

**2024-2025**

# **Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report**



**Bespoke Supportive Tenancies**

## Accessibility

We want to make sure that this report is accessible to all tenants. If you would like to receive the information in this report in a different language or format, such as larger print or braille, please get in touch with us on **0161 786 6000** or via our website: [www.bestha.co.uk/contact-form.php](http://www.bestha.co.uk/contact-form.php)

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Bespoke Supportive Tenancies (BeST) report every year on how many complaints we receive from tenants and how quickly we respond. This is part of our duty to follow the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code and the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) set by the Regulator of Social Housing.
- 1.2. This report looks at the complaints we received between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025, and how we responded to them. It highlights the key reasons for complaints, the lessons we have learned, and the improvements we have made to our services.

## 2. Number of complaints received

- 2.1. Over the past year, we received a total of **101** formal complaints. This is a 29% increase in complaints the previous year.
- 2.2. **90% of complaints were responded to on time**, a significant improvement from the 14% of complaints we responded to on time in the previous year.

### Stage 1 complaints

- 93 complaints received, a 26% increase from the previous year.
- 90% were responded to within our policy timescale of 10 working days.
- **92%** of complaints were resolved at **Stage 1**.

### Stage 2 complaints

- 8 complaints progressed to Stage 2, a 100% increase from the previous year.
- 88% were responded to within our policy timescale of 20 working days.

### **3. Foreword from the Board and Member Responsible for Complaints**

- 3.1. As the Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC) at BeST, I am pleased to share this Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report for the financial year 2024/25 with our tenants, colleagues and partners on behalf of the board.
- 3.2. This past year has been a year of listening, learning, and improving how we handle complaints. We know we have not always got things right, especially in areas such as repairs, communication, and keeping people informed. When things go wrong, it is important we fix them quickly and learn from them.
- 3.3. We have taken real steps forward. We have strengthened our complaints process, improved how quickly we respond, and brought in a new complaints management system. This year, we responded to 90% of complaints on time, compared to just 14% last year. That is a major improvement, and one we are proud of, but we know there is still more work to be done.
- 3.4. As a Board, we continue to oversee BeST's performance and challenge ourselves to meet the Housing Ombudsman's Code. We have carefully reviewed our self-assessment and are confident that we are performing well in terms of policy. However, we recognise the need to continue strengthening in practice.
- 3.5. Every complaint matters and represents a tenant who needed something to be put right. We will continue to listen to and act on feedback, and we are committed to ensuring that complaints lead to tangible improvements in our work practices. Thank you to everyone who took the time to raise a concern; you are helping us to do better.

***Paul Carhart, Board member and MRC***

4. Complaints performance

4.1. We assessed our performance below based on the Housing Ombudsman’s Complaint Handling Code and our complaints policy.

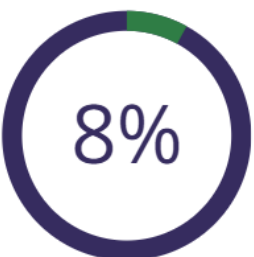
Total number of complaints recieved



Percentage of **stage one** complaints



Percentage of **stage two** complaints



Number of **stage one** complaints recieved



**Acknowledged** within 5 working days



**Responded to** within 10 working days



Number of **stage two** complaints recieved



**Acknowledged** within 5 working days



**Responded to** within 20 working days



## Stage 1 complaints

- We received 93 stage one complaints.
- We manage 1,381 homes, which means we received 67.3 complaints for every 1,000 homes.
- We responded to 84 out of 93 stage one complaints on time. That is 90.3% responded to on time.
- 65 stage one complaints were responded to within 10 working days, without using the extra 10 day extension allowed for complex cases.
- 19 stage one complaints were responded to on time, using the 10 working day extension allowed for complex complaints.
- 9 stage one complaints were not responded to on time.

## Stage 2 complaints

- We received 8 stage two complaints, which means we received 5.8 complaints for every 1,000 homes.
- We responded to 7 out of 8 stage two complaints on time. That is 87.5% responded to on time.
- 7 stage two complaints were responded to within 20 working days, without using the extra 20 day extension allowed for complex cases.
- No extensions were used for stage two complaints.
- 1 stage two complaint was not responded to on time.

