

# Housing Annual Complaints Performance Report 2023/24

## Introduction

The Housing Ombudsman's new Complaint Handling Code became a statutory requirement from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 and sets out the expectation placed on social landlords of how they deal with and manage complaints within their service areas. The Complaints Handling Code requires social landlords to produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report which must be reported to its governing body as well as published to residents, along with a response from the governing body, and submitted to the Housing Ombudsman.

The report must include:

- a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the landlord's complaint handling performance
- a summary of the types of complaints the landlord has refused to accept
- any findings of non-compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's Code
- improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints
- its actions following any reports and publication from the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord

## Complaint handling performance

### Tenant satisfaction measures – complaint handling performance

The Regulator of Social Housing requires that a suite of tenant satisfaction measures are published. Three of these measures relate to complaints and complaint handling performance in 2023/24. The Housing Ombudsman's complaint handling code sets out that these three measures should be included within this annual report, as well as reported to the Regulator of Social Housing. These complaints performance figures will be published by the Social Housing Regulator later in the year for all landlords.

The three questions are

***Tenant Perception 09 (TP09): Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling of complaints***

*Have you made a complaint to your landlord in the last 12 months? If yes, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your landlord's approach to complaints handling? This measure will be based on the percentage of tenants who say they are satisfied.*

This question was asked as part of the Annual Tenant Satisfaction Survey that was sent out to a random sample of tenants and is calculated based on the responses of the 647 tenants who replied to the survey.

***Complaint handling 01 (CH01): Complaints relative to the size of the landlord***

*This measure will be based on the number of complaints the landlord receives for each 1,000 homes they own.*

***Complaint handling 02 (CH02): Complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales***

*This measure will be based on the percentage of complaints the landlord responds to within the times set by the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.*

For CH01 and CH02, these are calculated from the 3C's complaints system.

The out-turn results for 2023/24 are provided below:

<b>TSM</b>	<b>Tenant Satisfaction Measure</b>	<b>Result</b>
TP09	Have you made a complaint to CBC Housing Service in the last 12 months? (Percentage of tenants that answered the questionnaire, who have made a complaint in the last 12 months)	Yes – 25.4 %
TP09	% Satisfied with complaints handling	29.3%
CH01	Stage 1 – no. complaints received per 1,000 homes.	57.21
CH01	Stage 2 – no. complaints received per 1,000 homes.	5.24
CH02	Stage 1 – % responded to within timescales	47.0%
CH02	Stage 2 – % responded to within timescales	26.1%

**General complaint handling performance measures**

The complaints included in the performance figures are those falling under the Housing Ombudsman's remit which covers services funded by the council's housing revenue account. Housing services such as homelessness, private sector housing and management of the housing register are outside its remit.

The table below shows the headline summary of performance for 2023/24:

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>2023/24</b>
Complaints received – stage 1	502
Complaints received – stage 2	46
Complaints received – Ombudsman	1
Average per month	46
Complaints responded within timescale	45.2% (combined stage 1 and 2) figure

Repairs complaints %	89.9% (488)
Housing management %	11.1% (61)
Average number of days to respond (stage1)	29 days

The ICT system for complaints provides a visual presentation of data on performance as well as the ability to interrogate individual complaints. These are shown as 'dashboards' which can be seen in full in the attached appendices.

**Appendix 1.1:** The housing services covered by the Housing Ombudsman

**Appendix 1.2:** Housing Management

**Appendix 1.3:** Housing Property Services (Assets, repairs and maintenance)

**Appendix 1.4:** Housing Complaints equalities monitoring

## Volume of complaints

The Housing Ombudsman has stated that high volumes of complaints must not be seen as negative as they can be indicative of a well-publicised and accessible complaints process. Low complaint volumes are potentially a sign that individuals are unable to complain.

The number of complaints received annually has increased slightly to a total of 548 (Stage 1 and 2), from 496 received in 2022/2023. The increase in complaints shows that our complaints process is accessible to and understood by tenants, and provides us with valuable customer feedback to help inform service improvements.

It should also be noted that we complete around 3,000 repairs each month, and the number of complaints received therefore represents a very small percentage of dissatisfied customers in this context.

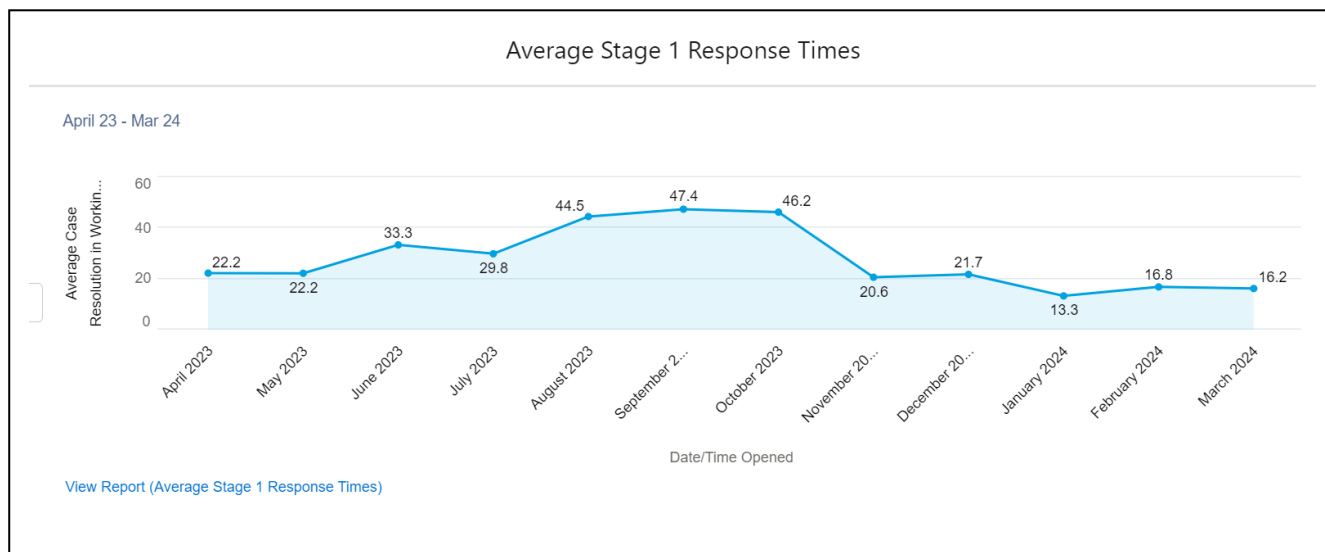
## Response times

Performance on responding to complaints within timescales has fallen below the standard we would expect, for the following main reasons:

- The increased number of complaints from an average of 25 (2021/2022 average) to 46 per month.
- More tenants are being encouraged to report disrepair issues as a result of government campaigns, as well as encouragement by 'claims farmers', meaning more staff time is spent on these complex cases and diverted from more general complaints handling.
- Insufficient office-based staff resources to investigate and respond to complaints.

