



Nottingham
City Council

Housing
Services

Annual Complaints Report and Learning Outcomes 2024/25



Annual Complaints Report 2024/25

Introduction

Nottingham City Council Housing Services is committed to providing an efficient, accessible and transparent complaints process. The complaints process involves all areas of the business, with staff in all service areas involved in investigations, resolutions and responses, while the process as a whole is administrated, monitored and managed by a central team dedicated to housing complaints (Customer Relations Team, or CRT).

Our complaint process is regularly reviewed in accordance with the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman Service, whilst also being assessed against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code. Our annual assessment can be found on our website at www.ncchousing.org.uk/complaints

This report is intended to show the volumes of complaints and our performance against the target times set out within our policy and the Complaint Handling Code, whilst also demonstrating how feedback and learnings from complaints have been used to improve services for our customers.



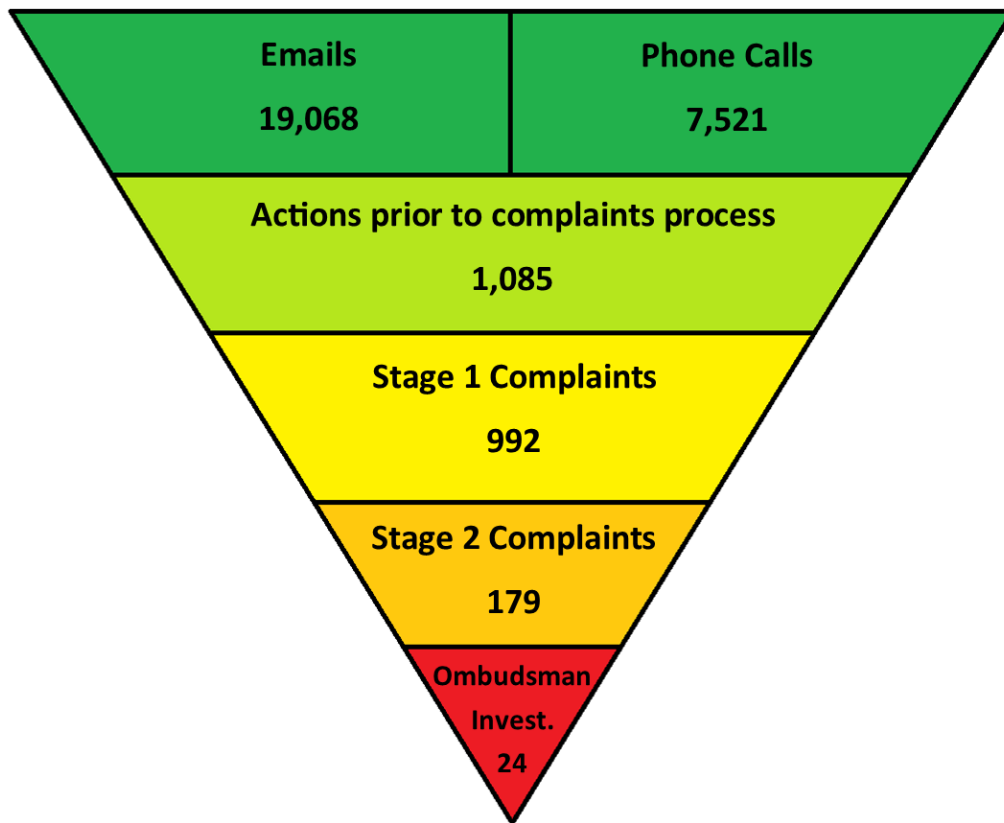
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Based on 2024/25 complaint volumes and current number of properties, we had 41.65 complaints per 1,000 properties

CRT Contacts

The Customer Relations Team oversees the complaint process, but also administrates a central mailbox for housing queries. The below data shows contact levels for the year as well as how this relates to matters formally entering into our complaints process.

