

Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report

April 2025 — March 2026



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Foreword

Over the past year, Housing 21 has continued to strengthen the approach to complaints handling, ensuring that the resident voice remains at the heart of it. Central to this has been the work of our Resident Complaints Panel, whose insight, challenge, and constructive feedback has been invaluable. Their contributions have not only shaped individual complaint reviews and analysis of ombudsman cases, but they have also significantly influenced wider policy development and improvements to our resident-facing materials such as our letter templates.

Another key priority has been to support colleagues to feel confident in their handling of complaints which has also led to greater consistency in the quality and tone of responses. Through targeted guidance, training, and more hands-on assistance, colleagues across the organisation are responding with greater clarity, empathy and more effectively. This has been complemented by strengthened quality checks, helping ensure that every response reflects our standards and positive culture around complaints.

As the Board looks ahead, we remain committed to embedding resident experience at the centre of our work and using every opportunity to learn, improve, and deliver services that meet the needs and expectations of residents. In helping us to do this, we have redesigned our Complaints Satisfaction Survey which provides valuable quantitative and qualitative feedback, enabling us to identify areas of dissatisfaction with our complaint handling and proactively respond to it.

The Board would like to thank Richard Dell, the Resident Board Member responsible for complaints for his active and engaged work throughout the year. His regular interaction with the operational Complaints Team demonstrates the importance of resident insight and the Board receives assurance that learning is being embedded within our devolved operating model, supporting a consistent quality of service.

The Board continues to actively support the National Housing Federation's "Chairs Challenge" to ensure we remain diverse in our thinking, are inclusive and take any actions required to support diversity, equity and inclusion in the way services are delivered.

Housing 21 was invited to join a webinar hosted by the Housing Ombudsman to share learning and actions over the past year. The Board will work positively with residents and employees to build on that work to further enhance our performance.

Elaine Elkington, Group Board Chair, Housing 21

After joining the Board in 2024, I have been the member responsible for complaints for just over a year. I appreciate the open and constructive relationships that have developed over that time with those involved in complaints. A new employee structure was put in place in 2025 and that has settled very quickly into being effective. Key to that success has been the time taken to assess areas for improvement and then the speedy development and implementation of action plans. The tone of our report reflects our desire for continuous improvement and that is shared by everyone.

The new structure is bringing support to our local managers who are usually first responders to complaints and who work in a highly devolved way. This support is resulting in improving consistency in how we respond. There has also been a big emphasis on learning from when things go wrong and making changes as a result. Whilst we are fortunate to have a low number of complaints relative to the number of our residents, we are now starting to focus on removing any remaining barriers that could prevent someone making a complaint.

We all recognise that complaints are a vital source of intelligence for an organisation. Complaints performance now sits as an integral part of our comprehensive performance reporting, both to the Board and for residents.

Within the new Resident Experience Strategy, launching in 2026/27, learning from complaints is explicitly a focus of how we improve responsive and fair service delivery, and how we communicate and engage with residents. As a Housing 21 resident for four years, I can also see that there is a heartfelt intention to place residents at the centre of all that we do. I hope you find this report informative and helpful.

Richard Dell, Resident Board Member responsible for complaints



Executive summary

During 2025/26, Housing 21 continued to strengthen its approach to complaint handling, with a clear focus on learning, consistency and putting residents' experiences at the centre of service improvement.

Performance remains strong overall. We received 286 complaints, a slight reduction from the previous year, alongside 859 compliments.

We recognise that this relatively low number of complaints relative to the size of the organisation could indicate that concerns may not always be raised or recorded correctly, and this continues to be an area of focus for us. Satisfaction with complaint handling rose for the second consecutive year, to 64 per cent, placing Housing 21 in the upper quartile of the sector based on previous benchmarking.

Timeliness and regulatory compliance improved further. We achieved:

This reflects our progress in both quality and consistency, which has been supported by enhanced training, improved quality assurance checks and clearer guidance to local complaint handlers.

Early resolution remains a key challenge. While performance remains strong, 84 per cent of complaints were resolved at stage one, below our 90 per cent target and slightly lower than last year. Learning from stage two escalations is being embedded into our Service Improvement Plan to reduce avoidable escalations in future.

Resident insight has played a central role. The Residents' Complaints Panel, customer journey mapping and redesigned satisfaction surveys have provided valuable challenge and evidence to shape improvements. Feedback shows growing satisfaction with communication and tone, but also highlights areas requiring further focus, particularly empathy, neutrality of investigations and how vulnerabilities are considered.

100%

of stage one and stage two responses issued within Complaint Handling Code timescales



97%

of complaints acknowledged within five working days



Zero

findings of maladministration from the Housing Ombudsman, compared to two in the previous year

Learning and improvement are becoming embedded. Complaints have driven tangible changes across repairs, contractor management, communication, record keeping and colleague training. We have also strengthened how vulnerabilities and reasonable adjustments are identified and recorded, with 99 per cent of cases now capturing this information, providing a stronger foundation for fair and accessible complaint handling.

Looking ahead, our priority for 2026/27 is to build on this progress by making it easier for residents to raise concerns, improving communication throughout the complaints journey, strengthening colleague capability, and ensuring learning leads to visible and lasting change. Our ambition remains not just to be compliant, but to deliver a complaints service that is exemplary and trusted by residents.



1. Introduction

Housing 21 is a leading provider of Retirement Living and Extra Care. We help older people live well, with dignity and autonomy, by providing support or care in quality social rent and shared ownership housing services across England. We work in 220 local authority areas, manage more than 24,200 properties and deliver over 48,000 hours of in-house social care each week.

Listening to residents is a vital part of our commitment. When residents tell us they are unhappy or that something has gone wrong, we want them to feel heard and to know that their views and complaints are taken seriously. Complaints are not only a way of putting things right for residents, but also an important source of learning for the organisation. They help us to understand where services have fallen short, where processes need to improve, and where further action is needed to prevent the same issues from happening again.

In accordance with the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) Complaint Handling Code, Housing 21 uses a two-stage complaints process that combines local knowledge with independent review. Stage one complaints are handled locally by colleagues who understand the scheme, the resident and the wider circumstances of the case. If a resident remains dissatisfied and asks for their complaint to be escalated, it is investigated at stage two by a senior colleague who was not involved in the original response. This approach combines the benefits of local knowledge and relationships with ensuring complaints are handled fairly, proportionately and robustly.

We continue to place strong emphasis on learning from complaints, both locally and nationally. Building a culture where complaints are welcomed as feedback, rather than viewed negatively, remains an important part of improving the experience of residents and strengthening accountability.

