



SOUTH HOLLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL - ANNUAL COMPLAINTS AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS REPORTING

INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS, MEMBER RESPONSIBLE FOR COMPLAINTS,
MANAGERS AND SHDC TENANTS

01 April 2025 to 31 March 2026

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GLOSSARY

- S1 – Stage 1 complaints
- S2 – Stage 2 complaints
- SR – Service Requests
- WD – Working Days (Monday to Friday excl bank holidays)
- Upheld – complaint valid and agreed with
- Partially upheld – some parts of the complaint valid and agreed with
- Not Upheld – complaint not valid
- KPI – Key Performance Indicators
- DCM – Damp, Condensation and Mould
- Drivers – Reasons for the complaint – the Why
- Themes – What the complaint was about – the What
- SO – Shared Ownership
- RTB – Right to Buy
- ILO – Independent Living Officers / team
- COLRO – Cost of Living Response Officers



FOREWARD –

MEMBER RESPONSIBLE FOR COMPLAINTS

As the Member Responsible for Housing Complaints, I welcome this Annual Complaints Report and the assurance it provides on how tenant concerns are being listened to, handled and learned from within the Housing Landlord Service. This culture is shown by the improvements in our Stage 1 responses, highlighted by our 41% reduction in Stage 2 complaints.

Throughout 2025/26, I have received regular updates on complaint handling performance and met with officers to review the quality of responses, particularly at Stage 1. This member oversight has focused not only on timeliness, but on whether responses are clear, fair and empathetic, and whether learning is being embedded into service delivery.

I am encouraged by the continued strengthening of tenant involvement in complaint scrutiny, including the role of tenant-led groups in reviewing responses and sharing observations. This has helped provide valuable challenge and insight, ensuring that the tenant perspective remains central to how complaints are handled.

Where issues have been identified, I have been reassured that appropriate actions have been taken promptly to address them. This reflects a culture of openness and learning, which is essential to maintaining trust and meeting our responsibilities under the Complaint Handling



Councillor Tracey Carter,
Portfolio Holder for Strategic
and Operational Housing and
Member Responsible for
Housing Complaints



FOREWARD –

GOVERNING BODY FOR COMPLAINTS – DRAFT RECOMMENDED RESPONSE

Cabinet notes the continued improvement in the handling of housing complaints during 2025/26, with a reduction in overall complaints and a significant decrease in escalations to Stage 2. This provides assurance that issues are increasingly being resolved effectively at Stage 1, supported by improved response quality, clearer processes, and stronger management oversight. Performance against Housing Ombudsman timescales has remained strong, with only one instance of non-compliance during the year and no findings of maladministration or non-compliance by the Ombudsman.

Cabinet welcomes the strengthened role of tenant involvement in complaints handling, particularly through the tenant-led Complaints and Performance Focus Group, and the ownership of complaints by staff at the Complaints Working Group. These arrangements have provided constructive challenge, helped improve the quality and tone of responses, and ensured learning is identified and shared. The introduction of clearer governance, scrutiny and reporting arrangements provides further confidence that complaint trends, themes and risks are being appropriately monitored.

Cabinet recognises that contractor performance and communication remain the most common drivers of upheld complaints and welcomes the actions being taken to address this, including tighter contract management, the introduction of a tenant-informed contractor code of conduct, and the increased use of post-works satisfaction surveys. Cabinet also notes that waiting times and managing expectations continue to feature prominently in complaints and endorses the focus on improving communication and proactive updates to tenants.

Finally, Cabinet is assured that learning from complaints is informing service improvement, policy development and training. The planned introduction of additional feedback mechanisms, including random telephone surveys, is supported to strengthen insight into tenant experience. Cabinet expects that this momentum will continue through 2026/27, with a continued emphasis on regulatory compliance, tenant voice, and early resolution, ensuring the complaints process remains fair, transparent and focused on continuous improvement.



FOREWARD –

TENANT INFLUENCE PANEL – REPRESENTING SHDC TENANTS

As a newly established Tenant Scrutiny Panel, this Housing Complaints Annual Assessment and Service Improvement Report represents an important first step in our formal scrutiny journey.

We recognise that, as a new panel, we are still developing our understanding of complaints handling, performance data, and the wider organisational context within which this report sits. We have approached this review with care, drawing on our lived experience as tenants while building the skills and confidence needed to provide effective challenge and assurance.

Through our review of this year's report, we have identified that overall complaints processes are in place and working broadly as intended. We have recommended a small number of practical and proportionate improvements, focused on clarity, consistency, and learning from complaints, which we believe will support continued service improvement and strengthen accountability to tenants.

Looking ahead, we see this report as the start of an exciting journey for tenants to really help shape services going forward. As the panel becomes more established, gains further training, and has access to richer performance information, we look forward to undertaking more detailed and robust scrutiny in future years. Our ambition is to play an increasingly active role in helping the organisation learn from complaints, improve services, and ensure that tenants' voices remain at the heart of decision-making.



INTRODUCTION

Our Complaints process comprises a two-stage internal process and is aligned with the principles of the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.

Stage one complaints which are dealt with by Team Leaders and Senior Officers who are in touch with the operations of services and can identify quickly when something has gone wrong.

Stage two complaints where a Service Manager or in exceptional circumstance our Director or Assistant Director reviews the stage one response.

Throughout the complaints process, tenants are clearly signposted to the Housing Ombudsman and where they remain dissatisfied following a Stage 2 response they can refer the matter for independent review by the Housing Ombudsman.

Our Complaints Policy has recently been reviewed by our Tenants, Policy Development Panel and the Housing Ombudsman to ensure it accurately reflects the Housing Ombudsman code of practice, but to ensure that a strong tenant's voice is running through it.

The Member Responsible for Complaints meets quarterly with Senior Officers and Team Leaders to scrutinise performance and to check on the standard of our Stage 1 and Stage 2 responses to ensure these are empathetic and clear.

Our Tenants scrutinise performance and trends through our Complaints Focus Group and Tenant Influence Panel, and members scrutinise at PMP.

Looking ahead for the coming year we will continue to emphasize early intervention and proactive engagement with our tenants, encouraging ownership and accountability amongst colleagues, strengthen the ways our tenants can feedback views to us via sample phone satisfaction surveys and extend the ways we support our more vulnerable tenants to complain and have their voices heard.

Please enjoy the report.





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF COMPLAINTS / COMPLIMENTS 2025/26

SHDC is committed to listening and learning from our tenants when things don't go as planned or meet expectations, to investigate what happened, accept where we are at fault, and how we could do better. We also like to acknowledge the work we do when we get things right and learn from these actions and behaviours. This report analyses our performance over the year, and highlights what we have done to improve our services working with our tenants to achieve this.

During the year from April 2025 to March 2026, the following activity was recorded:

Stage 1 Complaints (S1): A total of **189 S1 complaints** were received. We have not refused any complaints in the year.

Year-on-year comparison shows a **reduction of 24 S1 complaints** against complaints received in 2024/25.

Stage 2 Complaints (S2): 12 S2 complaints were received.

This marks a **decrease of 16** when comparing with the previous year.

Complaint Stats:

Of the 189 S1 complaints received, **124 (66%) were upheld**. Of the S2 complaints received **6 (50%) were upheld**.

No maladministration, or findings of non-compliance with the code were found by the Housing Ombudsman, with a total response rate for Stage 1 complaints standing at 97.8% for the year. A total of **151 service requests** were also received, monitored, analysed for trends and closed during the year.

Compliments and Thank Yous:

Across the year we recorded **115 compliments and thank you messages**, reflecting positive customer feedback.



Analysis has highlighted that the number of complaints received over this year has decreased compared to last year. During the year we have brought our damp repairs in house which has resulted in **47 % less** complaints received compared to 24/25. We continue to work to promote how to complain.



We have discovered that S2 complaints have **decreased by 41%** compared to last year. We are attributing this to the training, scrutiny and tracking of our S1 complaints and their responses. We will continue to track and check this trend and its overall impact.



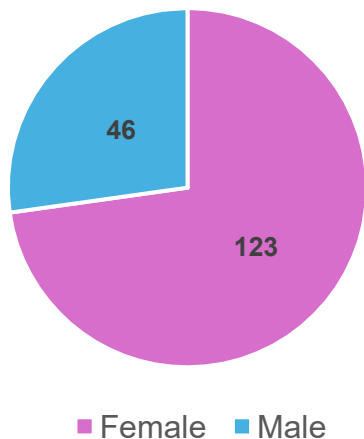
Service Requests are monitored to ensure they are dealt with appropriately. SR overall are a mixture of tenants / or residents reporting issues for the first time that need resolving OR they have come to complaints due to not knowing which department to speak to – work is ongoing to rectify this .



