



Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report

1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025

Information Governance and Complaints Team

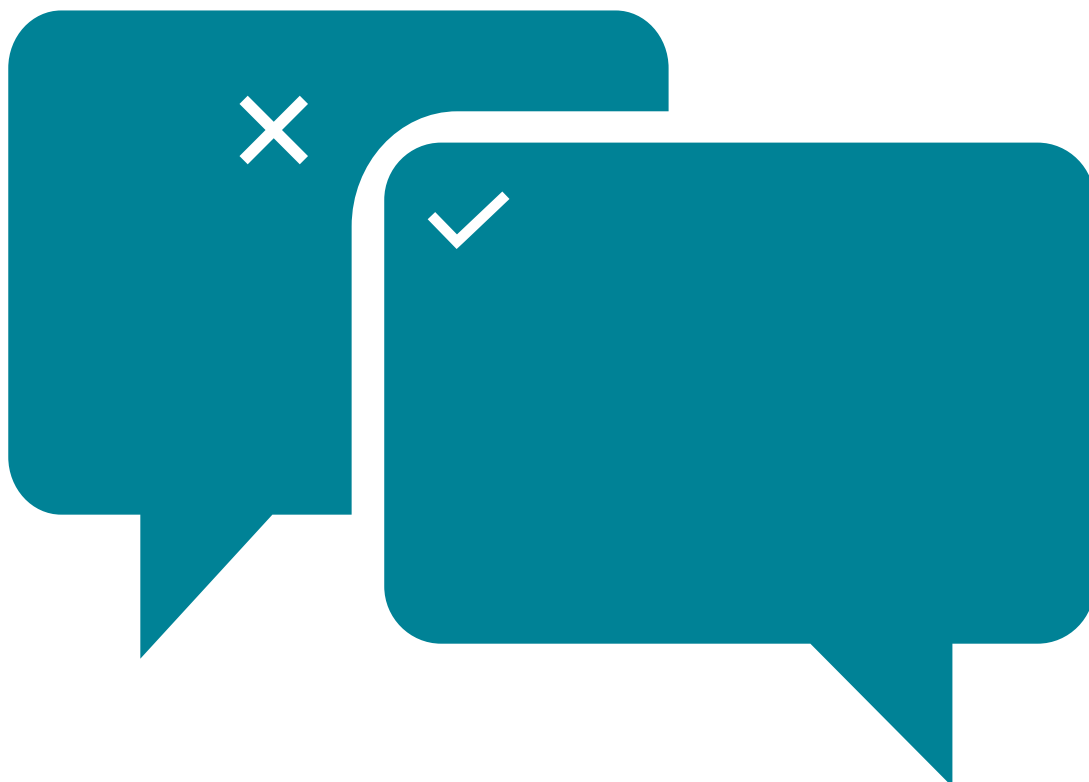


Table of Contents

1. Introduction	4
2. Complaint Handling Codes	5
Background	5
Self-Assessment	5
Annual complaints performance and service improvement report requirement	5
Housing Ombudsman Submission	6
3. Our procedure	7
4. Structure	9
5. All complaints	10
Summary – 2024/2025	10
Analysis	11
Numbers	11
Complaint findings	15
Themes	16
Stages	18
Timescales	19
6. Complaints from tenants	20
Summary - 2024/2025	20
Analysis	21
Numbers	21
Complaint findings	25
Themes	26
Stages	28
Timescales	29
7. Complaints not accepted	30
8. Tenant Satisfaction Measures review	35
Background	35
TSM results 2024/25	36
Analysis	37
9. Learning	39
Corporate	39
Complaints from tenants	42
10. Ombudsman decisions	45

Summary - 2024/2025	45
Right to escalate	45
Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman	45
Annual review letter.....	45
Investigations and findings	46
Housing Ombudsman	48
Performance report.....	48
Investigations and findings	48
11. Compliments.....	50
12. Next steps for 2025/26 and beyond	59

1. Introduction

- 1.1 New Forest District Council ('the Council') is committed to providing residents, tenants and our communities with quality services. However, sometimes things do go wrong. We encourage people to tell us when this happens so we can put things right, explain what has happened, learn from our mistakes and improve our services.
- 1.2 We have a **Corporate Complaints Procedure** which we follow for complaints that are made to the Council. This process is managed by the Information Governance and Complaints Team.
- 1.3 Our approach to complaint handling is also in line with the Council's **Corporate Plan 2024 to 2028 for people, place and prosperity** and our values: LEAF:
- **Learning**: we use complaints as an opportunity to learn from our mistakes.
 - **Empathy**: we show empathy to complainants.
 - **Ambition**: we have ambition to improve our services where it is identified that someone has not received the standard of service that they should have.
 - **Fairness**: we are fair to complainants and residents in our complaint handling.
- 1.4 The purpose of this report is to outline the complaints and compliments we have received during the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, highlighting key themes, trends and volumes recognising that accountability and transparency are integral to a positive complaint handling culture. The report includes case studies demonstrating learning from complaints received.

2. Complaint Handling Codes

Background

- 2.1 There are two Ombudsman services with jurisdiction over our complaint handling; The Housing Ombudsman for complaints from our tenants relating to the Council in its capacity as their landlord, and the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman with jurisdiction over all other complaints.
- 2.2 The Housing Ombudsman has a statutory power, in accordance with the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, to issue a statutory code of practice and a statutory duty to monitor compliance with this code.
- 2.3 Accordingly, the Housing Ombudsman has issued a **statutory Complaint Handling Code**. The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman has also issued a **non-statutory Complaint Handling Code** which aligns closely with the Housing Ombudsman's code. Both codes took effect on 1 April 2024.

Self-Assessment

- 2.4 There is a requirement within both codes for us to carry out annual self-assessments to ensure our complaints procedure complies with the codes.
- 2.5 There is a further requirement in the Housing Ombudsman's code that this self-assessment is reported to and approved by our governing body (Cabinet), at least annually.
- 2.6 After approval, the self-assessments should also be published on the complaints section of our website. Our self-assessments against both codes are published here: **Feedback, comments and complaints - New Forest District Council**.

Annual complaints performance and service improvement report requirement

- 2.7 We must also produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge. This is the required report.

- 2.8 This report is approved by Cabinet. Cabinet’s formal response to this report will be published, alongside this report, here: **Feedback, comments and complaints - New Forest District Council**

Housing Ombudsman Submission

- 2.9 The Housing Ombudsman requires that we submit a copy of our self-assessment, annual complaints performance and service improvement report and Cabinet’s response to the report to it by 30 September 2025.

3. Our procedure

3.1 We operate a 2 stage **Corporate Complaints Procedure** for all complaints.

3.2 The process followed is set out below:

Stage	Responsible Officer	Steps and Timescales
1	<p>Service Manager (in consultation with Assistant Director/Strategic Director as applicable).</p> <p>The Assistant Director or Strategic Director may personally deal with a complaint at stage 1 at their discretion.</p>	<p>Complaint received.</p> <p>Complaint acknowledged within 5 working days by the Information Governance and Complaints Team. This acknowledgement will set out our understanding of the complaint and the outcome the complainant is seeking. Complainant informed of officer dealing with complaint and expected response date.</p> <p>Complainant requested to clarify complaint and desired outcome if this is not clear.</p> <p>Stage 1 response sent within 10 working days, following the acknowledgement, advising the complainant of the right to escalate the complaint by contacting the Information Governance and Complaints Team (complaints@nfdc.gov.uk). The response will also advise the complainant of their right to escalate their complaint to the relevant Ombudsman when they have exhausted this Procedure.</p>
2	Monitoring Officer on behalf of the Chief Executive.	<p>Request to escalate complaint received.</p> <p>Escalation request acknowledged within 5 working days by the Information Governance and Complaints Team. This acknowledgement will set out our understanding of the complaint and the outcome the complainant is seeking. Complainant informed of officer dealing with complaint and expected response date.</p> <p>Stage 2 response sent within 20 working days, following the acknowledgement, advising the complainant that they have completed this Procedure, and they are entitled to refer their complaint to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman or, for Housing Complaints (by Council tenants/ leaseholders about the Council as their landlord), the Housing Ombudsman if they remain dissatisfied.</p>

3.3 These stages and timescales meet the requirements of the codes.

3.4 As a result of the new complaint handling codes, with effect from 1 April 2024 we took the following action:



- We updated our corporate complaints procedure to meet the requirements of the new codes, including the timescales.
- We updated our acknowledgment processes to clearly set out for complainants what our understanding of their complaint, and the outcome they are seeking, is.
- We introduced template letters to assist responders to complaints with covering all required information in their responses.

4. Structure

4.1 We recognise the importance of this report providing a clear picture of all our complaint handling. We have chosen to produce one report that covers all our service areas, which will go through one approval process and be submitted to the Housing Ombudsman in full. We have structured the analysis sections of this report as follows:

- All complaints (section 5)
- Complaints from tenants to the Council as its landlord (section 6)
- Complaints not accepted (section 7)
- Tenant Satisfaction Measures review (section 8)
- Learning (section 9)
- Ombudsman decisions (section 10)
- Compliments (section 11)
- Next steps for 2025/26 and beyond (section 12)

5. All complaints

Summary – 2024/2025

232

Complaints
received

**232 complaints
received** (compared
with 109 in 2023/24
which is an increase
of 113%)

42

Complaints
relate to one issue

**42 / 232 complaints
received relate to a
single planning
matter**



**Increase in Waste
and Transport
complaints** (increase
of 175% from
2023/24)



**76% of complaints
resolved at stage 1**
(compared with 78%
in 2023/24)



**Most common
theme for
complaints is
quality of service**
(31%)



**Lower proportion of
complaints upheld**
(44% compared to
53% for 2023/24)

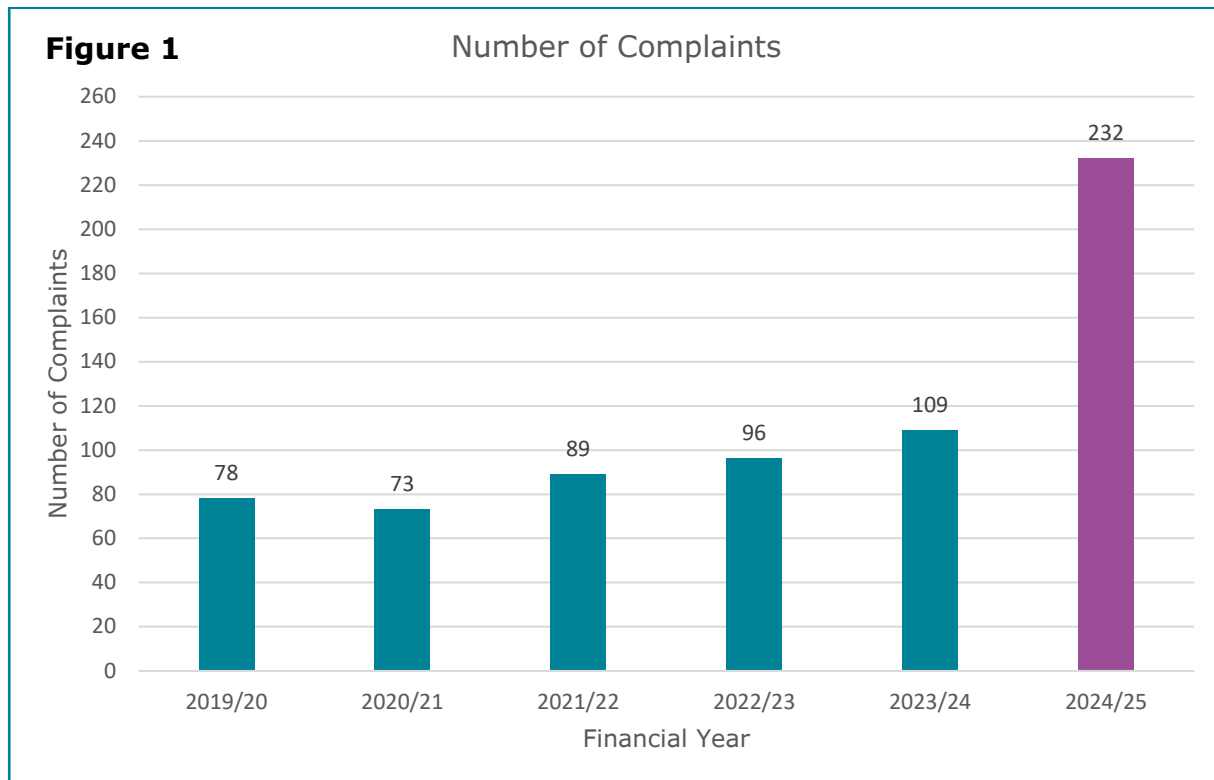


**93% of stage 1 and
100% of stage 2
complaints
responded to within
procedure
timescales**

Analysis

Numbers

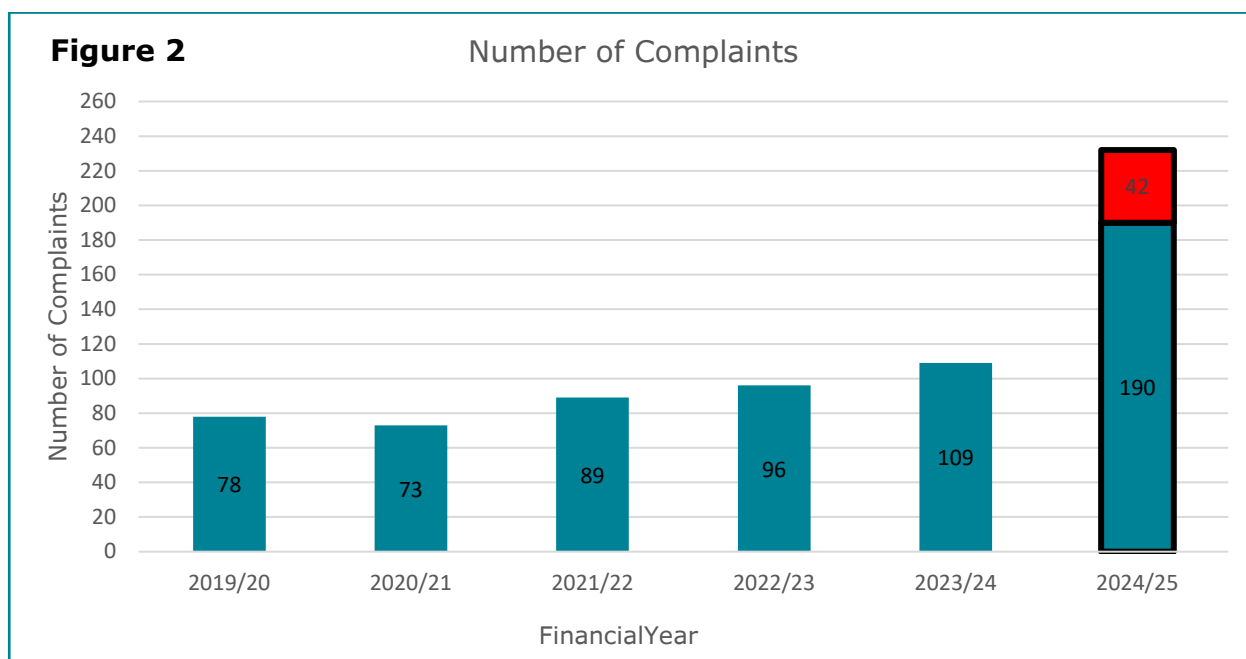
5.1 **Figure 1** below shows the total number of complaints received by year:



5.2 Between 2021/22 and 2022/23 there was an increase in complaints received of 7.9%, compared to an increase of 13.5% between 2022/23 and 2023/24. Between 2023/24 and 2024/25 there has been a significant increase in complaints received; 113% increase.