4.2. We responded to most complaints on time, with 90% of stage one and 88% of stage two complaints responded to on time. This is a significant improvement from the previous year.

4.3. We aim to keep improving how we respond to complaints by:

- Acting quickly
- Being fair
- And learning from what went wrong

4.4. We will continue to look at the causes of complaints and improve our services based on what tenants and their support tell us.

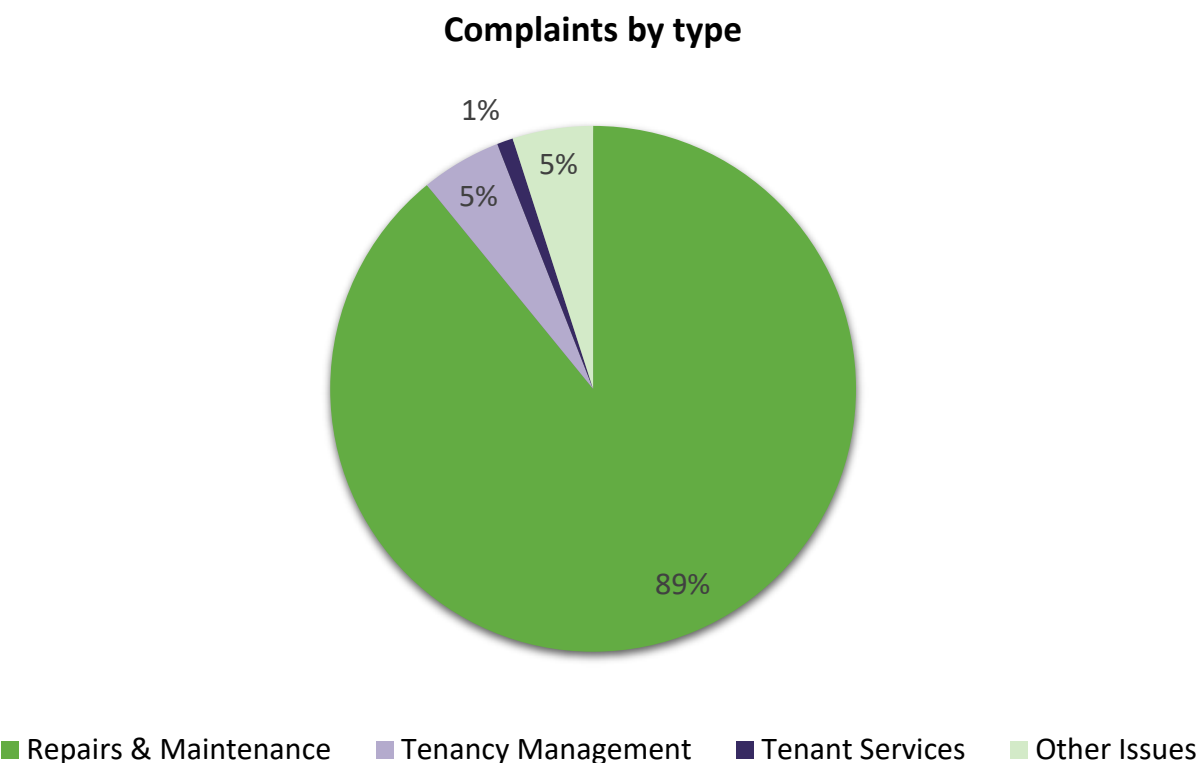
## 5. Complaint outcomes

Where our investigation finds that we are at fault in some way, we will partially or fully uphold the complaint. We will also inform tenants and their support about what we have learned and any steps we take to avoid similar issues in the future.

- 69% were fully upheld
- 9% were partially upheld
- 19% were not upheld
- 3% were resolved at the first point of contact

## 6. Complaints by type

- 6.1. Repairs and maintenance is our most important service, and it is also one of the areas that matter most to tenants. The majority of complaints we receive are about repairs and the condition of tenants’ homes.
- 6.2. 89% of the complaints we received were about repairs and maintenance.
- 6.3. 6% were related to tenancy management and tenant services, and 5% were for other issues.

