



Half Yearly Update Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report

1 April 2025 – 30 September 2025

Information Governance and Complaints Team

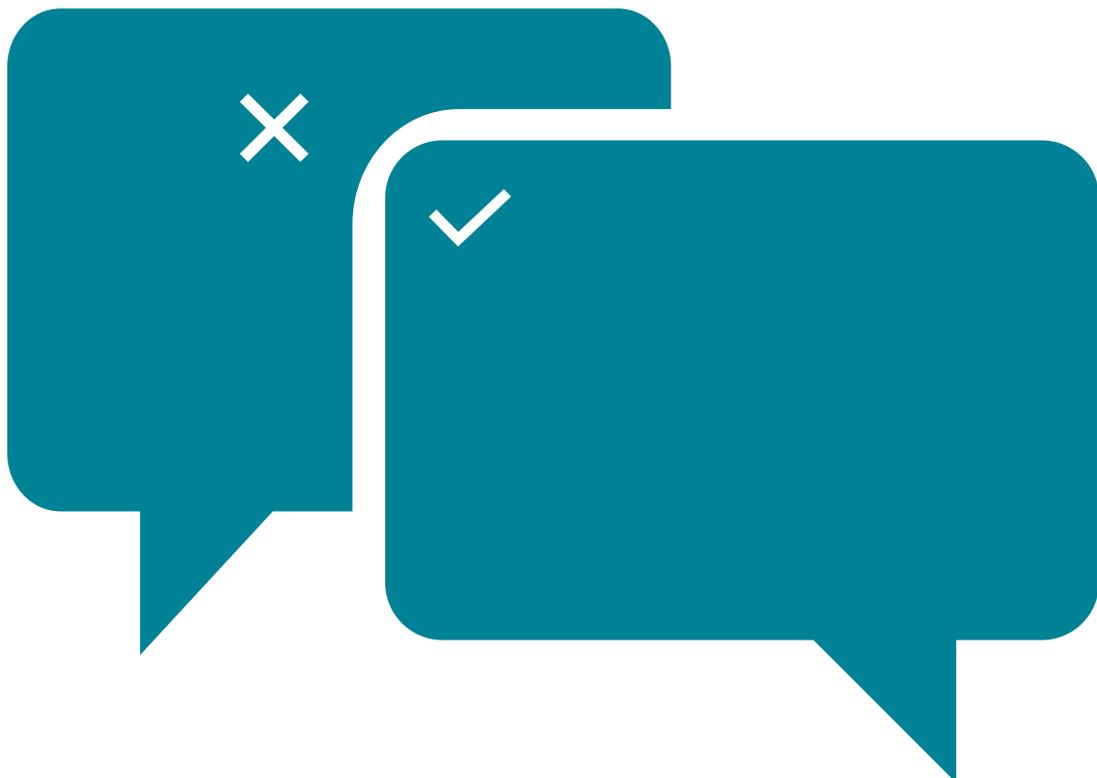


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1. Introduction

- 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 provide a half yearly update on the complaints we have received during the period 1 April 2025 to 30 September 2025, highlighting key themes, trends and volumes recognising that accountability and transparency are integral to a positive complaint handling culture.

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 approved by our governing body (Cabinet), at least annually.
- 2.6 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.
- 2.8 The annual report prepared for the year 2024/2025 is published online, here: **[Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2024/25](#)** ('the Annual Report').
- 2.9 The Annual Report was approved by Cabinet.
- 2.10 Cabinet's formal response to the Annual Report is published, here: **[Feedback, comments and complaints - New Forest District Council](#)**

Housing Ombudsman Submission

- 2.11 The Housing Ombudsman requires that we submit a copy of our self-assessment, annual complaints performance and service improvement report and Cabinet's response for the preceding financial year to it by 30 September each year.
- 2.12 The Annual Report for the year 2024/25 was submitted in accordance with this deadline.

3. Our procedure

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

3.2 The process followed since 1 April 2024 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 of 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	<p>Monitoring Officer on behalf of the Chief Executive.</p>	<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 of 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.

4. Structure

4.1 We recognise the importance of this report providing a clear half yearly update on our complaint handling. As with the Annual Report, we have chosen to produce one report that covers all our service areas, which can be considered by our overview and scrutiny panels (in this instance the half yearly report will be taken to the Resources and Transformation Overview and Scrutiny Panel (with members of the Housing and Communities Panel invited) and Cabinet. This report does not include learning case studies and compliments received during the half year period. These will be incorporated in the Annual Report.

4.2 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)
- Ombudsman decisions (section 8)
- Conclusion (section 9)

5. All complaints

Summary – 1 April 2025-30 September 2025

168 168 complaints received

Complaints received

53% 89/168 complaints (53%) were related to Waste and Transport

Waste and Transport service

 69/89 (78%) Waste and Transport complaints have related to missed bins

 74% of complaints resolved at stage 1 (compared with 76% in 2024/25)

 Most common theme for complaints is lack of/delay in service (53%)

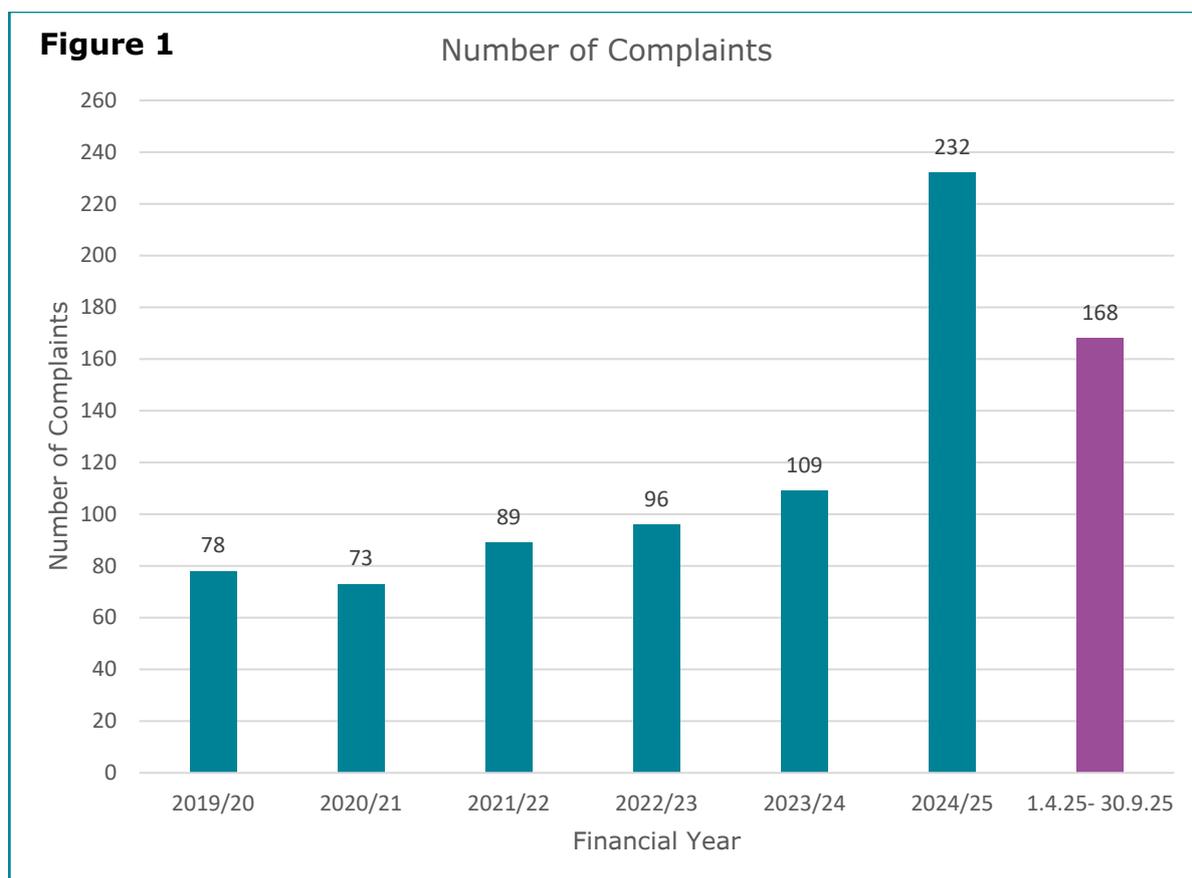
 Higher proportion of complaints upheld (64% compared to 44% for 2024/25)

 62% 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 new complaints received by year with the half year position included in purple:

