

## Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2025-2026

### Introduction

In **April 2024**, the Housing Ombudsman launched the updated **Complaint Handling Code**. Since its introduction, we have completed **annual self-assessments** to assure ourselves of ongoing compliance and to identify opportunities to further strengthen our approach to complaint handling.

Where improvements have been identified, **clear actions have been agreed and implemented**, helping to improve our processes, outcomes, and overall experience for tenants.

Effective complaint handling, building trust, and actively listening to tenants are central to **Our Plan** and directly support our strategic ambition to deliver a **Quality Tenant Experience**.

Complaints provide valuable insight into where services are falling short and play a key role in driving learning, accountability, and continuous improvement across the organisation.

This report has been prepared to meet the **annual performance reporting requirements** set out in the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. It provides transparency on our complaints performance and demonstrates how learning from complaints is being used to improve services for tenants.

### This report includes:

- A **statement from the Board Member Responsible for Complaints**
- An overview of **complaints performance**, including volumes, key themes, and response timescales for the period **April 2025 to March 2026**
- Examples of **service improvements delivered** between April 2025 and March 2026 as a result of complaint learning
- Our **service improvement plan for 2026–2027**

### Statement from Board Member Responsible for Complaints

*We're committed to providing the best possible services to our tenants. We recognise that sometimes things go wrong and it's important we put things right as quickly as possible. We are committed to improve both how we handle complaints and services that matter to tenants such as repairs. We've made these a top priority in Our Plan in our Quality Tenant Experience goal and have made some positive changes over the last year and want to see these continue. We're listening to feedback and involving tenants, to help us improve and deliver better services.*

*Our self-assessment of compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code evidences our compliance with the Code and has been scrutinised by our Board, whilst our Annual Complaints Performance Report was subject to scrutiny from both our Board and the Board and Tenants Working Together committee, which is made up of tenants and Board members, bringing a range of perspectives to influence improvements to complaints handling. Over the past year the committee has reviewed and challenged performance to help drive better tenant experiences. Further improvements have been identified, these are highlighted in the report, and we have plans in place to deliver these.*

*At our meeting on 2nd June 2026, we considered a report on the Code and, after scrutiny and challenge, approved: The Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2025-2026 as providing assurance that the approach to complaints management is in line with the requirements of the Code, with no risks being identified.*

*On behalf of the Board I confirm our approval of this report as providing a true and accurate reflection of complaints management performance for 2025/26, and the improvement plans in place to learn from complaints and deliver improved outcomes for our tenants.*

*Valerie Waby, Board Member 2026*

### Complaints Performance - Volume

The information below summarises our complaints performance for the period 1st April 2025 and 31st March 2026. During this reporting year no complaints were referred to the Housing Ombudsman.

#### Stage 1:

2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026
63	123	88

#### Stage 2:

2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026
2	7	2

The increase in complaints recorded between **2023/2024** and **2024/2025** provides assurance that we are compliant with the **Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code**.