5.3 The possible reasons for this increase in complaints are considered throughout this report. However, in summary, the profile of complaints has been raised both nationally and locally through the introduction of the complaint handling codes (as detailed in section 2 of this report). We are also open and welcoming of complaints, recognising their importance in improving resident satisfaction with our services and in driving forward service improvements. Through our improved complaints service, we also hope that residents and tenants are more trusting that the Council will act on their views.

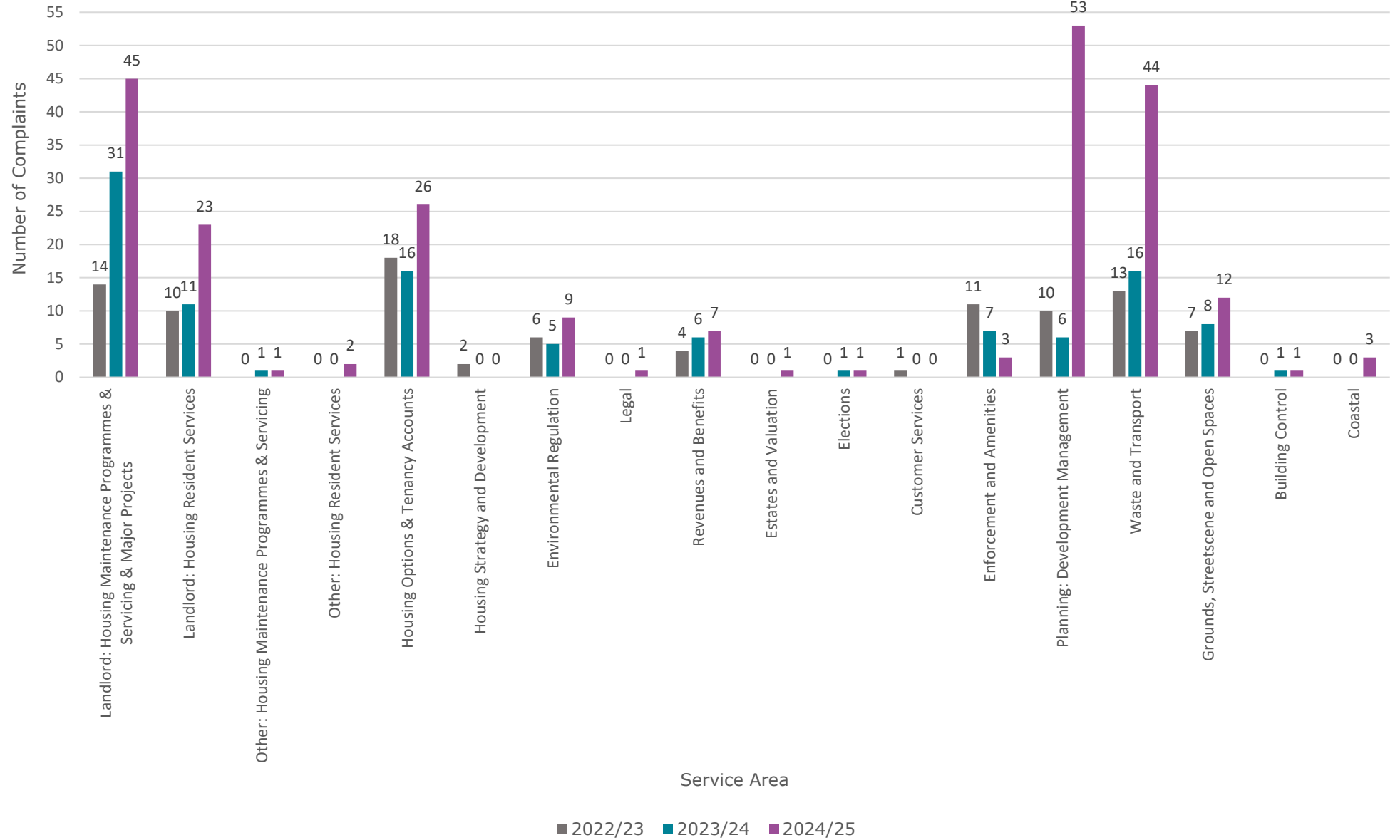
- 5.4 The total of 232 includes 3 complaints that were started at stage 2.
- 5.5 Whilst there was a small reduction in the number of complaints received in 2020/21, the general trend over the past 6 years has been an increase year on year. The percentage increase in complaints between 2019/20 and 2024/25 is 197%.
- 5.6 As a district Council we provide a wide variety of services to approximately 175,800 residents. In this context, 232 complaints represent only a tiny fraction of the number of resident interactions occurring each year. However, the Council, through its processes and approach, takes all complaints received as an opportunity to learn and improve services for the benefit of all residents.
- 5.7 In addition, the Council has received 42 separate complaints during 2024/25 that relate to one planning matter which has impacted the total number.
- 5.8 **Figure 2** below is an updated version of **Figure 1** with these planning complaints demarked:



- 5.9 **Figure 3** overleaf shows the total number of complaints received for 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25 broken down by service area:

Figure 3

Comparison of Complaints by Service Area



5.10 There were three complaints dealt with by Housing Maintenance Programmes and Servicing and Major Projects and Housing Resident Service which were not from tenants, so these have been included in **Figure 3** separately (referenced as 'other').

5.11 The service areas with the largest increase in complaints between 2023/24 and 2024/25 are listed below:

- Planning: Development Management: 783% increase (83% increase with 42 complaints about a single issue removed).
- Waste and Transport: 175% increase.
- Landlord: Housing Resident Services: 109% increase.

5.12 The service areas with the largest number of complaints in total for 2024/25 are listed below:

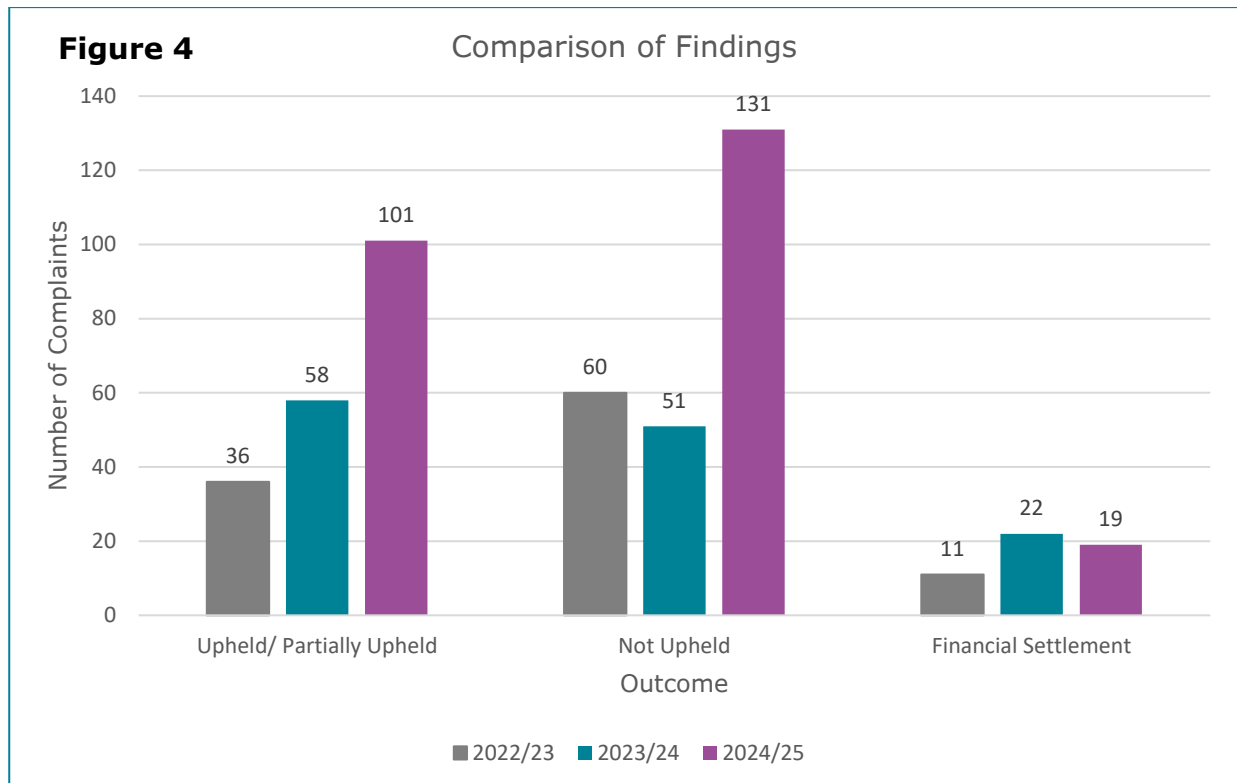
- Planning: Development Management: 53 (11 with 42 complaints about a single issue removed).
- Landlord: Housing Maintenance Programmes and Servicing and Major Projects: 45
- Waste and Transport 44.

5.13 Of the 44 Waste and Transport complaints received during 2024/25, 14 (32%) relate to the Council's garden waste service. From 1 April 2024, the Council introduced a new garden waste service using wheelie bins to over 20,000 households. This was a significant service change and during the first few months, after the new service was implemented, an increase in service requests and complaints was expected. Additionally, 9 (20%) complaints relate to issues with refuse bags being piled up and/or attacked by wildlife. A new domestic waste collection service is due to be rolled out across the District from summer 2025 which will involve the introduction of wheelie bins in accordance with our **Waste Strategy 2022 to 2027**. One of the benefits of this service change is that it should alleviate issues related to the collection of refuse bags.

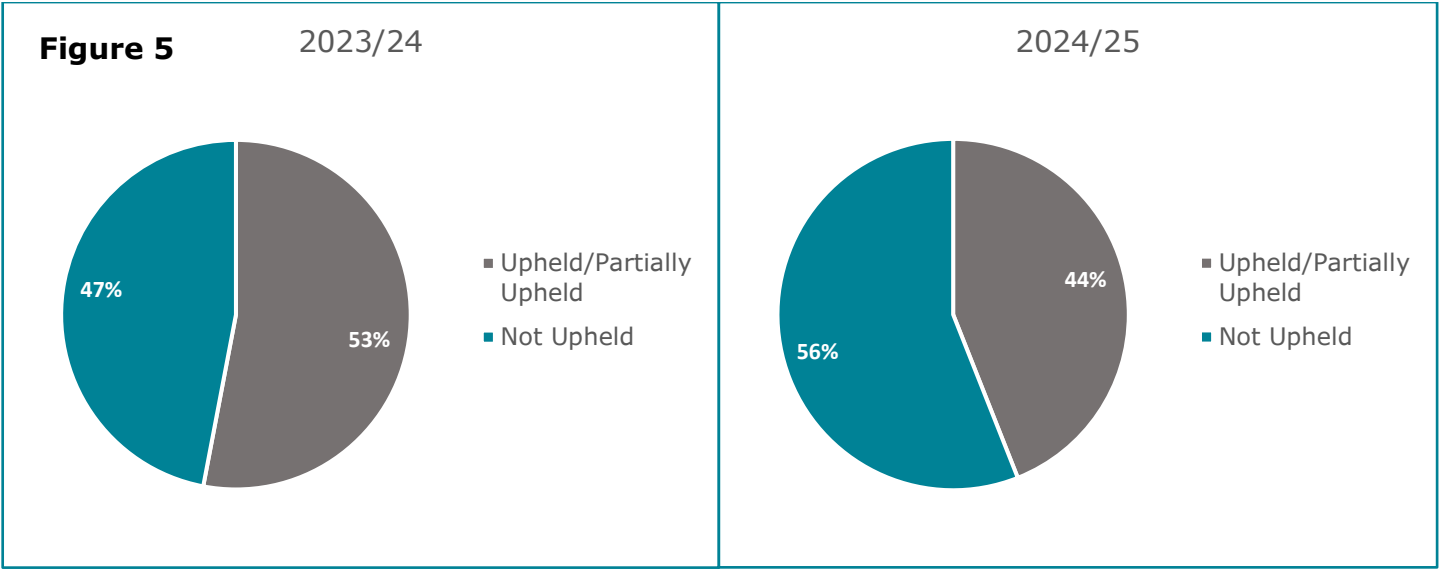
5.14 Most other service areas have seen an increase in the numbers of complaints for 2024/25 compared to 2023/24.