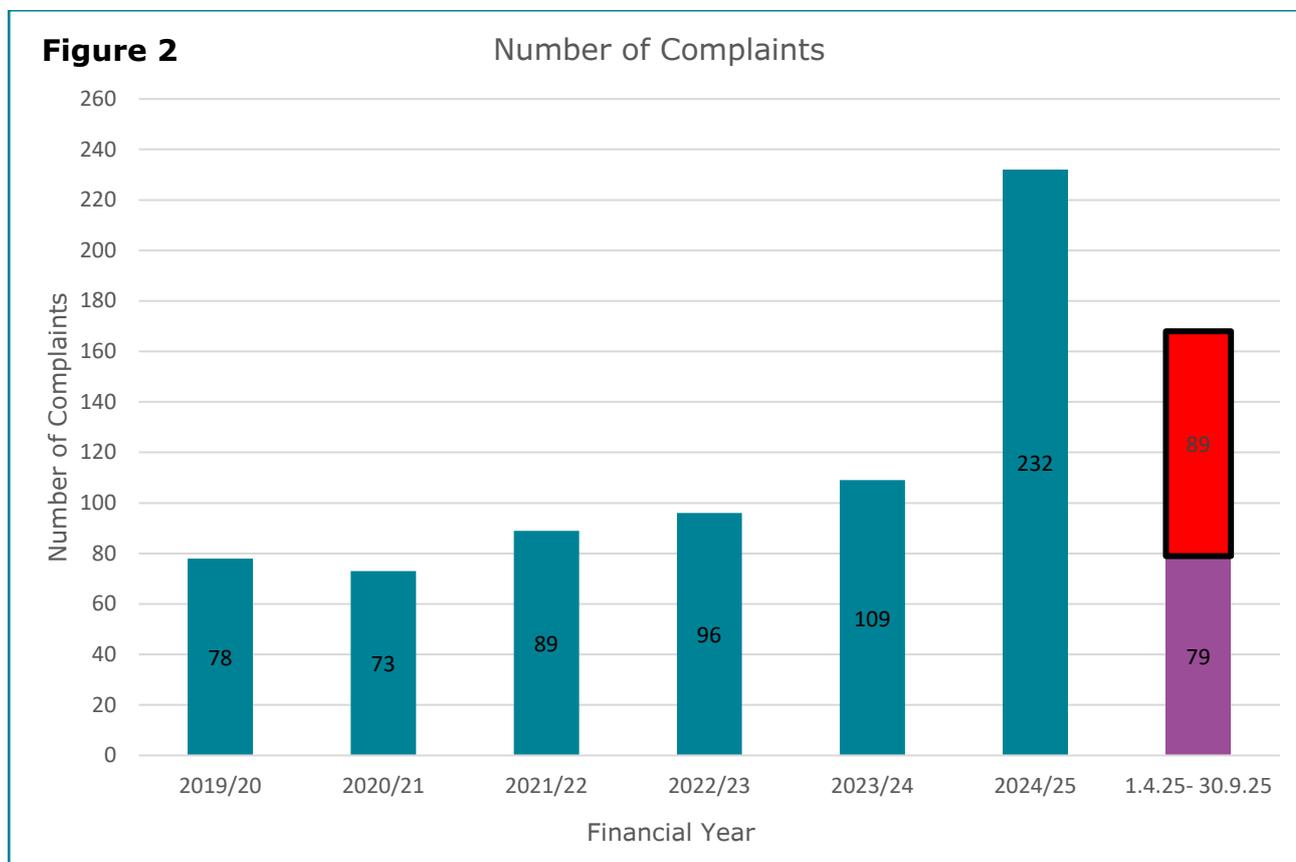


5.2 The half yearly total shows that there continues to be an increase in complaints being received.

5.3 The total of 168 includes 4 complaints that were started at stage 2.

5.4 On 9 June 2025, the Council launched phase 1 of its waste service change roll out. There have been 89 complaints (as well as a high number of service requests, which this report covers in section 7) received by Waste and Transport (which is 53% of the total number of complaints). It was anticipated that there would be an increase in complaints in this service area whilst the service change is being implemented.

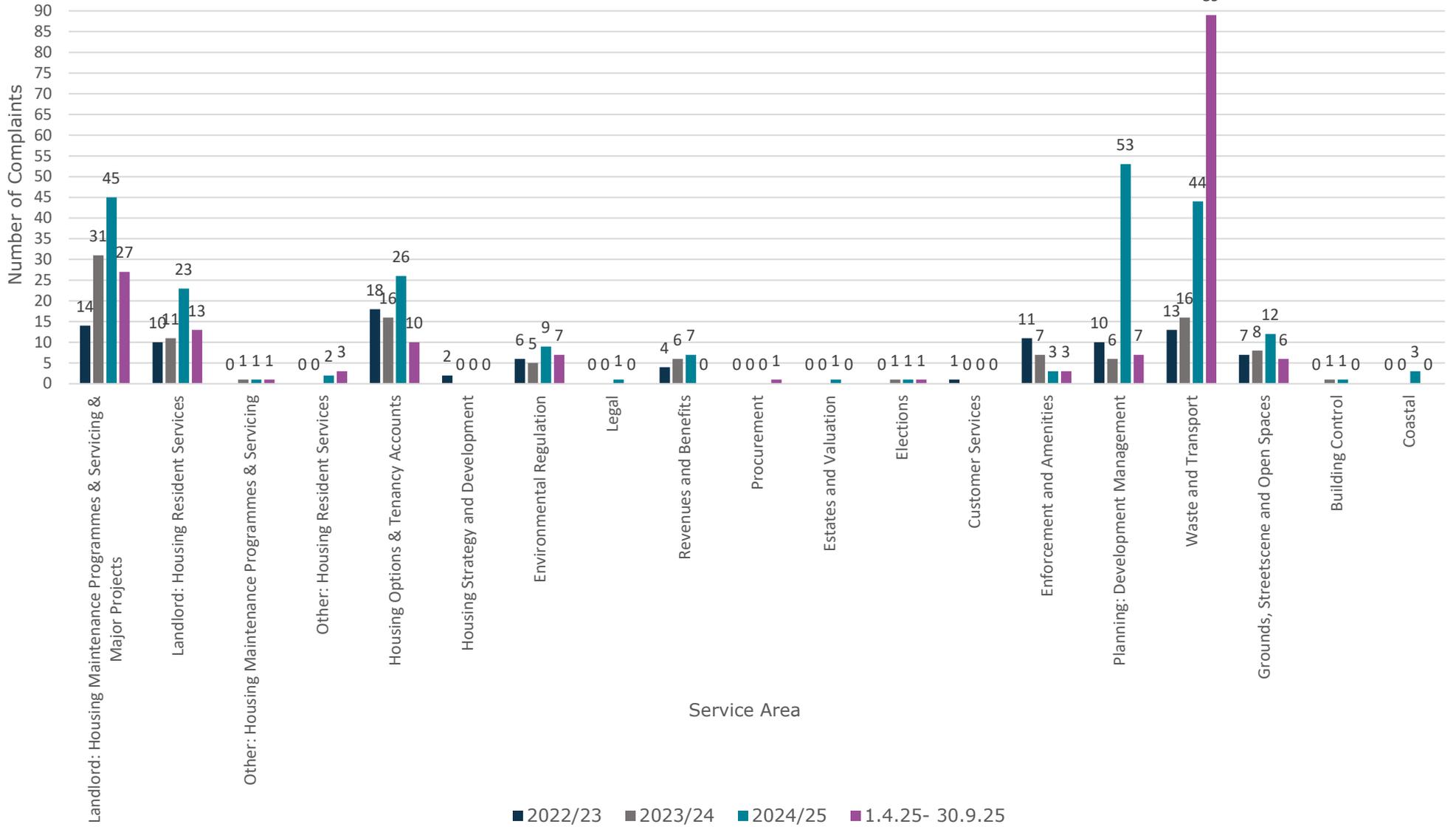
5.5 **Figure 2** below is an updated version of **Figure 1** with Waste and Transport Service complaints demarked:



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

Figure 3

Comparison of Complaints by Service Area



5.7 The service area with the largest increase in complaints for the half year period is Waste and Transport, with a total of 89 complaints compared to 44 for the full year 2024/25. The reason for this is explained in paragraph 5.4 above.

5.8 Of the total of 89 complaints for Waste and Transport, 69 (78%) of these have related to missed bins. **Figures 4** and **5** below and overleaf show a breakdown of the number and percentage based on the type of missed bins the complaints relate to:

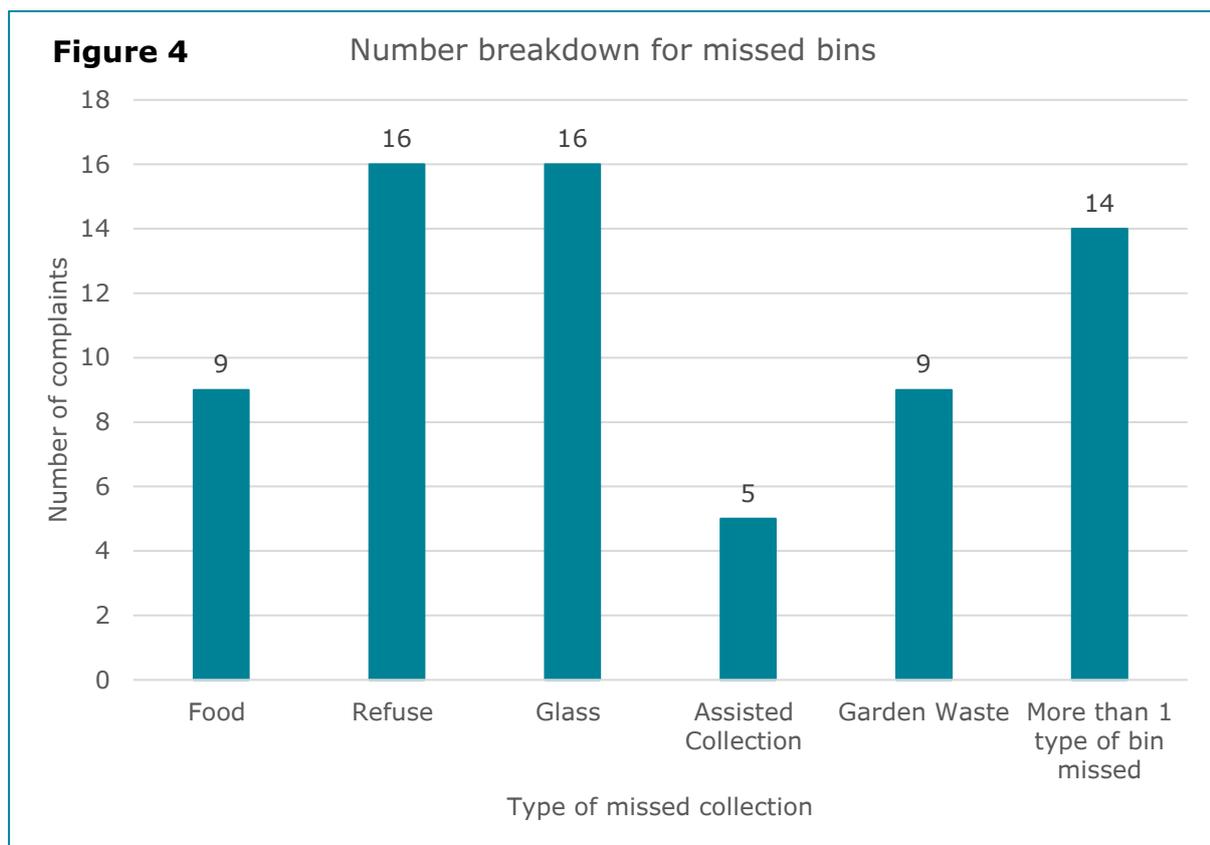
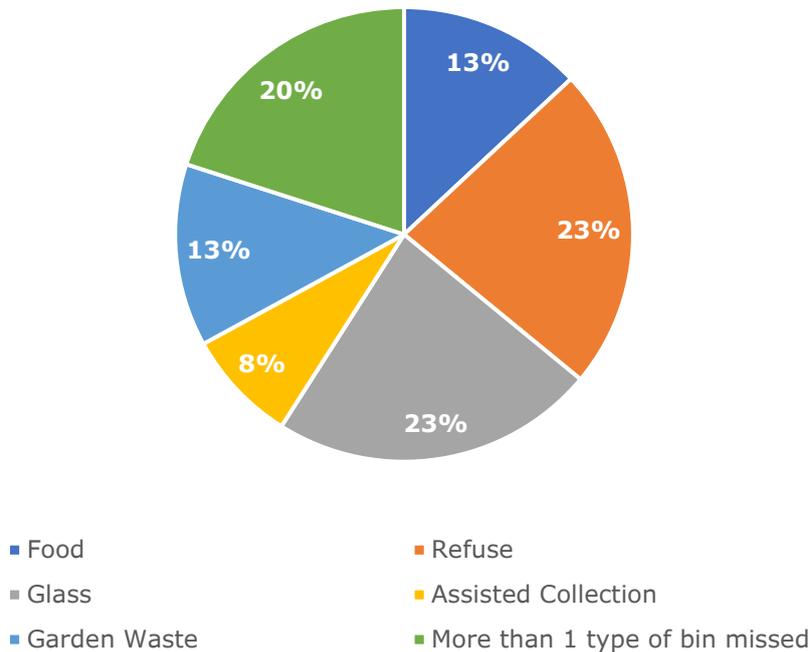