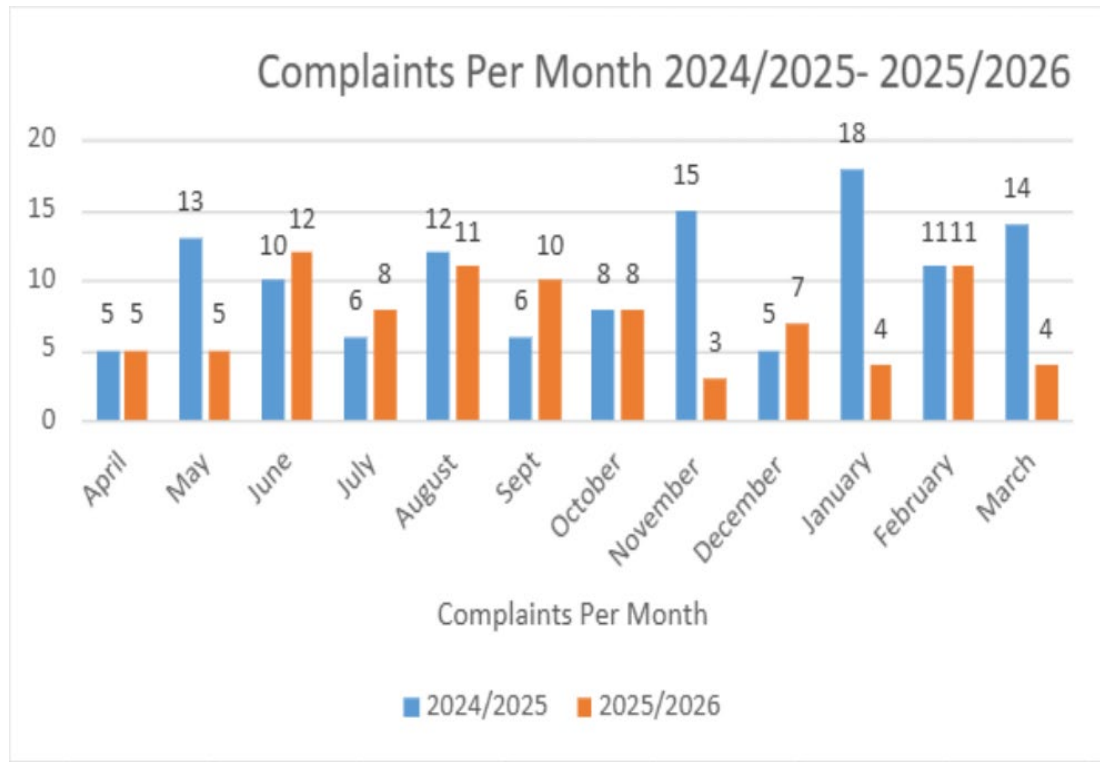
This increase reflects improved identification and more accurate recording of complaints and demonstrates that a positive complaints culture is now embedded across Golden Lane Housing.

The subsequent reduction in complaints during 2025/2026 represents a positive outcome and evidences that we:

- Remain compliant with the **Complaint Handling Code**
- Have robust arrangements in place to monitor and manage complaints performance
- Are implementing service improvement actions and actively using learning from complaints
- Have strengthened tenant engagement and communication around complaints
- Are placing greater focus on early monitoring and resolution of service requests, reducing escalation to formal complaints
- Have improved complaint handling and resolution at **Stage 1**

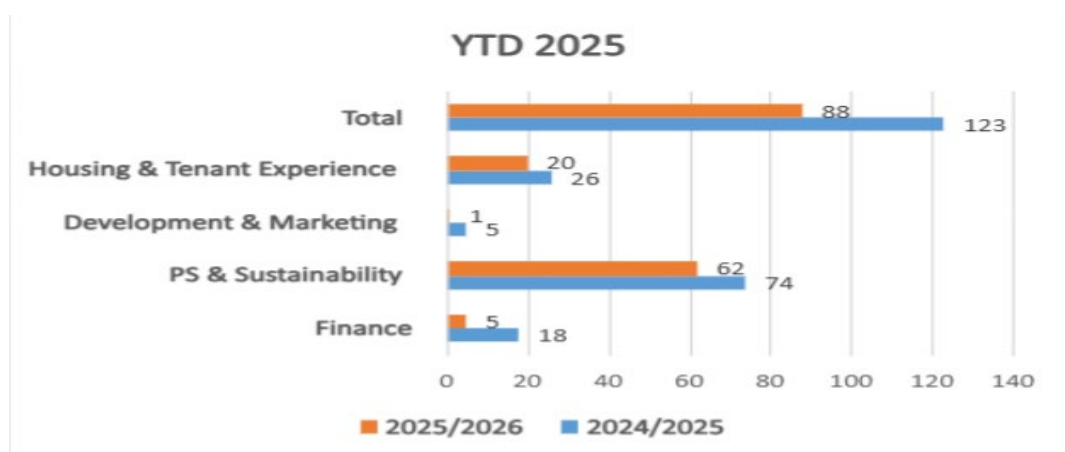
On average, we received seven **Stage 1** complaints per month during this reporting year. This represents a reduction compared to the previous year, when an average of ten **Stage**

1 complaints per month were received, demonstrating improved early resolution and service responsiveness.



