

Lewisham Council Housing Service

Annual Complaints Performance and Service
Improvement Report 2025/26

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Introduction

The social housing sector has seen significant change in recent years, with London providers facing challenges that are generally more acute than elsewhere in England.

London's social housing stock tends to be older and more complex. Demand far exceeds available homes, and we have larger homeless populations and associated costs. London boroughs also have lower tenant satisfaction and more complaints.

Residents' increasing use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), rising public awareness of tenant rights and stricter regulatory oversight have led to complaints increasing in both number and complexity across the sector. The Housing Ombudsman noted in its Business Plan for 2026/27 that the number of cases accepted for investigation in 2025/26 had risen almost 500% in five years.

In this challenging environment, we at Lewisham Council believe that complaints are a route for residents to speak to us directly and offer the opportunity to improve our services. They help us understand the resident experience, identify where services are falling short, and drive meaningful change. During 2025/26 we have reflected on the feedback given from our residents, the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) and other stakeholders, including the Housing Ombudsman Service. We have used this information to continue building a complaints service that is fair, accessible and transparent.

Regulatory Context

The past three years have seen the introduction of several regulatory standards affecting social housing. The Social Housing Regulation Act 2023 introduced new consumer standards with an accompanying regulation regime. This was followed in April 2024 by the statutory Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. The Code requires clear complaint stages and timescales, highlights the benefits of using complaints data as a learning tool to improve services and identify risks, and encourages organisations to promote a positive complaints culture.

Regulatory oversight for Lewisham

The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) met monthly with Lewisham Housing following a regulatory notice issued in March 2024. A regulatory notice is an official public statement. It announces that a social housing provider has breached official consumer or economic standards.

In 2025, the Housing Ombudsman published a Special Investigation Report under Paragraph 49 of its scheme, focused on maladministration in repairs, damp and mould, leaks and complaint handling. Monthly meetings with the Ombudsman Compliance Team concluded in February 2026, once they were satisfied that the Council had complied with the recommendations from the report.

Summary

This Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report sets out performance in Lewisham Council's Housing directorate for 2025/26, specifically focusing on landlord services regulated by the Housing Ombudsman Scheme.

The report provides a comprehensive overview of complaints performance over the year. It sets out the volume and nature of complaints received, complaint handling performance, resident feedback, Housing Ombudsman outcomes, and how learning from complaints is being translated into service improvements.

While there are areas where we have made encouraging progress, we remain clear that some residents continue to experience unacceptable delays, communication failures and service failures, particularly relating to repairs. This report will present an account of our achievements and the challenges we continue to address.

A Year of Progress and Challenge

Although this report focuses on complaints, the same staff and resources also manage a comparable volume of enquiries, adding further pressure on Lewisham Housing's capacity.

However, complaints remained a major focus for Lewisham Housing in 2025/26. The service continued to improve in response to the Housing Ombudsman's Paragraph 49 investigation and ongoing scrutiny by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH), who continue to monitor Lewisham's progress in 2026.

Housing complaints do not exist in a vacuum. Unresolved repairs, delayed follow-up work and poor communication will lead to dissatisfaction. While we recognise that some performance remains below the standard residents expect, there have been tangible improvements in some important areas.

Stage 1 complaint response performance improved significantly, increasing 38 percentage points between 2024/25 and 2025/26. There was a reduction in Complaint Handling Failure Orders (CHFOs) from the Housing Ombudsman and an internal audit in the autumn of 2025 gave 'Satisfactory' assurance. The audit identified clear improvement over the year, with no high-severity findings, but also identified further areas for development in 2026/27.

These improvements demonstrate that the actions taken through our Complaints Handling Improvement Project (CHIP), the Complaints Reset Programme and wider Housing Transformation activity are beginning to have an impact.

Lewisham Housing has introduced several measures to improve services and resident outcomes. New governance arrangements were introduced to strengthen learning from complaints. These include a Reasonable Adjustments Policy to support vulnerable residents, stronger reporting and monitoring, increased staff training and capacity, and improved communication and information management through a new Knowledge and Information Strategy. Together, these measures aim to make services more responsive, transparent and resident-focused, while meeting regulatory expectations.

Complaints numbers and performance

The percentage of stage 1 complaints responded to within timescale increased significantly from 33% in 2024/25 to 71% in 2025/26. This represents a marked improvement in complaints performance at stage 1, while stage 2 performance declined from 72% to 69%.

Key Statistics at a Glance

The period from April 2025 to March 2026 saw continued high demand on housing services, resulting in significant complaint volumes across both stages of the complaints process. Repairs, damp and mould, leaks and communication issues remained the principal drivers of dissatisfaction.

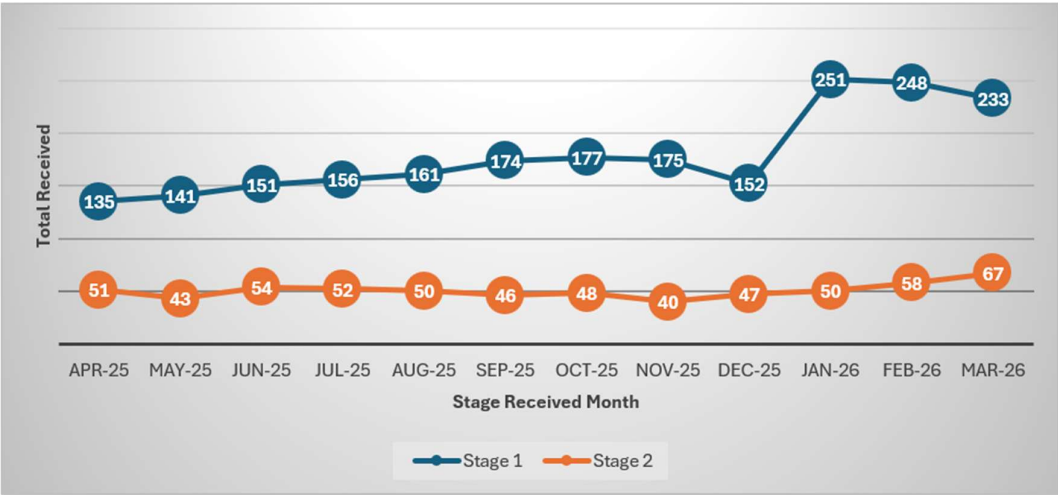
Measure	Outcome in 2025/26
Stage 1 complaints received	2154 complaints
Stage 2 complaints received	606 complaints
Improvement in stage 1 timeliness during 2025	From 33% to 71%
Reduction in stage 2 timeliness during 2025	From 72% to 69%
Housing staff completing complaints training	90%
Internal audit outcome	Satisfactory Assurance
Common complaint categories	Repairs, damp and mould, leaks, communication and complaint handling
Tenant ' <i>satisfaction with the landlord's approach to complaints</i> '	Just below the London median at 26%*
Housing Ombudsman determinations	70
Housing Ombudsman cases containing severe maladministration	10%
Area with most Housing Ombudsman Complaints	Repairs at 53%

