



NORTHAMPTONSHIRE  
PARTNERSHIP HOMES

# **Complaints Performance & Service Improvement Report**

**April 2025 – March 2026**



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# Introduction

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**Northamptonshire Partnership Homes (NPH) manages over 11,300 properties on behalf of West Northamptonshire Council (WNC), the landlord.**

**This report covers our compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code on behalf of the landlord, and our complaints handling performance from April 2025 to March 2026.**

We've included in the report:

- Our statement about performance from NPH's Board and the landlord, WNC
- A summary of complaints including the numbers of complaints received and resolved, and the response times
- Compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code (Appendix B)
- Housing Ombudsman cases and reports on our complaint handling
- Service improvements made because of lessons learnt from complaints and actions for improvements

## NPH Board Statement

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Over the last 12 months we have continued to listen to resident feedback and act upon what it is telling us. 2024/25 saw the reshaping of our core company structure into three new Directorates to focus on Resources, Property and Customer. A designated Customer Excellence Team was created, and a centralised Complaints Team was introduced from October 2024. During 2025/26 the journey of continuous improvement has seen new ways of working, improved use of technology and the embedding of a customer focused approach to complaint handling leading to improved outcomes for our residents.

We are pleased to see that complaint handling times have continued to improve from 71% in 2024/25 to 81.9% in 2026/27. Overall, Stage 1 complaints received have decreased from 65.0 per 1,000 homes in 2024/25 to 57.4 complaints per 1,000 homes.

From resident feedback we understood the impact of delivering quality and timely repairs has been a cause for complaints. Building on changes made in 2024/25, with increased investment, better use of data interrogation and systems to improve management, changes are delivering positive improvements.

Repairs received 38% of all complaints in 2025/26, a reduction from 54% last year. Satisfaction with the repairs service has improved significantly (+9% overall service from 68% to 77% and +11% for timeliness from 62% to 73%).

We recognise that there is still more to do. Feedback tells us that improving communication and the timeliness of responding to issues when they are first

reported to us as service requests are core reasons for complaints. Satisfaction with complaint handling starts at the beginning of that report and that we have not always got things right. Our new Resident Excellent Strategy developed a shared set of service standards with our residents and during 2026/27 we will be the embedding and building on a customer first culture focusing on communicating, following up on actions and timeliness.

We have carried out a self-assessment of the complaint handling service and policy and are assured we meet the Housing Ombudsman Code (April 2024). Our board member responsible for complaints, along with the landlord's representative, will continue to scrutinise and challenge the self-assessment and performance to make sure it is a true reflection of our complaint handling.

Our tenant led Service Quality Committee reporting to the Board have been actively involved in scrutinising and assessing where we are and helping to shape further improvements to the service. A Complaints Scrutiny Review has made recommendations to improve access to the complaints service and information.

Whilst we comply with the code in policy terms, we will continue to make further improvements to working practices over the coming year and learn from complaint cases to improve the customer experience and timeliness, and these are highlighted in the report.

## NPH Board

## Complaints Performance April 2025 to March 2026

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Following resident feedback from our transactional survey and annual Tenant Survey, we recognised we needed to improve how we handled complaints and over the past year we have continued to make service improvements.

For residents, our continued focus on improving complaint handling has meant:

- i. Delivering a consistent complaints service for residents because we've increased the focus and resources and embedded the changes to the way we manage complaints.
- ii. Increasing acknowledging and responding to complaints on time. We have continued to improve answering on time to 81.9%, from 62.9% in 2023/24 and 70.8% in 2024/25 despite experiencing staffing constraints in the second half of the year, and we will continue to do better to achieve our target of 90%.
- iii. Improved contact with residents by allocating case handlers and acknowledging all complaints with a telephone call to fully understand the issues to be addressed and identify where health conditions affect a residents' circumstances, so the potential risks to residents are managed and reduced.
- iv. Fewer Stage 1 complaints have been reported overall with 57.4 complaints per 1,000 homes, an improvement on 2024/25 (65.0 per 1,000 homes).
- v. Cases managed by designated case handlers to ensure all issues are addressed and appropriate resolutions provided by service area investigators.
- vi. More effective learning from complaints so we avoid repeating the same mistakes.
- vii. Improved resident experience by responding to actionable insights from both the positive and less positive resident feedback from our complaint handling transactional survey and the annual Tenant Survey to make positive changes.

## Summary of complaint performance April 2025 to March 2026

| Measure                                                                        | 2023/24 | 2024/25          | 2025/26 Target | 2025/26*          | Compared to last year                                                                 |        |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|------------------|----------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| Number of complaints                                                           | 1,049   | 895              | -              | 842               |    | -53    |
| Number of Stage 1 complaints                                                   | 1,005   | 743              | -              | 651               |    | -92    |
| Number of Stage 2 complaints                                                   | 11      | 152              | -              | 191               |    | +39    |
| Stage 1 per 1,000 properties                                                   | 88.1    | 65.0             | 60             | 57.4              |    | -7.6   |
| Stage 2 per 1,000 properties                                                   | 4.4     | 13.3             | 7              | 16.8              |    | +3.5   |
| Stage 1 complaints responded to in timescale                                   | 62.5%   | 73.6%            | 90%            | 82.2%             |    | +8.6%  |
| Stage 2 complaints responded to in timescale                                   | 72.7%   | 57.2%            | 90%            | 81.2%             |    | +24%   |
| Overall responded to on time                                                   | 62.9%   | 70.8%            | 90%            | 81.9%             |    | +11.1% |
| Complaints not upheld                                                          | n/a     | 33.7%            | 50%            | 46.9%             |   | +13.2% |
| TSM Satisfaction with complaint handling**                                     | 36.1%   | 33.9%            | 36%            | 36.6%             |  | +2.7%  |
| Complaint Transactional Survey: satisfaction with complaint handling (TP09)*** | n/a     | 46%<br>(97 base) | -              | 38%<br>(130 base) |  | -8%    |

\*Green, target met. Red, target not met. Amber, within target tolerance.

\*\*Tenant Satisfaction Measures Survey – based on an annual perception-based Tenant Survey of 1,000 tenants

\*\*\*Transactional Survey – monthly for closed complaints

## Complaint volumes

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In 2025/26, a total of 842 complaints were received as shown in the chart below:

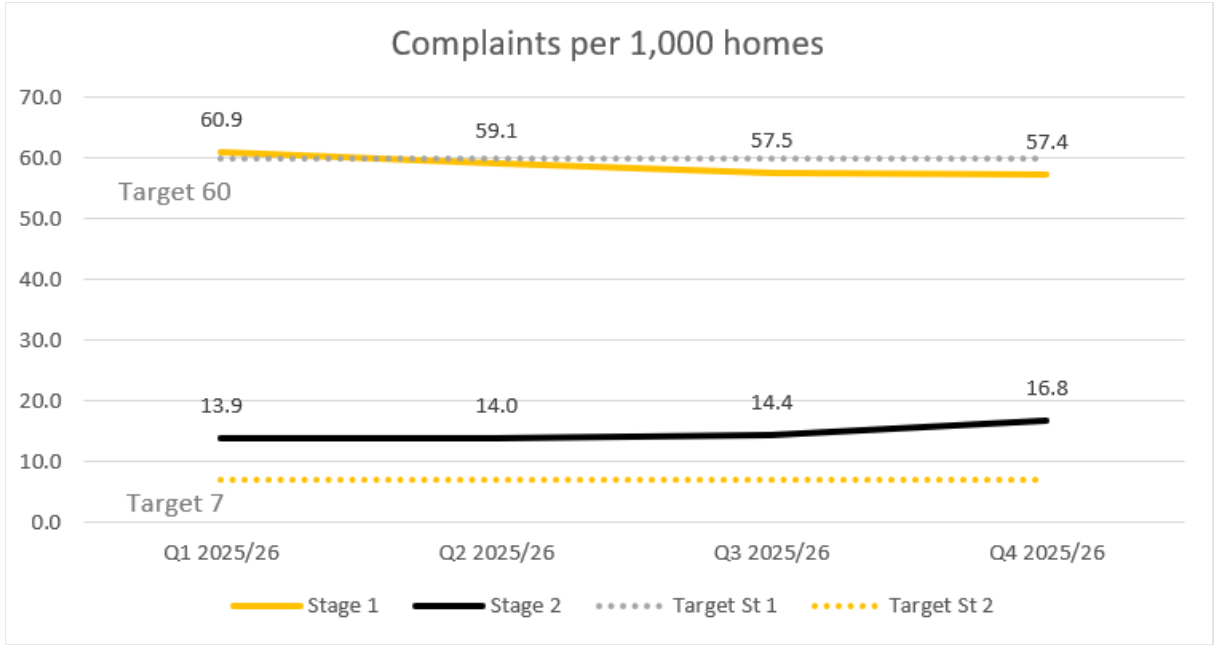
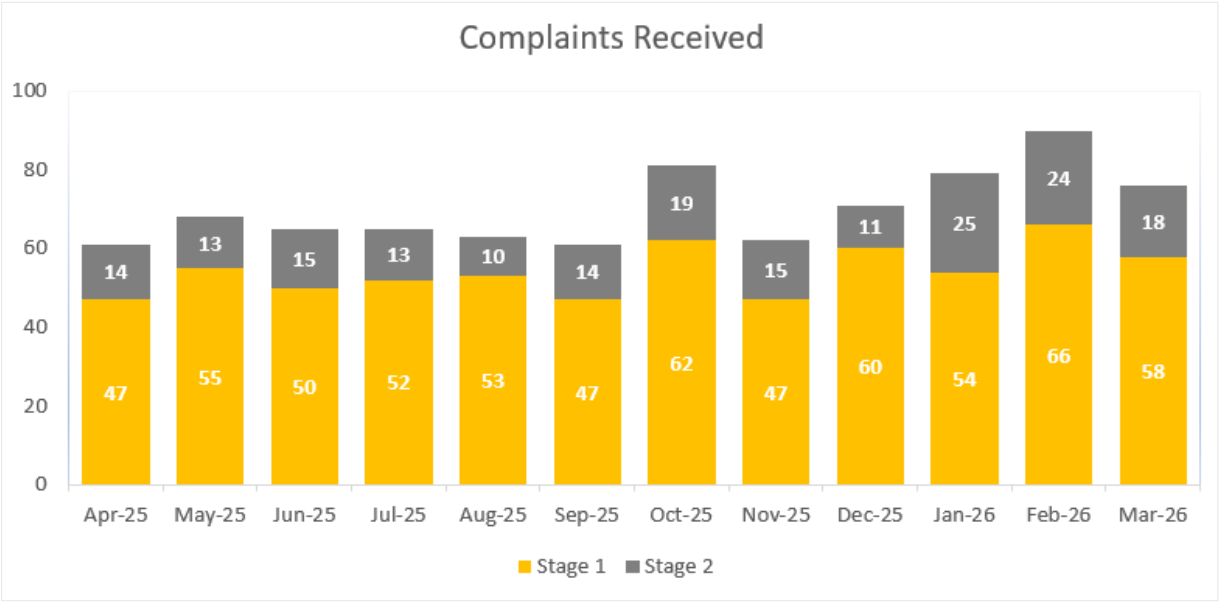
- 651 Stage 1 complaints equal to 57.4 complaints per 1,000 homes, an improvement on 2024/25 (743 complaints; 65.0 per 1,000 homes).
- 191 complaints were escalated to Stage 2, equal to 16.8 complaints per 1,000 homes.

During the year, 38% of complaints raised related to Responsive Repairs, 15% Tenancy Management and 12% Asset Management. These three accounted for just under two thirds of all complaints received in the year. On average we received 70 complaints per month - 54 at Stage 1 and 16 Stage 2.

Whilst the number of complaints received overall are falling, we have seen an increase in Stage 2 complaints partly due to a change to the Housing Ombudsman Code. Previously there were circumstances where housing providers could refuse requests to escalate Stage 1 complaints to the next stage. This has been removed and now providers must honour all requests to escalate from a resident.

However, Stage 2 escalations remain higher than we would want to see. The increase in escalation rates from Stage 1 to Stage 2 was most pronounced from Q3 onwards. The main causes of increases coincided with Complaints Team staffing constraints, poor post complaint action tracking and residents seeking more compensation than that awarded at Stage 1. We have invested in additional resource for the Complaints Team to support capacity, conducted refresher training with service area case handlers and developed a new Complaints Procedure with the aim of reducing escalations in the coming year.

Whilst we record higher volume of complaints per 1,000 homes compared to other providers, this demonstrates that we are providing an accessible service during a time of implementing significant business change and improving performance in response to resident feedback and independent service reviews

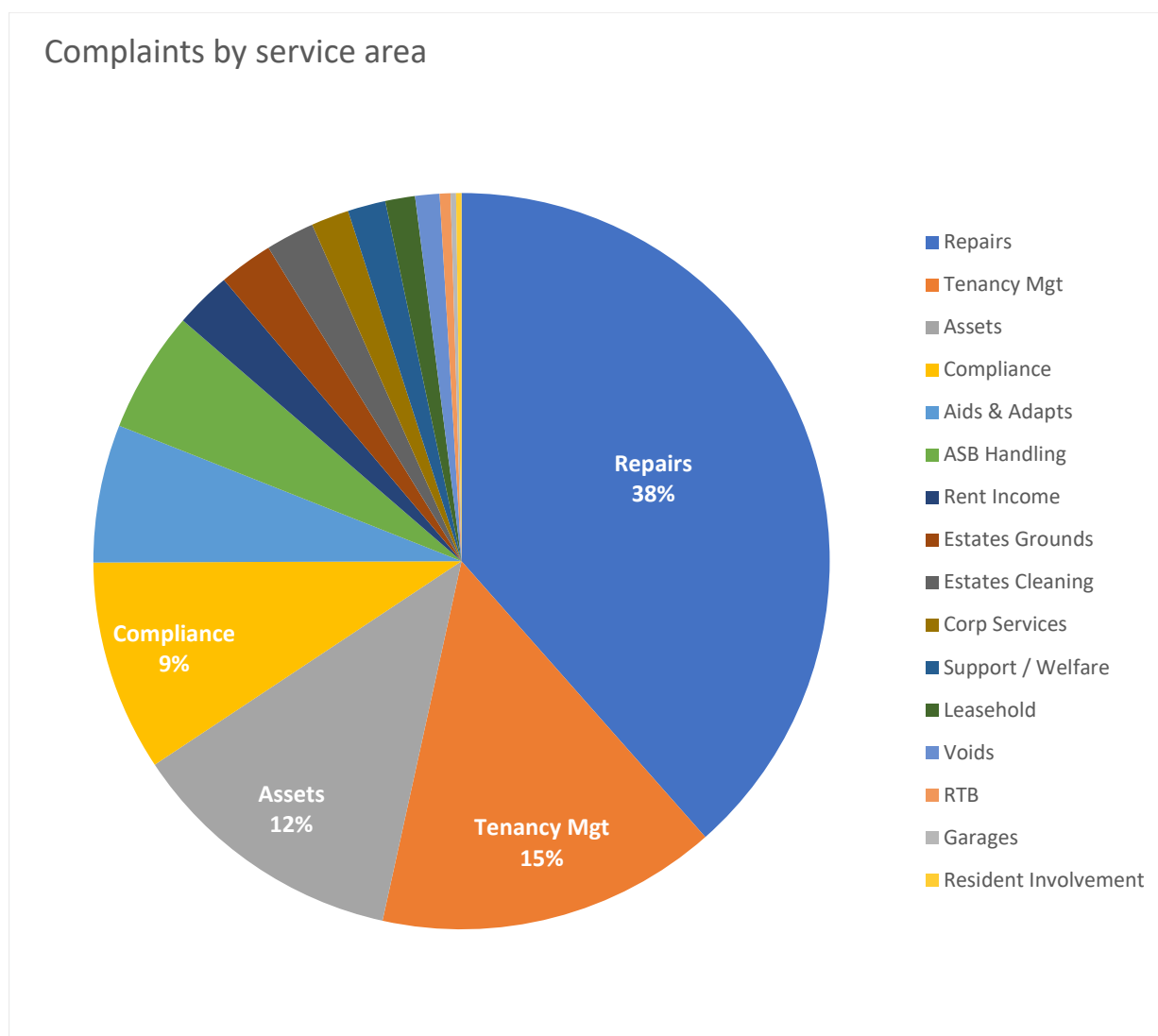


## Complaints by Service Area

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The chart below shows the split of complaints received in 2025/26 by service area. Repairs received 38% of all, which is a reduction from 54% last year.