Of the **88 Stage 1 complaints** received during the year, six complaints (5.68%) were not upheld. All non-upheld complaints related to the repairs service and, following investigation, it was confirmed that service level agreements had been met and no service failure had occurred.

**Complaints Performance – Volume by Department, Region and Property Type.**



Directorate	Stage 1	% of stage 1 total	Stage 2	% of complaints escalated to stage 2
Property & Sustainability	62	70.4%	1	1.6%
Housing & Tenant Experience	20	22.8%	1	5%
Finance	5	5.7%	0	0%
Development & Marketing	1	1.1%	0	0%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2.4%</b>

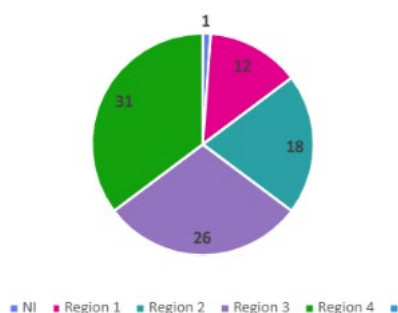
There has been a reduction in complaints across all directorates compared to the previous year. The most significant reduction has been within the Finance Directorate, indicating that the challenges identified in the previous year are being effectively addressed and that service improvement actions have delivered sustained impact.

These improvements have been achieved through a combination of additional resourcing, targeted training, and a stronger focus on data quality and performance monitoring.

Within **Our Plan**, clear objectives have been set to sustain and build on this progress, directly supporting our strategic ambitions to deliver **Impact and Growth** and to be **Future Ready**.

Reductions have also been seen across Property Services and Housing complaints. This provides assurance that we are focusing on the right improvement activity within these services, including enhancements to communication, capacity, and the quality of work delivered to tenants.

Regions - 2025/26



NI – Northern Ireland = 1 complaint (1.1%)

Region 1- North England, North West = 12 complaints (13.6%)

Region 2 – Yorkshire and Midlands = 18 complaints (20.5%)

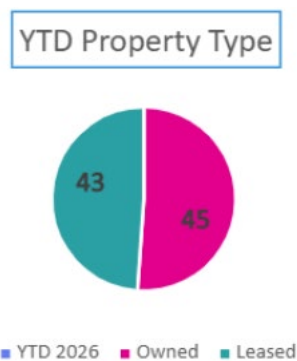
Region 3 – London and South East = 26 complaints (29.6%)

Region 4 – South West = 31 complaints (35.2%)

Analysis of complaints by region shows a **reduction in complaints across London and the Southeast**, decreasing from **35% last year to 29.6% this year**.

An **increase has been identified in the Southwest**, where complaints rose from **31% last year to 35.2% this year**. This will be monitored to understand the underlying drivers and to identify any targeted improvement actions required.

Complaint volumes across **Northern Ireland, North England, Yorkshire, and the Midlands** have remained **broadly consistent with the previous year**, indicating stable performance in these regions.



This year, no significant trends were identified in complaint volumes when comparing **owned and leased properties**. Of the complaints received, **45 (51%) related to owned properties** and **43 (49%) related to leased properties**, demonstrating a broadly even distribution across tenure types.

## Complaints Performance – Timescales

### Stage 1 Complaints

Of the **88 Stage 1 complaints** received during the reporting period:

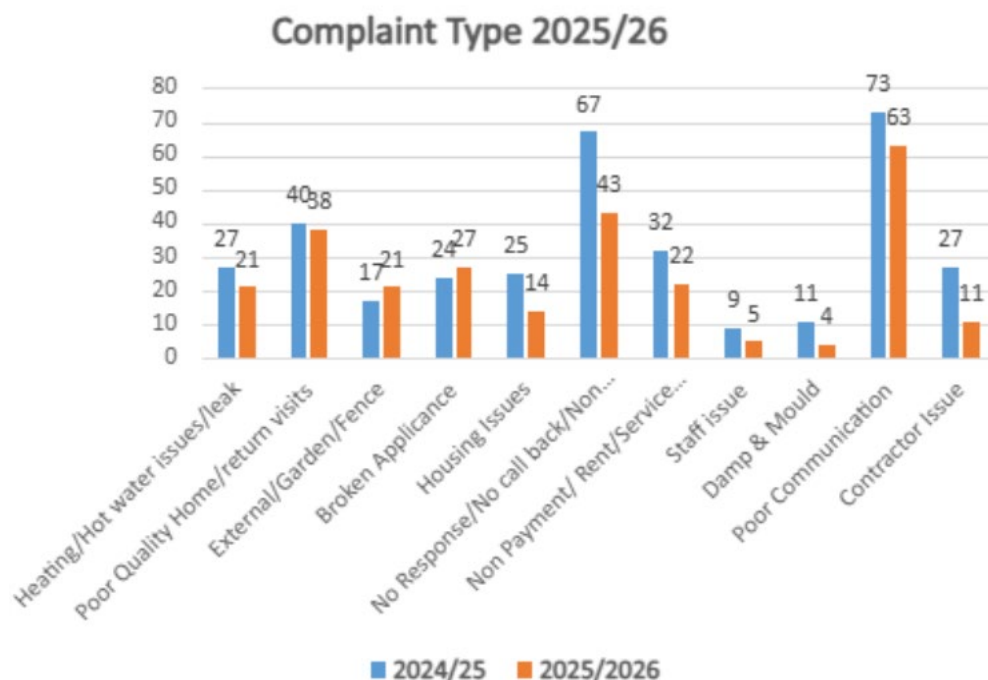
- 87 complaints (99%) were acknowledged within the regulatory timescale of 5 working days
- 80 complaints (91%) were responded to within the regulatory timescale of 10 working days
- 8 complaints (9%) were responded to outside the 10-day regulatory timescale
- 15 extensions were agreed with complainants, in line with regulatory guidance, allowing up to an additional 10 working days

### Stage 2 Complaints

Of the **2 Stage 2 complaints** received:

- 100% were acknowledged within 5 working days
- 100% were responded to within the regulatory timescale of 20 working days

**Complaints Performance – Themes and Trends**



**Top Complaint Themes 2025–2026**

The top three complaint themes during 2025–2026 were:

- **Poor communication**
- **No call back / no attendance**
- **Poor quality repairs and return visits**

As in the previous year, complaints analysis identified the same top three themes. However, while these issues remain consistent, the data shows a reduction in the overall volume of complaints relating to each theme.

This indicates that the actions taken to improve communication, address missed appointments, and improve the quality of repairs are beginning to have a positive impact.

These improvements will need to be further embedded and sustained throughout 2026–2027 to ensure continued progress and to support further reductions in complaint volumes.

Trend analysis shows that complaints relating to gardening services and rent enquiries are typically higher in **Quarter 1**. This reflects predictable seasonal factors, including increased demand for gardening services and the annual issue of rent increase letters during February and March.

Encouragingly, we have seen a reduction in complaints relating to damp and mould, housing management issues, and contractor performance. This reflects the targeted work undertaken by teams to:

- Embed the requirements of Awaab's Law
- Implement revised antisocial behaviour and tenancy management procedures
- Strengthen collaborative working with contractors to improve service quality and consistency

These trends provide assurance that focused improvement activity is having a positive impact, while also helping to inform where seasonal planning and proactive communication can further reduce complaints in future years.

### **Service Improvements Delivered Following Complaint Learning**

**April 2025 – March 2026**

Through our **Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2024–2025**, alongside ongoing live analysis of complaints throughout the year, a number of service improvement actions were identified for delivery during 2025–2026.

This work has been led by the Head of Tenant Experience, working collaboratively with teams across the organisation. Regular updates on complaint learning and progress against actions were shared with colleagues, with clear accountability and delivery timescales in place to ensure improvements were implemented effectively.