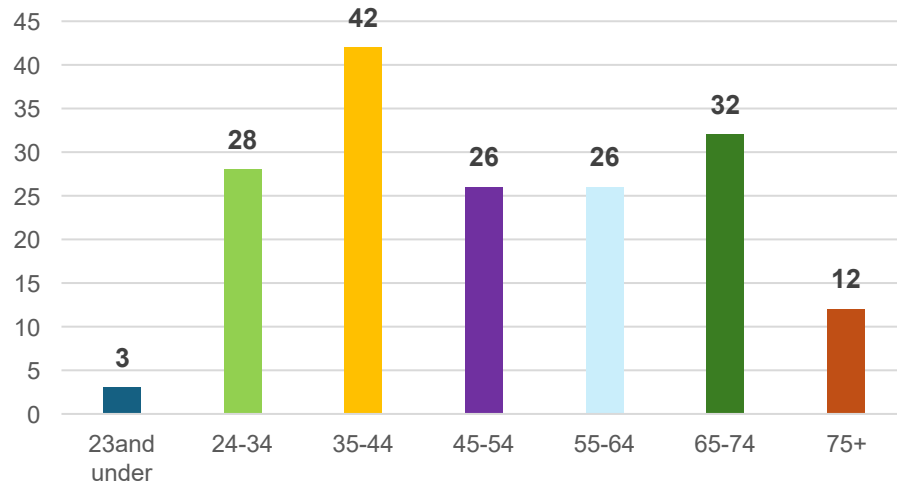
DEMOGRAPHICS OF COMPLAINANTS

Break down of demographics

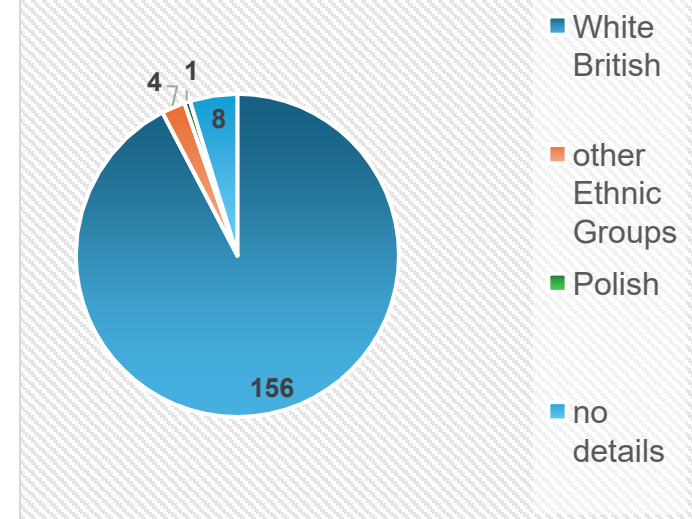
Gender of complainants



Age range of complainants



Ethnicity of complainants



We had 20 complaints received who are now former tenants or were not tenants who we hold no details for.



Complaints have been received from a wide range of ages, predominantly women. We will continue to monitor to ensure all tenants can access the service.



Over this year we have improved how we collect and use data of tenant's additional needs and reasonable adjustments. For 26/27 we will be embedding this into our processes; by updating guidance for teams so we can respond better to individual needs.



Working with Tenants at our Complaints and Performance Focus Group we aim to create a new information leaflet on Complaints to provide clearer and more empathetic information for tenants to help them through the complaints process.



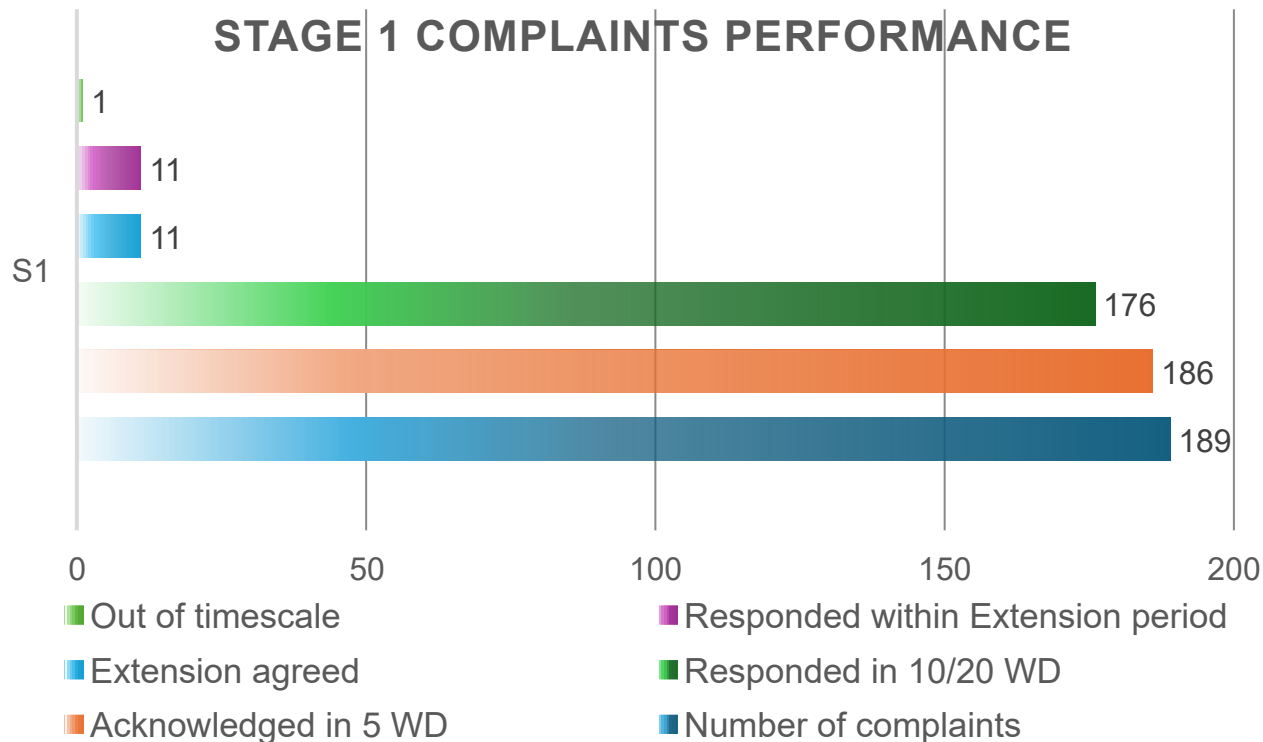
PERFORMANCE SUMMARY STAGE 1 COMPLAINTS

Stage 1 Complaints

We have received a total of **189 S1** complaints over the year – across all service areas with a **97.88%** response rate in target.

This represents a **decrease of 24** compared to the 213 complaints received last year:

- 0** Complaints refused in the year
- 186** were acknowledged within 5 WD
- 176** were responded to within 10 WD
- 12** agreed extensions with the tenant and responded to within 20 WD
- 1** response out of 10-day time frame – no agreed extension



Of the 3 late acknowledgements, 2 were due to an error in the spreadsheet, and 1 was due to it not being sent directly to complaints but to an Officer on leave. Complaint workshops and checks on the sheet are now in place to resolve this



The one response sent late was a complex case, involving multiple service areas, and no engagement with the Complaints Co-Ordinator. Steps were put in place to help with the complaint process, but the timescale ended up not being met and with no engagement there was no option to extend.



Tenants are called to agree any extensions required and are given regular updates on progress by the complaints Co-Ordinator / or team. All extension reasons are logged but are mainly due to further in-depth reports being required.



PERFORMANCE SUMMARY – STAGE 2 COMPLAINTS

Stage 2 Complaints

We have received a total of **12 S2** complaints over the year, relating to Estate Management, Repairs and Property.

