

Housing Services Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report and Self-Assessment.

Committee:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	20/08/2026
Report of:	Head of Housing and Corporate Assets
Portfolio:	Housing

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To note the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code to complete an annual complaints performance and service improvement report, including a self-assessment against the code.
- 1.2 To seek Cabinet approval for the Housing Services Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report.
- 1.3 To note the contents of the self-assessment form and its subsequent publication on the Council's website.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet:
 - i) Note the contents of the Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report and self-assessment;
 - ii) Approve the Report and the outcomes from the self-assessment form, further to its subsequent publication on the Council's website and submission to the Housing Ombudsman.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.2 To adhere to membership requirements of the Housing Ombudsman and its Complaint Handling Code 2024 for Landlords to produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge by Cabinet, which must include the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure complaint handling policy remains in line with the Ombudsman's requirements.

3. Key Issues

- 3.1 The Council is required to comply with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, its latest revision being applicable from 1 April 2024.

- 3.2 One of the implications is the completion of an annual complaints performance and service improvement report, including a self-assessment against the Code. This report forms the annual complaints and service improvement report and the self-assessment is attached as Appendix 1. The Ombudsman expects landlords to report their performance report and outcome of their self-assessment to their board members or, in the case of local authorities, elected members.
- 3.3 The Ombudsman expects landlords to carry out a regular self-assessment against the Code and take appropriate action to ensure their complaint handling is in line with the Code.
- 3.4 The [updated self-assessment](#) finds that Housing Services now fully adheres to all of the requirements in the Code as a result of the provisions set out in a new Housing Services Complaints Policy.

4. Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 This report supports the Council's Corporate Priorities as follows:
 - (i) Adhering to the Complaint Handling Code will assist Housing Services in dealing with complaints and help achieve the Council's 'Responsible Council' priority by delivering Council services that are customer centred and accessible - giving choice to our customers in how they access our services - and to be accountable for our decisions and uphold good governance across the Council.

5. Report Detail

Background

- 5.1 Cabinet considered the [previous year's Complaints Performance and Service Improvement report](#) at their 31 July 2025 meeting, this report contains the detailed background and purpose of the report.
- 5.2 The Housing Ombudsman requires Landlords to produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which must include the annual self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements.

The Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report

- 5.3 The annual complaints performance and service improvement report must include the following:
 - a. **the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements.**

This is provided as Appendix 1, also see paragraphs 5.41 and 5.47.

- b. a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the landlord's complaint handling performance. This must also include a summary of the types of complaints the landlord has refused to accept;**

See paragraphs 5.4 - 5.31 below

- c. any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman;**

The Council, as were all local authorities, were subject to a review by the Housing Ombudsman of the Corporate Complaints Procedure. The review letter found the procedure did not comply with the Code fully and a series of recommendations were made. A separate Housing Services Complaints Policy was approved by Leadership Team on 14 April 2026 and submitted to the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman subsequently approved the new policy on 27 May 2026.

- d. the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints;**

See paragraphs 5.32 - 5.37 below

- e. any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman;**

The Council was not subject to any reports about its performance from the Ombudsman.

The Ombudsman's [latest landlord performance reports](#) are for landlords with five or more findings made in cases determined between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025.

The Council didn't have any cases determined by the Housing Ombudsman in 2024/25. (See paragraphs 5.35 - 5.36 for more detail)

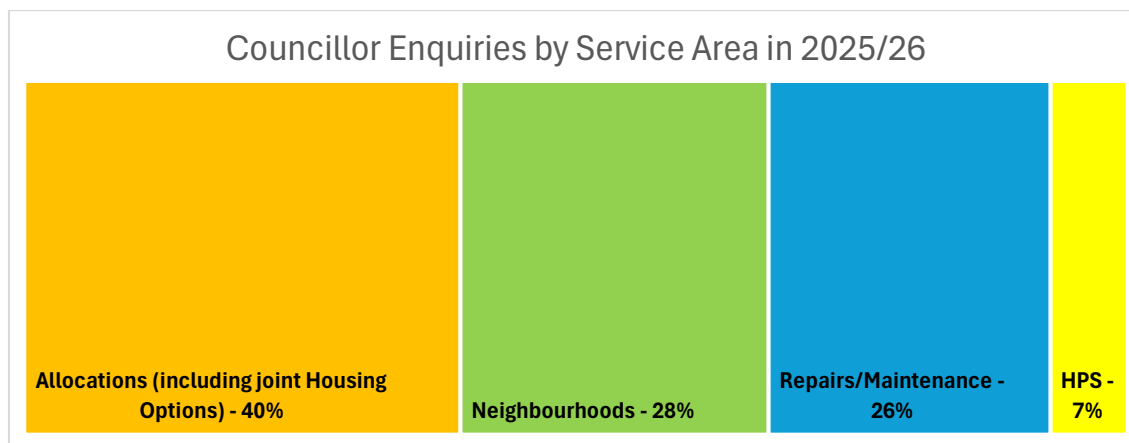
- f. any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord.**

The Council was not subject to any other reports from the Ombudsman specifically regarding its own work or services.

The Ombudsman produces a large number of reports throughout the year, available on their [website](#). These include Spotlight reports that look at thematic issues to special investigations into specific landlords' failings and quarterly Insight and Complaint Handling Failure Order reports. These reports are regularly digested by officers and any learning noted and implemented where possible, see paragraphs 5.38 - 5.41 below.