* According to the Housemark 2025/26 TSM analysis Report- Housemark is the leading data and insight company for the UK social housing sector

Complaints Volume and Performance

Last year there were over 2,000 stage 1 complaints in Housing, in addition to stage 2 complaints and other enquiry types. The number of stage 1 complaints received per 1,000 homes was 18% higher than the Housemark average of 93.

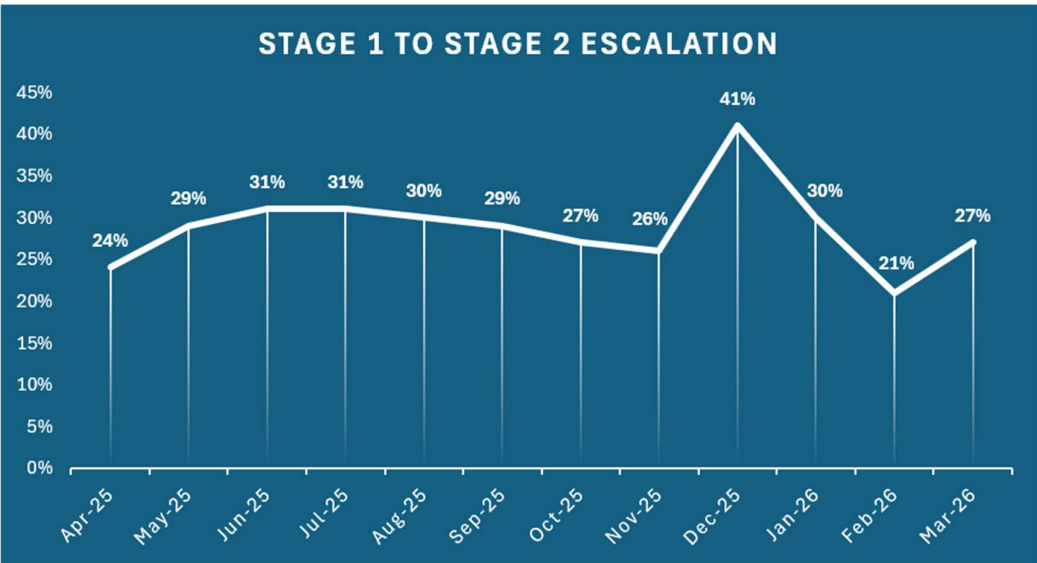
Complaints Received by Month



Stage 1 cases often involve delays in carrying out repairs and failures to follow up on actions from complaint responses. Housing Ombudsman determinations indicate that poor record keeping has been a recurring problem, hindering effective complaint resolution.

Complaint Escalations by Month

28% of cases completed at stage 1 in 2025/26 have been escalated to stage 2.



Escalation risk is becoming more concentrated in response quality and delivery. The leading recorded reasons were disagreement with the decision, failure to address all issues, insufficient promised action and promised action not taken. By July those categories accounted for over one hundred recorded escalation reasons. These findings are consistent with data analysis identifying poor communication, lack of timely tangible progress and broken promises in upheld complaints.

Response in time by stage 2025/26

Complaint stage	2024/25	2025/26
Stage 1 complaints	33%	71%
Stage 2 complaints	72%	69%

Themes and Trends in Complaint Casework

Top 5 classification by stage 1 received:

1. Leaks - Plumbing
2. Outstanding DLO Repair
3. Damp
4. Leaks - From Another Property
5. Carpentry Repairs

Top 5 classification by stage 2 received:

1. Leaks - Plumbing
2. Damp
3. Outstanding DLO Repair
4. Carpentry Repairs
5. Plumbing

In 2025/26, 'Leaks – Plumbing' and 'Outstanding DLO Repair' were the two most common stage 1 classifications. The broader 'Plumbing' classification was replaced with several more specific categories to provide greater detail.

'Leaks - Plumbing' is also the top classification at stage 2 in the past 12 months.

Top classifications at both stages fall under Repairs. This is also reflected in Housing Ombudsman statistics which show 53% of determinations were in the category 'Responsive repairs/activity'.

Refused Complaints

In 2025/26, Lewisham Council received several complaints that were not accepted. The table below summarises the types of complaints that were refused and the reasons for refusal.

Reasons:

Reason for refusal	No.
Duplicate complaint	128
Same complaint already dealt with at all stages of the procedure	39
Complaint not for this organisation/the Council	25
Customer refused to provide a name or address	15
Same complaint already investigated by the Ombudsman	5
Referred to Insurance and Risk team	2
Complaint subject to legal proceedings	2
To be re-logged as an Information Request	2
Complaint about personnel matters	1
Representative not authorised to act on behalf of client	1
Complaint about an issue more than 12 months old	1

Learning from complaints

Throughout 2025/26, recurring themes and trends emerged from complaints, resident feedback and Housing Ombudsman casework. These insights have helped us identify areas for improvement and shape our service transformation plans. Examples are set out below.

The Service and Performance Panel report provides further evidence of learning captured through iCasework. At December 2025/Q3, learning had been identified in 437 complaints within Housing Quality and Investment, 99 within Housing Resident Engagement and Services, and 9 within Housing Strategy. The leading themes were leaks - plumbing, outstanding DLO repairs, leaks from another property, damp and carpentry repairs, supporting the continued focus on repairs, leaks, damp and mould in this report.