Complaint findings

5.15 **Figure 4** below shows the number of complaints that were upheld or not upheld for 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25. It also shows the number of complaints that resulted in some form of financial settlement (including goodwill/time and trouble payments and compensation for losses).



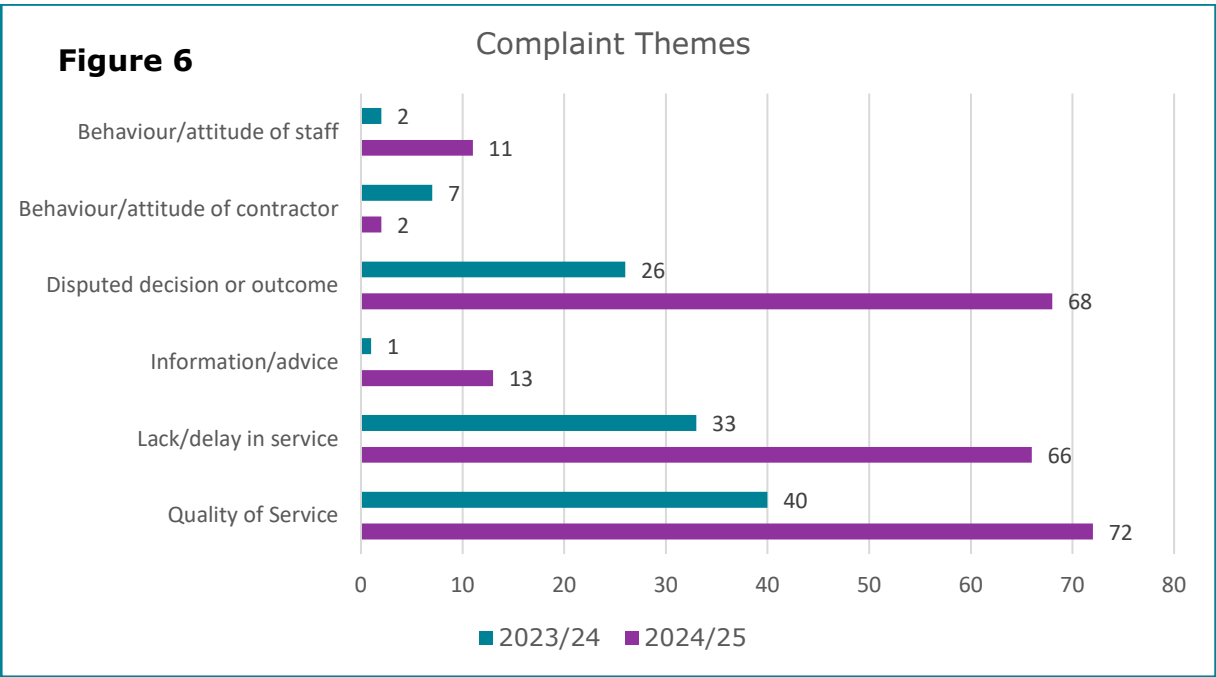
5.16 **Figure 5** overleaf shows the percentage of complaints that have been upheld/ partially upheld and not upheld in 2023/24 and 2024/25.



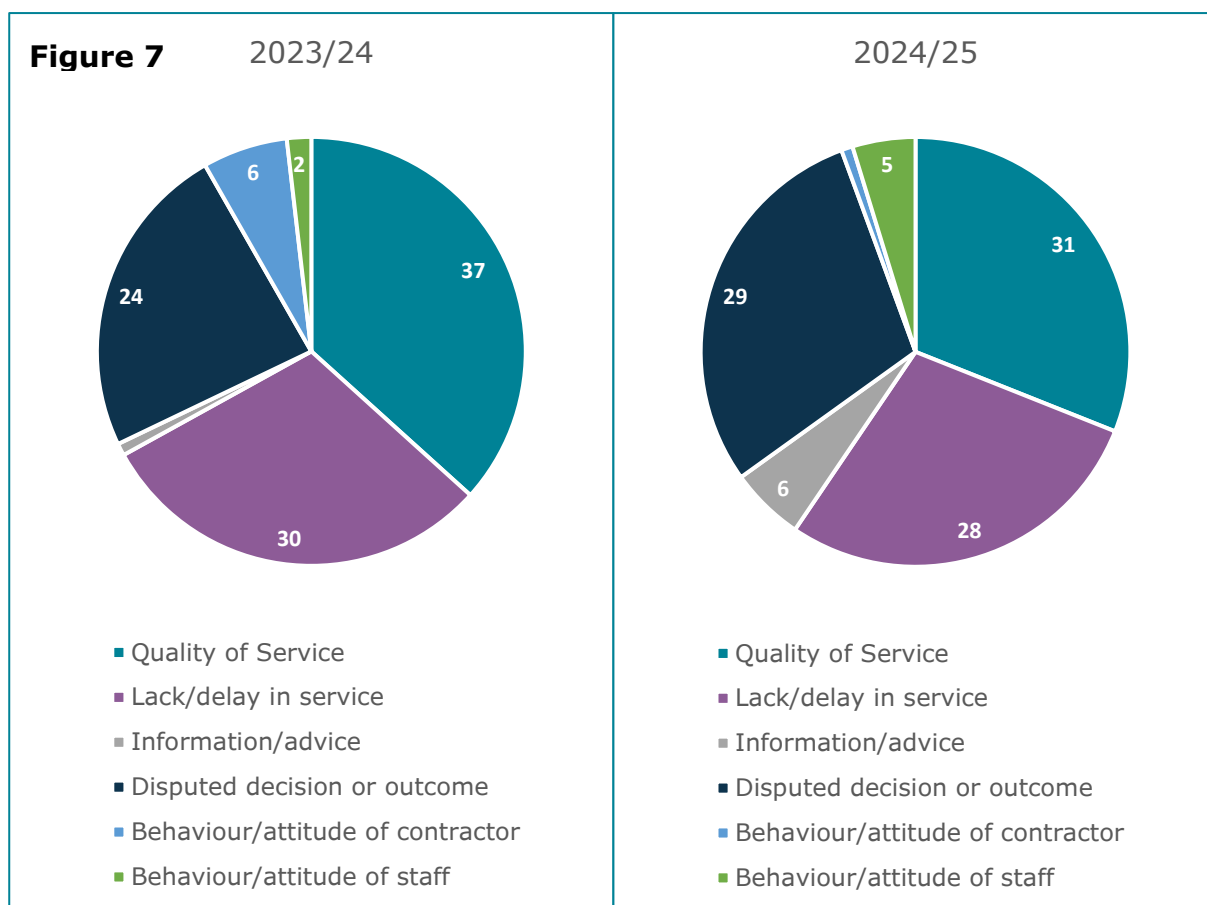
5.17 There has been a decrease in the proportion of complaints that have been upheld/partially upheld in 2024/25 (44%) compared to 2023/24 (53%).

Themes

5.18 **Figure 6** below shows the complaints we have received in 2023/24 and 2024/25 categorised by theme.



5.19 **Figure 7** below shows the percentage breakdown of complaints between themes in 2023/24 compared to 2024/25.



5.20 The most common type of complaint in 2024/25 has related to the quality of service received (31% in 2024/25), followed by disputed decision/outcome (29%) and by lack of/delay in service (28%). This is similar to the breakdown for 2023/24. There are some instances where complaints relate to more than one issue, but these have been categorised based on the most prevalent theme.

5.21 It has been identified that poor communication is the theme most relevant to some of the complaints received which have been categorised as quality of service. We will take the following action to enhance our future reporting:

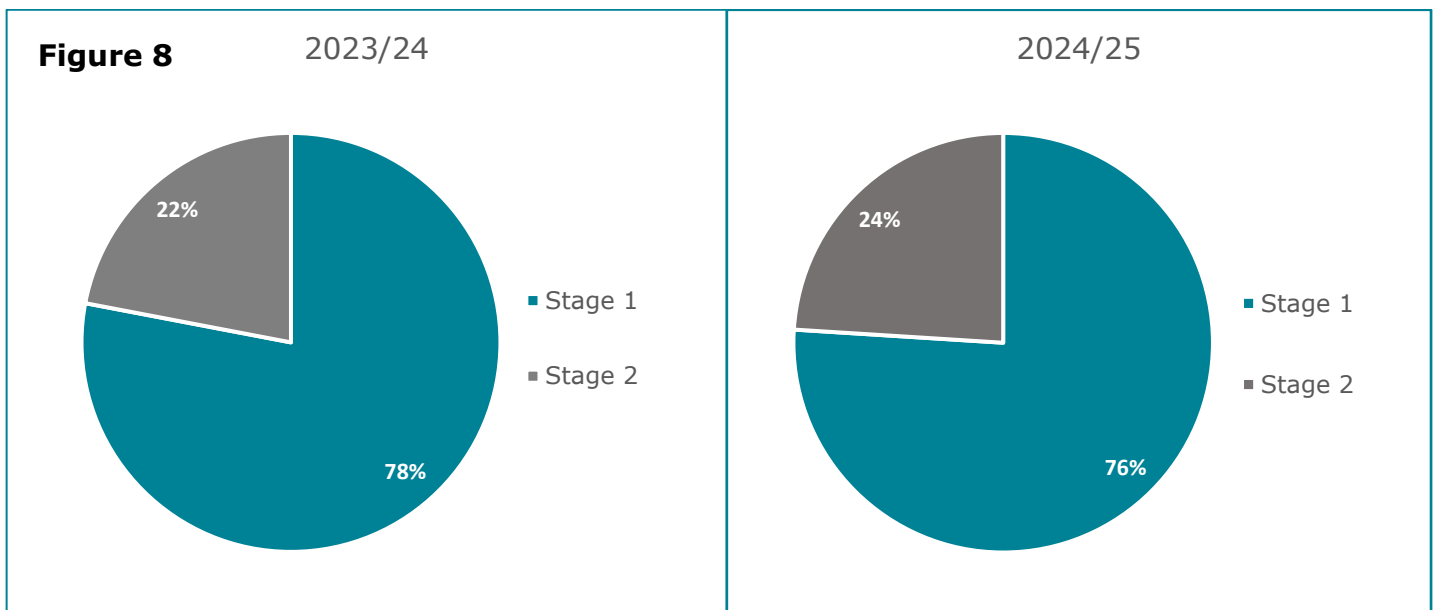
ACTION



- We will introduce a new theme for our record keeping of complaints for 2025/26 of 'poor communication'.

Stages

5.22 **Figure 8** below shows a comparison of the percentage of complaints that were either resolved at stage 1 or escalated to stage 2 of the corporate complaints procedure in 2023/24 and 2024/25. This will not include the 3 complaints that were started at stage 2 but does include any stage 2 complaints that were escalated during 2024/25 (including where the stage 1 complaint may have been received in 2023/24).



5.23 The extent to which complaints escalate through the corporate complaints procedure is an important measure, as it is preferable to find resolutions for complainants at the earliest possible stage. As shown in **Figure 8**, the majority of complaints (76%) were resolved at stage 1 and therefore only 24% of all complaints were escalated internally, this is a slight increase when compared to 22% in 2023/24.

Timescales

- 5.24 In 2023/24 100% of complaints were responded to within the timescales included in the corporate complaints procedure that was applicable at that time.
- 5.25 For 2024/25, 93% of stage 1 complaints and 100% of stage 2 complaints were responded to within the timescales included in the corporate complaints procedure as detailed at paragraph 3.2 above or with an agreed extension in accordance with the codes.