Despite the delays in responding to complaints, it is positive that only a very small proportion of these progress to stage 2, demonstrating that we are resolving the issue as swiftly as possible.

Furthermore, while the Housing Service acknowledges that its performance in responding to complaints has been disappointing, there are positive signs of progress. Stage 1 response times are improving and fell from an average of 29.5 days in Quarter 3 to 15.4 days in Quarter 4. The improvements to response times are shown in the chart below.



## Further complaints information

### Types of complaints

The top five things in Housing Management that were complained about were:

- Anti-social behaviour case handling
- Grounds maintenance
- Communal areas (within flats)
- Application of tenancy management policy and procedure
- Wanting to move home

The top five things for Housing Property Services that were complained about were:

- Chasing up a repair
- Delays with repairs/works
- Outstanding or ongoing repairs
- Damp and Mould
- Missed appointment(s)

## Upheld status

68% of complaints were upheld or partially upheld (we accepted we were at fault or partly at fault and needed to apologise or fix the problem).

## Reasons complaints were upheld

Reason	Number
Standard of service provided	16
Service requested but not provided	58
Not following an agreed procedure	5
Delays with works	204
Inadequate or wrong information given	2
Failure of an individual council officer	5
Other	52

Delays with works was the main reason that complaints were upheld. The main reason for this is that the repairs service has necessarily prioritised emergency right to repairs, landlord compliance activity and repairs involving damp and mould, meaning that less urgent repairs have taken longer to complete. We are still dealing with the legacy effects of the significant backlog of repairs generated during the pandemic.

## Reasons complaints were not upheld

Reason	Number
Service delivered to required standard	5
Not previously reported	3
Unreasonable complaint	12
Not related to a CBC service	3
Correct procedure followed	52
Wrong procedure*	7

\*Wrong procedure refers to the handling of the complaint by the complainant often where duplicates or where an advocate raises the complaint again / at the same time as the original complainant.

## Complaints not accepted

The recording of 'complaints not accepted' is a new requirement in the revised 2024 Code, as such data will be reported in future years' reports. Data around complaints that we did not accept were not recorded for 2023/24 but these might include things such as:

- Service requests e.g. requesting a repair for the first time or reporting anti-social behaviour
- Issues where legal procedures have been started
- Issues which have already been fully investigated at Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the complaints procedure

As part of the policy and system changes being implemented this complaints data will be recorded so that detailed information will be available about unaccepted complaints for 2024/25.

## Housing Ombudsman non-compliance with Code

The information from the Housing Ombudsman investigations into non-compliance for 2023/24 will not be provided until the autumn. The most current information from the Housing Ombudsman is from 2022/23. This report can be viewed [here](#). There was one instance of 'maladministration' in relation to complaint handling and one instance of service failure relating to property condition.

Any further reports will be distributed to the Cabinet Member for Housing and the Housing Advisory Board once received.

We are aware of one case the Housing Ombudsman has picked up during 2023/24, though this case is still under consideration and determination has yet been made.

## Examples of improvements made as a result of learning from complaints

### Specific learning examples

Issue	Improvement made
Unnecessary delay allowing a deceased tenant's family members access to a property caused distress and inconvenience because different teams worked to different processes	A written procedure has now been put in place to ensure that all similar enquiries are dealt with by the Allocations Team who can provide the appropriate advice and support
Operatives attended an emergency call out to repair a leaking boiler. The job could not be completed at the time and another operative should have attended the next working day. Unfortunately this	Communication procedures for emergency call out repairs have been reviewed to ensure that any uncompleted jobs attended during out of

<p>did not happen and the tenant was left without a working boiler for a further 2 days.</p>	<p>hours are passed to the team leader for re-scheduling</p>
<p>Communal cleaning standard and service delivery issues. Following a Housing Ombudsman determination on service delivery where compensation was paid, a full review of the service was undertaken including surveying service users and focus groups. This identified the issues tenants wanted addressing and led to the development of a new specification and management arrangements for the service</p>	<p>A full report was presented to the Strategic Housing Board advising of the consultation and agreed changes to service standards. Following re-submission to the Housing Ombudsman the following comment was received from the Investigating Officer: <i>'Thank you for the detailed evidence you have provided of the cleaning specification review. It is good to see how Chesterfield have taken on board both the considerations in the report and tenant feedback. I can now close the outstanding order and close this case.'</i></p>

## Wider learning

The use of complaints information is central to wider improvements being implemented across the Housing Service. These changes will address some of the underlying causes of complaints. Work utilising complaints data include:

- Conducting an overall review of repairs and maintenance services, including a restructure and additional customer service resources, which will lead to improved performance on repairs completion timescales.
- Recruiting two customer care officers to directly deal with repairs complaints.
- Standardising management meetings to include a focus on complaints and responses, with a particular focus on antisocial behaviour and communal areas, and work with colleagues in other council departments to implement service improvements in these areas.
- Manager level complaints performance reports have been introduced for housing tier 4 managers, for them to directly review with their teams.
- Complaints information is always included in Tenant Scrutiny Reviews and we will continue to work with our engaged tenants and use their feedback to inform service development improvements.

## Compliments

This report acknowledges that whilst managing our 8,800 homes, sometimes our service delivery does not meet the expectations of our customers. The '3C's system'

which is used for recording complaints also gives the opportunity for tenants to express satisfaction and pay compliments to the service. A selection of compliments received by the Housing Service during 2023/24 are set out below.

