

wandle

Annual complaints performance and service improvement report

2025/26

Approved by the Board on
17 June 2026



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access information we provide.**

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Introduction

This Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report explains how we handled complaints between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026, what residents told us about their experiences, and how this feedback has informed service improvements across our services.

The report provides a clear and honest assessment of our complaint handling performance. It sets out where we have made progress, the impact of improvements introduced during the year, and where further work is still required to meet residents' expectations consistently.

Last year's report marked a significant turning point for Wandle. Following notification from the Housing Ombudsman Service of their intention to carry out a special investigation into our complaint handling, we launched a comprehensive Complaints Improvement Project.

In June 2025, the Housing Ombudsman Service closed their investigation after we committed to strengthening complaint handling, improving response times, and embedding learning more effectively across the organisation.

While we have made progress, we recognise that improvement is not complete. Our focus remains on ensuring the right culture, systems and leadership are in place so that every resident who raises a complaint receives either a better outcome or clear, honest information about what we can and cannot do.

This report outlines the progress we have made, openly acknowledges where further change is required, and sets out how we intend to continue improving. It has been produced in line with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code and is intended to help residents understand our performance, support scrutiny by the Board and regulators, and hold us accountable for the commitments we have made. A glossary of terms is provided at the end of the report.



Improving our services and learning from complaints

Making progress in 2025–2026.

Complaints remain one of our most important sources of insight for improving services. During 2025–2026, we strengthened our approach to learning from complaints by enhancing oversight of complaint quality and outcomes and improving guidance and training for colleagues handling complaints – our overall complaint volumes have decreased this year falling from 201.0 to 186.1 per 1,000 properties.

These changes are helping to shift complaint handling from a largely reactive process to a driver of continuous improvement. While this work is still at an early stage, we are beginning to see more consistent learning and follow through.

Complaint handling

The Complaints Improvement Project introduced a new approach to how we manage, respond to and learn from complaints. This work directly addressed the concerns raised by the Housing Ombudsman.

We established a clearer end to end complaints process, developed practical guidance for staff, recruited a dedicated Complaints Team, and implemented a centralised system for recording and managing complaints.

Our aim is to provide a complaints service that:

- improves outcomes for residents
- rebuilds trust that we will listen, learn and put things right
- reduces avoidable and recurring causes of complaints

We have seen positive progress as a result, including:

- A centralised Complaints Resolution Team, providing clearer accountability, stronger performance oversight and a more consistent experience for residents
- A new complaints management system, improving record keeping, visibility and organisational oversight
- Stronger root cause analysis, helping us move from reactive fixes to more preventative action

We are working towards a complaints journey that is transparent, empathetic and accessible. This is ongoing work, and several areas remain under development, including:

- Updating our complaints and compensation policies to ensure a consistent tone and alignment with Housing Ombudsman expectations
- Developing and embedding key performance indicators and a quality framework that reflect residents' experiences, not just response times
- A phased move towards full centralisation of the Complaints Team, with the aim of completing this by summer 2026

Repairs service

We recognise that our repairs service has not consistently met residents' expectations, particularly in relation to delays and communication. We acknowledged this and ensured we cleared any backlog in repairs waiting to be completed. This then allowed us the opportunity to review and consider which improvements would have the greatest impact. During the latter part of 2025–2026, we have seen early signs of improvement following a series of operational changes. These include the introduction of a new repairs system, improved scheduling, and better equipping of operatives, which are helping to increase first-time fix rates and reduce delays. We have also introduced a new role in the repairs team to monitor resolution actions to ensure we follow through with what we have said to put things right.

Residents' experience is beginning to improve as a result, particularly where repairs are completed in a single visit and communication is clearer. However, these improvements are not yet consistent across all repair types or locations.

Where repairs involve multiple teams or external suppliers, coordination and communication can still fall short of expectations, leading to delays and frustration. Improving end-to-end ownership of repairs and ensuring residents receive clear, timely updates will remain a key priority over the coming year.

Communication

We acknowledge that communication remains one of our biggest challenges. While we have started to improve ways of working, we accept that residents do not always receive timely, clear or accurate information.

Communication issues arise from two main areas. These include internal teams not consistently sharing information which results in unclear or conflicting messages, along with external partners not always meeting expected standards of communication or responsiveness.

We acknowledge the impact on you, the resident, is the same regardless of the source of poor communication. The result leads to uncertainty, frustration and a lack of confidence in how services are being managed.

Over the past year, we have taken steps to strengthen oversight, improve accountability and increase the focus on resident outcomes. This includes closer monitoring of service performance and improvements in how information is shared and tracked. For example, we reviewed our approach with our contractor responsible for heating and hot water repairs. This has included closer monitoring of complaints and a stronger focus on response quality to ensure issues are properly resolved.

However, further work is required to ensure that communication is consistently resident-focused, particularly where services are complex or involve multiple parties.

Poor communication and complaint themes

Poor communication is one of the most common themes driving complaints. This is often linked to service failures and understandably affects residents' trust. It also contributes to higher complaint volumes and escalations from Stage 1 to Stage 2.

We have reflected these issues directly in our improvement programmes. While progress has been made, further work is required to deliver consistent, resident focused communication across all services.