Tenancy management received 15%, Assets 12% and compliance 9%. These four service areas account for just under three quarters of all complaints received in the year.

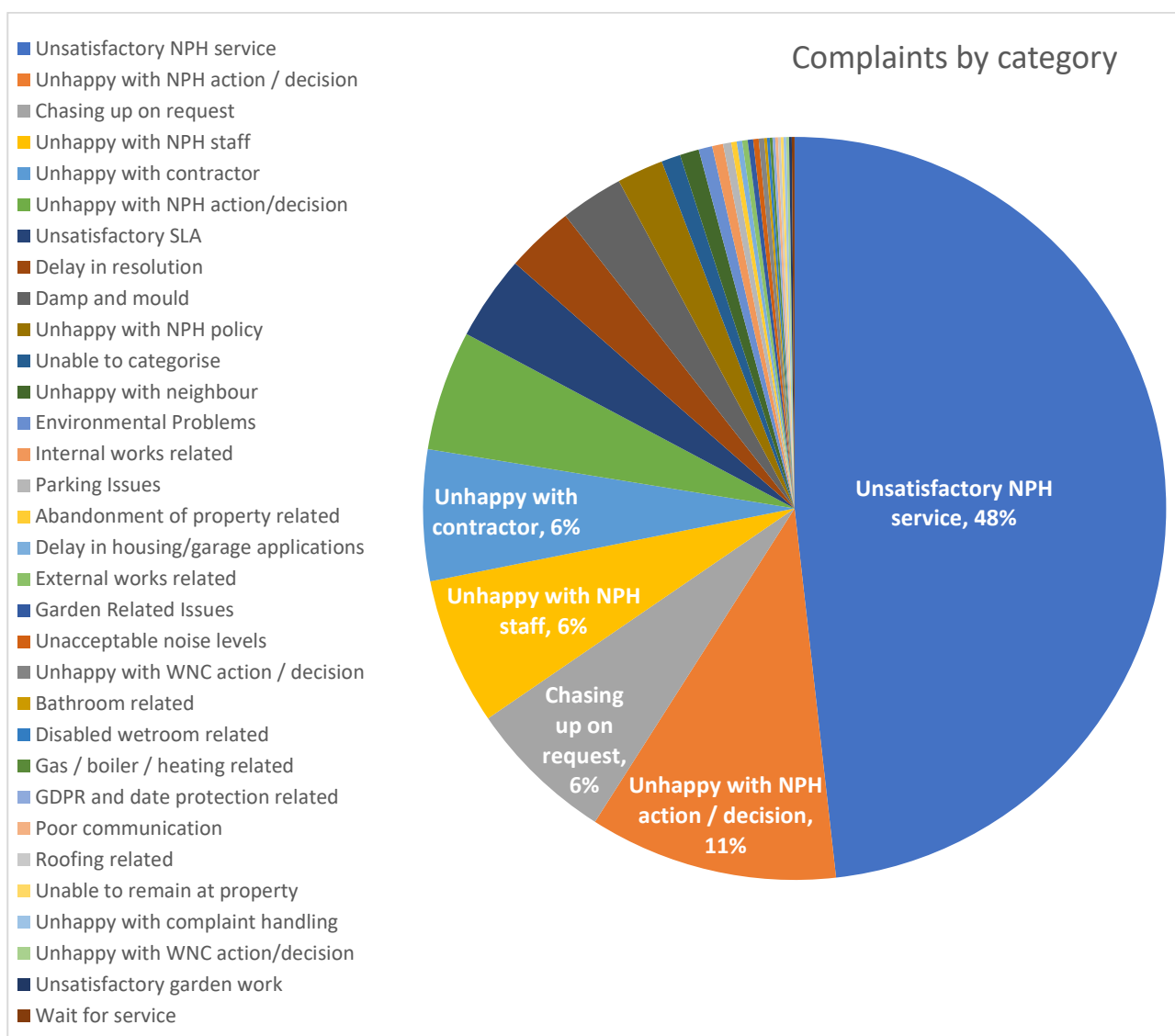


## Reasons for complaints

When a complaint is closed, the issue is categorised by the person closing the complaint from a set of options. The most common option chosen in 2025/26 was Unsatisfactory NPH Service, which accounted for 48% of closed complaints in 2025/26.

The pie chart below shows the complaints categories for the year. The top five categories shown make up just over three quarters of all complaints last year.

For 2026/27 new categories, along with more detailed service area descriptions, have been developed to improve describing the root causes of dissatisfaction and to help us to better quantify complaint themes within different service areas.



The table below shows the categories of complaints for the four service areas receiving most complaints in 2025/26.

Complaints were characterised by:

- Long waiting times for repair appointments and to fully resolve longstanding issues, long waits for contact or information and a tendency to carry out temporary fixes rather than sorting out problems fully. Issues continue to be addressed through the Repairs Improvement Plan.
- Damp and mould cases being responded to by Responsive Repairs prior to handing over to a dedicated specialist team in July 2025. Complaints related to historical case handling.
- Increased home improvement works by our Assets Team to reduce non-decent homes. Contractor complaints relating to ways of working, communication with tenants, quality of works and staff are speedily addressed through contract management when issues are reported.
- On boarding of a new Aids and Adaptations contractor, which created a backlog of cases. Communication was improved to notify tenants and when works would take place.
- Lifts breakdown issues. A replacement lift programme is in place in 2026/27 to resolve long-term issues.
- Tenancy management issues within blocks relating to ASB and contact with Housing Officers.

| Complaint category                 | Repairs    | Tenancy Management | Assets     | Compliance | Total      |
|------------------------------------|------------|--------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Unsatisfactory NPH service         | 174        | 52                 | 50         | 46         | 322        |
| Unhappy with NPH action / decision | 37         | 29                 | 12         | 9          | 87         |
| Unhappy with contractor            | 12         | 2                  | 12         | 13         | 39         |
| Unhappy with NPH staff             | 18         | 16                 | 2          | 1          | 37         |
| Chasing up on request              | 16         | 5                  | 11         | 2          | 34         |
| Delay in resolution                | 23         | 0                  | 2          | 0          | 25         |
| Damp and mould                     | 22         | 0                  | 1          | 0          | 23         |
| Unsatisfactory SLA                 | 13         | 1                  | 6          | 2          | 22         |
| Unhappy with NPH policy            | 3          | 1                  | 0          | 3          | 7          |
| Unable to categorise               | 0          | 4                  | 1          | 1          | 6          |
| Unhappy with neighbour             | 0          | 6                  | 0          | 0          | 6          |
| Internal works related             | 0          | 0                  | 4          | 0          | 4          |
| Abandonment of property related    | 0          | 2                  | 0          | 0          | 2          |
| Environmental Problems             | 0          | 2                  | 0          | 0          | 2          |
| Garden Related Issues              | 0          | 2                  | 0          | 0          | 2          |
| Parking Issues                     | 0          | 2                  | 0          | 0          | 2          |
| Roofing related                    | 2          | 0                  | 0          | 0          | 2          |
| Unhappy with WNC action/decision   | 1          | 1                  | 0          | 0          | 2          |
| Bathroom related                   | 1          | 0                  | 0          | 0          | 1          |
| Disabled wet room related          | 1          | 0                  | 0          | 0          | 1          |
| DMC                                | 0          | 0                  | 1          | 0          | 1          |
| External works related             | 0          | 0                  | 1          | 0          | 1          |
| Gas/boiler/heating related         | 1          | 0                  | 0          | 0          | 1          |
| Unable to remain at property       | 0          | 1                  | 0          | 0          | 1          |
| Unhappy with complaint handling    | 0          | 0                  | 0          | 1          | 1          |
|                                    | <b>324</b> | <b>126</b>         | <b>103</b> | <b>78</b>  | <b>631</b> |

## Responding to complaints on time

Under the Housing Ombudsman Code, Stage 1 complaints need to fulfil two criteria to count as timely – be acknowledged within 5 working days and be responded to within 10 working days (or agreed extension) of acknowledgement.

