



# Housing Services annual complaints performance and service improvement report 2024/25

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## 1. Introduction

The Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code became a statutory requirement from 1st April 2024 and sets out the expectation placed on social landlords of how they deal with and manage complaints within their service areas.

As part of the code Chesterfield Borough Council is required to produce an annual report of our complaint handling performance and the improvements we have made by learning from complaints. This report is submitted to the Housing Ombudsman along with our governing body's response and annual self-assessment against the complaint handling code.

The report includes:

- a qualitative and quantitative analysis of our complaint handling performance
- 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

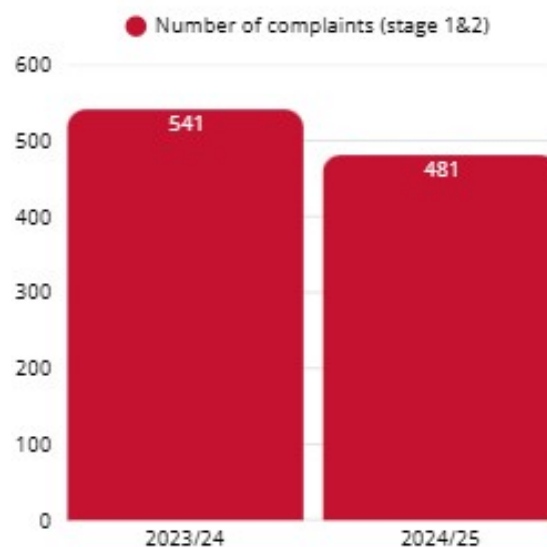
This report is the second annual report of our complaint handling performance and allows for comparison of both performance and the service areas where complaints have been made across the two years. Complaints are analysed overall and split into housing management related complaints and those related to our repair and maintenance services.

The complaint performance analysed in this report are those considered 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 the Housing Ombudsman's remit and therefore complaints about those services are not considered as part of this report.

## 2. Number and types of complaints

2.1 The total number of stage 1 and stage 2 complaints received has fallen to 481 from the 541 received during 2023/2024. When a complaint is first received it is dealt with at stage 1 of our complaints process. A complaint is escalated to a stage 2 if the customer is dissatisfied with the stage 1 response where it will be reviewed by a senior officer.

Number of stage 1 and stage 2 complaints received 2023/24 and 2024/25



Stage 1 and stage 2 complaints



70%

Complaints  
Responded to  
within target

13days

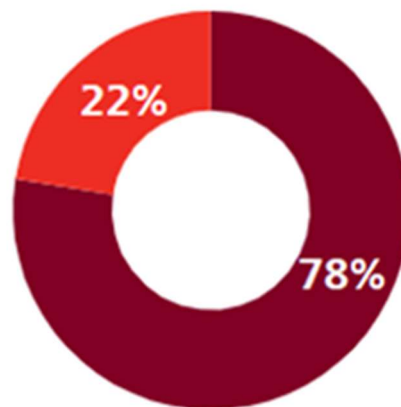
Average Stage 1  
response time

29days

Average Stage 2  
response time

- 2.2 During 2024/25 19% of stage 1 complaints were escalated to stage 2 in 2024/25. This was an increase from 9% in 2023/24.
- 2.3 The number of repairs complaints has fallen from 488 in 2023/24 to 373 during 2024/25. The fall in the number of complaints likely links to improved repairs performance over 2024/25 where:
- The percentage of standard 30-day repairs completed within timescales increased to 75%, compared with 60% the previous year
  - The percentage of emergency repairs completed within timescales increased to 95%, compared with 85% the previous year
  - The average time in working days for standard repairs to be completed reduced by 3.69 working days to 24.85 from 28.54 the previous year.
- 2.4 The number of housing management related complaints has increased from 61 in 2023/24 to 108 during 2024/25. This increase is due to expressions of dissatisfaction now being logged as formal complaints in line with the Housing Ombudsman complaint handling code.

Housing management related complaints  
108



Repair related complaints  
373

### 3. Complaint handling performance

#### Tenant satisfaction measures – complaint handling performance

- 3.1 Tenant satisfaction measures (TSMs) are performance indicators collected for the Regulator of Social Housing so that they can assess how well social landlords are doing at providing good quality homes and services. Three of the 22 TSM measures collected relate to complaints and complaint handling.