This report provides an overview of Housing 21's complaints and compliments performance for 2025/26. It explains how we have performed during the year, the progress we have made in improving complaint handling, and the priorities that will guide our work going forward.

During 2025/26, Housing 21 received 286 complaints and 859 compliments from a resident population of around 26,000. Our Tenant Satisfaction Measure relating to complaint handling has improved for the second year running, increasing from 60 per cent in 2024 to 64 per cent in 2025. This is encouraging progress and reflects our continued efforts to improve our complaints service, but we know there is more to do. Effective complaint handling remains central to our wider ambitions around accountability, service quality, the quality of our homes, and affordability.



2. Our focus on complaints during 2025/26

In recognising the importance of complaints both as an opportunity to make things right for residents but also as a way to improve our services, we have had several areas of focus during the past year:

2.1 Support and guidance

One of our main areas of focus this year has been to build on the foundations of good complaint handling by helping colleagues across Housing 21 feel more confident, supported and skilled in responding to complaints. As complaints are handled locally in our services, some colleagues may only deal with them occasionally. We recognised that this can make it harder to build confidence and consistency without the right support in place.

In response, our strengthened Complaints Team has provided more hands-on support across the organisation. This has included training sessions, clearer template letters, quality checks before responses are sent, and more active support around meeting deadlines.

Together, these changes are helping us to improve the quality and consistency of complaint handling and to provide a better experience for residents.

Following the increased colleague support provided this year, we conducted a survey for Housing 21 employees to capture levels of understanding and confidence in the complaints process.

- **83 per cent** of colleagues said they understood the stage one process.
- **71 per cent** of colleagues agreed that they felt confident in explaining complaint outcomes to residents.
- **7 per cent** of colleagues felt that they didn't have the right templates to be able to handle complaints well.

The survey results also highlighted areas for continued improvement, with 42 per cent of respondents feeling that learning is consistently recorded and followed up. Work is being put in place this year to strengthen the tracking and monitoring of change resulting from complaints learning, and to better share this across the organisation.

2.2 Enhanced performance reporting

At the end of last year, we introduced a new target to achieve 90 per cent of complaints being resolved at stage one and not progressing to stage two. We have been tracking this alongside our existing targets of having no findings of maladministration from the HOS and 100 per cent of acknowledgement letters and complaint responses sent within the Complaint Handling Code timescales. We have also revised our reporting schedule, introducing more regular focused reporting to senior leadership and to Board with quarterly and monthly performance reports. The combination of these targets and an improved reporting schedule has provided Housing 21 with more transparency around complaints, helping to hold us to account and regularly monitor how our performance is changing over time.

2.3 Communication and follow through

We know it's important not only to respond to complaints in a timely and robust manner, but also to follow through with our commitments in order to rebuild trust and relationships with our residents. This has been a key area of focus in 2025/26, and continues to be for the year ahead. We have been strengthening the way we track actions arising from complaints, giving greater oversight to make sure those actions are completed and not lost once the response has been issued. This is helping to improve accountability, support better communication between teams, and ensure a better and more consistent service for residents.

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We have also reviewed the way we gather feedback from residents after a complaint has been handled by redesigning our Complaint Satisfaction Survey.

The new survey for 2026/27 uses clearer and simpler language, making it easier for residents to understand and complete. It has also been designed to help us quickly identify areas of dissatisfaction, so that when a resident tells us they remain unhappy, we can review this sooner and respond more promptly.

2.4 Keeping resident voices central

In last year's report, we set out our commitment to strengthen the role of resident insight in shaping the way we handle complaints and improve services. During 2025/26, we have continued to build on that commitment by involving residents more directly in the review and development of our complaints approach.

A key part of this has been the ongoing work of the Residents' Complaints Panel, which has provided valuable challenge and feedback throughout the year. The panel has been involved in reviewing complaint cases, helping us to understand how our responses are experienced by residents in practice and where there may be opportunities to improve. Their input has also supported reviews of policies, guidance, and resident-facing materials, helping us to make sure these are clearer, fairer and easier to understand. Alongside this, resident feedback has helped inform wider discussions about what a good complaints experience should look and feel like.

This year, we also carried out customer journey mapping to better understand the resident experience from start to finish when raising a concern or complaint. This work brought together insight from a range of sources, including complaints, feedback, themes from cases, operational experience and resident panel input. By looking at the full journey in this way, we were able to identify where communication could be clearer, where processes could be simpler, and where residents may experience frustration or uncertainty.

This additional resident insight has given us a much stronger evidence base for improvement and has directly informed the development of our new Service Improvement Plan. The plan includes actions to improve resident information, strengthen communication, redesign key parts of the complaints process and make it easier for residents to raise concerns and receive timely responses. This reflects our wider aim not just to listen to residents, but to make sure their experiences actively shape the way our services develop.

2.5 Recording and monitoring vulnerabilities

As an older person's housing provider, ensuring vulnerabilities are taken into account through our services and complaint handling is a key priority. We are also aware that the number and complexity of vulnerable residents is increasing, and we need to ensure that this does not result in any barriers for anyone who wants to make a complaint. As such, we have placed increased emphasis this year on the recording and managing of vulnerabilities within the complaints process, and on identifying where reasonable adjustments are needed.

2.6 System improvements

Last year, we committed to exploring a new case management module within our existing housing system to help us bring resident information together more effectively and strengthen our reporting and insight. However, we received news from our systems supplier that this was no longer a viable option.

Instead, we have been focusing this year on improving and enhancing the systems we already use. We have successfully upgraded our current system to a newer, more user-friendly version, making it easier for colleagues to manage complaint information.

We have also begun making better use of an existing reporting tool that helps us analyse information more effectively. This is reducing the amount of manual work involved in producing complaints data and is improving how easily we can see performance, themes and trends. This will continue to be a key area of development for us in the year ahead.