Stage 2 complaints needed to be responded to within 20 working days (or agreed extension) of escalation. Escalation to Stage 2 is now automatic on request whereas in previous years housing providers were able to refuse requests to escalate where a policy exemption applied.

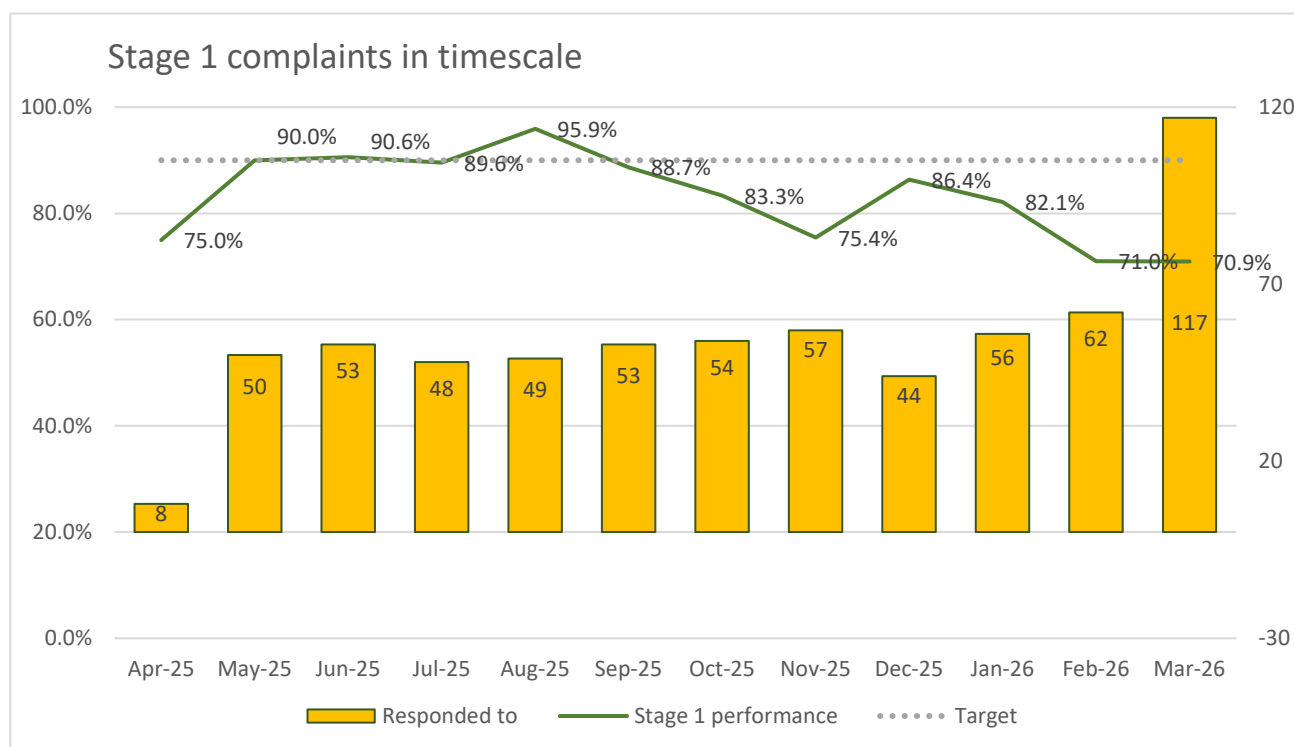
In 2025/26, of complaints received and closed in time, 81.9% met the Housing Ombudsman Code timescales overall (TSM CH02) compared to 70.8% last year. This breaks down into 82.2% for Stage 1 complaints and 81.2% for Stage 2

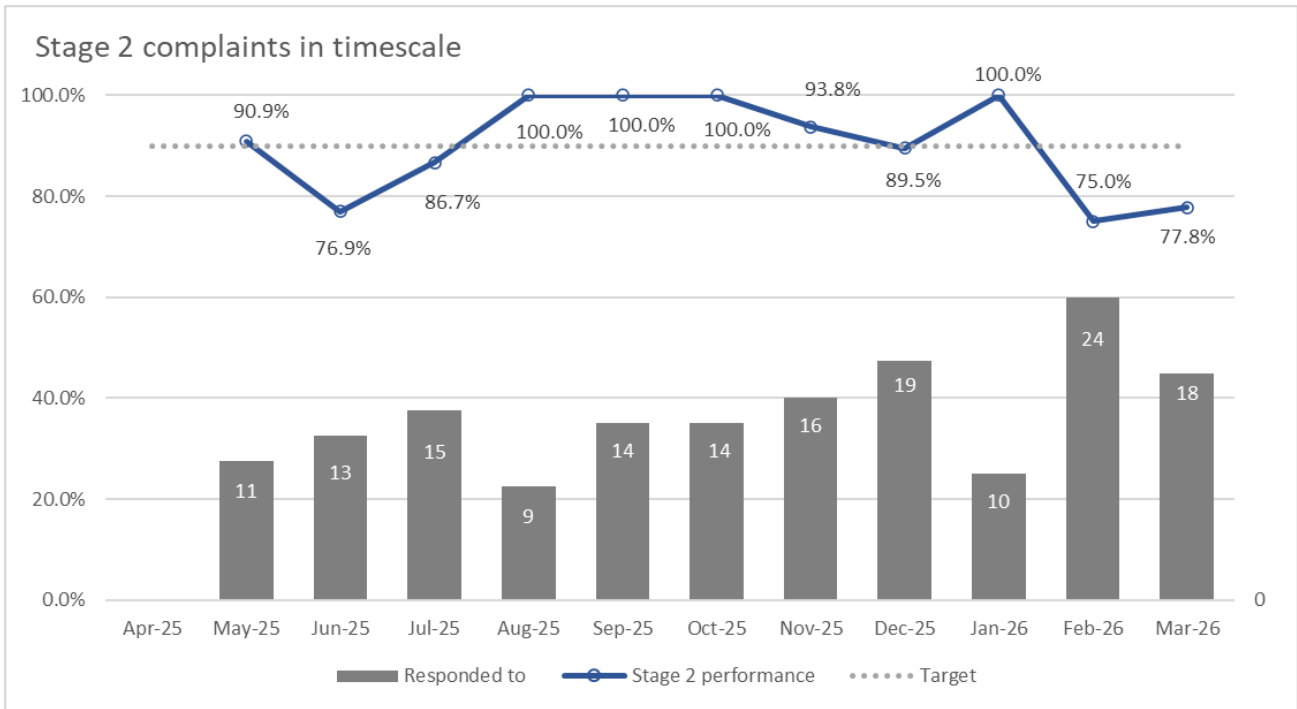
complaints. This compares to 73.6% and 57.2% for the full year last year.

The table below shows the total number of Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints received and responded to during 2025/26 and the number where we have responded to within Housing Ombudsman Code timescales.

The second half of the year was impacted by staffing constraints. A return to a full complement of staff in the central team and additional resource will continue to work towards achieving our target of 90% in 2026/27.

NOTE: March has a higher number of cases due to the year-end closedown and April has a lower number as the yearly count starts again.





