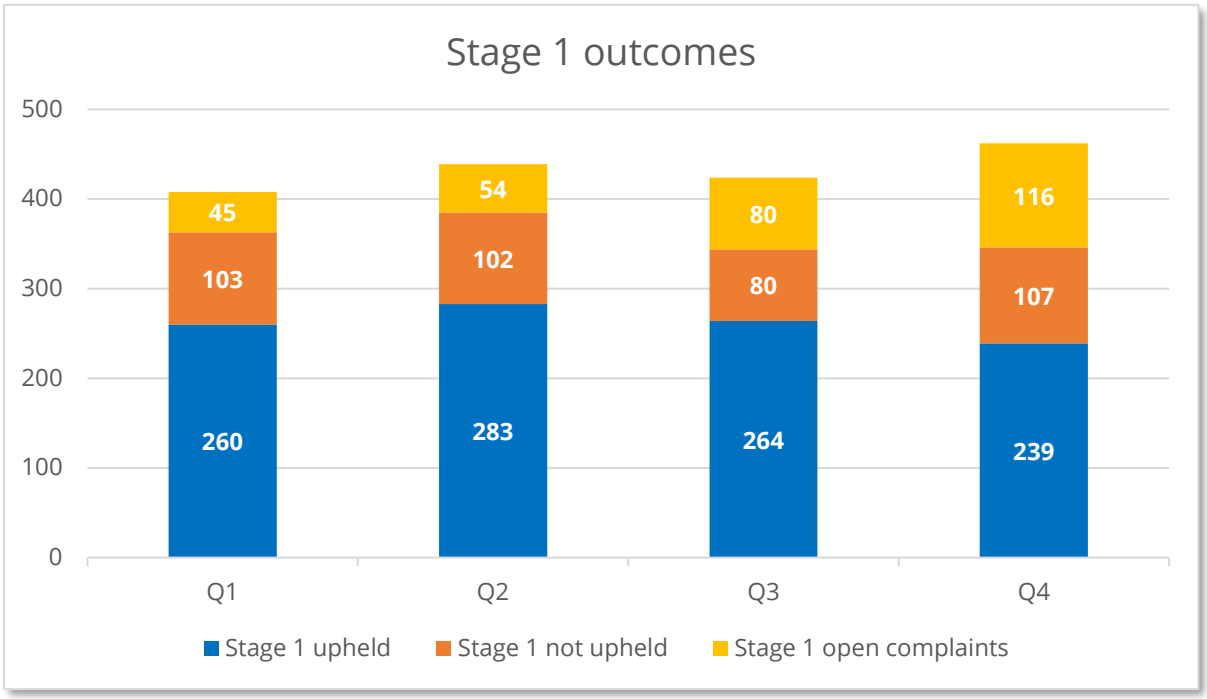
Stage	On time without extension	On time with extension
Stage 1	38%	45%
Stage 1 (TSM)		54%
Stage 2	38%	46%
Stage 2 (TSM)		57%