*I would like to pass on my thanks and gratitude for being invited to a Communication and accessibility group, where as tenants we were able to provide feedback from our perspective about how to better engage and communicate with us. For one this in itself was exactly that. I certainly felt listened to and it was great to be given the time to discuss the issues directly with the council. Both [members of staff] were extremely respectful and polite and I'd say they surpassed the standards of communication and engagement most of us would expect from the council. More of this, please! Brilliant initiative.*

*I would like to say a HUGE thankyou to the team who organized and fitted my kitchen, they were wonderful THANKYOU XX*

*I today reported that someone on my street had fly tipped rubbish into a black bin and at the side of an empty property. The Ranger has already been out and cleared it, so thankyou and very quick response.*

*Mrs XXXXX would like to compliment the tradesman that attended yesterday to her property to fix her shower. They were fantastic and went above and beyond for her. They were so friendly, did a brilliant job and even put a new rail in for her as the old one was damaged. She wanted to say Thank you and show recognition.*

*Tenant was very happy with the work they carried out at his property, and was amazed with how fast they managed to get the job done, with his power outage. He would like to send them both a compliment.*

*I just want to thank her for her great organisation for sorting out my electrics after upstairs flooded my flat*

*I just wanted to let you know that my mum has received the keys today for a one bedroom bungalow at XXX. We're so relieved that things will be much easier for her and her quality of life should hopefully improve significantly. Thank you so much for your help and advice throughout this process. We really appreciate everything you helped us with*

*Mrs XXXX has called to give some positive feedback to the electrician that came out today to fix the bedroom light. She was very thankful that we got out to the property so quickly and the worker was very friendly and professional so she wanted to say THANK YOU*

*Many thanks to (XXXX) for repairing my outside gate and making it secure. It looks brilliant. Thank you for doing a great job mark!*