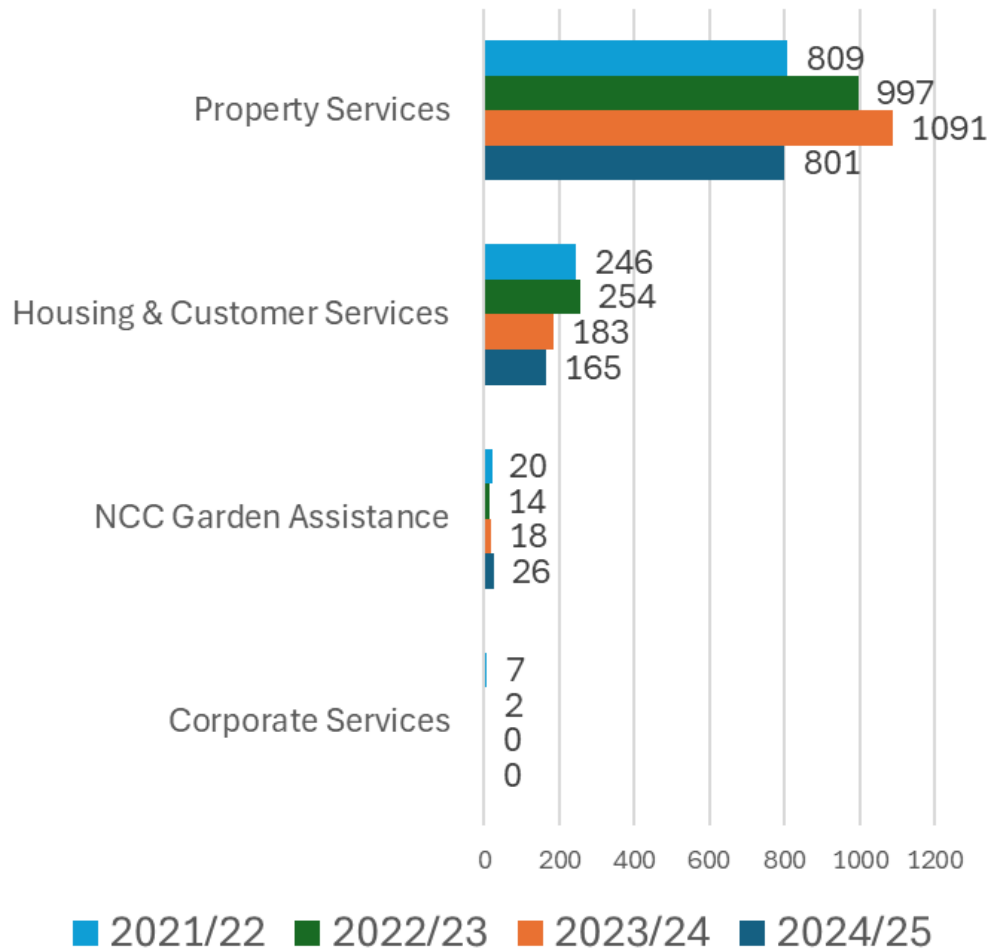


- Less than 1 in 10 contacts proceed to formal logging of dissatisfaction
- 4 out of 5 matters handled through early resolution never proceed to a Stage 1 complaint
- Less than 4% of CRT contacts lead to the recording of a Stage 1 complaint
- Less than 1 in 5 Stage 1 complaints proceed to Stage 2
- Less than 2 out of 10 Stage 2 complaints go on to become Ombudsman Investigations



Stage 1 Complaint Volumes

Annual Stage 1 complaints by Directorate



A total of 992 Stage 1 complaints were logged in 2024/25. This is a reduction of 300 compared to 2023/24 and is the lowest volume recorded since the implementation of the current complaint process in 2020.

This reduction had come primarily from Property Services, with Responsive Repairs seeing a 25% decrease on last year and Business Services (who provide administrative support to several areas of Property Services) decreasing by 43% on the previous year.

Mechanical & Electrical have seen their third consecutive year of reductions in complaint volumes—a direct result of their increased focus on effective complaint handling and good communication with our customers.