Damp and Mould- What residents told us

Residents reported delays, poor communication and uncertainty about whether damp and mould cases were being monitored.

What we learned

Case tracking, follow-up and communication between teams needed to improve.

What we changed

We introduced staff training, clearer mailbox processes, dedicated case tracking and priority arrangements for serious cases. These changes aim to improve response times, oversight and resident updates.

Repairs service- What residents told us

Residents said they often had to repeat their circumstances to different staff.

What we learned

Poor record keeping and fragmented information made it harder to provide joined-up services and resolve complaints quickly.

What we changed

We strengthened staff guidance and training, prioritised better record keeping and information management, and linked complaints learning more closely to transformation and service assurance. These changes aim to improve communication, coordination and complaint resolution.

Leaseholder services - What residents told us

Leaseholders reported unclear ownership of cross-service complaints, particularly those involving charges, billing, Right to Buy delays and repairs. Delayed actions and poor updates also caused dissatisfaction.

What we learned

Complaints need clearer ownership, better coordination and stronger follow-through across services.

What we changed

We are clarifying ownership, strengthening joint working, tracking actions to completion and improving updates. Progress will be measured through fewer repeat complaints and escalations, and faster action completion.

Housing Ombudsman

Paragraph 49 Special Investigation Report 2025

Paragraph 49 of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme allows the Ombudsman to conduct an investigation into whether there is systemic failure in an organisation. A formal P49 investigation was launched into Lewisham Council in July 2024.

The Housing Ombudsman published its Special Investigation Report into Lewisham Council's housing services on 7 October 2025. The investigation followed concerns raised by the Ombudsman in February 2024 about the level of complaints from Lewisham residents and the level of maladministration findings. The Council met the Ombudsman in May 2024, and the Ombudsman confirmed in July 2024 that a special investigation would be conducted under Paragraph 49 of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme. Evidence was provided in late 2024, and the Ombudsman visited Lewisham in January 2025. The report highlighted systemic concerns in repairs, damp and mould management, complaint handling, record keeping, contractor oversight and resident communication.

Ombudsman Findings and Our Response

Lewisham Council accepted the findings in full and responded through existing housing transformation, complaints improvement and governance arrangements.

Actions included improved repairs oversight, enhanced quality assurance, investment in stock condition data, stronger contractor management, improved complaint handling

processes and preparations for Awaab's Law. Monthly compliance meetings with the Ombudsman concluded in February 2026 following evidence of progress against the recommendations.

The Council's formal learning statement acknowledged the significant impact of service failures on residents, particularly where residents experienced delays, poor communication and unresolved repairs. It confirmed the Council's commitment to learning from complaints, strengthening accountability and rebuilding trust through sustained service improvement.

However, several themes, particularly repairs, contractor management, communication, resident satisfaction and complaint quality, continue to be monitored through ongoing improvement plans rather than being considered completed and closed.

The Ombudsman's investigation considered cases determined between July and October 2024, some of which related to complaints first raised as far back as December 2021. This context is important because Ombudsman determinations can reflect historical service failure as well as current service performance. While the cases pre-date much of the 2025/26 improvement work, they provide important evidence of the issues that residents experienced and the areas where sustained improvement is required.

Within the Special Investigation cohort, the Ombudsman reported that 92% of findings were service failure, maladministration or severe maladministration. Leaks, damp and mould, and complaint handling were the dominant themes. The Special Investigation also identified a 15% severe maladministration rate within that cohort. This should be read separately from the annual 2025/26 Ombudsman casework data, where 7 severe maladministration findings represented around 10% of the 70 determinations.

The report recommended that Lewisham Council:

- Strengthen management of housing hazards, particularly damp and mould.
- Improve repairs performance and contractor oversight.
- Enhance knowledge and information management, including housing and resident data.
- Improve complaint handling and learning from complaints.
- Strengthen communication, trust and engagement with residents.
- Embed stronger governance, accountability and service assurance arrangements.

Our Response

Progress included expanded stock condition surveys, improved data quality, strengthened complaints governance, increased focus on hazards and resident engagement, and a clearer link between Ombudsman learning and the Housing Improvement Plan. Staff guidance and training have also been enhanced, alongside a continued focus on learning from complaints and improving first-contact resolution across services. Work with the Housing Ombudsman and Regulator of Social Housing continues to deliver service improvements and improve outcomes for our tenants and leaseholders.

Service responses include continued work on hazards, damp and mould, Awaab's

Law readiness, contractor oversight, complaint-handling training, improved use of resident vulnerability data, Home Checks and implementation of the Reasonable Adjustments Policy. Further delivery detail is set out in the annex to Appendix B.

Key Statistics- Housing Ombudsman

Ombudsman casework: In 2025/26 there were 70 determinations, excluding 15 cases which were withdrawn or solely outside the Housing Ombudsman’s jurisdiction. These determinations included 149 findings of service failure, maladministration or severe maladministration and 54 complaint-handling findings.

Special Investigation findings: within the cases reviewed for the Special Investigation, 92% of findings were service failure, maladministration or severe maladministration, particularly in repairs, leaks, damp and mould, and complaint handling.

Compensation: A total of £62,416.50 was awarded in compensation payments.

Complaint Handling Failure Orders: We received four Complaint Handling Failure Orders in 2025/26, compared to 13 in 2024/25.

Determinations and Findings:

In 2025/26, there were 70 determinations. These included 149 findings of service failure, maladministration or severe maladministration, and 54 findings relating specifically to complaint handling.