Figure 5

Percentage breakdown for missed bins

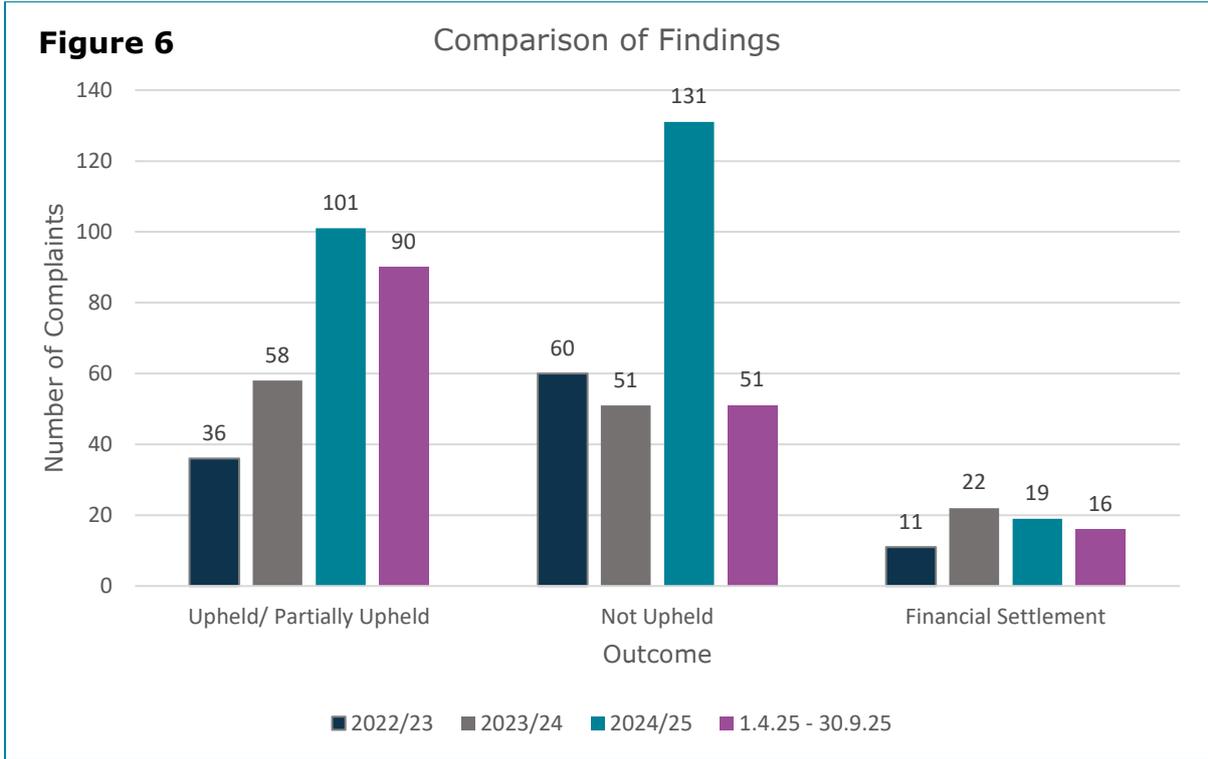


5.9 A review of whether the Waste and Transport complaints relate to residents in the phase 1 area has been carried out. 75% of the missed bin complaints received by Waste and Transport were from residents who live in the phase 1 area.

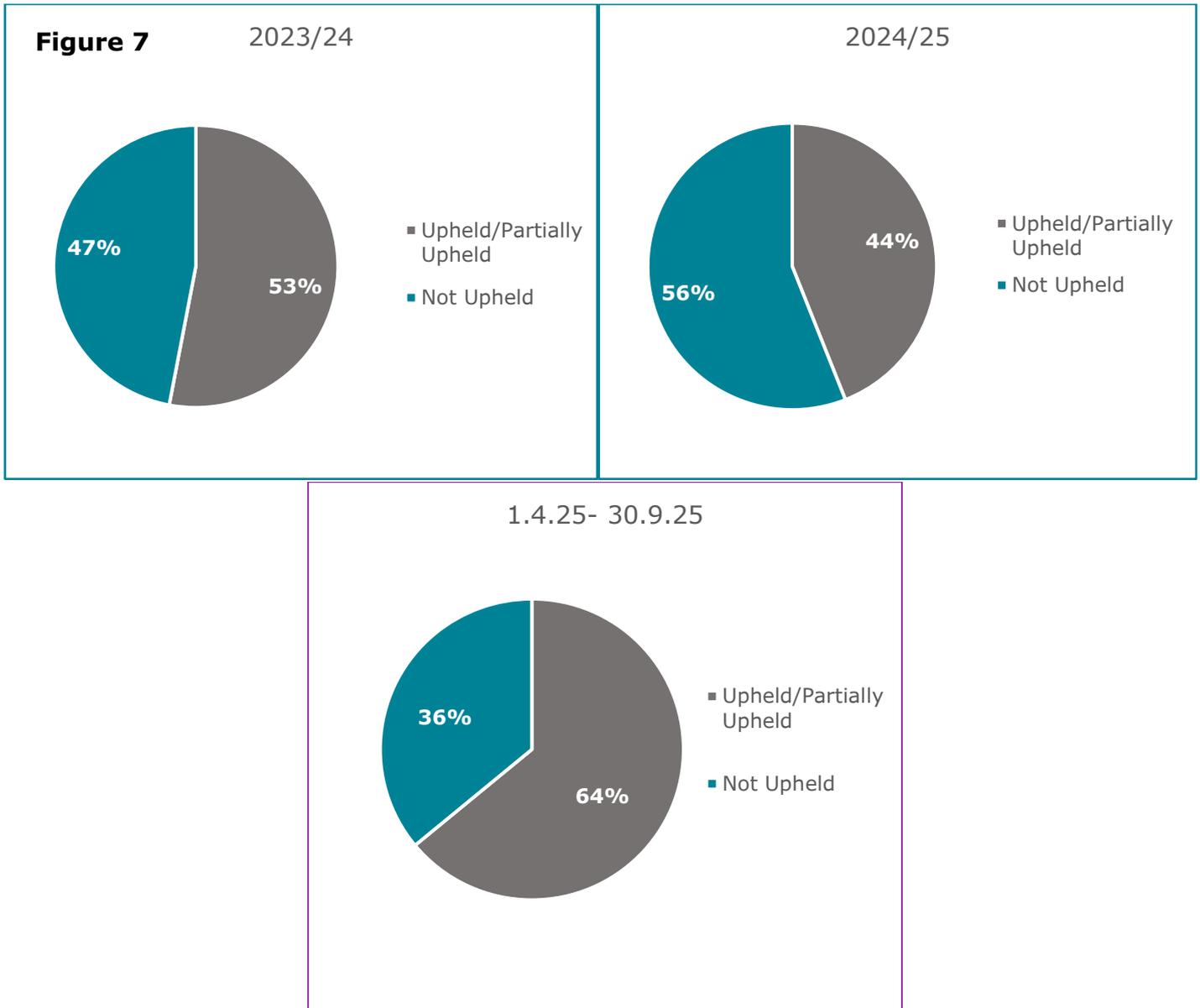
5.10 The service area showing the largest improvement in complaints at the half year position is Planning: Development Management who have received 7 complaints, compared with 53 for the full year 2024/25. However, during 2024/25 there were 42 complaints received relating to a single planning matter which did impact that full year total.

Complaint findings

5.11 **Figure 6** overleaf shows the number of complaints that were upheld or not upheld for 2022/23, 2023/24, 2024/25 and during the half year period covered by this report. 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 6** and **7** include information based on responses sent by 9 October 2025, when this report was prepared.



