



GUILDFORD
B O R O U G H

Annual Housing Complaints Report

Including Self-Assessment Against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code

April 2025 – March 2026

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1. Foreword

Complaints provide an important opportunity to understand residents' experiences of our housing services and identify where improvements are needed. They help us to learn from mistakes, address service failures and ensure we remain accountable to the people we serve.

This report sets out Housing Services' complaints performance for 2025/26 and summarises what residents told us through complaints, feedback, surveys and interactions with the Housing Ombudsman. It highlights both the progress made during the year and the challenges that remain.

During 2025/26, Housing Services experienced a significant increase in complaint volumes. Whilst this reflects ongoing pressures in some service areas, particularly repairs and technical services, it also demonstrates that residents are using the complaints process to raise concerns and seek improvement. The report shows that complaint handling performance improved during the year and that resident satisfaction with complaint handling increased. We also completed all recorded Housing Ombudsman orders issued during the reporting period.

However, the report is equally clear that further improvement is required. Residents continue to tell us that communication, delays in service delivery and repairs performance impact their experience of our services. We recognise that too many residents are still not receiving the level of service they should expect, and we remain committed to addressing the issues highlighted through complaints.

What is most encouraging is that resident feedback is increasingly being used to drive improvement. Learning from complaints, Tenant Satisfaction Measures, resident scrutiny activity and Ombudsman findings has informed a clear set of priorities for the year ahead. These priorities focus on improving response times, strengthening communication and ownership of complaints, improving repairs services and ensuring that resident feedback leads to visible and lasting change.

I would like to thank residents who have taken the time to share their experiences, as well as the officers, resident representatives and partners who continue to support our improvement journey. We remain committed to listening, learning and delivering better outcomes for our residents.

2. About This Report

The Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code requires all social housing landlords to produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report, report it through their governance arrangements and publish it for residents.

This report explains how Housing Services has managed, resolved and learned from complaints during 2025/26. It summarises complaint performance, resident feedback, Housing Ombudsman outcomes and the service improvements being delivered in response to what residents have told us across the following service areas:

- **Technical Services** – repairs and maintenance of council housing
- **Landlord Services** – tenancy management and housing estate services
- **Allocations, Homelessness and Housing Advice**
- **Case Services** – garages, banding changes, occupational therapy requests, moving home and housing waiting lists

Complaints are categorised by service area but may also relate to work carried out by customer, finance, case or other support teams that contribute to the delivery of housing services.

Housing complaints are managed through a clear two-stage process designed to resolve concerns as early as possible:

Stage 1 Complaint	Stage 2 Complaint
The first formal stage of the Council's complaints process At Stage 1, Housing Services will: ▪ Acknowledge the complaint within five working days ▪ Investigate the issues raised ▪ Work with the relevant service area to understand what happened ▪ Explain the findings and any actions to be taken ▪ Provide a response within 10 working days, where possible ▪ Explain how to escalate the complaint if the resident remains dissatisfied	The final stage of the Council's internal complaints process At Stage 2, Housing Services will: ▪ Acknowledge the escalation request within five working days ▪ Carry out an independent review of the Stage 1 investigation and response ▪ Consider whether the complaint was handled appropriately and whether the outcome was reasonable ▪ Provide a response within 20 working days, where possible ▪ Explain how the resident can refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman if they remain dissatisfied
Where a complaint is complex and additional time is needed, residents will be informed of the reason for the delay, given a revised response date and kept updated on progress.	

The Council has completed its annual self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman’s Complaint Handling Code. The assessment is included at Appendix A and explains how the Council complies with each requirement, as well as identifying areas for further improvement.

3. 2025/26 at a Glance

Housing Services received significantly more complaints during 2025/26 than in the previous year. While complaint volumes increased, complaint-handling performance and resident satisfaction also improved. The information below summarises the key themes, achievements, challenges and priorities identified through complaints, resident feedback and Housing Ombudsman outcomes during the year.

527 Total Complaints	470 Stage 1 Complaints	57 Stage 2 Complaints	60.3% Stage 1 Within Timescale
68.4% Stage 2 Within Timescale	30% Complaint-handling Satisfaction	5 Ombudsman Cases	63% Complaint Volume Increase

What Improved?

- Complaint-handling satisfaction increased to 30%.
- Stage 1 response performance improved to 60.3%.
- Stage 2 response performance improved to 68.4%.
- Resident feedback continues to influence service delivery and improvement.

Key Challenges

- Complaint volumes increased significantly during 2025/26.
- Repairs and maintenance remained the largest source of complaints.
- Communication, delays and follow-up continued to feature prominently in resident feedback.
- Complaint-handling satisfaction remains below where the Council would like it to be. Complaint-handling satisfaction has improved but remains below where the Council would like it to be.

Our Priorities for 2026/27

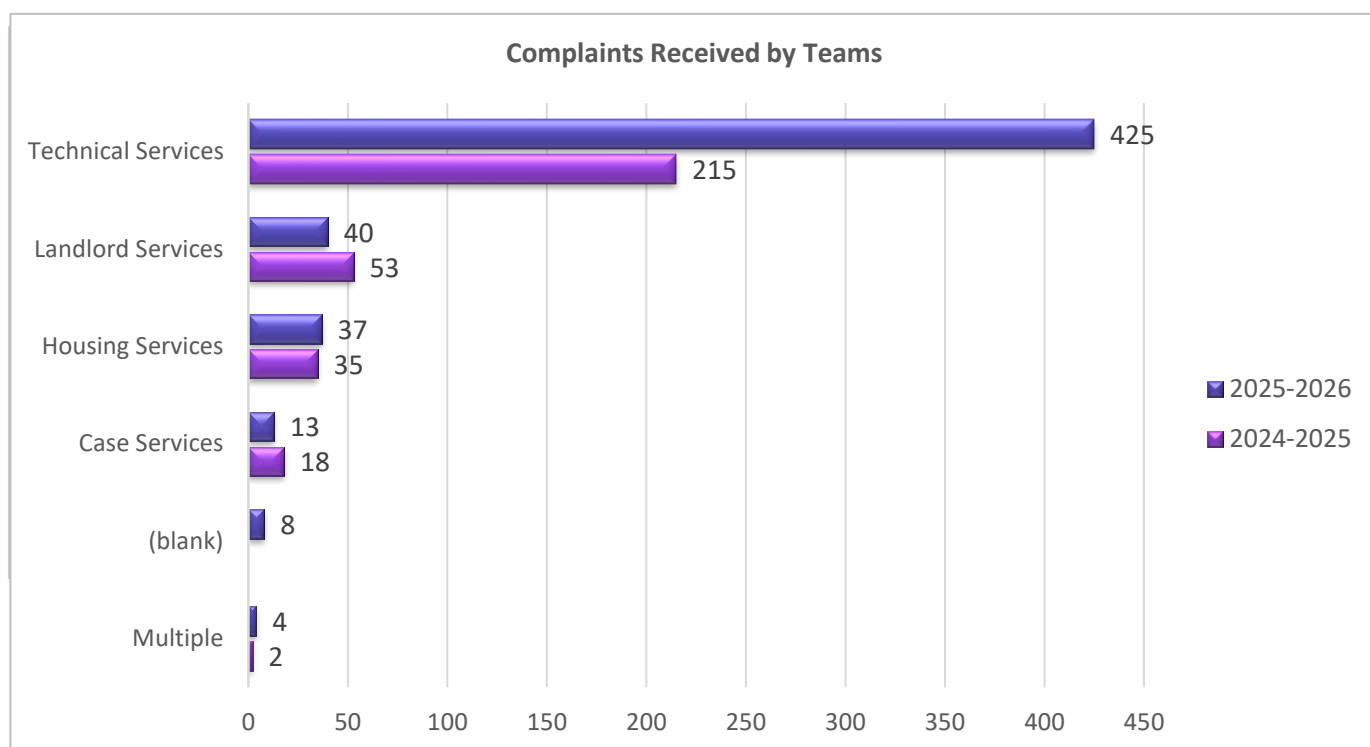
- Faster complaint responses.
- Stronger ownership and follow-up of complaints.
- Better repairs and contractor performance.
- Clearer communication with residents.
- Improved use of resident feedback.
- Embedding learning and continuous service improvement.