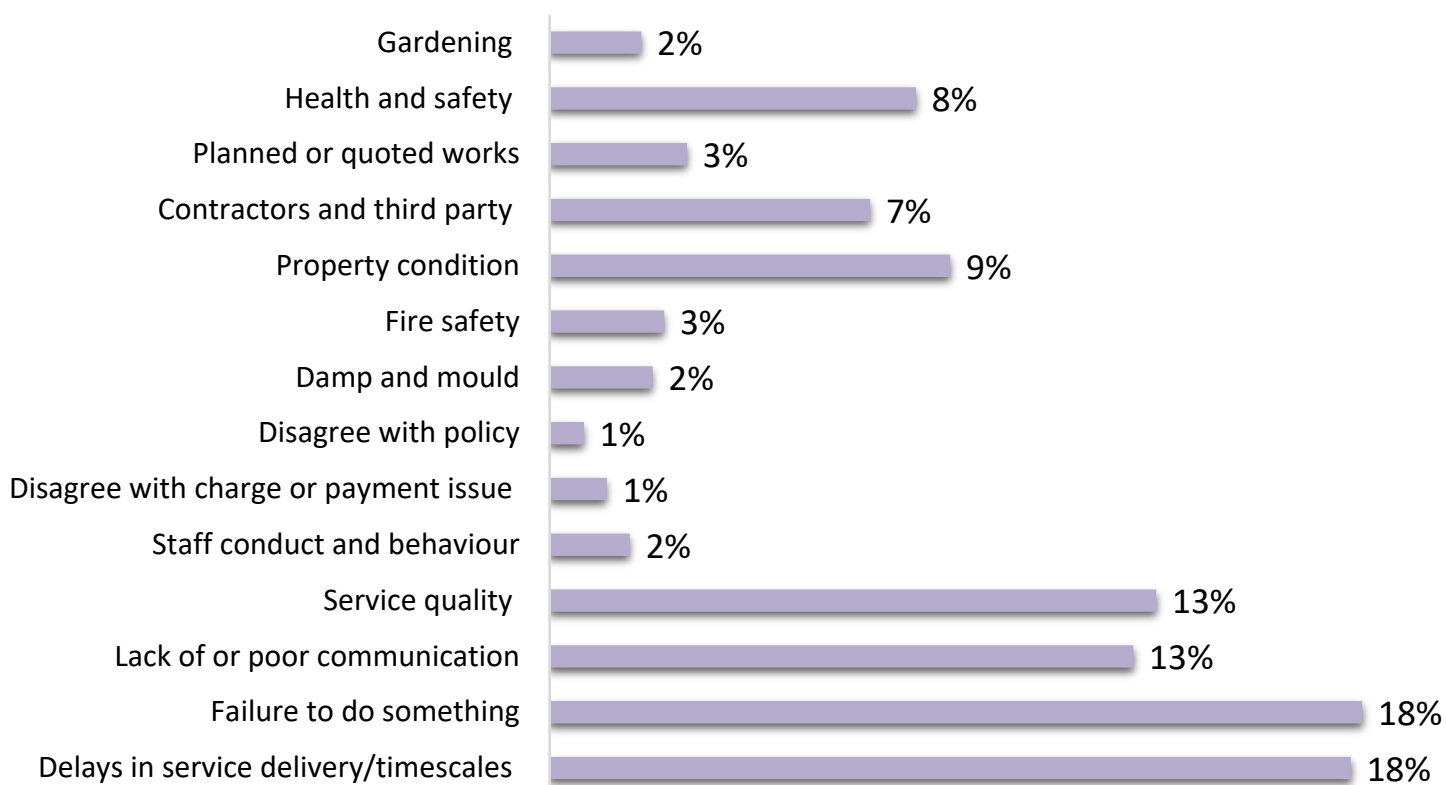


## 7. Complaints by theme

### 7.1. The top themes for complaints:

- **Delays in service delivery and time taken to complete repairs**  
Unsatisfactory time taken to complete a repair, or where an issue is unreasonably ongoing. Delays in works, especially those quoted or planned, are a common theme.
- **Failure to do something**  
Where an issue has not been resolved despite being reported.
- **Poor or lack of communication**  
Lack of or no follow-up or updates provided. Customers are often chasing for information.
- **Service quality**  
The overall quality of service delivered is inconsistent. Complaints highlight work being completed over multiple visits, lacking attention to detail, or requiring redoing. There are concerns about how repairs are carried out, whether issues are adequately resolved, and the standard of work.