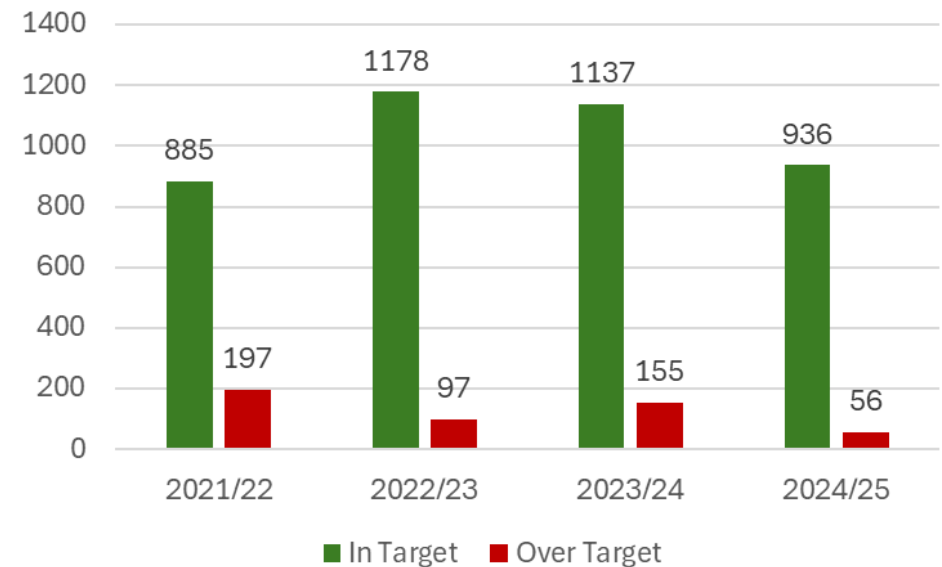


Stage 1 Complaint Performance

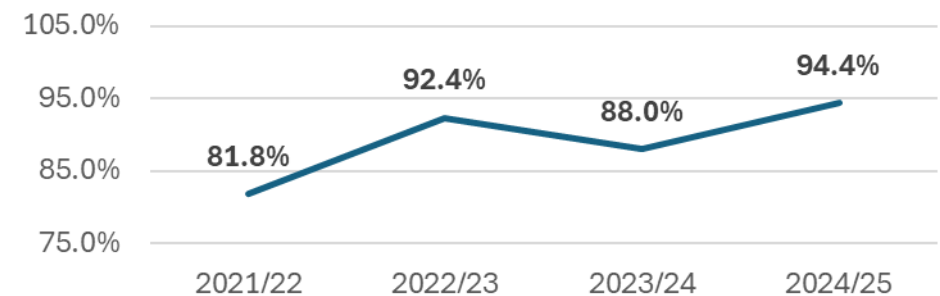
This year has seen significant improvements in performance for complaint handling across the business. While we still have work to do to reduce the number of complaints responded to outside of the 10-working-day target, we have seen performance improve to the highest level since the implementation of the current complaint process.

While the year as a whole has been an improvement, we have also seen consistent improvement throughout each quarter of the year, with 92% in target during quarter 1, 94% in quarter 2 and 96% in quarter 3. In quarter 4 we answered 99% of Stages 1 complaints within target, with just 2 complaints answered out of the target timeframe.

Annual Stage 1 complaints In and Out of Target



Annual Stage 1 complaints Performance



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Daily reporting to all investigating officers and senior management ensures appropriate staff remain aware of all current outstanding complaints.

Stage 1 Complaint Reasons

Stage 1 complaints are sorted into five main categories as follows:

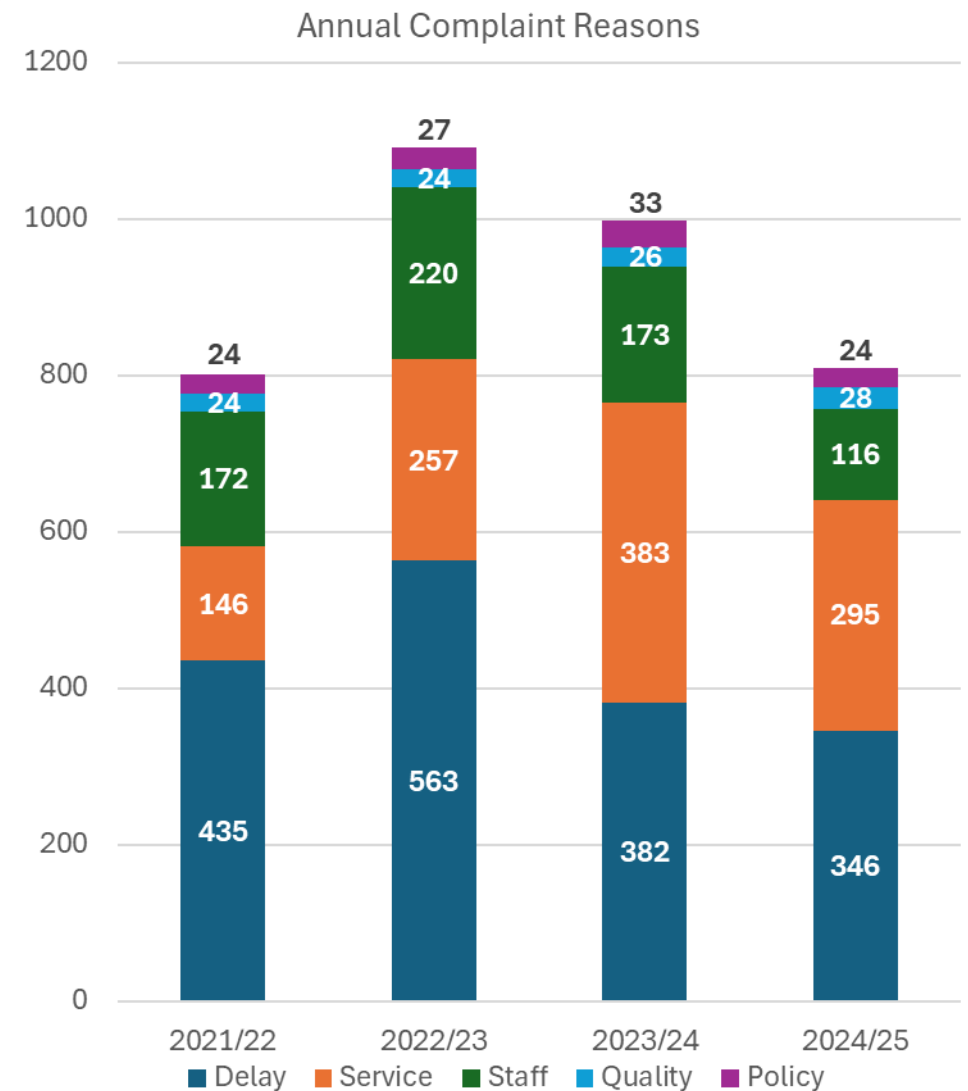
Delay - Dissatisfaction with time taken to start or complete work, due to staff, customer, process or sub-contractor error

Service - Issues driven by service failures such as missed appointments, incomplete work or unresolved recurring issues

Staff - Actions of individual staff member such as alleged/actual misconduct, accidental damage or communication failure

Quality - Quality of work completed by an individual, or issues with work carried out to published service standards

Policy - Caused by NCCHS policy and may include either correct or incorrect use of policy



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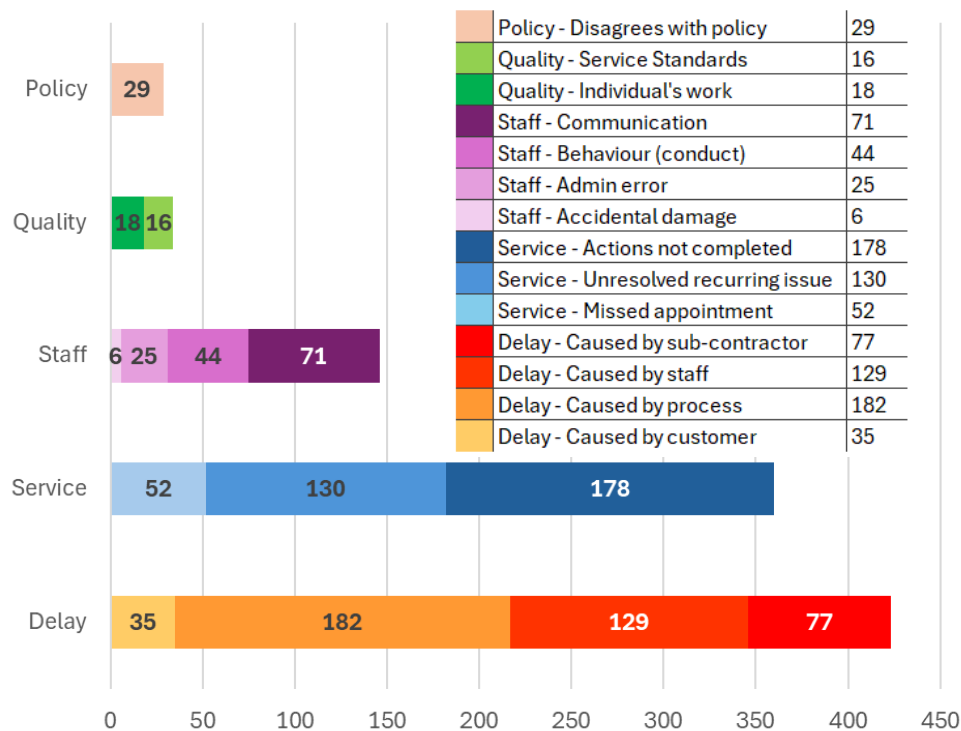
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Quarterly annual reports break down complaint reasons into smaller service areas, allowing us to make more specific recommendations and identify trends based on different areas of work.

