Agenda Item 4

Housing Services annual complaints performance and service improvement report 2025/26

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1. Introduction

The Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code sets out the expectations 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 published on the Councils website and submitted to the Housing Ombudsman.

The report includes:

- an analysis of our complaint handling performance
- any findings of non-compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code
- some of the improvements we have made from learning from complaints

This report is the third 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 three years. Complaints are analysed overall and by housing management related complaints and by repair and maintenance services complaints.

Chesterfield Borough Council believes that complaints provide us with valuable customer feedback to help inform service improvements.

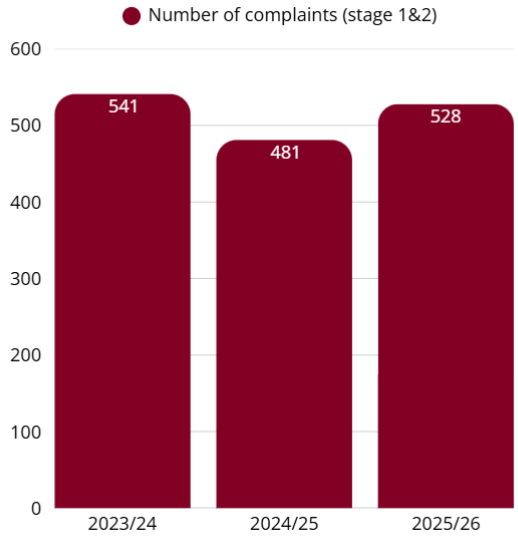
The complaint performance analysed in this report are those considered under the Housing Ombudsman's remit which covers services funded by the council's Housing Revenue Account.

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.

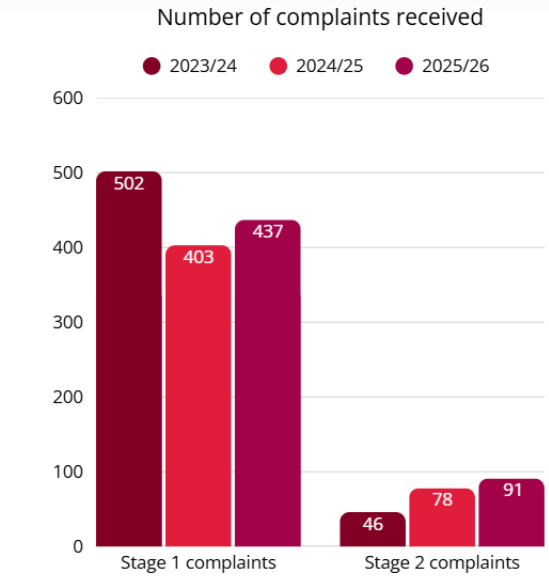
2. Number and types of complaints

2.1 The total number of stage 1 and stage 2 complaints received increased to 528 in 2025/26 from 481 during 2024/25. 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.

Total number of complaints received (stage 1 and 2)



Number of stage 1 and stage 2 complaints received



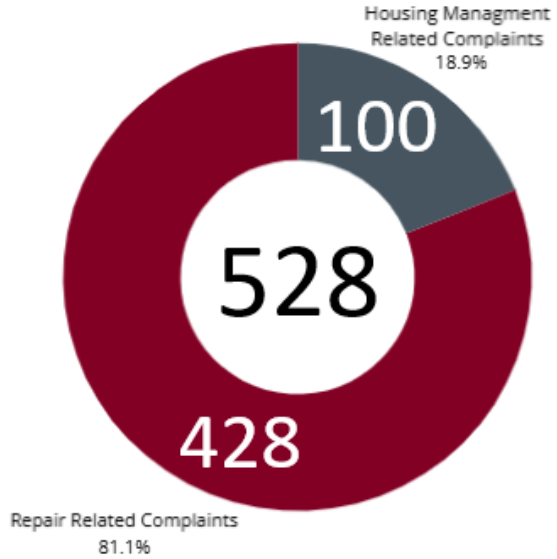
2.2 The number of stage 2 complaints increased to 91 in 2025/26 from 78 in 2024/25 though remained at a similar proportion of complaints overall (increasing from 16% to 17% of all complaints being escalated)

2.3 The number of repairs complaints increased from 373 in 2024/25 to 428 during 2025/26. As we complete over 3,000 repairs every month, and the number of complaints received represents a small percentage by repairs done (less than 1% customers raise a complaint).