Table 1 – Housing Ombudsman cases by subject matter

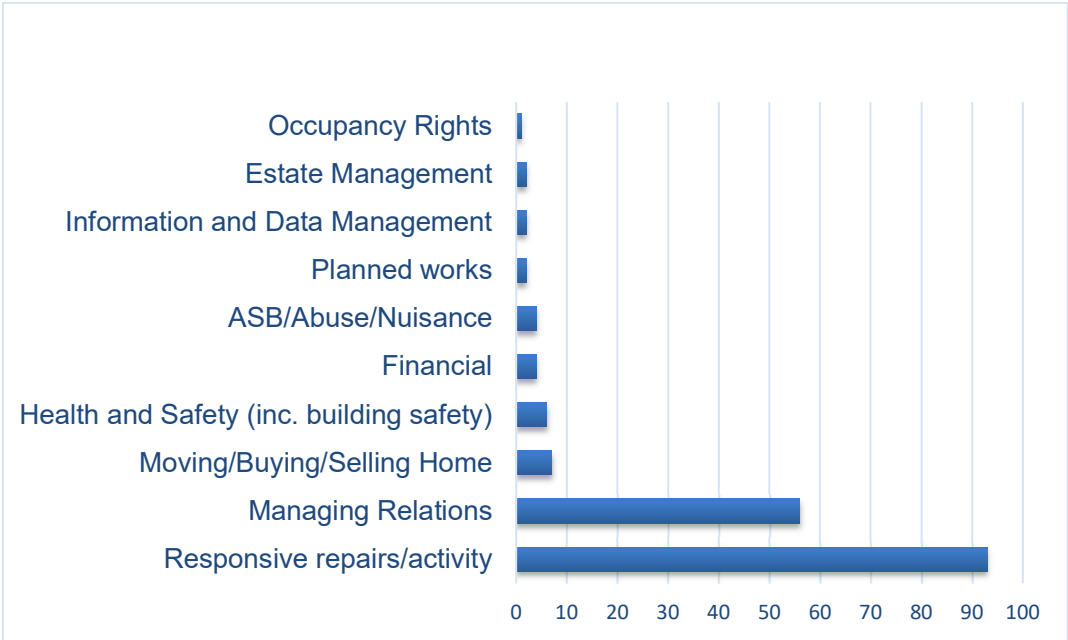


Table 2 also shows the broader total of findings by complaint category, which includes other finding types such as no maladministration and outside jurisdiction.

Table 2 - Case type and volume 2025/26 compared to previous years.

		2023/24	2024/25	2025/26*
Determinations (excluding Outside of Jurisdiction and Withdrawn)		36	105	70
Findings by Complaint Category (see table 3)		64	265	179
Orders made		96	483	316
Service Failure Findings		8	45	44
Severe Maladministration Findings		10	31	7
Maladministration Findings		40	139	98
Other Findings (such as No Maladministration and Outside of Jurisdiction)		6	50	30
Recommendations		27	99	49
CHFOs		4	13	4
Maladministration Rate	84%	87%		83%
Compensation Awards		£65,461.86		£62,416.50

**data for determinations and findings based on Annex A*

Table 3 - Findings by complaint category - 2025/26

Complaint Category Headings	No.
Responsive repairs/activity	95
Managing Relations	56
Moving/Buying/Selling Home	7
Health and Safety (inc. building safety)	6
ASB/Abuse/Nuisance	4
Financial	4
Planned works	2
Estate Management	2
Information and Data Management	2
Occupancy Rights	1
Total	179

Table 4 - Complaint handling findings (issued as part of determinations) - 2025/26

Number of complaints handling findings	No.
Service failure	18
Maladministration	24
Severe Maladministration	1
Other (No Maladministration)	11
Total	54

Table 5 - Orders Received from the Housing Ombudsman

Tables 5 and 6 provide further detail on the type of orders and recommendations made by the Housing Ombudsman during 2025/26. They add important context to the headline figures in Table 2 by showing that the Ombudsman’s interventions were not limited to financial redress. Orders and recommendations also required apologies, repairs, specific non-repair actions, case reviews, process changes and policy-related improvements.

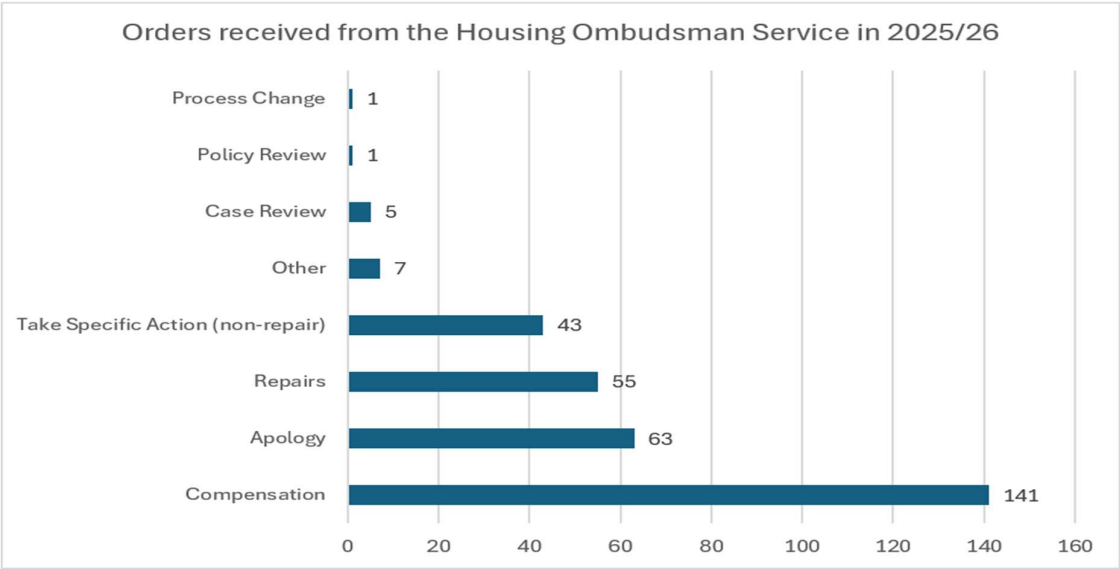
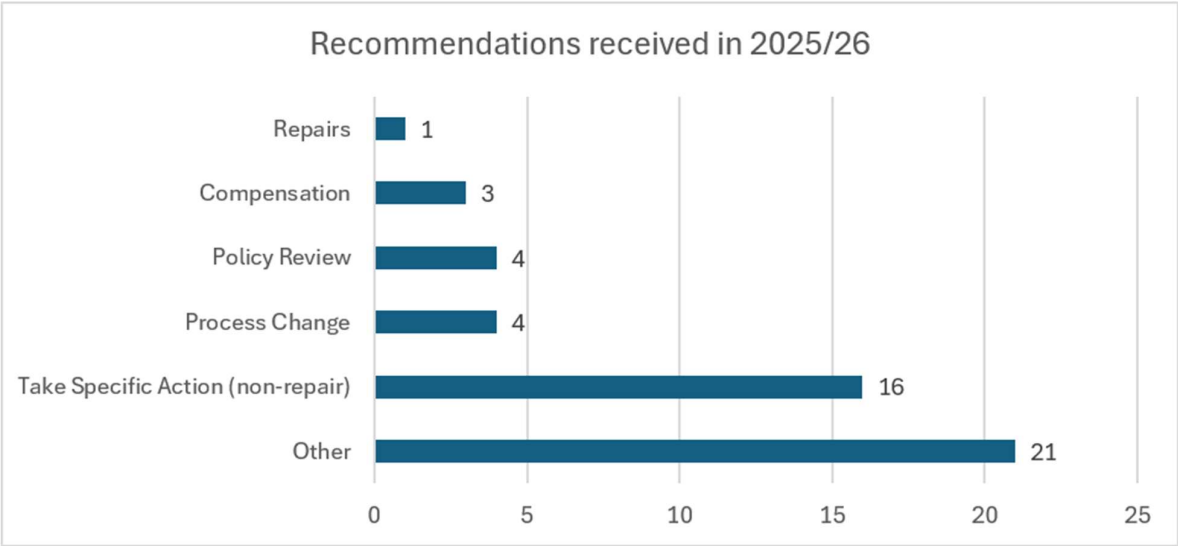