Stage 1 Complaint Reasons

In order to further identify the leading drivers of complaints, the five main categories are broken down further into fourteen sub-categories. This allows us to gain greater insight into where there may be problems needing to be addressed as well as causes of dissatisfaction for our customers.

2024/25 Stage 1 Complaint Sub-categories



While the overall volume of 'Delay' related complaints has reduced for a second consecutive year, the figures continue to show that the time we take to start or complete actions remains a key driving factor in customer dissatisfaction.

Additionally, not fully resolving issues, or failing to resolve them first time also continues to be a significant driver of complaints.

While more specific actions are taken on a team-by-team basis, as a business this shows we need to improve focus on getting things right the first time, doing what we say we will, and doing it all in a more timely manner.



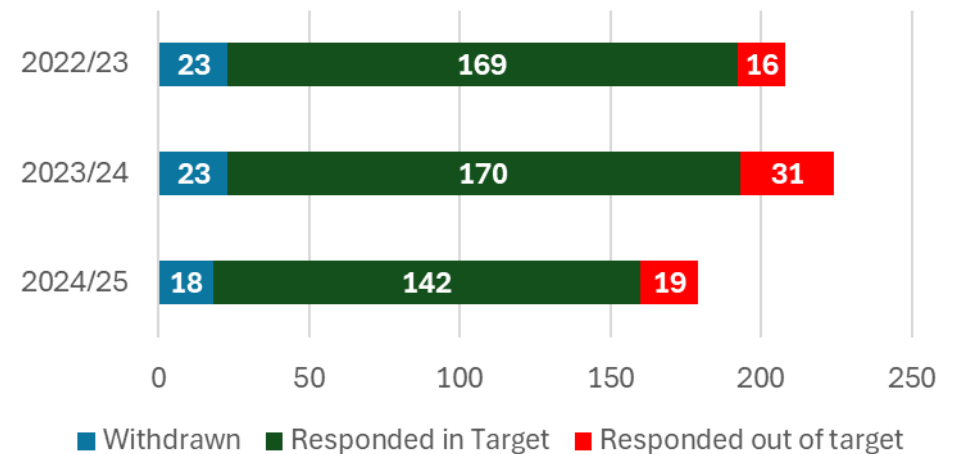
Stage 2 Complaints

In the event that a customer is unhappy with the outcome of their 'Stage 1 Investigation', or if we fail to deliver what we have promised, they have the option to escalate the matter to a 'Stage 2 Review'. This allows a complaint to be reviewed by senior management.

One of the primary drivers of Stage 2 Review requests is failure to carry out actions promised in Stage 1 responses. This also includes poor communication around the actions we are taking and how long we take to do them. Teams around the business continue to work on ways of ensuring we deliver what we promise in order to provide better service to our customers, and reduce demand for Stage 2 Reviews.

Stage 2 performance has improved throughout the year, with Quarter 4 seeing just a single Stage 2 complaint answered out of target for a performance of 97.7%.