This was a **41% reduction of S2** compared to last year

Of the 12 complaints:

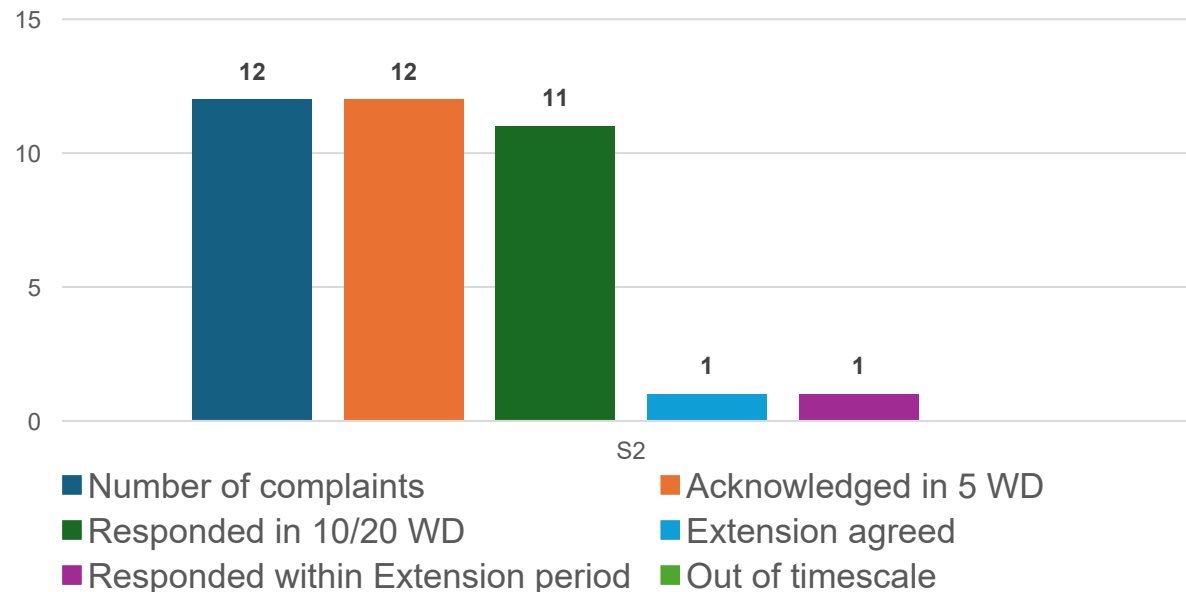
100% were acknowledged within 5 WD

92% (11) were responded to within 20 WD

1 had an agreed extension with the tenant

100% were responded to within 20-day extension period.

Stage 2 Complaints



Of the **12 Stage 2** complaints, **3** occurred due to Stage 1 Actions not commencing in time and the other **8** due to the tenant still not agreeing with the Stage 1 Response and wanting a review, with **1** being a complex ASB case.



The **8** Stage 2's wanting a review, **5** submitted the S2 request within **1 working day**, with the other **3** submitting S2 complaints within **3 weeks**. The complex case submitted the S2 complaint within **3 months**.

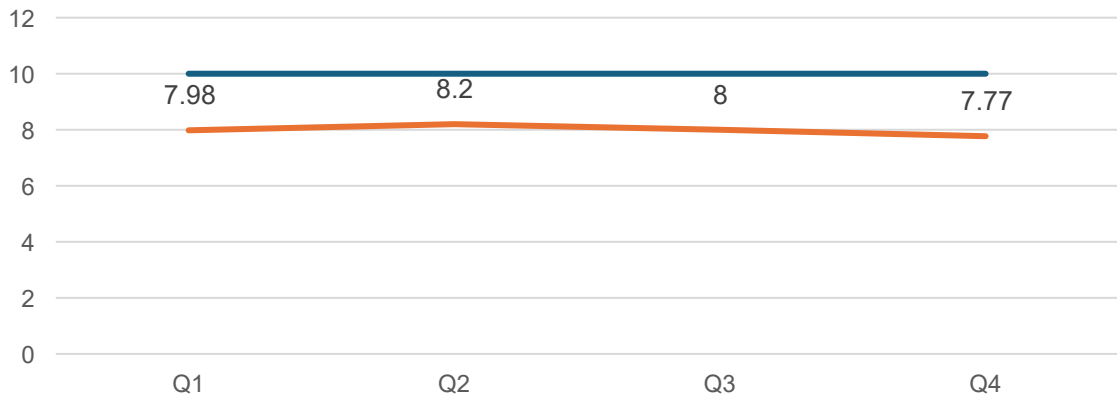


The **3** Stage 2 complaints that were unhappy over the time taken to follow up on the actions agreed at S1 submitted their S2 between **1 month to 6 months** later. Tighter controls on monitoring actions from complaints is being implemented with updates and audits taking place.



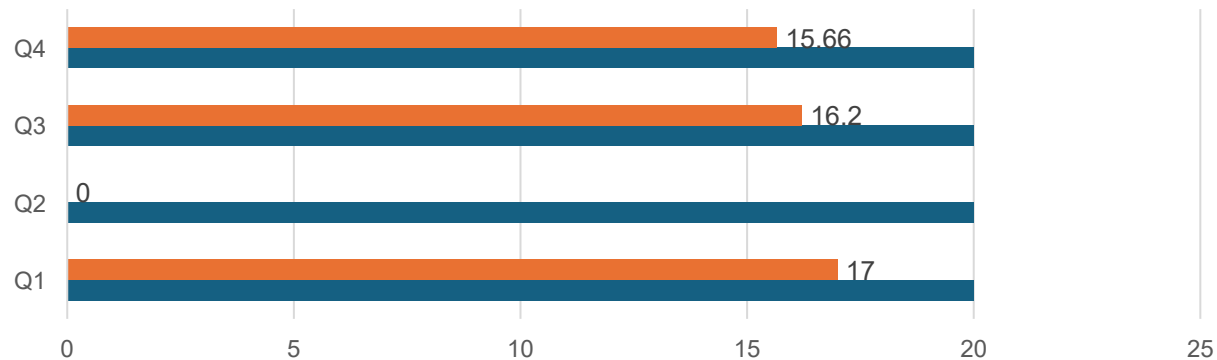
RESPONSE PERFORMANCE FOR STAGE 1 COMPLAINTS

Average days to respond to S1 complaints with no extension

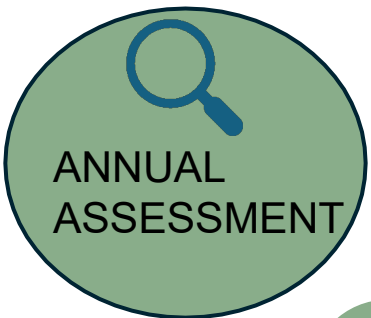


— KPI for S1 responses — Average days to respond to S1 complaint

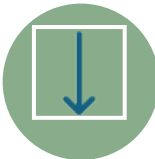
Average days to respond to agreed S1 extended responses



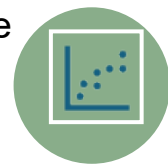
■ Average days to respond to agreed extended S1 complaint
■ KPI for agreed extended responses



Over the year out of the **189** complaints received **177** had no agreed extensions and the average response in days for these complaints stands at around **8 days per complaint**. Well within the Housing Ombudsman code. Of the 177 complaints with no agreed extensions, we had **1 complaint** that took over 10 days to respond due to limited engagement with the tenant.



Of the **12 complaints (6.34%)** that we had agreed extensions with the average time to respond was **between 15 and 17 days**, again well within the KPI of 20 days. Extensions all agreed with tenants to enable complaints to be investigated sufficiently to resolve the complaint to the tenant's satisfaction.