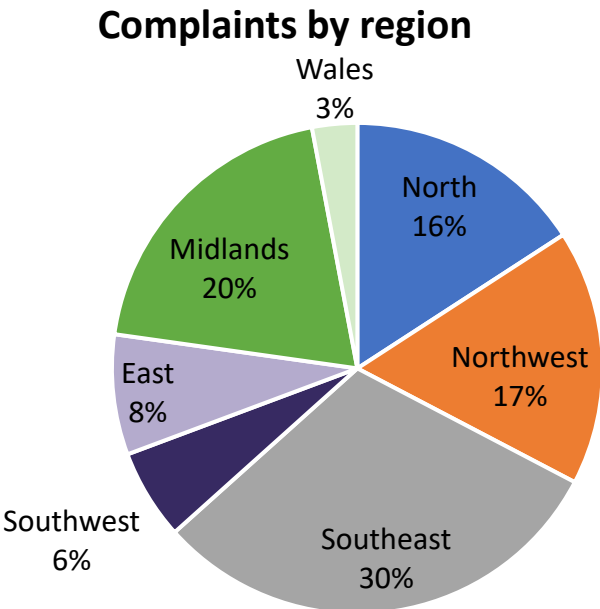
### Complaints by theme





8. Complaints by region

8.1. Most of the complaints we received came from tenants in the Southeast (30%), followed by the Midlands (20%), the Northwest (17%) and the North (16%). This helps us understand where tenants are experiencing the most issues, allowing us to focus our efforts accordingly.



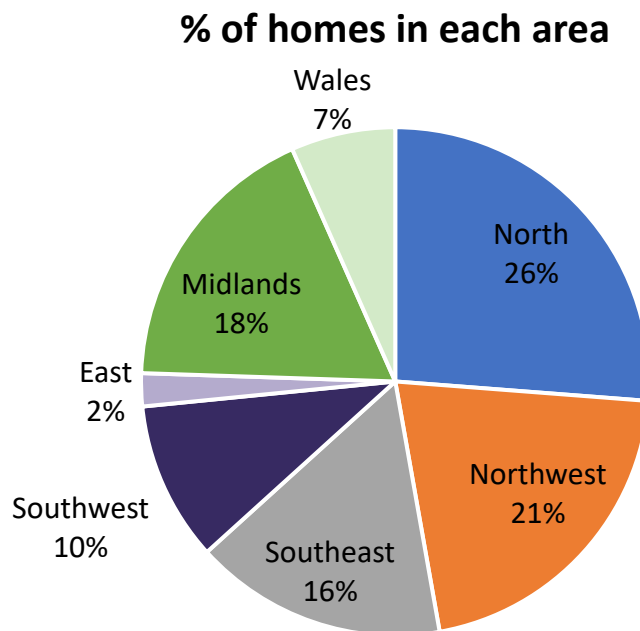
8.2. When comparing the profile of our homes to the profile of complaints, some apparent differences can be seen.

8.3. The East stands out most, with only 2% of homes but 8% of complaints. The Southeast also shows a higher level of complaints, accounting for 30% compared to 16% of homes. The Midlands is broadly in line, with 20% of complaints against 18% of homes. In other regions, the figures are slightly lower than their share of homes would suggest in the Northwest, 17% of complaints compared with 21% of homes; in the Southwest, 6% of complaints compared with 10% of homes; and in Wales, 3% of complaints compared with 7% of homes.

8.4. The North shows a more noticeable difference, with 16% of complaints compared with 26% of homes.

8.5. Overall, this indicates that complaints are more concentrated in the Southeast and East, while other regions are broadly proportionate or only slightly lower. These figures should be read with caution, as our current