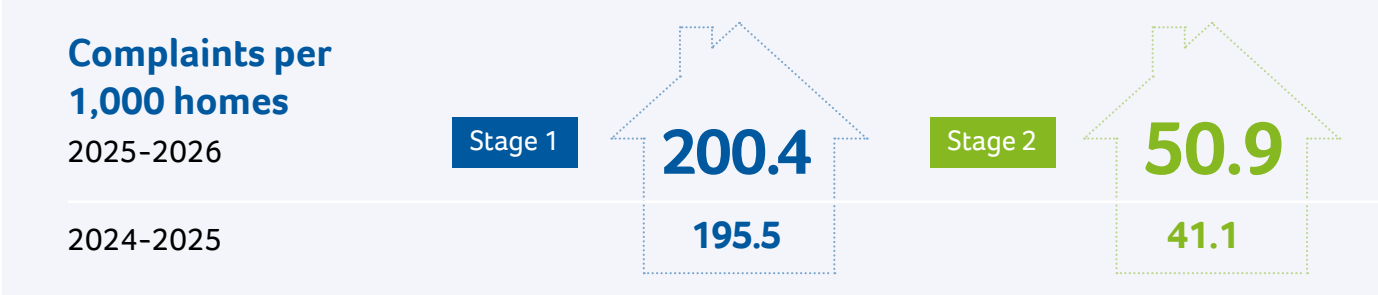
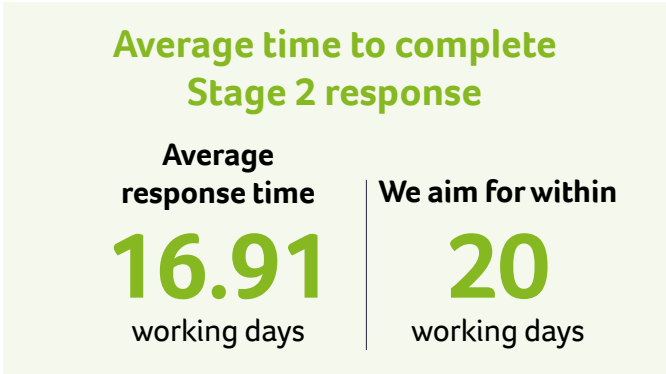
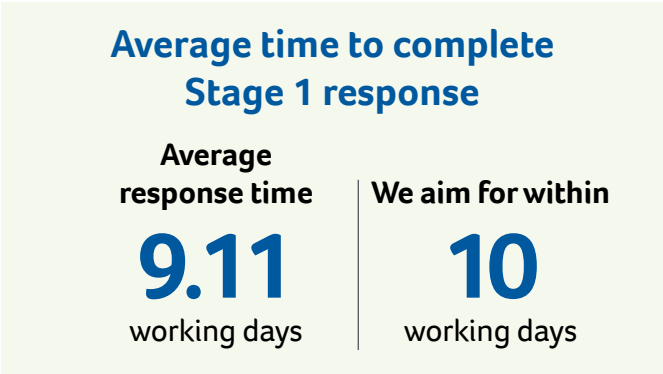
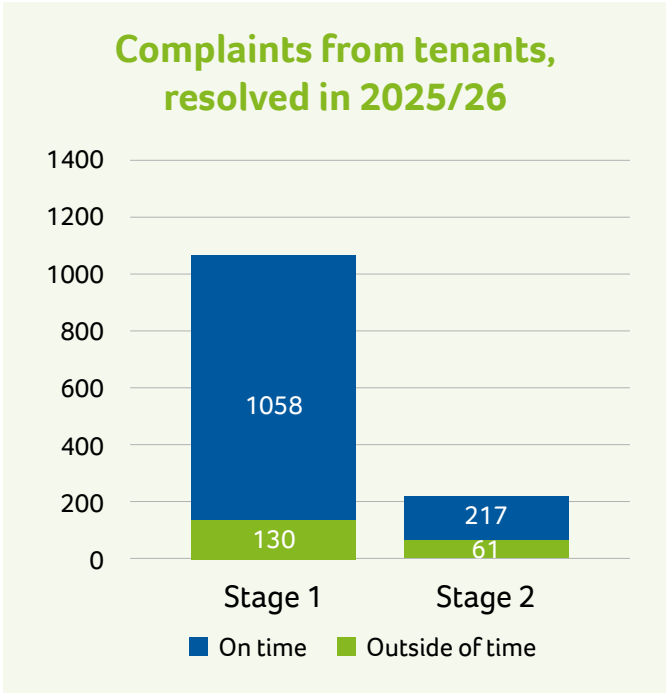
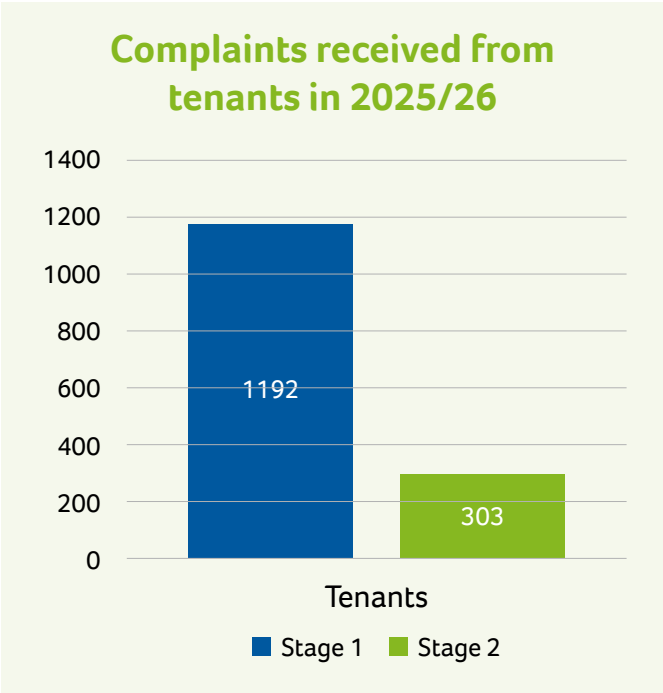
To help improve communication, we are calling residents more to discuss and clarify their complaint, ensuring we have a clear understanding of the issues raised and the resolution they're seeking. We also updated our complaint response templates so that it's clearer for the resident to see the investigation we've carried out, the outcome of this and how we are going to put things right where needed.