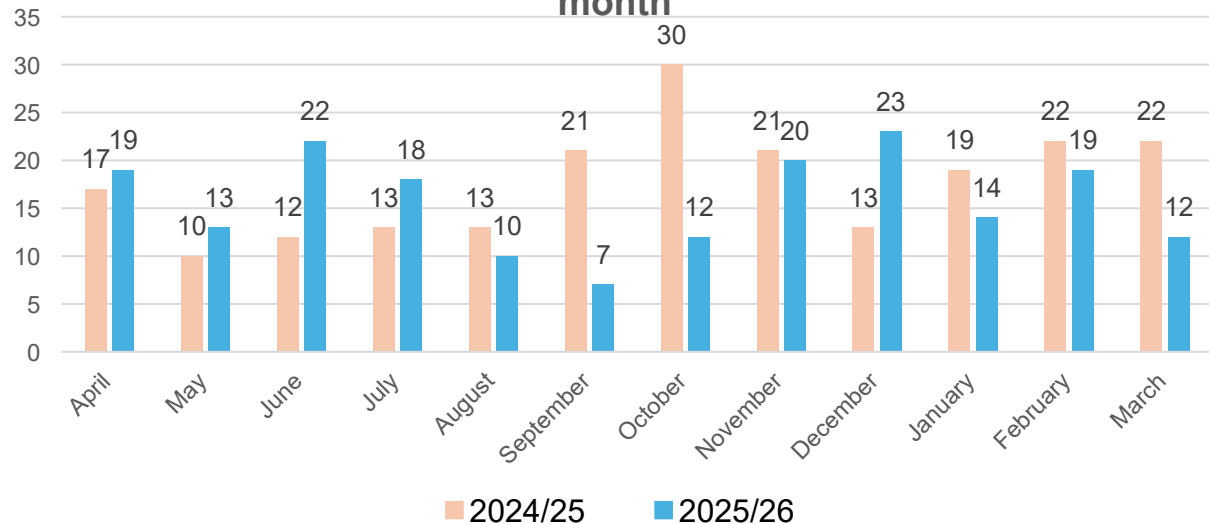


All Stage 2 complaints were responded to within the timeframes.

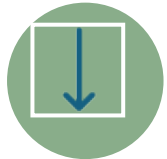
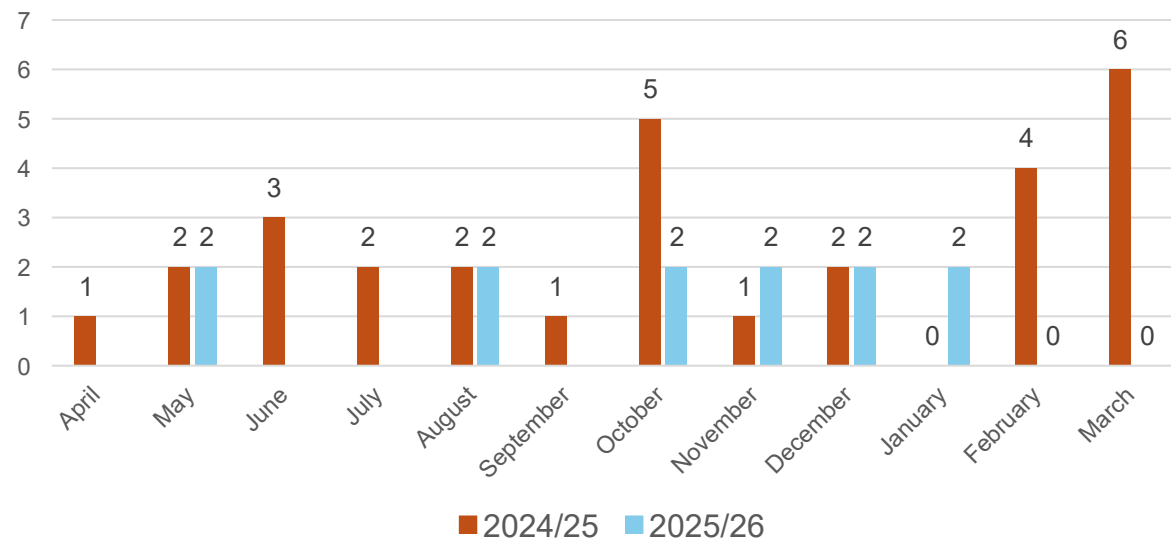


COMPLAINTS COMPARISON APRIL TO MARCH 24/25 & 25/26

Comparison of stage 1 complaints 24/25 to 25/26 by month



Comparison of stage 2 complaints 24/25 and 25/26 by month



When comparing the S1 complaints to last year, September and October show vast differences in complaints received. Investigation into this anomaly has returned no obvious reason why with no trends to the complaints received in 2024. However, this was around the period of meet the Housing Ombudsman event.



S2 complaints have reduced by over a half, which indicates much better S1 responses. The Complaints working group and tenant led, Complaints and Performance Focus Group who have oversight into the service playing a part in the quality of S1 responses.

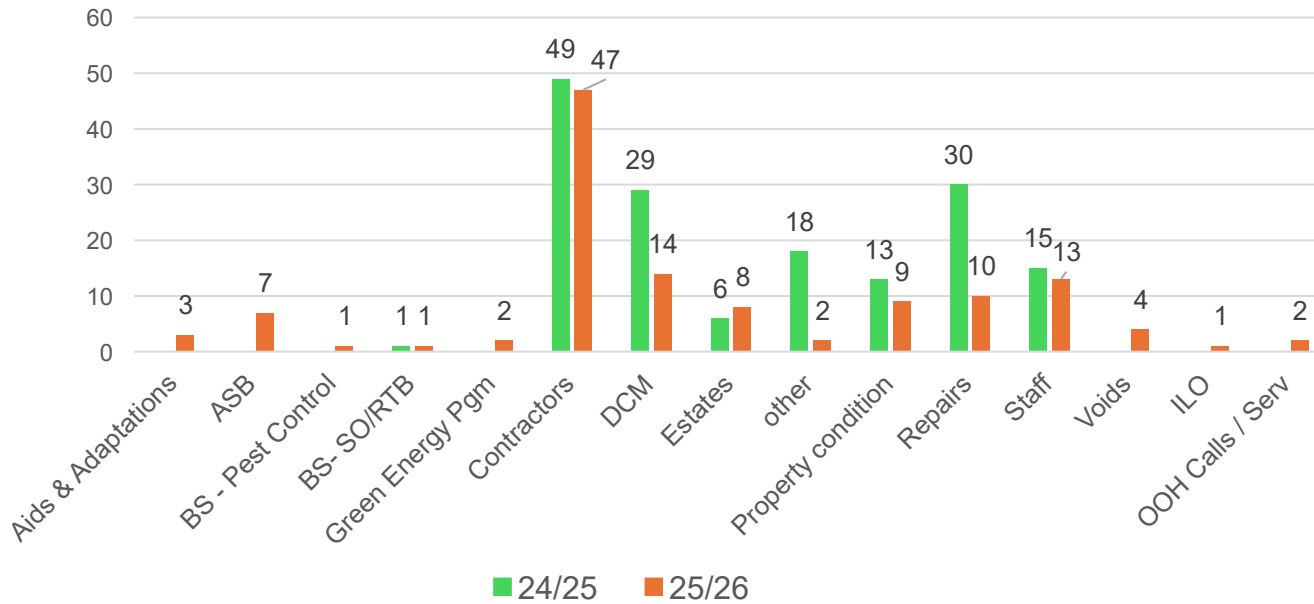


Looking forward we will be holding a series of Complaints Workshops for staff, tenants, internal departments and Contractors to attend to refresh themselves with the complaints process and equip them to identify dissatisfaction and raise complaints in a timely fashion.

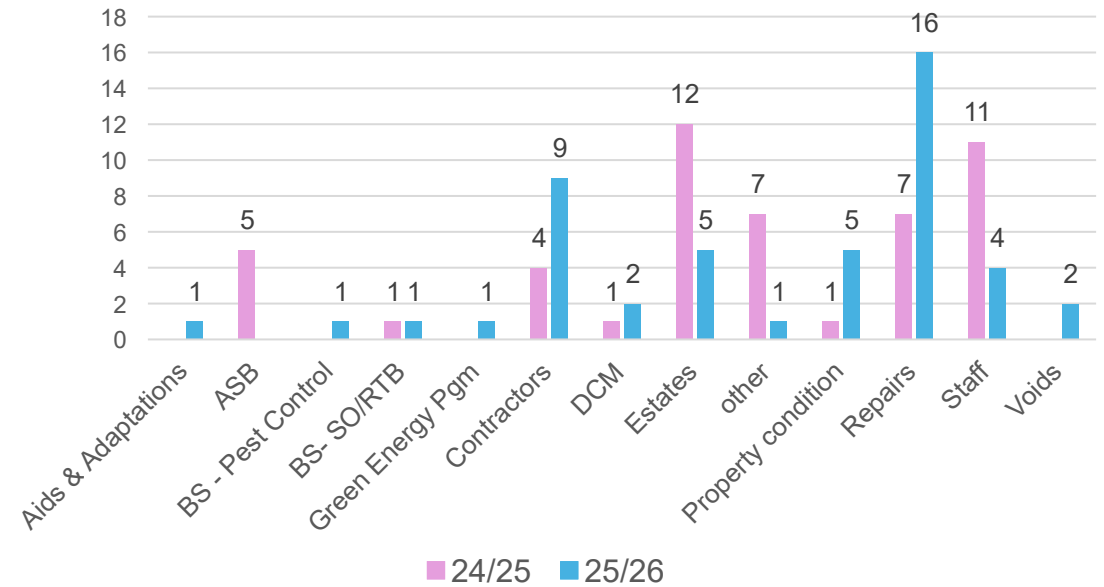


ANALYSIS OF UPHELD AND NOT UPHELD COMPLAINTS 24/25 AND 25/26

Complaints Upheld by theme and year



Complaints not upheld by theme and year

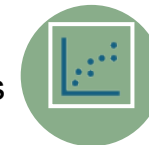


Analysis has taken place to identify the themes of our complaints and within these themes those where the complaints are upheld and not upheld.