4. Complaint Performance

This section provides an overview of complaints received by Housing Services during 2025/26, including changes in complaint volumes, the services and issues generating complaints, response timeliness and complaint outcomes.

4.1 Complaint Volumes

Complaint volumes increased significantly during 2025/26, with the greatest pressure experienced during the final quarter of the year. The chart below shows the monthly trend in Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints received.



Housing Services recorded 527 Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints during 2025/26, compared with 323 complaints in 2024/25, representing an increase of 204 complaints or 63.2%.

Complaint volumes increased particularly sharply during the final quarter of 2025/26. Stage 1 complaints rose to their highest level in February 2026 and remained high in March 2026. The increase placed significant pressure on services and contributed to a deterioration in complaint response performance towards the end of the year.

The increase in complaints provides valuable insight into residents' experiences and highlights areas requiring further improvement, particularly repairs, communication and complaint follow-up.

4.2 Complaints by Service Area

The chart below shows the number of complaints received across each Housing Services area during 2024/25 and 2025/26.

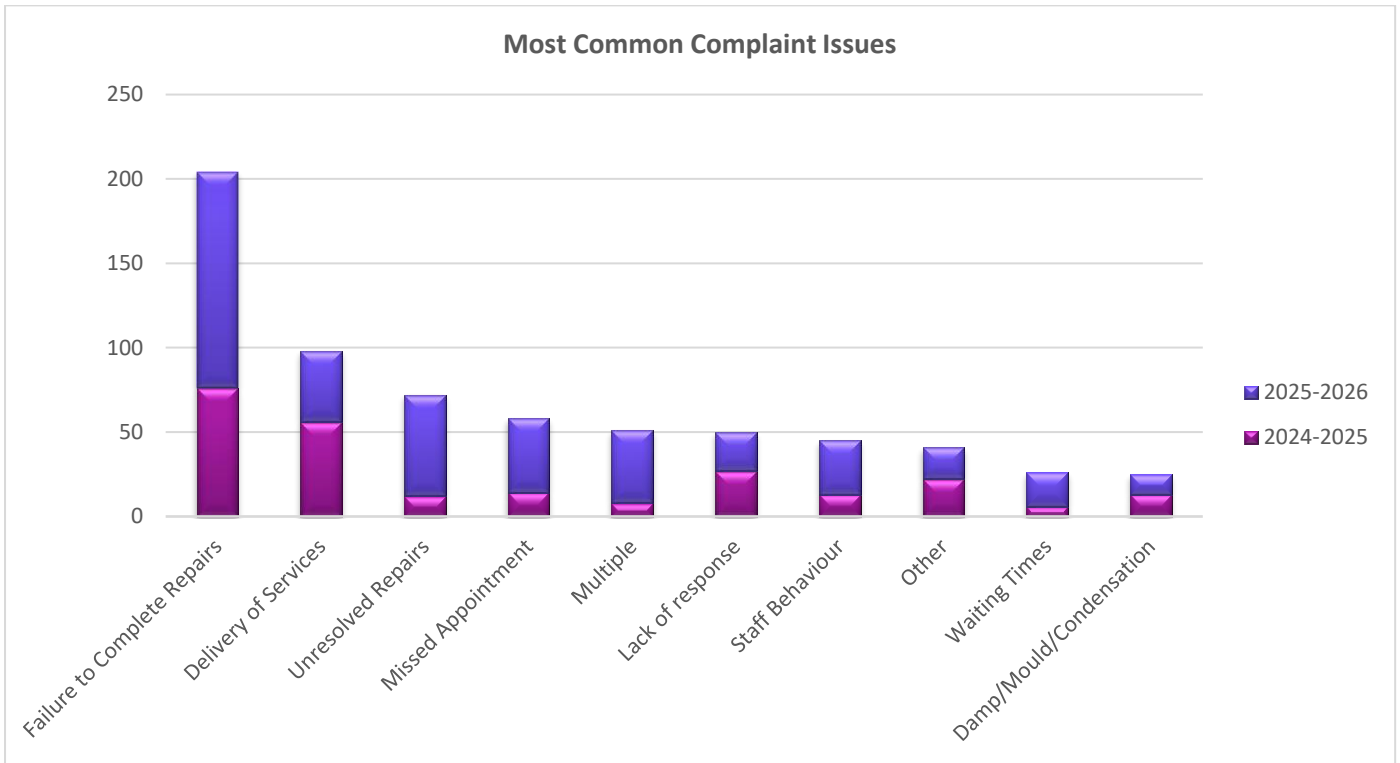
Technical Services received the highest number of complaints during 2025/26 and accounted for the majority of complaints received by Housing Services.

Complaints relating to Technical Services increased significantly compared with the previous year, reflecting the continued prominence of repairs and maintenance issues throughout the reporting period.

Landlord Services recorded the second highest number of complaints, while lower volumes were received across Homelessness Services and Case Services. The concentration of complaints within Technical Services highlights the importance of improving repairs services, communication and contractor performance during 2026/27.

4.3 What Residents Complained About

Understanding the issues raised through complaints helps the Council identify recurring problems and target improvement activity where it will have the greatest impact.



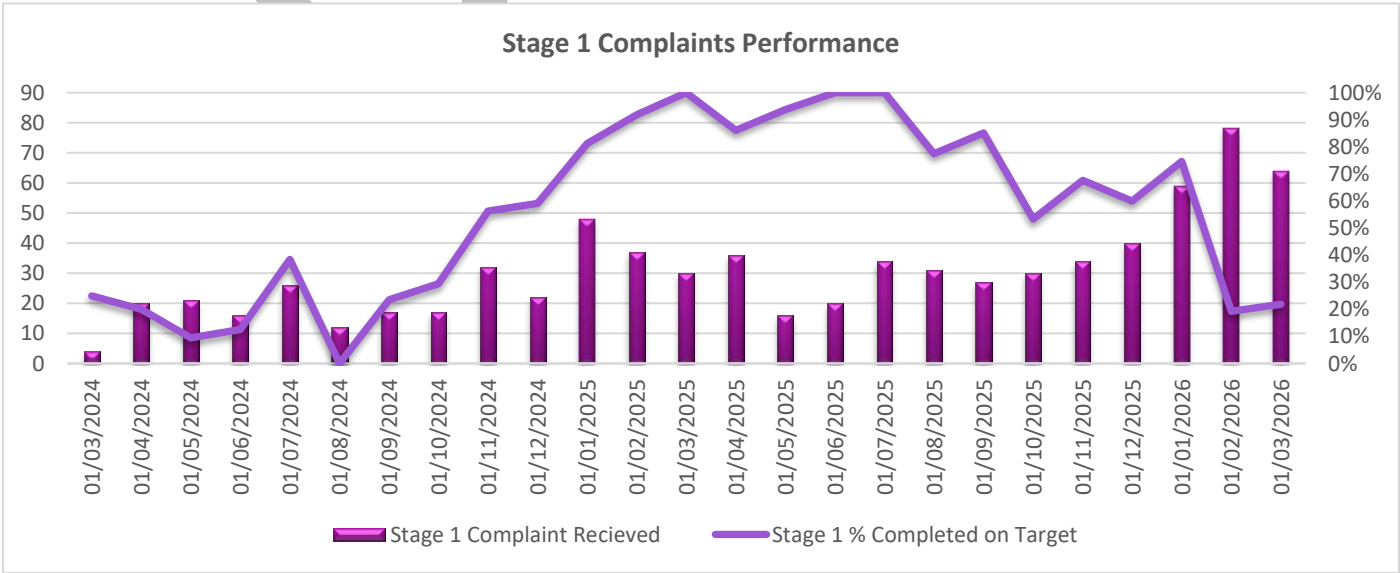
In terms of complaint reasons, the most prevalent issues during 2025/26 were failure to complete repairs, delivery of services and unresolved repairs. Together, these categories accounted for a significant proportion of complaints received and were important contributors to the overall increase in complaint volumes.