6. Complaints from tenants

Summary - 2024/2025

68

Complaints
received

**68 tenant
complaints received**
(compared with 42 in
2023/24 which is an
increase of 62%)



**Increase in
Housing Resident
Services complaints**
(109% increase
compared to
2023/24))



**60% of complaints
resolved at stage 1**
(compared with 81%
in 2023/24)



**96% of stage 1 and
100% of stage 2
tenant complaints
responded to
within procedure
timescales**



**Most common
theme for tenant
complaints is lack
of/delay in service**
(46%)



**Common
underlying causes
of complaints are
damp and mould
and ASB**



**Lower proportion of
complaints upheld**
(59% compared to
69% for 2023/24)

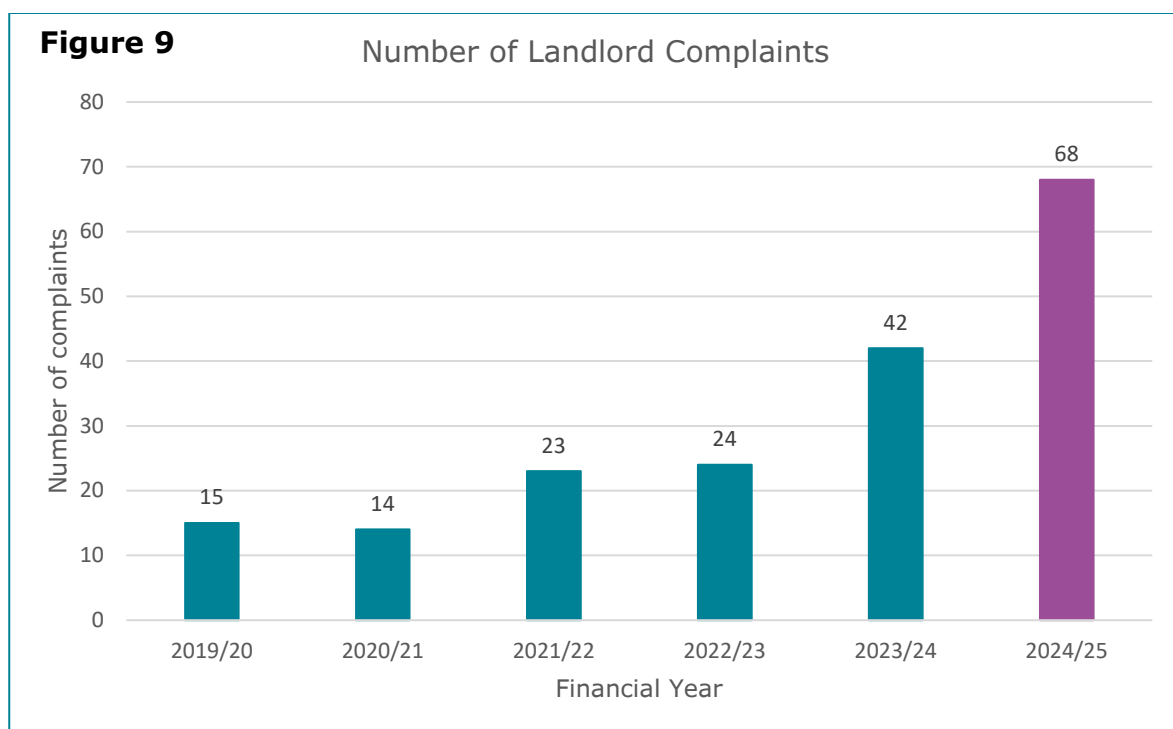


**Complaints
procedure used as
a form of
alternative dispute
resolution (ADR)
for 6 disrepair
claims**

Analysis

Numbers

- 6.1 As of the end of 2024/25 we had 5,251 Council properties that we either owned or managed and let to tenants.
- 6.2 **Figure 9** below shows the total number of complaints received by year from tenants to us in our capacity as their landlord:



- 6.3 Between 2022/23 and 2023/24 there was an increase in complaints received from tenants of 75%. Between 2023/24 and 2024/25 there has been an increase in complaints received from tenants of 62%.
- 6.4 The Council has 5,251 properties. The total number of stage 1 tenant complaints in 2024/25 amounts to 12.9 complaints per 1,000 homes.
- 6.5 **Figure 10** overleaf breaks down the landlord services complaints received by service area.

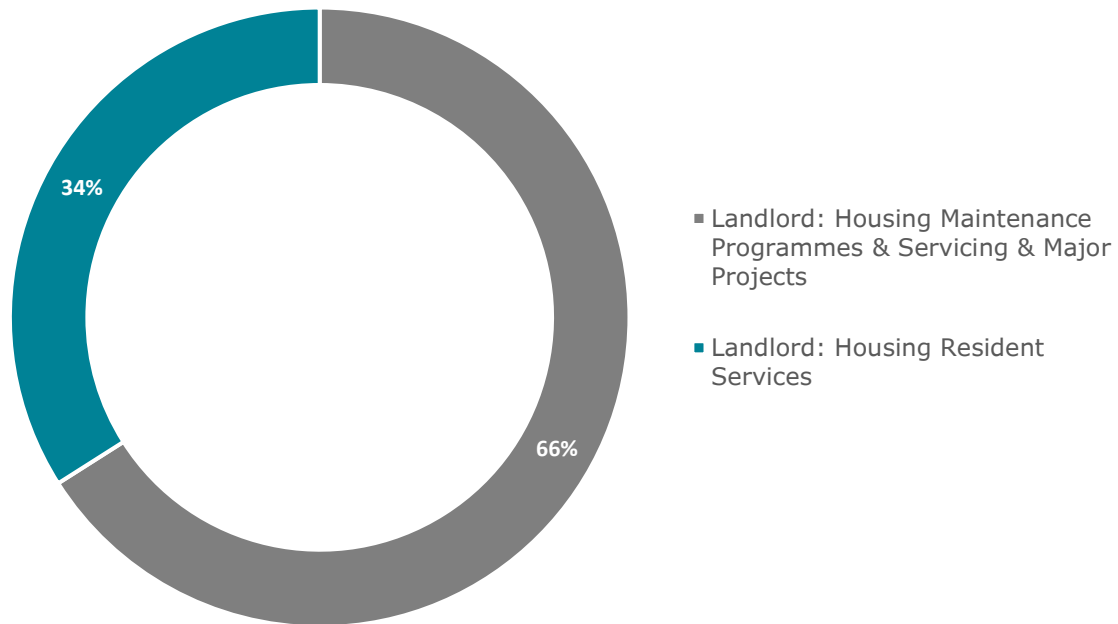


6.6 As outlined in section 5 above, there has been a 109% increase in Landlord: Housing Resident Services complaints between 2023/24 and 2024/25. In comparison, Landlord: Housing Maintenance Programmes and Servicing and Major Projects complaints increased by 45% in the same period.

6.7 As outlined in section 5 above (and in **Figure 3**), Landlord: Housing Maintenance Programmes and Servicing and Major Projects was one of the top three services that received the most complaints.

6.8 The percentage breakdown of complaints relating to landlord services for 2024/25 is shown in **Figure 11** overleaf:

Figure 11 Percentage breakdown Landlord complaints 2024/25



6.9 In 2023/24 the percentage breakdown was 74% Landlord: Housing Maintenance Programmes and Servicing and Major Projects/ 26% Landlord: Housing Resident Services.

6.10 To future proof the Housing service and provide the necessary resources an aspirational and customer focussed service deserves, a housing restructure has been incrementally implemented from May 2024 and is now complete. This is summarised below:



- Creation of a Housing Policy Officer role to lead on service improvements, including responding to learning from complaints.
- Creation of a new Housing Resident Services Team to centralise all non-repair related tenant activity.
 - A new specialist Neighbourhood and ASB team have been created to respond directly and timely to incidents affecting tenants.

- A new Tenancy Sustainment Team was created to support tenants and offer more tailored support to resolve matters such as damp and mould in their homes.
- The gas and electrical safety teams have merged to form a more responsive service.
- Complaint learning and performance data is fed into a Housing service improvement plan alongside a drive to meet with Consumer Standard Regulations.

6.11 Housing services have taken positive steps during 2024/25 to promote and encourage tenant complaints. These actions are set out below:



- Complaints and complaint handling has been a regular agenda items for our Tenant Involvement Group ('TIG').
- The TIG have been encouraged to support the message that we welcome complaints and complaint learning within their communities.
- We have highlighted our culture of welcoming and learning from complaints. This was included in Housing services' tenant magazine Hometalk (winter 2024) which is issued to all our Tenants and Leaseholders.
- All staff in Housing will appropriately signpost a tenant if a complaint or expression of dissatisfaction is raised through a data capture workflow.

Complaint findings

6.12 **Figure 12** below shows the number of tenant complaints that were upheld or not upheld for 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25. It also shows the number of complaints that resulted in some form of financial settlement (including goodwill/time and trouble payments and compensation for losses). **Figures 13** and **14** show how these total figures are broken down between Landlord: Housing Maintenance Programmes and Servicing and Major Projects and Landlord: Housing Resident Services.

Figure 12 Comparison of findings for tenant complaints

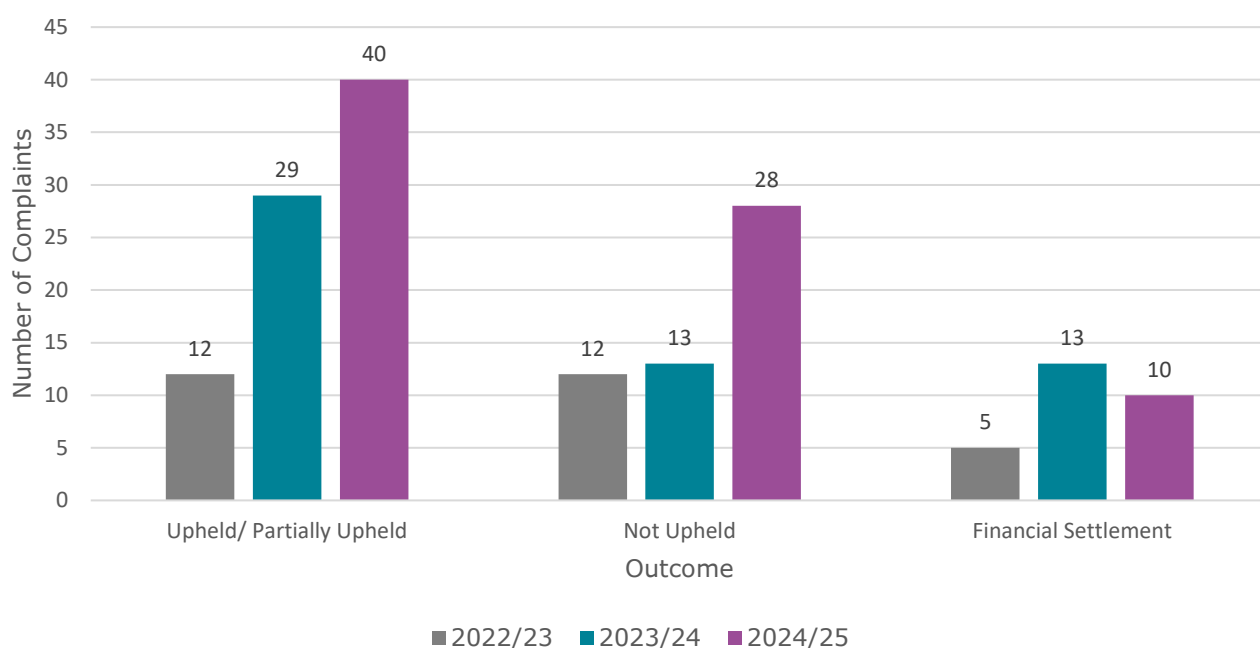


Figure 13 Housing Maintenance, Programmes & Servicing & Major Projects

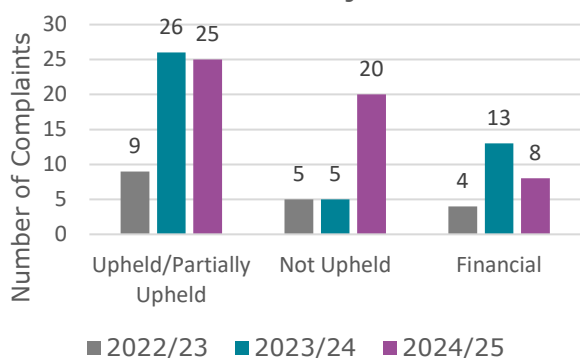
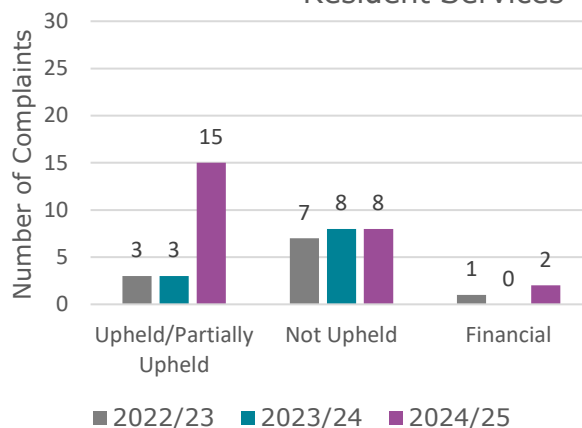
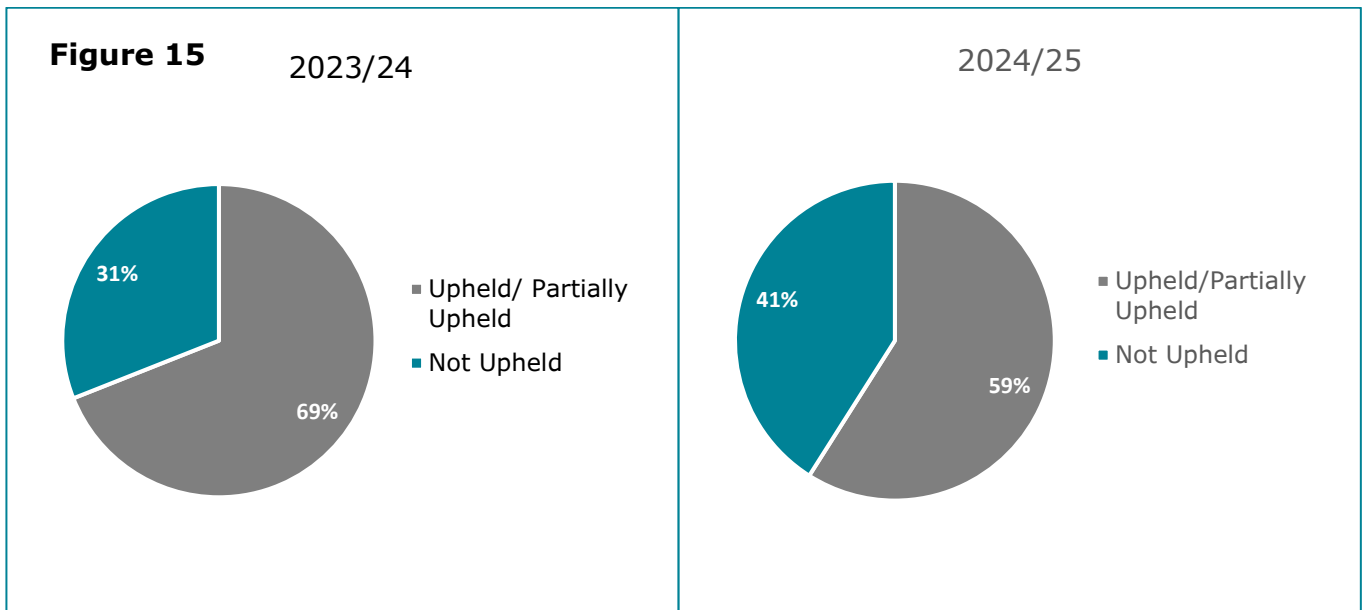