2.4 We do not view higher numbers of complaints as a negative. The increase in complaints number gives the service re-assurance that our complaints process is accessible to tenants and that staff are aware of the complaint process and can raise complaints on behalf of tenants.

2.5 We have sought to make it easier for our tenants to complain to us by adding information on how to complain to our publicised documents including satisfaction surveys.

2.6 The number of housing management related complaints has fallen from 108 in 2024/25 to 100 during 2025/26.



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.

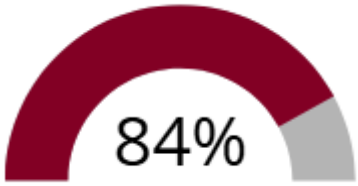


3.2 The data on satisfaction with approach to complaint handling is collected by surveying a random sample of our tenants. Of the 572 respondents to the TSM questionnaire, 126 (22.0%) said they had made a complaint to CBC in the last 12 months. This was a decrease from 138 out of 569 (24.3%) of respondents who made a complaint in the 2024/25 survey.

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

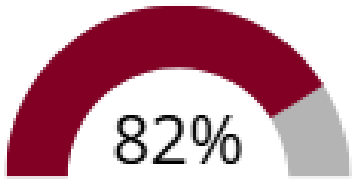
3.4 Performance on responding to all complaints within timescales (stage 1 and stage 2 combined) improved from **70.1%** in 2024/25 to **83.71%** in 2025/26.

Stage 1 complaints responded within complaint handling code timescales



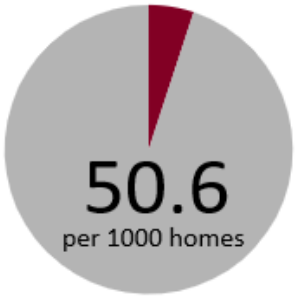
84.0% were responded to within timescale – an increase from **74.7%** the previous year

Stage 2 complaints responded within complaint handling code timescales



82.4% were responded to within timescale – an increase from **46.2 %** the previous year

Number of stage 1 complaints received in relation to landlord size



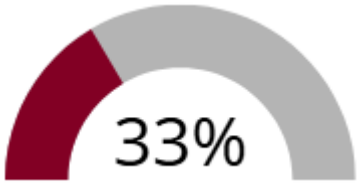
The 437 Stage 1 complaints received works out as **50.6** complaints for every 1,000 homes that we manage.
This is an increase from **46.2** for every 1,000 homes in the previous year

Number of stage 2 complaints received in relation to landlord size



The 91 stage 2 complaints received works out as **10.5** complaints per every 1,000 homes that we manage.
This is an increase from **8.9** for every 1,000 homes in the previous year

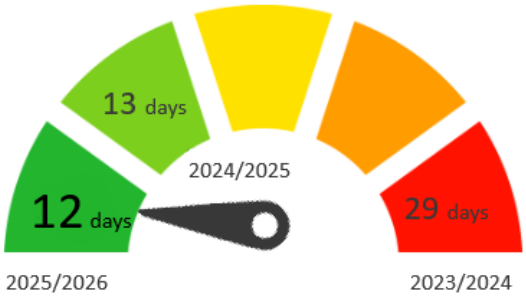
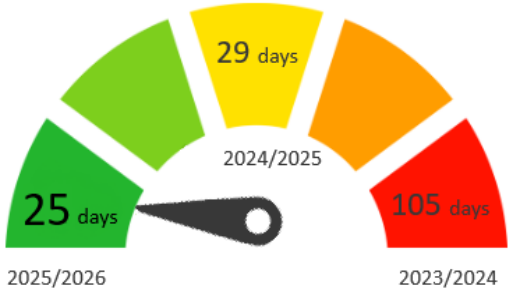
Satisfaction with landlords' approach to handling complaints