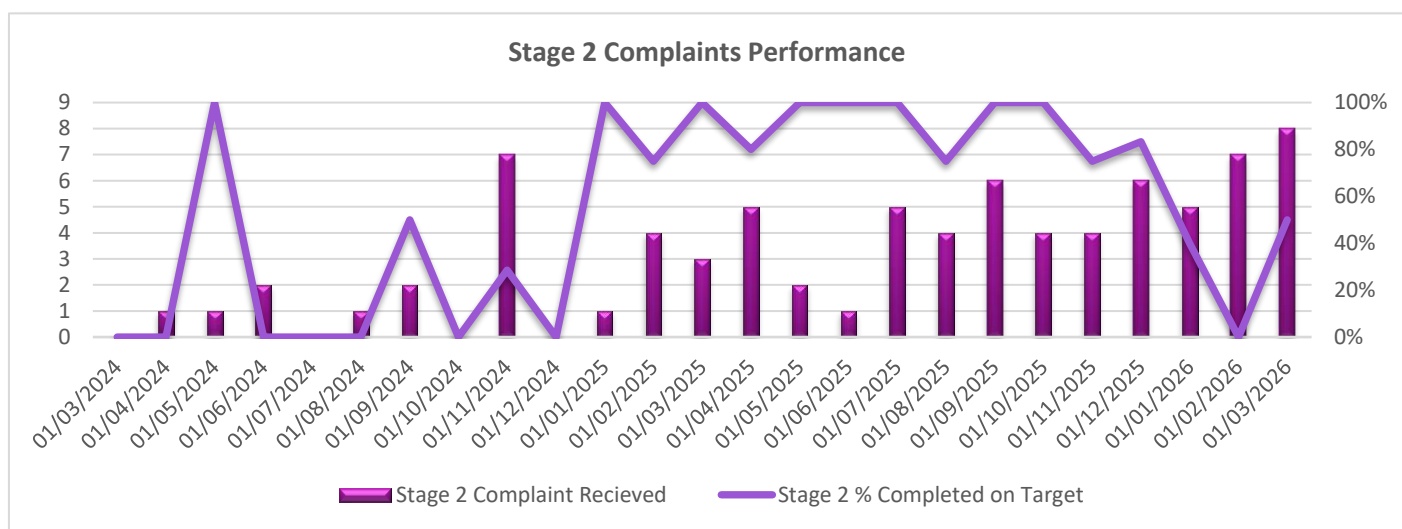
Repairs-related complaints continue to highlight the importance of reliable service delivery, effective communication and the timely completion of agreed works. The prominence of service delivery issues also demonstrates the importance of maintaining clear communication with residents and ensuring concerns are resolved effectively at the earliest opportunity.

The issues raised through complaints provide valuable insight into residents' experiences and have informed the service improvement priorities set out later in this report, particularly in relation to repairs performance, communication and complaint follow-up.

4.4 Response Timeliness

Timely responses are an important indicator of complaint-handling performance and residents' experience of the complaints process. The charts below show complaint volumes alongside the proportion of Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints responded to within the required timescales.





Complaint response performance improved during 2025/26. On average, 60.3% of Stage 1 complaints were responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales, compared with 53.5% in 2024/25. Performance also improved for Stage 2 complaints, with 68.4% of complaints responded to within the required timescale, compared with 54.5% in 2024/25.

Performance improved following changes to the Housing complaints process, including earlier contact with complainants to agree expectations and proposed resolutions, together with closer performance monitoring and oversight of complaint handling.

Despite this progress, performance remained below the standard residents should expect and deteriorated during the final quarter of the year as complaint volumes increased significantly. Improving complaint response times, strengthening oversight of complaint deadlines and maintaining effective communication with residents will remain key priorities during 2026/27.

Timely complaint handling is fundamental to maintaining resident confidence and is closely linked to overall satisfaction with the complaints process.

4.5 Complaint Outcomes

Complaint outcomes provide valuable insight into the extent to which complaints identified genuine service failures and opportunities for improvement.

More than half of Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints were upheld or partly upheld during 2025/26. This demonstrates that a significant proportion of complaints identified genuine service failures and reinforces the need to address recurring issues, particularly delays, communication, repairs and contractor performance.

Complaint outcomes provide an important source of learning and help the Council identify where services, processes and communication can be improved. The lessons identified through complaints continue to inform service improvement activity and the priorities set out later in this report.

5. Resident Satisfaction with Complaint Handling

Understanding residents' experience of the complaints process is an important part of improving services. In addition to complaints data, the Council uses resident feedback to understand how residents feel about complaint handling and the wider services they receive.

Resident satisfaction is measured in two main ways:

- **Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)** provide a broad picture of how residents feel about housing services overall. The surveys use nationally prescribed questions, allowing results to be compared over time and with other social housing landlords.

- **Transactional surveys** gather feedback from residents about a specific service they have recently received, such as a repair or complaint. These surveys provide insight into individual experiences and help identify opportunities to improve day-to-day service delivery.

Together, these sources of feedback help the Council understand both overall satisfaction and individual service experiences. Combined with complaints, resident engagement and Housing Ombudsman learning, they provide valuable insight into where further improvement is needed and whether actions taken are making a difference.

It is important to recognise that the Tenant Satisfaction Measure relating to complaint handling measures residents' satisfaction with the Council's approach to handling complaints. This differs from the complaints performance information reported elsewhere in this report, which measures operational performance such as complaint volumes, response times and complaint outcomes. Both sources provide valuable insight into complaint handling but measure different aspects of performance and should not be directly compared.

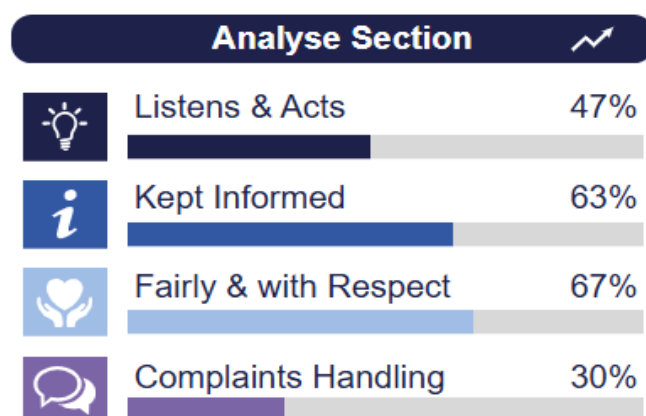
5.1 Tenant Satisfaction Measures

In 2025/26, 30% of residents who responded to the Tenant Satisfaction Measure survey said they were satisfied with how we handle complaints. This was an improvement from 21% in 2024/25, representing a 9 percentage point increase.

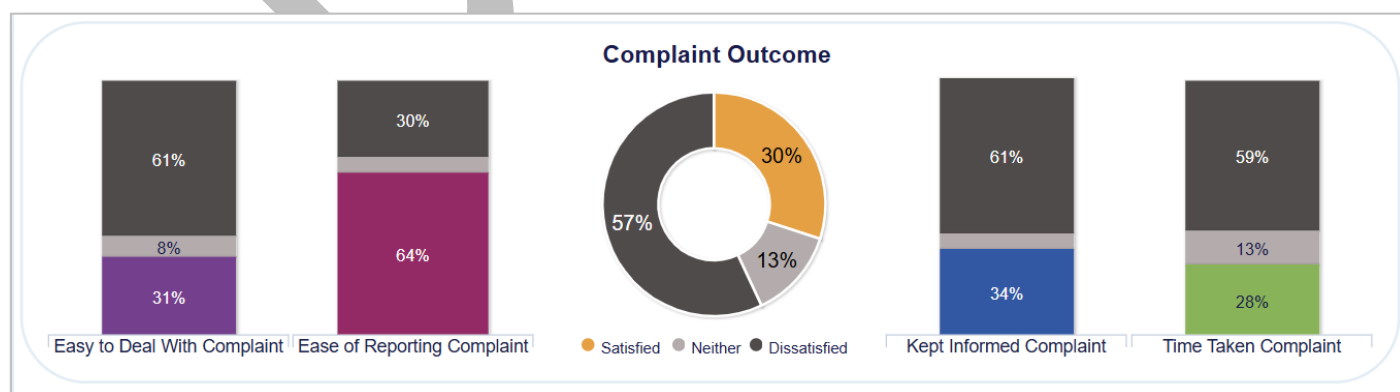
Although this represents positive progress, the result remains below the Housemark sector median of 34.1%, meaning complaint handling continues to be a key area for improvement.