Figure 14 Resident Services



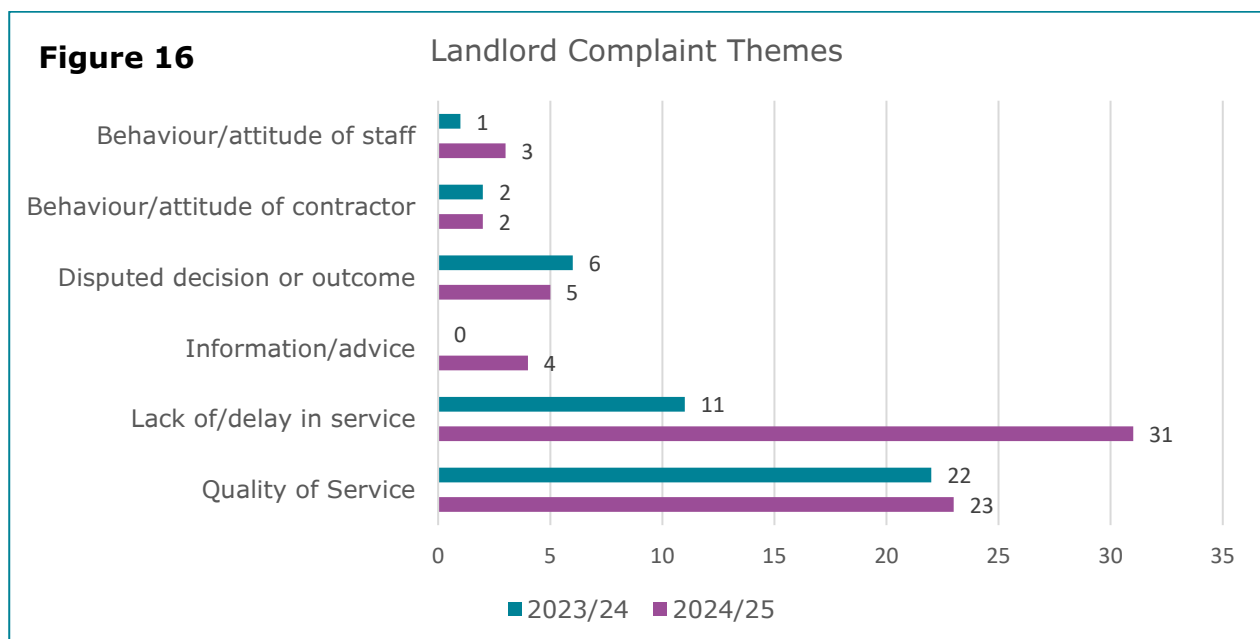
6.13 **Figure 15** below shows the percentage of tenant complaints that have been upheld/partially upheld and not upheld in 2023/24 and 2024/25.



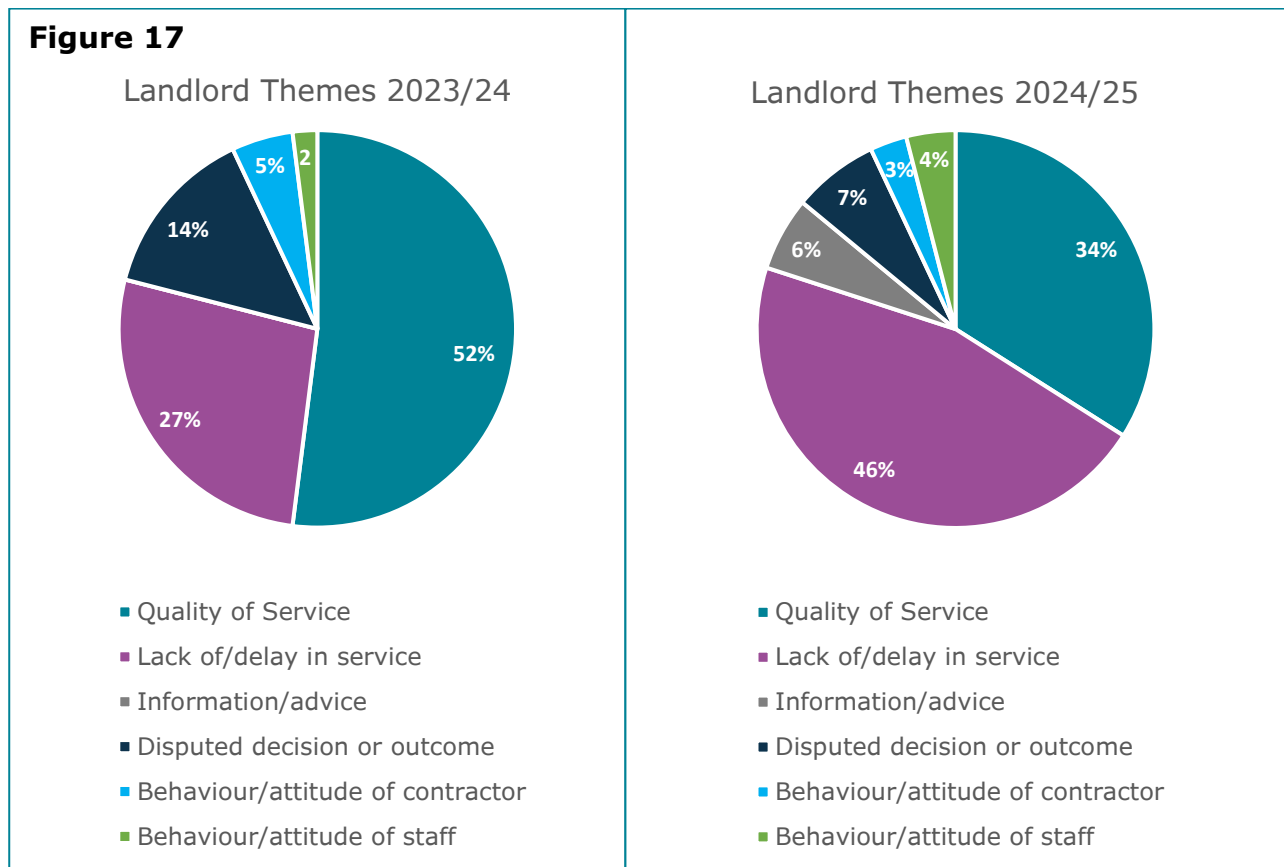
6.14 There has been a decrease in the proportion of tenant complaints that have been upheld/partially upheld in 2024/25 (59%) compared to 2023/24 (69%).

Themes

6.15 **Figure 16** below shows the tenant complaints we have received in 2023/24 and 2024/25 categorised by theme.



6.16 **Figure 17** below shows the percentage breakdown of tenant complaints between themes in 2023/24 compared to 2024/25.



6.17 The most common type of tenant complaint in 2024/25 has related to lack of/delay in service (46%) followed by quality of service (34%). In 2023/24 the most common type of complaint related to quality of service (52%), followed by lack of/delay in service (27%). There are some instances where complaints relate to more than one issue, but these have been categorised based on the most prevalent theme.

6.18 As referred to in 5.21 above it has been identified that poor communication is the theme most relevant to some of the complaints received which have been categorised as quality of service. The following action will also apply to complaints from tenants:

ACTION



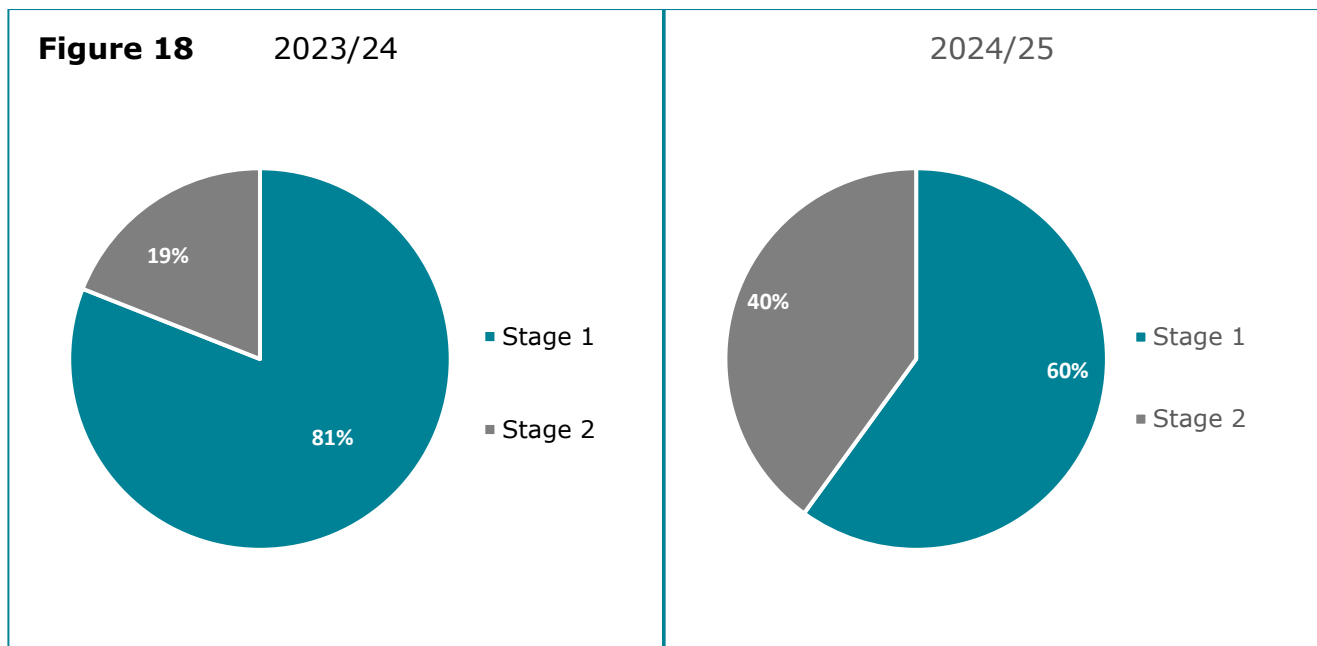
- We will introduce a new theme for our record keeping of tenant complaints for 2025/26 of 'poor communication'.

6.19 When reviewing the underlying cause of complaints made by tenants regarding Landlord: Housing Maintenance Programmes and Servicing and Major Projects matters it was identified that damp/mould was the underlying cause of 14 of these complaints (31%). Whilst Anti-Social Behaviour issues were the underlying cause of 11 complaints (48%) made by tenants regarding Landlord: Housing Resident Services.

6.20 In August 2024, the Council started using the complaints procedure as a form of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) in accordance with paragraphs 4.1 and 4.2 of the **Pre-Action Protocol for Housing Conditions Claims (England) – Civil Procedure Rules** in order to resolve disrepair claims. Since this time, 6 claims have been directed to the complaints procedure. This amounts to 13% of the Landlord: Housing Maintenance Programmes and Servicing and Major Projects complaints.

Stages

6.21 **Figure 18** overleaf shows a comparison of the percentage of tenant complaints that were either resolved at stage 1 or escalated to stage 2 of the corporate complaints procedure in 2023/24 and 2024/25. This includes any stage 2 complaints that were escalated during 2024/25 (including where the stage 1 complaint may have been received in 2023/24).



6.22 60% of all tenant complaints in 2024/25 were resolved at stage 1, with 40% escalating to stage 2, this is an increase in the number of stage 2 complaints compared with 19% in 2023/24).

Timescales

6.23 In 2023/24 100% of tenant complaints were responded to within the timescales included in the corporate complaints procedure that was applicable at that time.

6.24 For 2024/25, 96% of stage 1 tenant complaints and 100% of stage 2 tenant complaints were responded to within the timescales included in the corporate complaints procedure as detailed at paragraph 3.2 above or with an agreed extension in accordance with the codes.