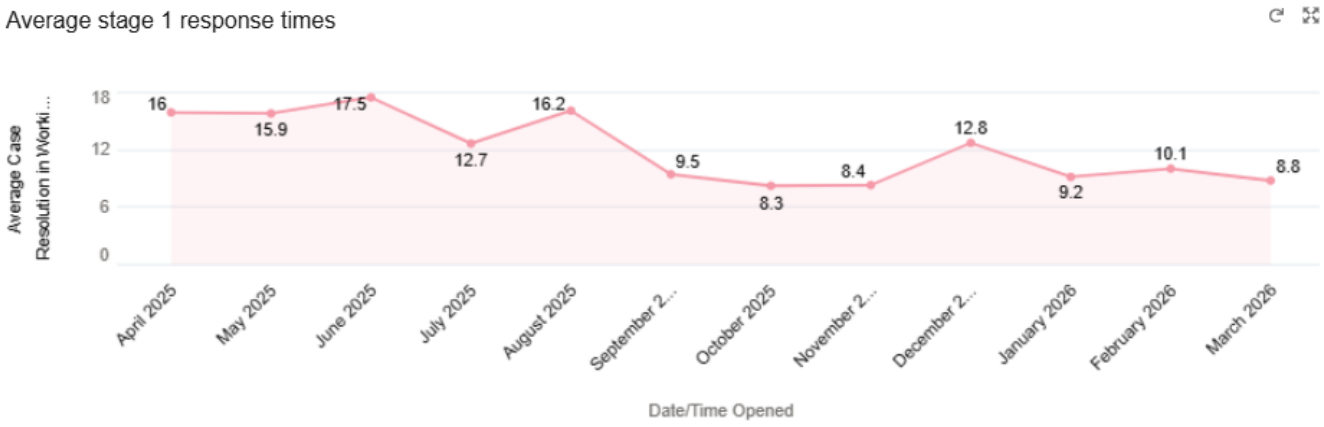
33.1 % of respondents said that they were satisfied with complaints handling – an **increase** from **31.2%** the previous year

Complaint handling response times

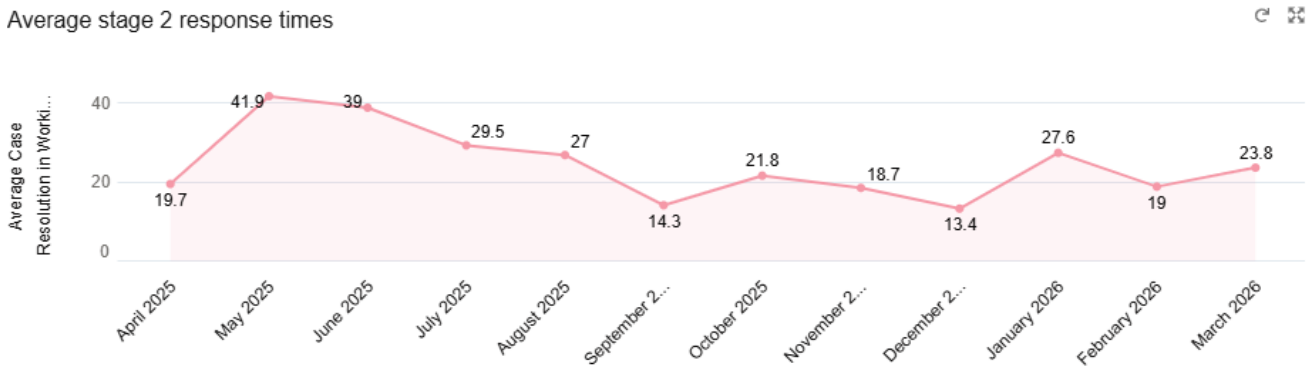
3.5 Our average number of days to respond to both Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints has also improved over the past three years.

Average Stage 1 response times 2025/26	Average Stage 2 response times 2025/26
	

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



3.7 Performance for responding to stage 2 complaints also improved through the year.



3.8 The continued improvement in performance has been due to the Housing Service taking ownership of complaint handling from the Councils Customer Services team from February 2026. This has enabled the appointment of

internal resources to handle and oversee complaints and complaint procedures. Weekly messages to senior managers to check the progress of complaint cases in their area ensure continuing focus on complaint handling to ensure sustained improvement in complaint response timescales.

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.



