

# HOUSING COMPLAINTS ANNUAL REPORT FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/2025

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# **Housing Complaints Annual Report Financial Year 2024/2025**

## **Executive Summary**

This report sets out information on housing complaints received about the 2024/25 and the council's complaint handling performance. The report focuses on housing complaints and provides information and insight for the service area. This report also includes key data regarding complaints received at each stage of the council's complaint procedure, complaint handling performance, primary root causes for complaints and quality performance monitoring statistics.

## **Introduction**

The council currently operates a devolved operational model in managing complaints. The Corporate Complaints team handle and administer Housing complaints, member enquiries and information requests. The Corporate Complaints team respond directly to stage 1 complaints while stage 2 escalations are handled by the housing service Heads of Service for each team.

## **Background**

The council has a clear corporate policy that is available to customers on its website. The complaints procedure offers multiple channels for customers to lodge dissatisfaction about council services. This policy addresses most council services and specifies which ones are excluded, particularly those governed by other statutory processes. It outlines what qualifies as a complaint, how customers can report issues, and what they should anticipate throughout the complaints process and its various stages.

The council also has a corporate complaints procedure which is developed from a range of good complaints handling practices with the organisation and through benchmarking with other local authorities and external organisations including effective complaints handling practices from both the Local Government and Housing Ombudsman.

The council aims to address 95% of complaints within the specified time limits. These timeframes differ based on whether the complaint is corporate or statutory, and depending on the stage of the complaints process.

Handling complaints effectively is essential for providing excellent customer service and achieving positive results for our residents. Beyond correcting mistakes, each complaint offers a chance to learn from our residents' and customers' feedback, which we can use to enhance our services, thereby restoring and maintaining trust.

A high number of complaints alone does not necessarily reflect the quality of the Council's performance in handling them. Conversely, a low number of complaints could suggest that an organisation is not receptive to feedback.

Escalation and uphold rates are better performance metrics as they show where service-level complaints were unresolved, and fault was identified. Low escalation rates suggest

effective initial responses and timely resolutions. When fault is found, measures are taken to resolve the issue and enhance our service.

## Housing Complaint Volumes

The table below outlines the number of complaints received and escalated between stage 1 and 2 of the complaint's procedure by teams within the housing service. Housing needs saw the highest number of complaints

	Stage 1	Stage 2	Ombudsman	% *Complaints escalated to stage 2	% of *Complaints escalated to the Ombudsman
<b>All Housing</b>	<b>640</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>9%</b>
<b>Asset Management</b>	197	44	9	22%	5%
<b>Housing Management</b>	73	24	9	33%	12%
<b>Housing Needs</b>	370	132	40	36%	11%

\*Rounded up to the nearest %

Stage 2 escalation rates are high, suggesting low satisfaction with stage 1 responses. Asset Management complaint quality is 86%, with issues obtaining details from third-party contractors. Housing needs have the highest escalation to stage 2 despite strong quality assurance scores, mainly due to dissatisfaction with stage 1 outcomes.

## Complaint Handling Quality Assurance

A random selection of cases from 2024/2025 was examined to evaluate the quality of complaint management and responses. The evaluation covered several areas. The definition of these areas is detailed in the table below:

Category	Description
Administration	Timely logging and acknowledgement, correct selection of service categorisation and root cause classification
Complaint handling Process and Procedure	Locating appropriate tasks, obtaining relevant information, approval processes, timely complaint response, correctly recorded actions
Customer Experience	Keeping customers informed and updated, quality and format of written response, adequately responding to all points, determining appropriate outcome

<b>Service</b>	<b>Administration</b>	<b>Process/procedure</b>	<b>Customer Experience</b>	<b>Overall Quality</b>
Asset Management	89%	88%	80%	<b>86%</b>
Housing Management	88%	97%	93%	<b>93%</b>
Housing Needs	90%	96%	91%	<b>92%</b>

### Housing Complaints Top Classifications by Team

	<b>Top Classifications</b>
<b>Asset Management</b>	Asset Management 78% Repairs and Maintenance 19%
<b>Housing Management</b>	Housing Management 45% Antisocial Behaviour 18% Environmental Services 15%
<b>Housing Needs</b>	Temporary Accommodation 24% Housing Assessment 17% Housing Allocations 16% Housing Register 14%

### Housing Complaints Top Root Causes by Team

	<b>Share of top 3 root causes</b>
<b>All Housing</b>	<b>Delay in delivery of service 22%</b> <b>Dissatisfied with service offered 18%</b> <b>Unhappy with the handling of process 10%</b>
<b>Asset Management</b>	Delay in delivery of service 39% Delay in doing something 15% Failure to do something 9%
<b>Housing Management</b>	Dissatisfied with service offered 29% Service not to agreed standard 15% Delay in delivery of service 14%
<b>Housing Needs</b>	Dissatisfied with service offered 22% Delay in delivery of service 14% Unhappy with the handling of process 10%

## Housing Complaints Upheld Percentages

	<b>Stage 1 % Upheld or Partially Upheld</b>	<b>Stage 2 % Upheld or Partially Upheld</b>	<b>Ombudsman % Upheld</b>
<b>All Housing</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>43%</b>
<b>Asset Management</b>	80%	86%	33%
<b>Housing Management</b>	62%	79%	33%
<b>Housing Needs</b>	54%	56%	48%

\*Not all Ombudsman escalations have an outcome yet

## Housing Complaints Performance by Team

<b>Stage One answered on time</b>	<b>All Housing 79%</b> Asset Management 68% Housing Management 78% Housing Needs 85%
<b>Stage Two answered on time</b>	<b>All Housing 56%</b> Asset Management 42% Housing Management 69% Housing Needs 57%

## Service Improvements

There are a number of initiatives that sit as part of the corporate team's service plan to be completed by the end of the financial year. These include:

- Review and refresh the corporate complaints policy.
- Evaluate root cause classifications and add new categories to enhance understanding and learning of root causes.
- Incorporate root cause insights into service improvement plans.
- Review and refresh the vexatious/unreasonable behaviour policy
- Create corporate compensation policy/guidelines

The council has updated its website to assist residents in locating information and accessing resources more easily, including the implementation of an AI tool. This digital approach aims to improve access to current service information and facilitates online issue resolution. It also enables the council to allocate face-to-face or telephone support for residents who require additional assistance.

A new housing system will centralise resident, customer, and repair records, giving complaint handlers quick access to all information and enabling faster, more efficient resolution.

Complaint insights help pinpoint service gaps. The Corporate Complaints team regularly meets with Housing Service managers to inform targeted improvement plans for service delivery. By systematically analysing the types and frequency of complaints received, the team is able to identify patterns and recurring issues that may signal underlying problems within the housing services offered. These findings are then discussed in collaborative meetings with Housing Service managers, allowing both parties to share perspectives, clarify root causes, and agree actionable steps for improvement. This collaborative approach ensures that feedback from residents is not only acknowledged but also directly influences future service development. The process supports a cycle of continuous improvement, whereby lessons learned from complaints are integrated into broader service improvement plans, contributing to more effective, responsive, and resident-focused housing services.

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