Initial analysis indicates that Contractors are the highest cause of complaints being upheld, followed by DCM. Investigation into DCM revealed that many of the complaints arising were due to historic issues before the new DCM service began, and that upheld complaints for this year have reduced, along with repairs. ASB identifies as an area to watch. Work with tenants will take place at our Tenancy Focus Groups to help address this.

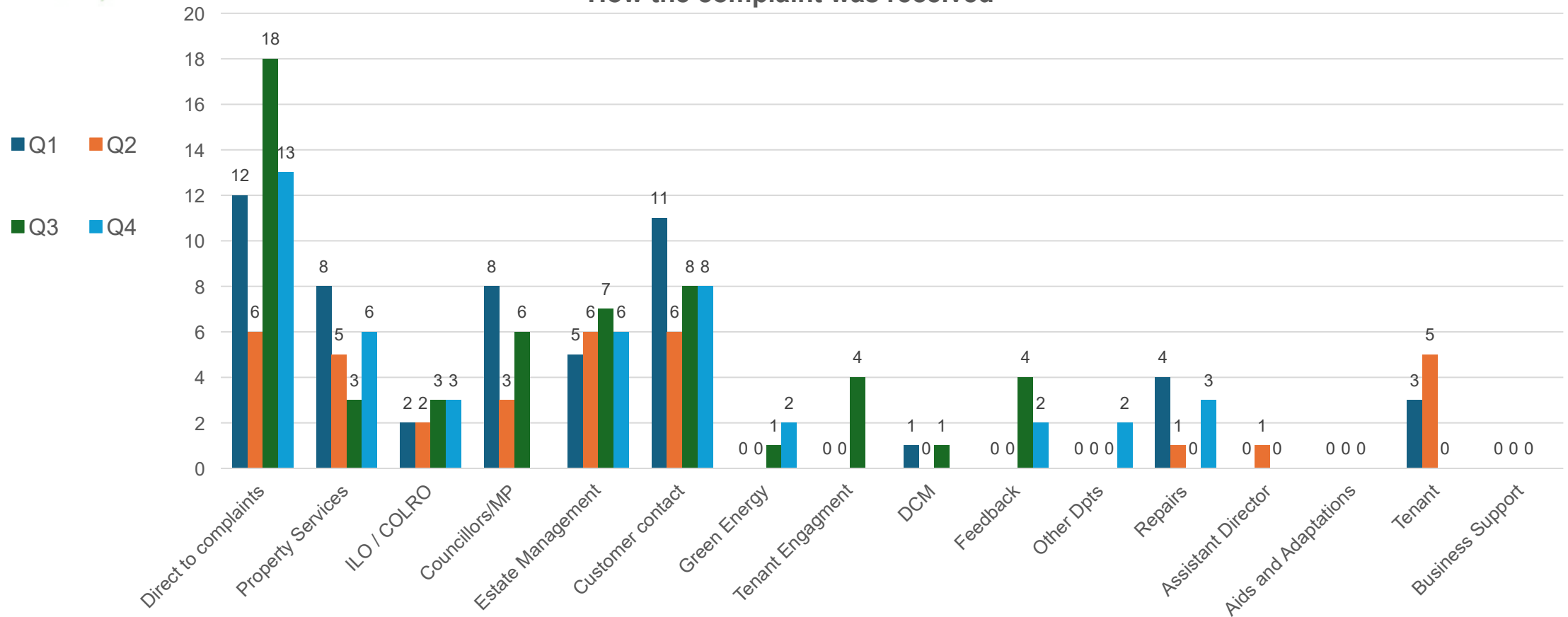
A deeper look into the range of the complaints over contractors has begun, with tighter contract management and controls being put in place through our newly established Capital Clinic.



COMPLAINTS RECEIVED



How the complaint was received



We are tracking how we receive all complaints and who is reporting them, to ensure that we are not missing any tenant feedback. We will investigate if figures in areas decrease dramatically



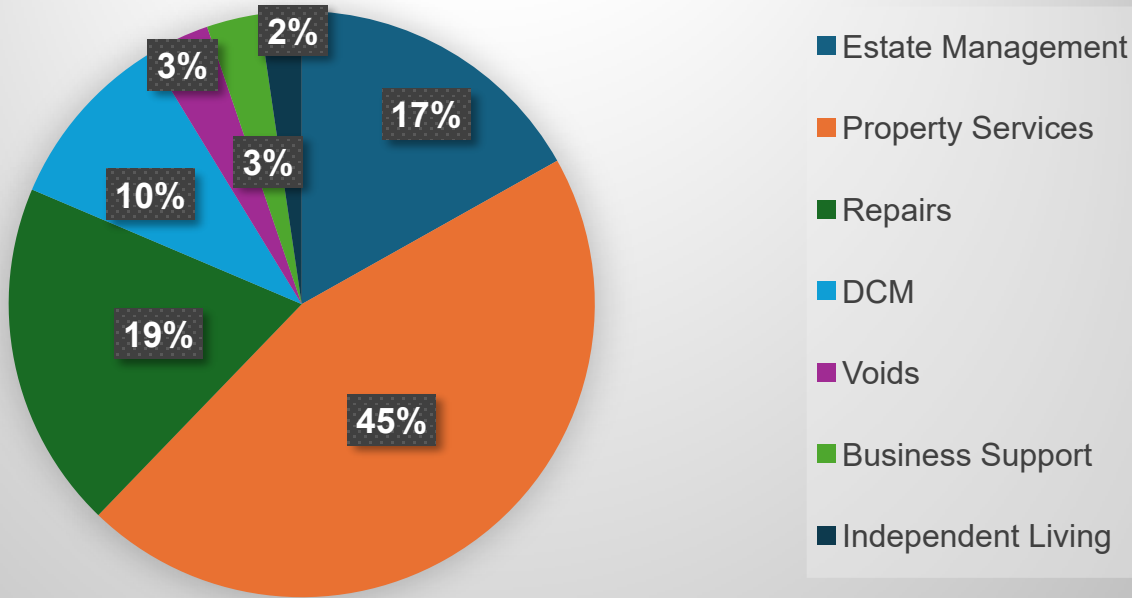
Analysis shows that all teams and areas are sending through complaints when received. To give assurance on satisfaction with work we are introducing transactional surveys to check tenant views.



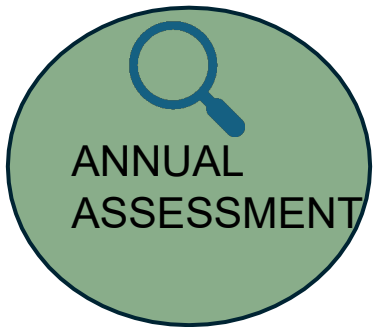
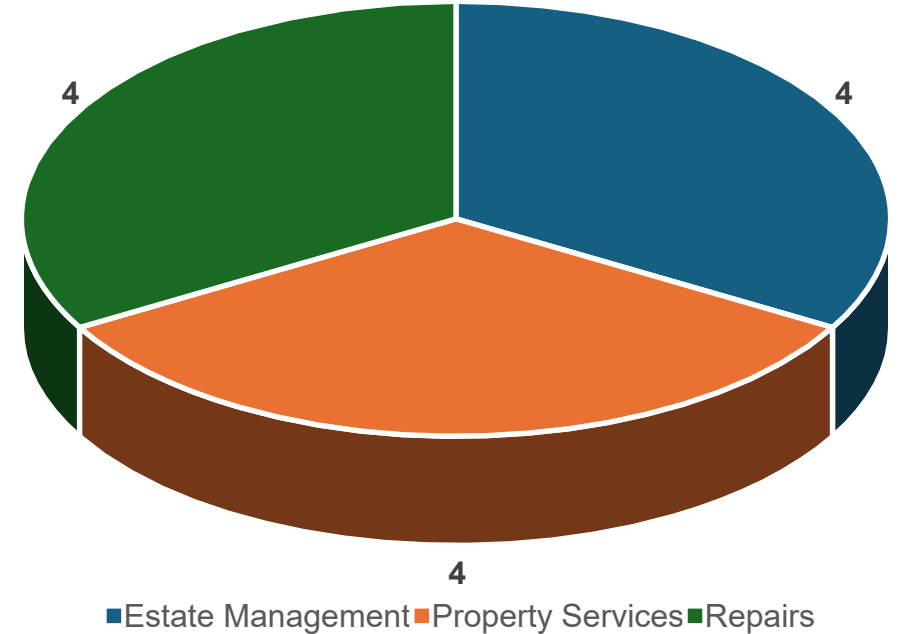
Pop up events planned for the year throughout the Spring / Summer and complaint workshops in planning will reinforce how to complain and provide more channels to raise dissatisfaction.