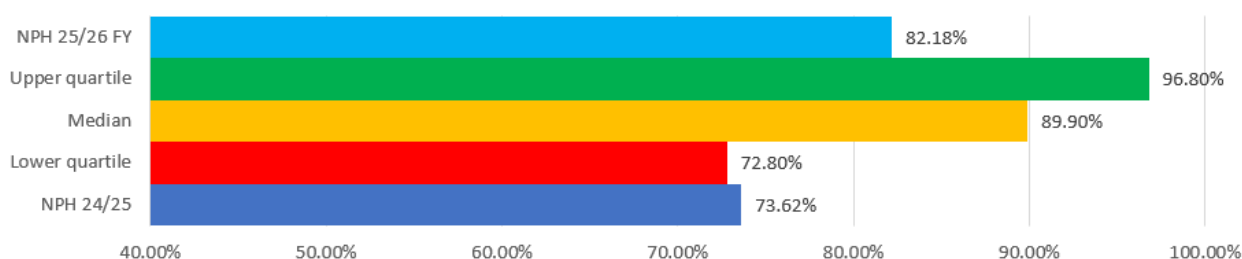
## Comparing our performance with others

When we compare our performance (turquoise bar) with the national Regulator for Social Housing (RSH) figures for all LCRA housing providers, we are below the median (yellow bar) for stage 1 and stage 2 but much higher than lower quartile performance (red bar).

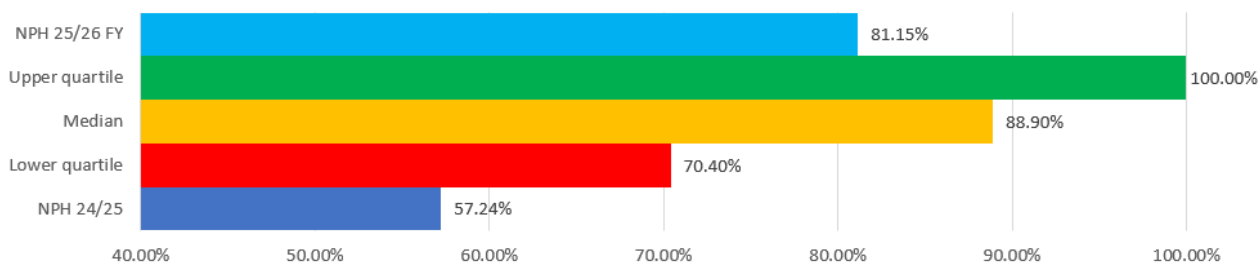
The dark blue bar is our full year performance in 2024/25 showing the continuous improvement journey to reach our target of 90%.

We will be continuing to improve response times through the co-ordination of complaints by the centralised team and supporting officers with investigations to ensure resolution within timescales to achieve targets in 2026/27.

CH02(1) % of Stage 1 complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales



CH02(1) % of Stage 2 complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales



## Satisfaction with complaint handling

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We monitor satisfaction with complaint handling through two surveys; an annual Tenant Survey which complies with the Regulator of Social Housing requirements and is a perception-based survey, and an independent transactional survey for a sample of closed complaints which have been responded to through our formal process.

### Annual Tenant Survey

The annual perception-based Tenant Survey captures feedback on the regulatory tenant satisfaction measure (TSM) '**Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling complaints' (TP009)**. Satisfaction with complaint handling is very low across the sector. It is very difficult to tell whether the survey responses relate to complaints made through the formal process or were service requests yet to be fully actioned, an issue faced by many since the introduction of this question in the TSMs. Nonetheless, it is important that tenants feel confident that any complaint they make will be taken seriously and dealt with effectively and in good time. Clear communication about how to make a complaint and the complaints process is vital to increasing awareness and accessibility.

In 2025/26 satisfaction with complaint handling (TP09) was 36.6%, up from 33.9% last year. Compared to last year's national results, this is above the median (35.5%). It is noted that the best performers achieved only 42.1% or above.

Looking at comments from the 172 respondents who answered this question in 2025/26, the key negatives that people mentioned included that the substantive matter being complained about (whether through the formal process or otherwise) had not been fully resolved, that there was a lack of follow up and clear communication from NPH officers, or that matters take too long.

### Complaint Transactional Survey

An independent Complaint Transactional Survey is undertaken every month. 130 people who had complaints closed between April 2025 and March 2026 were interviewed across the year.

Of these, 38% were satisfied with complaint handling overall which is just slightly higher than our TSM result for the same period. 37% of complainants were satisfied with the outcome of their complaint.

While we try to distinguish between the handling of the complaint and the outcome of the substantive matter in the survey design, these are very closely linked in complainants' minds. People complain to get an outcome. If they are not satisfied with the outcome, or even if they are but this is overshadowed by memories of the time and effort it took to get there, satisfaction will remain low.

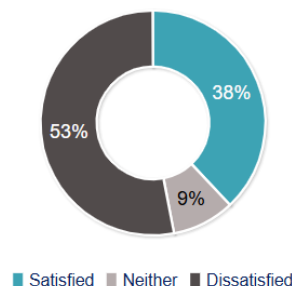
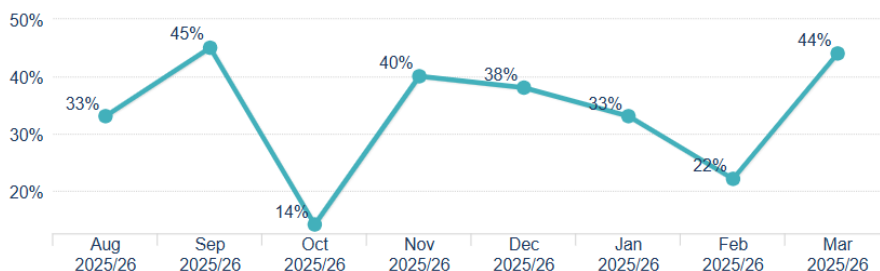
## Complaints Dashboard

|               |                   |            |
|---------------|-------------------|------------|
| Annual Target | Fully Interviewed | New Alerts |
| 120           | 130               | 3          |

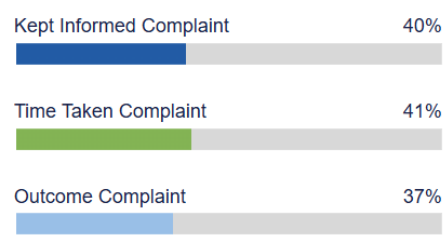
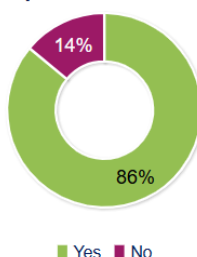
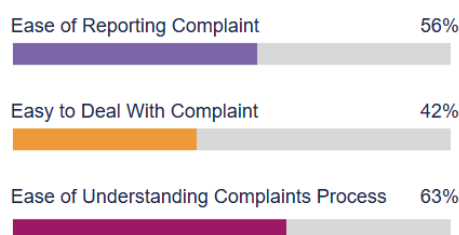


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### Overall Satisfaction



### Complaint acknowledged



### What do complainants say about the process?

Survey respondents are invited to express what they think about the process and why they gave the responses they did to the questions.

Some respondents mention the complaint handling team in a positive way and reflect on the way that the complaint process itself was conducted, referring to regular contact and good customer care and understanding from members of complaints team.

However, as stated, most focus on the substantive issue being complained about. The same issues arise as at TSM – failure to fully resolve issues raised, a lack of contact or follow-up, matters taking a long time to resolve.

Some complainants refer to the way they have been treated by NPH and its officers. Some tenants feel let down and that their needs and specific circumstances have not been considered or addressed prior to, or during the complaints process. This will be addressed as part of customer centric cultural programme of work in 2026/27.

