
Annual Housing Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Ashley Monk
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Assistant Director	Assistant Director Community and Housing Services
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Wards Affected	(All Wards);
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/A
Relevant Council Priority	Community & Housing;
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Committee RESOLVE that:-

- 1) The Annual Housing Complaints and Service Improvement Report (Appendix1) is approved;**
- 2) The Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code Self-Assessment is approved (Appendix 2); and**
- 3) The Housing Complaints Policy (Appendix 3) is approved and;**

The Executive Committee is asked to NOTE that

- 4) The reports referred to at resolutions 1 to 3 above, will be published on the Council's website.**

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Housing Ombudsman is a non-departmental public body sponsored by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). Its role is to resolve disputes involving members of the Housing Ombudsman Service, including making awards of compensation or other remedies when appropriate.
- 2.2 All Local Authorities that are Registered providers of Social Housing are required to be a member of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme. A

condition of the scheme is that members must have a complaint handling procedure which must satisfy the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman complaint handling code which became mandatory from April 2024.

- 2.3 The Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report is a mandatory requirement for social landlords to ensure compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

Complaint Self-Assessment

- 3.1 The Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code 2024 requires that members undertake a self-assessment of its complaint handling scheme as part of its annual complaint performance and service improvement report.
- 3.2 The purpose of the self-assessment is to set out how landlords demonstrate their complaint handling complies with the provisions of the Code.
- 3.3 Completion of the self-assessment typically requires landlords to:
- Review current practices to identify any gaps or actions required to comply with the Complaint Handling Code
 - Take any necessary action to ensure that Complaint Handling Code requirements are met
 - Gather and document evidence to support the assessment of compliance
 - Scrutinise and challenge the assessment, to provide assurance
 - Publish the self-assessment and wider documentation
 - Communicate and embed changes made through the self-assessment
- 3.4 The self-assessment has been completed by officers and has been reviewed by the Corporate Leadership Team and is attached at Appendix 2.
- 3.5 On completing the self-assessment Officers identified that the Complaints Standard was not always specific in its terminology of who can make a Housing Complaint.
- 3.6 The Housing Complaints Standard has been amended to provide clarity in that it applies only to residents, service users and members /

representatives and that residents or people affected by a Housing Service who are not Housing Tenants should instead follow the Corporate Complaints Policy.

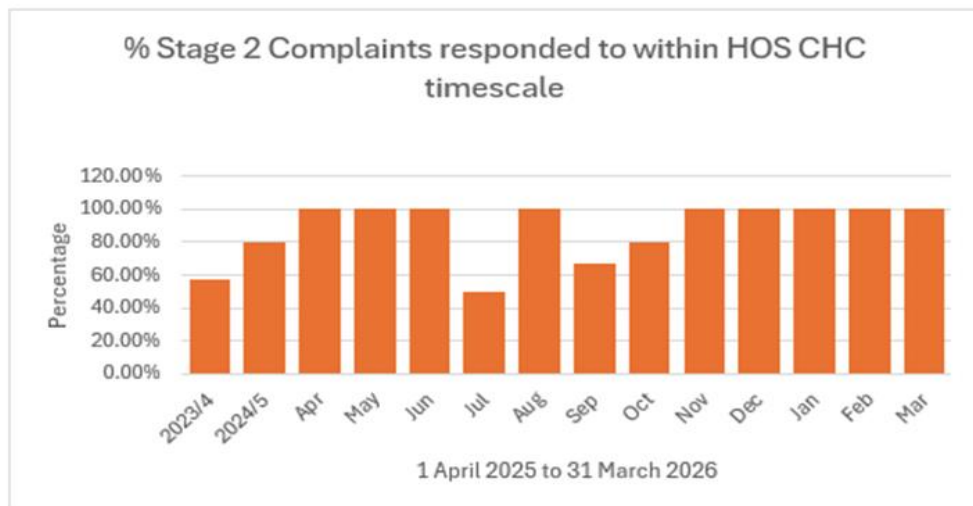
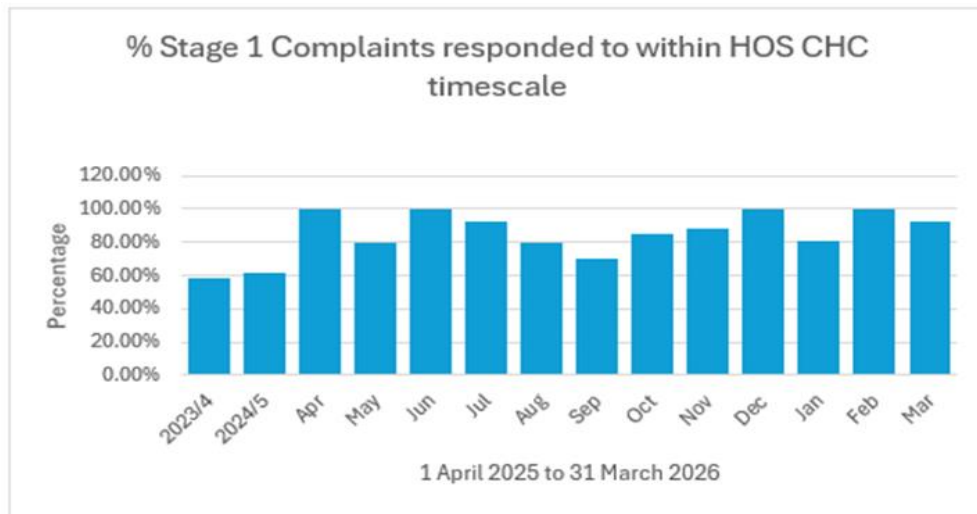
- 3.7 In addition the Housing Ombudsman service undertook a separate review of our Complaints Standard and in May 2026 made a number of recommendations to improve the Standard, this included renaming it a Policy. The recommendations have been incorporated into the Housing Complaints Policy attached as Appendix 3.