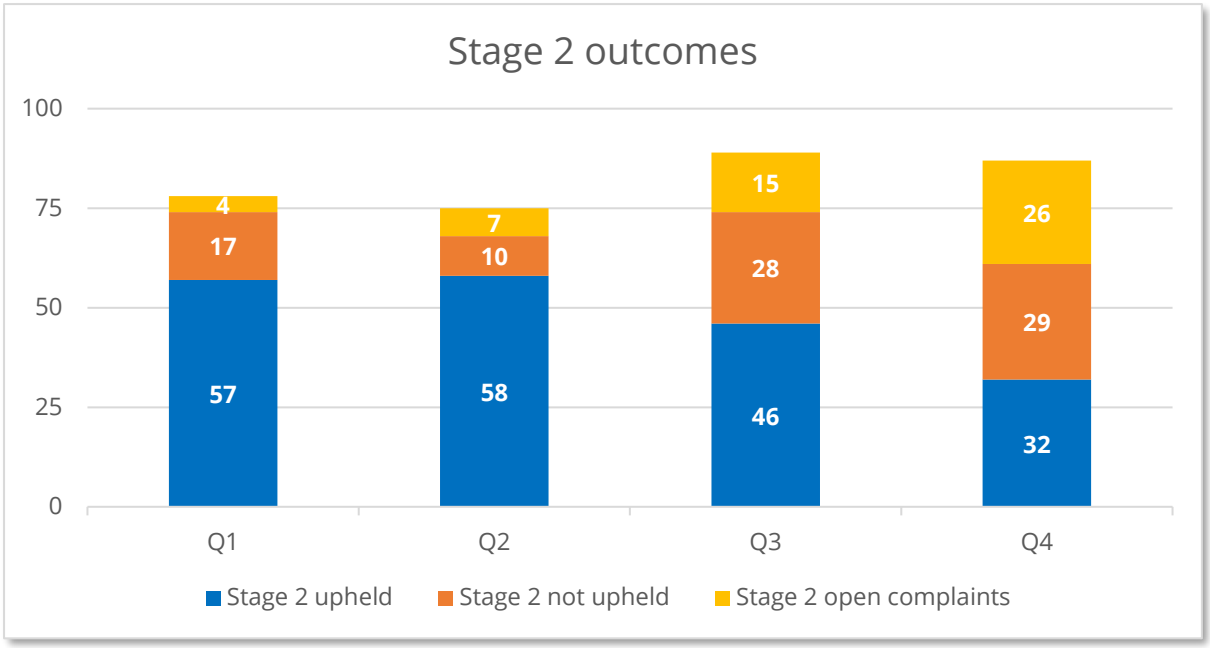




Complaint outcomes

When we investigate complaints, they can be either upheld (entirely or partially) or not upheld. Upholding a complaint means we have investigated it and found that we got something wrong, which we will correct.



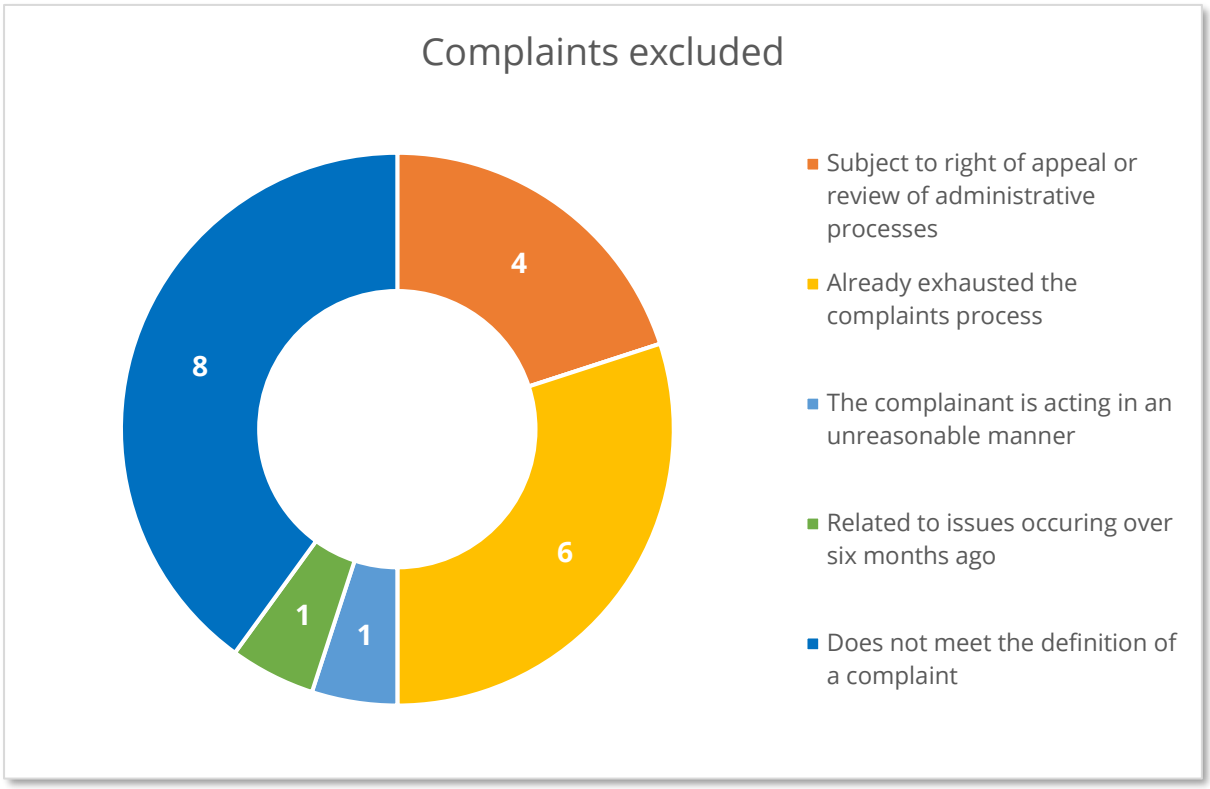


73% of Stage 1 and 70% of Stage 2 complaints were upheld this year. This excludes complaints which were still open at the end of the quarter. Overdue complaints are regularly monitored and actively managed by the division which is responding to them.