# Housing Ombudsman

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## About the Housing Ombudsman

The Housing Ombudsman (HO) is a free (to residents), independent, and impartial service. Their work is funded through landlord subscription fees. They investigate complaints and resolve disputes involving the tenants and leaseholders of social landlords, (housing associations and local authorities). Residents can take a complaint to the Housing Ombudsman Service for investigation and support at any time and to help where the landlord is not responding to a complaint they've received. A formal investigation will be considered after going through the landlord's

complaint process if the issues have not been resolved. Members of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme must comply with the Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. The code aims to achieve best practice in complaint handling. The Ombudsman has the power to make orders to landlords, this might mean ordering the landlord to apologise, carry out works or pay compensation. Please see the Housing Ombudsman website for more information: [Complaint Handling Code 2024 | Housing Ombudsman Service](#)

## Housing Ombudsman determinations

The Housing Ombudsman will make recommendations and a determination when they review a complaint. There are several types of determination including:

- **Maladministration:** where the landlord, for example, has failed to comply with its legal obligations, its policies and procedures, or unreasonably delayed dealing with the matter. This could be a finding of **service failure, maladministration or severe maladministration**, depending on the seriousness of the failure and the impact on the resident. Service failure is the lowest level of maladministration and is reserved for minor failings where action is still needed to put things right.
- **No maladministration:** where the landlord is found to have acted appropriately.
- **Redress:** where the landlord made redress to the resident which resolved the complaint satisfactorily in the Ombudsman's opinion.
- **Resolved with intervention/early resolution:** where the complaint was resolved with the Ombudsman's intervention.
- **Outside jurisdiction (OSJ):** where the Ombudsman didn't have the authority to investigate. This could be for a variety of reasons including: the complaint had not been made within a reasonable timescale; the complaint did not meet the conditions of the scheme; or the matter was more appropriately dealt with by the courts, a tribunal, another complaint handling body or regulator.

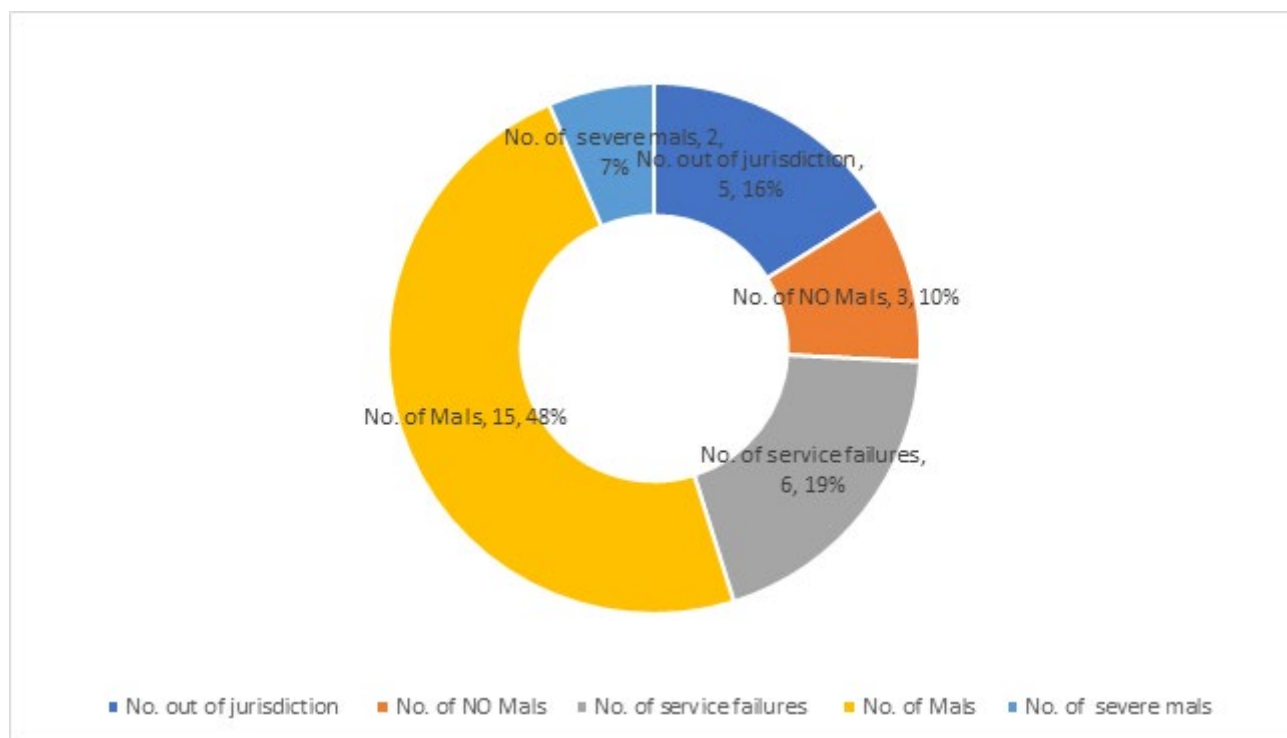
## Housing Ombudsman determinations 2025/26

The charts below summarise the outcomes from the twelve cases formally determined by the Housing Ombudsman in 2025/26 and the outcomes are detailed in the table below.

For the year, our maladministration rate is 74.1% where 23 out of 31 findings were maladministration. This percentage will change throughout the year depending on the volume

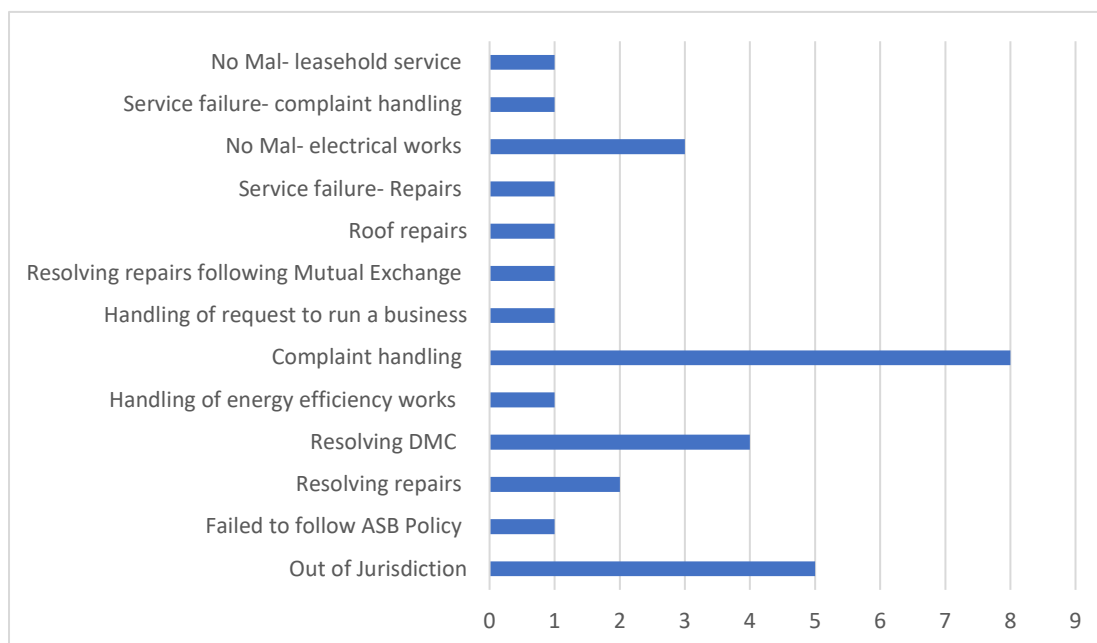
of cases received. The national maladministration rate for landlords between 10,000-50,000 units was 72% in 2024/25 and 79% for Local Authority/ALMOs (calculated by findings total divided by total number of maladministration findings). In 2024/25 our maladministration rate was 63% with 10 cases determined.

|                                    |         |
|------------------------------------|---------|
| ♦ Determinations                   | 12      |
| ♦ Findings Total                   | 31      |
| ♦ Maladministration Findings Total | 23      |
| ♦ Orders Made                      | 39      |
| ♦ Recommendations                  | 8       |
| ♦ Complaint Handling Failure Order | 0       |
| ♦ Compensation                     | £10,500 |
| ♦ Maladministration Rate           | 74%     |



The chart above shows how the 31 findings are categorised. It is worthy of note that service failure is considered in the maladministration percentage although recognised by the Housing Ombudsman as a lesser failing.

Of the twelve cases investigated, eight related to the repairs service with some including DMC which sat with the repairs service at the time. The other cases related to 1 DMC for Assets, 1 ASB, 1 Housing Management and 1 Leasehold. There were 31 findings from the 12 cases and the chart below summarises the case findings by type.