7. Complaints not accepted

- 7.1 Our corporate complaints procedure sets out what will not be considered as a corporate complaint.
- 7.2 This includes, but is not limited to, complaints against councillors, anonymous complaints, cases where other legal rights of appeal/review exist, or cases where we or the complainant has started legal proceedings.
- 7.3 Where we decide that a complaint cannot be dealt with as a corporate complaint, we will let the complainant know and advise them of their right to take that decision to the relevant Ombudsman.
- 7.4 As a result of an action identified in the 2023/24 Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report we have:

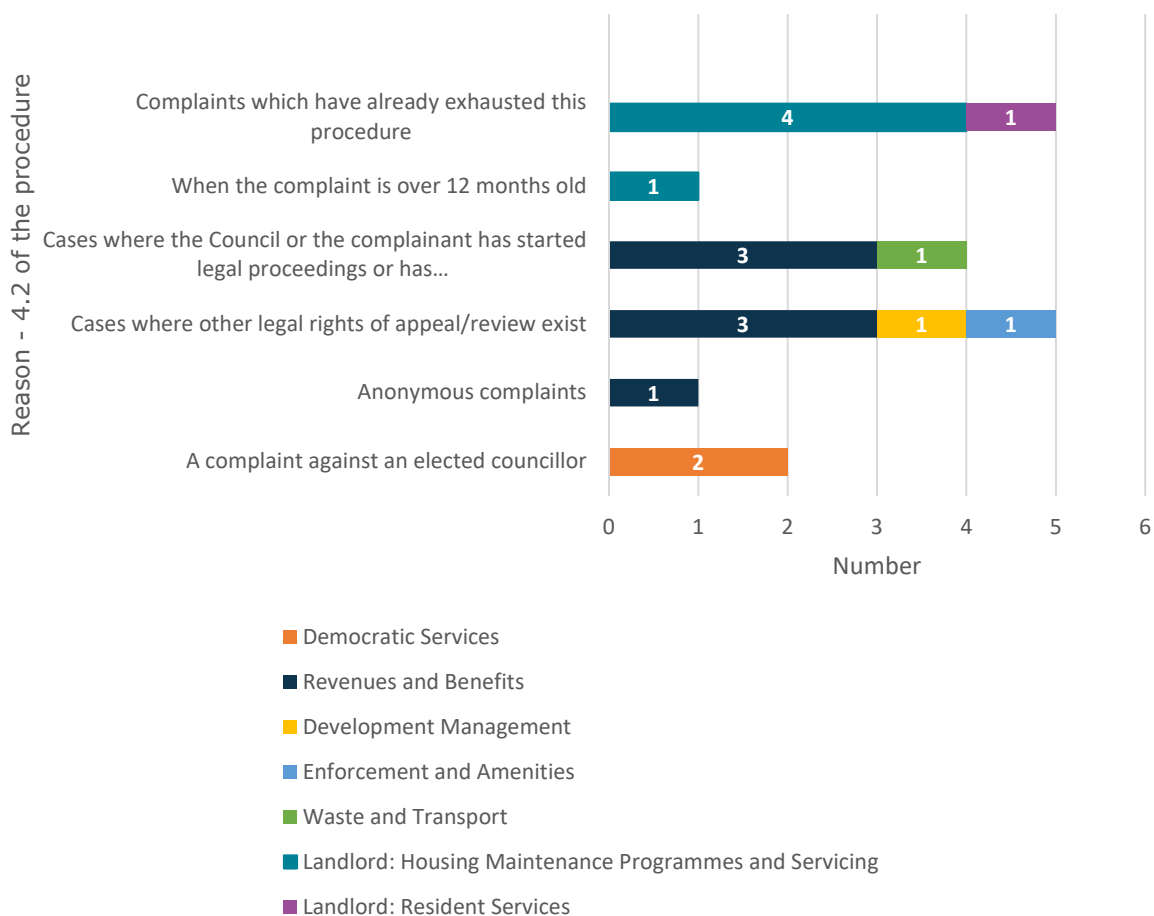


- Improved our record keeping for complaints that are not accepted

- 7.5 During 2024/25, there were 14 complaints that were either not accepted, or partially not accepted.
- 7.6 **Figure 19** overleaf shows a breakdown of the reason these complaints were not accepted by service area. Some complaints were not accepted for more than one reason:

Figure 19

Complaints not accepted



7.7 Where a complaint is made relating to the conduct of an elected councillor, this is dealt with through a separate process. Further information regarding this is published on our website: [Complain against a councillor - New Forest District Council](#)

7.8 We also have complaints that are not dealt with as corporate complaints because they are service requests. Our procedure includes the following regarding service requests:

'Service requests where an individual is requiring the Council to take action to put something right.

- Such service requests will be recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly.*

- *Where an individual expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, a complaint will be raised. Efforts to address the service request will continue.'*

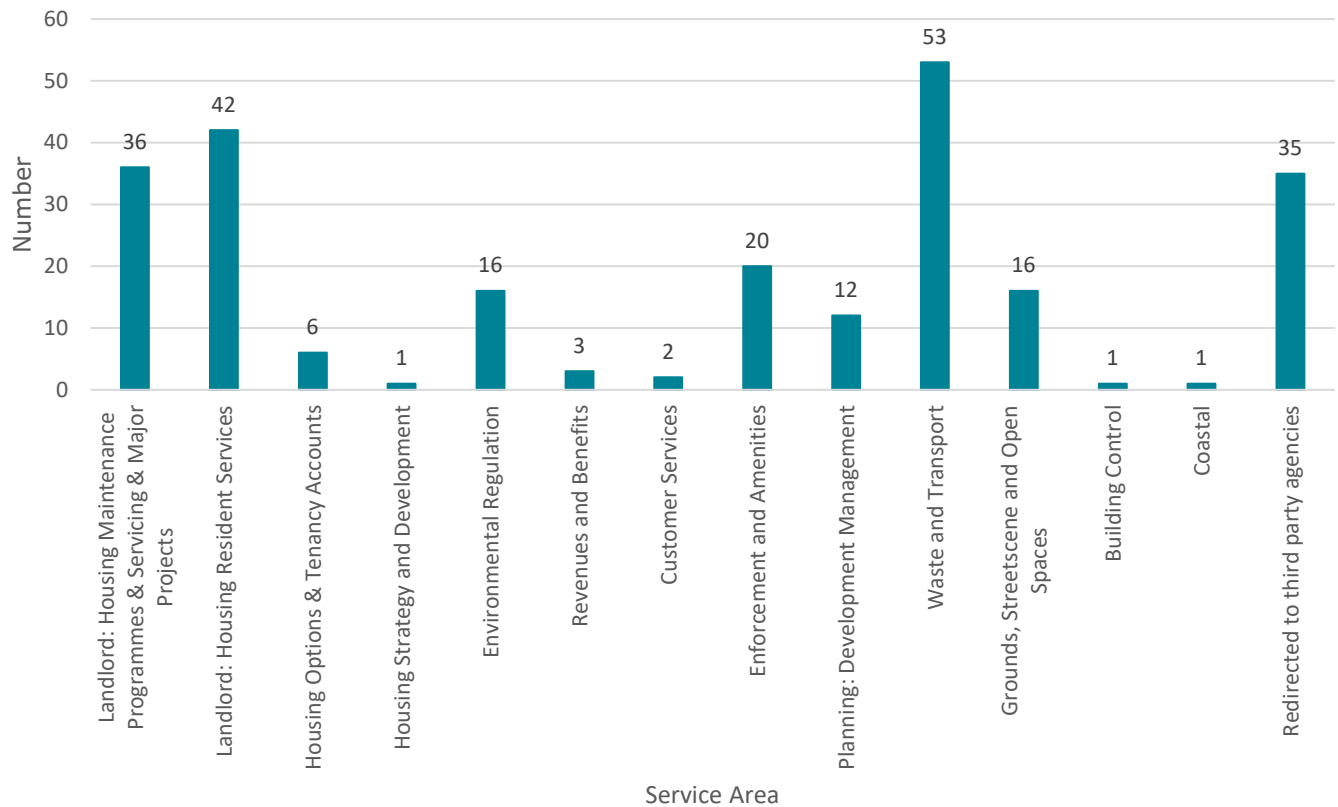
7.9 Some service requests are received by the Information Governance and Complaints Team for allocation to the relevant service.

7.10 As a result of an action identified in the 2023/24 Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report we have:



- Improved our record keeping for service requests.
- Improved our acknowledgement and allocation of service requests to the relevant services.
- Updated our template response to ensure individuals are provided with details of how to make a complaint if they are dissatisfied with a response to a service request.

7.11 **Figure 20** overleaf shows a breakdown of service requests which have been received by the Information Governance and Complaints Team and responded to by services.

Figure 20**Service requests received 2024/25**

7.12 During 2024/25 the Information Governance and Complaints Team has received 244 service requests. This also includes 35 requests/complaints which have been redirected to third party agencies, such as Hampshire County Council or Housing Associations.

7.13 To review how effectively service requests are being dealt with, it is important to look into how many service request responses lead to a resolution of a resident's or tenant's issue. To assist with this, the following action has been identified.

ACTION

- We will add to our record keeping of service requests whether the matter is escalated to a corporate complaint.

7.14 Many service requests are also received directly by services. Below are ongoing actions to improve how we deal with service requests:

ACTION



- We will continue to work with services to ensure that service requests are handled consistently, recorded, monitored and reviewed and that learning from service requests is incorporated into service delivery.
- We will consider introducing a service request standards of service document to clarify responsibilities, expectations and timescales for response.

8. Tenant Satisfaction Measures review

Background

- 8.1 As a registered provider of social housing, we are required to generate, report and publish tenant satisfaction measures ('TSMs') which are a core set of performance measures issued by the Regulator of Social Housing ('the Regulator'). The aim of the TSMs is to provide tenants with greater transparency about their landlord's performance and inform the Regulator about compliance.
- 8.2 The Council's response to the TSMs is either generated through management information or through tenant perception surveys which were conducted on our behalf by Acuity Research & Practice on a sample of 580 tenants (with an additional 13 partially completed interviews).
- 8.3 The TSMs are separate to this complaint performance and service improvement report. However, there are three TSMs which relate specifically to complaint handling. These are:

Code	Issue	How
CH01	Complaints relative to the size of the landlord	Generated from management information
CH02	Complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales	Generated from management information
TP09	Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling complaints	Collected from tenant perception surveys

- 8.4 The Council's TSM submission for 2024/25 (the same period covered by this report) will be viewable online in due course on: [Tenant engagement and participation - New Forest District Council](#)
- 8.5 We recognise the importance of the TSMs that relate to complaint handling and have chosen to incorporate them into this report as part of our performance and service improvement considerations. We are committed to making improvements where the TSMs have highlighted areas of low satisfaction.

TSM results 2024/25

- 8.6 TSM CH01 shows that the number of stage 1 complaints made by tenants in the relevant stock type during the reporting year per 1,000 homes is 12.9 and the number of stage 2 complaints made by tenants in the relevant stock type during the reporting year per 1,000 homes is 5.1.
- 8.7 TSM CH02 shows that the proportion of tenant complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales is:
- Stage 1 – 96%
 - Stage 2 – 100%.
- 8.8 TSM TP09 provided the *'proportion of respondents who report making a complaint in the last 12 months who are satisfied with their landlord's approach to complaints handling'*. The results were 32% (this is an increase from 29% in 2023/24). This was based on 17% of the respondent sample reporting having made a complaint.
- 8.9 The question for TP09 included the mandatory wording *'Have you made a complaint to [your landlord] in the last 12 months?'* with the option of 'yes' or 'no' answers.
- 8.10 If the answer was 'yes', the mandatory following question was *'How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with [your landlord]'s approach to complaints handling?'* with the response options of:
- *Very satisfied*
 - *Fairly satisfied*
 - *Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied*
 - *Fairly dissatisfied*
 - *Very dissatisfied*
- 8.11 The Regulator of Social Housing's **Tenant Satisfaction Measures 2023/24 - Headline Report** provides useful benchmarking from the national results from 2023/24.
- 8.12 The table overleaf shows the average (median) results for low cost rental accommodation (LCRA) from the Headline Report, together with the Council's 2023/24 and 2024/25 results:

TSM	Description	LCRA average 2023/24	Council results 2023/24	Council results 2024/25
CH01	Number of stage one complaints received (per 1,000 homes)	42.5	7.9	12.9
CH01	Number of stage two complaints received (per 1,000 homes)	5.7	1.5	5.1
CH02	Proportion of stage one complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales (%)	82.3%	100%	95.59%
CH02	Proportion of stage two complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales (%)	83.6%	100%	100.00%
TP09	Proportion of respondents who report making a complaint in the last 12 months who are satisfied with their landlord's approach to complaints handling	34.5%	29%	32%

Analysis

- 8.13 The Headline Report shows that for CH01 the number of stage one complaints received (per 1,000 homes) for the Council in 2024/25 (12.9), is lower than the LCRA average for 2023/24 (42.5).
- 8.14 Whilst for CH02 the number of stage two complaints received (per 1,000 homes) for the Council in 2024/25 (5.1) is closer to the LCRA average for 2023/24 (5.7).
- 8.15 The Headline Report makes reference to landlords ensuring that it is easy for tenants to complain and that complaints are accurately recorded. It states this is particularly important for landlords that have recorded a low number of complaints for CH01 relative to other landlords. We are committed to ensuring that complaints are appropriately logged.

8.16 A comparison of the number of housing complaints recorded and the TSM results for TP09 indicates that tenants are perceiving that they are making a 'complaint', of some description (17% of the sample), which could be an expression of dissatisfaction, but that the Council is not always recording or treating this as a formal complaint. We have already taken some steps to improve how we handle service requests and further ongoing actions are planned to try and improve how service requests are dealt with which may assist with this going forward. There is a firm commitment from the Council to address the feedback.

8.17 As a result of an action identified in the 2023/24 Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report:



- We have introduced a feedback form for complainants to complete follow receiving a stage 1 or stage 2 complaint response.

8.18 We will continue with the actions below to improve our complaints handling:

ACTION



- We will continue to progress the introduction of training for all staff on complaint handling, recognising complaints, the difference between service requests and complaints and the importance of learning from complaints.
- We will provide service specific training for services most likely to receive or deal with complaints, including Housing Services and Customer Services.

9. Learning

9.1 We recognise the importance of learning from complaints. Below are some examples of service improvements that have been made as a result of complaints dealt with in 2024/25:

Corporate

Case Study 1 – Environment and Regulation - Licensing

The complaint

A complaint was made regarding delays in the processing of a pleasure boat licensing application and requesting additional information from the applicant.

What did we do?

It was considered that the application was processed in a reasonable time, but the review of the complaint identified that the Council's website did not inform applicants of response and processing times. Further information was added to the website and internal guidance updated to require contact with an applicant if required information is missing from an application.

What is the ongoing service improvement?

Increasing transparency in the licensing process and managing applicants' expectations will improve the standard of service for pleasure boat licence applicants.

Case Study 2– Environment and Regulation - Environmental Protection

The complaint

A complaint was received regarding the handling of alleged noise nuisance.

What did we do?

Whilst it was considered that the investigation had been handled appropriately, it was identified that further information regarding the statutory nuisance investigation process should be published on the Council's website.

What is the ongoing service improvement?

Increasing transparency in the statutory nuisance investigation process will improve the customer experience.

Case Study 3 – Housing Options and Tenancy Accounts – Homesearch

The complaint

A complaint was received stating there was a lack of support offered from the housing options team. The complaint also referred to limited opening hours of the Homesearch telephone line and criticised the tone and formality of language used in correspondence.

What did we do?

Some aspects of the complaint were not upheld, but the housing register application was reassessed. In addition, it was acknowledged that the opening hours of the Homesearch telephone line were limited so these have now been increased by an extra afternoon each week. The wording of the standard letters is also in the process of being reviewed and updated.