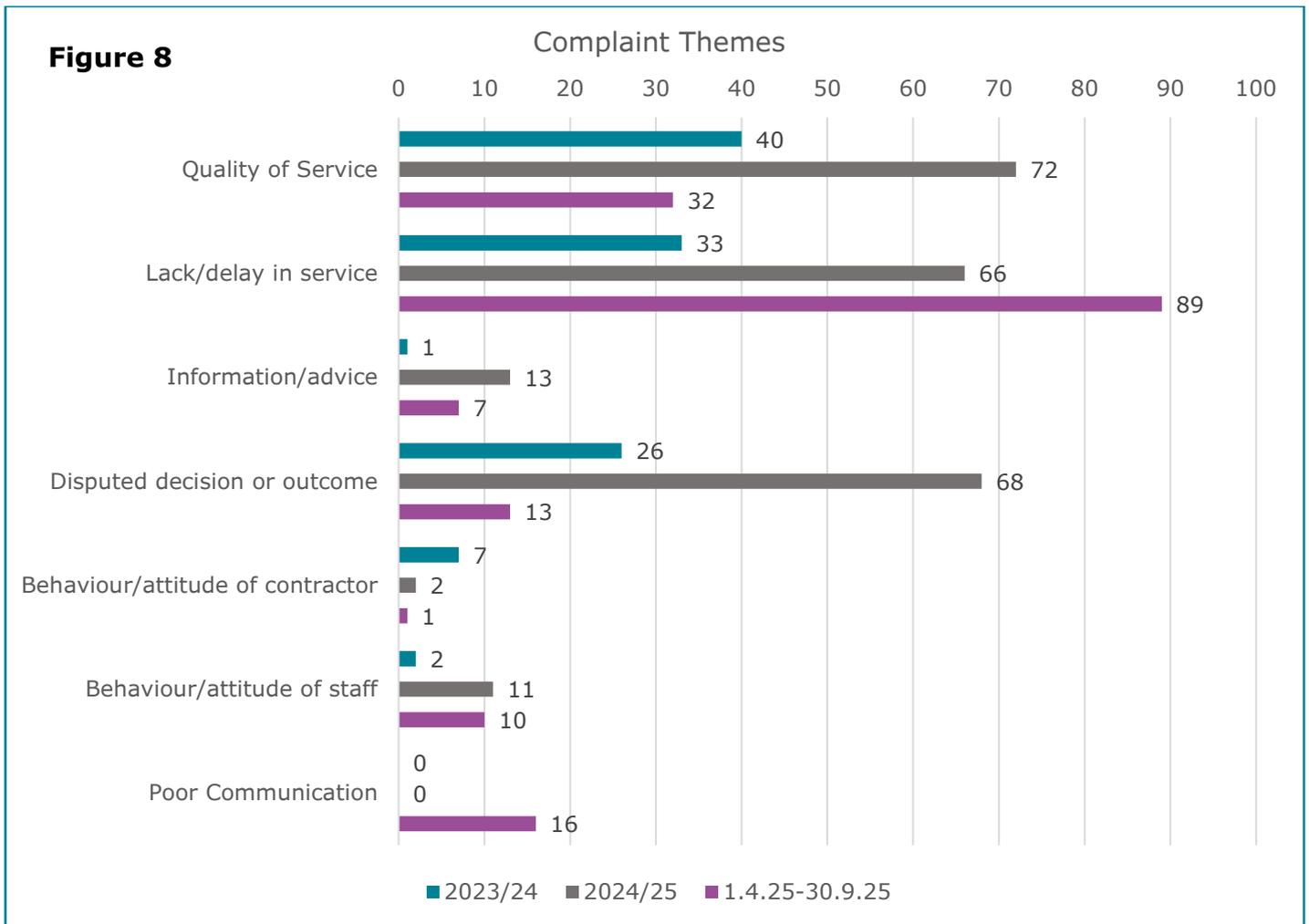
5.12 **Figure 7** overleaf shows the percentage of complaints that have been upheld/ partially upheld and not upheld in 2023/24, 2024/25 and during the half year period covered by this report.



5.13 There has been an increase in the proportion of complaints that have been upheld/partially upheld from 2024/25 (44%) compared to the half year position (64%).

Themes

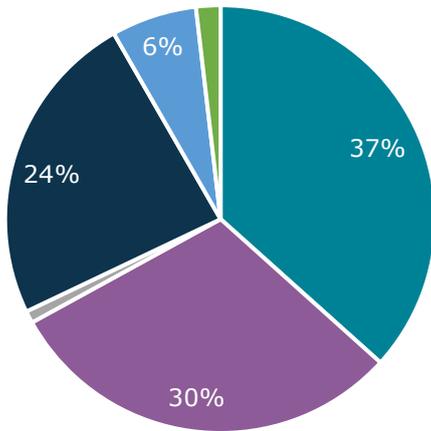
5.14 **Figure 8** overleaf shows the complaints we have received in 2023/24, 2024/25 and at the half year position categorised by theme.



5.15 **Figure 9** overleaf shows the percentage breakdown of complaints between themes in 2023/24 compared to 2024/25 and at the half year position.

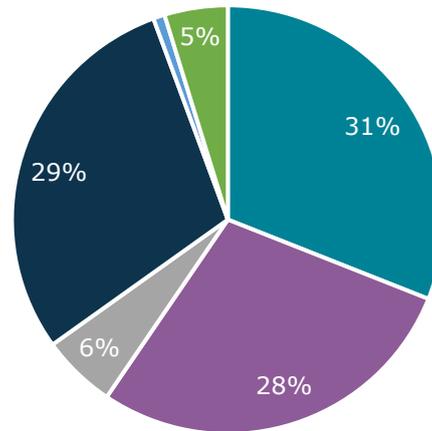
Figure 9

2023/24



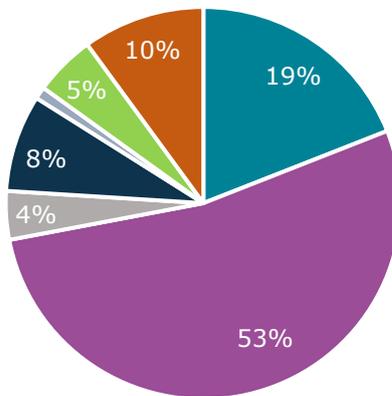
- Quality of Service
- Lack/delay in service
- Information/advice
- Disputed decision or outcome
- Behaviour/attitude of contractor
- Behaviour/attitude of staff

2024/25



- Quality of Service
- Lack/delay in service
- Information/advice
- Disputed decision or outcome
- Behaviour/attitude of contractor
- Behaviour/attitude of staff

1.4.25- 30.9.25

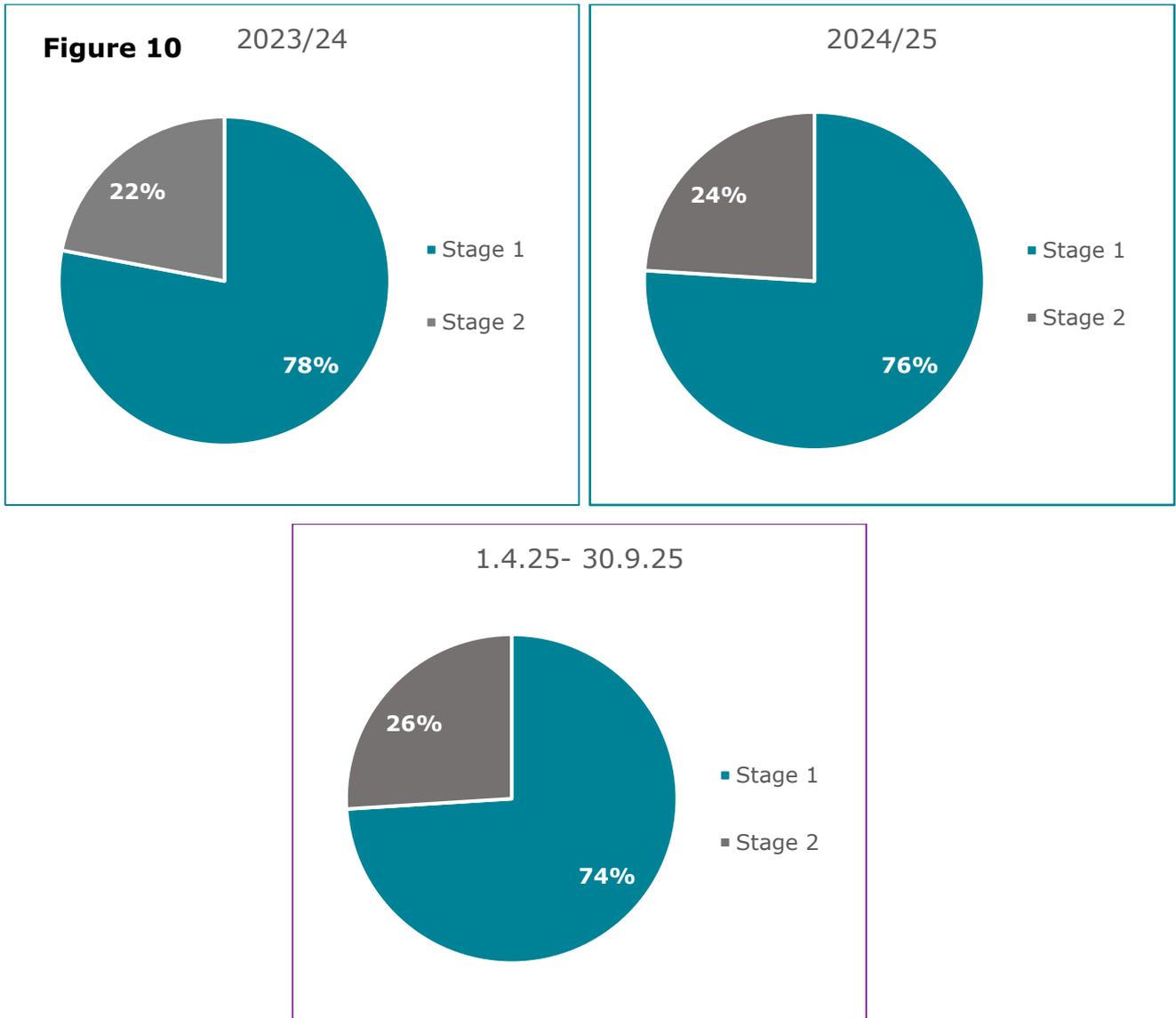


- Quality of Service
- Lack/delay in service
- Information/advice
- Disputed decision or outcome
- Behaviour/attitude of contractor
- Behaviour/attitude of staff
- Poor Communication

5.16 For the half year period the most common type of complaint has related to a lack of/delay in service (53%). This will be due to the number of complaints related to missed bins, as referred to in paragraphs 5.4 and 5.8 above. This is followed by complaints related to quality of service received (19%). In the Annual Report for 2024/25 it was identified that poor communication was a theme that was relevant in many complaints being classified as related to quality of service. The new theme of poor communication was introduced in 2025/26, with 10% of complaints received relating to this. There are some instances where complaints relate to more than one issue, but these have been categorised based on the most prevalent theme.

