

Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2024/25

Introduction

Tenant feedback from compliments and complaints gives us important information about how our tenants view our services. It helps us see where we're doing well and where we can improve.

This report covers complaints received how we've responded to them from April 1 2024 to March 31, 2025. It includes both qualitative (descriptive) and quantitative (numbers-based) analysis of our complaint-handling performance. We'll also talk about how we've followed the rules set by the Housing Ombudsman Service, any changes we've made to our services based on what we've learned from complaints and any compliments we've received during the same period.

We have looked at the complaint data following the rules laid out in the Complaint Handling Code 2024 and our Complaints Handling Policy.

Number of complaints received in 2024- 2025

Over the reporting period we received **62** formal complaints, of which **31** were escalated to Stage 2 review. No complaints were refused during this period.

This means we received 8.21 complaints for every 1000 homes we manage. This is very low and far below the average of 49.1 per 1000. As a result of this we have identified areas for improvement on how we identify and record complaints.

We resolved 50% of complaints at stage one. This suggest that tenants are not receiving the response they want at stage 1 and are asking for the outcome of their complaints to be reviewed at stage 2.

When we have investigated this there are two reasons why tenants are not happy at stage one. The first is because the actions agreed at stage one have not been completed in the timescales provided (27) and the second is the tenant was unhappy with the response at stage 1 (4).

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

To make sure our complaints process is accessible, fair and transparent for everyone, we keep track of the demographic details of our complainants, if available. If we notice any unexpected trends, we will investigate further to ensure there is fairness in how we treat our tenants

By looking at the themes of complaints across different tenant groups, we gain insight into how consistent our service standards are across various tenant characteristics.

We currently record and analyse the following characteristics in relation to tenants making a complaint: age, gender, ethnicity, primary language and disability.

52.3% of complainants stated they had a disability compared to 23% of the tenants showing that disabled tenants were disproportionately more likely to make a complaint compared to non-disabled tenants. This suggests that our services are not as responsive to the needs of disabled tenants as they should be. This is reflected in our learning from complaints around ensuring reasonable adjustments and tailored services are consistently understood and applied.

We have analysed complaints made by disabled tenants. 15% of disabled complainants mentioned that the issues had affected their mental health. The main reasons for complaining are dissatisfaction with the standard/condition of their property and poor customer service/communication.

The age profile of complainants was similar to our wider tenant population, with two key exceptions:

Tenants aged 35–44 made up 34.9% of all complaints, despite only representing 20.7% of our tenant population. This was the largest group of complainants, suggesting that this age group is more likely to raise concerns.

Tenants aged 65 and over were much less likely to complain. They made up just 7.7% of complaints, even though they represent 28% of our tenants.

Within the older age group, tenants aged 65–74 showed the biggest gap, making up only 1.5% of complaints compared to 15.8% of the tenant population.

We need to do more to understand why older tenants, particularly those aged 65–74, are less likely to raise complaints, and ensure that everyone feels confident and supported in speaking up when things go wrong.

Regarding gender, women were more likely to complain than men with women making up 71.4% of complainants compared to 59% of tenants.

We've looked at how complaints compare to the overall tenant population by ethnicity. White British tenants made up 74% of complaints, while they represent 63.9% of our tenant population. Black Caribbean and Black Other tenants each accounted for 1.5% of complaints, despite making up only 0.34% and 0.31% of the tenant population, respectively. Pakistani tenants were slightly underrepresented, making up 1.5% of complaints compared to 2.2% of tenants.

This shows that some ethnic groups are more likely to raise complaints than others, and there may be barriers or differences in experience that influence this. We want to understand these differences better to make sure all tenants feel equally supported and confident in raising concerns.

Complaints performance

We have assessed our performance based on the requirements of the Compliant Handling Code 2024. The table below shows how we perform against these requirements.

Complaint stage	Housing ombudsman target	Performance
Acknowledgement	5 working days	100%
Stage one	10 working days	100%
Stage two	20 working days	83.78%

Complaint outcomes

Stage one outcomes

Where our investigation finds that we are at fault in some way, we will partially or fully uphold the complaint. We will also inform customers about what we've learned and any steps we'll take to avoid similar issues in the future.

Here are the overall outcomes of our formal complaints.