- 3.2 The data on satisfaction with approach to complaint handling is collected by surveying a random sample of our tenants. Of the 569 respondents to the TSM questionnaire 138 (24.3%) said they had made a complaint to CBC in the last 12 months. This was a reduction from 25.4% of respondents who made a complaint in the 2023/24 survey.

#### Satisfaction with landlords' approach to handling complaints



31.2 % of respondents said that they were satisfied with complaints handling – an **increase** from 25.2% the previous year

- 3.3 Information on complaints relative to the size of the landlord and responded to within timescales are provided by our Housing management system. The complaints within timescales is split between stage 1 and stage 2 complaints.

### Number of stage 1 complaints received in relation to landlord size



We received 46.17 Stage 1 complaints per every 1,000 homes that we manage. This is a **decrease** from 57.21 in the previous year

### Number of stage 2 complaints received in relation to landlord size



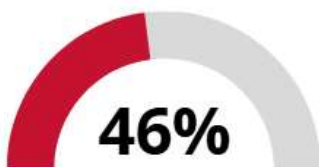
We received 8.94 Stage 2 complaints per every 1,000 homes that we manage. This is an **increase** from 5.24 in the previous year

### Stage 1 complaints responded within complaint handling code timescales



74.69% were responded to within timescale – an **increase** from 47% the previous year

### Stage 2 complaints responded within complaint handling code timescales

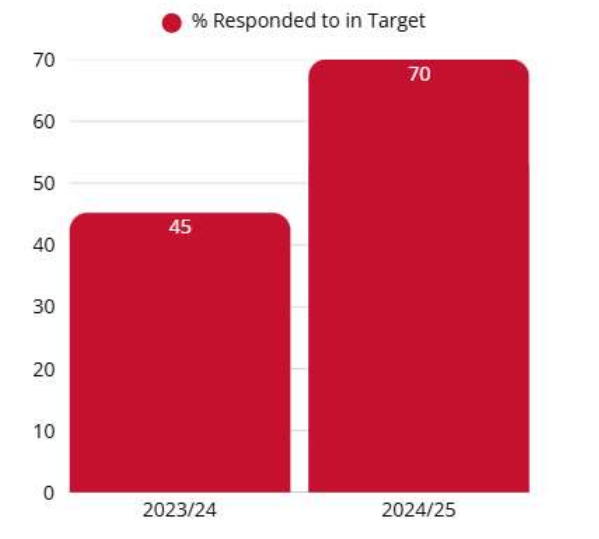


46.15% were responded to within timescale – an **increase** from 26.1% the previous year

### Complaint handling response times

- 3.4 Performance on responding to complaints within timescales has improved significantly from 45.2% in 2023/24 to 70.1% in 2024/25 (stage 1 and 2 combined). The upturn in performance has been due to increased office-based

staff resources to be focused on complaint handling, investigating and responding to complaints.



- 3.5 Our average number of days to respond to both Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints has also improved.