The TSM findings indicate that residents continue to place particular importance on communication, being kept informed and confidence that concerns will be acted upon and resolved. Whilst residents reported more positively on being treated fairly and with respect, satisfaction with complaint handling remained significantly lower, highlighting the need for continued improvement.

During 2026/27, we will use the TSM findings to focus improvement activity on the areas that matter most to residents, including timely responses, clearer explanations, better updates and ensuring residents can see that learning from complaints leads to service improvements.



5.2 Transactional Survey



The transactional complaints survey provides insight into residents' experiences of the complaints process itself. Unlike the Tenant Satisfaction Measures survey, it focuses specifically on residents who have recently raised a complaint.

Results showed that 64% of respondents were satisfied with the ease of reporting a complaint and 61% found the complaints process easy to deal with.

Satisfaction was lower in relation to communication and timeliness. Only 34% of respondents were satisfied with how well they were kept informed and 28% were satisfied with the time taken to resolve their complaint.

The results reinforce the key themes identified elsewhere in this report and highlight the importance of communication, ownership, regular updates and timely resolution in shaping residents' experience of complaint handling.

6. Housing Ombudsman Complaints

The Housing Ombudsman Service considers complaints after the Council's complaints process has been completed, or where a complaint has not progressed appropriately. Where investigations are undertaken, the Ombudsman reviews the evidence and may issue findings and orders requiring the Council to take specific actions.

6.1 Ombudsman Cases

During the 2025/26 reporting year (1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026), the Council managed a total of 11 new Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) cases. Five cases were concluded, with findings including a maladministration, a service failure and a premature referral decision. A further two cases were closed without a recorded determination. At the end of the reporting period, eight cases remained open, including a small number of older cases carried forward from previous years.

Two investigations resulted in formal Ombudsman orders during 2025/26. The findings highlighted the importance of:

- Maintaining communication with residents during periods of delay.
- Providing clear information about escalation routes, including access to the Housing Ombudsman.
- Ensuring complaint handling is supported by appropriate training and oversight.
- Providing timely apologies and remedies where service failures have been identified.

These themes align with the wider findings from complaints, Tenant Satisfaction Measures and transactional survey feedback and have informed the improvement priorities set out later in this report.

6.2 Compliance with Ombudsman Orders

The Council achieved 100% compliance with all recorded Ombudsman orders issued during 2025/26.

Key statistics:

- Total cases with orders: 2
- Cases requiring apologies: 2
- Cases requiring compensation: 1
- Total compensation awarded: £200
- Cases requiring service improvement actions: 1
- Cases completed within compliance timescales: 2

7. Learning and Service Improvement

Housing Services receives the highest proportion of Council complaints, reflecting the scale and complexity of the service, particularly repairs, and improved access for residents to raise concerns. Complaints highlight residents' experiences and show where services need to improve.

More than half of Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints were upheld or partly upheld during 2025/26, demonstrating that many concerns related to genuine service failures. We are using this learning, with Resident Scrutiny Panel involvement, to address root causes, improve satisfaction, resolve issues earlier and provide a more responsive, accountable and reliable housing service.

7.1 Learning from Resident Feedback

Qualitative feedback from the Tenant Satisfaction Measures provides important context for the Council's complaint performance.

Residents identified several strengths in the complaints process. Many praised individual officers for listening, showing empathy and acting professionally. Satisfaction was higher where officers kept in regular contact, gave clear explanations and took ownership of complaints. Residents also recognised that formal investigations were completed and that repairs were resolved in many cases.

However, recurring issues continue to affect satisfaction. Residents raised concerns about delays in completing repairs, poor communication during the repair process, inconsistent contractor performance and delays in complaint handling. Some residents said they had to chase for updates, were unclear about who was responsible across teams or contractors, or felt complaints had been closed before the underlying repair had been resolved.

Feedback also highlighted the personal impact on residents, including stress, inconvenience and financial consequences caused by delayed repairs, repeated appointments and the need to keep chasing for progress.

The consistency between Tenant Satisfaction Measure feedback and complaint analysis provides a clear evidence base for improvement. The main priorities are repairs, communication, contractor performance and complaint follow-up.

Learning from complaints and resident feedback will continue to be translated into service improvement actions and monitored throughout the year. Progress is reviewed by the Senior Management Team and reported through the Council's governance arrangements to ensure improvements are delivered, embedded and lead to better outcomes for residents.

8. Priorities for 2026/27

The complaints data, Tenant Satisfaction Measure feedback, transactional survey results, Housing Ombudsman learning and resident scrutiny activity all point to the same priorities for 2026/27: improving the quality of complaint handling, strengthening communication, ensuring agreed actions are completed and using resident feedback to drive visible service improvements.

During 2026/27, we will focus on six measurable priorities.

- 1. Improve complaint response times**

We will improve the timeliness of complaint handling so residents receive responses within the required timescales more consistently.

- 2. Strengthen early contact, ownership and follow-up**

We will improve the resident experience by making sure complaints are clearly owned from the start and that residents know who is dealing with their complaint.

- 3. Deliver a joint resident scrutiny action plan**

We will work with the Resident Scrutiny Panel to turn its complaints review recommendations into a clear action plan with owners, milestones and evidence of delivery.

- 4. Improve complaints communication and accessibility**

We will make it easier for residents to understand how to complain, what will happen next and how their feedback is being used.

- 5. Embed a resident feedback, insight and learning framework**

We will bring together complaints, Tenant Satisfaction Measures, transactional surveys, repairs feedback, Ombudsman findings, member enquiries and resident engagement into a single learning framework.

6. Improve repairs and Axis contractor performance

Because repairs remain the main driver of housing complaints, we will work with Axis and internal repairs teams to improve communication, completion times, quality and follow-up.

Together, these priorities will support a more accountable, transparent and resident-focused complaints service. Progress will be monitored throughout 2026/27 and reported through the Tenant Engagement Group, Resident Scrutiny Panel, senior management and the Council's housing governance arrangements.

9. Conclusion

Housing Services made progress during 2025/26 whilst responding to a significant increase in complaints. Complaint handling performance improved, resident satisfaction with complaint handling increased, and resident feedback is increasingly being used to shape service improvement. However, the report also shows that too many residents continue to experience delays, poor communication and unresolved repairs, and satisfaction with complaint handling remains below where the Council would like it to be.

The evidence from complaints, Tenant Satisfaction Measures, transactional surveys, Housing Ombudsman learning, MP and Member enquiries, and resident engagement presents a consistent picture. Residents value officers who listen, take ownership and provide clear explanations, but their overall experience may be affected by delays in repairs, inconsistent contractor performance, poor communication and a lack of follow-up after complaint responses are issued.

The priorities for 2026/27 focus on turning this learning into measurable improvement. This includes improving complaint response times, strengthening early contact and case ownership, reducing avoidable escalation to Stage 2, improving the quality of complaint responses, and ensuring agreed actions are monitored through to completion.

Resident involvement will remain central to this work. The Council will continue working with the Resident Scrutiny Panel and Tenant Engagement Group to review complaints performance, test improvement actions and publish clear "you said, we did" updates. This will help residents see how their feedback is influencing decisions and service change.

Alongside this, the Council will continue working with the corporate complaints team to improve the online complaints journey and test complaints information with residents. The Council will also continue working with Axis and internal repairs teams to address the repair-related issues that remain a significant driver of housing complaints.

Overall, this report demonstrates a commitment to transparency, accountability and continuous improvement. The focus for 2026/27 is to ensure that complaints are not only handled more effectively, but that the learning from them results in visible improvements in repairs, communication, contractor performance and resident confidence in Housing Services.

Appendix A: Self-Assessment Against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code

In line with the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, all social landlords must complete and publish an annual self-assessment of their compliance with the Code. This is intended to ensure transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement in complaint handling practices.

Guildford Borough Council's self-assessment was completed by the Complaints Resolution Officer and formally reviewed and approved by the **Housing Operations Board on 9 September 2026**. It forms an integral part of our annual complaints performance and service improvement reporting.