Table 6 - Recommendations Received from the Housing Ombudsman

The profile of orders shows the direct impact of service failure on residents, with compensation and apologies forming a significant proportion of outcomes. The number of repair-related and specific-action orders also demonstrates the continued importance of resolving underlying service failures, not just responding to complaints. The recommendations provide a forward-looking view of the changes expected by the Ombudsman, including process improvement, policy review, specific actions and further learning from complaint outcomes.



This reinforces the improvement priorities set out later in this report and in Appendix C: strengthening complaint quality, improving record keeping and evidence retrieval, ensuring promised actions are completed, improving contractor and service ownership, and evidencing the impact of learning from complaints. These actions are being taken forward through the Complaints Reset Programme, the Housing Improvement Plan 2026/27 and senior complaints governance arrangements.

Determinations – Next steps

The Housing Ombudsman P49 report highlighted the need to strengthen confidence in our data and records. Reliable information is essential to understanding where to focus improvement activity and how to evidence progress.

To increase the proportion of determinations in our favour, we need reliable case and complaint-handling information that can be retrieved promptly and presented clearly when requested.

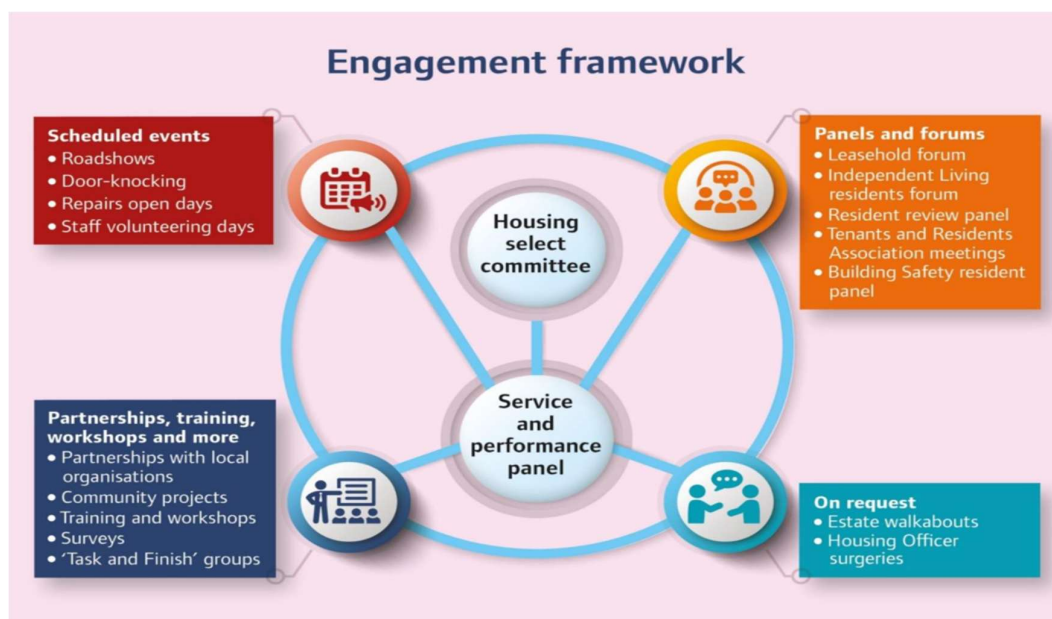
New ways of working have been identified for 2026/27, including a project to improve data reliability, better information management through electronic systems and increased senior-level scrutiny of cases that reach the Ombudsman. We will also make greater use of templates to support clear, consistent and evidence-based responses.

Resident Engagement and Feedback

Resident feedback remains central to our service improvement. Residents have continued to provide honest feedback through complaints, surveys, resident engagement events, scrutiny activities and direct conversations with Housing staff.