Complaints Analysis

- 5.4 The Service Improvement Team administer Housing Services' complaints and service requests that get directed to the service. The team use a dedicated email account housingformalenquiries@cannockchasedc.gov.uk and maintain a register of all complaints and enquiries received. All formal complaints are directed through this inbox, including those received via the CEO office and their dedicated email account ceoformalenquiries@cannockchasedc.gov.uk.
- 5.5 The team logged a total of 346 enquiries and complaint contacts during 2025/26, with 50 Stage 1 complaints and 14 Stage 2 complaints, the remainder being Councillor enquiries, MP enquiries, and Service Requests, this doesn't include a large number of other enquiries that go directly through managers, team leaders and other officers.
- 5.6 These Councillor enquiries, MP enquiries, and Service Requests were all considered 'informal resolutions' in accordance with the Corporate Complaints Procedure, they were generally first-time enquiries or where the service hadn't had opportunity to respond when an issue had arisen or it was a query over the service provision or delivery. However, under the new complaints policy, Councillor and MP enquiries will be categorised as service requests or complaints to fully adhere to the Complaint Handling Code.
- 5.7 There were 43 Councillor enquiries received throughout 2025/26, with the majority being received for Allocations (including jointly with Housing Options/Homelessness). Allocations received 40% of total Councillor enquiries, which was 17 enquiries. HPS received the fewest number of Councillor enquiries (3), which amounts to 7% of total Councillor enquiries received.
- 5.8 The majority of Allocations (including joint Housing Options) Councillor enquiries were requests for updates on Housing Applications and applicant's circumstances. There were a few Councillor enquiries requesting reconsideration for Banding given or Medical Needs Assessment decision.
- 5.9 Proportions of Councillor Enquiries received by service area can be seen in the chart below. The most common Councillor enquiries were:
- Updates on Housing Applications (as mentioned above)
 - Reports of Council-owned gardens and/or estates in poor condition
 - Following up outstanding repairs and requesting updates as to when repairs/upgrades are expected to be carried out.

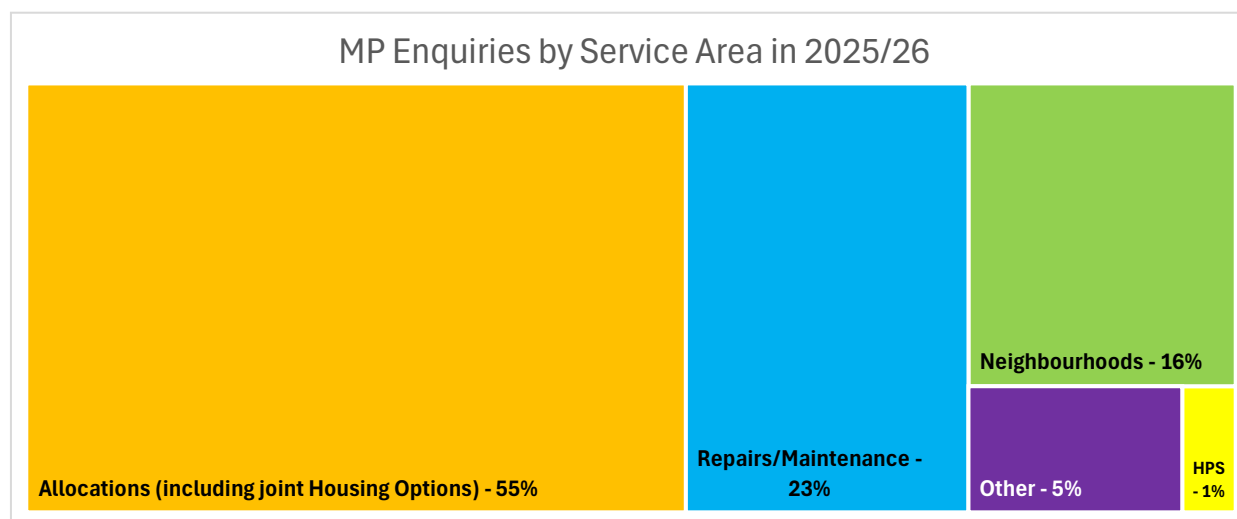


5.10 There were 77 MP Enquiries received throughout 2025/26, of which the Allocations team (including some jointly with Housing Options team on homelessness cases) were the Service Area to receive the most - they received 42 enquiries which amounts to 55% of total MP Enquiries received. Generally, these enquiries were requesting assistance with current Housing Applications or asking for help with a move/transfer. There were many enquiries which requested a review of existing Housing Applications, especially regarding banding, medical and/or social needs, and homelessness priority.

5.11 The chart below shows the proportion of MP Enquiries received between areas within the Housing Service.

Typical MP enquiries included:

- Requesting a review or reconsideration of Application/Band, particularly in relation to Medical Needs, Social Needs or Homelessness status
- Queries regarding succession of tenancy
- Chasing outstanding repairs, particularly fencing and Damp and Mould; and
- Unresolved Anti-Social Behaviour cases.