Complaints also provide valuable insight into how well our services work for residents who require additional support or reasonable adjustments. Over the coming year, we will strengthen how we capture and use this data to better understand where changes are needed.

Complaints we handled in 2025/26¹

In this report, we are reflecting on complaints handled from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.

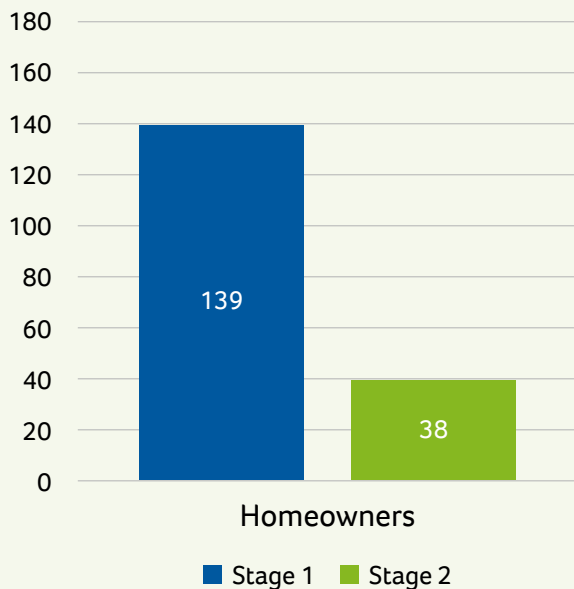
Tenants



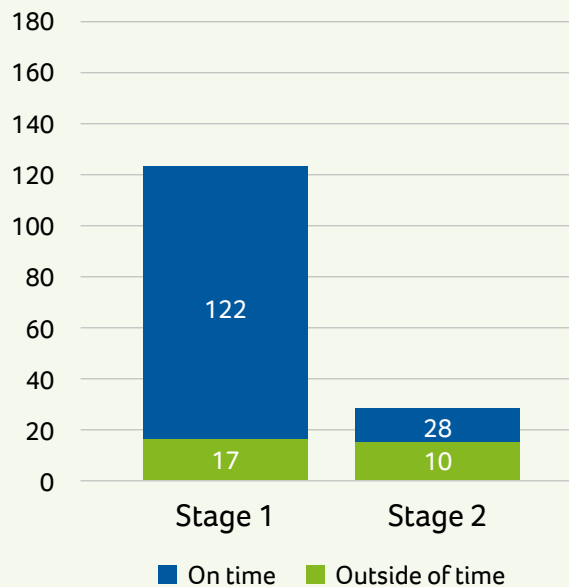
¹ In this report, we are reflecting on complaints handled from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026. Complaints are recorded in two stages. Stage 1 represents the initial investigation of a complaint. Where a resident remains dissatisfied, they can request escalation to Stage 2. It is important to note that Stage 2 complaints are not new complaints, but a continuation of the original case. Reporting both stages separately can therefore make overall volumes appear higher, and this is reflected in how we present and explain our data.