The completed self-assessment is published alongside this report and will be made available on the Council's website, in accordance with the Ombudsman's requirements.

Section 1: Definition of a complaint

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
1.2	A complaint must be defined as: <i>‘an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.’</i>	Yes	Section "What is a complaint?" of the Complaints Policy states: "A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by a customer about the standard of service, actions, or lack of action by the Council, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual or a group."	The Council has adopted the Housing Ombudsman's definition of a complaint within its Complaints Policy. The policy also provides additional information and examples to assist residents and officers in identifying complaints and ensuring they are handled appropriately.
1.3	A resident does not have to use the word 'complaint' for it to be treated as such. Whenever a resident expresses dissatisfaction landlords must give them the choice to make complaint. A complaint that is submitted via a third party or representative must be handled in line with the landlord's complaints policy.	Yes	The Complaints Policy states: "A resident does not have to use the word 'complaint' for an expression of dissatisfaction to be treated as a complaint." The policy also confirms that complaints can be made by advocates, relatives, carers, friends, councillors and MPs acting on behalf of residents.	The Council accepts complaints from representatives where appropriate consent has been provided. Officers are expected to recognise expressions of dissatisfaction regardless of the language used by a resident and ensure they are considered through the complaints process where appropriate.
1.4	Landlords must recognise the difference between a service request and a complaint. This must be set out in their complaints policy. A service request is a request from a resident to the landlord	Yes	The Complaints Policy distinguishes between a complaint and a service request and states: "A service request is not normally treated as a complaint."	The Council recognises the distinction between service requests and complaints. Service requests provide an opportunity to resolve issues at the first point of contact, whilst complaints provide a mechanism for

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	requiring action to be taken to put something right. Service requests are not complaints, but must be recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly.		The policy also identifies examples of first-time service requests that do not constitute complaints.	reviewing dissatisfaction with the Council's actions, decisions or service delivery.
1.5	A complaint must be raised when the resident expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, even if the handling of the service request remains ongoing. Landlords must not stop their efforts to address the service request if the resident complains.	Yes	The Complaints Policy states: "Where a resident expresses dissatisfaction with the Council's response to a service request, that expression of dissatisfaction will be treated as a complaint, even where the service request remains open or ongoing." The policy also confirms: "The consideration of a complaint will not prevent or delay the Council from taking action to resolve the underlying service issue."	The Council will continue to seek resolution of the underlying service issue whilst simultaneously investigating the complaint. This ensures residents do not experience unnecessary delay in receiving a service whilst a complaint investigation is ongoing.
1.6	An expression of dissatisfaction with services made through a survey is not defined as a complaint, though wherever possible, the person completing the survey should be made aware of how they can pursue a complaint if they wish to. Where landlords ask for wider feedback about		The Council actively seeks customer feedback and publishes information regarding how residents can raise complaints through its Complaints Policy and website.	The Council uses customer feedback and satisfaction surveys as part of its wider customer engagement and insight arrangements. Whilst feedback received through these routes is not automatically treated as a complaint, residents raising concerns through surveys are provided with information regarding how to access the

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	their services, they also must provide details of how residents can complain.			Council's complaints process where appropriate. The Council commissions an independent research company to carry out post-complaint satisfaction surveys. While feedback provided through the survey is not treated as a new complaint, residents are given the opportunity to request further contact from the Council regarding their complaint. Where a resident requests contact, this is shared with the relevant service for follow-up. This ensures residents have a route to raise any outstanding concerns or discuss their complaint further.

Section 2: Exclusions

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
2.1	Landlords must accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so. If landlords decide not to accept a complaint they must be able to evidence their reasoning. Each complaint must be considered on its own merits	Yes	The Complaints Policy sets out the circumstances where complaints may not be accepted and confirms that decisions regarding acceptance will be made following consideration of the relevant circumstances.	The Council considers complaints individually and seeks to ensure any decisions not to accept a complaint are proportionate, justified and supported by clear reasoning. Residents are informed where a complaint falls outside the scope of the complaints procedure.
2.2	A complaints policy must set out the circumstances in which a matter will not be considered as a complaint or escalated, and these circumstances must be fair and reasonable to residents. Acceptable exclusions include: • The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago. • Legal proceedings have started. This is defined as details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been filed at court. • Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy.	Yes	The Complaints Policy sets out the circumstances in which a matter may not be considered under the complaints process, including where: "The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago." The policy also identifies other exclusions, including matters subject to legal proceedings, statutory appeals or issues that have previously been considered through the complaints process.	The Council's Complaints Policy clearly identifies the circumstances in which a complaint may not be accepted or escalated and ensures these exclusions are fair, reasonable and consistent with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code. The policy recognises that complaints should normally be accepted where they are raised within twelve months of the issue occurring or the resident becoming aware of the issue, whilst also allowing officers to consider the individual circumstances of each case before making a decision on acceptance. This approach ensures residents have fair access to the complaints process whilst enabling the Council to manage complaints effectively and proportionately.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
2.3	Landlords must accept complaints referred to them within 12 months of the issue occurring or the resident becoming aware of the issue, unless they are excluded on other grounds. Landlords must consider whether to apply discretion to accept complaints made outside this time limit where there are good reasons to do so.	Yes	The Complaints Policy states: "For housing-related issues a complaint should be made within 12 months of the issue arising." The policy also confirms that the Council will review the material facts of each case and make a fair decision based on the available evidence.	The Council accepts housing complaints referred to it within twelve months of the issue occurring or the resident becoming aware of the issue, in line with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code. The Complaints Policy supports a fair and proportionate approach to complaint handling, and complaints are considered on their individual merits. Where appropriate, the Council may exercise discretion when considering complaints submitted outside the normal timescales, taking account of the circumstances presented and the availability of evidence to support a meaningful investigation.
2.4	If a landlord decides not to accept a complaint, an explanation must be provided to the resident setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the Ombudsman. If the Ombudsman does not agree that the exclusion has been fairly applied, the	Yes	The Complaints Policy states: "If a complaint is rejected for this reason, it will be made known to the complainant." The policy also provides information regarding referral to the Housing Ombudsman.	Residents are provided with explanations where a complaint cannot be considered under the Complaints Policy and are signposted to the appropriate Ombudsman where applicable.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	Ombudsman may tell the landlord to take on the complaint.			
2.5	Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.	Yes	The policy provides discretion for Directors to determine whether complaints should be considered in specific circumstances and confirms complaints will be reviewed based on the available facts and evidence.	The Council does not apply blanket exclusions and considers the individual circumstances of each complaint before determining whether it falls within the scope of the complaints process.

Section 3: Accessibility and Awareness

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
3.1	Landlords must make it easy for residents to complain by providing different channels through which they can make a complaint. Landlords must consider their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and anticipate the needs and reasonable adjustments of residents who may need to access the complaints process.	Yes	The Complaints Policy states: "We acknowledge that we may receive a range of complaints in a variety of ways including by phone, in person, in writing, and online." The policy also contains a specific Equality Act section.	The Council seeks to make the complaints process accessible to all residents by providing multiple contact channels and making reasonable adjustments where necessary. Support is available through Customer Services for residents who require assistance accessing the complaints process.
3.2	Residents must be able to raise their complaints in any way and with any member of staff. All staff must be aware of the complaints process and be able to pass details of the complaint to the appropriate person within the landlord.	Yes	The Complaints Policy confirms complaints may be received by phone, in person, in writing and online.	Residents may raise concerns through any appropriate route. Complaint handling awareness continues to be promoted across the organisation to ensure staff recognise expressions of dissatisfaction and direct them through the appropriate complaints process.
3.3	High volumes of complaints must not be seen as a negative, as they can be indicative of a well-publicised and accessible complaints process. Low complaint volumes are potentially a	Yes	The Complaints Policy identifies complaints as a source of organisational learning and service improvement. We do not set or report KPIs related to reducing the number of complaints received to	The Council recognises that complaint volumes are not necessarily an indication of poor service and can instead reflect the accessibility of the complaints process. Complaint trends and outcomes are reviewed to identify service improvements