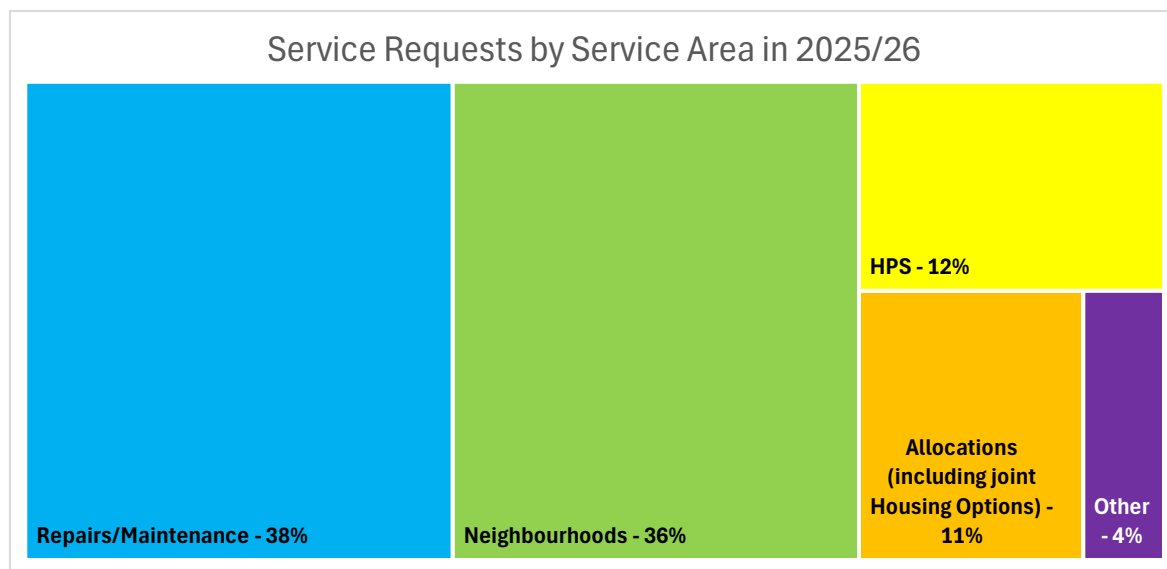


5.12 162 Service Requests were received during 2025/26. Repairs and Maintenance received 61 requests, giving them the highest percentage of 38%, closely followed by Neighbourhoods who received 58 Service Requests (36%).

4% of Service Requests were received for “Other”, which included Income Management, Leasehold Services and Independent Living.

Similar to MP enquiries, typical service requests included:

- Requesting a review of Housing Application
- Neighbour issues, including noise nuisance and Anti-Social Behavior
- Awaiting fencing repairs
- Parking issues

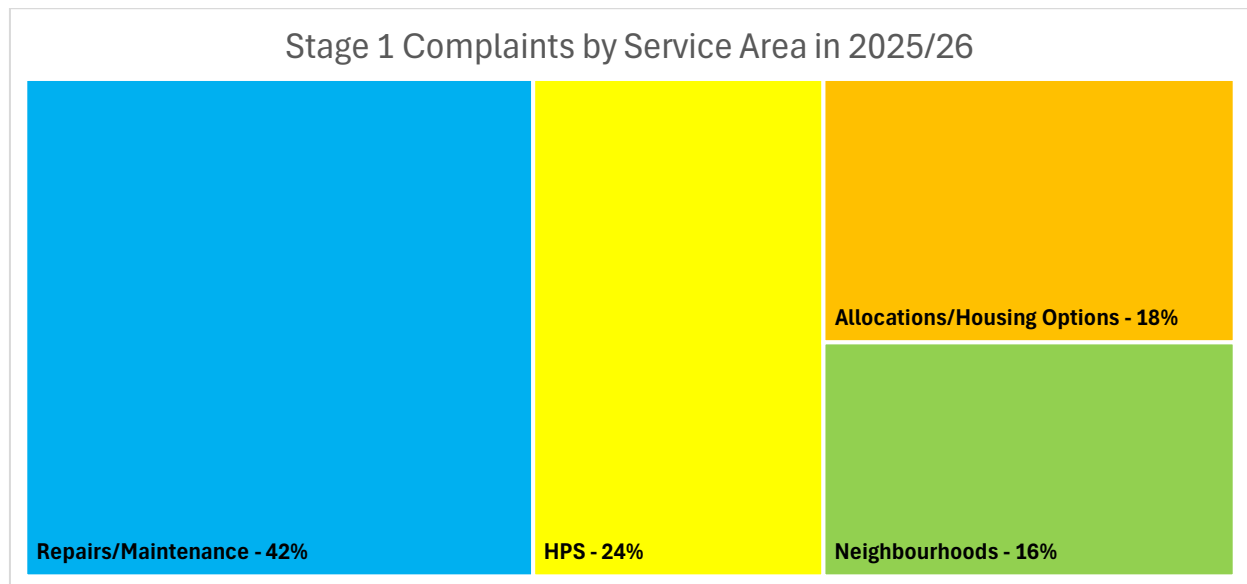


Stage 1 Complaints

- 5.13 A total of 50 Stage 1 complaints were received during 2025/26, this is slightly higher, by 11%, than last year's figure, where 45 were received.