Outcome	Percentage of complaints
Fully upheld	51.61 (32)
Partially upheld	15.9% (9)
Not upheld	29.03 (18)
Withdrawn	4.84% (3)

Therefore, in **61.13%** of complaints, we accepted partial or full responsibility.

Stage two outcomes

When a complaint is escalated to be reviewed by a more senior manager, they will assess whether the investigation was fair and thorough. They may agree or disagree with any outcome from Stage 1.

In 2024/25 31 stage 2 complaints were received and reviewed.

The outcomes at Stage 2 review can be found below:

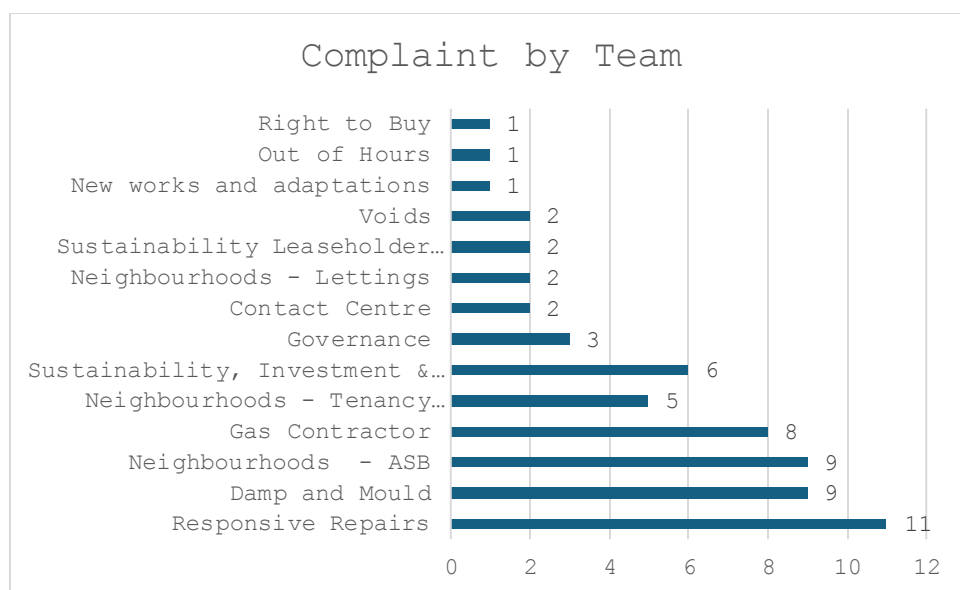
Outcome of Stage 2 complaints	Percentage of complaints
Fully upheld	51.16% (16)

Partially upheld	9.67% (3)
Not Upheld	38.70% 12
	31

Complaints by Service Area

The Repairs service received the most complaints at **17.7%**. This is followed by our Damp and Mould Team and Neighbourhoods specifically complaints about Anti-Social Behaviour.

The graphs below illustrate the number of complaints received by each service area:



100% of the damp and mould complaints and **81%** of the Responsive Repairs complaints were upheld whereas only **33%** of ASB complaints were upheld.

In response to these findings we have:

- Begun a review of the Repairs service including the Tenant Voice Forum completing some mystery shopping
- Developed an ASB action plan which includes managing communications
- Reviewing our processes for Damp and Mould in ahead of the introduction of Awabbs Law in October 2025

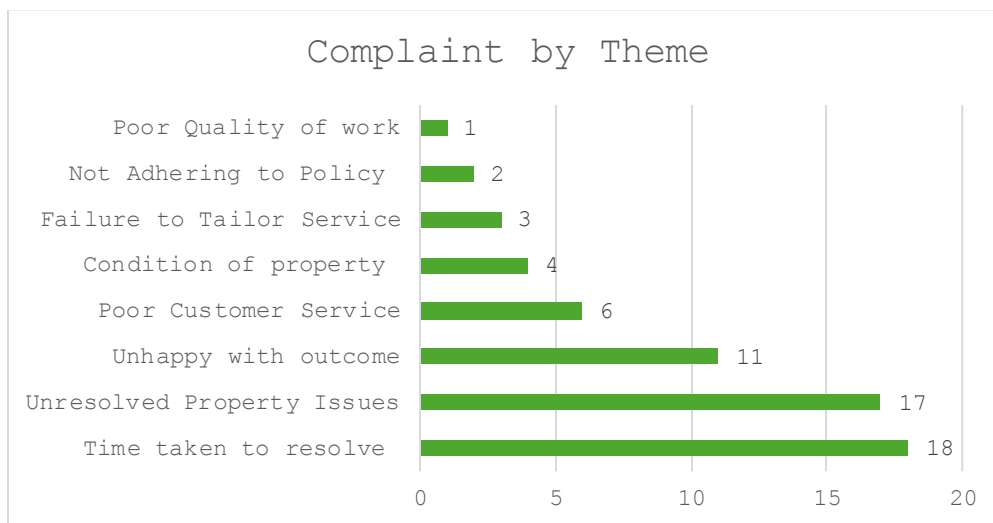
At stage 2 the Sustainability, Investment & Capital Programme received the highest number of escalated complaints and highest number of fully upheld/partially upheld followed by Responsive repairs.