3. Performance

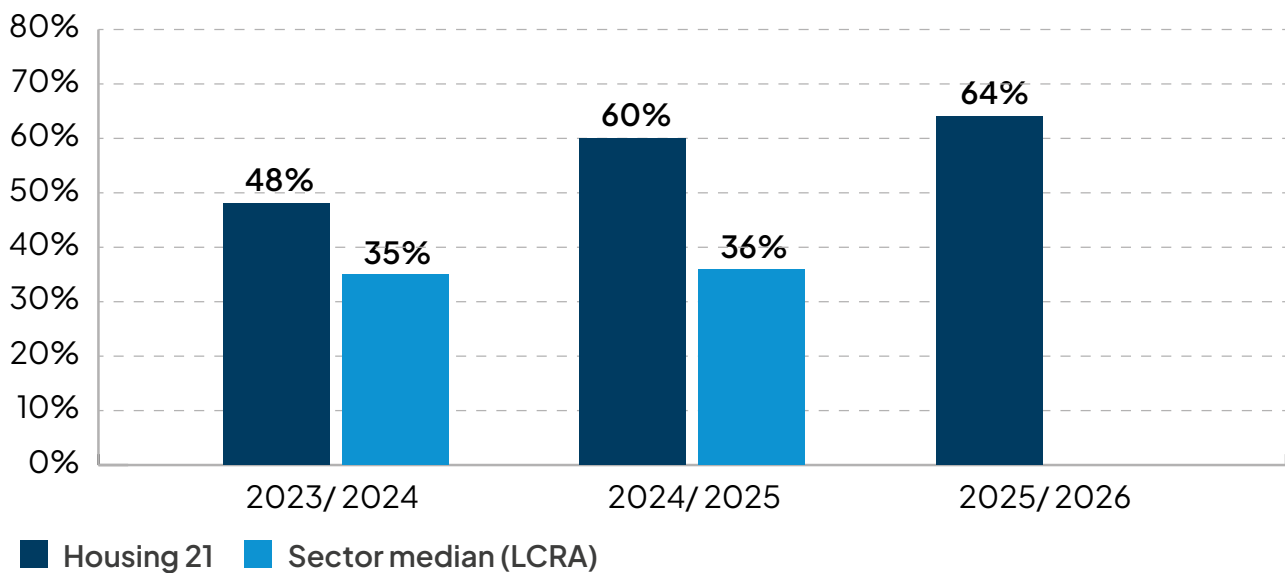
April 2025 – March 2026

3.1 Tenant Satisfaction Measures and benchmarking

Complaint handling satisfaction

The annual Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) include a question on satisfaction with complaint handling. The 2025 satisfaction level was 64 per cent, an increase of four per cent from the previous year and shows a rise for the second consecutive year. Whilst benchmarking for 2025/26 is not yet available, our previous results have put us in the upper quartile for complaints satisfaction and we have continued to improve on these satisfaction scores this year.

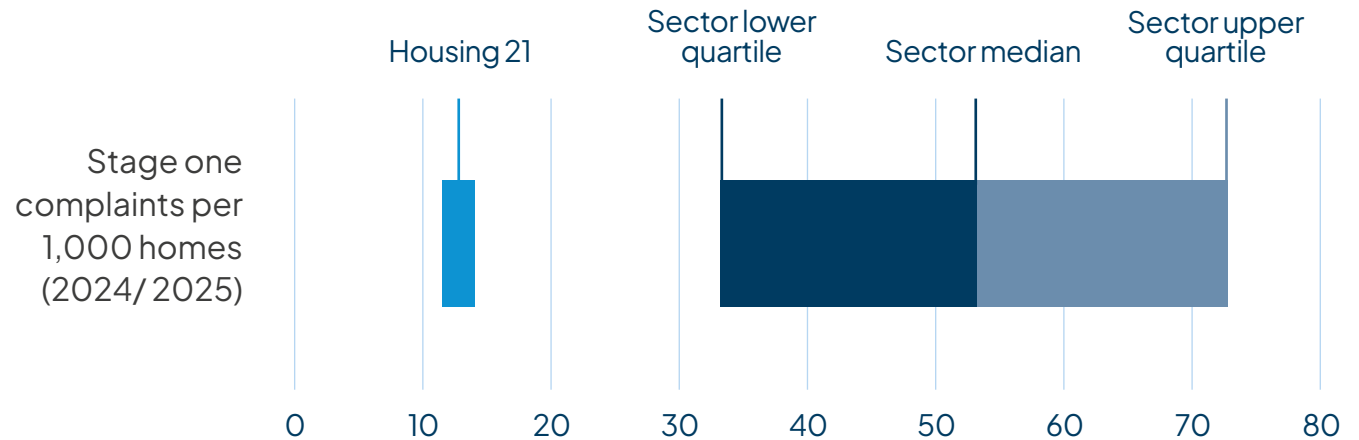
TSM satisfaction with complaint handling (tp09)



Where schemes have achieved a lower satisfaction score, action plans are developed by the local teams. Following an internal TSM audit this year, governance of these action plans is being strengthened to provide more accountability, consistency and visibility of progress.

Complaint numbers

The number of complaints we receive each year per 1,000 homes remains below the sector average. While this may in part reflect positive performance, we also recognise that lower complaint volumes can indicate that concerns are not always being raised or recorded correctly. This creates a potential risk around visibility, learning and compliance with the Complaint Handling Code.



6.5 per 1,000

in 2023/2024

12.7 per 1,000

in 2024/2025

11.9 per 1,000

in 2025/2026

During 2025/26, our Complaints Team carried out a detailed review of this area. This included analysing complaint data, reviewing system usage, visiting schemes, and speaking with colleagues to better understand how concerns are identified, recorded and responded to in practice. We also completed an internal complaints audit to provide further assurance and identify any gaps or inconsistencies.

This work gave us confidence in many aspects of our customer service, but it also highlighted some areas where the distinction between service requests, complaints and anti-social behaviour (ASB) concerns was not always clear for residents or employees. It also showed that there

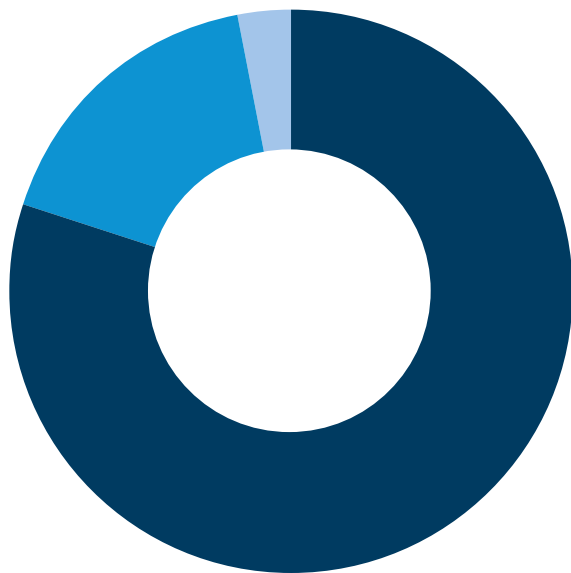
is more we can do to ensure residents understand how to raise concerns and what they can expect from us when they do.