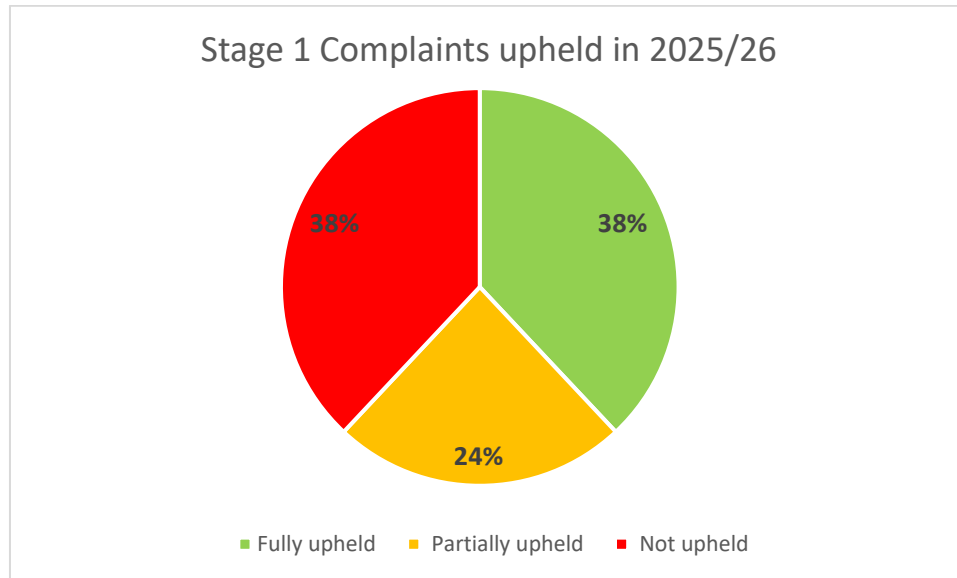
<i>Stage 1 Complaints</i>		
Service Area	Count	Percentage
Repairs/Maintenance	21	42%
HPS	12	24%
Allocations/Housing Options	9	18%
Neighbourhoods	8	16%
Total	50	

- 5.14 The majority of Stage 1 complaints were received for Repairs and Maintenance - 21 complaints were received, accounting for 42% of total Stage 1 complaints. There were 12 complaints made for Housing Property Services (24%). The Tenancy Services section received 17 complaints in total across Allocations (including jointly with Housing Options) and Neighbourhoods teams, with Allocations receiving just one more Stage 1 Complaints than Neighbourhoods. The graph below illustrates the proportion received by each housing service area.



- 5.15 When looking further into the main areas of concern for Repairs and Maintenance complaints, 18 complaints were based around outstanding repairs at the property – many of which were either outstanding roof repairs, or fencing repairs. Furthermore, a few of the Repairs Complaints required input from HPS, as some repairs linked closely with adaptations works – either outstanding or not completed satisfactorily.
- 5.16 HPS received a total of 12 Stage 1 Complaints. Five complaints dealt with by the HPS Gas team concerned issues with the boiler, including being left without heating and hot water. Seven complaints received for HPS were due to issues with adaptations works or poor upgrade works completed by contractors (Dodds and/or Novus).
- 5.17 Allocations received 9 Stage 1 Complaints; this included some cases dealt jointly with the Housing Options Team. The majority of which were based around dissatisfaction on how residents' applications had been dealt with and requesting a review of their needs and banding.
- 5.18 Neighbourhoods received 8 Stage 1 Complaints, with the vast majority involving on-going Anti-Social Behaviour cases. Some of these complainants were unhappy with the Neighbourhoods Team and how matters had been dealt with.
- 5.19 Of the 50 Stage 1 complaints, 7 were escalated from unresolved MP enquiries, Councillor enquiries or Service Requests, equating to an escalation rate of 14% - an improvement on last year where the escalation rate was 8 out of 45 (18%).
- 5.20 One complaint was refused to be considered. This was because the complaint was in relation to an ongoing neighbour dispute and involved multiple agencies including the Police. It was considered better to deal with through the ASB case handling route. The dispute was resolved fairly quickly, rather than going through the formalised complaint process.

- 5.21 Of the 50 Stage 1 complaints, 38% of complaints were fully upheld and 24% were partially upheld – therefore 62% were upheld to some extent. The remaining 38% were not upheld.



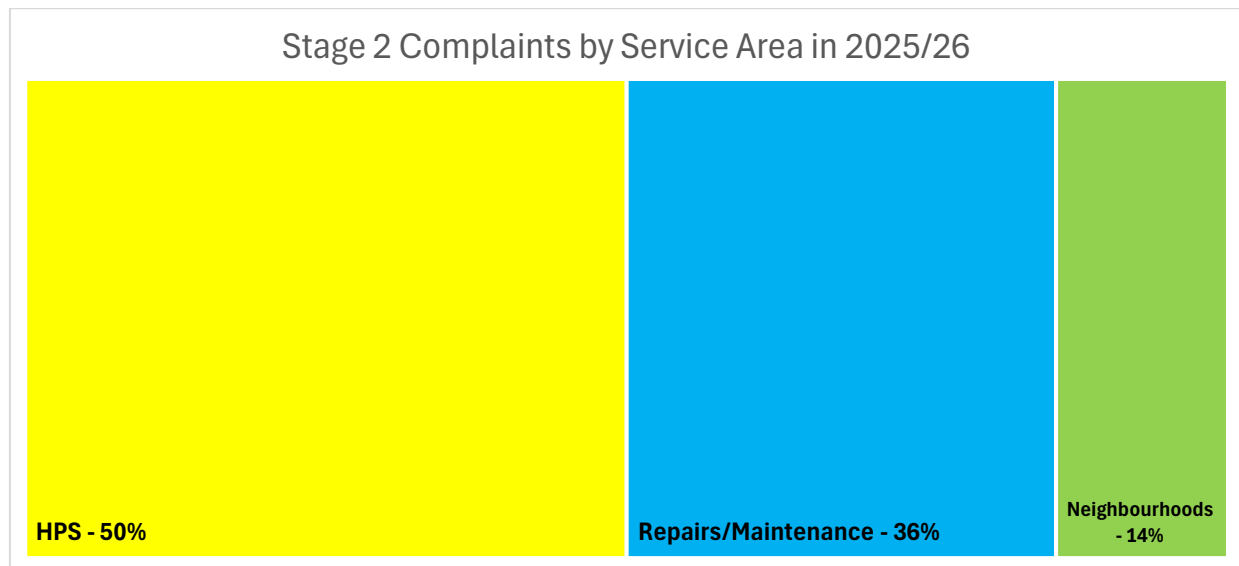
- 5.22 Upon investigation, the majority were found to show error or fault from the team, therefore where there is found to be fault we will own the mistakes and apologise, put them right and offer appropriate resolutions to the complainant - and most importantly learn from the issues raised, see paragraphs 5.32 - 5.37 for more detail.