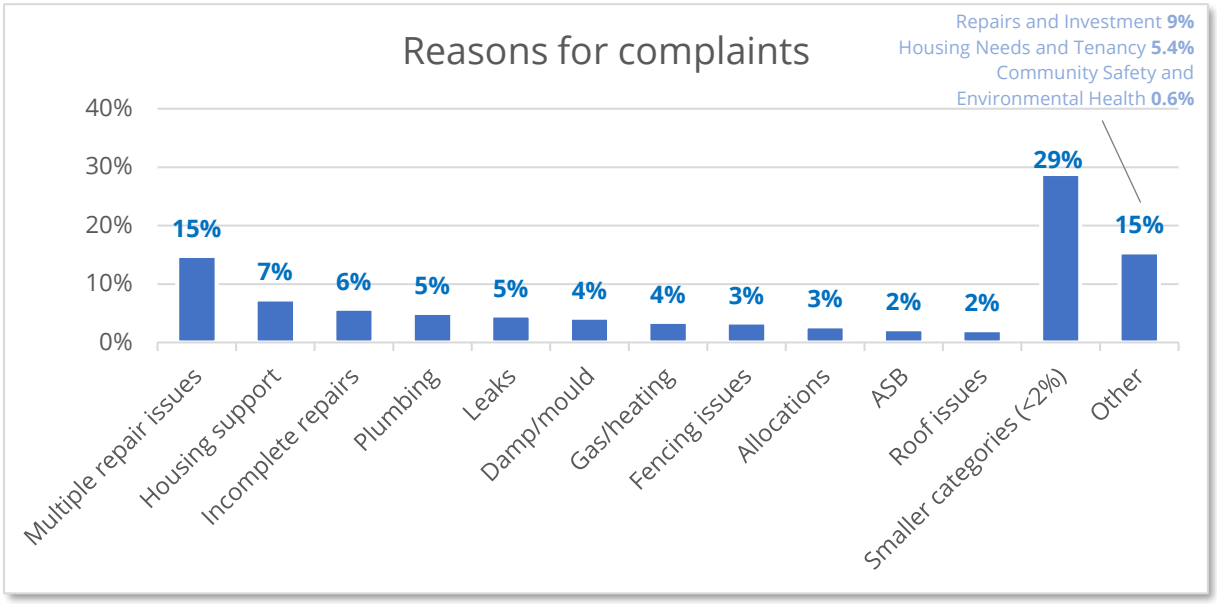
There were 74 complaints with informal outcomes. These include where a complaint is withdrawn and otherwise not progressed, usually for administrative reasons.

Excluded complaints

The Royal Greenwich complaints policy allows for complaints to be excluded from investigation in certain circumstances. We formally excluded 12 complaints this year and declined a further eight that did not meet the definition of a complaint, usually because they were requests for service. In these cases, we helped the resident to make a service request.