Homeowners²

Complaints received from homeowners in 2025/26



Complaints from homeowners, resolved in 2025/26



Average time to complete Stage 1 response

Average
response time

8.27

working days

We aim for within

10

working days

Average time to complete Stage 2 response

Average
response time

21.39

working days

We aim for within

20

working days

Complaints per 1,000 homes

2025-2026

Stage 1

81.15

Stage 2

14.98

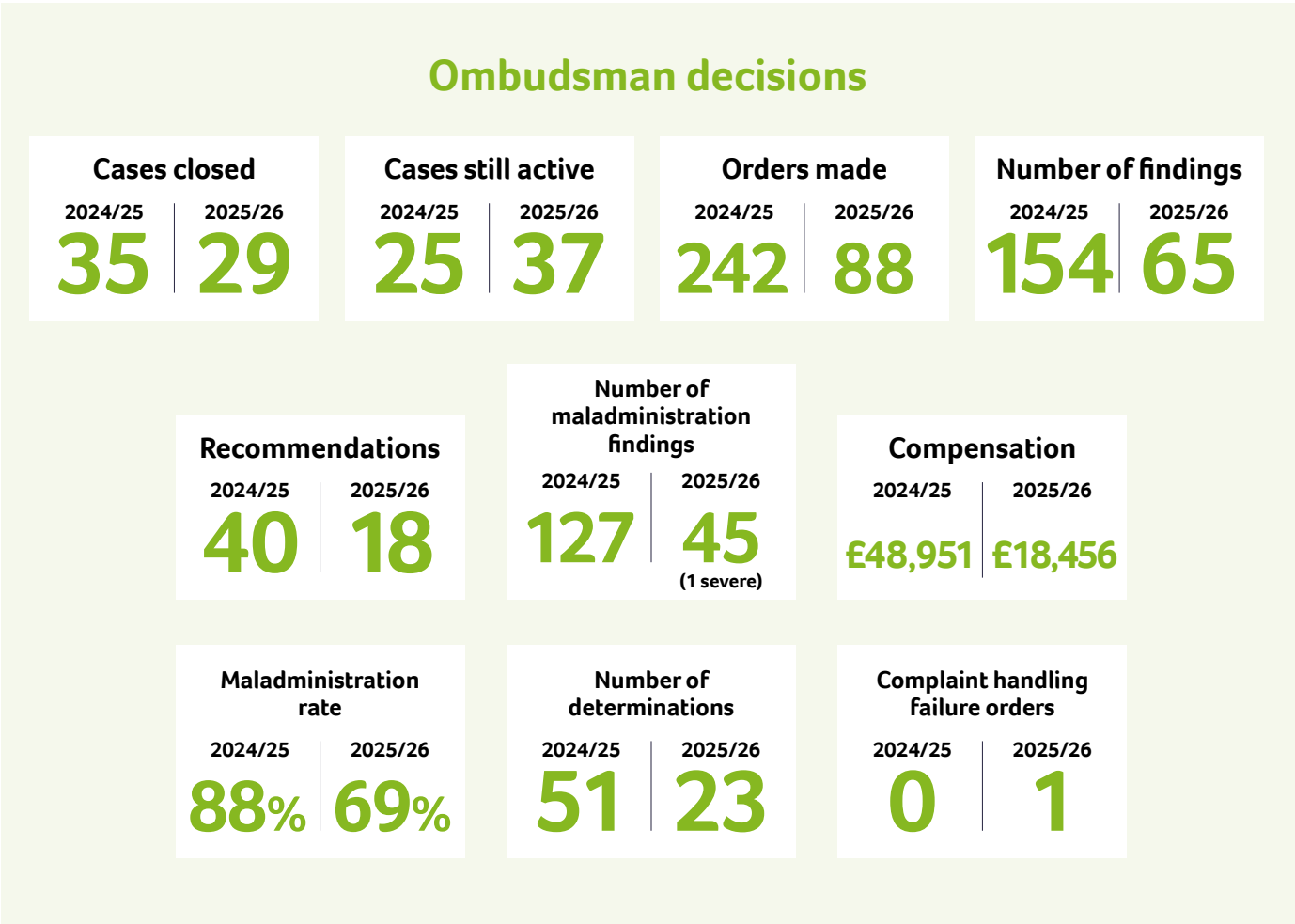
2024-2025

120.2

35.5

2. Homeowners' includes leaseholders and shared owners.

Housing Ombudsman cases



We review every Housing Ombudsman determination in detail and use the learning to inform policy, training and service improvement. This year, we have seen early evidence that this learning is beginning to reduce repeat findings. However, we recognise that further cultural and operational change is still required.

The determinations received indicate clear and recurring themes, with the majority relating to delays, poor communication, record keeping and failures to follow policy. These findings are particularly relevant to repairs, antisocial behaviour (ASB) and complaint handling.

Determinations often include maladministration across multiple service areas, highlighting the need for more consistent end to end processes.