What is the ongoing service improvement?

The increase in the Homesearch telephone line opening hours and, when finalised, the amendments to the standard letters will benefit all applicants accessing and understanding the Homesearch service.

Case Study 4 – Housing Options and Tenancy Accounts – Homelessness

The complaint

A complaint was received stating that interim accommodation provided, and other offers of accommodation made, were not suitable because they did not take into consideration the applicant's medical needs and future prognosis, including the need for ground floor accommodation.

What did we do?

The complainant was placed in suitable accommodation prior to the conclusion of the complaint. The complaint response did acknowledge that further medical evidence could have been proactively requested on what type of accommodation would be suitable based on the known medical conditions and this has been incorporated into processes going forward. The Council's standard letter requesting proofs in support of Homesearch applications will be reviewed to consider whether proofs should be requested in all cases relating to the type of accommodation needed due to medical conditions.

What is the ongoing service improvement?

This will improve the standard of service and offers of accommodation made to those individuals who have a medical condition that affects which properties may be suitable.

Case Study 5 – Environment and Regulation - Environmental Protection

The complaint

A complaint was received regarding the handling of alleged noise nuisance.

What did we do?

It was identified that the complainants were deemed unreliable witnesses based on evidence included in noise recordings, and the noise nuisance case was closed. However, on review, this outcome was not conclusive. Going forward, all officers who investigate and peer review noise cases have been informed, based on the legal advice obtained, on how they should manage situations where audio recordings made by complainant's present questionable evidence. This includes reviewing all the evidence with the team manager, determining the outcomes from the evidence in question and seeking advice from the legal department if required.

What is the ongoing service improvement?

Having more consistent guidance and checking processes will assist with ensuring noise nuisance cases are not incorrectly closed.

Case Study 6 – Grounds, Street Scene and Open Spaces – Corporate Trees

The complaint

A complaint was received regarding the standard of service provided by tree contractors acting on behalf of the Council.

What did we do?

It was identified that works were not carried out by the contractor within the agreed timescales or in accordance with instructions resulting in multiple attendances to the complainant's property being required. The learning from this has been incorporated into the Council's tree contract performance management processes, including ensuring that all evidence of works are appropriately recorded on the Council's tree management software.

What is the ongoing service improvement?

Ensuring contractors meet requirements and proactively managing contract performance through regular meetings will improve the standard of service to residents.

Complaints from tenants

Case Study 7 – Landlord: Housing Maintenance, Programmes and Servicing

The complaint

A complaint was received from a tenant relating to repair issues at their property. This included that some agreed drainage works that were identified several years ago had not been completed and that other issues had been raised on multiple occasions before being rectified.

What did we do?

We apologised for the delays and steps were taken to progress these works. Steps have been taken to avoid repair works being missed through the introduction of more comprehensive housing repairs management software. We have introduced reporting to raise alerts for multiple repair requests or repeat repair requests so that issues can be resolved sooner.

What is the ongoing service improvement?

Improved software and alerts will increase repair requests being actioned without delay.

Case Study 8 – Landlord: Resident Services

The complaint

A complaint was made that the Council was trying to recover rent for a period of time after the tenant believed they had terminated their tenancy and left the property, but had not left vacant possession. The reason for leaving the property related to concerns about the behaviour of a person who remained in the home.

What did we do?

An update was added to standard letters advising tenants of the requirements regarding the end of tenancy process to include vacant possession. Steps will be taken to review and update policies and procedures relating to end of tenancy and vacant possession, particularly where disclosures regarding the behaviour of someone living at the property are made.

What is the ongoing service improvement?

Having updated policies and procedures will improve consistency and the support/signposting provided to tenants. Making sure information provided to tenants is up to date and complete will assist with managing expectations.

Case Study 9 – Landlord: Resident Services – Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG)

The complaint

A complaint was received about the standard of service related to a DFG application for adaptations to a Council property.

What did we do?

Whilst the complaint was not upheld, it did result in a review of procedures. Where cases are open for a long period of time, one to one reviews now take place with officers to identify if any further steps can be proactively taken to progress works. These cases are now flagged at 6 months for this review process.

What is the ongoing service improvement?

Applicants will be kept up to date and progress will be actively monitored on cases that are not concluded in the initial 6-month period to avoid delays.

Case Study 10 – Landlord: Resident Services – Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG)

The complaint

A complaint was received relating to the standard of service provided by DFG contractors engaged to carry out adaptations to a Council property.

What did we do?

The feedback provided by the complainant identified several issues that needed to be considered and feed into a wider review of the Council's DFG processes. This review will look at the whole DFG process, including the information provided to applicants, costs, estimates, and payment criteria, how contractors are selected, the terms of reference provided to contractors, information that should be passed to the relevant contractor related to the particular needs of a DFG applicant, further consideration of when specialist contractors may be required and what additional support the Council can provide to its tenants who go through the DFG process, particularly where adaptations involve significant building works and disruption.

What is the ongoing service improvement?

The outcome of this DFG review will improve the all-round service received by future DFG applicants.

Case Study 11 – Landlord: Resident Services

The complaint

Several complaints have been received relating to our response to Anti-Social Behaviour ('ASB') reports.

What did we do?

We have now introduced an Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy setting out the Council's priorities and approach to preventing and improving the co-ordinated response to housing related ASB. In support of this, a new Housing Anti-Social Behaviour Policy has been adopted. There has been a restructure of Resident Services team responsibilities and a dedicated ASB Team is now in place. New procedures are also followed, and template letters are being reviewed.

What is the ongoing service improvement?

The improvements across the management of ASB will improve how ASB complaints are handled by the service, improving the experience for our tenants.

9.2 As a result of an action identified in the 2023/24 Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report:



- We now ask complaint responders to clearly identify where a complaint has been upheld and what the learning from the complaint is.
- We have updated how we record complaints to improve how we capture and follow up learning and to assist with reporting.
- We have introduced periodic meetings with senior managers to consider complaint trends, complaints decided, learning identified and service improvements.

9.3 To improve how learning from complaints is captured and implemented into meaningful service improvements, we plan to take the following action going forward:

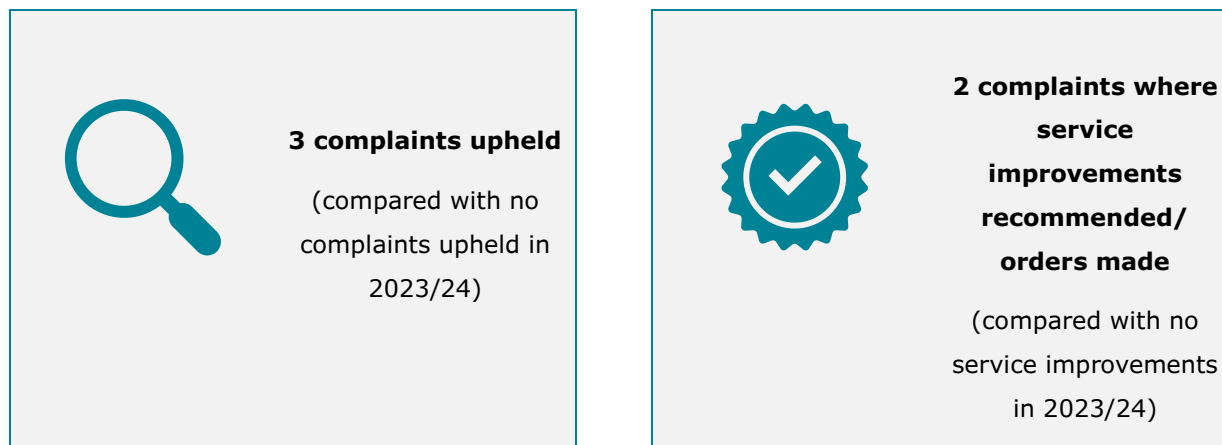
ACTION



- We will support services with the development of any proposed service improvement plans.

10.Ombudsman decisions

Summary - 2024/2025



Right to escalate

- 10.1 If complainants are not satisfied with our response to their complaint, when they have exhausted our internal corporate complaints procedure, they can escalate their complaint to either the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman or, for tenants, the Housing Ombudsman.
- 10.2 Both Ombudsman services will generally not investigate complaints unless the complainant has completed our internal procedure. However, complainants can contact the relevant Ombudsman at any stage during their complaint.

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

Annual review letter

- 10.3 The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman provides us with an annual review letter each year in July which includes a summary of complaint statistics for complaints which have escalated to them. This covers the preceding financial year.
- 10.4 All our annual review letters that have been received to date are published on the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's website: **Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman - New Forest District Council Annual Reviews.**

10.5 Our performance is also viewable on the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's website: [Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman - New Forest District Council Performance](#)

Investigations and findings

10.6 We are not always aware of every complaint or enquiry that is made to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

10.7 Our records show that there have been 6 complaints decided by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman in 2024/25 related to the Council. These decisions are published on the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's website: [Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman - Decisions - New Forest District Council](#) Of these, 4 were closed after initial enquiries, and 2 were subject to detailed investigations and upheld. Some of these complaints will have been considered by us in the 2022/23 period.

10.8 Summaries of the complaints that were investigated are set out below:

Service area	Complaint	Summary and outcome	Agreed action
Housing Options and Tenancy Accounts	Mr X complains the interim accommodation provided by the Council was unsuitable for his needs because of his reduced immune system. He also complains communication with the housing officer was poor.	We will not investigate Mr X's complaint that the interim accommodation provided by the Council was unsuitable for his needs. This is because the Council has agreed to resolve the complaint early by providing a proportionate remedy for the injustice caused by the faults accepted.	I therefore asked the Council to consider remedying the injustice caused by the faults accepted by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apologising to Mr X for the distress and frustration caused by the faults accepted.• Make a payment of £300 per month to recognise the time Mr X spent in unsuitable accommodation. A total of £900.• Make a payment of £100 to recognise the distress and frustration caused by the Council's poor communication.

Community Safety and Support	<p>Mr B, complained the Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> failed to put in place reasonable adjustments to enable him to comfortably attend a meeting which took place in December 2022; and failed to act on antisocial behaviour he experienced from his neighbour. 	<p>There is no fault in how the Council dealt with the antisocial behaviour concerns Mr B raised. The Council failed to address the concerns Mr B raised before the meeting and delayed dealing with his logs of anti social behaviour. An apology, drawing up a policy on applying reasonable adjustments and a reminder to officers is satisfactory remedy.</p>	<p>Within one month of my decision the Council should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> apologise to Mr B for the frustration he experienced due to the faults identified in this decision. The Council may want to refer to the Ombudsman's updated guidance on remedies, which sets out the standards we expect apologies to meet; remind officers of the need to consider whether a reasonable adjustment is required if a resident raises concerns; remind officers of the need to ask the residents' permission to share correspondence received by one department with other departments when the correspondence includes information relevant to both. <p>Within four months of my decision the Council should draw up a policy on applying reasonable adjustments.</p>
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Housing Ombudsman

Performance report

10.9 The Housing Ombudsman publishes individual landlord performance reports for landlords with 5 or more findings for a particular financial year. These reports are available on the Housing Ombudsman's website: [Housing Ombudsman - Landlords Archive](#)

10.10 The Housing Ombudsman has not yet published its reports for 2024/25, so the information available on its website relates to 2023/24. As we had no determinations made by the Housing Ombudsman in the period 2023/24 there is no report relating to the Council currently published on the Housing Ombudsman's website.

Investigations and findings

10.11 As with the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, we are not always aware of every complaint or enquiry that is made to the Housing Ombudsman.

10.12 Our records show that there has been 1 complaint decided by the Housing Ombudsman in 2024/25 related to the Council. This decision will be published on the Housing Ombudsman's website: [Decisions Archive - Housing Ombudsman](#). This complaint was considered by us in the 2022/23 period. A summary of this complaint is included overleaf:

Service area	Complaint	Summary and outcome	Agreed action
Housing Maintenance Programmes and Servicing and Complaints	<p>1. The complaint is about the landlord's response to a gas leak.</p> <p>2. The Housing Ombudsman also considered the complaint handling.</p>	<p>There was no maladministration by the landlord in response to the resident's reports of a gas leak.</p> <p>There was a service failure by the landlord in its complaint handling.</p>	<p>Order</p> <p>The landlord should apologise to the resident for its complaint handling failing.</p> <p>Recommendations</p> <p>The landlord should:</p> <p>a. Pay the resident the £520 compensation offered in its level 1 response.</p> <p>b. Review training requirements with its out of hours team to prevent communication delays where a gas safety concern has been reported outside of usual business hours.</p>

11.Compliments

11.1 It is important to recognise the good work that officers of the Council do, as well as identifying where improvements can be made.

11.2 As a result of an action identified in the 2023/24 Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report we have:



- Raised awareness with staff about what to do if they receive a compliment.
- Introduced an online form for members of the public to submit compliments and positive feedback.

11.3 Managers and officers are encouraged to pass on compliments and positive feedback that has been received. A compliments inbox (compliments@nfdc.gov.uk) has been set up to assist with this, along with an online form (**Compliments and Positive Feedback Form**) for members of the public.

11.4 Below are anonymised examples of the positive feedback that has been received by some of our service areas in the period 2024/25.

Landlord: Housing Maintenance, Programmes and Servicing

"Many thanks for the repair carried out this morning by xx. He has done his usual great job, very much appreciated".

"Tenant called and said 'He ... was very happy with the service and input he received from us...'"

"A big thank you for the fencing work we have just had completed"

"I just wanted to say that the team carrying out the work on the soakaway have done an excellent job."

"Tenant called in she is thrilled and really full of praise for the works we completed today. She would like to pass on her thanks to the worker and commend his wonderful craftsman ship."