Average Stage 1 response times 2024/25

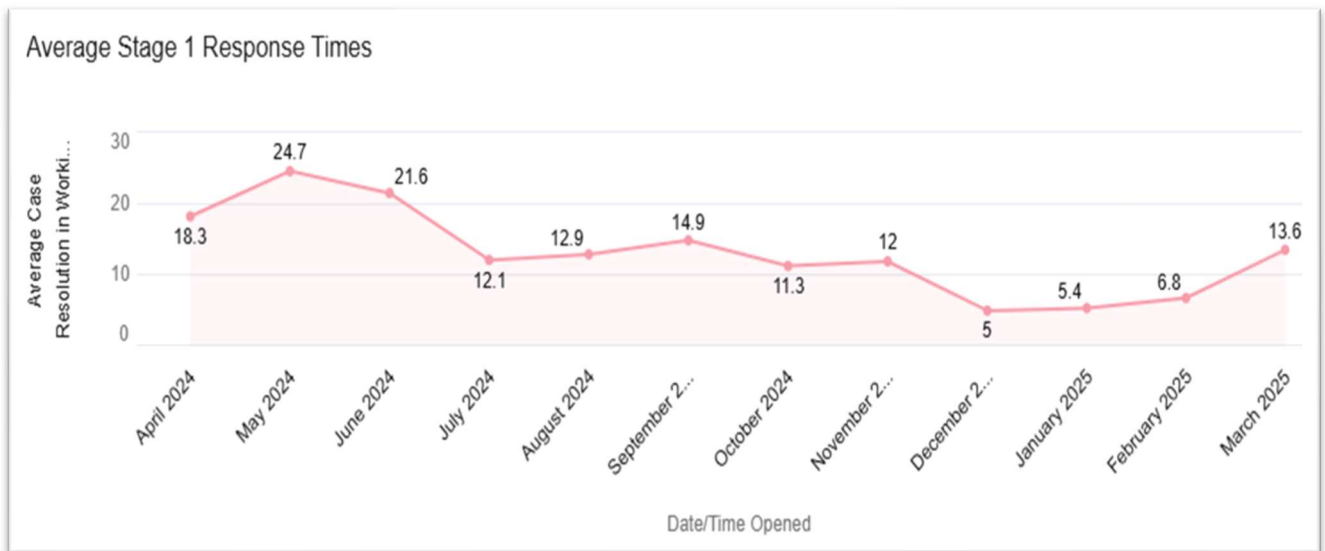


Average Stage 2 response times 2024/25

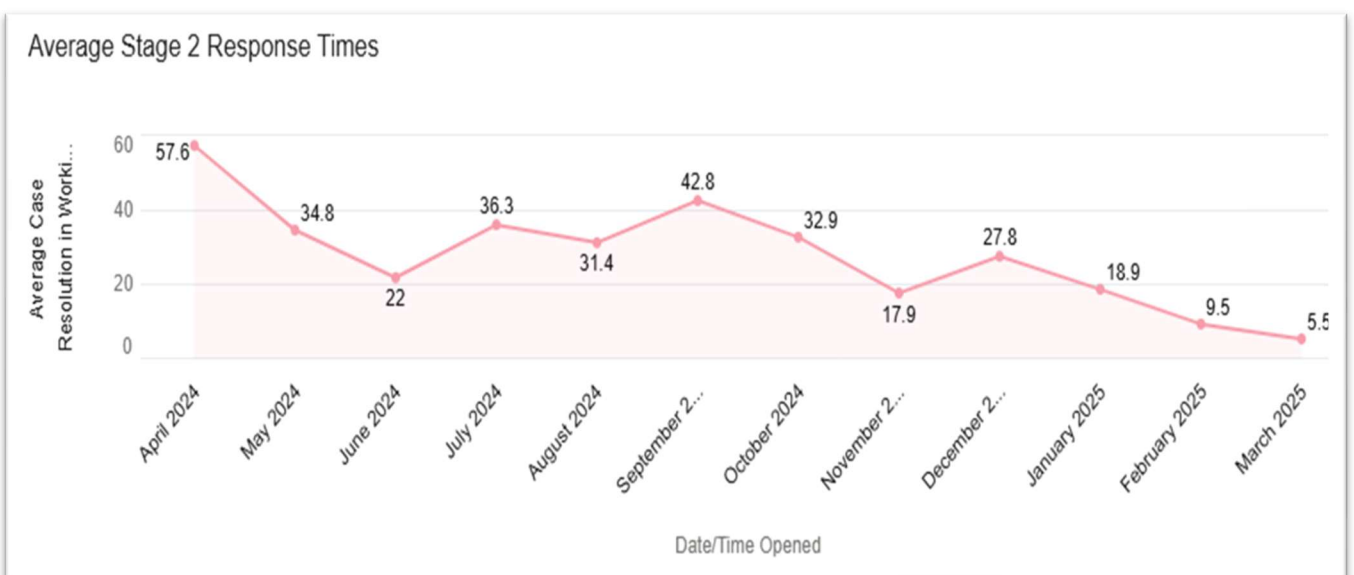


- 3.6 Performance for responding to Stage 1 complaints is shown in the chart below. This has been a general improvement in performance through the year





3.7 As with stage 1 complaints performance for responding to Stage 2 complaints also continued to improve through the year as shown in the chart below.

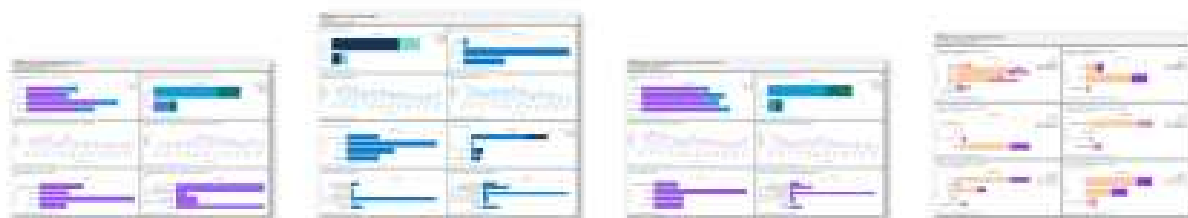


3.8 In order to continue to improve our response times for responding to complaints in 2025/26 we brought the management of housing complaints back into the Housing Service in February 2025.