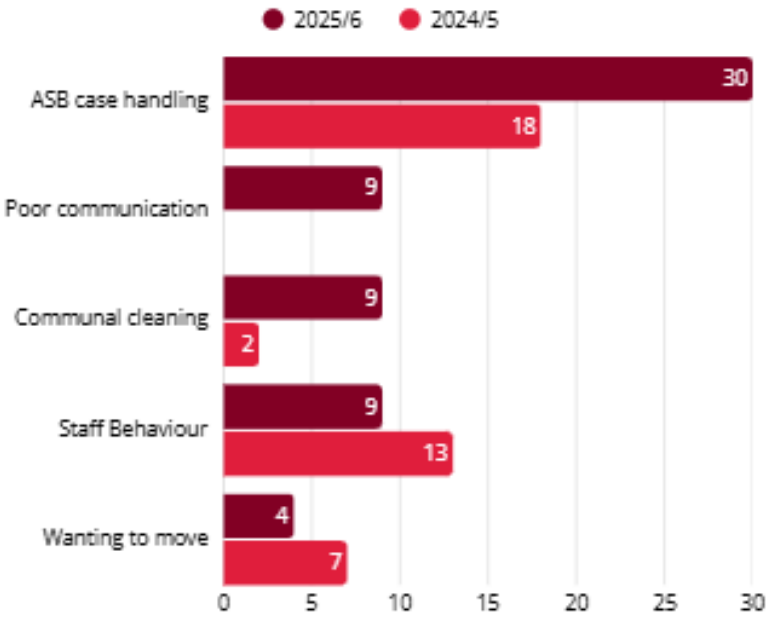



Appendix 1.1: All Housing Ombudsman complaints
Appendix 1.2: Housing management
Appendix 1.3: Housing property services (assets, repairs and maintenance)
Appendix 1.4: Housing complaints equalities monitoring

4. Housing management complaints



Top five reasons for housing management complaints received in 2025/26 and 2024/25 (includes upheld and not upheld complaints)



Note: Poor communication was not a recorded complaint category in 2024/25

4.1 Although the number of complaints related to ASB case handling have increased, the % of complaint cases upheld or partially upheld remains similar (23% in 2025/26 and 22% in 2024/25)

Comparison of housing management complaint outcomes with previous years (stage1)

Outcome	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026
Upheld/ partially upheld	41%	27%	**43%**
Not upheld	51%	44%	**41%**
Escalated to stage 2	8%	27%	**16%**
In progress	N/A	2%	**N/A**

Outcome of complaints for housing management 2025/2026

Area of complaint for housing management	Total (Stage 1)	Upheld	Partially upheld	Not upheld	Escalated Stage 2
ASB case handling	30	3	4	14	9
Communal cleaning	9	5	1	3	0
Poor communication	9	1	6	2	0
Staff conduct	9	0	3	5	1
Wanting to move	4	1	2	0	1
Policies	4	1	1	1	1
Rent	3	0	0	3	
Rodent infestation	3	1	0	2	0
Fly tipping/ rubbish	3	2	1	0	0
Condition of property	2	0	0	2	0
Compensation request	2	0	2	0	0

Area of complaint for housing management	Total (Stage 1)	Upheld	Partially upheld	Not upheld	Escalated Stage 2
Grass cutting/ estate maintenance	1	0	0	0	1
Overgrown gardens/ garage sites	1	0	0	1	0
Other	5	0	2	2	1
Total	85	14	22	35	14
%		16.5%	26%	41%	16.5%

4.2 The proportion of complaints that we fully uphold about housing management is low at 16.5%. The main reason for fully upheld stage one complaints are around communal cleaning.

4.3 Of the fifteen cases escalated to a stage 2 complaint none were fully upheld and eight were partially upheld following review.

Reason for Stage 2 escalation housing management	Total	Fully upheld	Partially upheld	Not upheld
Disagrees with S1 response	9	0	4	5
Not happy/ satisfied with S1 response	5	0	4	1
Issues not resolved	1	0	0	1
Total	15*	0	8	7
%		0%	53%	47%