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	sign that residents are unable to complain.		avoid creating a culture where high volumes of complaints is seen as a negative.	and opportunities for organisational learning.
3.4	Landlords must make their complaint policy available in a clear and accessible format for all residents. This will detail the two-stage process, what will happen at each stage, and the timeframes for responding. The policy must also be published on the landlord's website.	Yes	The Complaints Policy states: "We will ensure that details of our complaint's procedure remain published on our website and are available in printed form (on request)." The policy also sets out the two-stage complaints process and associated timescales.	The complaints procedure remains available through the Council's website and can be provided in alternative formats on request. Information is available to residents regarding complaint stages, expected timescales and escalation routes.
3.5	The policy must explain how the landlord will publicise details of the complaints policy, including information about the Ombudsman and this Code.	Yes	The policy includes information regarding the Housing Ombudsman and Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and confirms publication arrangements.	The Council publishes its Complaints Policy, self-assessment and annual complaints reporting information through its website. Information regarding the Housing Ombudsman and residents' rights to seek independent review is included within the policy and complaint responses.
3.6	Landlords must give residents the opportunity to have a representative deal with their complaint on their behalf, and to be represented or accompanied at any meeting with the landlord.	Yes	The Complaints Policy states: "The affected person may choose for someone else to complain on their behalf such as a relative, carer or friend."	The Council permits residents to nominate a representative to act on their behalf, subject to appropriate consent requirements, and will engage with authorised representatives throughout the complaints process.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
3.7	Landlords must provide residents with information on their right to access the Ombudsman service and how the individual can engage with the Ombudsman about their complaint.	Yes	The Complaints Policy contains dedicated sections entitled: "Contacting the Housing Ombudsman" and "Contacting the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman".	Information regarding the Housing Ombudsman is made available throughout the complaints process. Residents are informed of their rights to access the Ombudsman Service and how they may do so if they remain dissatisfied.

Section 4: Complaint Handling Staff

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
4.1	Landlords must have a person or team assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling, including liaison with the Ombudsman and ensuring complaints are reported to the governing body (or equivalent). This Code will refer to that person or team as the 'complaints officer'. This role may be in addition to other duties.	Yes	The Complaints Policy identifies the Director, Communications & Customer Services as the policy owner and outlines the Council's governance and reporting arrangements.	The Director, Communications & Customer Services has operational oversight of complaints handling across the Council. The corporate complaints lead acts as the principal contact for Ombudsman enquiries and investigations. The role supports services in delivering effective complaint resolution and compliance with relevant complaint handling standards. There are also Housing complaints resolution officers in place to support housing complaints.
4.2	The complaints officer must have access to staff at all levels to facilitate the prompt resolution of complaints. They must also have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes promptly and fairly.	Yes	The policy commits to investigating complaints in an evidence-based, fair and efficient manner and supports cross-service complaint handling arrangements.	The Complaints Lead and Complaints Resolution Officers work across all service areas and has access to officers and managers where necessary to support investigations and complaint resolution. This enables complaints to be managed consistently and proportionately across the organisation.
4.3	Landlords are expected to prioritise complaint handling and a culture of learning from complaints. All relevant staff must be suitably trained in the importance of complaint handling. It is important that complaints are seen as	Yes	The Complaints Policy includes a dedicated "Learning and improving" section and requires reporting through the Council's governance arrangements.	The Council continues to promote a culture of learning from complaints. Insights gained from complaints, Ombudsman investigations and complaint trends are used to support service improvements, staff development and policy review activity across the organisation.

	a core service and must be resourced to handle complaints effectively			
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Section 5: The Complaint Handling Process

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
5.1	Landlords must have a single policy in place for dealing with complaints covered by this Code. Residents must not be treated differently if they complain.	Yes	The Complaints Policy establishes a single corporate complaints procedure consisting of Stage 1 complaints and Stage 2 appeals.	The Council operates a single complaints policy covering complaints relating to Council services, including landlord functions. Complaints are handled consistently and residents are not treated differently based on how or where they submit their complaint.
5.2	The early and local resolution of issues between landlords and residents is key to effective complaint handling. It is not appropriate to have extra named stages (such as 'stage 0' or 'informal complaint') as this causes unnecessary confusion.	Yes	The Complaints Policy states that one of its objectives is: "to resolve customer complaints at the earliest stage possible" The policy operates a two-stage complaints procedure.	The Council encourages the early resolution of complaints wherever possible. The complaints process does not contain informal complaint stages, stage 0 processes or other barriers that may delay access to the formal complaints procedure.
5.3	A process with more than two stages is not acceptable under any circumstances as this will make the complaint process unduly long and delay access to the Ombudsman.	Yes	The Complaints Policy provides for a Stage 1 complaint and a Stage 2 appeal only.	The Council operates a two-stage complaints procedure in line with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code. Stage 2 represents the Council's final response before referral to the relevant Ombudsman.
5.4	Where a landlord's complaint response is handled by a third party (e.g. a contractor or independent	Yes	The Complaints Policy explains how complaints relating to services	Where services are delivered by third parties on behalf of the Council, residents will not be required to navigate multiple complaints procedures. The Council

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	adjudicator) at any stage, it must form part of the two stage complaints process set out in this Code. Residents must not be expected to go through two complaints processes.		delivered on the Council's behalf will be managed.	retains responsibility for ensuring complaints are considered within the framework of its two-stage complaints process.
5.5	Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.	Yes	The Complaints Policy confirms the Council's responsibility for complaint handling arrangements relating to services delivered on its behalf.	The Council remains accountable for the quality of complaint handling relating to outsourced or commissioned services. Appropriate oversight arrangements are in place to ensure complaints are considered in line with the requirements of the Complaint Handling Code.
5.6	When a complaint is logged at Stage 1 or escalated to Stage 2, landlords must set out their understanding of the complaint and the outcomes the resident is seeking. The Code will refer to this as "the complaint definition". If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification.	Yes	The Complaints Policy states that complaints will be: "logged, defined and acknowledged within five working days" The acknowledgement confirms the Council's understanding of the complaint and the outcomes being sought.	The Council uses the complaint acknowledgement process to confirm its understanding of the complaint and ensure expectations are clearly established from the outset. Where further clarification is required, officers will contact the resident before commencing the investigation.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
5.7	When a complaint is acknowledged at either stage, landlords must be clear which aspects of the complaint they are, and are not, responsible for and clarify any areas where this is not clear.	Yes	The Complaints Policy states that acknowledgements will confirm: "which aspects of the complaint the Council is responsible for investigating"	The Council seeks to provide clarity from the beginning of the complaint process regarding the issues under investigation and any matters that fall outside the Council's jurisdiction or responsibility
5.8	At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers must: a. deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind; b. give the resident a fair chance to set out their position; c. take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest; and d. consider all relevant information and evidence carefully.	Yes	The Complaints Policy confirms complaints will be investigated in an evidence-based, fair and efficient way	Complaint investigations are undertaken objectively and based on the available evidence. Officers are expected to consider all relevant information, listen to the resident's concerns and ensure decisions are reached fairly and impartially. Stage 2 investigations are undertaken by a senior officer who was not involved in the Stage 1 investigation.
5.9	Where a response to a complaint will fall outside the timescales set out in this Code, the landlord must	Yes	The Complaints Policy states: "we will agree appropriate communication arrangements with	Where an extension is necessary, residents are informed of the reasons for the delay, the revised

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	agree with the resident suitable intervals for keeping them informed about their complaint.		the complainant and provide regular updates" where complaint timescales cannot be met.	timescale for response and how progress updates will be provided throughout the investigation
5.10	Landlords must make reasonable adjustments for residents where appropriate under the Equality Act 2010. Landlords must keep a record of any reasonable adjustments agreed, as well as a record of any disabilities a resident has disclosed. Any agreed reasonable adjustments must be kept under active review.	Yes	Section "Equality Act 2010" states: "We will comply with the Equality Act 2010 and where appropriate will make reasonable adjustments"	The Council is committed to making reasonable adjustments where required and records relevant information relating to resident needs and disclosed disabilities to support accessible complaint handling arrangements.
5.11	Landlords must not refuse to escalate a complaint through all stages of the complaints procedure unless it has valid reasons to do so. Landlords must clearly set out these reasons, and they must comply with the provisions set out in section 2 of this Code.	Yes	The Complaints Policy provides residents with the right to request a Stage 2 review if dissatisfied with the Stage 1 response.	The Council will escalate complaints upon request unless there are valid reasons not to do so in accordance with the exclusions set out within the Complaints Policy and the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.
5.12	A full record must be kept of the complaint, and the outcomes at	Yes	The Complaints Policy states:	The Council's complaint management systems allow records to be maintained throughout the lifetime of