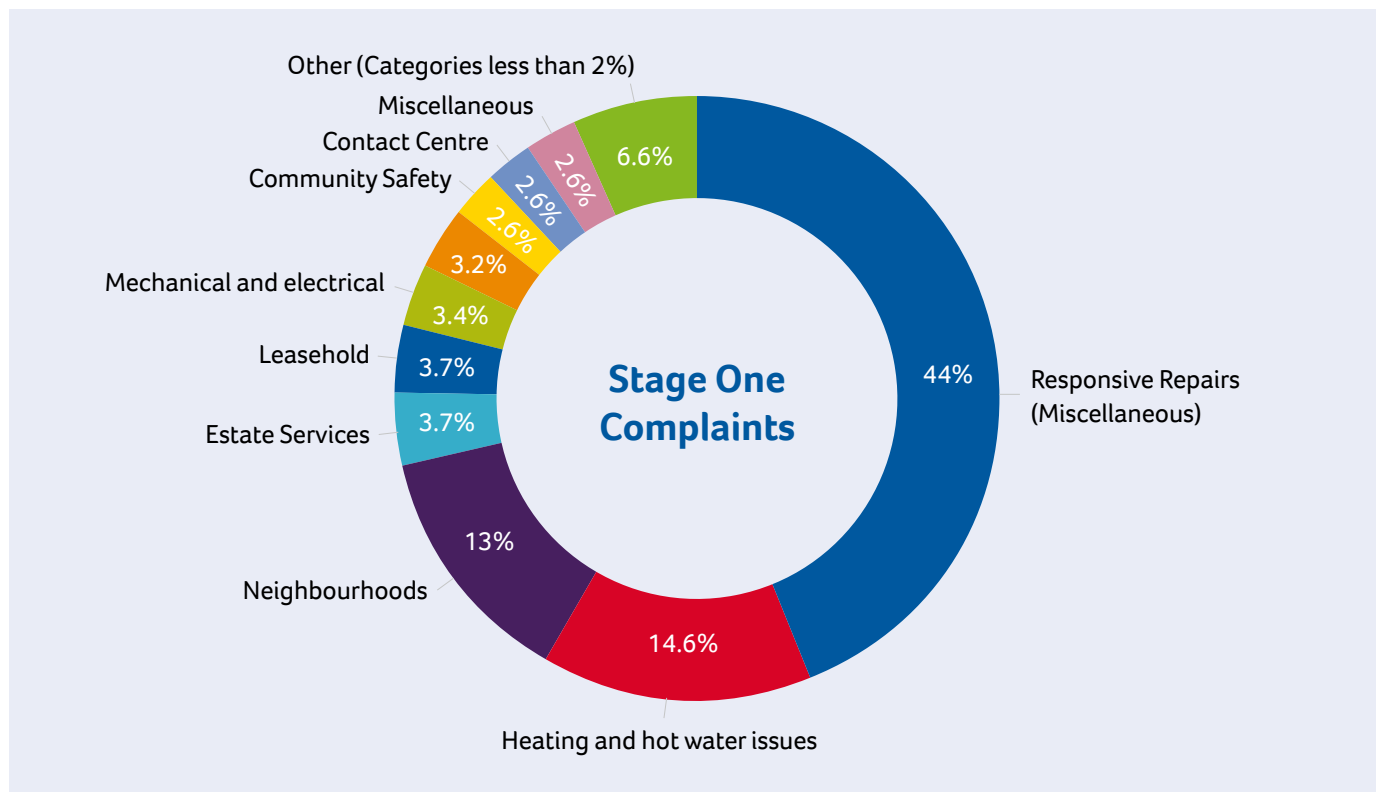
The most common drivers of maladministration include:

- Repair delays and poor standards of work
- Poor complaint handling, including failures to log, escalate or respond within timescales
- ASB handling failures, particularly around communication
- Failure to meet commitments or follow through on actions promised in complaint responses

A significant proportion of findings stem from process failures rather than technical complexity. This indicates that clearer processes, stronger ownership and better follow through should reduce future maladministration.

It is also important to note that outcomes have improved overall, with only one finding of severe maladministration this year. This reflects the positive impact of improvement activity underway, while acknowledging that further work remains necessary.

What do residents complain about?



Complaints received between April 2025 and March 2026 highlight a number of recurring themes. These themes provide valuable insight into where services are not consistently meeting residents' expectations and where targeted improvement is required.

Key themes driving complaints from April 2025 to date:

1. Heating and Hot water

Complaints relating to heating and hot water increased significantly during the winter period. This was partly driven by major works which created additional disruption for affected residents.

While support was provided to residents during these periods, heating and hot water remains a key area of concern and has shown a noticeable increase in complaints since April 2025. This highlights the importance of clear communication, effective contingency arrangements and stronger contractor oversight during major works and periods of high demand.

2. Repair related issues (timeliness, quality, missed appointments)

Repairs continue to be the single biggest driver of complaints. The most common issues raised include missed appointments, repeat repairs, delays in diagnosing problems and a lack of clarity about what residents should expect once a repair has been raised with a contractor.

Delays often occur where multiple teams or contractors are involved, affecting the timeliness of repairs and increasing resident frustration. This reinforces the need to improve first time fix rates, coordination between teams and the quality of communication throughout the repair journey to rebuild resident confidence.

3. Poor communication

Poor communication is a cross cutting theme that impacts complaints across all service areas and is a significant factor in the escalation of complaints from Stage 1 to Stage 2.

Residents commonly report receiving conflicting or unclear information, a lack of updates on progress, or missed appointments without notice. These communication failures can undermine trust even where technical solutions are ultimately delivered, highlighting the need for greater consistency, ownership and clarity in how we keep residents informed.

4. Condition of property

Complaints relating to property condition often reflect a combination of historic issues and the need for better coordination between repairs, asset management and planned investment.

Residents can experience delays or uncertainty where responsibilities are not clearly defined across teams, particularly for more complex or longstanding issues.

We are strengthening collaboration between services to ensure a more coordinated approach, including earlier identification of underlying issues and clearer alignment between reactive repairs and planned investment.

In some cases, further investment will be required to address recurring or structural issues. Ensuring transparency with residents about what can be resolved through repairs and what requires longer-term investment will be an important part of improving trust and satisfaction.