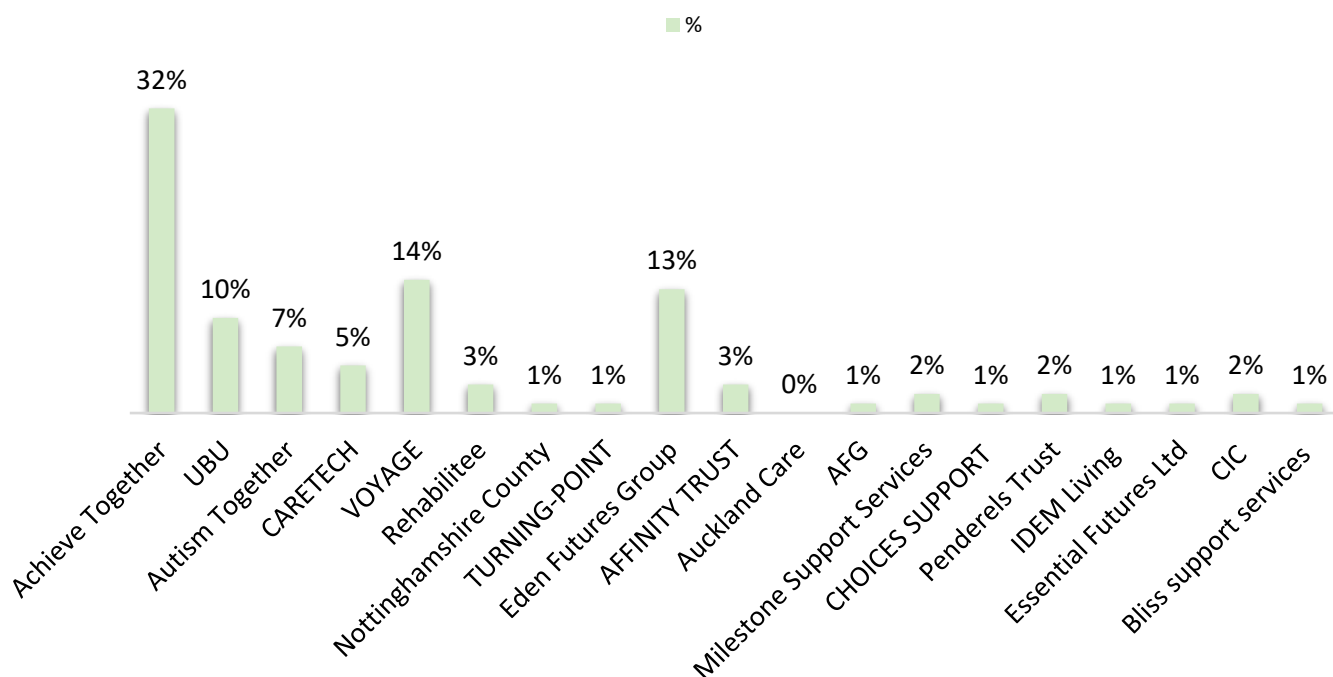
regional boundaries are broad, and we are reviewing the way homes are grouped to provide a more accurate regional breakdown in future reports.



## 9. Complaints by support provider

- 9.1. The chart below sets out the percentage of complaints received during the year by the support provider.
- 9.1. When these complaints are considered alongside the proportion of homes each provider supports tenants in, the analysis highlights where complaint levels are disproportionate to the scale of service delivery. This enables us to identify providers where complaints are higher than expected, as well as those performing broadly in line with or below their footprint, and to target service improvements accordingly.

## Complaints by support provider



9.2. This table shows the % of homes that the support providers provide support to tenants in.

Support provider	% homes they provide support in
Achieve Together	9%
UBU	4%
Autism Together	5%
Voyage	18%
Eden Futures	15%

- Achieve Together** provide support in 9% of our homes yet accounted for 32% of all complaints received. This is significantly higher than expected and identifies Achieve Together as a priority area for service improvement. Further examination shows that complaints are concentrated within specific schemes, where tenants appear to be more aware of how to raise concerns. In addition, feedback from the provider's Director of Estates has complemented our complaints handling. Many of the properties are in the South, which links to the southern weighting for complaints shown in section 8.
- UBU** provide support in 4% of homes but accounted for 10% of complaints. This higher share highlights the need for closer review of the

nature of these complaints. Further analysis will focus on identifying any recurring themes or scheme level patterns so that targeted improvements can be agreed and progress monitored.