Stage 2 Complaint Volumes



179 Stage 2 Review requests were received, with 160 resolved in target, giving a 2024/25 performance result of 89.4%



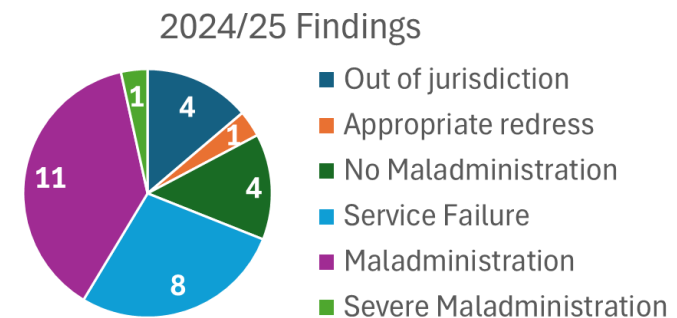
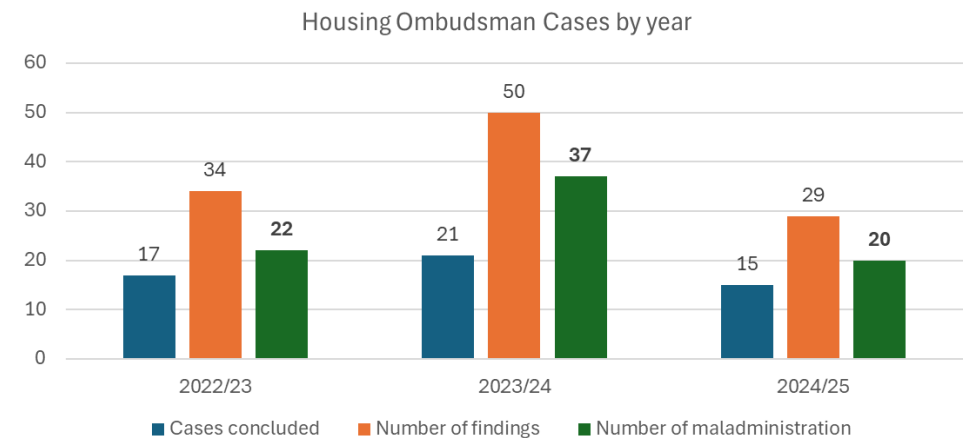
Housing Ombudsman Cases

After the full 2-stage complaints process has been exhausted, the next channel of escalation for customers is the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS). When this happens, an investigation is conducted by the HOS, who then submit a determination with their findings which may include orders or recommendations.

The number of concluded cases has decreased this year, and subsequently the number of findings has also reduced. However, the maladministration rate (which now categorises 'Service failure' as a level of maladministration) has reduced from 75% to 69%.

A total of £10,775 ordered to be paid through determinations received in 2024/25, down from £11,905 in 2023/24.

All orders and requests have been complied with. NCC Housing Services remains fully compliant with the Complaint Handling Code and has never received a Complaint Handling Failure Order.



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The HOS assesses each point of a complaint, with a finding given for each separately. This is why there are more findings than cases determined.

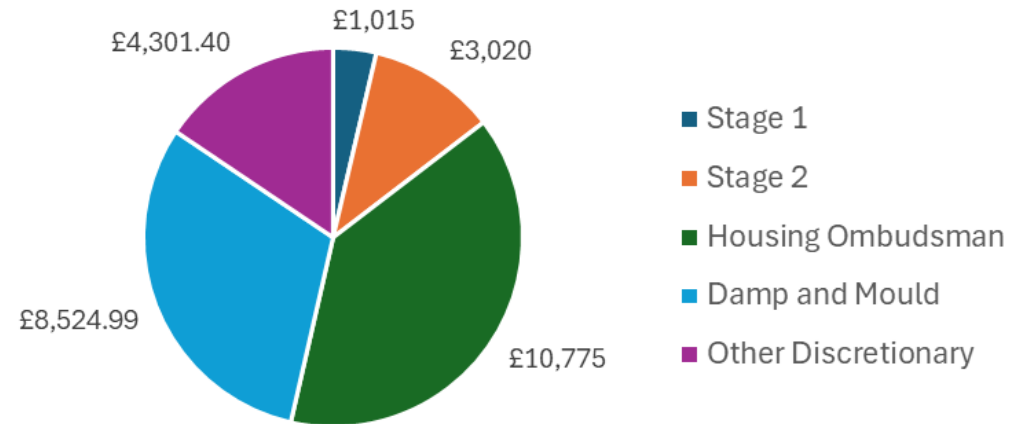
Compensation

Compensation can be offered at any stage of the complaints process. As required by the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code, we now give full consideration to the use of compensation as a remedy at both Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the complaint process.