## Detailed complaint handling performance

3.9 Service reports for managers provide 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:** All Housing Ombudsman complaints

**Appendix 1.2:** Housing management

**Appendix 1.3:** Housing property services (assets, repairs and maintenance)

**Appendix 1.4:** Housing complaints equalities monitoring

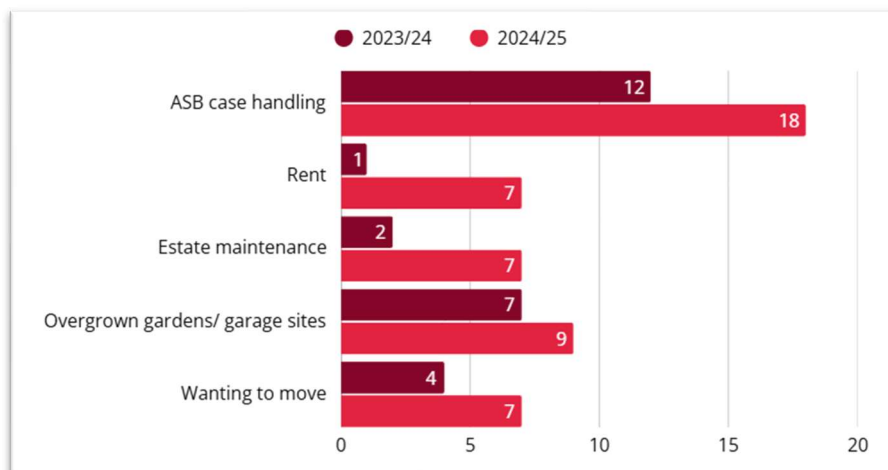
## 4. Housing management complaints

### Reasons for complaints

#### Top 5 reasons for upheld complaints about housing management



#### Top five reasons for housing management complaints received in 2023/24 and 2024/25



- 4.1 Housing management complaint numbers increased in 2024/25. Complaints about communal areas and cleaning are no longer in the top five areas of complaint. A full review of the cleaning service was carried out in consultation with our tenants and service changes implemented reducing the number of these types of complaints.

#### Comparison of housing management complaint outcomes with previous year

Outcome	2023/2024	2024/2025
Upheld/Partially upheld	41%	27%
Not upheld	51%	44%

Escalated to stage 2	8%	27%
In progress	N/A	2%

### Upheld complaints

Area of complaint for Housing Management (Stage1 complaints)	Total Number	Upheld	Partially upheld	Not upheld	Escalated Stage 2	In Progress (8.4.25)
ASB case handling	18	1	3	9	4	1
Staff conduct	13	0	0	8	5	
Rent	7	1	2	3	1	
Grass cutting/ estate maintenance	7	4	0	2	1	
Wanting to move	7	0	2	3	2	
Policies	7	0	1	3	3	
Overgrown gardens/ garage sites	9	4	1	2	2	
Other neighbour issues not dealt with	6	0	0	3	3	
Fly tipping/ rubbish	4	0	0	2	1	1
Items from previous tenant not cleared	2	2	0	0	0	
Communal cleaning	2	0	1	1	0	
Other	3	0	1	1	1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>%</b>		<b>14.1%</b>	<b>12.9%</b>	<b>43.5%</b>	<b>27.0%</b>	<b>2.4%</b>

- 4.2 The number of fully upheld complaints received about housing management is low at 14.1%. The main reasons for upheld stage one complaints are around grass cutting and estate maintenance.

4.3 Of the twenty-three cases escalated to a stage 2 complaint only five following review were fully or partially upheld.