Stages

5.17 **Figure 10** overleaf 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, 2024/25 and at the half year position. This will not include the 4 complaints that were started at stage 2 but does include any stage 2 complaints that were escalated during the half year period (including where the stage 1 complaint may have been received in 2024/25).



5.18 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 10**, the majority of complaints in the half year period (74%) were resolved at stage 1 and therefore only 26% of all complaints were escalated internally, this is a slight increase from 22% in 2023/24 and 24% in 2024/25.

Timescales

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

5.20 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.

5.21 At the half year period, there has been a reduction in the percentage of stage 1 complaints being responded to within the timescales included in the corporate complaints procedure, down to 62%. 100% of stage 2 complaints were responded to within the procedure timescales. This information is based on responses due by 9 October 2025, when this report was prepared.

5.22 The majority of the late stage 1 responses have been in the Waste and Transport area, where there have been significant pressures due to the waste service change. However, steps have now been put in place within the service to assist with meeting the complaint timescales; ensuring complainants receive a timely response to their complaint.

6. Complaints from tenants

Summary – 1 April 2025-30 September 2025

40

40 tenant complaints received

Complaints received



68% of tenant complaints for Housing Maintenance services (32% for Resident Services)



57% of complaints resolved at stage 1



97% 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 (35%)



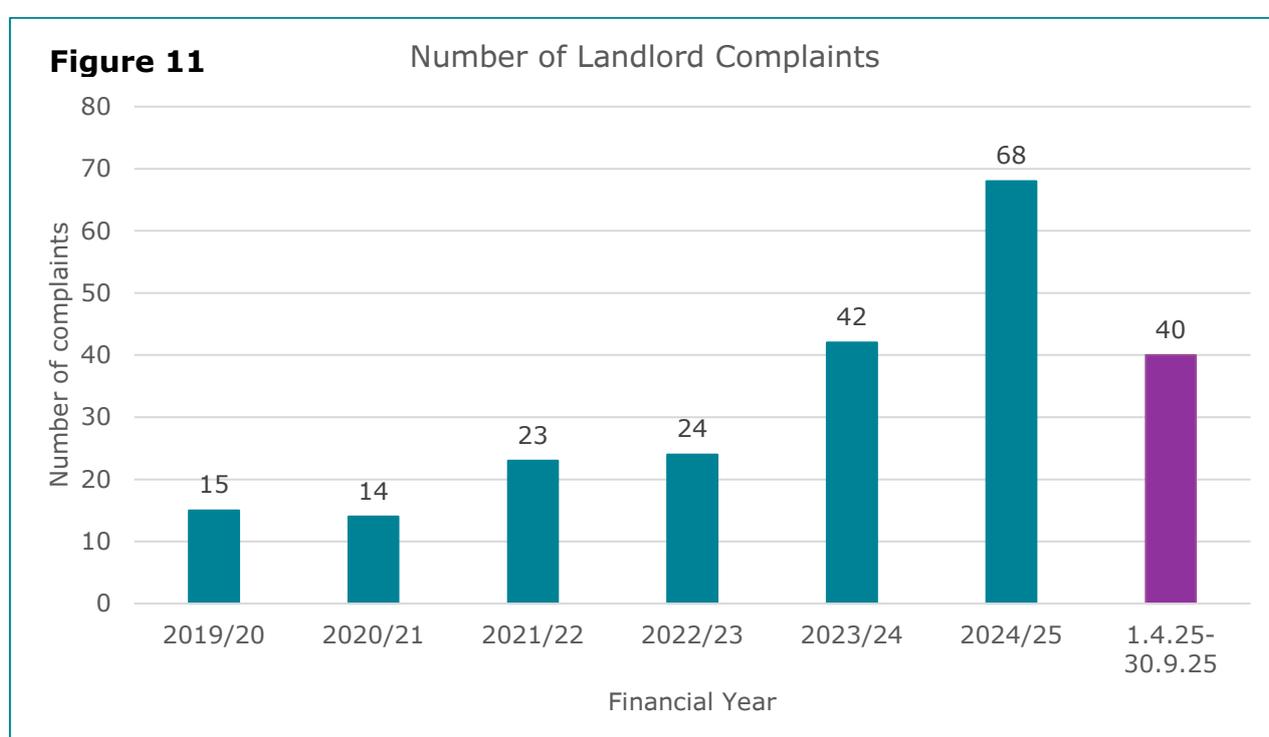
Lower proportion of complaints upheld (41% compared to 59% for 2024/25)

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.

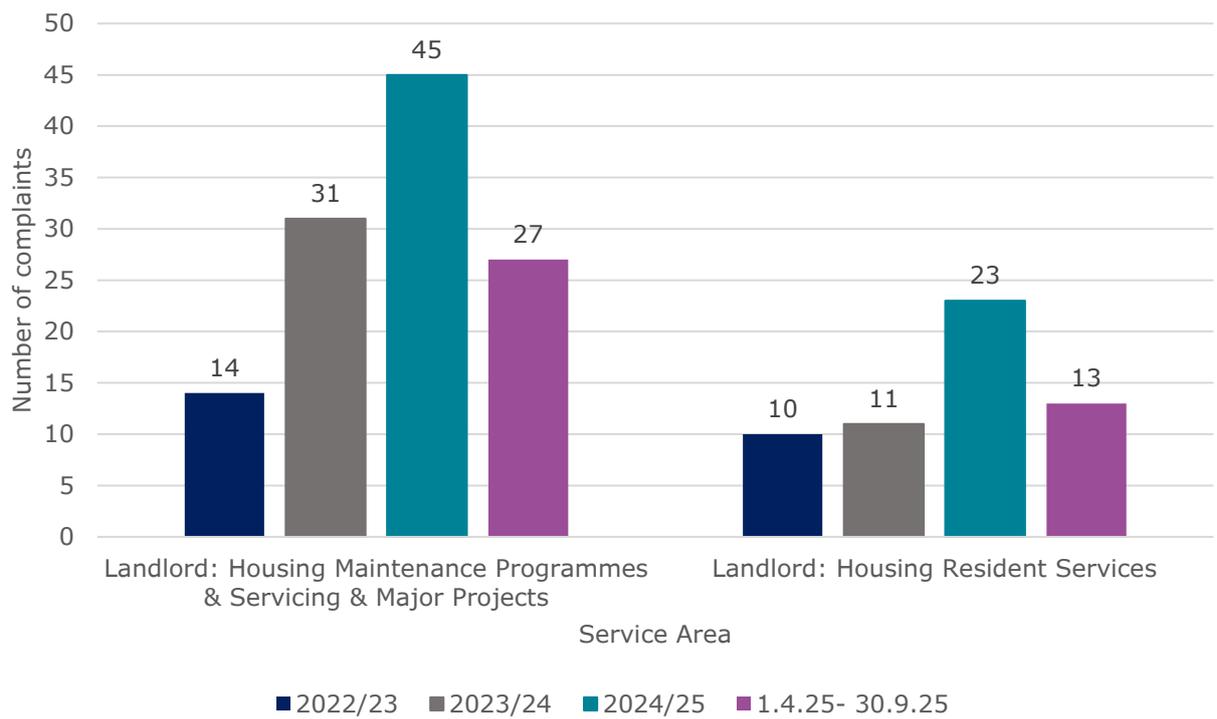
6.2 **Figure 11** below shows the total number of new complaints received by year from tenants to us in our capacity as their landlord with the half year position included in purple:



6.3 At the half year position, 40 complaints have been received by the Council from tenants in its capacity as their landlord.

6.4 **Figure 12** overleaf breaks down the landlord services complaints received by service area.

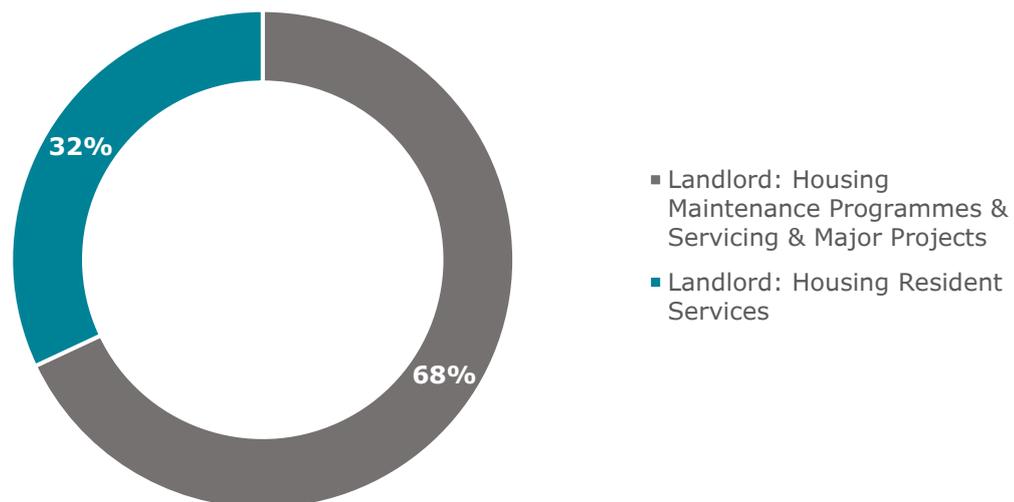
Figure 12 Comparison of complaints received in Landlord services



6.5 The percentage breakdown of complaints relating to landlord services for the half year period is shown in **Figure 13** below:

Figure 13

Percentage breakdown: landlord complaints 1.4.25- 30.9.25



6.6 This compares to 34% for Landlord: Resident Services and 66% for Landlord: Housing Maintenance Programmes and Services for the year 2024/25.

Complaint findings

6.7 **Figure 14** below shows the number of tenant complaints that were upheld or not upheld for 2022/23, 2023/24, 2024/25 compared to the half year position. 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 15** and **16** show how these total figures are broken down between Landlord: Housing Maintenance Programmes and Servicing and Major Projects and Landlord: Housing Resident Services. **Figures 14, 15** and **16** include information based on responses sent by 9 October 2025, when this report was prepared.