Stage 2 Complaints

- 5.23 28% of Stage 1 complaints were escalated up to Stage 2 (14 out of 50). This means the total number of Stage 2 Complaints was 14 for the year, which is 7 more than last year (a 100% increase).

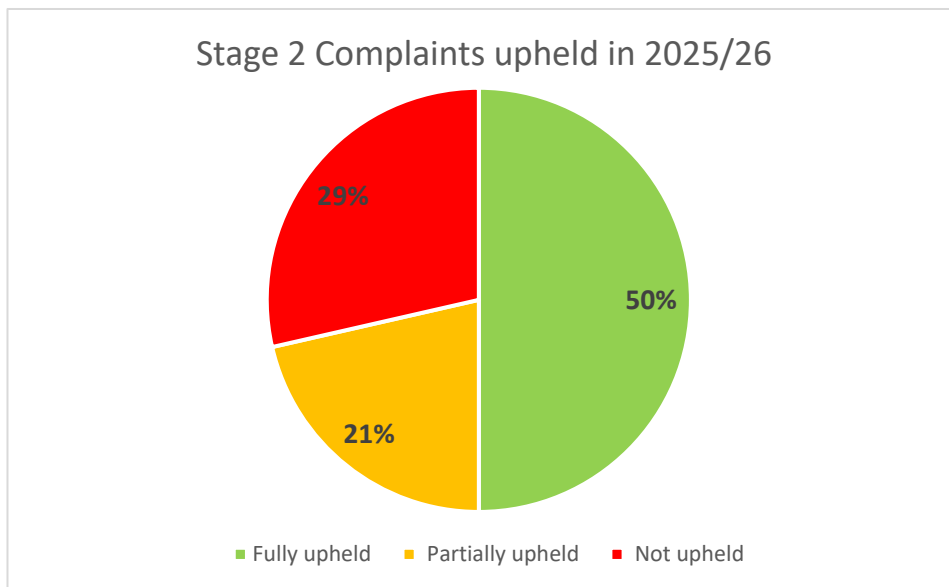
Stage 2 Complaints		
Service Area	Count	Percentage
HPS	7	50%
Repairs/Maintenance	5	36%
Neighbourhoods	2	14%
Total	14	

- 5.24 The majority of Stage 2 Complaints were related to property issues, with 7 for HPS and 5 for Repairs and Maintenance. 50% of the Stage 2 Complaints received were for HPS. Neighbourhoods received the remaining 14% of Stage 2 Complaints (2). The Allocations team did not have any complaints escalated to Stage 2 during the year.



5.25 When looking at the upholding of Stage 2 complaints, half of them were fully upheld (50%) and 21% were partially upheld, therefore 71% were upheld to some extent. The remaining 29% were not upheld.

Two Stage 2 complaints that were not upheld at Stage 1 had their complaint decisions upgraded to partially upheld following the review. The remaining 12 Stage 2 complaints maintained the decision from the Stage 1 investigation.

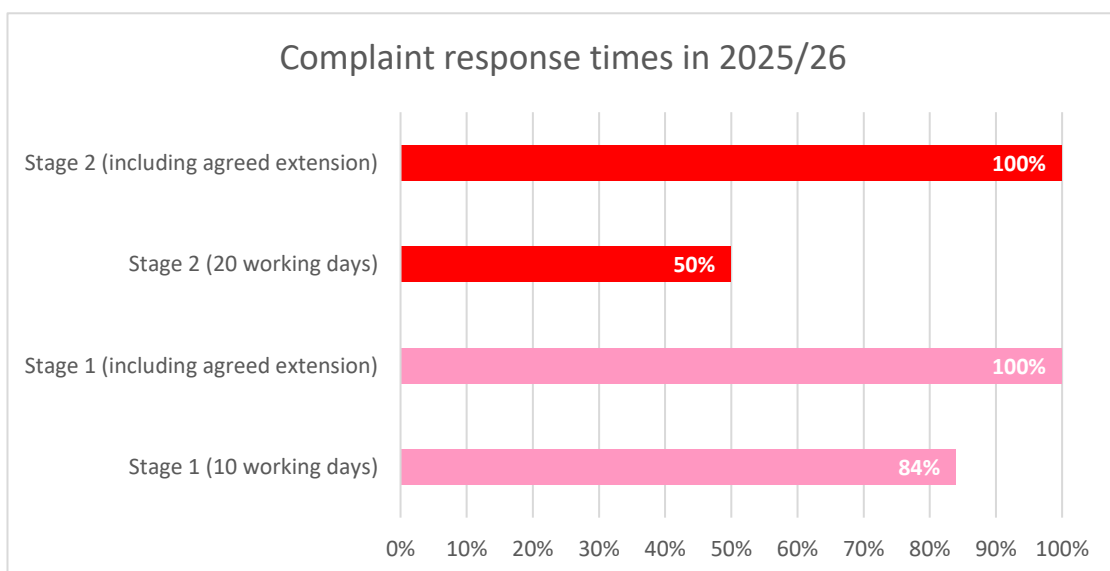


5.26 The majority of complainants that escalated their complaint to Stage 2 stated they were dissatisfied with the Stage 1 response. A couple of complainants were offered compensation at Stage 1, however escalated to Stage 2 as they were in disagreement with the amount offered.