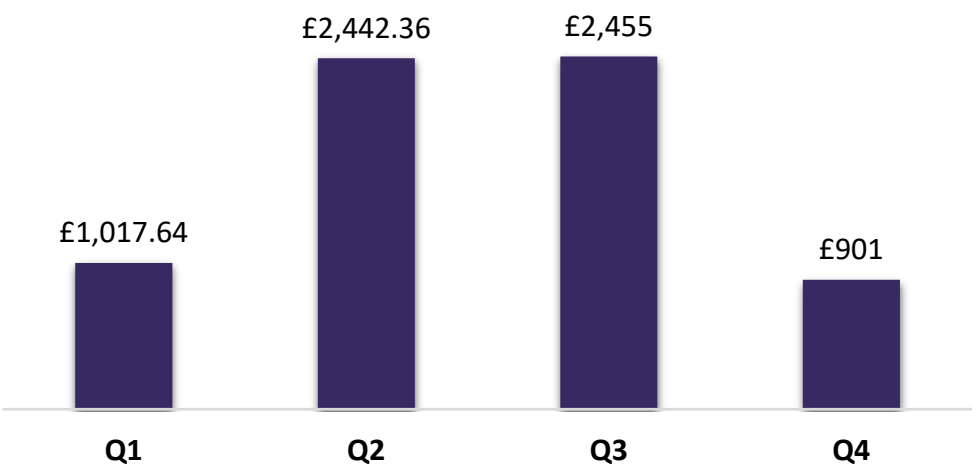
- **Autism Together** provide support in 5% of homes and accounted for 7% of complaints. While not disproportionately high, this indicates some areas of concern that require attention. Ongoing monitoring will be used to identify whether complaints are isolated to particular schemes or represent broader service issues, ensuring that any necessary improvements are targeted effectively.
- **Voyage** provide support in 18% of homes and accounted for 14% of complaints. While this is still a notable proportion, it is broadly consistent with their overall footprint. Complaint levels have shown signs of stabilisation over the year, and we will continue to monitor trends closely to ensure that service quality remains consistent across schemes.
- **Eden Futures** provide support in 15% of homes and accounted for 13% of complaints. Although this is proportionate to their footprint, the volume means they remain one of the highest sources of complaints overall. The focus here is less on disproportionality and more on addressing the themes raised, ensuring that lessons are embedded across their wide service coverage.

9.3. This analysis shows that the majority of complaints are concentrated within a small number of providers, several of whom are generating complaints at levels significantly above their service share. These findings will inform provider performance reviews, with targeted engagement, action planning and monitoring put in place where complaint levels are disproportionately high.

9.4. From 2025-26, complaint-to-footprint analysis will be embedded within quarterly monitoring to strengthen accountability and ensure that service improvements are delivered.

10. Compensation

10.1. Total compensation paid - £6,816



10.2. In line with our compensation policy, we provided financial redress during the year to address service failures, inconvenience, and tenant distress where our landlord responsibilities were not met.

10.3. Each case was reviewed individually, with compensation amounts based on the seriousness and duration of the issue, any financial impact, and how similar cases had been handled previously. This approach helps ensure that compensation is fair, consistent, and reflects each tenant’s experience.

10.4. We have reviewed our process so that any discretionary compensation is awarded fairly, in accordance with the Ombudsman’s dispute resolution principles of ‘be fair’, ‘put things right’, and ‘learn from outcomes’.

10.5. We are reviewing our compensation policy in 2025/26 in line with the Housing Ombudsman’s guidance.

## 11. Housing Ombudsman

- 11.1. The Housing Ombudsman is a free (to tenants), independent, and impartial service. Their work is funded through landlord subscription fees.
- 11.2. They investigate complaints and resolve disputes involving the tenants and leaseholders of social landlords (housing associations and local authorities) like BeST.
- 11.3. Tenants can take a complaint to the Housing Ombudsman Service for investigation after going through the landlord's complaint process, if the issues have not been resolved. The service also helps when the landlord is not responding to a complaint they have received.
- 11.4. Members of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme must comply with the Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. The code aims to achieve best practice in complaint handling. The Ombudsman has the power to issue orders to landlords, which may include ordering the landlord to apologise, carry out works, or pay compensation. For more information, please visit the [Housing Ombudsman website](#).
- 11.5. The Housing Ombudsman will make recommendations and a determination when they review a complaint. There are several types of determination, including:

### Maladministration

Where the landlord, for example, has failed to comply with its legal obligations, its policies and procedures, or unreasonably delayed dealing with the matter. This could be a finding of service failure, maladministration or severe maladministration, depending on the seriousness of the failure and the impact on the resident. Service failure is the lowest level of maladministration and is reserved for minor failings where action is still needed to put things right.