5. Handling of ASB

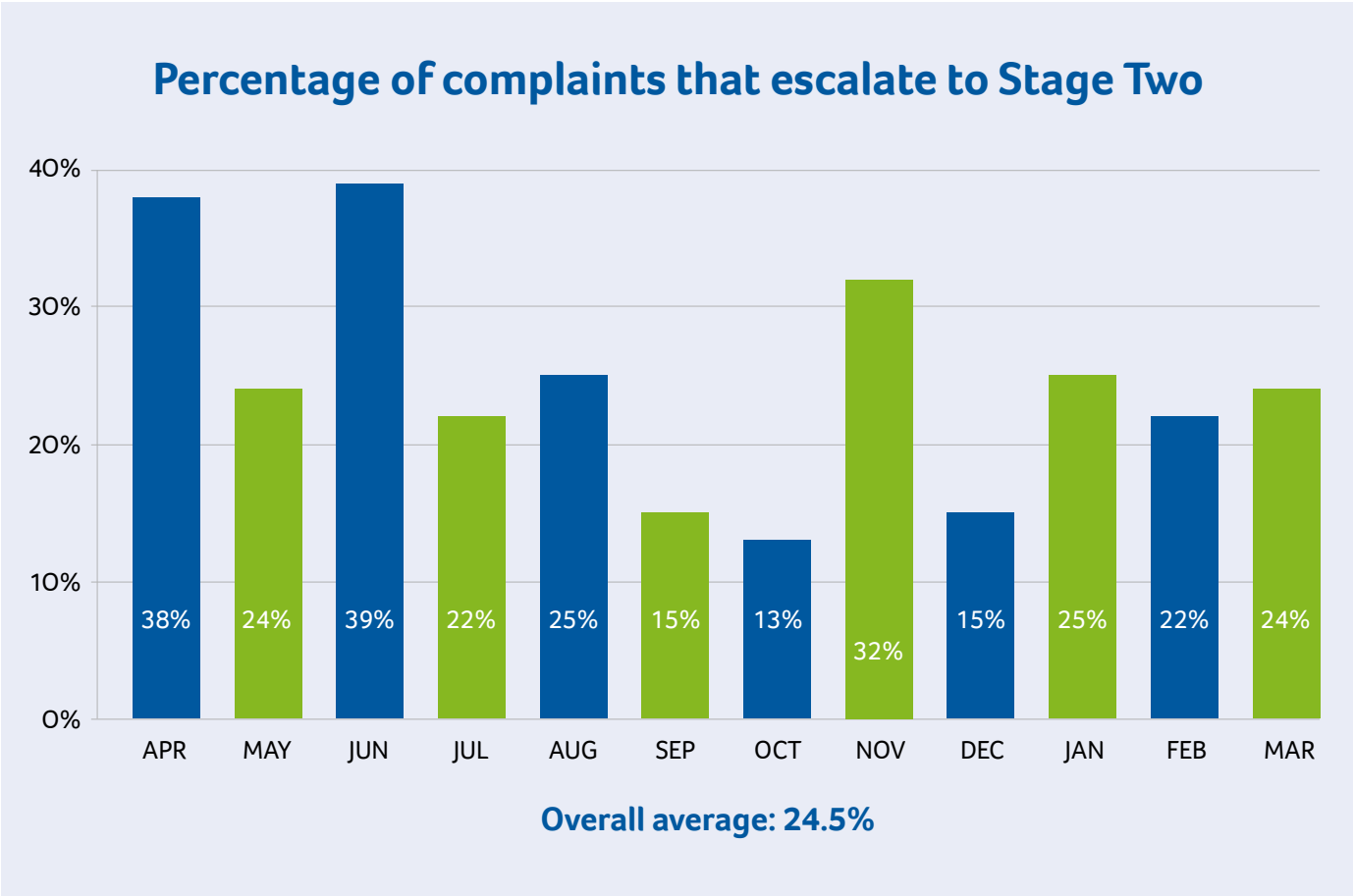
Although ASB complaints are lower in volume than repairs, they have remained a consistent theme throughout the reporting period.

Concerns raised by residents most commonly relate to communication, clarity around timescales and dissatisfaction with outcomes. These complaints underline the need for clearer expectations, stronger case management and more consistent follow up to reassure residents that concerns are being taken seriously.

Damp and mould remain an important issue and features in a number of complaints, particularly where repairs are involved. However, this is not always clearly reflected in complaint data.

This is likely due to complaints being categorised under a primary service area (such as repairs) without damp and mould issues being recorded as a secondary theme, especially where complaints span multiple services. Work is underway to improve complaint categorisation and data quality so that reporting more accurately reflects residents' experiences and informs targeted improvement activity.