In addition to this, compensation can be ordered to be paid by the Housing Ombudsman as part of the investigation Determinations.

Compensation is also provided through our Discretionary Policy for issues such as Damp & Mould or damage to property/ possessions.

Compensation Paid



Payment Type	Number	Value
Stage 1	10	£1,015
Stage 2	23	£3,020
Housing Ombudsman	14	£10,775
Damp and Mould	19	£8,524.99
Other Discretionary	23	£4,301.40
TOTAL	89	£27,636.39



Learning and Improvement

Customer Relations Team

Learning from complaints is as important to us as effectively handling and resolving complaints. As such, we maintain regular focus on how we learn and improve from the feedback that complaint data provides us.

As the overseers of the complaint process, CRT also aims to improve the way we work and have carried out the following actions throughout this financial year:

- Worked alongside Nottingham City Council's 'Have Your Say' team to develop a new system for logging and managing complaints, which is planned to go live in Quarter 2 of 2025/26.
- Worked alongside key stakeholders in the complaint process to develop more effective channels of communication to ensure effective complaint handling
- Provided training to new starters on our approach to complaint handling
- Promoted the use of the 'interim' process to ensure customers are advised when delays in complaint handling are expected while also improving performance figures
- Introduced more detailed data on learning and complaint trends in quarterly reporting
- Reviewing data for complaints against general customer characteristic data to ensure our full range of customers are accessing the complaints process inclusively



Learning and Improvement

Tenancy & Estate Management (TEM)

Senior management in TEM have continued to promote the value of learning from complaints, as well as the importance of documenting and promoting improvements made. As such, they now maintain a learning log which is used to record and track essential learning, which includes:

- Amendments to the Anti-social Behaviour (ASB) procedure to ensure clarity around agreements in ASB action plans
- Arranging additional training on use of the noise app for use in noise-related issues
- Changes made to TEM complaints management process to ensure the right staff are handling complaints from the start
- Reviewed cross-border partnership between NCC Housing Services, Gedling Borough Council and Police Beat Team to strengthen relationships and improve services in the area
- Additional information and training to staff on complaint handling issues such as compensation offers, stating whether complaints are upheld, reallocation of resources, record keeping and following up on promised actions



Learning and Improvement

Property Services

Property Services have taken a joined up approach to complaint handling to ensure both better performance and more effective learning. Some of the improvements made this year include:

- Clearer ownership of matters that cross between multiple departments
- Issues with the Service Referral process were identified as a trend and addressed through various changes such as clearer communication with staff, extended time slots for appointments, a dedicated contact within a sub-contractor used for this work and monthly quality checks
- Issues with follow-on work not being raised due to trade colleague errors were addressed through various changes including communication with relevant staff on the causes of the issues and enhanced quality checking to ensure errors are not being repeated
- Changes made to minimum time slot for repair appointments to ensure trade colleagues have sufficient time to complete works, resulting in a documented reduction in complaints
- Improvements made to sub-contractor communications to reduce wait times for customers
- Issues with wet room flooring repairs addressed through use of dedicated sub-contractor



Learning and Improvement

Defects and Latent Defects

Following on from previous years' learnings on defects and Ombudsman determinations, as well as reviewing complaints made, meetings have been held between colleagues from the New Build team and the Customer Service Centre with a view to improving the service we provide to customers. Linked to that, Customer Service Centre colleagues have visited new build sites to further understand the new homes we build, and the outcome of the visits has been shared with the wider team.

We have noted that on occasion complaints about new build defects could have been avoided had communication been better. As this process includes the Customer Service Centre, the new build team and the contractor it is important that there are strong and positive relationships. A site visit to the contractors by a Customer Service Centre representative and the new build team has taken place resulting in improved communication that can only benefit customers. A further return visit is arranged for June 2025 to keep the momentum going.