Complaints By Theme

The top three themes for 2024/25 were

- Time taken to resolve a tenant's issue (29%)
- Unresolved property issues including incomplete repairs (27%)

- Tenant was unhappy with outcome (18%)



The complaints about time taken to resolve an issue cross 6 service areas, Gas Contractor, Neighbourhood ASB and Responsive Repairs are the top three. 43% of the unresolved property issues relate to Damp and Mould.

Looking at complaints by theme where the overall outcome was either fully or partially upheld helps us identify areas needing improvement in each department.

Only **18%** of complaints relating to unhappy with outcome were upheld whereas **87%** of unresolved Property issues and **100%** of time taken to resolve complaints were upheld.

The restructure of our Repairs, Building Safety (including Damp) and Assets team will ensure that we have the resources to resolve tenants' queries and concerns. See learning section below for more planned improvements.

Housing ombudsman service

We received six Housing Ombudsman determinations in the reporting period, which contained two findings of maladministration, two findings of service failure and two findings of adequate redress. The maladministration determinations related;

- A right to buy case where maladministration was found in relation to completing repairs in a timely way.
- Complaint handling where maladministration was found as we should have formally logged a complaint much earlier than we did.

The two service failures also related to failings in our complaints handling and escalation process.

We also received three determinations of no maladministration.

Within the determinations, Bury Council received nine orders and complied with 100% of these.

The Housing Ombudsman awarded compensation totalling £550 which was paid to tenants in full.

We have acknowledged the need to improve our complaint handling culture, and we have identified several areas for improvement in how we handle complaints. Including how we identify and record complaints.

The Tenants Voice Forum are conducting an end-to-end review of the complaints service which will provide valuable insights for future improvements.

The Housing Ombudsman produces an annual report about any landlord with five or more determinations. In 2023/24 Bury Council received 9 determinations from the ombudsman with 14 findings of maladministration. The 2023/24 report can be found [here](#).

We did not receive any additional reports from the Housing Ombudsman regarding Bury Council's work. However, we have used the information and research from the Ombudsman Spotlight publications to evaluate and improve our services.

Learning from complaints

We have continued to focus on learning from feedback and complaints, to ensure that we are listening to the tenant voice and making the necessary improvements to our service provision as a result. We accept that we do not always get things right, but we are committed to learning from our mistakes, sharing the learning with other internal departments and tenants, and making positive changes to prevent the same issues from happening again.

As part of our regular reporting on complaints performance we share the learning from complaints. We also share best practice examples with staff as part of the monthly staff newsletter.

Learning themes and actions.

We have acknowledged the emerging themes from our complaints and as a result we have, we have delivered several improvements across the service including ongoing improvements to the complaint service delivery itself.