### **Service improvements delivered during 2025–2026**

As a direct result of complaint learning, the following improvements were implemented:

- Improved the management and oversight of complaints, ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements, including response timescales and procedural standards
- Increased the volume and quality of tenant data captured, enabling more proactive and tailored services and improving communication
- Increased resources and training within our in-house repairs service, Resolve, to improve responsiveness and service delivery
- Clearly defined the service request process across all teams, with training delivered to support consistent logging, management, and review, helping to improve proactive communication
- Completed a full audit of rent arrears accounts, strengthening communication with tenants about next steps and improving liaison with Housing Benefit teams
- Launched a Tenant Complaints Forum, enabling tenants to receive training, provide feedback, and review a sample of complaints to shape service improvements
- Reviewed and updated the Complaints Policy to ensure full alignment with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code
- Proactively engaged with tenants who pay a gardening service charge to understand satisfaction levels and take action where required
- Completed a review of the out-of-hours repairs service to assess performance and identify improvement opportunities

- Strengthened feedback, coaching, and quality assurance arrangements for complaint handlers to support earlier and more effective resolution

### **Strengthening compliance with the Complaint Handling Code**

In addition to the improvements outlined above, further work was completed to strengthen assurance and compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, supporting a robust and effective complaints process.

This included:

- Reviewing and updating the Compensation Policy to ensure fairness, consistency, and compliance
- Enhancing the complaints training programme to ensure role-specific training aligned with regulatory expectations
- Clearly communicating complaint handling responsibilities to third-party contractors, ensuring alignment with the Code
- Providing documented complaints and compensation procedures to support consistent practice across the organisation
- Introducing a formal process to regularly review, record, and respond to changes in tenants' needs

### **Service Improvement Plan for 2026/2027.**

During 2026–2027, the Head of Tenant Experience will provide leadership and operational oversight for the delivery of all complaints-related actions. This will ensure clear ownership, coordinated delivery, and continued focus on using complaint learning to improve services for tenants.

Progress against complaints actions will be managed and monitored through the organisation's new platform, **4Action**. This system will provide increased transparency and consistency by clearly recording actions, assigning ownership, and tracking progress against agreed timescales.

The use of **4Action** will support more robust monitoring and enable assurance that actions are being delivered as intended and are driving tangible service improvements.

**Board** oversight will be maintained through regular reporting to the **Housing and Property Committee**, covering complaints performance, learning, and progress against agreed improvement actions. This will ensure continued scrutiny, challenge, and alignment with regulatory expectations.

The **Board Member Responsible for Complaints** will provide independent oversight and challenge throughout the year, ensuring that learning from complaints is effectively embedded across the organisation and that improvement activity continues to align with both the **Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code** and Golden Lane Housing's strategic priorities.

The service improvements planned for 2026–2027 have been identified through current complaints analysis. In addition, learning from individual complaints and emerging themes will continue to be systematically reviewed throughout the year. Where further improvement opportunities are identified, additional actions will be agreed and formally recorded, ensuring that continuous improvement remains embedded within the complaints handling framework and wider service delivery arrangements.

What action are we taking?	Why are we focusing on this?	How will we do it?
Embedding colleague training around service requests and complaints.	<p>To reduce complaints linked to poor or unclear communication</p> <p>To ensure issues are resolved as quickly as possible for tenants</p> <p>To strengthen compliance with the Housing Ombudsman’s Complaint Handling Code</p>	<p>Provide regular performance reporting to managers to support effective monitoring and review of service requests</p> <p>Deliver ongoing feedback and coaching to complaint handlers to improve quality and consistency</p> <p>Test services through structured tenant involvement and feedback activities</p>
Change how we monitor promises made to tenants following a complaint.	<p>To reduce complaints arising from unmet expectations and poor communication</p> <p>To increase tenant satisfaction by ensuring commitments are delivered</p> <p>To strengthen compliance with the Complaint Handling Code</p>	<p>Deliver targeted training for colleagues on managing post-complaint actions</p> <p>Use the <i>4Action</i> platform to track, monitor, and provide assurance on actions and commitments made following complaint responses</p>
Change how we record learnings from our complaints.	<p>To capture learning consistently and use it to prevent future complaints</p> <p>To reduce repeat service failures</p> <p>To evidence that we listen to tenants, learn from complaints, and make meaningful improvements</p>	<p>Deliver training to colleagues on identifying and recording complaint learning</p> <p>Use the <i>4Action</i> platform to formally log complaint learning and track associated improvement actions</p>