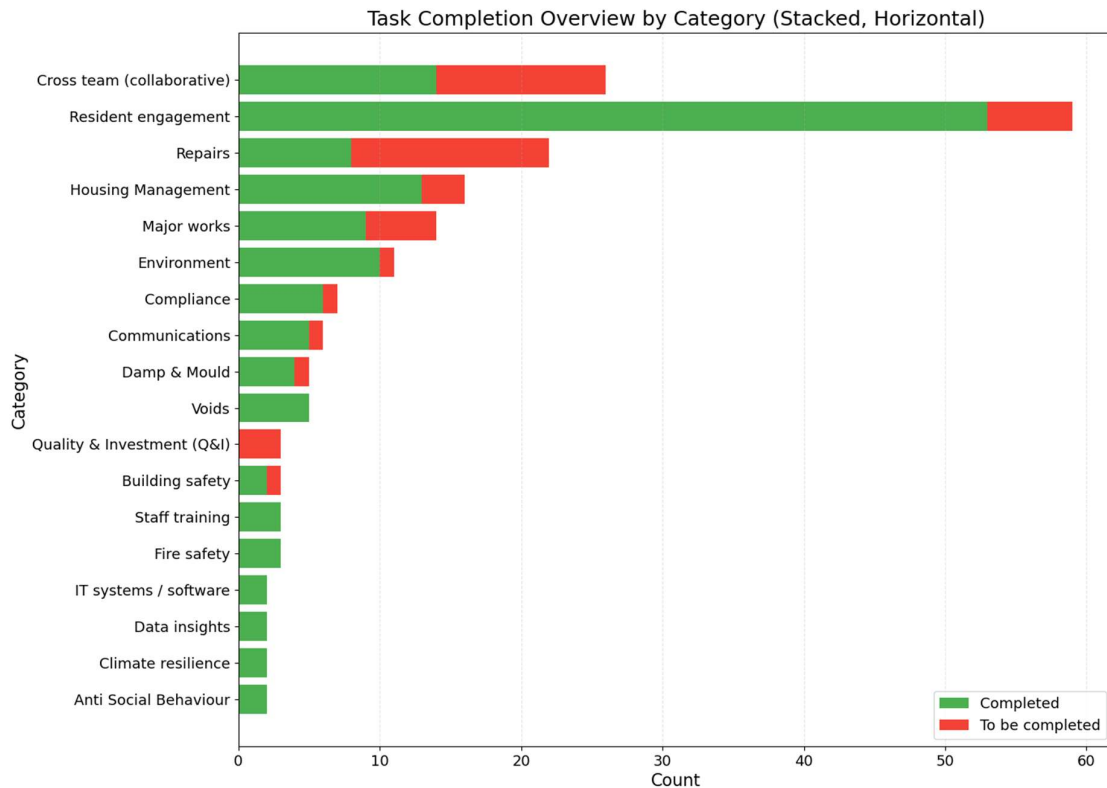
Diagram 1 below shows the framework developed by our Community Relations team with the aim of widening participation, strengthening trust, and ensuring the voices and priorities of Lewisham residents guide service improvement.

Diagram 1 – Resident Engagement Framework 2025/28



Resident Influence

While complaints are one important way for our residents to engage with us and drive service performance, it is important that we try to tackle issues before they become formal complaints. Some of these issues and service requests are raised through the channels and panels illustrated in Diagram 1, supported by the work of the Community Relations team. These are vital in shaping service improvements. Their recommendations resulted in over 70 actions completed in 2025/26. Diagram 2 shows the actions by team in this period.



Residents have been particularly important to complaint handling outcomes through the following feedback:

Strengthening of complaint handling (Repairs complaints review)

- Training delivered to staff with a 90% completion rate
- Quality assurance embedded in letter writing and communication.
- Learning from complaints systematically captured and reported
- Resident involvement in communication reviews

Transparency, improving communication and listening to residents

Across reviews:

- Tenant satisfaction measures built into monitoring.
- Reasonable Adjustments Policy and Vulnerable Residents Policy updated and published online.
- More information being shared through newsletters and resident forums.
- Resident Review Panel invited to future contractor meetings.

Resident Satisfaction Surveys

- We carry out two types of surveys on complaint handling: transactional surveys, which gather feedback immediately after a complaint is resolved, and perception surveys, which measure overall satisfaction with the complaint handling process over time.

Transactional

Transactional surveys aim to understand resident experience of a recent complaint. Results indicated low levels of satisfaction, with the highest being 68% for the complaint response being clear and easy to understand, and the lowest being 17% for being kept informed about the progress of the complaint.

Perception

Complaints Quarterly Perception Surveys showed lower levels of satisfaction, with only 22% satisfied with our approach to complaints.

- The figure for tenant satisfaction with the landlord's approach to complaints handling is 26% in the 2025/26 Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM).
- Tenant feedback all points to the importance of communication, ownership and follow-through. While satisfaction with complaint handling remains low, residents have also recognised improvements in responsiveness and welcomed greater openness about performance and service challenges.

The message from residents has been consistent. Residents want:

- the Council to keep promises made during complaints.
- repairs fixed properly first time.
- updates without having to chase.
- services to learn from mistakes rather than repeat them.
- greater accountability when things go wrong.

Service Improvement

Training and changes to the complaints process are helping us capture learning more consistently. Officers now have clearer templates and guidance to record learning outcomes, identify actions arising from upheld complaints, agree and evidence extensions, and retain key case documents on iCasework. The internal audit action plan will further reinforce this through mandatory complaint-handling training, improved communication to teams, corrective action reporting and targeted support through the complaints reset.

We have continued with several initiatives to transform housing services and enhance complaint handling:

- Complaints Transformation: Updating policies, improving reporting, enhancing training, and analysing feedback and Housing Ombudsman casework.
- Repairs Transformation Programme: Aims to improve communication, tenant satisfaction, efficient operations, and budget control.

Tenant satisfaction with how we handle complaints remained at 26% between 2024/25 and 2025/26, two percentage points below the London local authority average.

However, our complaints statistics for 2025/26 have improved at stage 1, showing a rise in stage 1 complaints responded to on time from 33% to 71%, and a small decline in stage 2 complaints responded to on time from 72% to 69%.

Complaints Audit

An internal audit of complaints began in October 2025, following the Housing Ombudsman's P49 investigation. The audit sought assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the policies and processes in place for managing housing complaints.

The audit report was issued in May 2026 and gave 'Satisfactory' assurance, identifying clear improvement over the year, with no high-severity findings. The action plan was agreed with management at the audit exit meeting on 2 March 2026 and will be followed up by Internal Audit as actions fall due. Delayed implementation may be escalated to senior management or the Council's Audit and Risk Committee.