As a result, we are taking forward a number of actions through our Service Improvement Plan to address these challenges. These include further work to raise awareness of the difference between service requests, complaints and ASB concerns, as well as reviewing resident-facing materials to make sure they are clear and accessible.

3.2 Compliments

We always welcome and value compliments about our employees and services, and this year we received a total of 859 compliments from our residents. Of these 80 per cent were about employees/teams, 17 per cent about our services, and three per cent about our contractors.

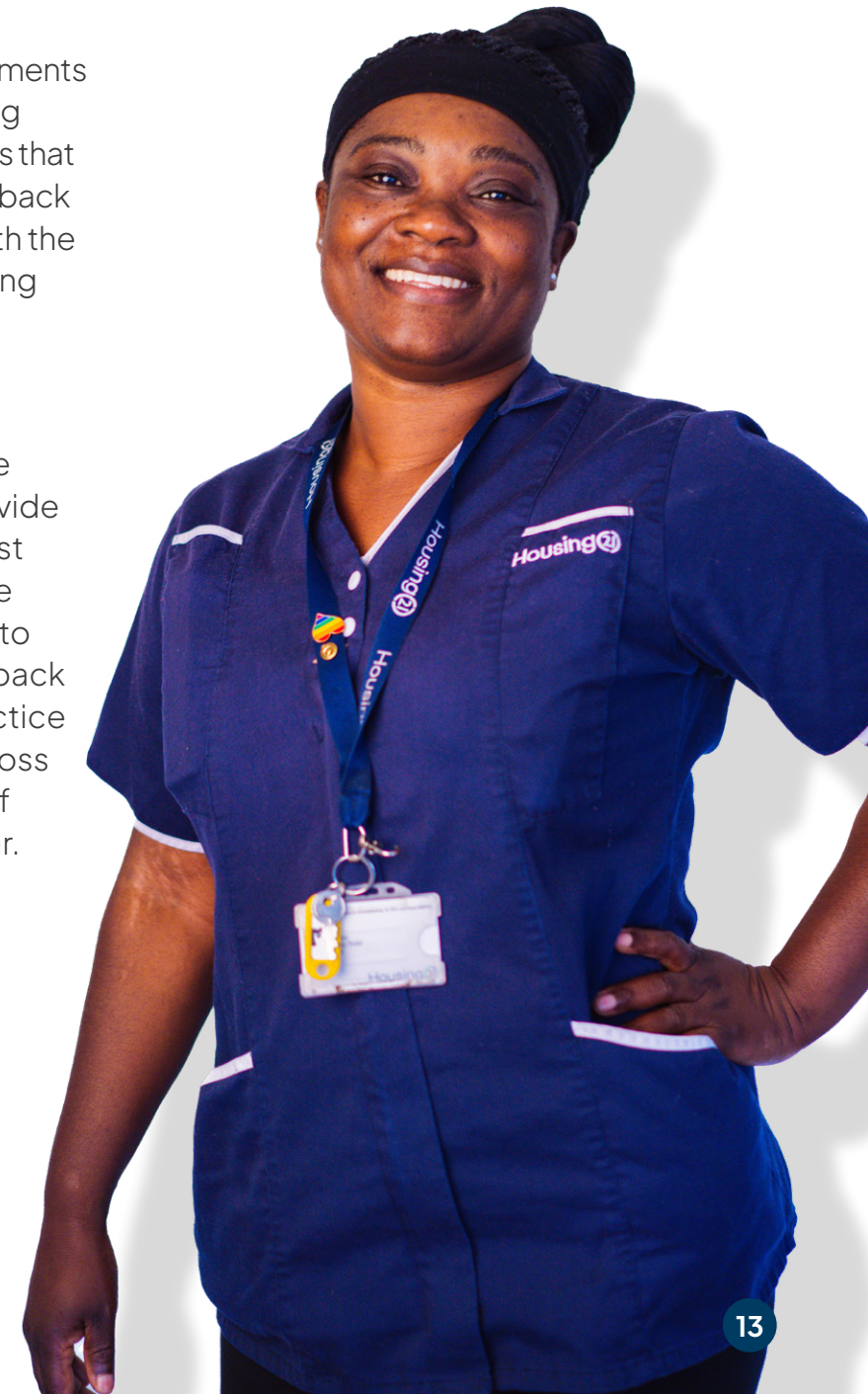
Compliments by topic



- Our employees/ teams – 80%
- Our services – 17%
- Our contractors – 3%

A total of 153 schemes received compliments in 2025/26 without any complaints being raised. This could indicate in some cases that residents know how to access our feedback process, but don't need to engage with the complaints process due to experiencing high levels of satisfaction.

Although our focus this year has been on strengthening complaint handling and learning from concerns raised, we recognise that compliments also provide valuable insight into what matters most to residents and where colleagues are delivering excellent service. We want to make better use of this positive feedback in future, both to celebrate good practice and to share learning more widely across the organisation. This will be an area of greater focus for us in the coming year.



3.3 Complaints

In the year 2025/26, we received 286 complaints, compared to 297 in 2024/25. The table below shows our performance against targets, compared to the previous financial year. Whilst our overall performance remains strong and shows improvements, we have seen a small increase in complaints escalating to stage two. We remain focused on learning from these cases to reduce avoidable escalations in future, with quality of complaint handling and enhanced learning forming key components of our Service Improvement Plan.

Performance			
Measure	Target	25/26	24/25
Per centage of complaints acknowledged within five working days	100%	97% 	97%
Per centage of stage one complaints responded to within timescale*	100%	100% 	94%
Per centage of stage two complaints responded to within timescale*	100%	100% 	98%
Number of maladministration findings from HOS	0	0 	2
Per centage of stage one/ two complaints not escalating to stage two	90%	84% 	86%

 Improved  Declined  No change

*Including compliant extensions as per the Complaint Handling Code

Complaints not accepted

The Complaints Handling Code allows us to reject a complaint if it does not meet the requirements of our policy. In total, 18 complaints were not accepted during the year (compared to 21 last year). The table below shows that the most common reason was that it was a first time service request. The second most common reason was that it was a service which wasn't Housing 21's responsibility or had already been considered under the Complaints Policy (both stages).