COMPLAINTS RECEIVED BY SERVICE AREA

Complaints by Service Area - Stage 1



Complaints by service area - Stage 2



Property Services continues to be the main area that complaints are received, due to the use of external contractors.



Working with our Tenants we have now produced a Code of Conduct for Contractors which captures key areas tenants are dissatisfied with regarding contractors. This is being rolled out through contract meetings to improve customer satisfaction, and a Tenant version provided to our Tenants.

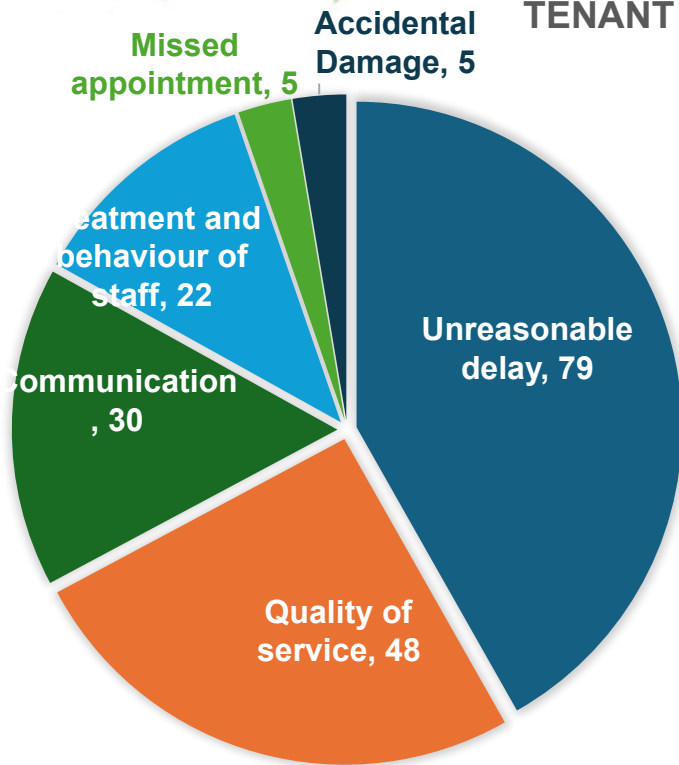


MP enquiries received are not on the above S1 graph, but we received 15 for Estate Management and 3 for Property Services.

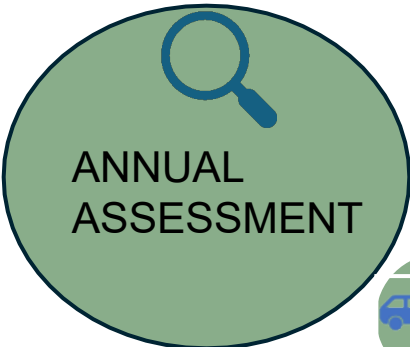
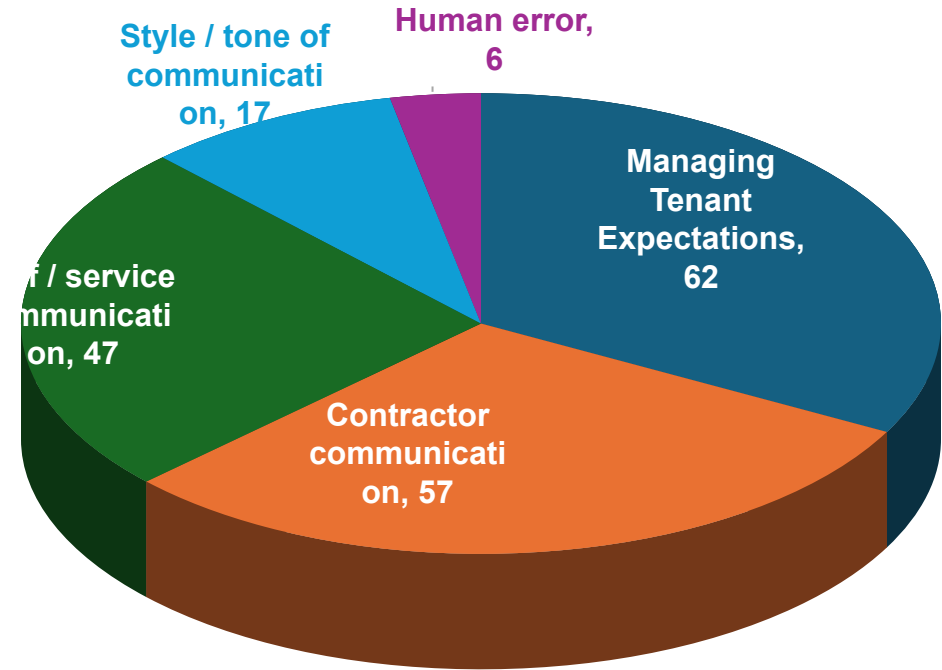


ROOT CAUSE OF COMPLAINTS RECEIVED (THE REASON / WHY)

TENANT – ROOT CAUSE OF COMPLAINT



Officer investigated root cause for complaints



We have delved into the main drivers of the complaints as the tenants report them to investigate what the drivers are telling us and compare them to what the tenants report as to what investigations found.



This has highlighted that the majority cause of complaints reported by tenants is due to the amount of time they are waiting (**42%**) for works to start, be completed, or for information to be shared. We have started a programme of reminding staff the importance of updates and working with tenants to address this, which will form part of our Complaints Workshops.