Findings and Actions Summary		
Severity	Findings	Actions
High	0	0
Medium	5	8
Low	2	2

Table 7 - Audit themes summary

Audit action theme	Agreed action and current position	Target date
Guidance, training and iCasework use	Review the communication plan, update guidance and training, and encourage consistent use of iCasework, including mid-year progress checks. Corporate complaint-handling training is mandatory through the Learning Academy.	31 December 2026
iCasework prompts and record completeness	Explore automated prompts before case closure to confirm that key documents have been uploaded. Early discussions have identified wider system and cost implications because any change would affect council-wide users.	31 December 2026
Templates, signposting and extensions	Update guidance and training to reinforce use of correct complaint templates and ensure extensions are agreed and evidenced. Teams have been reminded and a wider Housing communications plan is in development.	30 June and 31 December 2026
Third-party complaint handling	Provide third parties with updated templates, restate complaint-handling obligations in contract management meetings, and monitor Brockley PFI complaint documentation for completeness and compliance.	30 September 2026
Corrective actions and learning capture	Improve completion of corrective action and learning fields, develop reporting to create a register of complaint actions, and use webinars through the complaints reset to support consistent practice.	31 December 2026
Complaint Handling Code compliance	Review identified non-compliance and add due dates where required. The Housing Ombudsman Duty to Monitor team has confirmed no further meeting is needed following review of policy and Code compliance.	30 September 2026

We are resetting the complaints service to bring audit recommendations, Paragraph 49 learning, the Complaint Handling Code self-assessment, TSM data, implementation of the Vulnerable Residents Policy and Ombudsman recommendations into a single monitoring framework. The audit action plan strengthens this approach by requiring clearer use of iCasework, better evidence retention, compliant templates, agreed and recorded extensions, third-party complaint-handling controls, corrective action reporting and more consistent capture of learning from upheld complaints. This will give senior leaders clearer oversight from issue identification through to action completion. Ongoing monitoring will demonstrate impact and provide assurance that lessons learned are improving outcomes for residents.

This approach is consistent with the learning framework reported to the Service and Performance Panel, which groups improvement activity under seven linked elements: insight, governance, action, quality assurance, learning, sharing and capture. The framework supports the shift from response-time compliance to demonstrable learning, clearer accountability and stronger evidence of service change.

Table 8 – Learning examples and actions identified

Complaint theme	Learning identified	Action taken	Impact to be monitored
Damp, mould and leaks	We needed stronger case tracking, clearer ownership and more consistent communication with residents where damp, mould and leak issues were identified.	Introduced clearer mailbox processes, staff guidance, dedicated case tracking and priority arrangements for serious cases.	Impact will be monitored through overdue damp and mould cases, case ownership records, communication quality checks and repeat complaint trends.
Repairs and contractor delays	Complaint evidence showed that delays, repeat visits and lack of clear updates increased the likelihood of escalation.	Strengthened contractor monitoring, response templates, completion evidence and senior review of recurring repair themes.	Impact will be monitored through repeat complaint volumes, completion evidence, response quality checks and resident update records.
Signposting and complaint handling	Residents needed clearer information about complaint stages, escalation rights and the role of the Housing Ombudsman.	Updated complaint templates and quality assurance checks to ensure clearer explanations, signposting and escalation information.	Impact will be monitored through quality assurance checks, template compliance, reduced process failures and clearer signposting to escalation and Ombudsman rights.
Staff communication and empathy	Feedback showed the importance of empathy, ownership and accountability when residents experience repeated service failure.	Embedded complaint-handling training, strengthened letter quality checks and reinforced expectations on clear, respectful communication.	Impact will be monitored through complaint response quality, repeat dissatisfaction themes, escalation reasons and accountability checks.
Ombudsman learning	Ombudsman casework identified recurring issues in repairs, communication, record keeping and follow-through on agreed actions.	Linked Ombudsman learning to the Housing Improvement Plan, complaints governance and senior oversight of orders, recommendations and corrective actions.	Impact will be monitored through compliance with Ombudsman orders, overdue action reporting and evidence that lessons learned are being implemented.

Complaints Consumer Standard

The Social Housing Regulation Act 2023 introduced new consumer standards and a proactive regulation regime, effective from 1 April 2024. The table below shows the specific consumer standard relating to complaints and some of the work done to meet them.

Complaints Service Improvement – the next phase

Last year's annual report included a Housing complaints improvement plan focused on improving complaint response timeliness, strengthening performance in Housing Ombudsman casework and improving resident communication, ownership and follow-

**Table 9 – Actions against complaints consumer standard
Transparency, Influence and Accountability**

Detailed standard		Compliance
2.5.1	Registered providers must ensure their approach to handling complaints is simple, accessible and publicised.	Information about Housing complaints can be found on our website at https://lewisham.gov.uk/my services/housing/complaints . The simplest way to make a complaint is by completing our online form. We regularly publicise this information in Council publications. We can also accept complaints by phone, or in writing to our main address. As the majority of complaints are submitted electronically, 2026/27 will see a move towards making this the main form of contact for those who are able to use it. Managing the annual complaint handling and service improvement report and the Complaint Handling Code self-assessment as companion documents is consistent with good practice. The annual report provides the narrative account of performance, learning, resident feedback and improvement activity, while the self-assessment provides the structured compliance position against the Code.
2.5.2	Registered providers must provide accessible information to tenants about: a) how tenants can make a complaint about their registered provider, b) the registered provider's complaints policy and complaints handling process, c) what tenants can do if they are dissatisfied with the outcome of a complaint or how a complaint was handled, and d) the type of complaints received and how they have learnt from complaints to continuously improve services.	In addition to this report, we publish an Annual Report for Tenants and Leaseholders, providing information on service performance, key achievements, areas for improvement and future priorities. Our policy has been updated in partnership with the Housing Ombudsman's Compliance Team and is available on our website, linked to our main complaints page. Our self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code has been published alongside this annual report. It shows substantial compliance, with any identified gaps captured in the service improvement plan and monitored through the complaints governance framework.

through.

A review of these objectives found that further work was needed to achieve the scale of service change required, particularly given the increasing volume and complexity of complaints.