Further information on how we have learnt from the complaints is covered in paragraphs 5.32 - 5.37.

Response times

- 5.27 42 Stage 1 complaints were responded to within timescales (10 working days). This amounts to 84% of them being responded to on time. However, the remaining eight of the Stage 1 complaints had their deadline extended as allowed for under the Complaint Handling Code. Therefore, when factoring in these complaints as being responded to on time, the figure rises to 100%. This is an improvement on the response times in 2024/25, where 93% of Stage 1 Complaints were responded to within timescales (including extensions).
- 5.28 50% of Stage 2 complaints were responded to within 20 working days, meaning seven were responded to within the timescale. Again, an extension of the response due date was used for the remaining seven complaints, meaning we can count them as being responded to on time. This puts the overall percentage of Stage 2 complaints responded to on time at 100%.



Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)

- 5.29 The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) created the TSMs system for assessing how well social housing landlords in England are doing at providing good quality homes and services. Performance is to be reported to the RSH annually (by the end of June) and will subsequently be published by the RSH in the Autumn of each year.
- 5.30 There are 22 TSMs in total which cover five key themes, one of these themes is Effective Handling of Complaints. There are three tenant satisfaction measures linked to the Effective Handling of Complaints theme which includes:
- CH01: Complaints relative to the size of the landlord, based on the number of complaints the Housing service receives for each 1,000 homes of the relevant stock type. This is recorded by the Service Improvement Team.
 - CH02: Complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales, based on the percentage of complaints the Housing service

responds to within the timeframes set by the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. This is recorded by the Service Improvement Team.

- TP09: Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling complaints, measured by a tenant perception survey and will be based on the percentage of tenants who say they are satisfied with the approach to handling complaints. This was obtained by the TSM perception survey carried out in Spring 2026, and will be reported to tenants through our newsletter, the Annual Report (towards the end of the year) and on our [website](#).

5.31 The performance to be reported to the Regulator will be as follows:

CH01: Complaints relative to the size of the landlord	
Stage 1 complaints received per 1,000 homes during the reporting year.	10.04
Stage 2 complaints received per 1,000 homes during the reporting year.	2.81
<i>Commentary: This is an increase on last year, where 8.98 stage 1 complaints were received per 1,000 homes. Stage 2 complaints received has doubled compared to last year's 1.40 per 1,000 homes, but from a low base.</i> <i>This would appear low in comparison to the sector, the 25/26 results (Housemark early release figures) found that the average number of complaints received per 1,000 homes was 55.9 at Stage 1 and 11.4 at Stage 2.</i> <i>We believe we followed the Corporate Complaints Procedure and the Complaint Handling Code, identifying service requests and informal resolutions correctly in accordance with both. Other housing providers may interpret more service requests/informal resolutions as formal complaints. The new Housing Complaints Policy when adopted may increase the number of complaints logged in 2026/27 as the new Policy is more closely aligned with the HOS Complaint Handling Code.</i>	
CH02: Complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales	
Proportion of Stage 1 complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales (10 days)	100%

Proportion of Stage 2 complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales (20 days)	100%
<i>Commentary: All 50 Stage 1 complaints were responded to within timescale. This is an increase from last year at 93%.</i> <i>In comparison, 89.9% was the average for all providers in 24/25, so we are exceeding the average performance from last year.</i> <i>All 14 (100%) Stage 2 complaints were responded to within 20 working days. This maintained the 100% level from last year, despite the number responded to increasing by 71% (7 up to 14).</i> <i>The national average in 24/25 was 88.9% for the sector, so we are performing well into the upper quartile of providers.</i>	

TP09: Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling complaints	49%
<i>Commentary: Whilst 49% may appear low (maintained from last year), in comparison to other housing providers it is relatively good. The median score for this indicator in 25/26 for benchmarking providers with Housemark was 34.1%, therefore we are comfortably in the upper quartile of providers on this indicator.</i> <i>As per the previous year, when looking at the data from the TSM perception survey a large number of tenants who responded to the question about complaint handling hadn't submitted a formal complaint - the numbers were vastly different. A number of these 'complaints' will have been from MP enquiries or service requests where the complainant may believe they have submitted a formal complaint but actually have not.</i> <i>It is a contentious area as those responding could have a negative perception of the approach to our handling of the complaint if they did not achieve the outcome they wanted, whilst we always try to achieve outcomes for complainants it is not always possible.</i> <i>We introduced complaint handling satisfaction surveys for 2025/26, however responses to the survey were minimal. From 27 surveys sent out, we only received 4 responses – two thirds (67%, 3 responses) were satisfied or very satisfied with the way the complaint was handled; and half (50%, 2 responses) were satisfied or very satisfied with the complaint outcome – but conclusions cannot reliably be drawn from such a low response.</i>	

Learning from complaints

5.32 In both our regular [tenant newsletters](#) and the [Annual Report to Tenants](#) we have reported upon our learning from complaints, therefore previous years' have been published.

5.33 A learning from complaints form is completed by the responding manager shortly after each stage 1 complaint, or if escalated after the stage 2 response is completed. It allows the service to quickly put something right - either a policy or procedure change, or act quickly to implement any staff training, to ensure that no other tenant or resident has to go through the same experience and improve our services to them.