Reason given	Number of complaints not accepted
First time service request	5
Complaints occurred over 12 months ago	2
Non-Housing 21 resident	2
Service not Housing 21's responsibility	4
Resident advocate no consent	1
Already considered under the complaints policy (both stages)	4

3.4 Vulnerabilities and reasonable adjustments

With an increased focus this year on better capturing vulnerabilities and reasonable adjustments, 99 per cent of cases recorded captured whether the complainant had any vulnerabilities to be aware of, and 99 per cent captured whether any reasonable adjustments were needed (this is not directly comparable to last year, due to the field only being introduced in the system part way through the financial year). This indicates good uptake of the new record keeping, but we recognise that there is still work to be done to improve our handling of vulnerabilities further.

Analysis shows that 19 per cent of complaint cases had a vulnerability recorded against them this financial year, compared to 27 per cent in the time the field was introduced last year. In 2024/25, four per cent (nine cases) had reasonable adjustments recorded as being needed. This has increased slightly this year to five per cent (15 cases).

Almost all recorded vulnerabilities related to physical and mental health. While these are the most common types of vulnerability within our resident demographic, improving colleagues' awareness and understanding of vulnerability will remain a key focus over the coming year. This will be particularly important in helping colleagues recognise and make reasonable adjustments for vulnerabilities that extend beyond age and health alone, such as in circumstances of domestic violence or financial vulnerability.



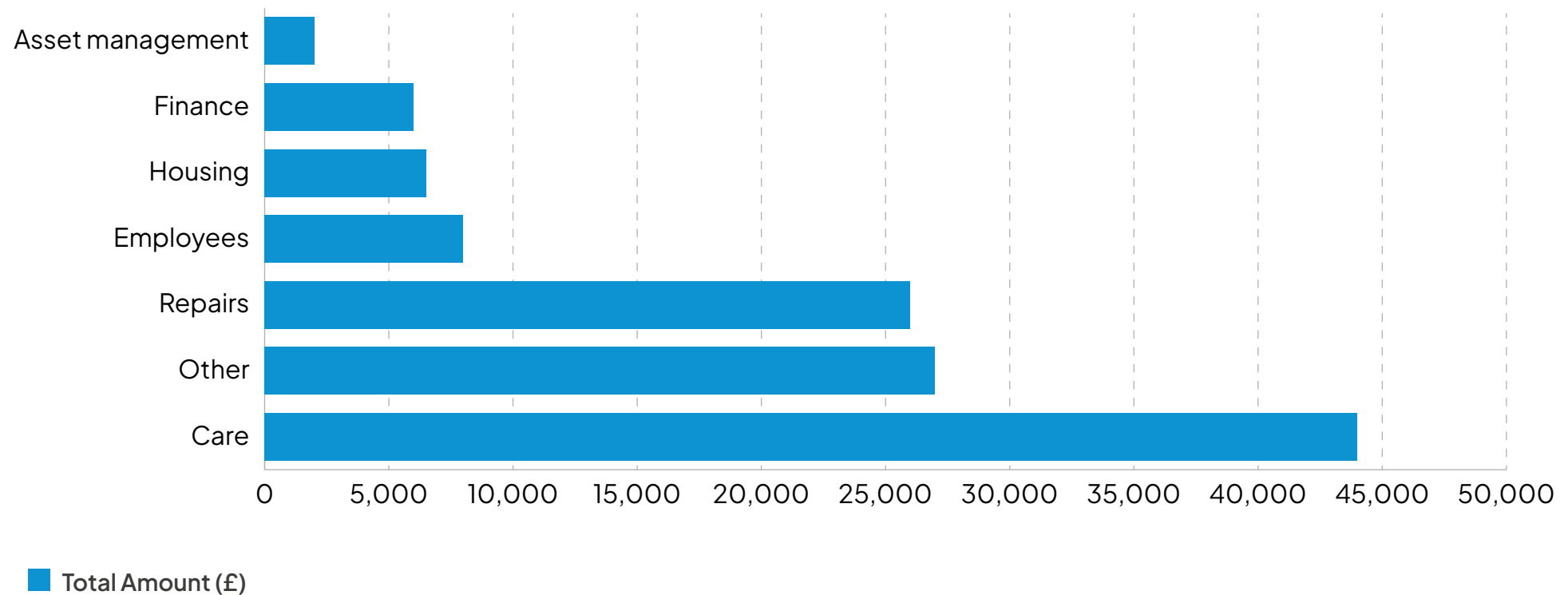
3.5 Compensation

During the year, compensation was offered in 59 per cent of complaints cases, compared to 58 per cent last year. The average compensation awarded was £624.73 per complaint.

Care-related complaints continued to have the highest amount of compensation offered, with the total breakdown shown in the graph below.

This year we have reviewed and updated our Compensation Policy to reflect the latest ombudsman's guidance and provide more clarity to colleagues about levels of appropriate compensation in different circumstances.

Total compensation offered by complaint theme



3.6 Housing Ombudsman cases and inquiries

During 2025/26 we received and submitted 11 case requests (nine Retirement Living and two Extra Care). Over this period, we acknowledged and actioned 19 inquiries (17 for Retirement Living and two for Extra Care).

An inquiry is usually a check from the Housing Ombudsman when a complainant contacts the service as to whether the landlord's complaints process has been completed. This can then instigate the process if not and close the ombudsman inquiry down. A case can be actioned by the ombudsman when both stages of the complaint procedure have been completed and they are satisfied that the complaint falls within their jurisdiction. Case requests have a target timescale of three weeks for us to submit. However, the timescale for the ombudsman to process and review a case is longer, so determinations can often relate to a previous financial year. Our target is zero cases at fault of maladministration.

To date, four case requests considered by the Housing Ombudsman have resulted in 11 individual determination outcomes. We received five findings of no maladministration, four of reasonable redress, one finding of service failure and one case found to be outside jurisdiction. There have been no findings of maladministration so far.

Our improvement in outcomes has also been recognised externally. During the year, Housing 21 co-hosted a webinar with the Housing Ombudsman to share learning from our complaints journey and the progress made in reducing maladministration findings. This provided an opportunity to reflect on the steps taken to strengthen complaint handling and to contribute to wider sector learning.



4. Learning lessons

4.1 Complaints Satisfaction Survey

A monthly 'satisfaction with complaint handling' survey is undertaken, with responses collected via both telephone and email to widen accessibility. The following satisfaction results record to quarter three (ending December 2025), due to the time-lag in data collection. These early results show a general increase in resident satisfaction since last year, suggesting that our service improvements are making a positive difference for residents.

The survey has highlighted that some of our lowest areas of satisfaction relate to the neutrality of investigations (49 per cent satisfied), how well we accounted for vulnerabilities (40 per cent satisfied) and the empathy of our approach (51 per cent satisfied).