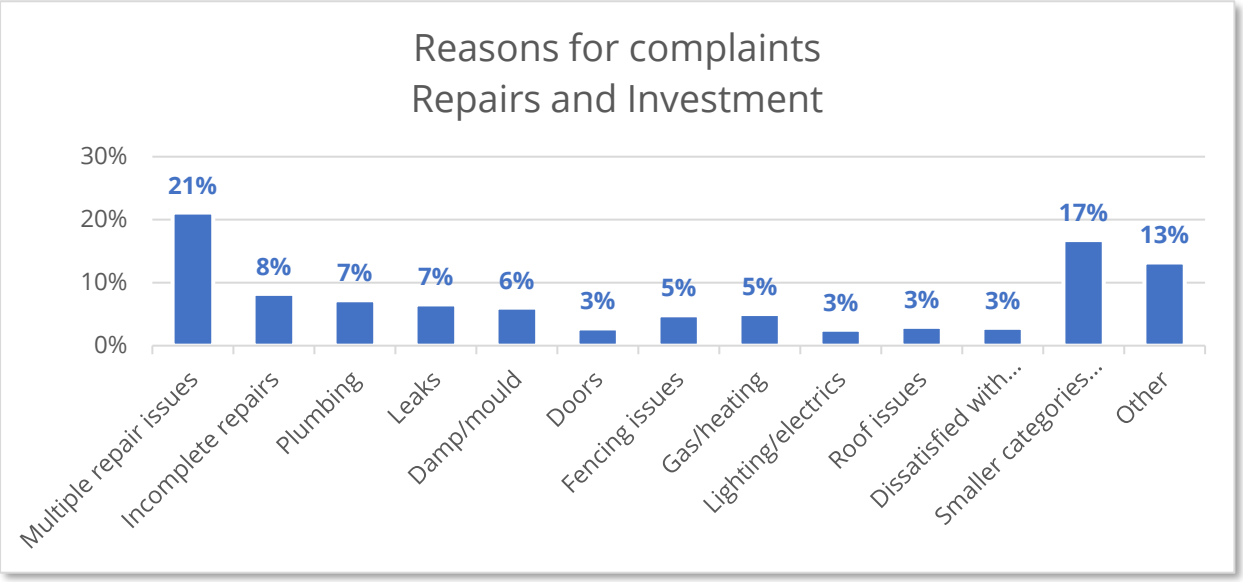


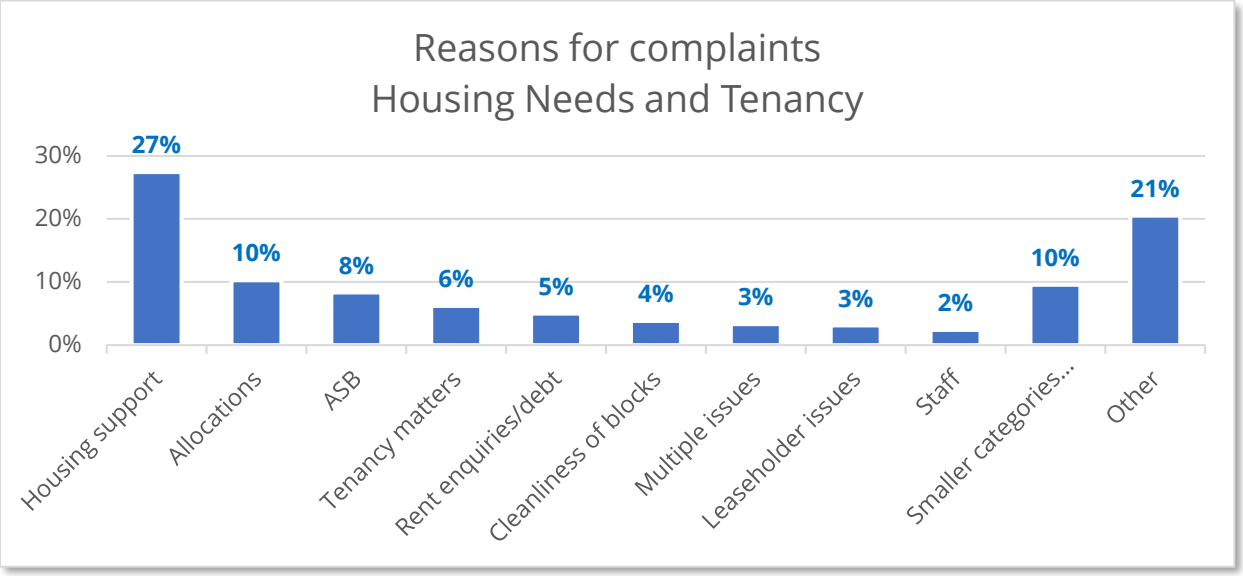
Learning From Complaints

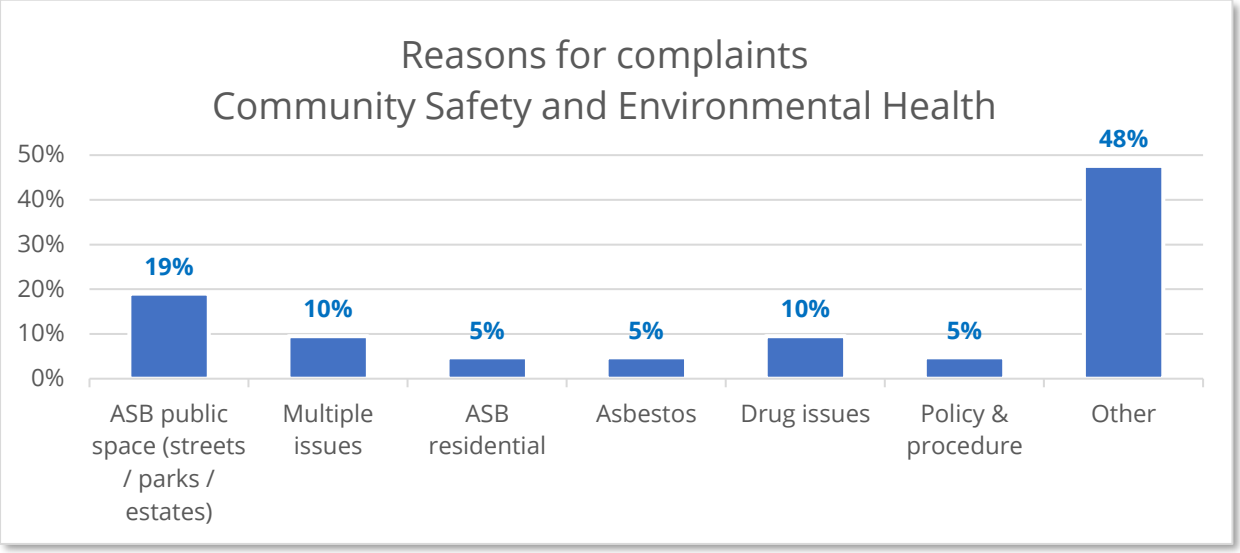


Seven of the top 10 reasons for complaint relate wholly or in part to property condition. Over half of the cases recorded as "other" are about repair issues. Therefore, repairs issues are the main driver of dissatisfaction that leads to complaints.

The top reasons in each division are on the next page. The vast majority of complaints are for the Repairs and Investment and Housing Needs and Tenancy divisions. Just 19 reasons for complaint were recorded in our Community Safety and Environmental Health division, which is concerned primarily with the performance of statutory functions rather than our function as a social landlord. Other complaints that this team receives fall under the remit of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and are covered in our Corporate Complaints Report.