Reason for Stage 2 Escalation Housing Management	Total Number	Fully upheld	Partially upheld	Not upheld	In progress
Not happy/satisfied with S1 response	11		1	8	2
Disagrees with S1 response	4	1		1	2
Issues not resolved	4		1		3
Wants decision reconsidering	2			2	
Work not done	1	1			
Reason not stated for escalation request	1		1		
Total	23	2	3	11	7
%		8.7%	13.0%	47.8%	30.4%

## 5 Repairs and maintenance complaints

### Complaint reasons

#### Top 5 reasons for upheld complaints about repairs



Chasing repairs



Delays with repairs



Cancelled,  
missed or failed  
appointments



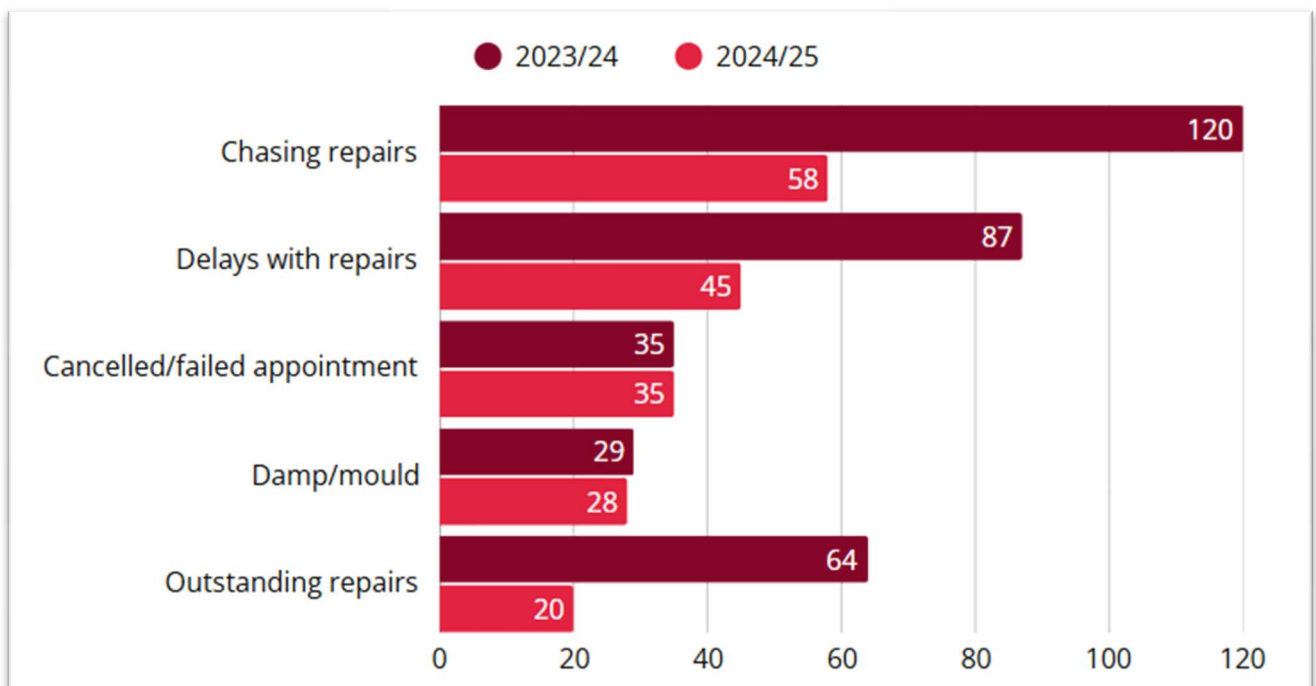
Damp  
and/or  
mould



Outstanding  
repairs/works

- 5.1 The top five topics for repairs complaints remain the same as the previous year – though as improved performance in carrying out repairs as a service has reduced the number of complaints chasing repairs, delays with work and outstanding repairs.

#### Comparison of the reasons of top five repairs complaints received



### Comparison of repair complaint outcomes with previous year

Outcome	2023/2024	2024/2025
Upheld/ partially upheld	72%	66%
Not upheld	19%	14%
Escalated to stage 2	9%	15%
In progress	N/A	5.0%

### Reasons complaints were upheld

- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 The reasons for complaints not being upheld follows the same trend as the previous year with the correct procedure being followed being the majority reason.