#### Issues highlighted in relation to service area determinations included:

- ◆ Complaint handling failure was the biggest finding. As the Ombudsman takes around 18 months to 2 years to review a case many of the findings relate to issues before the Customer Excellence Team existed and relate to cases where complaints were refused an escalation to Stage 2 or 3. The HO Complaint Handling Code now ensures all complaints can be escalated to Stage 2 regardless of reason and takes away the decision making which we were penalised for.
- ◆ Four cases related to DMC. The Ombudsman is now fast tracking any cases where there is a complaint of DMC so we are likely to see a disproportionate number of these cases coming through whilst other cases await investigation.

- ◆ Two cases related to resolving repairs and the time taken to fully resolve the issue.

#### Issues highlighted in relation to severe maladministration cases included:

- ◆ Two findings of severe maladministration related to the handling of DMC and our failure to act promptly, determine root cause and complete timely remedial works. Issues were resolved as a result of HO intervention and orders made as part of the investigation. In both cases escalating to the Ombudsman resulted in the issue being resolved after many reports to us.

### Housing Ombudsman Code Self-Assessment

NPH have completed a self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's new Complaint Handling Code, which is included in this report as Appendix B. The Policy was reviewed by the Ombudsman in June 2026 and four recommendations were made, which have all been actioned to ensure the Policy's compliance with the Code. The main area of work is continuing the work in practice towards the target of responding to all complaints within the Code timescales during 2025/26. Changes made in the later part of 2024/25 have seen a positive impact and overall response times improved to 71% from 63% the previous year, and to 81.9% in 2025/26.

Following the annual review of our self-assessment, analysis of complaints and satisfaction survey feedback we have refreshed our Complaints Improvement Plan for 2026/27. Below summarises some of the key actions being taken to continue to improve our complaint handling service.

- ◆ Action the recommendations from the tenant and leaseholder Service Quality Committee Complaints Scrutiny Review. Actions included creating an easy read versions of our policy and simplifying the content on the complaints website page.
- ◆ Continue the focus on reducing the number of Stage 2 complaints.
- ◆ Increased team resource to continue improvements to timeliness and to focus on pending Housing Ombudsman cases.
- ◆ Complete the review of our Compensation Policy against the Ombudsman guidance published in February 2026.
- ◆ Develop an Appeals Policy and accompanying guidance framework for all service appeal processes.
- ◆ Develop a Reasonable Adjustments Policy.
- ◆ Develop and deliver a customer centric cultural programme to embed tenant and leaseholder feedback from the Resident Excellence Strategy about what makes good customer service. Embed the agreed Service Standards.
- ◆ Improve action tracking through the development and implementation of the new core housing management system and the new complaints module.
- ◆ As raised in a Housing Ombudsman case, records management is important in demonstrating compliance with processes and policies and to ensure working practices are being applied correctly and fairly. Within this, we will address the recommendations in the Housing Ombudsman spotlight report on Knowledge and information management and our new Data Strategy
- ◆ Service Quality Committee Scrutiny review of ASB and neighbourhoods to support reducing complaints in this area. The review will look at data overlays including complaints, fly-tipping, ASB cases, TSM results, estate inspection scores, cleaning and grounds maintenance ratings, crime data and household makeup to highlights localities and hotspots to allow more targeted work.
- ◆ Service Quality Committee Scrutiny review of the repairs customer journey to better understand the customer experience at key touchpoints to support reducing complaints in this area.
- ◆ Working with WNC Contact Centre on the first point of contact to improve call wait times and NPH service areas to ensure callbacks are responded to on time.

## Service improvements and lessons learnt

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This section focuses on what we have learnt from complaint cases, Housing Ombudsman determinations and resident feedback from our Tenant Survey and Complaints Transactional Survey and the changes made.

### Complaint service improvements

Below are some of the learning and improvement actions from this year.

- Housing ombudsman **complaint service failure findings** related to acknowledging complaints and cases where complaints were refused an escalation to Stage 2 or 3. Seven determined cases are from 2023 prior to the centralisation of the Complaints Team. The HO Complaint Handling Code now ensures all complaints can be escalated to Stage 2 regardless of reason and the centralised team ensure that all complaints are acknowledged.
- The Service Quality Committee (SQC) conducted a **Complaints Scrutiny Review** of the Complaint and Feedback Policy and process. The committee looked at the Policy, sample checked response letters, discussed the creation of an easy read version of the policy and reviewed the information on the website regarding complaints and provided feedback, and the customer experience. Recommendations aim to improve and simplify the policy with an easy read version and website information.
- Consultation on our **Service Standards, and Resident Excellence Strategy has been completed with tenants and leaseholders** and told us what makes good customer service for our service users. Customer Service training across the business will pick up on the issues raised in complaints around keeping residents informed and being easy to deal with ensuring a culture that is customer centric where customers feel listened too, individual circumstances considered, and reasonable adjustments made so residents feel supported through the process.
- A **procedure for sampling and quality checking complaint responses** including on the completeness, quality and tone has been developed and has been implemented.
- Completed a review of the **categorisation of complaints** to ensure complaint themes are right and support the ease of reporting granular data analysis and insight. The most common option chosen in 2025/26 was Unsatisfactory NPH Service, which accounted for 48% of closed complaints in 2025/26. This category is very general and as such was not helpful in describing the root cause of dissatisfaction. The new categories, along with more detailed service area descriptions, will improve reporting on areas of dissatisfaction in different service areas.
- **Improved complaint insight** through the development of PowerBI reporting dashboard and introducing Case handler monthly reports
- Triaging cases once logged to see if tenants have a **communication flag so needs can be tailored**, for example a preferred contact by post, where letters instead of emails are sent.
- **DMC cases** are logged and forwarded to the Complex Works Team to action immediately alongside the complaint process.
- A deep dive into the reasons for **Stage 2 escalations** increasing identified follow up actions, timeliness of responses and requests of more compensation/redress as the main reasons. Through learning, the central team ensure all failings are acknowledged and adequately addressed at Stage 1 and clear timeframes for works detailed in letter responses.
- **Refresher training** for service areas on the procedure and process for responding to complaints to improve response times.

- Embedding **monthly Customer Voice Meetings** with services to review complaint trends and timeliness and a **monthly Customer Contact Meeting** with our contact centre and service teams to review issues emerging from the first point of contact.

## Service area improvements

### Keeping residents informed

- Complaints raised concerns around communication with residents. A **review of Call backs** highlighted responses to requested was poor in some areas. Call back process within teams were reviewed and responsible officers held to account. Call backs are now on track with 78-85% being responded to within the 5 working days. Our target for 2026/27 is 90%.
- An increase in Aids and Adaptation waiting time **complaints highlighted that applicants had not been kept informed** and updated on their application status following works being put on hold whilst new contractors were on-boarded. More frequent updates were provided for with those on the waiting list improving communication and reducing complaints.

### Anti-Social behaviour

- Following complaints on ASB, a **targeted communication campaign was launched**, including relevant articles in the resident newsletter 'Your Voice', to inform and raise awareness on what is ASB and where NPH can act, what issues are for the Police, partnership working activity and regular updates via website and socials.

### DMC and disrepair

- A number of complaints related to disrepair and DMC. We have reviewed the **disrepair claim and DMC cases** to ensure the two processes are fully aligned with the complaints process and the pre-protocol stages. A new DMC Policy and Disrepair Policy have been developed to outline the

process and stages and roles and responsibilities for customers.

- Two findings of severe maladministration related to the handling of DMC and our failure to act promptly, determine root cause and complete timely remedial works. The new Complex Cases Team is now established in the Property Directorate to focus on dealing with Disrepair Claims and Damp Mould and Condensation (DMC) and the new Awabb's Law Act requirements in place for 1 October 2025. The team is made up of highly skilled staff, qualified in Building pathology and will improve the speed and quality of diagnosis for our customers and costs. The team have consulted with residents on DMC documentation to ensure it is easy to read and understand. Awabb's Law training has been provided across the business, and to NPH Board and the Service Quality Committee.

### Tenancy Management

- Reviewed the **Mutual Exchange Policy** in response to a HO case to improve processes and the resident experience.