A deeper dive into the qualitative feedback gathered through both our survey and TSM survey identified some lack of trust in the thoroughness and fairness of our investigations. It also identified inconsistent levels of communication and differences in tone, clarity, and empathy in our responses. Overall, this analysis shows there are still opportunities to improve consistency and quality in how complaints are handled and resolved.

↑ 60%

satisfaction with our overall approach
(compared to 44 per cent in 24/25)

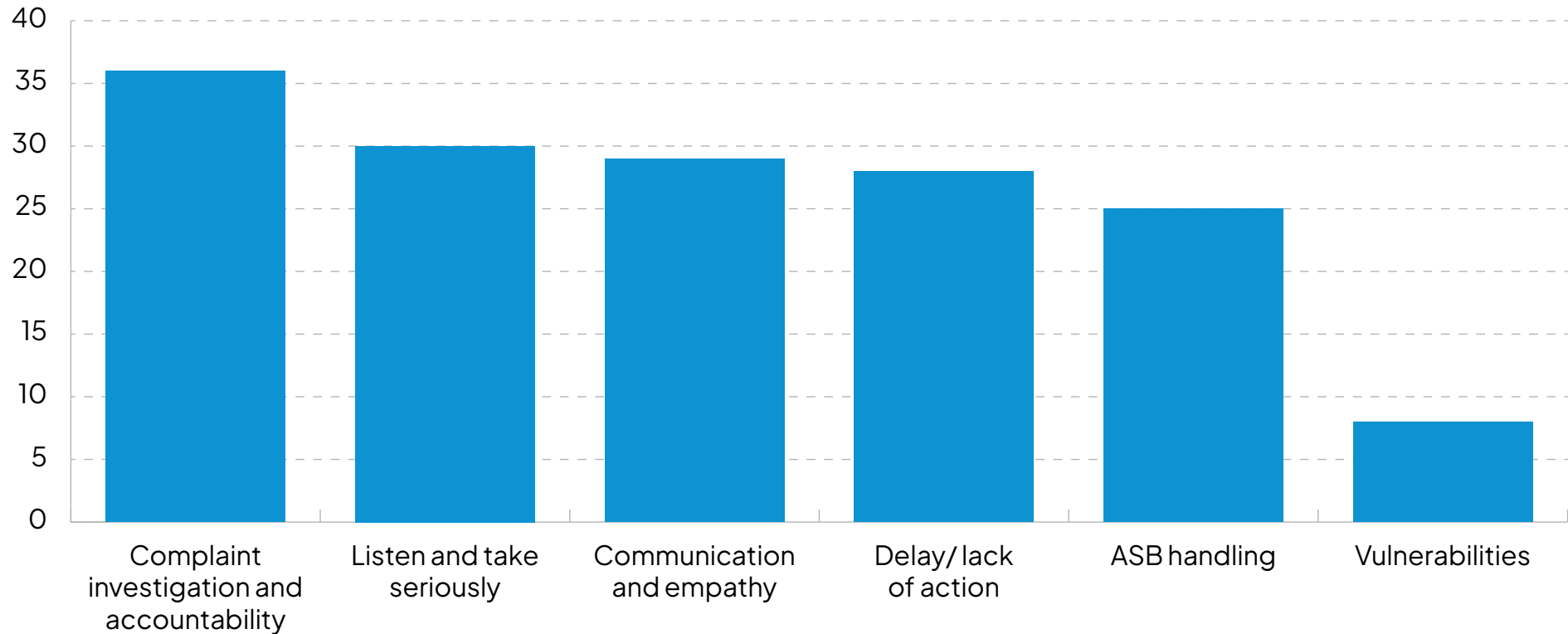
↑ 74%

satisfied that we kept in touch
throughout (compared to 60
per cent in 24/25)

↑ 69%

satisfied that our response had the right
tone (compared to 58 per cent in 24/25)

Areas to improve: Analysis of qualitative feedback from residents who have made a complaint



By building this feedback into our customer journey mapping and Service Improvement Plan, we have developed key actions for the year ahead to strengthen our communication with residents and further enhance our support resources for complaint handlers.

4.2 Utilising ombudsman resources

The reports and resources published by the Housing Ombudsman Service provide an ideal opportunity for us to learn lessons from across the sector and ensure they are implemented in the context of Housing 21. The following are examples of how we have used these learnings and recommendations this year:

Repairing trust (repairs and maintenance)

- Introduction of a Repairs Transactional Survey to collect and analyse resident feedback about our repairs services and inform our contract management.
- In responding to the requirements of Awaab's Law we developed bespoke training to raise awareness as well as to be able to successfully categorise and respond to any instances of damp and mould using a new hazards reporting platform. Supporting guidance was issued to all relevant employees. The instances reported are triaged to ensure correct categorisation and examples are used to learn lessons and to continue to raise knowledge in this area.

Attitudes, respect and rights

- Further embedding of our Reasonable Adjustments Policy, including increased focus on capturing and responding to vulnerabilities and needs for reasonable adjustments in complaint handling.