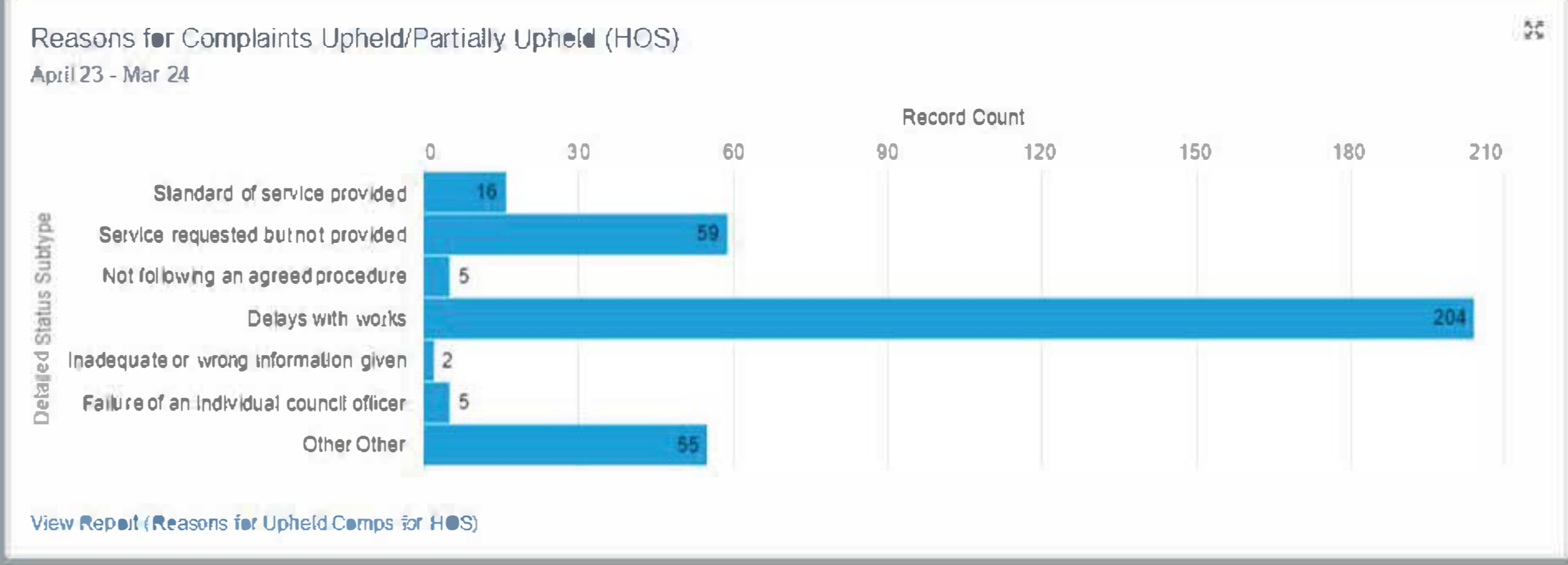
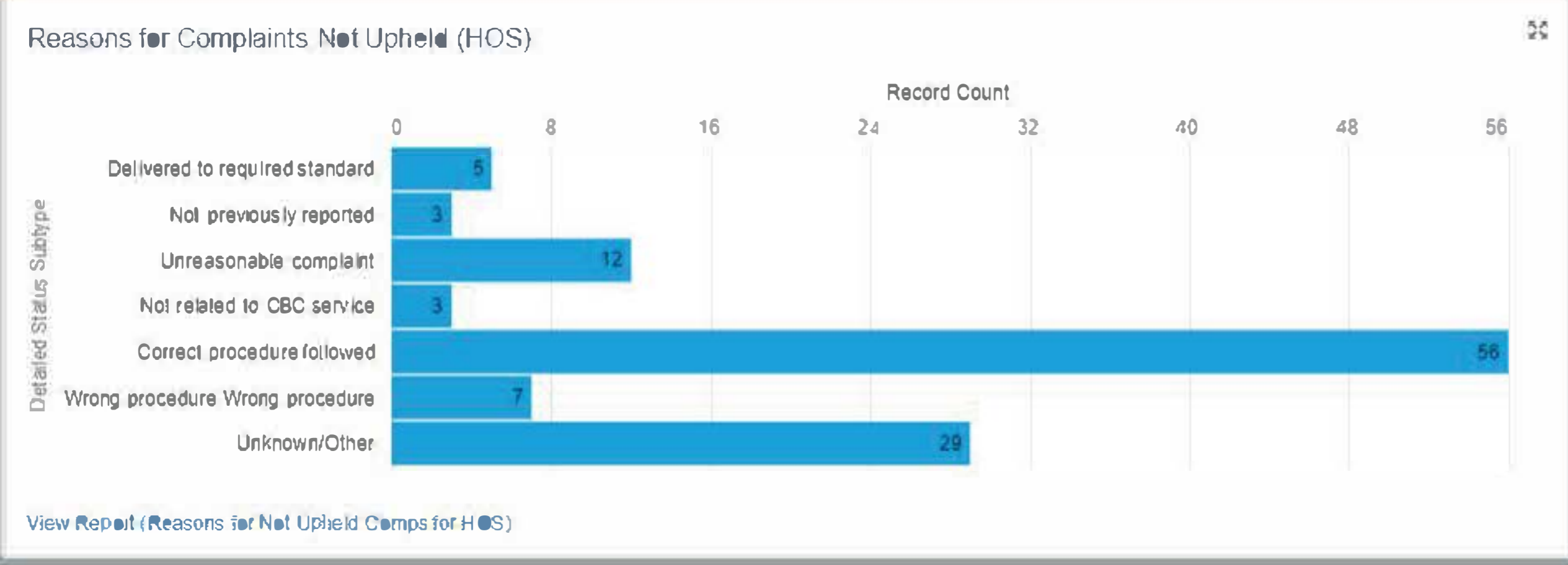
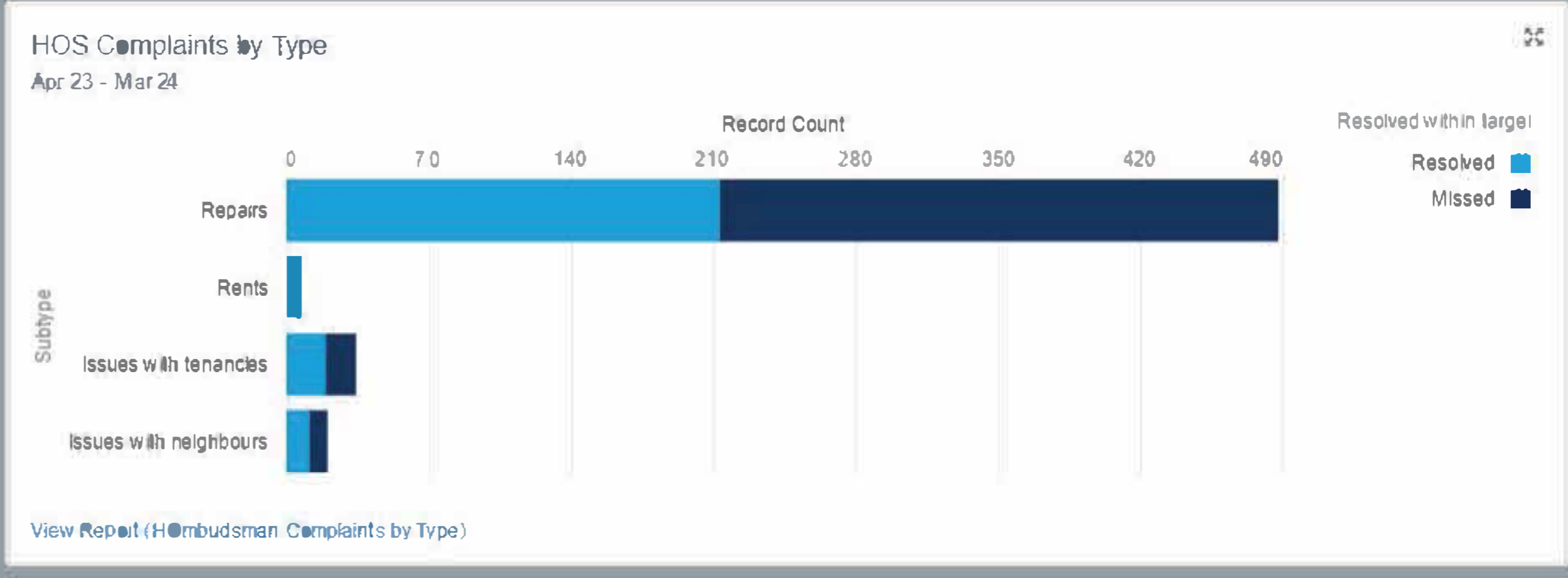
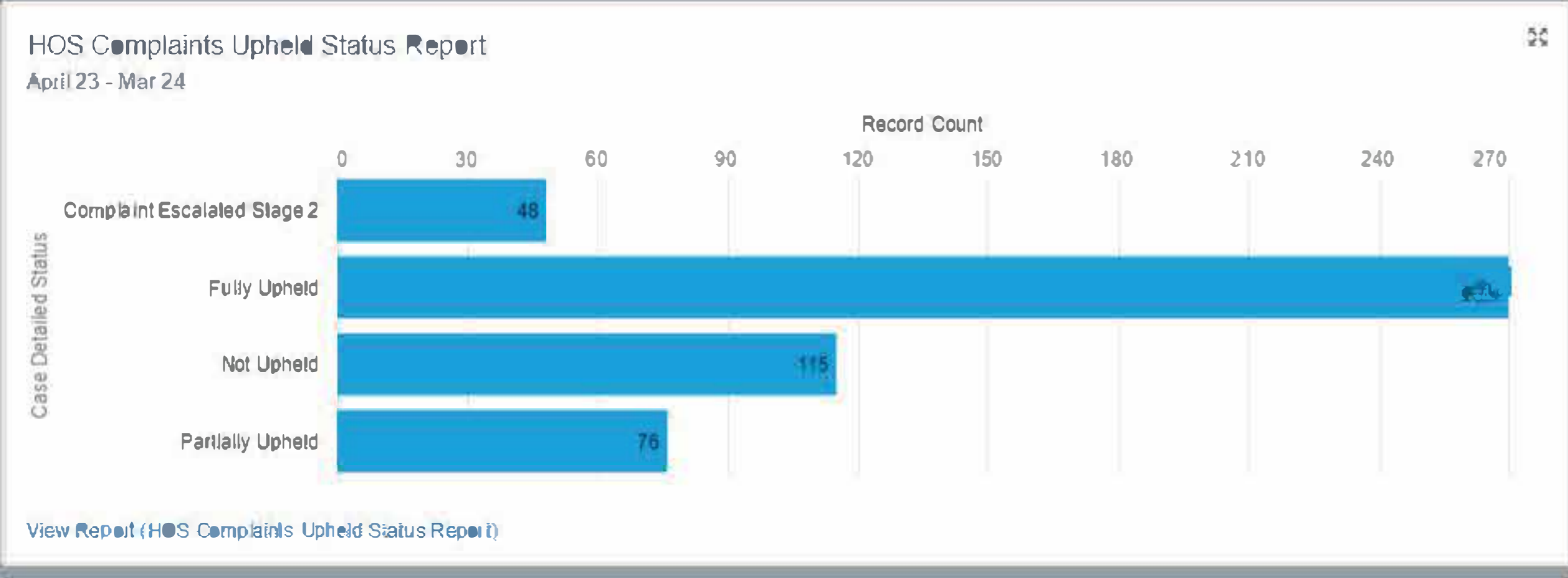