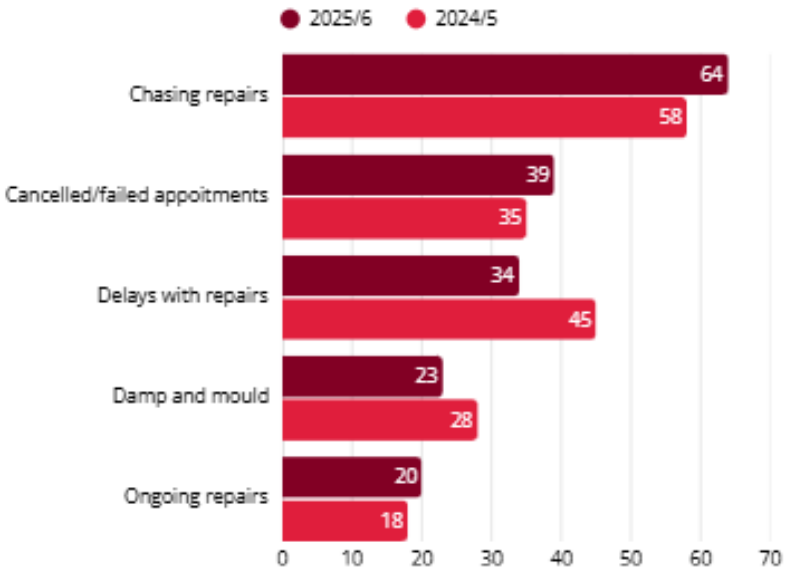
*the total figure of 15 stage 2 complaints for housing management is higher than the 14 escalated in the previous table as it includes stage 2 complaints escalated from stage 1 complaints that were responded to 2024/25.

5. Repairs and maintenance complaints

Top 5 reasons for complaints about repairs



Top five reasons for repairs related complaints received in 2025/26 and 2024/25 (includes upheld and not upheld complaints)



5.1 The top five reasons for complaints about our repair service are the same as 2024/25. Complaints about 'delays with repairs' and 'damp and mould decreased from the previous year.

Comparison of repair complaint outcomes with previous years (stage 1)

Outcome	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026
Upheld/ partially upheld	72%	66%	**60.5%**
Not upheld	19%	14%	**20.5%**
Escalated to stage 2	9%	15%	**19.5%**
In progress	N/A	5.0%	**N/A**

Area of complaint for Repairs	Total (Stage 1)	Fully Upheld	Partially upheld	Not upheld	Escalated Stage 2
Chasing repairs	64	28	18	7	11
Cancelled/ missed/ failed appointment	39	23	6	7	3
Delays with repairs	34	14	8	4	8
Damp and/ or mould	23	5	7	8	3
Ongoing repairs/ works *Repeated works/ visits to the same repair job*	20	10	2	4	4
Outstanding repairs/ works *Where work has started but not been completed*	16	6	5	2	3
Staff behaviour/ conduct	16	8	5	1	2
Condition of property	14	5	2	2	5
Damage caused during a repair	13	4	3	1	5
Availability of appointments/ wait time	14	3	4	5	2

Area of complaint for Repairs	Total (Stage 1)	Fully Upheld	Partially upheld	Not upheld	Escalated Stage 2
Poor communication	12	6	1	1	4
Quality of work	11	3	1	4	3
Voids – condition property	9	4	0	3	2
Fencing needs replacing	8	2	2	0	4
Compensation Request	8	1	1	4	2
Time taken for emergency/ urgent repairs	7	3	1	3	0
Damage caused by delays attending a repair	7	5	0	1	1
Voids – length of time for work	5	3	0	1	1
Rodent infestation	5	1	1	1	2
Out of hours call handling	5	1	2	1	1
Mess left by operative	4	3		1	
No notification/ consultation of works	4	0	2	2	0
Works related to disrepair claims	4	0	1	3	0
Tenant obligations	2	2			
Gas enforcement lock change	2	0	0	2	0
Other	6	1	0	4	1
Total	352	141	72	72	67
%		40%	20.5%	20.5%	19%

5.2 Tenants needing to chase up repairs was the main reason that complaints were upheld.

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 and delivered to the required standard the second most recorded reason

5.4 In contrast with Housing Management complaints the majority of repair complaints escalated to stage 2 were upheld or partially upheld during 2025/26.

Reason for Stage 2 Escalation Repairs	Total	Fully upheld	Partially upheld	Not upheld
Disagrees with S1 response	22	5	8	9
Not happy/ satisfied with S1 response	20	6	7	7
Issues not resolved at S1	15	8	4	3
Repairs not carried out/ completed	10	8	1	1
Not kept updated/ informed by CBC	4	4	0	0
Appointment not kept	2	0	1	1
Wrong/ contradictory information given	2	1	0	1
Incorrect information on system	1	0	0	1
Total	76*	32	21	23
%		42%	28%	30%

*the total figure of 76 stage 2 complaints for repairs is higher than the 67 escalated in the previous table as it includes stage 2 complaints escalated from stage 1 complaints that were responded to 2024/25.