Area of complaint for Repairs (Stage 1 complaints)	Total Number	Upheld	Partially upheld	Not upheld	Escalated Stage 2	In Progress (8.4.25)
Chasing repairs	58	32	8	7	9	2
Delays with repairs	45	30	5	0	9	1
Cancelled/ missed/ failed appointment	35	22	7	4	2	
Damp and/or mould	28	16	3	4	3	2
Outstanding repairs/works <i>Where work has started but not been completed</i>	20	11	1	1	3	4
Ongoing repairs/ works <i>Repeated works/visits to the same repair/job</i>	18	8	3	1	3	3
Quality of work	12	3	4	2	3	

Area of complaint for Repairs (Stage 1 complaints)	Total Number	Upheld	Partially upheld	Not upheld	Escalated Stage 2	In Progress (8.4.25)
Staff behaviour/ conduct	12	5	4	2	1	
Damage caused during a repair	9	6	2	1	0	
Fencing needs replacing	8	2	1	3	2	
Voids – length of time for work	7	3	1	0	2	1
Voids – condition property	7	2	1	0	2	2
Poor communication	6	4	0	1	1	
Time taken for emergency/ urgent repairs	4	2	0	2	0	
Damage caused by delays fixing a leak	4	1	1	1	1	
Condition of property	4	1	0	2	1	
Path repairs (tenant obligations)	3	0	1	1	1	
No notification/ consultation of works	3	2	1	0	0	
Compensation request	3	1	1		1	
Wants a new kitchen	4	0	1	2	0	1
Disagree with charge/ recharge	3	3	0	0	0	
Out of Hours customer service	2	1	0	1	0	
Other	22	4	4	10	4	
Total	317	159	49	45	48	16
%		50.1%	15.4%	14.2%	15.1%	5.0%



5.4 In contrast with Housing Management complaints the majority of repair complaints escalated to stage 2 were upheld or partially upheld during 2024/25.

Reason for Stage 2 Escalation Repairs	Total Number	Fully upheld	Partially upheld	Not upheld
Repairs/works not carried out/completed	19	15	3	1
Not happy/satisfied with S1 response	16	8	1	7
Disagrees with S1 response	6	1	1	4
Issues not resolved	4	2		2
No timescales given	4	2	1	1
Appointment not kept	1	1		
Extra evidence provided	1		1	
No compensation offered	1			1
Not happy with timeframe	1		1	
Poor quality work carried out	1	1		
Wants charge removing	1	1		
Total	55*	31	8	16
%		56.3%	14.5%	29.1%

\*the total figure of 55 stage 2 complaints for repairs is higher than the 48 escalated in the previous table as it includes stage 2 complaints escalated from stage 1 complaints that were responded to 2023/24.

## 6 Complaints not accepted

- 6.1 Recording details of complaints that were not accepted was a new requirement in the Housing Ombudsman revised 2024 complaint handling code. At the start of the year our complaints system did not allow data to be recorded around the number of complaints that we did not accept.
- 6.2 The reasons for not accepting a complaint include:
- 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
- 6.3 New updates to our complaint handling system have now been implemented to enable this data to be captured from February 2025. Since this date no complaints have not been accepted.

## 7 Housing Ombudsman determinations

- 7.1 If customers are unhappy with the way their complaint has been dealt with after completing Chesterfield Borough Council complaints process they can request that the Housing Ombudsman reviews their case.
- 7.2 For instances where complaints have been escalated to the housing ombudsman during 2024/25 the information from those investigations will not be provided until the autumn. The most current information from the Housing Ombudsman is from 2023/24. This report can be viewed [here](#).
- 7.3 For the two cases determined by the Housing Ombudsman during 2023/24; in relation to complaint handling, there was one instance of maladministration and one instance of service failure where the Housing Ombudsman made a determination.
- 7.4 During 2024/25 we are aware of one instance of maladministration in complaint handling.

## 8 Improvements made as result of learning from complaints

### Specific learning improvement examples

The examples below are several examples from across the service where dealing with customer complaints has led to changes in procedure and process.

Inadequate information was given regarding the Transfer Incentive Scheme (TIS) which led to confusion over payments.



Standard letters used by Allocations Team have been redesigned to include clearer information about the TIS and the implications of a tenant ending a joint tenancy. Staff training has also taken place and the TIS policy is under review to provide clarity.

Too much money was taken via direct debit from a tenant's bank account for a rent payment.



The Rent Recovery Team have reassessed banking process measures to avoid the same error happening in the future

A tenant slipped and fell in the communal area of a block of flats where cleaning had been carried out and there was inadequate signage.