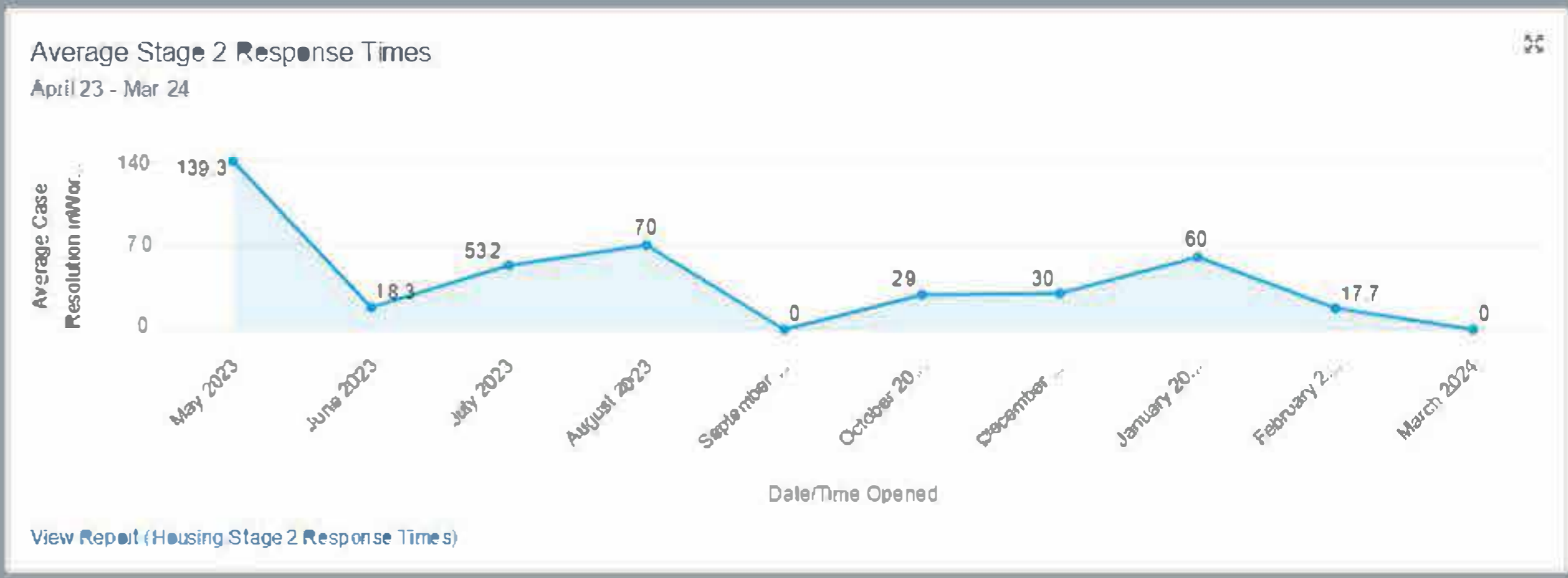
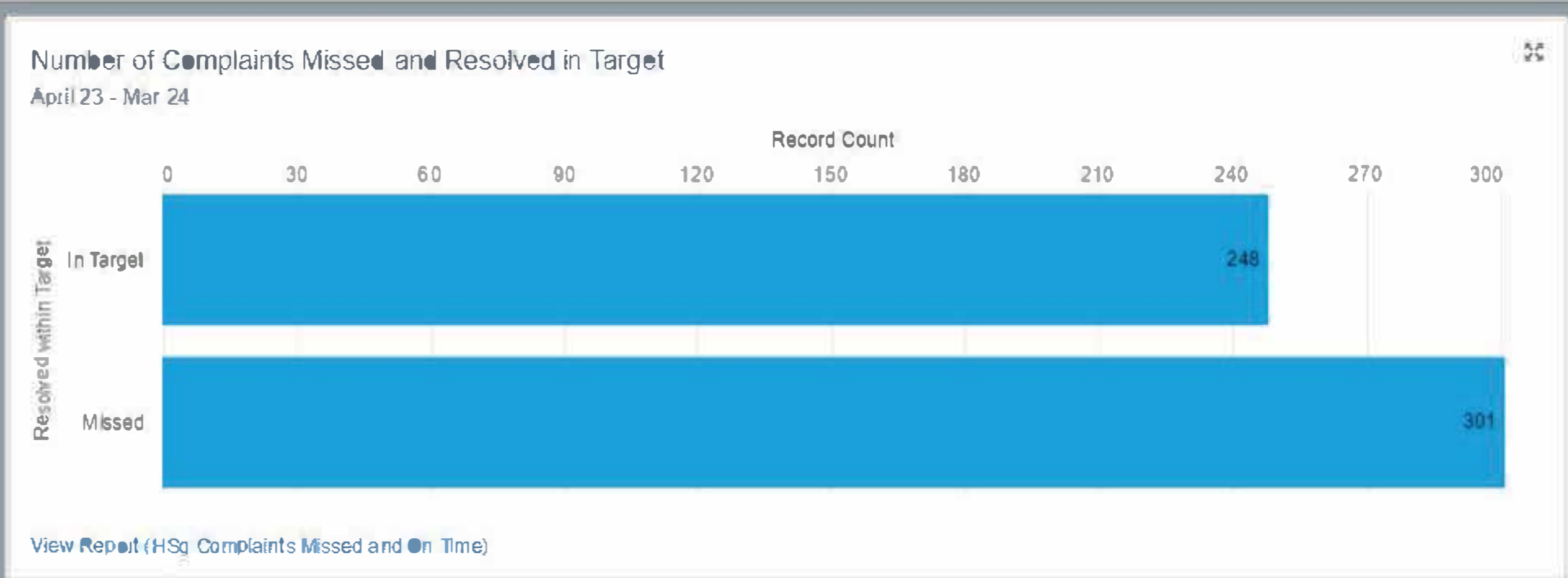
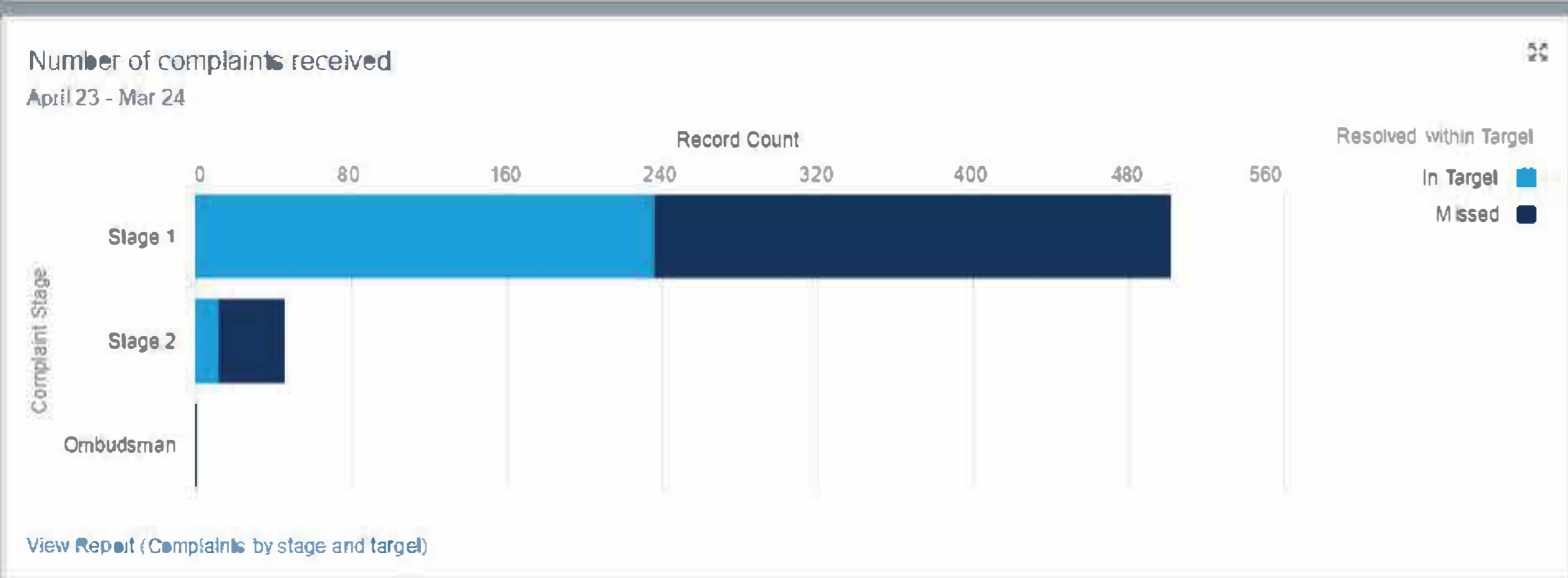
*Mr XXXXX recently had a wet room installed via ourselves - he said he was very impressed with everyone he dealt with (including the contractors who he singled out for special praise) and wanted his thanks passed on*