The category “Other” indicates that the complaint is about something for which there is no specific recorded category. We are working on better ways of capturing information about complaints so that we have greater insight into what they are about.

We know we don't always get things right first time, and complaints provide valuable information into how we can improve our services. We also use our own data to inform the areas we need to improve. The following table shows where we have identified areas to improve and what we have done or plan to do to improve.

Service improvements

What we have learned
• We have heard that we are not keeping our residents updated on the status of their repairs or communicating changes to appointments promptly. A lack of tied-up working across our repairs teams has led to issues in scheduling "follow-on" jobs. We also heard that initial works were taking place yet follow-on works were not being progressed where multiple works were required. • We have also heard that we are not always completing repairs within our target timescales to a satisfactory standard. A significant number of our complaints were in regard to long standing unresolved repairs • Through an Ombudsman investigation, we learned that we were not testing internal disability lifts early enough in our voids process. • Our ability to capture information about our residents' vulnerabilities is limited, which means we miss opportunities to take these into account when delivering our services. • In Tenancy Services, there are gaps in processes that are creating an inconsistent service at times. We can also do more on customer service in this area • Our approach to antisocial behaviour (ASB) is sometimes inconsistent and not transparent enough. This can make it difficult for us and the Ombudsman to investigate complaints about ASB • At least a third of our complaints are linked to leaks within or into properties through either external water ingress or leaks from neighbouring properties.
What we are changing
• We have issued reminders to staff on keeping residents updated, contacting residents routinely and to manage their expectations when appropriate. This saves us and our residents time in chasing for updates and provides reassurance

- We have changed the process for identifying issues with disability lifts earlier in our voids process (when homes become empty) to prevent delays when new residents move in

- We have piloted and implemented a "follow-on" telephone line and process whereby if "follow-on" works are needed after a repairs job then the Trade Operative calls straight away and books an appointment in with the planner. This information is then provided to the tenant, so they are clear what the next steps are with works in their properties. This has currently been implemented across our largest trades by volume Plumbing, Carpentry and Plastering and has handled over 5000 calls ensuring customers are informed of what happens next.

- We have renegotiated our Repairs Direct Labour Organisation (DLO) pay terms and conditions. Pay was previously based on productivity and Trade Operatives were incentivised to "close" a repairs works order, even if it was not completed, as it would count towards their productivity. The new system will be on a flat salaried basis so there is no financial benefit to the Operative of the works being closed. This should lead to jobs remaining open and service managers then being able to progress outstanding works.

- We have implemented an award winning Damp, Mould and Condensation (DMC) Team with new processes and dedicated focus for improving our response to damp and mould. Mould washes for vulnerable residents are taking place within three working days.

- We have significantly increased our data capabilities and have a new data dashboard which allows us to respond on a daily basis to productivity in our workforce and by trade. Through this we have recruited a number of targeted resources which have massively reduced the number of outstanding repairs within our service. We have seen our TSM for "Time taken to complete repair" increase from 62% to 72.7% and our overall satisfaction with repairs increase from 71.4% to 80.4%

- The DMC Team, Follow-On Line and Data Dashboard have all been part of our multi-year Repairs Transformation Programme. This programme now has a specific workstream for "Leaks" which will be looking at what resources and process we need to ensure that ownership is taken within the service and complicated leak repairs are seen through from first reporting to fixing of the leak and remedying any damage that has been sustained because of it. This new approach will be going live in the second half of 2025/26

- Over 250 residents have been involved in shaping research, redesign and engagement of our Repairs Transformation Programme.

- We have created a new vulnerability policy to bring together our existing approaches to vulnerability and create clarity for staff, to enable us to better identify and support vulnerable residents.

- In Tenancy Services, we are reviewing our internal procedures to fill in gaps and create more consistent decision making. We also intend to deliver customer service training for all staff in this department

- We are working on a new anti-social behaviour (ASB) and hate crime policy. This will help staff and residents to better understand what we can do about ASB as well as provide a clearer framework for holding ourselves to account for how we manage it.

- We have introduced a new Vulnerability Policy and are working to make improvements to how our IT systems capture vulnerability data.

Complaint handling

What we have learned

- We are not always responding to complaints on time. In particular we are not responding as well as we could to multi-service complaints, which require input from several services.

- We do not have a real-time system for reporting on complaints, limiting our insights and access to performance information

- Having two complaints policies, although effective, can at times be complex and inefficient. Neither policy fully fitted the requirements of the Building Safety Regulator. We have now resolved this issue but it has impacted on performance during the year.

- In Tenancy Services, the rise in demand on the previous year has built-up a backlog of complaints and the quality of complaint responses suffers from an incomplete understanding of the issues. When we respond to complaints, we do not always follow-through with our actions to put things right.

What we are changing

- We have kicked off a review of our complaints performance with a particular focus on landlord complaints, led by a senior member of the directorate leadership team. The goal of this project is to remove barriers to good performance and be more responsive to complaints, especially in our Repairs and Investment division.