### No maladministration

Where the landlord is found to have acted appropriately.

## Redress

Where the landlord made redress to the resident, which resolved the complaint satisfactorily in the Ombudsman's opinion.

## Resolved with intervention/early resolution

Where the complaint was resolved with the Ombudsman's intervention.

## Outside jurisdiction (OSJ)

Where the Ombudsman does not have the authority to investigate, this could be for a variety of reasons, including the complaint had not been made within a reasonable timescale; the complaint did not meet the conditions of the scheme, or the matter was more appropriately dealt with by the courts, a tribunal, another complaint handling body or regulator.

- 11.6. We have received no determinations by the Housing Ombudsman from April 2024 to March 2025.

## 12. Learning from complaints

- 12.1. This section explains what we have learned from complaints, the common issues that caused them, and what actions we have taken to improve services.
- 12.2. Listening to feedback and responding fairly helps us improve how we work and ensures we meet the needs of all tenants.
- 12.3. Over the past year, we have made several important changes to improve how we handle complaints and how we use them to drive service improvements. These include:

## Governance and oversight

- We meet with our board Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC) quarterly to challenge and improve our performance at the highest level.

- We have expanded our complaints team and have a complaints steering group to oversee complaints, track learning, and ensure that improvements are made.

### Stronger policies and clearer procedures

- We introduced and updated several policies to make our complaints service clearer, fairer, and easier to access:
  - Complaints Policy
  - Compensation Policy
  - Unreasonable Behaviour Policy
  - Reasonable Adjustments Policy

### Systems and staff training

- In July 2024, we launched a new complaints system to help us better record, track and respond to complaints. This system has improved how we monitor cases and follow up on actions, and it will continue to be developed in 2025/26.
- We also delivered staff training to strengthen our approach to complaints, including:
  - Promoting a positive complaints culture.
  - Helping staff identify and recognise complaints correctly.
  - Ensuring all staff know how to handle complaints and refer them to the Complaints Team in line with our complaints policy and procedure.
  - Most staff have completed internal training on our Complaints Policy and Procedure.
  - 83% of staff have completed the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code eLearning course.
  - 60% have completed the Housing Ombudsman's Dispute Resolution eLearning course.
- We also introduced new systems to:
  - Improve how we record and monitor complaints.
  - Track actions arising from complaints.



- Record and monitor learning from complaints to support service improvement.

Further development of our systems and processes is planned for 2025/26 to strengthen learning, accountability and oversight.

## What's working better

- Quicker acknowledgement and responses.  
We acknowledged **97%** of complaints on time and are now responding to **90%** within timescales. We know that we still need to improve further and are aiming to achieve 100% by the end of the year ahead.
- More consistent complaints handling.  
We have increased the size of our Complaints Team, made our processes more efficient, and improved how we track progress and monitor our performance.
- Named case handlers.  
Tenants and support now have a point of contact during their complaint, improving communication and helping customers feel more supported.
- Better support for tenants with disabilities or health conditions.  
We are improving how we handle complaints so that risks are recognised and appropriately managed. This includes asking if the tenant needs any reasonable adjustments, updating our complaint system and providing staff guidance.

## Improving repairs

- Repairs remain the number one concern raised by tenants, and our main area for improvement.
  - Repairs take longer than expected or are sometimes delayed.
  - Repairs are sometimes not resolved, even after being reported.
  - Repairs are often completed over multiple visits.
  - Tenants are not always kept informed about the progress of their repairs.