"The tenant from xx has called in to say she is really happy with works xx has done today and how nice polite and helpful he has been 😊"

"Whilst doing building checks at xx, I bumped into the tenant in xx, who has lived at this address for 10 years. He praised me and NFDC for the work we are doing and said he and his family was 110% happy with where they are and the work we do – we fix problems very quickly"

"I had workman here Monday I must say xx so polite and helpful ... He is a lovely man! Please pass this onto his boss please!"

"Tenant has called in to the Hub this morning to pass on her thanks and compliments to our operative xx for all his hard work in the back garden, she is extremely grateful."

"I would also inform you that the workman who came was absolutely wonderful he worked so quickly and soon was able to find the problem after many tries. Definitely someone to keep on your 'book's'.

Thank you again."

"Compliments given over the phone to operative xx for a job he was on yesterday, at xx Tenant noted xx is a very hardworking man and should get recognition as such.

All is done to a very high standard..."

"... I wanted to say that he was both very friendly and efficient at his job; he made me feel very much at ease, and also made sure to explain what he'd just done afterwards clearly. He basically did everything just the way you'd hope it would be, and as such I thought it important to pass on my compliments, and give full credit where it's due. If you could pass on these thoughts, thanks and best wishes, it would be much appreciated..."

"I would like to thank the three guys who came one last week and two today who were lovely guys and did a great job. Especially thank you xx for a brilliant job..."

"Xx called the Hub this afternoon to pass on her thanks and compliments to both the call taker and the tradesman who helped her today..."

"Tenant called regarding her replacement driveway.

She said that everyone at NFDC and our contractors had all 'gone above and beyond' and 'gone out of their way to make everything easier' for her. She is absolutely delighted with the work and with the way she has been treated all along..."

"Thank you to kitchen fitter (contractor) I can never thank you enough for the care and respect they gave me whilst they carried out to work on my kitchen. They put my needs above the work. They have kept me informed and each and every day they have made sure I was safe They left the kitchen clear of trip hazards..."

"I would like to convey my grateful thanks to xx and his workforce for being so thorough, so kind and considerate to my needs.

xx went above and beyond ...he ensured his crew did the same.

Amazing workers and nothing was too much trouble."

"Tenant called to say how impressed he was with xx, who came out to him this morning".

"Just a big thank you for helping get the repairs on the house corrected, the work was carried very professionally and both times the staff were very polite and worked well"

"Tenant called to say that he reported his boiler not working yesterday. An operative was deployed within the hour, condemned his boiler and left him some heaters until the new boiler is fitted next week. So far he is delighted with the service".

"I had my yearly gas safety check- the engineer was xx, he was efficient, clean and very professional. Please pass on my thanks to him"

"Tenant called to say how polite and helpful xx (Electrician) was who attended "

"Good afternoon, I had one of your workers at my property today to carry out work on my banister and spindles. I would just like to say what a credit he is to your team! His name was xx, and he was a carpenter by trade. He has done a wonderful job replacing the spindles and banister, he was punctual, well-mannered and all round a very pleasant and nice guy! His attention to detail was superb, he was polite and he cleared up after himself. I would just like to say a sincere thankyou to Jim for all his hard work today, it is greatly appreciated, and I hope he is recognised for his hard work!"

"Dear Sir/Madam, sending in a positive feedback for the most excellent service received with your electrician xx who called to do a full electricity inspection. xx was polite and courteous all the way through whilst carrying out his work in a professional manner. A delight to be in his company"

"Tenant wanted to give praise for xx as she said he did a wonderful job"

"Call to hub from tenant to say how pleased she is with her new kitchen and both the NFDC staff and contractors "

"Tenant called to say how please she was with the electrician who attended today to repair her smoke alarm"

Landlord: Resident Services

"xx, again I must reiterate that every day I go and visit Mum and every time she is in her kitchen and singing your praises! The kitchen refit has made such a massive difference to her, not only physically, but mentally as well!"

"Two residents at xx would like to offer feedback on xx, the regular cleaner. 'she's great, she does a fantastic job' they were very pleased with the regular cleaning that she does!"

"I've just had a chat with xx and she wanted me to convey her thanks to all the team who helped xx and those who have given their assistance to her over the last week.

xx said that it's been a great help to her and her children knowing xx was in great hands, and that he was very optimistic about the move on accommodation he'd been allocated.!"

"Hi xx, thank you for your time yesterday and the smooth and caring sign-up process."

"Mum of tenant, passes thanks through to xx for all her help..."

"Tenant wanted to pass on how lovely, helpful, and efficient everyone has been in dealing with all her recent issues and what an amazing and efficient service we provide. She is very happy."

"I would also like to thank you for your help and support at a very difficult time. "

"I would like to say thank you. The property on xx road is beautiful, it's everything I hoped for it really is. I have accepted the flat and we sign the tenancy agreement tomorrow! I am very delighted to be able to relax and not have to worry all of the time. You have helped me in many ways, you have listened to me and have taken my situation into consideration and you did all you could to give me an amazing place to live with all of the beautiful surroundings. I am excited to move into the property."

Housing Options and Tenancy Accounts

"xx, I have to say a huge thank you to you for your help, advice, and reassurance during this nightmarish time...Thank you again,"

"Thank you, xx, you've been amazing at helping me"

"Thank you, xx, I really appreciate all that you're doing and helping us so much."

"Just want to say thank you for everything you have done for me and my children.
It's much appreciated, thank you."

"xx, I Just like to say how jolly efficient and kind you have been. Well done and thank you..."

"xx, Thanks for your email, it has been a pleasure having a great contact in the New Forest."

"Tenant ...wanted to thank everybody involved with assisting her mum to be re-housed, she said she cannot believe the difference it has made to xx and how happy she now is...She asked for special thanks to xx as you showed her around ... she is now in a secure, safe place she loves,"

"Tenants both said how great and supportive you both have been, and they are very grateful for all your help.."

"Thank you, xx,... you have been a godsend in a really difficult time for me.."

"Thank you to xx-So great news!!!! ...Thanks a million!!!!I wanted to say a huge thank you again for your help and participation!!! This is incredibly good news; we are very happy!..."

"Thank you so much for all your help. I am so grateful. The future is bright ..."

"Our dear and beloved xx and xx, thank you very much for the good organisation and participation in today's event. Thank you for accepting us and helping us"

" Me and my wife really grateful to you for your help! Without your assistance we can't proceed, previously we tried but unsuccessfully :(Thanks a million, to You!"

"Thank you for sending me this amazing piece of news!...Its taken a massive weight from my shoulders and I should be able to finally get a good nights sleep tonight. Thank you so much for your help and advice."

"Thank you for your help with this application. In an age of social media and ever-increasing technology it is great to speak to someone who can and does help!"

"I really wanted to express my appreciation and thanks to the absolutely wonderful staff from the nfdc that have made such a difference along the way, xx from the allocation team has been not only incredibly helpful but empathetic and kind, she listened and really cared about my xx, her quick reactions and competence really did start this whole process..."

"Just to say thank you again. You got me through it. The legal battle is not over. My health is improving. You helped with this phone. Got my car back and found my banking"

"I spoke with a client today who shared with me her experience with you during an out of hours call last week. Being on the out of hours rota can be challenging and of course it inevitably interrupts your home life. However, despite this, you continued to show the utmost professionalism and empathy towards a client in crisis. She was so very grateful for this and explained how your kindness really helped her during a time of dire need"

"Thank you for your email, I also just want to take the time to say thank you to you for everything you have done for me and the children you have been very supportive since day one"

"Just to say a massive thank you for all your help I really do appreciate it."

"It's been a bumpy ride for me, but am very great full for the help NFDC has given me. Just wanted to say a big thank you to all the team that has helped me and am taking 1 day at a time!"

"Mum moved into her apartment at xx on Monday. Finally, after 16 months of not having a place of her own, including being made homeless in June, she has somewhere to call home. She is surrounded by her own, familiar possessions ... xx is absolutely the right environment for her."

"I wanted to write and thank New Forest District Council, Hampshire County Council, and in particular yourselves, for the level of concern, care, and commitment you have shown to my mother, as well as to myself and my family. When I first approached New Forest District Council in July of last year, out of desperation, I really couldn't see a way forward and out of the situation we were in. xx, you reassured us and set us on the right path. xx, you and xx made the move to Extra Care accommodation possible. Over the last six months, I have also spoken with other, very helpful individuals, including those in the housing benefit team.

I am sure Councils and their staff, tend to receive more negative than positive feedback, but on this occasion, I cannot speak highly enough of everyone and your efforts to assist us... So I leave you my best wishes and heartfelt thanks."

"I just wanted to take a moment to express my sincere gratitude to xx as I was truly impressed and very thankful for all his help and as I imagined he would be unable to accept a thank you gift I thought the next best thing would be an email to his bosses to acknowledge his efforts. xx is settling in to his accommodation and is also very very thankful for xx help. He is looking forward to getting his life back on track. Thank you all for the work you do it is very much appreciated".

"I genuinely cannot thank you enough for all your help, after all the stress and plenty of tears there is finally light at the end of the tunnel"

"I just wanted to write to say a huge thank you for all you have both done in getting me into Number xx. The past 6 months have been so challenging, and I honestly felt like there was nothing left that could go wrong, but at last with the amazing kind help of both of you I can finally see some light at the end of the tunnel.

Thank you again to both of you as I cannot wait to move in and I know I will be so happy there".

"Thank you for everything over the last few months and a massive thank you for helping me secure this accommodation"

"I genuinely cannot thank you enough for all your help, after all the stress and plenty of tears there is finally light at the end of the tunnel"

Community safety and support

"Hi just really wanted to say thank you again Thank you for today don't think you realise the difference you've just made!"

"I just wanted to say thank you for all your help, support and guidance over the past couple of years – I've loved working with you. The range of issues you deal with is immense and how you keep on top of it all is beyond me. There have been some real challenges as I'm sure there will continue to be – but I think some of the relationships and working arrangements we've put in place will only serve to make the partnership (and therefore the New Forest) stronger and safer.

Thanks again for everything"

Environmental and Regulation

"Thank you and a quick note to say how good an experience it has been to work with you and the team on the ground. Lots of useful advice by everyone, respectful and very customer friendly. You and the team are a shining light not just to the council, but business in general on how to engage with the general public..."

"Thank you very much for this information and making sure we are all kept safe."

"THANKYOU , you are still my favourite Licensing authority !!"

"Many thanks for your email. I think you should know that you are by far the easiest and most efficient Licensing team to deal with! Many thanks"

" ...I just wanted to say again thanks to you and all concerned in Licensing ... every time I've communicated with NFDC you've all been super polite and helpful"

"I have had excellent service from licensing department over the past 13 years and thank you for the friendly and efficient way I have been looked after."

"Thank you for your most kind letter of xx, which is much appreciated. "

"Just a quick email to pass on customer feedback. xx spoke to a lady today, regarding a complex pest issue in a shared ownership property.

The customer advised me, that the lovely lady xx she had spoken to, had been very helpful and could I pass on her thanks".

Revenues and Benefits

"...I was met with another member of your staff, xx who again was patient, kind and incredibly efficient."

"... I just wanted to say again, thank you so much for keeping an eye on things with me and for the increased support..."

I am grateful for good people like yourself working in and around this process and your support is so very much appreciated

Thank you, not just for me, but for my children, whose well being your are also assisting."

"...Many thanks for arranging this for me. The staff at Lymington made the whole process very easy please pass my thanks".

"Just to say thank you very much for the continuing financial support and clarifications - I am so very grateful for this and appreciate your kind considerations in these challenging times... "

Coastal

"Please pass on my personal thanks to the NFDC team who provided so much information ... all the best to you and thanks again...."

"We are also very grateful for the coastal team - you have always given very prompt and thorough responses whenever we contacted you during our beach hut search"

"Thank you for the team effort in clearing the shingle at Milford"

"Thank you for the hard work all of the team, it looks great".

"Some of the hut owners have commented on how much they appreciate the personal touch of taking the time to call rather than sending out bulk emails of just sending letters. One lady said it really makes a difference. "

"I just wanted to say thank you very much on behalf of a lot of us that you see beach at Hordle Cliff for organizing for the smashed glass door that was on the beach at the bottom of the steps by the Kiosk Cafe to be removed. We really appreciate that. Obviously a lot of dog walkers and general public use that for swimming etcetera and we really appreciate the fact that glass was taken away. So thank you for responding to that. Many thanks".

"We are all very grateful for your excellent work in getting this done".

Waste and Transport

"Thank you very much for your kind reply. The operatives work hard and at a pace. The new bins should solve it all.
I [would] like to say a huge thank you for resolving the issue of the domestic waste... Long may it continue"

"Many thanks to the team ... They were really friendly and did a really great job, an asset to the council..."

"I have just had a visit from xx and write to state my gratitude for the swift and timely manner he dealt with my complaint."

"We wanted to write to extend our gratitude to the refuse collectors...Our 2 year old boy, xx, eagerly awaits the bin collection every xx morning and loves to go out and watch the team collect our bins. They are always incredibly friendly with him and take the time to stop, wave and chat and let him see what they're doing. Please ensure [our] appreciation is shared with them and their line managers."

Grounds, Streetscene and Open Spaces

"Just wanted to say what a brilliant job is being done ...Thank you very much for what you are doing!!"

"I logged a call this morning, ...The response I got today was Excellent , you responded to my call, with a prompt E-mail informing me of the process... Thank You very much for such excellent service"

12. Next steps for 2025/26 and beyond

- 12.1 During 2024/25 the number of complaints received increased. It is vital that complaints are responded to adequately and in a timely manner and that our corporate complaints procedure works effectively for both complainants and staff.
- 12.2 Complaints serve as one of the Council's most important intelligence sources. It is important that services scrutinise complaints to learn from them and develop meaningful service improvements.
- 12.3 We have already made some positive changes to our complaints handling processes and plan several actions for 2025/26 and beyond to improve our complaints handling. These are set out in this report.