- To meet increased demand we have increased our complaint handling capacity in all divisions, including additional management capacity to improve processing and oversight of complaints. We have also created a process to closely monitor overdue complaints, which will ensure we resolve complaints more promptly.

- To improve complaint handling for multi-service complaints, we have changed our process so that we ensure we have addressed issues with complaint handling in our response to residents.

- We are developing a dashboard that shows real-time data, which will help services keep track of complaints.

- We have improved our complaints IT system so that is simpler and easier to use, so our staff spend less time on systems and more on responding to complaints

- We have merged our Corporate and Housing complaint policies. This provides a simpler, integrated process for residents and staff to follow while also being compliant with the Building Safety Regulator's complaints guidance and the Housing Ombudsman and Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman complaint handling codes.

- In Tenancy Services, we have streamlined and improved the local complaints process, which includes telephone contact for every new complainant, to improve understanding of the complaint and identify opportunities for early resolution. We will follow-up all complaints to check with residents that we have done what we said we would do.

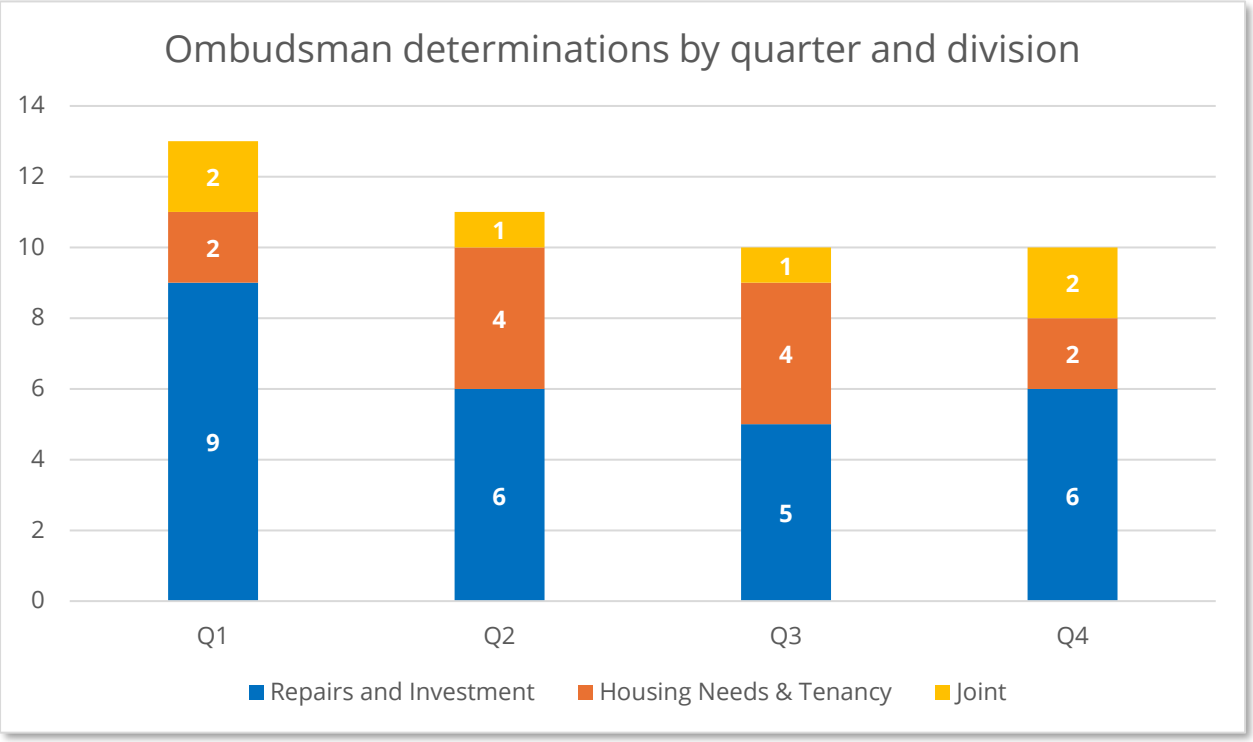
Ombudsman Determinations

Residents who are still dissatisfied after completing our complaint process may ask the Social Housing Ombudsman to investigate their complaint independently.