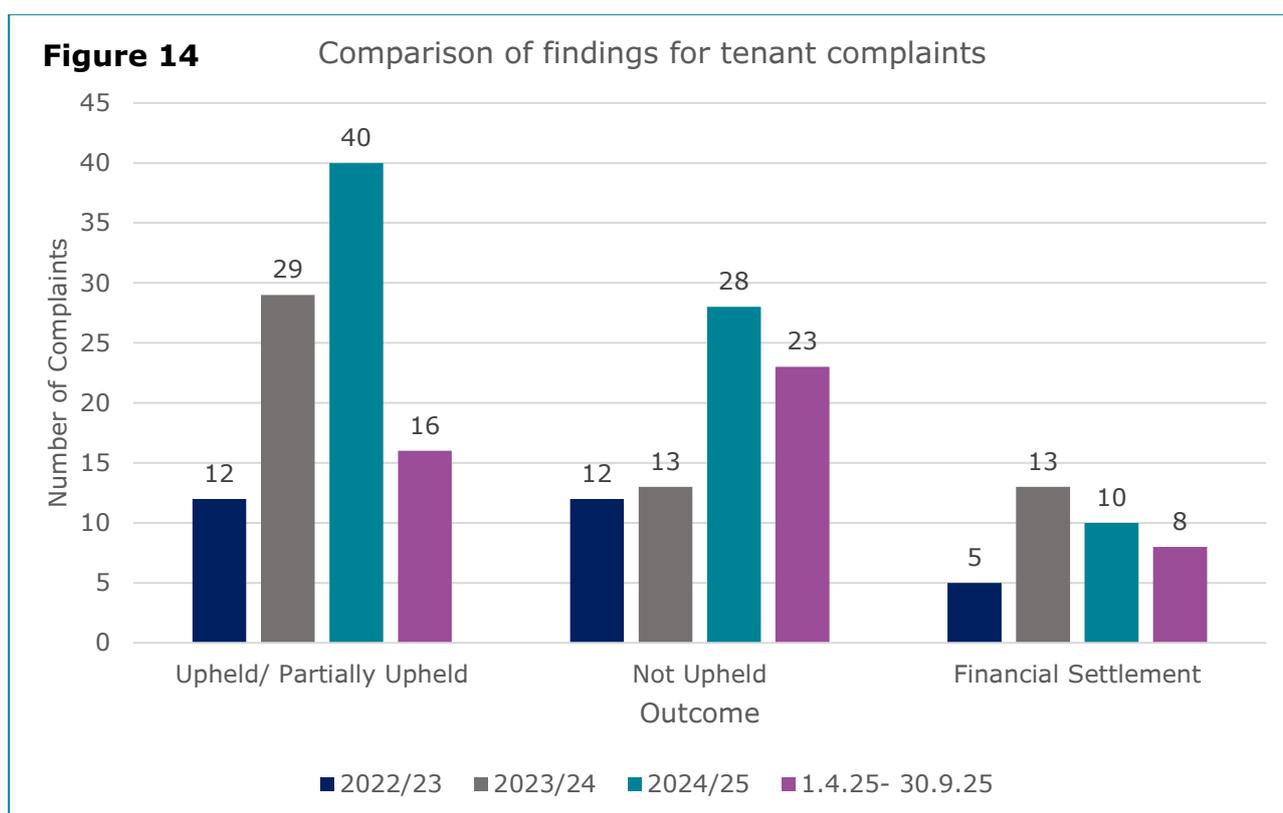


Figure 15 Housing Maintenance, Programmes & Servicing & Major Projects

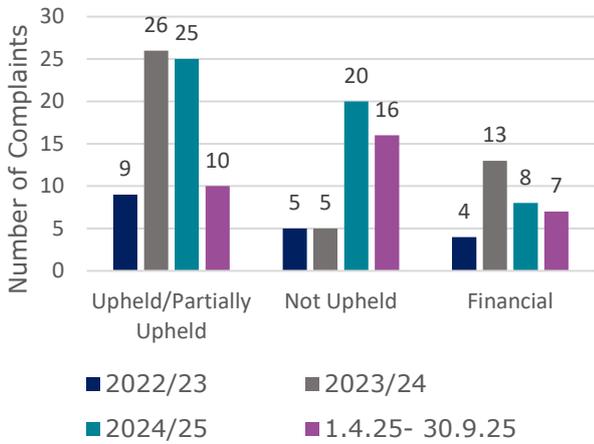
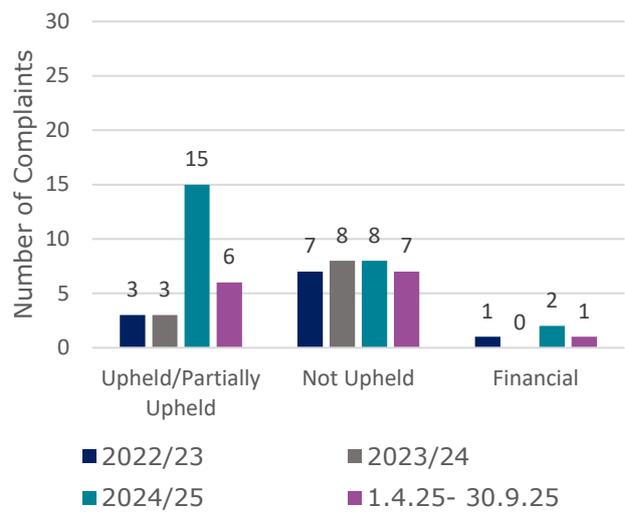
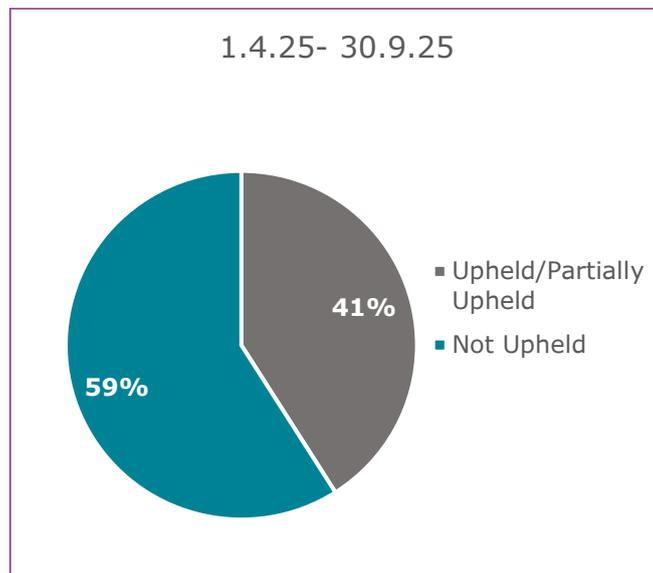
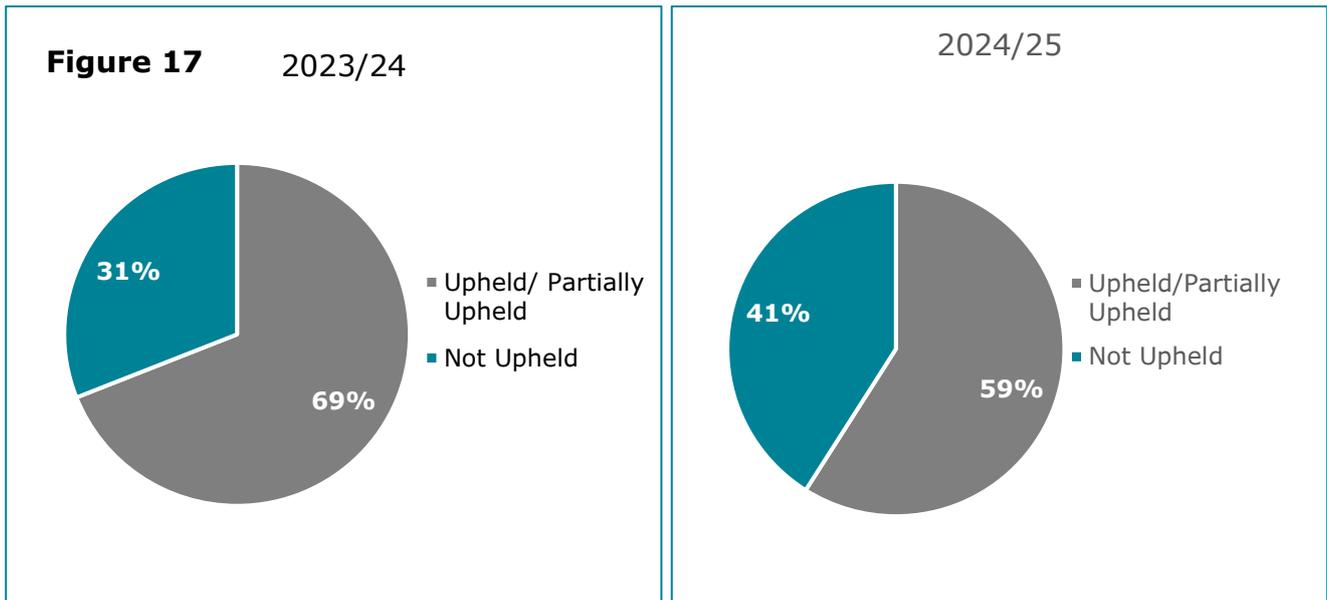