# Complaints Report - Housing Ombudsman Remit

KW - use for fixed time periods

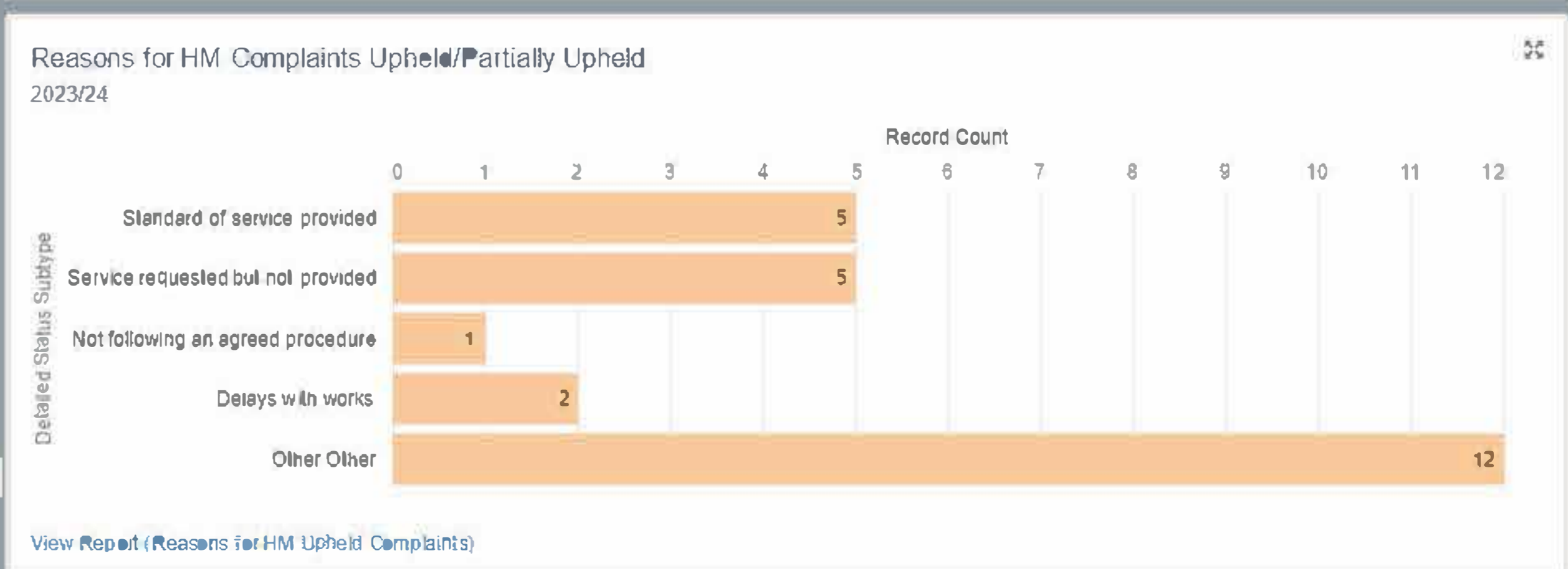
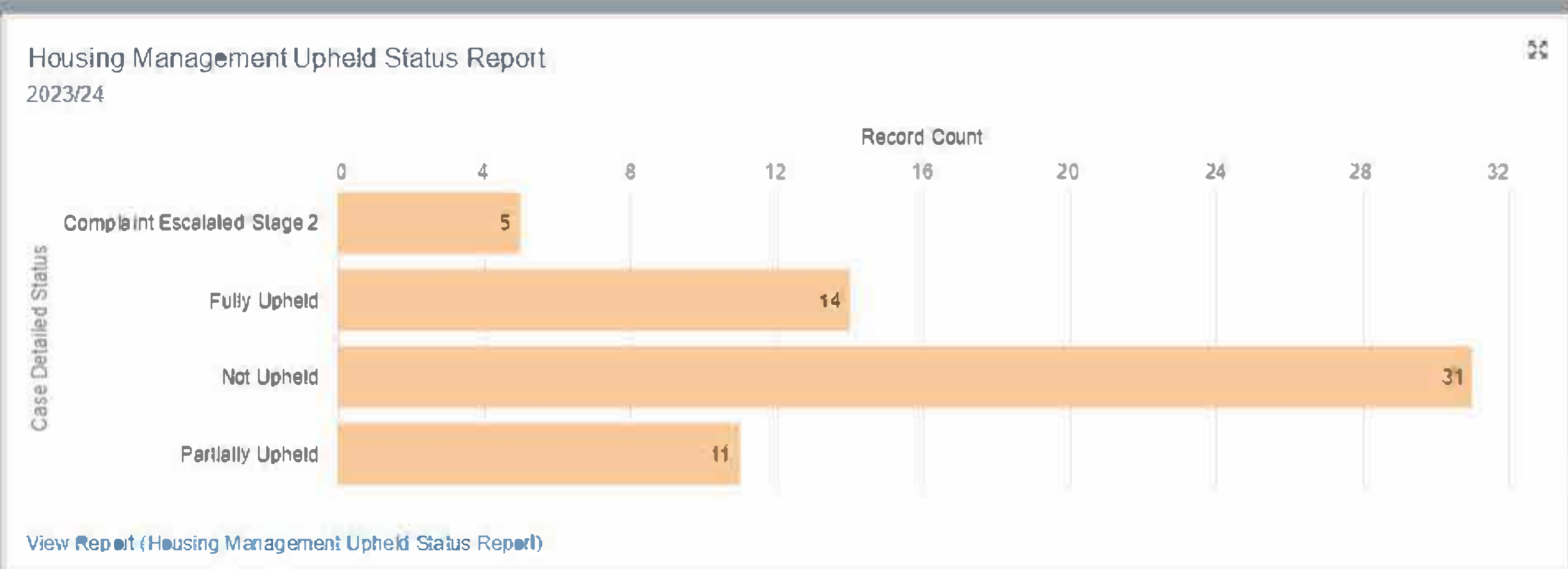
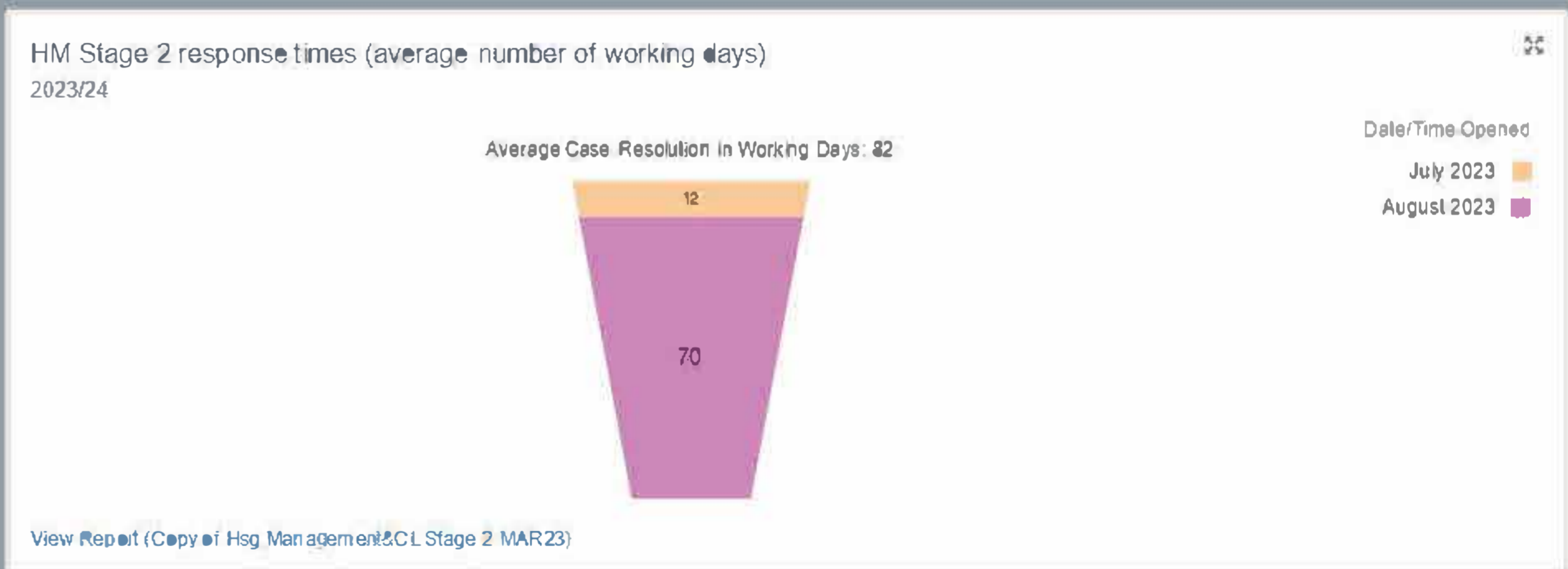
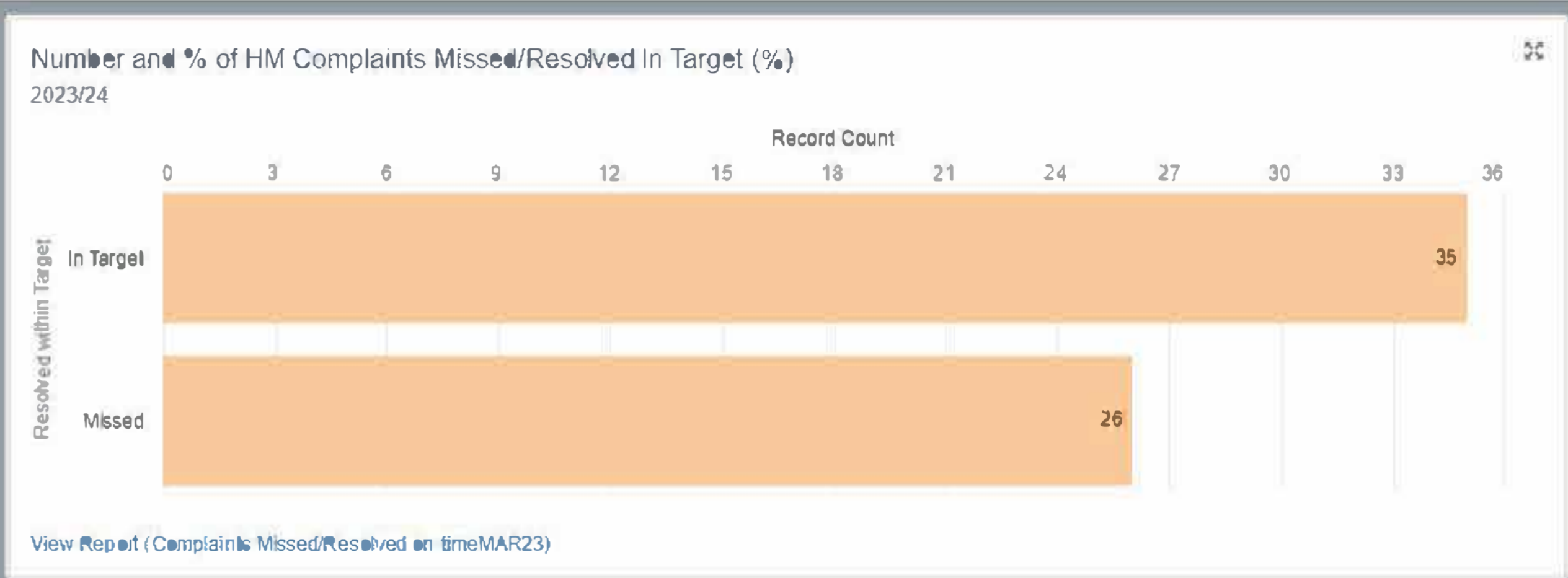
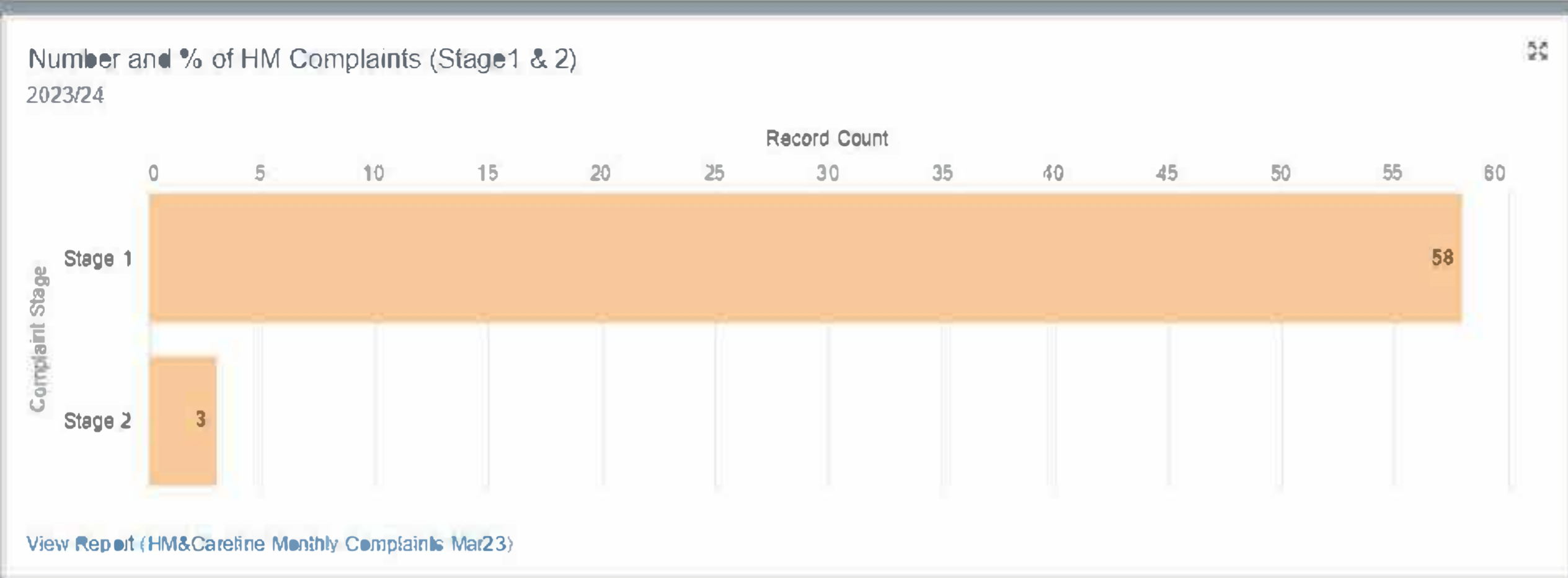
As of 05 Jun 2024 16:55



# Complaints Report - Housing Management (including rents)

For reporting on Housing Managements Complaints Performance

As of 05-Jun-2024 15:02



# Complaints Report - Housing Property Services (Assets, repairs and maintenance)

For reporting on Repairs Complaints Performance

As of 04-Jun-2024 20:51