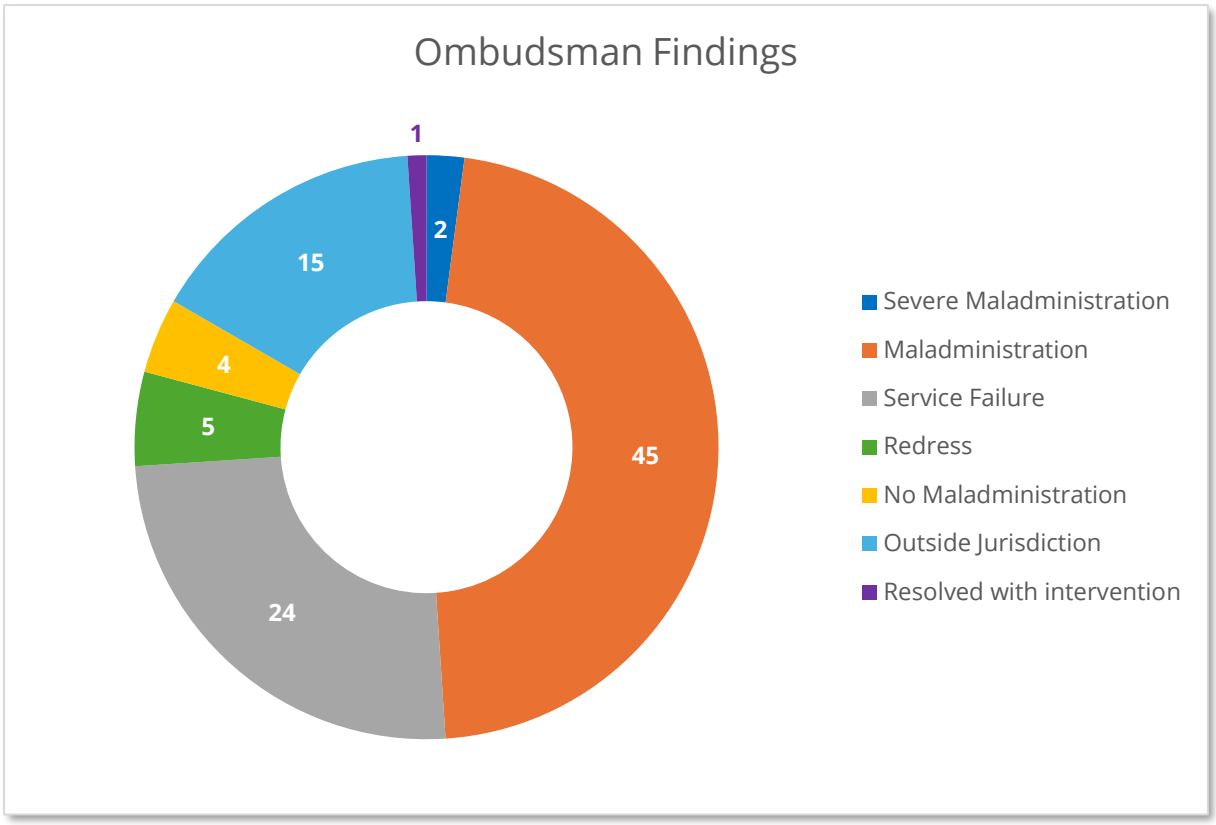
During 2024/5, the Ombudsman was working through a backlog of cases which had built up nationally during the pandemic. Most of the cases where we received determinations did not relate to the current year. Several investigations with decisions this year related to issues occurring in 2021/22.

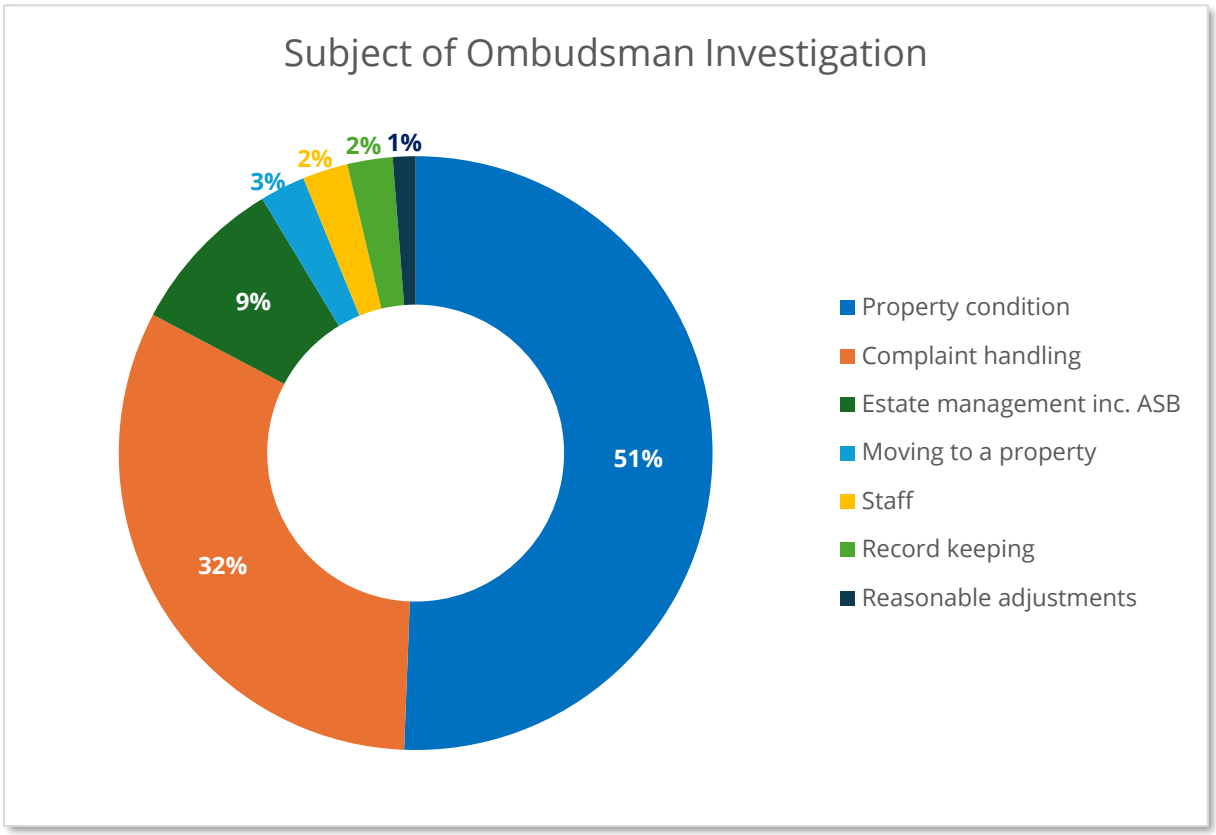
The Housing Ombudsman may make multiple findings in each investigation, ranging from *no maladministration* to *severe maladministration,* and order compensation. If we do not follow the Ombudsman's instructions, we may receive a *Complaint Handling Failure Order (CHFO)*.