Figure 16 Resident Services



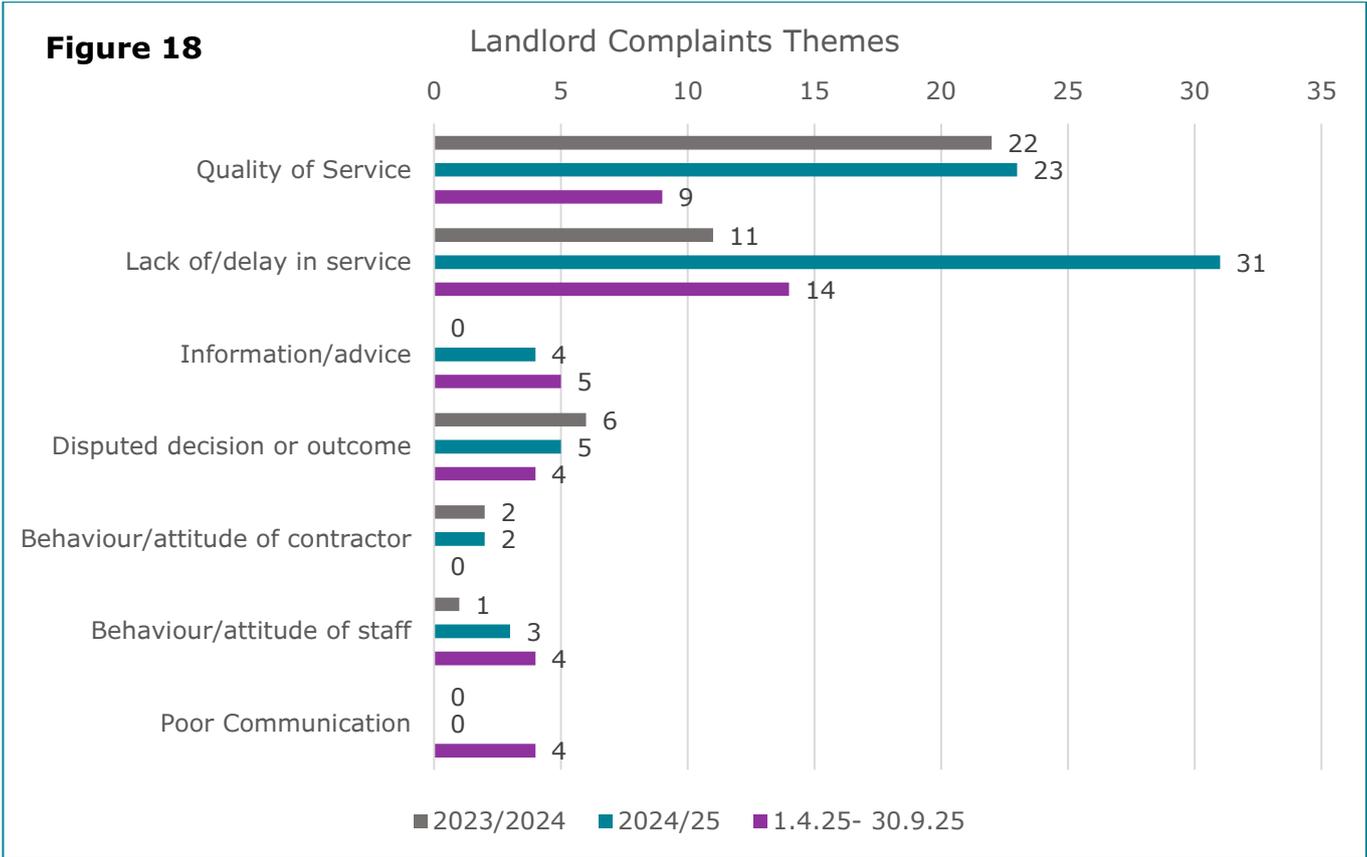
6.8 **Figure 17** overleaf shows the percentage of tenant complaints that have been upheld/ partially upheld and not upheld in 2023/24, 2024/25 and during the half year period covered by this report.



6.9 There has been a decrease in the proportion of tenant complaints that have been upheld/partially upheld at the half year position (41%) compared to 2024/25 (59%).

Themes

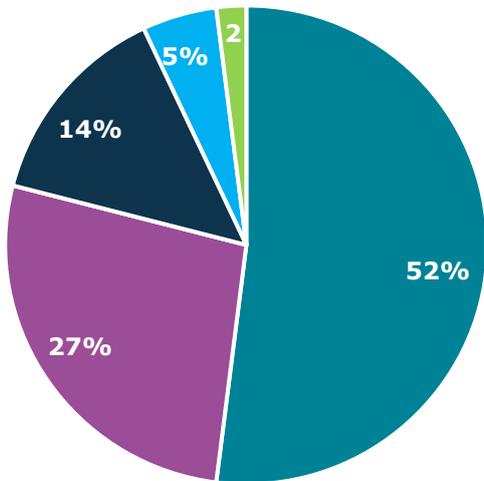
6.10 **Figure 18** overleaf shows the tenant complaints we have received in 2023/24, 2024/25 and at the half year position categorised by theme.



6.11 **Figure 19** overleaf shows the percentage breakdown of complaints between themes in 2023/24 compared to 2024/25 and at the half year position.

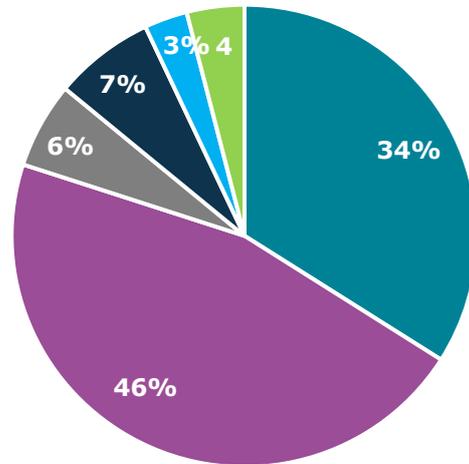
Figure 19

Landlord Themes 2023/24



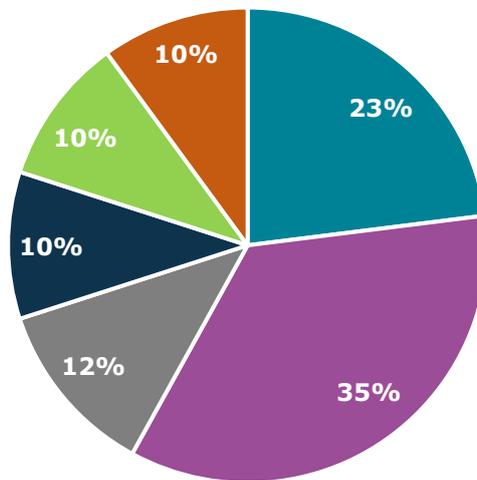
- Quality of Service
- Lack of/delay in service
- Information/advice
- Disputed decision or outcome
- Behaviour/attitude of contractor
- Behaviour/attitude of staff

Landlord Themes 2024/25



- Quality of Service
- Lack of/delay in service
- Information/advice
- Disputed decision or outcome
- Behaviour/attitude of contractor
- Behaviour/attitude of staff

Landlord Themes 1.4.25- 30.9.25

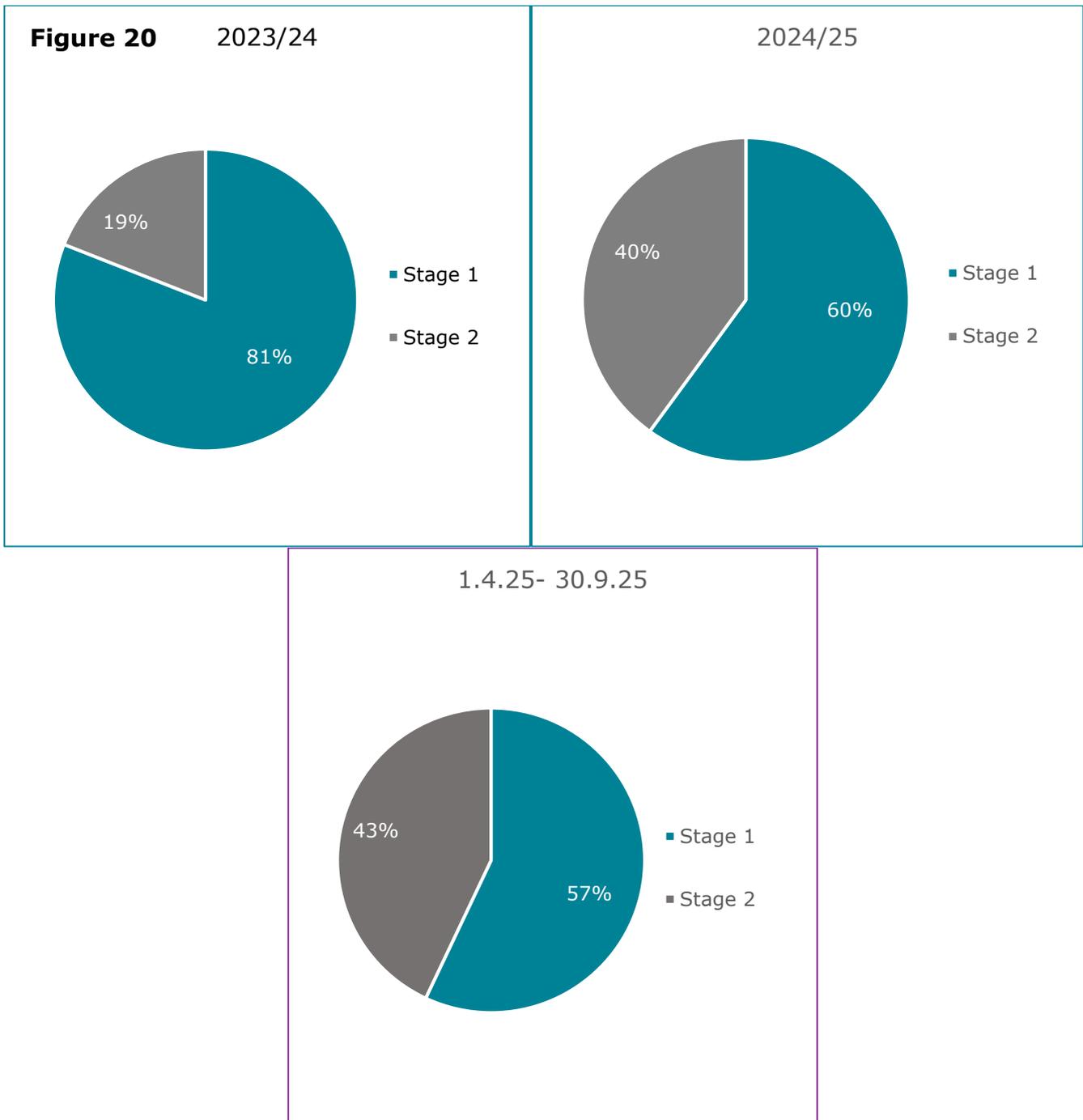


- Quality of Service
- Lack of/delay in service
- Information/advice
- Disputed decision or outcome
- Behaviour/attitude of staff
- Poor Communication

6.12 The most common type of tenant complaint has related to lack of/delay in service (35%). As with all complaints, for tenant complaints a new theme of poor communication has been introduced. Poor communication has been the theme identified in 10% of tenant complaints. There have been no complaints related to behaviour/attitude of a contractor during the half year period. There are some instances where tenant complaints relate to more than one issue, but these have been categorised based on the most prevalent theme.