Improvements already implemented based on feedback include:

- Appointing new contractors to improve our landlord compliance services. This includes necessary safety checks, servicing, and repairs for items such as gas and oil boilers, fire alarms, fire fighting equipment, emergency lighting, lifts, and asbestos.
  - Setting new performance standards for our contractors.
  - Introducing Plentific, a new Maintenance and Property Management system to help us manage health and safety compliance. Over the next 18 months, we will also start using Plentific for day-to-day repairs. Tenants and support will be able to report repairs, track progress, book appointments, and get automatic updates through an app. This means tenants and support will be kept up to date without needing to chase for information.
- Our aim is to reduce delays, improve communication, and complete repairs right the first time, providing all tenants with safe, well-maintained homes and a positive experience.

### Bringing repairs and maintenance in-house

- From April 2026 the repairs and maintenance service will be brought fully in-house. This represents a significant and exciting opportunity to reshape how we deliver our property maintenance services and reflects our commitment to improving outcomes for tenants.
- The new model has been designed to strengthen oversight and accountability, allowing us to manage performance directly rather than relying on third-party contractors. This will deliver faster response times, improved quality of repairs, and better value for money. By managing the service in-house, we will also have greater flexibility to plan and prioritise works based on tenants' needs, ensuring that the service is not only efficient but also person-centred.

Further benefits include:

- **Improved tenant experience** with greater consistency, clearer communication, and a more responsive service.
- **Direct workforce engagement** enabling us to invest in training, skills and culture aligned with our values.
- **Improved data and reporting** stronger insight into repairs trends and tenant feedback to drive continuous improvement.
- **Value for money** reducing reliance on external contractors and better controlling costs.
- **Integration with wider services** aligning repairs with housing management, compliance and planned maintenance to deliver a more joined-up service.

This marks a major step forward, giving us the ability to deliver a modern, flexible and accountable repairs service that is responsive to tenant needs and built around learning from complaints.

## Tackling damp and mould

- Living with damp and mould can have a serious impact on health and wellbeing. During the 2024/25 period, we reviewed all complaints related to damp and mould and took targeted action to improve our response and support for affected tenants.
- Although only **9 complaints (9%)** related to damp and mould, we recognise the importance of acting quickly and effectively.
- To strengthen our approach, we have:
  - Improved our response times and introduced a new damp and mould policy. We make safe any reported damp and mould issues within 7 days, and we attend to emergency cases within 24 hours.

Further improvements will continue into 2025/26 as we prepare for the legal duties outlined in Awaab's Law and aim to enhance tenant safety and satisfaction.

## Culture and accountability

- Our Tenant Satisfaction Measure (TSM) for complaints handling **increased from 31% to 42%** this year, indicating some positive progress in how tenants perceive our service. While this is a step in the right direction, we know there is still significant room for improvement.
- To help drive this forward, from 2025/26, every staff member will have a complaint-related performance objective. This will help embed accountability across the organisation and keep the focus on delivering excellent service, resolving issues fairly, and learning from complaints to better meet the needs of our tenants.

## 13. Looking ahead 2025/26

13.1. Areas where we are focusing on making further improvements against the Housing Ombudsman code include:

- Acknowledging and responding to more complaints on time and keeping tenants informed during the complaints process. By expanding our team and improving the way we work, we are already seeing positive changes that help us provide a better complaints service.
- Continuously embed our approach to complaint handling across the organisation and with our contractors through ongoing training and clear communication.
- Improving how we track, monitor and follow up on actions and learning from complaints. We will improve our systems and processes to ensure that all complaint learning points and agreed actions are clearly recorded, tracked through to completion, and regularly reviewed. This includes introducing clear ownership, timelines, and reporting mechanisms to prevent repeat issues and support continuous

improvement.

- 'Closing the loop' on complaint learning to deliver real service improvements. We will embed a stronger learning culture by making sure lessons from complaints are acted on and lead to visible changes in service delivery. We will work across teams to share learning, implement improvements, and report back to tenants and staff on the changes made as a result of their feedback in our tenants' annual report and Snippets newsletter.
- Expanding our internal complaints training offer and increasing uptake of the Housing Ombudsman's eLearning modules. New staff inductions will include expectations for complaint handling, and refresher training will be rolled out for existing staff to support consistency and confidence in complaint resolution.

## 14. Conclusion

- 14.1. We have made significant changes to improve complaint handling and services for tenants, and we continue to work with tenants and their support to deliver better experiences across all services. Importantly, we are learning from complaints and other feedback to focus improvements on the areas that matter most to tenants, in particular, repairs.