The actions taken in response to learning help us improve the customer experience and reduce the likelihood of similar issues occurring in future. We will continue to monitor progress against these actions to ensure that learning from complaints leads to meaningful service improvements.

5.34 Not all complaints produce learning points, however a selection of cases and improvements made from complaints received in 2025/26 are included in the following table.

Complaint outline (reasons etc.)	Our response	Learning implemented
A resident expressed concerns about ongoing flooding at their property and the emotional distress due to the work involved in rectifying issues when a flooding occurs. The resident expressed dissatisfaction with a lack of response and action from the Council when flooding occurs and lack of action when flood water recedes.	We ensured that there was a clear end-to-end process in place within our Housing Maintenance team that guided our approach to flooding. This now includes clear reporting channels to both Severn Trent and SCC so that historic records can be looked at in the future and risk of flooding identified.	Review process of flooding due to reason outside the Council's control but affecting housing properties. Ensure that staff advise residents to report flooding on SCC and Severn Trent website each time they happen and as a Landlord, to do the same when flooding is reported to us.
A resident felt that the Council had failed to consider the needs of the resident's disabled son-in-law when allocating a property. Therefore, a property	Identified that it was essential that when OT assessments are undertaken, the affected person is involved in the whole process and before an offer is made.	Amendments were made to Disabled Facilities Works/Adaptations Process to include effective completion and post inspection of void

was given that failed to fully meet their needs. They felt that they were put under pressure to accept the property. The move was delayed due to unfinished repairs some of which remained outstanding.	Also recognised that an inspection should be carried out after void works are carried out.	works, and continuous monitoring of void works completion.
A resident made a complaint about unresolved repairs to a leaking waste pipe. The resident was unhappy with the timescales of the repairs. The resident also raised draughts and security concerns with the front door, electrical safety in the property and black mould in the bedroom.	It was recognised that there was a need for improving communication between staff in different departments as well as between those carrying out different aspects of the job for the same resident. It was also agreed that work should be carried out to re-prioritise some issues (i.e. foul waste, leaking roofs etc) as urgent.	Toolbox talks were held to discuss better communication between the operatives and planners/supervisors. Repairs that involve foul waste were re-prioritised as urgent repairs, and in future these cases will be resolved in a quicker timeframe.
Service failure and poor staff attitude were raised by a resident who moved into our property. They noted issues with the stair bannister, floorboards in the bedrooms, condition of the walls, lack of flooring in the bathroom, rubbish left by previous tenant and the attitude of our staff.	It was agreed that we needed to improve communication with new customers, being clear where the Council's responsibility lies with repairs. Especially important was ensuring that we get void repair work right the first time.	A New Lettable Standard Leaflet is being produced to help explain the standard of the property at handover stage so that the tenant knows what they are signing up to.
<u>Summary</u> 21 Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints cases had cause for learning to be identified, and actions were taken to address the issues raised. Most of the learning related to complaints over service failure, unresolved repairs, void management and new lettings, allocations and housing need, staff attitude and conduct, and contractor management.		

Overall, the learning from Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints over the 2025/26 period show a need for better communication, stronger repair management, clearer ownership of action, and improved use of systems. Key areas for improvement include:

- repair tracking and follow-up.
- communication with residents and communication between teams.
- planning of complex works.
- post-inspection of repairs and void works.
- staff awareness and training.
- use of systems to record and monitor work.
- clarity for residents about standards and timescales.

In response to this learning, key actions have focused on improving repair management, communication, void standards, and how services work together. Actions taken include: new processes, better planning of works and system improvements, toolbox talks, team briefings, policy reviews, staff training, and improved monitoring of similar issues.

- 5.35 We have recorded a total of four complaints being escalated to the Housing Ombudsman or the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGO) during 2025/26, but no full determinations were made in the year.
- 5.36 Two complaints were under investigation at year end and the other two we are informed have been triaged for investigation by the Housing Ombudsman. Whilst not within the 2025/26 year, one of the two under investigation did reach determination in late April 2026. It did find maladministration in the handling of the resident's requests for adaptations as the landlord was partly responsible for delays in carrying out works to adapt the property. We were issued with an order to apologise to the resident, pay compensation of £550 and arrange an urgent stakeholder meeting to agree a timebound plan for action.
- 5.37 Learning highlighted in the determination included:
- Offering timely apologies for cases where there was service failure. – ***learning has been taken from this case and further learning from the HOS severe maladministration reports referred to in paragraph 5.40 below.***
 - On complaints where the Council believes that the payment of compensation is appropriate, it should pay compensation at the earliest opportunity in its complaint process. If it believes that it cannot fully quantify the amount payable, it can say it will pay more at a later date but a recognition of service failure should be made at the earliest opportunity. – ***the Housing Services Compensation Policy is in place and assists responding officers with making resolutions, staff will be reminded***

of this. The new Housing Complaints Policy (and accompanying procedure), plus additional staff resource in a new Policy, Complaints and Performance Officer starting in early May 2026, should hopefully improve resolution offers and better communication with complainants.

- The Council should consider self-assessment against the Knowledge and Information Management report if it hasn't already done so. - ***we will complete in 2026/27 and report upon learning in next year's performance report.***
- The landlord has accepted that its communication with the resident was inadequate and it was found that this contributed to the distress suffered by the resident in this case. – ***as per second learning point, we should hopefully improve resolution offers and better communication with complainants.***

Learning from reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord.