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.

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
- Duplicated complaints such as ones where a Stage 1 or Stage 2 is already open and has not yet received a response

6.3 New updates to our complaint handling system have been implemented to enable this data to be captured from February 2025. Where a complaint is not accepted, the customer is informed and given the reason why.

Complaints not accepted 2025/26

Reason	Number
Service Request	39
Duplicated complaint	36
Legal issue	1
Fully investigated at stage 1 and stage 2	2
Historical issue (out of timeframe)	1
Other Council (not CBC issue)	1
Total	**80**

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 The Housing Ombudsman publishes a report detailing the decisions made against each landlord each autumn. The Housing Ombudsman will publish this report here.

7.3 For the five cases determined by the Housing Ombudsman during 2025/26 the following outcomes and orders were made:

Housing Ombudsman decisions	Count
Determinations (cases with decisions)	5
Total findings (of which)	9
Maladministration	7
Service failure	1
No maladministration	1
Orders made (instructions given by HO)	18
Compensation paid	£2,300

7.4 All the orders were complied with within the timescales set by the Housing Ombudsman.

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.

Awaiting further examples from Housing Leadership Team (Will be designed up as per compliments section following)

Lack of clarity on succession rights

A complaint concerning the lack of clarity on succession and how long the process for a decision should take prompted the Housing Management team to review procedures and develop new succession template letter to improve consistency and provide clarity to tenants.

Snagging repairs at new build homes

As repairs and maintenance to new build homes can sometimes remain responsibility of the developer this on occasion caused confusion to tenants when reporting repairs. To avoid this confusion a dedicated point of contact through a customer liaison officer is now provided to occupiers of new build homes to ensure clear communication and support.

Complaints as part of service reviews and service development

8.X The use of complaints information is central to designing wider improvements across the Housing Service.

Tenant Challenge Panel

8.X Complaints are routinely considered as part of the work of our Tenant Challenge Panel (tenant scrutiny). Details of complaints for each service being reviewed are considered and themes identified. During 2025/26 the Tenant challenge Panel reviewed both voids and rent recovery. The information from the complaints help the tenants form their recommendations for service improvements.

Anti-social behaviour review

8.X The Housing management service also reviewed our Anit-social behaviour case handling with tenants with a series of workshops reviewing the issues and the

complaints tenants had made about how we handled their cases to develop a new ASB Service Commitment and improve communication for victims of ASB.

New ICT system for repairs

8.X Through 2025/26 we have been working on a new repairs and maintenance management system. The changes this new system will introduce from August 2026 are designed to improve our ability to keep tenants up-to-date and will address some of the underlying themes that are the cause of complaints - preventing the need to keep getting in touch and ensuring tenants are kept up-to-date about the progress of their repair:

- 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

Ongoing reporting and scrutiny

8.X Complaint handling performance is also reported monthly to Strategy Housing Board and 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 2025/26 are set out below.



Had logged an Online repair for her shower not working and the electrician has already turned up so wants to say thank you to whoever has actioned this so promptly

Gas engineer just been out today to repair pressure vessel and PRV. Tenant would like to compliment him, very neat and tidy and pleased with work he did.

I'd just like to message you to say, the person representing you in this van is a delight, after finishing his job he's collected a bit of rubbish off the grass next to where he's been working, it's a lovely thing to see as a resident of the area

I had an appointment for an EPC check on the 5th September which was completed by XXXXX.
I wanted to send a thank you as I live on my own in a Bungalow and XXXXX arrived showed me his ID and explained what his job role was and what the reason for his visit was, offering reassurance about this. He was thoughtful and considerate of me and my home and just really nice. Thank you

He visited 10 minutes ago to inspect the new boiler and radiators we had fitted last month. He was extremely polite and friendly and also helped me with the temperature gauges on 3 of the radiators which were facing the wrong way so he fixed this for me. I also asked him to praise the workmen who had carried out the boiler replacement. They were very considerate and efficient too.
All in all a very positive experience of Chesterfield Borough Council so thank you.

Ms XXXXX says the kitchen she has had fitted in her CBC property has exceeded all expectations, she is delighted with it and the team who fit it were brilliant.