We also look to speak to all new build tenants personally and undertake a home demonstration visit with them with the aim of ensuring they know how their home works, and thus preventing potential defects emerging. As a service enhancement this demonstration is now an 'e' form to ensure all tenants get a consistent service. To enhance this further we have now introduced a video for new build tenants to provide a thorough insight into their new home. New tenants are also given a comprehensive home user guide to help them know and enjoy their home and surrounding area.



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Satisfaction surveys results at two of our projects (ratings out of five): Satisfaction with the CSC when reporting defects - 4.41 and 4.13. Satisfaction with the contractor when resolving defects 4.46 and 4.09.
Satisfaction with the home user guide/home demonstration 4.59 and 4.64

Learning and Improvement

Housing Operations

Following a recent Mutual Exchange, we were made aware that the outgoing tenant had not ensured a qualified electrician was used to disconnect their cooker resulting in wires left exposed. Whilst this is the responsibility of the tenants who exchange, health and safety is our key priority and we have immediately implemented a new process whereby a qualified NCCHS electrician will attend to disconnect appliances just prior to the completion of the exchange.

A focus for the team has been to ensure that we are making reasonable adjustments to support any customers where these are required. A complaint was received after we failed to communicate the outcome of a housing application in the requested format. By missing the 'pop up' on our housing management systems we caused distress to a customer who required written documentation in a larger font and on coloured paper due to their disability. We apologised for this mistake, ensured full team training to be mindful of any advisory notices, and given our assurances that we can support with access to any of our services if requested.

Within Temporary Accommodation, some residents told us that they were finding it difficult to find private rented accommodation and would appreciate more help. Working with NPRAS we have implemented accommodation finding workshops that are taking place in different locations across the city so that residents can be supported with additional help to find settled accommodation.

Temporary Accommodation residents have also told us that they didn't know who the staff were working within our main homeless family hostel, other than their dedicated Temporary Accommodation Officer. We now have a 'who's who' board in reception with names and photos of all officers and a board identifying the staff on reception each day.



Learning and Improvement

Asset Management

Issue: Tenants calling up to find out the result of their damp and mould survey

Learning Outcome: Provided information pre-emptively by providing customers with information in a letter, as well as providing recorded messages for phone queries that can provide all the information needed, done in collaboration with our Customer Service Centre.

Issue: Delays for customers due to high levels of requests for permissions to carry out changes

Learning Outcome: Utilise surveyors to support with managing some requests (such as driveways). Trained more resource in team to deal with permissions as well as auto allowing some low risk permissions to be granted

Issue: Queries around what will happen at Damp and Mould or Stock Condition Surveys

Learning Outcome: We created a Damp and mould inspection Video and a Stock condition video that has a link and QR code. These videos clearly explain what to expect from these inspections and the next steps. Videos can be found at the links below:

Damp and Mould Surveys - <https://bit.ly/3RtUGFu>

Stock Condition Surveys - <https://www.savills.co.uk/vod/savills-stock-survey>



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Asset Management have consistently maintained 100% performance on Stage 1 complaint targets for several years.

Learning and Improvement

Customer Service Centre (CSC)

Management of the CSC have maintained a focus on improving the quality of the service we provide, using complaints as valuable source of feedback. Changes made recently include:

- Full implementation of a complaints rota to ensure that we have a dedicated manager each week responding to complaints in a timely and efficient manner.
- Faster response times to speak to our tenants to discuss their issues and look for a resolution to mitigate dissatisfaction from progressing to Stage 1 complaints.
- Valuable conversations with team members providing balanced coaching, feedback and side by side sessions to improve the service they are delivering. This includes more formal conversations where improvement has not been demonstrated.
- Sharing of Call Quality Review forms and encouraging team members to listen to not only their own calls but calls that their colleagues have taken to reflect and take onboard tips as to how provide a great service whilst maintain call control.



Further Contact

How to Contact Us

NCC Housing Services Website - ncchousing.org.uk/

NCC Housing Complaints - ncchousing.org.uk/complaints

General Enquiries - 0115 915 2222, Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5pm

Customer Relations Team - 0115 915 7333

Social Media

X (formerly Twitter) - twitter.com/NottmCCHousing

Facebook - facebook.com/NottmCCHousing

YouTube - youtube.com/channel/UCY_Jc-I_JNAqS54NS_1mMBQ

LinkedIn - linkedin.com/company/nottingham-city-council/