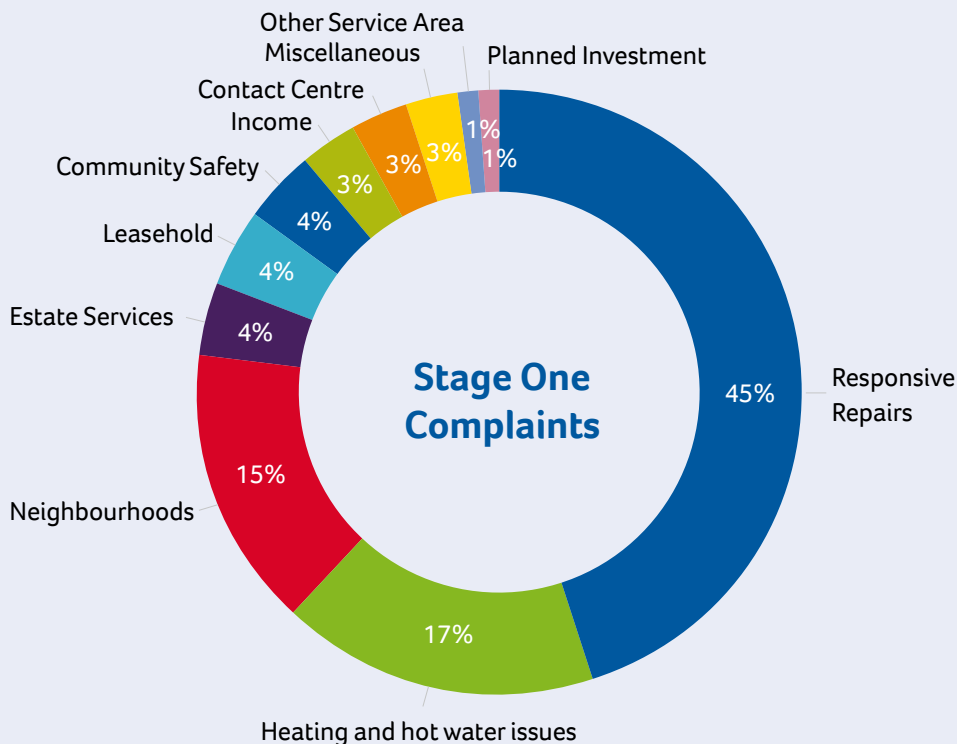


Following a stage one complaint, a resident has up to three months from the date of our stage one response or from the completion of the agreed resolution actions to escalate their complaint to stage two.

As of 31 March, 348 residents had escalated their complaint to stage two of our complaints process, however this figure doesn't represent any complaints that were escalated after this date.

This could mean that the figure provided is higher, however the information provided reflects our end of year position.

What cases are being escalated to stage 2?



We acknowledge that the number of Stage 2 complaints recorded during 2025–2026 remains consistently high. Our priority is to resolve issues effectively at the first stage wherever possible, and to understand the drivers of escalation, a detailed review of Stage 2 complaints has been undertaken.

The key trends identified include:

- Inconsistencies in the quality and depth of Stage 1 investigations
- Outstanding actions not being completed as part of the agreed resolution
- Resident dissatisfaction with how outcomes were explained or delivered

Failure to track and deliver resolutions has been identified as a significant factor driving escalation. Residents are more likely to lose confidence where agreed actions are delayed or not followed through.

Improving resolution tracking is therefore a priority, as it supports accountability, rebuilds trust and demonstrates that we do what we say we will do. While early indications suggest some reduction in escalation where improvements have been implemented, we recognise this as longer term work requiring sustained focus.

To improve consistency and quality, we are:

- Reviewing our compensation policy in line with recent Housing Ombudsman guidance
- Developing a complaint quality framework with customer service and resident experience embedded
- Reviewing complaint investigation practices and overall processes to support better first stage outcomes

Number of Refused Complaints

2024/25

0

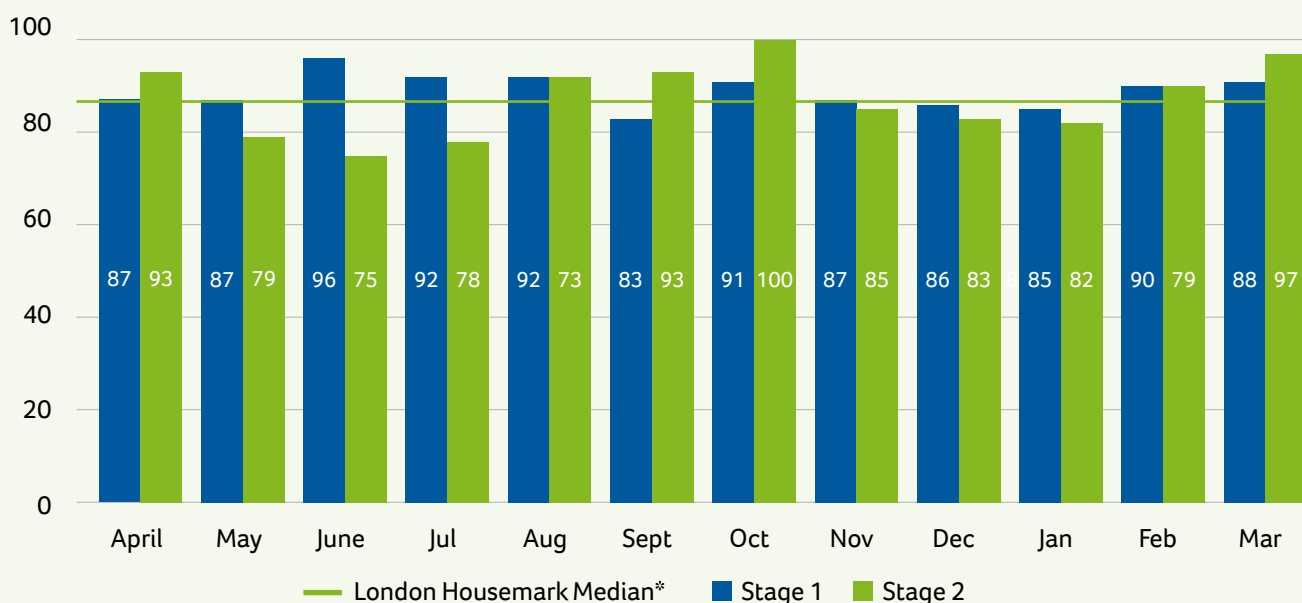
2025/26

0

Are we responding to complaints on time?