5.38 The Housing Ombudsman issued a Spotlight report on [repairs and maintenance – repairing trust](#) in May 2025. The report highlights the need to modernise maintenance operations and end poor practices, such as denying access to necessary repairs. Trust remains essential among landlords, residents, and contractors. The report made several recommendations for complaint handling, which have been considered and the following actions have taken place or a being embedded:

Recommendation Area	Action / Response
Systems	We carried out a Tenant Profile Survey and Stock Condition surveys in 2025/26 to ensure we know about our residents as well as homes. We are inputting all this data into our Housing Management Systems and using the information to plan and manage service delivery in 2026/27 onwards.
Data and analysis	We will be using insights gained from the above data analysis to drive meaningful changes that enhance the repairs and maintenance service for residents. This should help identify any underlying factors stopping a high-quality repairs service. This may include issues such as failure to gain access, repeated resident contact for reassurance, or exceeding

	reasonable repair timescales and appointment frequencies.
Policy and procedures	Several policies and procedures are due for review in 2026/27 and a more collaborative review process has been established to involve more residents in reviewing all policies.
Communication and relationships	We are looking at ways to improve communication and build relationships and trust with residents. We are analysing the Tenant Profile Survey information and taking on board all resident comments, requests and communication preferences to ensure our communication is timely, transparent, tailored, and the tone is respectful of residents and address any communication gaps.
Training	We regularly review the training requirements for our operatives, ensuring they remain informed about evolving technologies. We also encourage contractors to adopt similar training practices. With the introduction of the Competency and Conduct Standard, further work will be carried out with HR Services to ensure compliance.

- 5.39 The Housing Ombudsman did not publish any Insight reports in 2025/26. Learning from severe maladministration reports and further investigation reports were reviewed for learning to help improve and create a positive complaint handling culture.
- 5.40 The learning from severe maladministration – February 2026 report focused on the use of apologies as a remedy. A timely apology given as soon as the problem is understood is a most effective resolution. The sooner an apology is given, the sooner the trust and relationship between the landlord and resident can begin to mend. In the report example the issues that led to the Ombudsman finding severe maladministration went beyond communication with the resident. A timely and effective apology could have helped improve the relationship and would have made a difference. The Council will ensure it offers sincere and meaningful apologies at the earliest opportunity where necessary.
- 5.41 The Housing Ombudsman did subsequently issue an Insight report on [further investigations](#) in June 2026. This Insight report highlights common themes,

causes, and lessons. We will use this report in 2026/27 to consider how to discover potential weaknesses in our service provision and provide improved service delivery and assurance to the Member Responsible for Complaints.

The Self-Assessment 2026/27

- 5.42 As detailed above, the Complaint Handling Code requires landlords to undertake a self-assessment against the requirements set out. The self-assessment form is attached as Appendix 1.
- 5.43 The HOS reviewed all Local Authority social housing landlords' complaint procedures following 24/25 self-assessment returns.
- 5.44 There were 31 recommendations, which involved additional or amended policy wording and could easily be incorporated into the existing procedure. However, the implementation of them may have caused other service areas difficulties in operating to new requirements.
- 5.45 Housing Services have made every effort to operate a procedure in line with the HOS Complaint Handling Code but also having to interpret and follow the current complaints procedure, as per Self Assessment 2025/26. However, the existing corporate procedure has dictated that not every requirement of the HOS complaint handling code can be evidenced as being met due to the written procedure not setting out these requirements – hence the findings of the HOS review and recommendations.
- 5.46 It was considered that for the most part the Council's Corporate Customer Feedback and Complaints Procedure made provision for the majority of requirements set out by the Code, and for the remainder the Housing Services team would interpret the Code and act in accordance with it.
- 5.47 The new Housing Services Complaints Policy now meets the requirements of the Complaint Handling Code as confirmed by the Housing Ombudsman in May 2026. It is published on the Housing Services [complaints webpage](#). Therefore, this performance report relates to operating under the previous corporate procedure. Next year's performance report will be under the new policy and procedures.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

There are no direct financial implications from the report. However, the increase in the number of complaints may result in an increase in compensation payments being made in order to resolve complaints appropriately. Any costs arising from increased compensation payments will need to be met from within existing budgets.

6.2 Legal

As detailed within the report, the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code became statutory on 1 April 2024. All members of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme are obliged by law to follow its requirements. The Housing Ombudsman has a legal duty to ensure landlords complaint procedures and responses are compliant with the Code. The Code requires landlords to self-assess and submit an annual submission of their performance against the Code.

Failure to comply with a requirement of the Code will result in Ombudsman intervention to gain compliance. Repeated or ongoing failures can result in a Complaint Handling Failure Order and subsequent referral to the Regulator for Social Housing. It is therefore essential that the Council ensures compliance.

There has been a significant increase in complaints and references to discrimination and the Equality Act 2010 which could indicate a need to update training and understanding for those delivering the services to service users. It should be noted that there has been an increase in Artificial Intelligence (AI) generated complaints which are easily produced to reference the Equality Act and other legislation when created by residents, regardless of the complaint content.

6.3 Human Resources

None

6.4 Risk Management

None

6.5 Equalities and Diversity

None

6.6 Health

None

6.7 Climate Change

None

7 Appendices

Appendix 1: Self-Assessment Form 2026/27

8 Previous Consideration

Cabinet - 28 January 2021

[CCDC]

Cabinet - 12 October 2023

Cabinet - 12 June 2024

Cabinet – 31 July 2025

9 Background Papers

None

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Ward Interest: N/A

Report Track: Cabinet - 20 August 2026

Key Decision: No

Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code: Self-Assessment Form 2026/27