### Repairs

- During 2025/26 improving the Repairs Service have has been a priority. Resident feedback told us the main issues included the time taken to complete repairs, outstanding and forgotten repairs, quality of work, communication and being kept informed. The Repairs modernisation plan has delivered improvements including transitioning all non-urgent repair jobs to a 28-day target to improve timeliness, increasing post-inspections and extending appointment times beyond 4pm. A new Repairs Policy has been developed setting out repair timescales and roles and responsibilities. Repair complaints reduced from 54% of all complaints received in 2024/25 to 38% in 2025/26. Satisfaction with the repairs service has improved significantly (+9% overall service from 68% to 77% and +11% for timeliness from 62% to 73%).

## Case studies

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### Improving the mutual exchange process for residents

In May 2022, a tenant moved into their home through a mutual exchange, looking forward to settling into their new property. However, by June 2023 they felt the need to raise a complaint about the condition of the home. Although a number of repairs were identified, the tenant experienced frustration as progress was slower than expected and it was not always clear when works would be completed.

When the repairs were eventually assigned to a contractor, the quality of the work fell short of what the tenant had hoped for. Throughout the complaints process, the tenant was given reassurance that the outstanding issues would be resolved, but clear timeframes were not always provided. There were also occasions where contractors attended without prior arrangement, which added to the inconvenience and uncertainty for the tenant.

This experience prompted a wider review of the Mutual Exchange Policy, with a focus on improving the journey for future tenants. As a result, processes were strengthened, sign-up documentation was enhanced, and clearer communication was introduced to address common misunderstandings—such as the belief that repairs could not be carried out within the first 12 months of an exchange.

A dedicated Mutual Exchange Team was also established, bringing together Housing, Mutual Exchange, and Decant Officers to provide more joined-up support. This has already led to positive outcomes, including the successful completion of a mutual exchange chain involving 10 properties and the delivery of 74 completed exchanges in 2025/26 from 124 matches.

The case also brought to light ongoing concerns with the major works contractor. In response, the decision was made to end the contract, with the aim of improving both the quality of works and the overall experience for residents. Alongside this, stronger working relationships between teams and improved record-keeping have been introduced, helping to ensure that works are better coordinated and completed as expected in future.

### Putting things right

The tenant initially reported a large crack in their living room ceiling, which understandably caused concern for the household. Unfortunately, the situation escalated when the ceiling later collapsed. The family includes children, and while it was a very distressing experience, it is a relief that no one was injured.

Following the incident, the complaint was investigated by the service area and a response was shared with the central team. However, the initial reply did not fully reflect the impact the situation had on the tenant and their family, including the disruption, distress, and service shortfall experienced. As a result of the collapse, the tenant had to make temporary arrangements for their children to stay with their mother while works were being addressed. In addition to the upheaval, some of the family's belongings were damaged, adding to the overall impact of the incident.

The central team supported the tenant by raising the need for appropriate reimbursement with the service area, ensuring that the full circumstances and impact on the family were taken into account. This led to an insurance claim form being provided so the tenant could pursue compensation and seek a fair resolution.

This case provided an important opportunity for learning. Training has since been delivered to complaint investigators to strengthen how redress is considered, ensuring that both the practical and emotional impact on tenants is fully recognised. The central team continues to play a key role in advocating for tenants, helping to ensure their experiences are understood and that appropriate action is taken to put things right.

## Keeping tenants informed

The tenant reached out for support as they continued to experience unresolved issues with DMC. By this stage, they had already been waiting some time and were understandably looking for reassurance that their concerns were being addressed. The complaint response took longer than initially expected and had to be extended, which added to the uncertainty.

Recognising this, the team made a point of contacting the tenant directly to explain the delay and provide reassurance that their case remained a priority and was actively being progressed. During this conversation, the tenant mentioned that a contractor had previously suggested that compensation might be offered.

The team took this forward by raising it with the investigating manager, ensuring the tenant's expectations and experience were fully understood. Following a review of the circumstances, the manager agreed that compensation was appropriate, helping to bring the matter to a fair and balanced conclusion.

Throughout the process, the team made a conscious effort to stay in touch, particularly once the complaint went beyond its original timeframe. They continued to advocate on the tenant's behalf, helping to ensure their voice was heard and their concerns were taken seriously. This consistent communication and support made a positive difference, and the tenant expressed their appreciation, including a compliment for Jenny's involvement.

This case highlights the value of maintaining regular, open communication with tenants, especially when delays occur. Taking the time to keep tenants informed and supported can help build trust and reassurance, even when resolution takes longer than anticipated.

*"I would just like to say a massive thank you to the lady who was handling my complaint, she went above and beyond to help and support me through the process, she listened to me and shown a great understanding as well and empathy, I am very grateful".*

## Going the extra mile

Following a fire at their home, this family was unexpectedly displaced and had to move into temporary accommodation. Given the size of the household, finding a suitable property locally proved challenging, which meant they had to move further away than hoped. While the temporary accommodation was initially expected to last around six months, complications with their property meant the family faced a longer period of uncertainty.

Throughout this time, the family were keen to keep their children at their existing school, close to their permanent home, to maintain stability during an already difficult period. However, this came with added travel costs and practical challenges. When the tenant raised a complaint about the ongoing delays, she also shared a further concern—she was due to undergo surgery and was worried about how she would manage daily travel with her young children during her recovery.

Recognising the pressure this was placing on the family, enquiries were made to explore support options, including a bus pass. While the circumstances were fully explained, it became clear that this solution would not be available in time to meet the family's immediate needs.

To ensure the family were supported during this particularly difficult period, the Complaints Team worked closely with the service area to find a more immediate solution. It was agreed that taxi transport would be funded for the children for a short period of two weeks, helping to ease the immediate burden while the tenant recovered. At the same time, arrangements were made to secure a free bus pass to provide longer-term support once the initial period had passed.

This case reflects the importance of seeing beyond the process and understanding the individual circumstances behind each situation. By listening carefully and advocating on the family's behalf, the Complaints Team was able to help reduce some of the pressure they were facing and provide practical, timely support when it was most needed.

## Complaints scrutiny review

Our Service Quality Committee review complaints performance and trends each quarter and wanted to take a closer look at complaint handling. The Committee are made up of individuals from diverse backgrounds who brought a range of perspectives to influence improvements to complaints handling alongside our Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC) to review and challenge performance to help drive a better resident experience.

At the end of 2024/25 complaints meeting the Housing Ombudsman Counplaints Handling Code timescales was 71%. Satisfaction with complaint handling in our Tenant Survey was 34%, and 46% in our monthly transaction survey, where those who have been through the formal complaints process provide feedback.

The committee took a deep dive into the complaints process from the customer's perspective following the implementation of the new centralised Complaints Team by:

- Gaining an understanding of the complaints process and regulatory requirements of the Housing Ombudsman Counplaints Handling Code
- Identifying trends by looking at your satisfaction survey feedback and comments.
- Listening to the Complaints Team experience on the challenges.
- Providing feedback on the Policy, letter responses and how accessible information about the complaints service and process is for those seeking out the service.

The Group used a variety of methods to gather a range of information and evidence in relation to the service. The following activities were undertaken:

- Review of various documentation including the Complaints Policy, HOS Self-Assessment, Equality Impact Assessments
- Reviewing performance data and trends
- Looking at NPH website, complaints leaflets and Your Voice
- Online research focusing on C1 rated organisations and other housing association websites.
- Question and answer session with the staff member from Customer excellence team
- Hearing your voice by reading the 64 comments received from the monthly transactional survey

The Committee made 22 recommendations which included:

- To create an easy read, customer friendly version of the Complaint and Feedback Policy as the main version was long and those with learning disability, dyslexia, neurodivergency may find this difficult.
- Simplify the complaint information on our website to make it easier to read, with simple language, more visual and accessible to mobile users. Include an FAQ and video explaining the process.
- Meeting customer needs on contact - agree at the start of the process the best way to make contact and time of day
- Establish a tenant and leaseholder complaints group to help review cases, lessons learned, and sample quality check letters

## APPENDIX A: OUR COMPLAINT HANDLING PROCESS