Annual complaints performance and service improvement report

- 3.8 The Housing Service is committed to providing an excellent service for its customers but recognises that it does not always get it right. The Council recognises that customers have a right to complain when they feel the authority has fallen short of their expectations.
- 3.9 As well as giving the Council the chance to put things right, complaints provide valuable feedback that help Officers to continually improve services by identifying root causes, learning from complaints, making improvements and developing a positive complaint culture.
- 3.10 The following table provides statistics around the quantity of complaints received, numbers closed and upheld, and the percentage responded within the timescale set out by the Housing Ombudsman’s Complaint Handling Code. This includes a comparison between this year and last year:

Key Complaint Stats	2024/25	2025/26
Complaints Received at Stage 1	124	130
Complaints Responded to within Timescale	62%	88.7%
Complaints escalated to Stage 2	17%	22%
Stage 1 Complaints upheld	47.5%	50%
Ombudsman requests received:	12	19

- 3.11 The graphs below show the percentage of complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code requirements including the figures for 2023/24 and 2024/25 for comparison, indicating that performance has improved significantly during 2025-2026, demonstrating the impact of focused work to strengthen complaint handling arrangements across the service.



3.12 Between 1st April 2025 and 31st March 2026, 50 learning outcomes were recorded because of complaints that were fully or partially upheld. We have taken clear and practical action to put things right and improve services based on what we have learned from complaints.

These include:

- Improved communication standards, including reinforcing expectations around call-backs, appointment updates, and keeping tenants informed when delays occur.
- Additional staff training for Repairs scheduling teams, call handlers, and complaint handling officers, particularly around customer care, vulnerability awareness, and safe advice.

- Strengthened record-keeping controls, including retaining repair tickets, improving case notes, and investigating failures where reports were not actioned.
- Process reviews and changes to ensure follow-on works are booked correctly, cancelled works are recorded promptly, and repeat failures are avoided.
- Enhanced contractor management, including direct feedback to contractors, reaffirmation of expected standards, and action taken where behaviour or quality fell below expectations.
- System-based improvements, such as alerts for vulnerable households and dispersed temporary accommodation units, clearer job ticket wording, and improved access to accurate technical information for staff.
- Increased management oversight, with recurring issues reviewed in team meetings, learning logged formally, and actions tracked to completion.

3.13 Between 1st April 2025 and 31st March 2026 the Council received two determinations where the Housing Ombudsman fully or partially upheld a complaint following an intervention.

3.14 The Housing Complaints Policy clearly sets out the complaint handling principles managers need to apply when investigating a complaint. The Policy also provides guidance for managers in how to set out their response to ensure all points are addressed and appropriate remedies are considered. Letter templates are utilised to ensure a consistent complaint response.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Compensation was paid to complainants in eleven Stage 1 complaints totalling £1467.56, with a further £3,000 paid to complainants as ordered by the Housing Ombudsman following the two determinations.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The annual housing complaints and service improvement, self-assessment are statutory requirements as per the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation

- 6.1 There are no implications from Local Government Reorganisation. Any new local authority will be required to follow the requirements of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 if it is a stock holding authority.

Relevant Council Priority

- 6.2 The Housing Complaints Standard supports the Council's priority of Community and Housing ensuring that tenants live in well maintained homes and receive a quality housing service.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.3 There are no climate change implications from this report.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.4 The report is being designed in a more accessible format to ensure tenants can access and digest the details contained within it and the Housing Complaints Standard provides for complaints to be made using several contact methods to ensure the standard is inclusive.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 The Housing Service wants the complaint process to be easily accessible for residents and does not view complaints as negative. It is important to know when things go wrong so that the authority can put them right and learn from mistakes. This approach enables the Council to continually improve what Officers do by identifying the root causes, learning from complaints, making improvements and developing a positive complaint culture.
- 7.2 Failure in following the Housing Ombudsman Code can lead to various consequences for landlords, including Complaint Handling Failure Orders (CHFOs) and potential reporting to the Regulator for Social Housing.

- 7.3 Complaints are a standing agenda item on the Housing Directorate Management Team meeting to ensure complaints are dealt with effectively and reported as required.
- 7.4 Quarterly meetings are held with the Portfolio Holder for Housing, as the Member Responsible for Complaints in accordance with the Housing Ombudsman's code.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 - Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2025-26

Appendix 2 - Housing Complaint Self-Assessment 2025/26

Appendix 3 - Housing Complaints Policy (To Follow).

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Bill Hartnett.	TBC
Lead Director / Assistant Director	Judith Willis - Assistant Director Community & Housing	13/5/2026
Financial Services	Debra Goodall, Assistant Director Finance and Customer Services	13/5/2026
Legal Services	Claire Felton, Assistant Director Legal & Procurement Services	13/5/2026