Stages

6.13 **Figure 20** overleaf shows the percentage of tenant complaints that were either resolved at stage 1 or escalated to stage 2 of the corporate complaints procedure. This includes any stage 2 complaints that were escalated during the half year period (including where the stage 1 complaint may have been received in 2024/25).



6.14 57% of all tenant complaints in the half year period were resolved at stage 1, with 43% escalating to stage 2.

Timescales

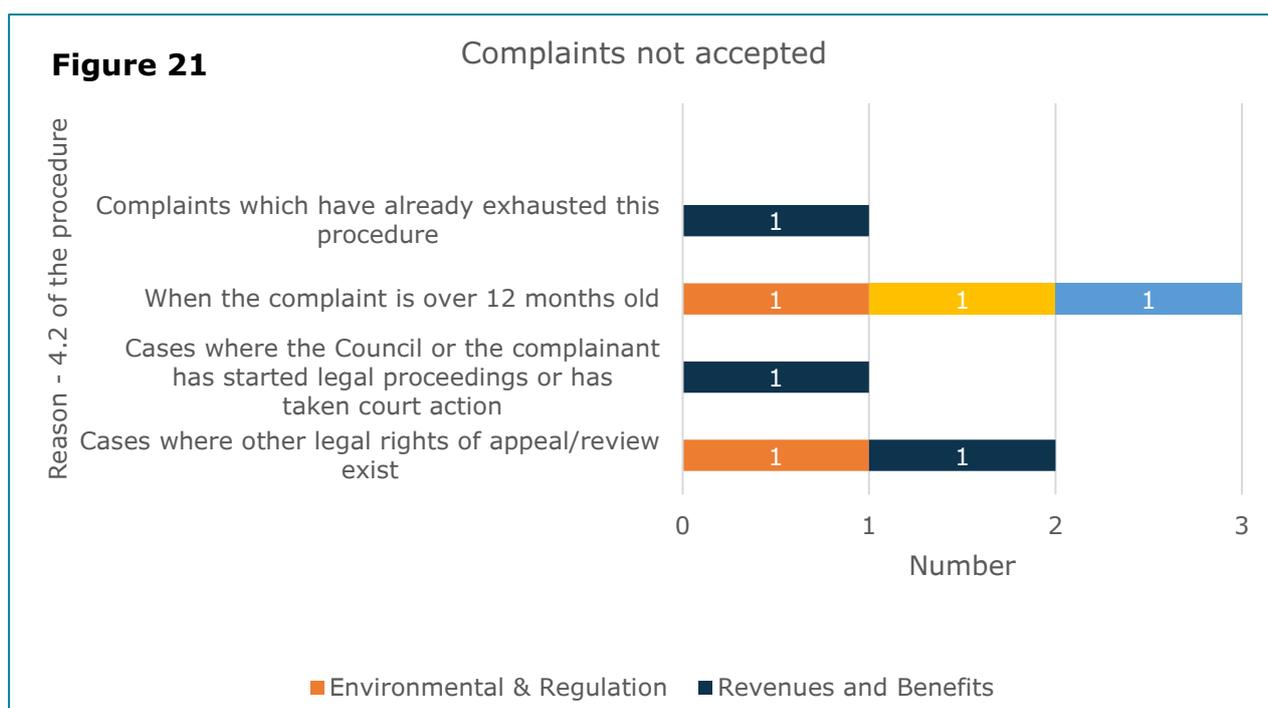
6.15 In 2023/24 100% of tenant complaints were responded to within the timescales included in the corporate complaints procedure that was applicable at that time.

6.16 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.

6.17 At the half year period, 97% of stage 1 tenant complaints and 100% of stage 2 complaints were responded to within the procedure timescales. This information is based on responses due by 9 October 2025, when this report was prepared.

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 During the half year period covered by this report, there were five complaints not accepted.
- 7.5 **Figure 21** below shows a breakdown of the reason these complaints were not accepted by service area. Some complaints were not accepted for more than one reason:



7.6 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.

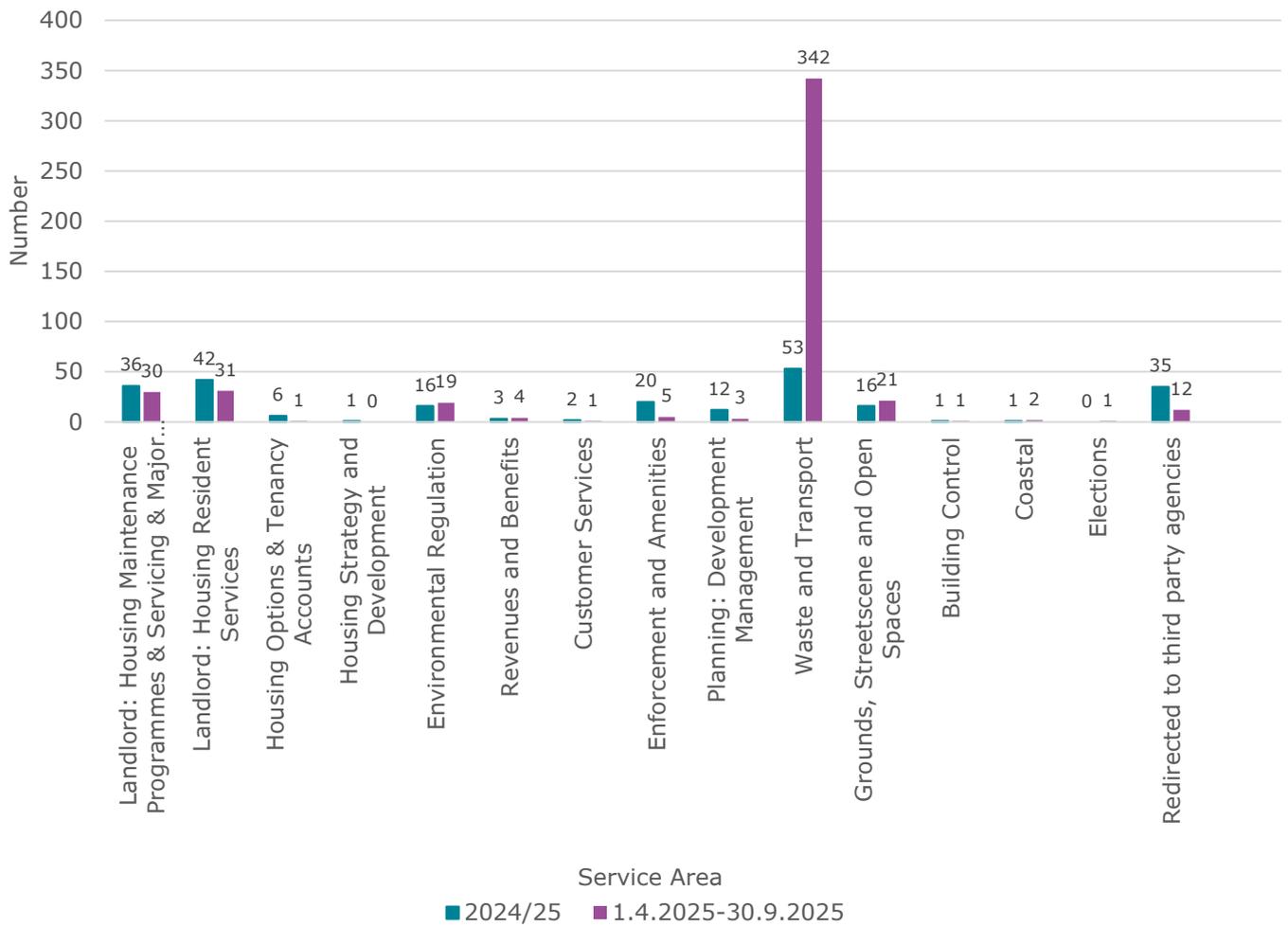
- *Such service requests will be recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly.*
- *Where an individual expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, a complaint will be raised. Efforts to address the service request will continue.'*

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

7.8 **Figure 22** overleaf shows a breakdown of service requests which have been received by the Information Governance and Complaints Team and responded to by services in 2024/25 and during the half year period. To support the waste service change, the Information Governance and Complaints Team has coordinated and provided written responses to the majority of the Waste and Transport service requests.

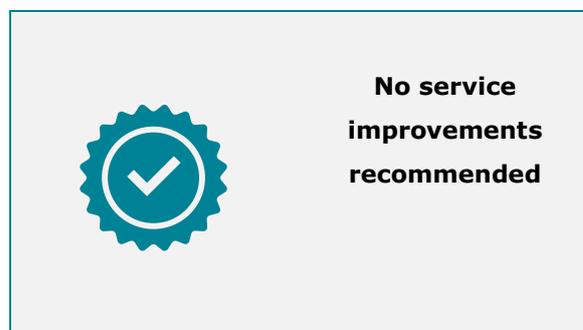
Figure 22

Service requests



8. Ombudsman decisions

Summary – 1 April 2025-30 September 2025



Right to escalate

- 9.1 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.
- 9.2 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

- 9.3 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.
- 9.4 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.**

9.5 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

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

9.7 Our records show that there have been 6 complaints decided by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, during the half year period covered by this report, related to the Council. These were all closed after initial enquiries.

Housing Ombudsman

Performance report

9.8 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](#)

9.9 There is no landlord performance report relating to the Council currently published on the Housing Ombudsman's website.

Investigations and findings

9.10 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.

9.11 Our records show that there have been no final determinations made by the Housing Ombudsman, during the half year period covered by this report, related to the Council.

9. Conclusion

10.1 This report provides a half yearly update on our complaint handling from 1 April 2025 to 30 September 2025.

10.2 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.

10.3 Complaints serve as one of the Council's most important intelligence sources and learning from complaints, and developing meaningful service improvements, will drive our complaints handling going forward. We will continue to work on the actions identified in the Annual Report to improve our complaint handling.