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	each stage. This must include the original complaint and the date received, all correspondence with the resident, correspondence with other parties, and any relevant supporting documentation such as reports or surveys.		"We will log all complaints in our complaints handling system."	the complaint, including correspondence, evidence, complaint outcomes and agreed actions
5.13	Landlords must have processes in place to ensure a complaint can be remedied at any stage of its complaints process. Landlords must ensure appropriate remedies can be provided at any stage of the complaints process without the need for escalation.	Yes	The Complaints Policy includes a dedicated "Remedies Offered" section applicable at both Stage 1 and Stage 2.	The Council seeks to resolve complaints at the earliest opportunity and remedies may be offered at any stage of the complaint process where service failure is identified.
5.14	Landlords must have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from residents and/or their representatives. Landlords must be able to evidence reasons for putting any restrictions in place and must keep restrictions under regular review.	Yes	The Complaints Policy references the Council's separate Vexatious and Malicious Contact Policy.	The Council has arrangements in place for managing unreasonable behaviour whilst continuing to ensure residents have access to a fair complaints process. Any restrictions applied are subject to review and must be appropriately justified

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
5.15	Any restrictions placed on contact due to unacceptable behaviour must be proportionate and demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.	Yes	The Complaints Policy confirms compliance with the Equality Act 2010.	Any restrictions relating to customer contact are assessed on a case-by-case basis and take account of individual circumstances, including any known vulnerabilities or reasonable adjustment requirements

Section 6: Complaints Stages

Stage 1

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.1	Landlords must have processes in place to consider which complaints can be responded to as early as possible, and which require further investigation. Landlords must consider factors such as the complexity of the complaint and whether the resident is vulnerable or at risk. Most stage 1 complaints can be resolved promptly, and an explanation, apology or resolution provided to the resident.	Yes	The Complaints Policy states that one of its objectives is: "to resolve customer complaints at the earliest stage possible." The policy also recognises that complaints will vary in complexity and be allocated to an investigator where appropriate.	The Council seeks to resolve complaints as quickly and effectively as possible. Complaints are assessed according to their complexity and circumstances, including any vulnerabilities or risks identified. Where appropriate, complaints may be resolved through explanation, apology, corrective action or other suitable remedies without the need for extensive investigation.
6.2	Complaints must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 1 of the complaints procedure <u>within five working days of the complaint being received.</u>	Yes	The Complaints Policy states: "A complaint will be logged, defined and acknowledged within five working days of receipt."	The Council acknowledges, defines and records complaints within five working days of receipt. This ensures residents receive confirmation that their complaint has been accepted and provides an early opportunity to clarify any matters requiring further information.
6.3	Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints <u>within 10 working days</u> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	The Complaints Policy states:	The Council aims to provide Stage 1 complaint responses within ten working days and monitors performance against this target as

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
			"Stage 1 complaint decision – 10 working days from complaint being acknowledged."	part of its complaints management and reporting arrangements.
6.4	Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 10 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.	Yes	The Complaints Policy states: "If this is not possible, an explanation should be given for the delay in providing the decision, and an expected date for when the Stage 1 outcome should be reached."	Where additional time is required, residents are informed of the reason for the delay and the revised timescale for response. Extensions are only used where appropriate and in accordance with the Complaint Handling Code.
6.5	When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.	Yes	The Complaints Policy states that where complaint timescales cannot be met, residents will be informed and provided with information regarding the appropriate Ombudsman.	Where a Stage 1 extension is required, residents are provided with details of the Housing Ombudsman Service and informed of their rights under the Complaint Handling Code.
6.6	A complaint response must be provided to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned	Yes	The Complaints Policy states: "Complaint responses will be provided when the Council has completed its investigation and reached a decision	The Council provides complaint responses once a decision has been reached rather than waiting for all remedial actions to be completed. Any outstanding actions continue to be monitored and residents are kept informed of progress.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.		on the complaint, even where some agreed actions remain outstanding."	
6.7	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.	Yes	The Complaints Policy states complaints responses will explain the outcome of the investigation and provide reasons for the decision reached.	The Council seeks to ensure complaint responses are clear, evidence-based and address all aspects of the complaint definition. Where appropriate, responses reference relevant legislation, policies, procedures and recognised good practice.
6.8	Where residents raise additional complaints during the investigation, these must be incorporated into the stage 1 response if they are related and the stage 1 response has not been issued. Where the stage 1 response has been issued, the new issues are unrelated to the issues already being investigated or it would unreasonably delay the response, the new issues must be logged as a new complaint.	Yes	The Complaints Policy states: "Where additional issues are raised during the investigation of an existing complaint, we will consider whether those issues are related to the matters already under investigation."	Additional issues raised during an investigation are assessed to determine whether they should form part of the existing complaint or be managed as a new complaint. This approach supports timely complaint handling whilst ensuring all concerns receive appropriate consideration.
6.9	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 1 in clear, plain language: a. the complaint stage;	Yes	The Complaints Policy requires complaint responses to clearly explain the outcome of the investigation, any remedies offered and escalation rights.	Stage 1 responses follow a structured approach to ensure residents receive all of the information required under the Complaint Handling Code, including details of how to

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	b. the complaint definition; c. the decision on the complaint; d. the reasons for any decisions made; e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right; f. details of any outstanding actions; and g. details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the individual is not satisfied with the response.			request a Stage 2 review if they remain dissatisfied.

Stage 2

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.10	If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the resident's satisfaction at stage 1, it must be progressed to stage 2 of the landlord's procedure. Stage 2 is the landlord's final response.	Yes	The Complaints Policy states: "If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your Stage 1 complaint you can use the Stage 2 complaints procedure."	Residents who remain dissatisfied following a Stage 1 response are entitled to request a Stage 2 review. Stage 2 represents the Council's final complaint response before referral to the relevant Ombudsman.
6.11	Requests for stage 2 must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 2 of the complaints procedure within five working days of the escalation request being received.	Yes	The Complaints Policy states: "A Stage 2 appeal will be logged, defined and acknowledged within five working days of receipt."	The Council acknowledges and records Stage 2 requests within five working days and confirms its understanding of the issues to be reviewed.
6.12	Residents must not be required to explain their reasons for requesting a stage 2 consideration. Landlords are expected to make reasonable efforts to understand why a resident remains unhappy as part of its stage 2 response.	Yes	The Complaints Policy states: "Residents are not required to explain their reasons for requesting a Stage 2 review."	Residents are not required to justify their request for a Stage 2 review. However, the Council may seek clarification regarding any remaining dissatisfaction to ensure all concerns are fully considered as part of the review
6.13	The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.	Yes	The Complaints Policy states that Stage 2 reviews will be undertaken by a different officer to the person	The Council ensures Stage 2 reviews are conducted independently from the Stage 1 investigation to provide residents with

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
			who considered the complaint at Stage 1.	an objective and impartial review of their complaint.
6.14	Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 <u>within 20 working days</u> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	The Complaints Policy states: "Stage 2 response – 20 working days from the date the Stage 2 complaint being acknowledged."	The Council aims to provide Stage 2 responses within twenty working days and monitors performance against this standard through its complaint reporting arrangements.
6.15	Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 20 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.	Yes	The Complaints Policy provides for an extension where necessary and explains that residents will be advised of the reasons and revised timescale.	Extensions are only applied where justified by the circumstances of the complaint. Residents are informed of the reasons for the delay and the expected date for the final response.
6.16	When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.	Yes	The Complaints Policy states that residents will be provided with information regarding the relevant Ombudsman where extensions are required.	Where a Stage 2 extension is necessary, residents are provided with the contact details of the Housing Ombudsman Service in accordance with Code requirements.
6.17	A complaint response must be provided to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed.	Yes	The Complaints Policy states:	The Council issues responses once a final complaint decision has been made. Outstanding actions continue to be

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.		"Complaint responses will be provided when the Council has completed its investigation and reached a decision on the complaint, even where some agreed actions remain outstanding."	monitored until completed and residents receive updates where required.
6.18	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.	Yes	The Complaints Policy requires complaint responses to explain decisions reached and the reasons supporting those decisions.	Stage 2 responses address all matters within the complaint definition and explain the findings of the review in a clear and transparent manner.
6.19	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 2 in clear, plain language: a. the complaint stage; b. the complaint definition; c. the decision on the complaint; d. the reasons for any decisions made; e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right; f. details of any outstanding actions; and	Yes	The Complaints Policy requires Stage 2 responses to include details of the decision, any remedies offered and the resident's right to contact the Ombudsman.	Stage 2 response letters are designed to ensure residents receive all information required under the Complaint Handling Code, including details of how to refer the complaint to the Housing Ombudsman Service.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	g. details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman Service if the individual remains dissatisfied.			
6.20	Stage 2 is the landlord's final response and must involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response.		The Complaints Policy states that Stage 2 is the Council's final response.	The Council ensures all relevant officers are appropriately involved in the Stage 2 review process where required to support a comprehensive and informed final response.