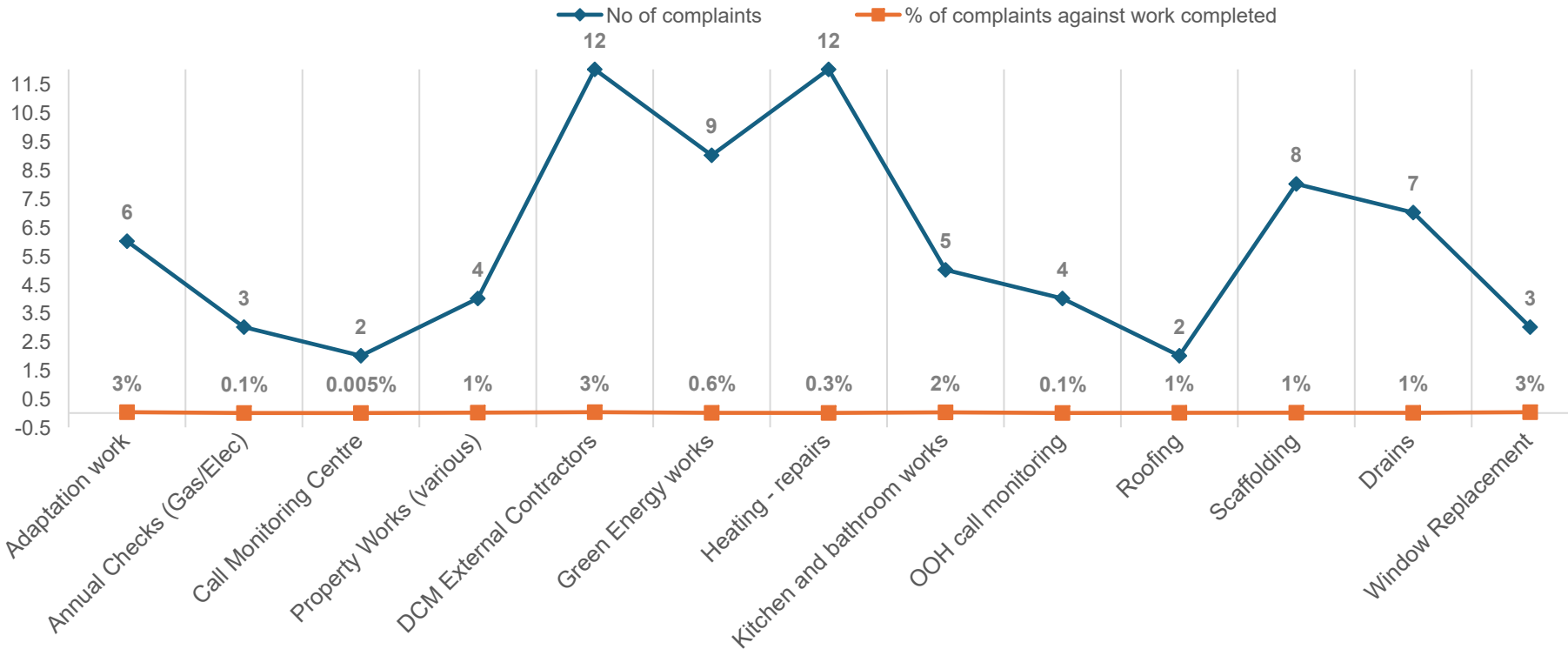


The second highest driver is managing the tenant's expectation (**33%**) – for instance tenants not wanting to wait a reasonable time for a service or not understanding who is responsible for a service area. By expanding our engagement opportunities and literature we aim to tackle this.



ANALYSIS OF CONTRACTORS AND COMPLAINTS

NUMBER AND % OF COMPLAINTS BY CONTRACTOR AREA



QUARTERLY ASSESSMENT



Over the year we have received 77 complaints regarding external contractors who deliver services on SHDC behalf – these cover from property works through to OOH services.



Analysis has taken place on the Contractor types of complaints compared to the number of jobs / properties they serve to check if value for money is being received and if there are any trends. This was requested by our Tenant Influence Panel.

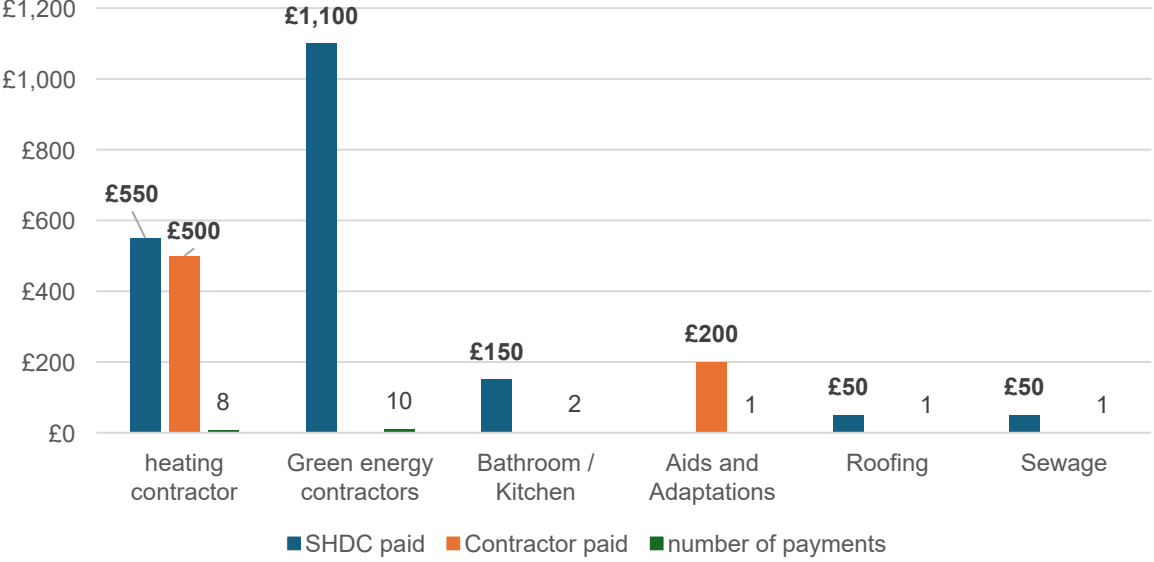


Analysis shows that the 2 highest areas came from Contractors with heating repairs (12) – however this was compared against 3549 Jobs over the year this only represented 0.3% average, we continue to monitor performance at our Capital Clinic. The second highest was DCM contractors, (12) showing a 3% average which has resulted in most of this work being taken in house.

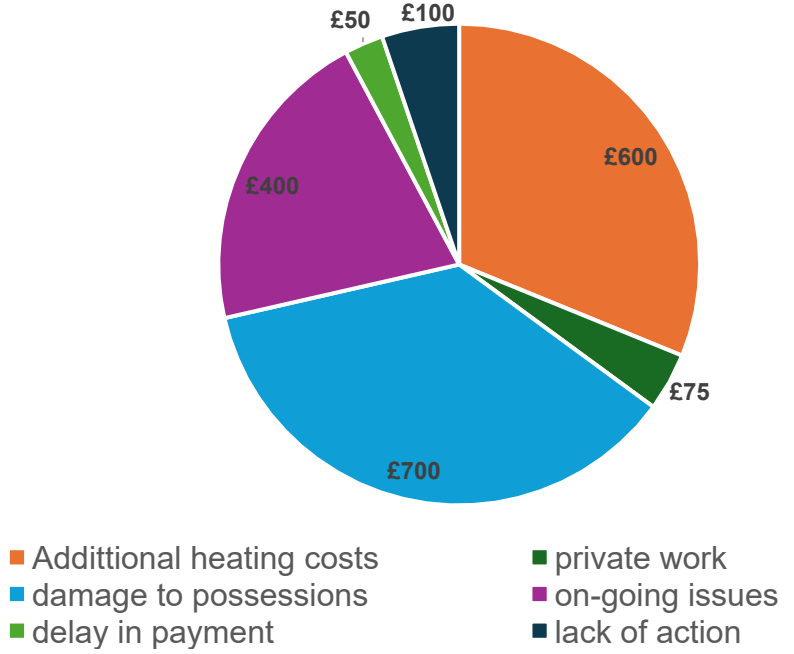


COMPENSATION PAID

Property Service Compensation payments



Repairs / Estate Compensation payments



QUARTERLY ASSESSMENT



Over the year we have paid **30** complainants' compensation for inconvenience, loss of earnings, damage to property or to cover additional heating costs



In late 2025 as we introduced our Code of Conduct for Contractors, this resulted in a change in approach to compensation payments with contractors paying any compensation. This will continue to have an effect in future years.

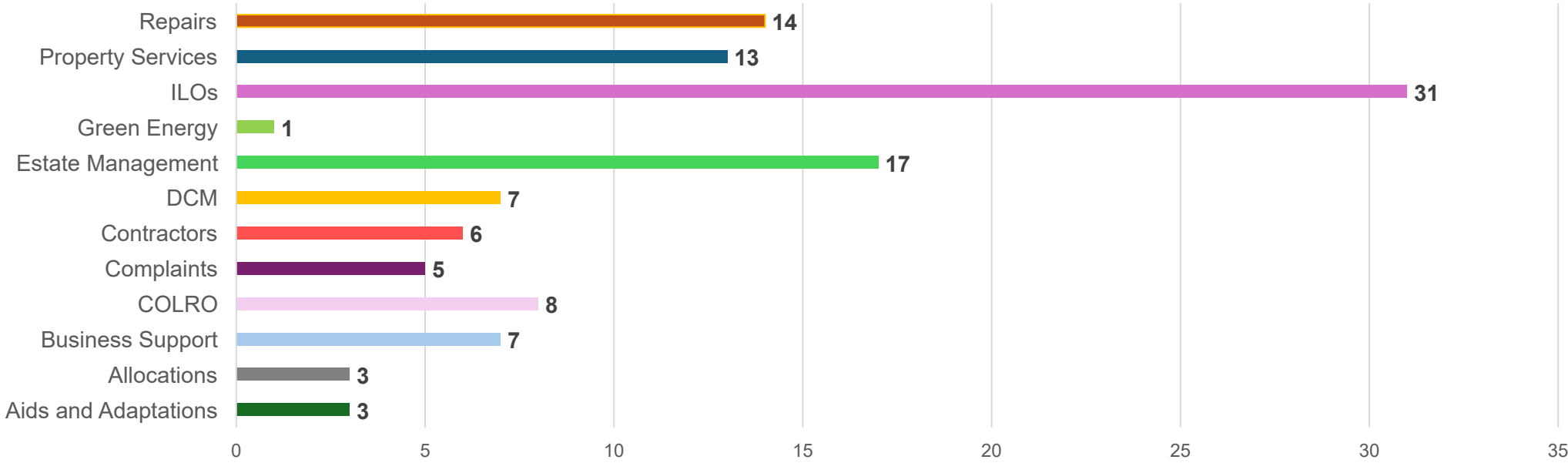


The **30** tenants paid compensation are made up of **23** due to contractors, **5** from our Repairs service and **2** from Estate Management. We are currently drafting a Compensation Policy to match Housing Ombudsman's good practice to streamline compensation and how it is paid.