<p>Making structure changes across the organisation.</p>	<p>To strengthen our repairs service and reduce complaints</p> <p>To improve housing management services and reduce service-related complaints</p>	<p>Review and implement organisational changes to ensure the right skills, capacity, and roles are in place to support sustained service improvement</p>
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### Mapping Service Improvement Actions to the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code

#### 1. Embedding colleague training around service requests and complaints

##### Relevant Code clauses

- 1.2 – Landlords must have a culture that supports effective complaint handling
- 1.4 – Landlords must ensure staff have the skills and knowledge to handle complaints effectively
- 2.1 – Clear distinction between service requests and complaints
- 6.1 – Landlords must ensure complaints are addressed fairly, effectively, and promptly

##### How this action supports compliance

This action strengthens staff capability and consistency in distinguishing service requests from complaints, responding appropriately, and communicating clearly with tenants. Enhanced training, performance reporting, and feedback mechanisms directly support effective early resolution and a positive complaints culture.

#### 2. Changing how we monitor promises made to tenants following a complaint

##### Relevant Code clauses

- 5.9 – Landlords must clearly record complaint outcomes and any actions agreed
- 5.11 – Landlords must take steps to ensure remedies are delivered
- 6.2 – Landlords must ensure learning from complaints leads to service improvement

##### How this action supports compliance

Tracking commitments and remedies through *4Action* provides assurance that agreed actions are delivered and monitored. This addresses Ombudsman expectations around “putting things right,” reducing repeat dissatisfaction, and strengthening trust through accountability.

#### 3. Changing how we record learning from complaints

##### Relevant Code clauses

- 6.1 – Landlords must use complaints to drive service improvement
- 6.2 – Landlords must identify themes, trends, and root causes
- 6.3 – Landlords must report on learning and resulting improvements

#### **How this action supports compliance**

Improved recording of complaint learning ensures systemic issues are identified and addressed, not just individual cases. Using *4Action* to log learning and track actions provides a clear audit trail evidencing that feedback is listened to and acted upon.

#### **4. Making structural changes across the organisation**

##### **Relevant Code clauses**

- 1.1 – Governing bodies must have responsibility for complaint handling
- 1.4 – Landlords must ensure sufficient resources are in place
- 6.2 – Complaints must be used to review and improve service delivery

#### **How this action supports compliance**

Organisational and structural changes ensure the right skills, capacity, and accountability are in place to prevent repeat service failures. This demonstrates that complaint learning is influencing strategic and operational decision-making, as expected by the Ombudsman.

In addition to leading the delivery of the service improvement actions, the Head of Tenant Experience will also be responsible for ensuring that:

- Our complaints policy and complaints handling approach remain fully compliant with Regulatory Consumer Standards
- We maintain ongoing compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code and deliver any agreed improvement actions arising from self-assessments, complaint learning, or Ombudsman guidance
- Complaints performance data and key performance indicators continue to be reported regularly and transparently to the Board, Executive Team, colleagues, and tenants to support effective scrutiny, learning, and accountability

#### **Board assurance**

The Board retains overall responsibility for oversight of complaint handling and assurance of compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code and Regulatory Consumer Standards.

Regular performance reporting, supported by independent challenge from the Board Member Responsible for Complaints, provides the Board with assurance that complaints are managed effectively, learning is embedded, and service improvement actions are delivered.

This governance framework supports ongoing compliance, accountability, and continuous improvement, ensuring that complaint handling contributes positively to delivering a quality tenant experience.