Section 7: Putting things right

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
7.1	Where something has gone wrong a landlord must acknowledge this and set out the actions it has already taken, or intends to take, to put things right. These can include: • Apologising; • Acknowledging where things have gone wrong; • Providing an explanation, assistance or reasons; • Taking action if there has been delay; • Reconsidering or changing a decision; • Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum; • Providing a financial remedy; • Changing policies, procedures or practices.	Yes	The Complaints Policy includes a "Remedies Offered" section which identifies apologies, explanations, corrective action, financial remedies and service improvements as potential remedies.	Where service failures have occurred, the Council seeks to put matters right through appropriate and proportionate remedies. Remedies are tailored to the individual circumstances of each complaint and intended to address any detriment experienced by the resident.
7.2	Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.	Yes	The Complaints Policy states:	The Council considers the impact of any service failure and seeks to ensure remedies reflect the level of

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
			"The remedy must be appropriate and proportionate to the complaint."	inconvenience, detriment or distress experienced by the resident.
7.3	The remedy offer must clearly set out what will happen and by when, in agreement with the resident where appropriate. Any remedy proposed must be followed through to completion.	Yes	The Complaints Policy states: "We will set out what will happen and timelines for this."	Residents are informed of the action to be taken and the expected timescales for completion. Progress is monitored to ensure agreed actions are delivered.
7.4	Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.	Yes	The Complaints Policy confirms that remedies will be fair, proportionate and appropriate to the circumstances of the complaint.	The Council takes account of Housing Ombudsman guidance and recognised good practice when determining appropriate remedies and complaint outcomes.

Section 8: Self-assessment, reporting and compliance

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
8.1	Landlords must produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which must include: a. the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements. b. a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the landlord's complaint handling performance. This must also include a summary of the types of complaints the landlord has refused to accept; c. any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman; d. the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints; e. any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman; and f. any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord.		The Complaints Policy refers to annual reporting arrangements and monitoring of complaint handling performance.	The Council produces an Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report, which is presented for scrutiny and challenge before being published. The report includes the annual self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, a comprehensive qualitative and quantitative analysis of complaint handling performance and confirms that no complaints were refused during the reporting period. The report also summarises Housing Ombudsman determinations and any findings of non-compliance, together with the actions taken in response. It demonstrates how learning from complaints, Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs), resident feedback and Housing Ombudsman publications has informed service improvements and the priorities for the forthcoming year.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
8.2	The annual complaints performance and service improvement report must be reported to the landlord's governing body (or equivalent) and published on the on the section of its website relating to complaints. The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside this.	Yes	The Complaints Policy confirms governance oversight and publication arrangements.	The annual complaints performance report is reported through the Council's governance framework and published on the Council's website to support transparency and accountability.
8.3	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.	Yes	The Complaints Policy confirms that policies and procedures will be reviewed as required.	The Council will undertake a new self-assessment following significant organisational or procedural changes to ensure continued compliance with the Complaint Handling Code.
8.4	Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation.	Yes	The Complaints Policy provides for policy review and oversight arrangements.	Where requested by the Housing Ombudsman, the Council will review and update its self-assessment and associated complaint handling arrangements.
8.5	If a landlord is unable to comply with the Code due to exceptional circumstances, such as a cyber incident, they must inform the Ombudsman, provide information to residents who may be affected, and publish this on their website	Yes	The Complaints Policy contains governance and monitoring arrangements relating to complaint handling performance.	Should exceptional circumstances affect compliance with the Complaint Handling Code, the Council will notify the relevant Ombudsman, communicate with affected residents and provide information

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	Landlords must provide a timescale for returning to compliance with the Code.			regarding the anticipated timescale for returning to full compliance.

Section 9: Scrutiny & oversight: continuous learning and improvement

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
9.1	Landlords must look beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint and consider whether service improvements can be made as a result of any learning from the complaint.	Yes	The Complaints Policy states: "We will look for systemic themes in complaints received and use this awareness to learn and improve our service delivery."	The Council seeks to identify lessons arising from complaints and uses complaint outcomes to support service improvements across the organisation.
9.2	A positive complaint handling culture is integral to the effectiveness with which landlords resolve disputes. Landlords must use complaints as a source of intelligence to identify issues and introduce positive changes in service delivery.	Yes	The Complaints Policy includes a dedicated "Learning and Improving" section.	Complaint information is treated as a valuable source of customer insight and is used to improve service quality, strengthen processes and prevent repeat failures.
9.3	Accountability and transparency are also integral to a positive complaint handling culture. Landlords must report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints to stakeholders, such as residents' panels, staff and relevant committees.	Yes	The Complaints Policy requires performance reporting and governance oversight.	Learning and service improvements arising from complaints are shared through governance reporting, management oversight arrangements and engagement with relevant stakeholders where appropriate.
9.4	Landlords must appoint a suitably senior lead person as accountable for their complaint handling. This person must assess any themes or trends to identify potential systemic issues,	Yes	The Complaints Policy identifies the Director, Communications & Customer Service as the policy owner	The Complaints Lead has operational responsibility for complaint handling arrangements across the Council, whilst the Director of Communications and

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	serious risks, or policies and procedures that require revision.		and sets out governance arrangements for complaint handling.	Customer Services retains overall accountability for the complaints function.
9.5	In addition to this a member of the governing body (or equivalent) must be appointed to have lead responsibility for complaints to support a positive complaint handling culture. This person is referred to as the Member Responsible for Complaints ('the MRC').	Yes	The Council has appointed a Lead Councillor with responsibility for Engagement and Customer Services.	The Lead Councillor for Engagement and Customer Services acts as the Council's Member Responsible for Complaints and supports the promotion of a positive complaint handling culture.
9.6	The MRC will be responsible for ensuring the governing body receives regular information on complaints that provides insight on the landlord's complaint handling performance. This person must have access to suitable information and staff to perform this role and report on their findings.	Yes	The Council's governance arrangements provide regular oversight of complaint handling performance.	The Member Responsible for Complaints receives information relating to complaint handling performance and has access to the officers and information necessary to undertake this role effectively.
9.7	As a minimum, the MRC and the governing body (or equivalent) must receive: a. regular updates on the volume, categories and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance;	Yes	The Complaints Policy provides for ongoing performance monitoring and reporting. Quarterly performance reports are reported to overview scrutiny	Regular reporting arrangements ensure complaint volumes, outcomes, learning, Ombudsman decisions and service improvement actions are shared with senior officers, members and relevant governance bodies.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
	b. regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling; c. regular updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman's investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings; and d. annual complaints performance and service improvement report.		committee which includes an overview of complaints.	
9.8	Landlords must have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties that reflects the need to: a. have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments; b. take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and c. act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.	Yes	The Complaints Policy promotes accountability, transparency, learning and continuous improvement.	The Council promotes a collaborative approach to complaint handling and encourages officers to take ownership of complaint outcomes and learning. Complaint handling forms part of the Council's wider commitment to continuous improvement and customer service excellence.