COMPLIMENTS AND THANK YOU

Compliments received by service area




QUARTERLY ASSESSMENT



Over the past year we have recorded **115** compliments and thank you split over all of our services.



It should be noted that Property Services are our highest area of complaints, however they have also attracted (including Aid and Adaptations & contractors) **22** receipts of praise over the year.



Repairs and Estate Management have also been praised consistently over the year. The main theme coming from these compliments is the staff's attitude, how they listened and helped improve things for the tenant.



YOUR VOICE, WE HEARD

Your Voice	We heard (action taken) - Outcomes
Tenants with neuro-divergencies or families with neuro divergences expressed concerns over staff not understanding their needs or how to communicate effectively.	Training for staff on neuro-diversity has commenced throughout the department – and Tenant Engagement is pro-actively working with tenants to develop communication techniques.
Poor communication throughout processes for contractors	Communication with tenants added to all contract meetings and monitored as standard.
Delays in Green Energy works with no explanation why	Communications increased regarding delays – process updated, and information sent out to all those experiencing delays
Scaffolding left up for prolonged periods of time – with no explanation – by solar company.	Report received from contractor highlighting 5 key recommendations to be implemented - added to next contract meeting to check implementation.
No evidence of Housing Officers attending properties	To introduce timestamped pictures of delivery of mail or missed appointment cards to the process.
Tenants reported difficulty in getting to the complaints department or knowing how to complain.	Customer Contact attended Tenants Forum to explain their service and listen to tenants – wider publicity on complaints taking place.



SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS FROM COMPLAINTS

AREA	WHAT	WHY	IMPACT
Complaints	To refresh the complaint pathway for all service areas, including feedback, Contractors, Customer Contact and internal departments	Investigations have found that tenants raising dissatisfaction can often be directed to the service to deal with rather than flowing through to complaints.	All complaints captured, themes/trends identified, and tenants' queries monitored to resolution.
Complaints	Although we offer tenants a variety of ways (post, on-line, links) to complete a satisfaction survey take up is low. We will be introducing random phone surveys to help gather views.	It is important to gather tenants' views on our complaint process to help us understand of any barriers tenants are experiencing.	We will be able to be confident that our process works, and the service provided is of a high standard.
Property/ Repairs – Contractor works	Procedures have been updated and tighter controls / audits on sign off from works completed by contractors are taking place.	Many complaints arising from contractor works have involved incomplete or unsatisfactory work, with no communication to the tenants about this.	Stricter contract management in place to capture and resolve issues as soon as they arise. Assurance to tenants.
Contractor Works	Tenant feedback should be considered as part of contract extensions.	To make a rounded view of performance of the contract.	Improved satisfaction with contracted works/contracts not extended where performance is poor.
Property/ Repairs Services	Transactional surveys to be introduced to capture satisfaction as soon as work has taken place.	Gathering information on works completed will ensure we can react quickly to any issues.	The service will be centralised with the Engagement Team so themes can be identified.



SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS FROM COMPLAINTS

AREA	WHAT	WHY	IMPACT
DCM	The DCM service to repair once reported has been brought in-house.	Following 30 Complaints in 24/25 around the length of time it was taking for identified repairs to take place.	Complaints on DCM regarding the time to repair have reduced by 46.67%
Property Services	To review all contractors' letters over time, with our Reading Group	To ensure these are understandable and provide the right information.	Communication on works taking place will improve.
Property Services	An additional KPI has been established in regard to full breakdowns in heating and referrals back to SHDC for boiler replacement	Analysis of Q3 complaints has shown an upward trend in boiler breakdowns with no notification to SHDC. Contractor will now have 7 calendar days to replace.	Tenants will have a better service with timescales for replacement heating.
Repairs - voids	To add cleaning of extractor fans to void standard	To ensure fans working correctly for new tenants.	Fans will help with keeping properties free from DCM
Estate	To review information for tenants on website and ensure it is accessible	Tenants / families find it hard to know what to do in some circumstances, especially around ending a tenancy upon the death of tenant.	Once information updated will be a resource for tenants and CSC to use .
Estate	Document with time stamped picture when issuing calling/missed appt card	Tenants challenging that Officers have attended to deliver information.	Improved communication and evidence.
Estate	Implement case reviews at 1-2-1s to go through outcomes of complaints.	To reflect actions with staff and discuss alternative ways to meet outcomes.	Reflection will provide alternative behaviour.



SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS FROM COMPLAINTS

AREA	WHAT	WHY	IMPACT
ILO Team	Review lifeline monitoring centre response process with tenant representative.	Due to gaps in the process for unusual circumstances	Tenants will be assured of correct response at all times.
Business Support	A sales pack for right to buy and shared owners is being devised.	To supply information, timescales and responsibilities for each part of the process when wanting to buy or sell.	Customers will be informed of the process and who is responsible for each element.
Business Support	Dates of visit are now obtained from Pest Control and given to the tenant	To give tenants the timescale of how long they will need to wait.	Tenants have information on timescales.
All Services	We have reviewed our recharge process.	Tenants attending Focus Groups and findings from some complaints discovered that some damage and costs incurred by SHDC were as a result of damage caused by tenants.	Tenants are made aware that wilful damage is a rechargeable element that we will impose to cover our expenses to put it right.
ILO Team	Improve the flow of information if there is an issue with equipment—door knocks, leaflets	To ensure all tenants are kept informed	Reduction in confusion over service.
Complaints	Action and Service Improvement tracker has been established for 26/27	To track and sign off all actions and improvements arising from complaints to ensure completed.	Reduction in escalation to Stage 2 complaints, high satisfaction levels with service

TENANT COMPLIMENTS

Have your voice heard

Thank you so much for getting jobs booked quickly and efficiently, I'm very impressed how well your maintenance team work - **Repairs**

Thank you – you have bridged the gap between Fi-Nest and SHDC and I am very grateful – **Business Support**

We are really happy with DCM surveyor and how he covered the DCM survey so well, He did a good job checking the problem areas but also asking if we had problems elsewhere. He was very friendly and a lovely guy - **DCM**

I do appreciate all your help with my tenancy, you have been amazing, and I feel you have gone above and beyond to try and help and be supportive - **Housing**

I just wanted to thank SHDC for the very professional and responsive manner the Repair Team have dealt with any matters relating to the upkeep of this property. All the staff are courteous and efficient. I am so grateful knowing I have support and security of a first-class District Council - **Repairs**

COLRO has consistently gone above and beyond to ensure the tenants needs were fully met. Her hard work and commitment have been evident throughout. Her compassion, professionalism and proactive approach have had a genuinely life-changing impact - **COLRO**

Thank you for the recent damp work carried out, Surveyor is very friendly, very thorough and very helpful and went out of his way to make us feel comfortable - **DCM**

I honestly don't even have the words, thank you so much for the support. I've been struggling in silence for so long - **COLRO**

I just wanted to thank the 2 engineers who attended my property, they made me feel safe and secure in my home, made me cups of tea and even shared their biscuits - **Property**

The Officer did exactly what she said she would do and gave updates even when she didn't have the final answer – every call should be like this - **Housing**

The handyman is a real asset to the council and we're very pleased with the work he did - **ILO**

You are so kind, thank you very much for all your help. You are a lovely lady, and I can't thank you enough – **Green Energy Team**