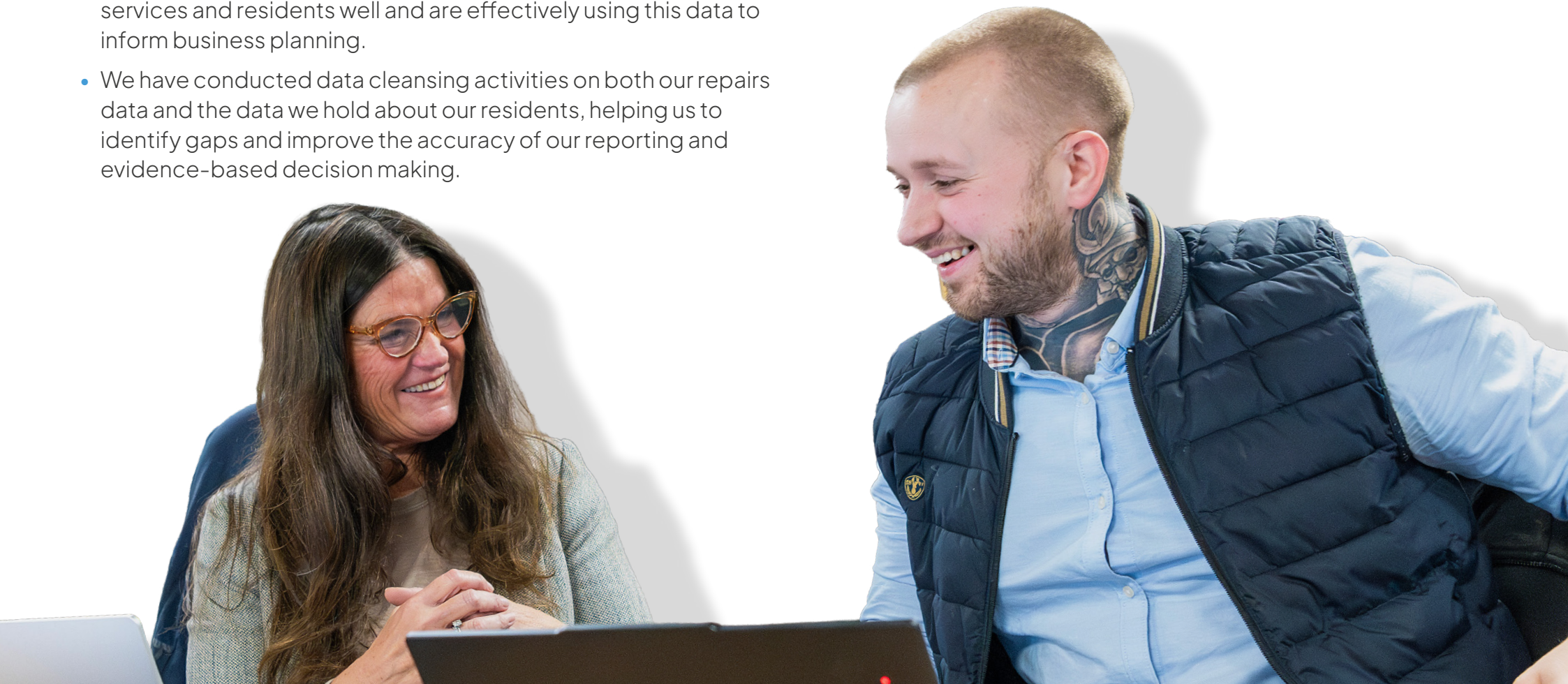
- We continue to prioritise a human-centric approach to service delivery through our commitment to our devolved model of service delivery, with regular face to face contact and welfare checks. We have introduced annual People and Property Visits, providing dedicated one-to-one time with residents and their home to check property compliance, damp and mould, proactively spot repairs, and conduct wellbeing checks and signposting to our support services.
- We are currently looking at more nuanced ways to capture resident vulnerabilities, to enable us to effectively respond to them. This includes a review and redesign of our Resident Information Form, including the expansion of how we record vulnerabilities to be more accurate and comprehensive such as through the ability to record multiple and temporary vulnerabilities. The re-designed form will also capture communication requirements and preferences, giving us a better understanding of where alternative formats and languages are needed to provide better tailored communication for residents.
- We have introduced specialist support roles with expertise in areas such as complaints, ASB, tenancy sustainment and complex needs. These centralised roles are providing additional support and advice to our local teams, ensuring that our frontline colleagues are confident in their handling of increasingly complex needs and vulnerabilities in line with latest good practice.

Knowledge and information management

- We have developed and rolled out data literacy training, focusing on using data to drive decision making and understanding the importance of good data quality. Sessions run monthly and are adapted to role types across the organisation.
- We have continued with the implementation of our Data Strategy. Key activities this year have included developing an Information Asset Register and analysis of the data quality and systems behind our key performance data. Both of these activities have helped us to increase assurance that we know our services and residents well and are effectively using this data to inform business planning.
- We have conducted data cleansing activities on both our repairs data and the data we hold about our residents, helping us to identify gaps and improve the accuracy of our reporting and evidence-based decision making.

Learning from severe maladministration

In addition to utilising good practice from the spotlight reports, this year we have begun disseminating the findings of the learning from severe maladministration reports into bitesize colleague summaries on our intranet. These are also shared with our policy team, to be referred to when policies are due for review and renewal to ensure we are incorporating good practice into our services where possible.



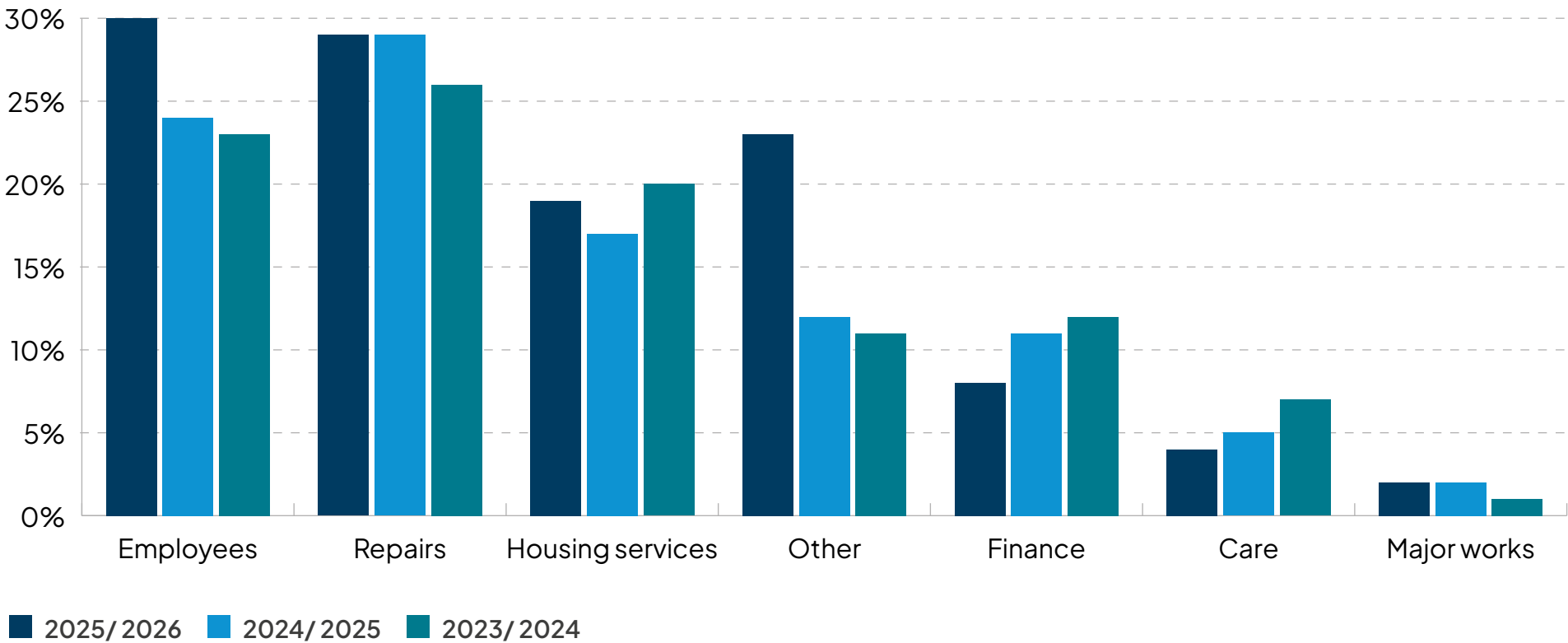


4.3 Identifying improvements from complaints

The identification, recording and following up on lessons learnt is central to our complaints process. This also includes thematic analysis of the subject of our complaints to spot patterns and trends.