Type	2023/24	2024/25	Change
Determinations	32	44	12 ↑
Findings	67	96	29 ↑
Maladministration Findings	52	71	19 ↑
Maladministration Rate[1]	78%	74%	2% ↓
Complaint Handling Failure Orders	0	4	4 ↑
Compensation Ordered	£25,930	£22,934	£2,996 ↓



[1] Maladministration calculated as a percentage of outcomes, including "outside jurisdiction"; this differs from the Housing Ombudsman's method, which ignores "outside jurisdiction"





We use determinations from the Ombudsman to inform the areas we need to improve. We have included our learning taken from Ombudsman decisions in the learning section above.

We received four Complaint Handling Failure Orders (CHFOs) for not complying with the Housing Ombudsman's instructions promptly enough. Two were "type 1" orders, relating to failure to respond to complaints and two were "type 2" orders relating to failure to comply with orders following the Ombudsman's investigation. We have complied with all of these orders and taken on board any learning for the future.

We received two findings of Severe Maladministration, both relating to the handling of reports of damp and mould. The investigations related to issues first occurring in 2021 and 2022 respectively. They found that we had not conducted a specialist survey of the home of a vulnerable resident and there were substantial delays in remedying the problem. As well as putting things right by compensating and apologising to the resident, we conducted a thorough learning exercise to identify opportunities for improving our damp and mould and complaints services. Following these decisions, we have since greatly improved our damp and mould service and we are confident that any residents experiencing damp and mould are now receiving a much improved service from us.

Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code Self-Assessment

- The Housing Ombudsman requires us to self-assess ourselves against its Complaint Handling Code.

- We have assessed ourselves as complying with all of the 72 recommendations. We will continue to work to improve our complaints handling this year and ensure that we respond to new requirements from the Ombudsman. This is attached at **Appendix 2**.

Social Housing Ombudsman Reports

- The most recent report of our performance by the Housing Ombudsman is for the year 2023-24 **(Appendix 1**). This relates to a different period from this report, but is included as this is a requirement of the Housing Ombudsman.

    - The top three categories investigated were property condition, complaint handling and anti-social behaviour

    - Compared with comparable landlords:
        - Overall maladministration was higher
        - Severe maladministration was slightly lower
        - Redress findings were lower[2]

    - Compared with the previous year (2022-23):

[2] "Redress" findings are used when the finding would have been "maladministration", but we put it right, generally through apologising or offering compensation during the complaint process.

        - Determinations tripled
        - 10 times more orders were made
        - Maladministration rose by 16 percentage points
        - Compensation ordered rose by over £24,000

    - This report relates to investigations determined in 2023-24; the issues investigated go back as far as 2020.

- 2023-24 saw a rise in complaints in the social housing sector and an associated increase in the activity of the Housing Ombudsman. The Ombudsman was also working through a backlog of older complaints during this period.

- The Housing Ombudsman periodically produces "spotlight" reports about thematic issues in the social housing sector, which we are asked to self-assess against. We have conducted the following self-assessments this year:
    - Knowledge and Information Management (KIM) – **Appendix 3**
    - Attitudes, Respect and Rights – **Appendix 4**

- In 2025-26, we intend to produce the self-assessment on:
    - Repairing Trust

Appendices

Appendix 1	Housing Ombudsman annual report on RBG 2023-24
Appendix 2	Self-assessment – Complaint Handling Code
Appendix 3	Self-assessment – Knowledge and Information Management
Appendix 4	Self-assessment – Attitudes, Respect and Rights