Our complaint response time has significantly improved. In 10 out of the last 12 months our response times have been better than our peer group. We recognise the need to enhance the quality of our responses and record-keeping to ensure we have all necessary information when addressing complaints. This is being addressed through our complaints handling project.

Complaints response time compared to peer group



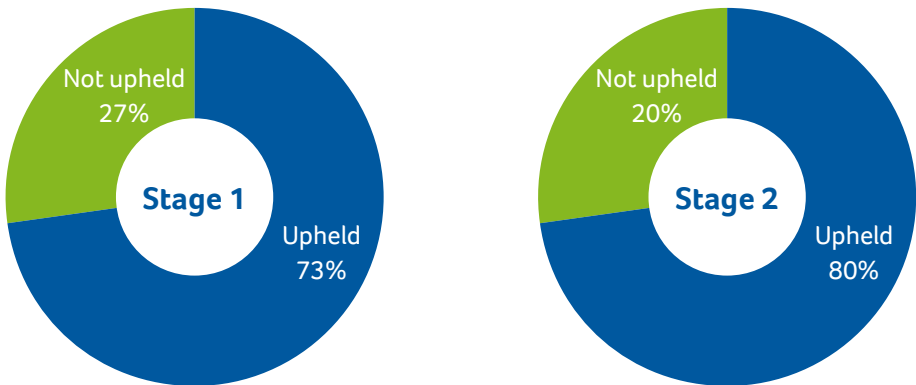
*Housemark is the leading data and insight company for the housing sector. It offers housing providers such as local authorities, housing associations and other social landlords with tools, analytics, and consultancy services to help improve performance, ensure compliance and enhance tenant satisfaction.

Over the reporting period, we handled 1672 complaints, with overall complaint volumes remaining broadly stable compared to the previous year. We continued to respond within the timescales set out in the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, with 87.9% of Stage 1 and 80.4% of Stage 2 complaints responded to on time.

Response times remain an area of relative strength. However, we recognise that timeliness alone is not sufficient if complaints are not resolved effectively at the first attempt.

While pressure continues in key service areas such as repairs and neighbourhoods, these remain the most common drivers of dissatisfaction. This reflects both longstanding service challenges and increased resident confidence to raise concerns. Reducing escalations remains a priority, particularly where complaints progress to Stage 2 due to incomplete actions, response quality or poor follow up.

Complaints upheld



Are customers happy with our approach to complaint handling?

Resident satisfaction with our complaint handling has improved during the year, but we recognise that it has not yet reached the standard we expect.

Feedback consistently highlights that while processes and response times have improved, residents do not always feel that outcomes adequately reflect the impact issues have had on their lives. Improving empathy, clarity around decisions, communication during resolution and the approach to redress is therefore a central focus of our ongoing improvement work.

Satisfaction with complaint handling (%)	
Target	Actual
2025/26	2025/26
25	19.5
2024/25	2024/25
25	16.4
2023/24	2023/24
25.3	12.6

Looking ahead

Over the coming year, our focus will be on:

- Reducing avoidable complaints and escalations
- Improving the quality and consistency of complaint responses
- Ensuring agreed actions are delivered promptly and effectively
- Increasing resident confidence and satisfaction with how we put things right

We are committed to being open about our performance, learning from our mistakes and using residents’ feedback to deliver better services.

This report forms part of that commitment and enables residents, the Board and our regulators to hold us to account as we continue our improvement journey.

Glossary of terms

Housing Ombudsman

The Housing Ombudsman is responsible for resolving disputes between tenants and landlords in the social housing sector, promoting fair treatment, and improving complaint handling across the industry.

Housing Ombudsman Determination

A formal decision made by an Ombudsman after investigating a complaint.

Housing Ombudsman Findings

These are the formal outcomes of investigations into complaints. These are:

No maladministration

The landlord acted appropriately.

Service failure

A minor failing occurred that needs to be addressed, but it didn't cause significant harm.

Maladministration

A failure by the landlord that negatively affected the resident.

Severe maladministration

A serious failure with significant detrimental impact on the resident.

Resolved with intervention

The complaint was resolved through mediation with the Ombudsman's help.

Redress

The landlord acknowledged the issue and took steps to resolve it before the Ombudsman's investigation concluded.

Outside jurisdiction

The complaint falls outside the Ombudsman's authority to investigate.

Withdrawn

The resident chose to withdraw the complaint, and the Ombudsman agreed with the circumstances

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