Reiterated to all staff about adequate and visible signage. Cleaning staff should carry a sufficient amount of signage on their vehicles to cover all floors in flats for the area they are working in. Housing staff now carry out random checks in blocks of flats following the cleaners attendance to check that the appropriate signage is being used.


## Wider learning and reporting


- 8.1 The main cross cutting themes across all complaints categories are shown below. A common thread is about our communication with customers.


**Top 5 themes were:**

 Where we should have contacted them first

 Not being updated

 Not being contacted about changes to an appointment or visit

 Having to get in touch multiple times or chasing an update

 Unhappy with information given or contradictory information given

- 8.2 The use of complaints information is central to designing wider improvements across the Housing Service. Upcoming changes to the repairs services are designed to improve our ability to keep tenants up-to-date and will address some of the underlying themes to prevent the need to keep getting in touch and ensure tenants are kept up-to-date these changes include:

- Procurement of a new ICT system for repairs and maintenance which will allow:
  - The scheduling of repairs more efficiently minimising delays
  - improving communication with customers with updates and reminders
  - capturing tenant feedback immediately after repairs to enable any issues to be picked up immediately
- Increased capacity and procedures to deal with damp and mould cases more quickly
- An overall review of repairs and maintenance services, including a restructure, which will lead to improved performance on repairs completion timescales

- 8.3 Complaints information is routinely in tenant scrutiny review. During 2024/25 reviews of standard 30 days repairs and the rents service used complaints data as part of their scrutiny reviews. Complaint performance is also reported quarterly to tenant Performance Group and the Housing Advisory Board.

## 9 Compliments

9.1 The ICT system' 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 2024/25 are set out below.

XXXXXXXXXX would like to pass on how impressed he was with the Electrician who attended this afternoon for his repairs, he says the Operative was polite, professional and has done a great job.

The plumber came out this morning. Very cheery chap, that got straight on with the job. He explained to me why I was experiencing repeated leaks from the toilet waste ..... and he also advised that he would put in a request for an isolation valve to be fitted to my stop tap, as it is below floor level behind a wooden wall panel, which means I cannot access it. Great member of staff, with an excellent manner. Clean and tidy worker. Thank you. Keep up the great work. Please can you pass on my thanks

I had an appointment today for my kitchen extractor fan to be replaced. The workman arrived on time, he was very polite, efficient and did a really good job. He tidied the area up around where the old extractor had been removed (it was larger than the new one). He filled in any holes really neatly. He cleaned up after himself and also explained to me how to use the new extractor. I'd just like to pass on how impressed I am also grateful too, and so would like him to get the credit he deserves for a really good job.

Wants to say a Big Thank you to the people who cut her hedges at the side of the property.

The joiner who went out today to fix her back door; she would like a compliment passed to his manager. He did an excellent job and also fixed the storm guard on her door without her asking him to which she had a job raised for so was able to cancel that repair. She said he was very polite also.

XXXXXXXXXX was very happy with the support and assistance she received with this from the neighbourhood ranger, XXXXXXXXXX.



XXXXXXX had radiators fitted yesterday and is very pleased with the work. She made a comment that they were amazing

XXXXXXX wanted to pass over that the plumber came out very quick and she is very thankful for him attending

I've just taken a call from the tenant of the above address who would like to pass on her praise and appreciation to XXXX who fitted window locks and letter box. She said he was very polite and efficient, adding that he's a credit to the council. She also wanted to thank the council as a whole for all we've done with XXXXXXXX, she is extremely grateful.

Compliment received from XXXXXXXXX, Social Care practitioner for the time, effort and support provided to a vulnerable tenant, effective joint working and good communication.

Caller rang regarding an issue with his cooker and washer after a recent repair to his flooring. His cooker was disconnected and needed sorting which XXXXXX did. At the end of the call he said she had been awesome, brilliant and very clear and he understood what she was saying. He wanted to make sure his comments would be passed on

XXXXXXXXX wanted to pass on positive feedback. He wanted to tell us he was extremely happy with the gas engineer who came out today promptly and was sociable and friendly with him. Said it's important to give us positive feedback and say how efficient and helpful our staff are because he knows we get a lot of grief etc. He says all workmen who visit his property are always obliging and get the job done. Well done everyone

XXXXXXX from XXXXXXXX Court has been to the mobile office today and spoke to the Tenant Engagement Team about XXXXXXXX to say thank you for her help with the issues at her block regarding the garages and the litter is now being cleared up more effectively.