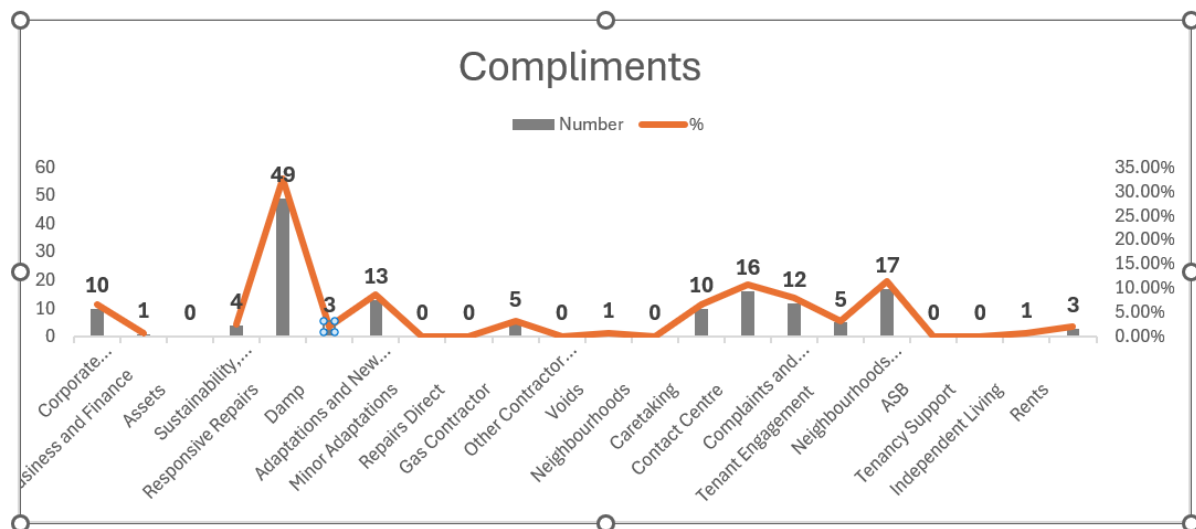
Lesson	Action	Progress
Poor Customer service Improve the way we communicate with our	Trailing text message notifications for the repair's appointments.	Ongoing

tenants about things that matter to them.	Using text messages and emails to keep tenants informed.	Training sessions delivered to service areas to maximise usage of text and email messages to inform tenants
	Design a non-digital approach to communicating with tenants who do not have access to digital channels	Designed a newsletter for our independent living schemes Introduced phone call surveys for tenants who do not have access to digital channels
	Reviewing our out of hours scripts for the contact centre to ensure we deliver a consistent message	
	Improve communication on capital works schemes and the contractors delivering the service	Developed guides and tips for tenants due to experience capital works
Unresolved issues (primarily with repairs) Improve the repairs and maintenance service	Review process for multi trade follow on work	A revised process has been put in place
	Improve no access process	Review currently underway.
	Improve how we manage tailored services in the repairs service	Ongoing work to simplify how we identify tailored service in the housing management system
	Proactively inform tenants about cancelled repairs	Introduce breakfast / early communication messages to tenants to give early notice of cancelled repairs and make new appointments
Unhappy with outcome Improve our approach to complaint handling	Improve stage one resolution especially completion of actions and feedback to tenants	Early deadline escalation process is now in place and sign off of stage 1 actions to reduce escalation stage 2
	Ensure reasonable adjustments and tailored services are consistently applied	Ongoing training. Policy refresh with the Tenants Voice Forum.
	Ensure the complaint process is accessible to all tenants – providing an easy-to-follow process and improving accessibility on the website	Changes being implemented to website and process being reviewed by the Tenants Voice Forum.

	Embed a positive complaint handling culture across the service	Training ongoing across the service
	Complete the end-to-end review of the complaint handling process and implement recommendations	Ongoing
	Strengthen complaints investigation team	2 complaints investigators being recruited to the team.
Improve our approach to Anti-Social Behaviour	Carry out quality checks of case handling and roll out annual training to ensure case handling continues to improve.	Ongoing
Improve Data quality to represent Disabled adaptations in our homes more clearly	Improve data quality for disabled components and Right to Buy in our systems	This work has started, once completed a process and training will be rolled out.
Improve data quality to enable better customer care. (understanding our tenants needs)	Establish a data project group to drive long-term improvements in data quality and usage across the service	Data project group established. Working on identifying data and process gaps to support better data flow and accountability across the service.

Compliments

A total of 150 compliments were recorded on our system over the reporting period. The repairs service received the most compliments (33%), Neighbourhoods and the Contact Centre each received 11% of the compliments. Compliments were also given to other service areas and individuals, including those in adaptations, the complaints team and the caretaking team.



Most compliments were about the standard of service (70%), while others praised the quality of work, staff attitude, and speed of service. We share all compliments with services managers, we include them in service shout outs and internal communications to commend and promote a culture of great customer service.