Of the 286 complaints we received this year, the majority continue to be related to employees (30 per cent), repairs (29 per cent) and housing services (19 per cent).
The chart below shows the subjects of our complaints, compared to previous years.

Complaints subject by year



Analysis of the sub-themes of the complaints found that the most common issue in employee complaints was around attitude and behaviour, recorded as the key issue in 80 per cent of these cases. For repairs complaints, the most common causes were issues with ongoing repairs, such as timeliness and delays to works (41 per cent). Damp and mould was an issue in six per cent of cases, and heating and hot water failures in 11 per cent. For housing service complaints, the most common issue was in the usage and maintenance of communal areas (22 per cent), followed by how ASB reports are handled (19 per cent).

Whilst repairs continue to be one of the predominant themes for complaints, the number of complaints about repairs can be considered low when compared to the number of works orders raised. In Extra Care, there were just 26 complaints from over 32,935 work orders (0.8 per 1,000), while Retirement Living saw 56 complaints from 45,747 work orders (1.2 per 1,000).

Lessons learnt are captured when complaints are closed, and thematic analysis of these lessons has highlighted the following most common areas identified for improvement:

- 1. Communication with residents:** this was the most frequently raised area for improvement, highlighting a need for clearer and more timely communication, improving updates about repairs and changes in service delivery such as employee absences, and improving empathy and consistency in handling complex or emotional situations.
- 2. Repairs and contractor management:** lessons in this area focused on repairs work needing closer quality checks, improving coordination with contractors, recognising repeated issues earlier and more prompt escalation of concerns.

- 3. Record keeping and documentation:** learning here highlighted a need for more accurate recording and logging of issues, especially for ASB and repairs, ensuring information on systems is updated regularly.
- 4. Joint working and handovers:** lessons learnt focused on the need for better collaboration between colleagues within Housing 21, including strengthening processes around employee absence cover, internal handovers and continuity plans.
- 5. Upholding customer service standards:** this included the visibility and approachability of employees in schemes, providing private spaces for conversations, usage of master keys and key-safe processes, and ensuring dignity and respect in difficult situations.

This year, lessons learnt from complaints have led to further training for colleagues on areas including:

- Access and key management
- Complaint handling and unreasonable behaviour
- ASB
- Allocations
- Pest control
- Building safety
- Managing communal facilities
- Respect and Inclusion Charter and Housing 21 values
- Repairs management and communication

In addition to individual training and support, we also identified a number of wider, organisational learnings from our complaints.

Some examples of policy and process gaps identified and reviewed this year are:

- A review of the master key and key-safe procedures.
- Improved processes and guidance for planned and unplanned access.
- Improving service continuity plans for buddy cover arrangements, handovers, and prolonged absences.
- Enhanced processes for checking contractor repairs on completion and communication around unexpected issues or delays.
- Review of the Pest Policy to improve clarity.
- Review of the Unacceptable Behaviour Policy to ensure inclusivity and reduce risk of unintended escalation.
- Strengthened our joint working protocol and contract management to improve collaboration with third party providers and ensure issues can be raised, discussed and addressed promptly.

Case study example:

Learning in practice

This year saw the introduction of 'lessons learnt' sessions at the Extra Care quarterly leadership events, with colleagues from each region sharing lessons and good practice from resident feedback, complaint handling and ombudsman cases.

One such event featured a deep dive into the root causes behind a complex bed bug complaint, identifying issues around lack of support, communication failures, poor decant arrangements and unclear responsibilities. This led to improvements being made to our Pest Control and Decant Policies to provide clearer communication steps, changes to the treatment of decant properties, enhanced processes for hazardous waste management, and more robust case tracking and record keeping. New guidance was developed and training was delivered to educate frontline colleagues on how to identify and handle pest concerns, with a focus on early reporting, swift intervention, and clear and timely communication with residents.

New Resident Experience Strategy

This financial year sees the launch of our new Resident Experience Strategy, which has been co-produced with residents and is rooted in the learning we have gathered from feedback and complaints. The strategy is structured around four key priorities:

- Quality and consistency
- Communication and engagement
- Knowing our residents
- Living well

Together, these provide a focused framework for improving services, strengthening relationships with our residents, and personalising support.



5. What next? Our focus for 2026/27

Overall, we have made considerable improvements to our complaints service over the last year, but we know we have further to go. We aim to develop a complaints service that is not only compliant with regulatory requirements, but exemplary within the sector, and our performance targets reflect this ambition.

During 2026/27, we will continue to build on the improvements made this year and focus on the areas that we believe will make the biggest difference to residents' experience of raising a concern or complaint.

Our key priorities for the year ahead are:

Making it easier to understand how to raise a concern

We will continue to improve the information we provide to residents so that it is clearer when something is a service request, a complaint, or another type of concern. This will include reviewing resident-facing materials, improving accessibility, and making sure residents know what to expect from us at each stage of the process.

Improving communication throughout the complaints process

We want residents to feel better informed and supported whilst their complaint is being investigated. We will continue to strengthen our communication throughout the process, improve the quality of our letters and guidance, and build on the work already started to make complaint handling more consistent and easier to follow for both residents and colleagues.

Strengthening training and support for complaint handlers

As complaints are handled locally, it is important that colleagues feel confident and well equipped to respond. In the coming year, we will further develop our training and support resources so that colleagues are better able to investigate complaints, communicate clearly and deliver fair, high-quality responses.

Making better use of data, insight and reporting

We will continue to improve how we collect and analyse our complaints data. This includes further development of our reporting, improving data quality, and reducing manual processes where possible. Combined, these activities will help us to more easily identify themes and trends, and more proactively spot any emerging areas of concern for the organisation.

Embedding learning and following actions through to completion

We want to make sure that learning from complaints leads to visible and lasting change. During 2026/27, we will continue to strengthen how actions are recorded, tracked and monitored, while also building on how we share learning across the organisation at both a local and national level.

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