It was determined that a 'reset' of the strategic and operational framework supporting complaint management was necessary.

The March 2026 Service and Performance Panel report on complaints transformation provides supporting evidence for this annual report. It confirms the continued focus on embedding learning from complaints, improving complaint handling performance, strengthening use of iCasework, making better use of resident feedback and Tenant Satisfaction Measures, and improving oversight of actions arising from upheld complaints, Ombudsman casework and service reviews.

The SPP report also identified actions reflected in this report, including improved demographic data capture through iCasework, further analysis of satisfaction by protected characteristics where data is available, complaints process mapping, cross-council complaint handler networks, participation in the Cross-London Housing complaints forum, and strengthened reporting through monthly complaints meetings, performance dashboards and senior governance routes.

The 2025/26 Service Improvement Plan was developed in response to complaint performance, Housing Ombudsman learning and internal assurance findings. Progress has been reviewed during the year and is summarised in Appendix C. Completed actions have strengthened capacity, monitoring, complaint handling processes, staff guidance and resident communication. Where actions remain ongoing, they have been carried forward into the 2026/27 improvement plan, alongside new priorities arising from complaint themes, Ombudsman determinations, resident feedback and performance data.

Appendix C provides the supporting improvement plan evidence, including the closed 2025/26 position, actions carried forward into 2026/27, evidence of impact and the forward programme for complaints service improvement. This gives a clear evidence trail from the original 2025/26 service improvement plan through to the 2026/27 improvement priorities.

Our priorities for 2026/27 are clear:

- Improve stage 1 and stage 2 complaint handling performance.
- Embed learning from complaints across all housing services.
- Reduce repeat failures in repairs, damp and mould and disrepair.
- Strengthen record keeping and information management.
- Demonstrate measurable improvements in outcomes for residents.
- Continue to involve residents in designing, shaping and scrutinising services.

We know that trust is built not by publishing reports alone, but by delivering better outcomes for residents and being open about where services still need to improve. This report shows that Lewisham Council Housing Service has made important progress during 2025/26, including improved stage 1 response timeliness, fewer Complaint Handling Failure Orders, strengthened complaints governance, increased staff training and clearer arrangements for capturing learning from complaints.

However, the report is also clear that further improvement is required. Resident satisfaction with complaint handling remains low, repairs continue to drive the highest volume of complaints and Ombudsman casework, and weaknesses in communication, record keeping, ownership and follow-through continue to affect residents' experience. These issues are being addressed through the Complaints Reset Programme, the Housing

Transformation Programme, implementation of audit recommendations and continued monitoring of the Housing Ombudsman Paragraph 49 recommendations. The internal audit action plan provides additional structure by setting due dates for improved training, template compliance, third-party controls, extension recording, corrective action reporting, learning capture and Code compliance.

During 2026/27, our focus will be on demonstrating measurable improvement: responding to complaints within timescale, improving the quality of complaint responses, reducing repeat service failure, evidencing learning from upheld complaints and ensuring residents receive clearer communication and stronger service ownership.

Progress will be monitored through the complaints governance framework, the audit action plan, corrective action reporting and regular updates to senior leaders, residents and relevant oversight bodies.

Submitted alongside the annual Complaint Handling Code self-assessment, this report provides a transparent account of both progress and challenge. It confirms our commitment to learning from complaints, responding openly to residents and the Housing Ombudsman, and embedding a more accountable, responsive and resident-focused housing service.

Annex A: Housing Ombudsman Case List 2025/26

Reference	Category	Finding(s)	£ Award
202453475	Responsive repairs/activity - Leaks, Managing Relations - Complaints Handling	Maladministration	650
202502857	Occupancy Rights - Terms and conditions of occupancy agreement	Maladministration	200
202442128	Responsive repairs/activity - Other responsive repairs, Responsive repairs/activity - Windows, Managing Relations - Complaints Handling	Maladministration, Service failure	500
202502695	Responsive repairs/activity - Heating & hot water	Maladministration	280
202517370	Responsive repairs/activity - Condensation damp and mould, Planned works - Windows upgrade, Responsive repairs/activity - Other responsive repairs, Managing Relations - Complaints Handling	Maladministration, Service failure, No maladministration	1450
202522707	Responsive repairs/activity - Condensation damp and mould, Moving/Buying/Selling Home - Decants (temp. or permanent), Managing Relations - Complaints Handling	Maladministration, Service failure	200
202527711	Managing Relations - Complaints Handling, Responsive repairs/activity - Condensation damp and mould, Financial - Reimbursement of costs incurred by resident, Information and Data Management - Information held on file	Maladministration, No maladministration	100
202501043	Responsive repairs/activity - Leaks, Managing Relations - Complaints Handling	Service failure, No maladministration	1100
202525114	Responsive repairs/activity - Windows, Managing Relations - Complaints Handling	Severe Maladministration, Maladministration	1450
202441034	Responsive repairs/activity - Leaks, Responsive repairs/activity - Windows, Managing Relations - Complaints Handling	Maladministration, Service failure, No maladministration	250
202442163	Responsive repairs/activity - Condensation damp and mould, Managing Relations - Complaints Handling	Maladministration	1100
202500499	Responsive repairs/activity - Heating & hot water, Moving/Buying/Selling Home - Condition of property upon letting (e.g. void works), Managing Relations - Complaints Handling	Maladministration	1150

Reference	Category	Finding(s)	£ Award
202417652	Health and Safety (inc. building safety) - Water safety, ASB/Abuse/Nuisance - Pets, Managing Relations - Complaints Handling	Maladministration, Service failure	1150
202427280	Responsive repairs/activity - Heating & hot water, Managing Relations - Complaints Handling	Maladministration, Service failure	550
202500441	Responsive repairs/activity - Leaks, Managing Relations - Complaints Handling, Financial - Reimbursement of costs incurred by resident	Maladministration, Service failure, No maladministration	150
202520588	Responsive repairs/activity - Condensation damp and mould, Managing Relations - Complaints Handling	Maladministration, No maladministration	840
202509103	Responsive repairs/activity - Condensation damp and mould, Managing Relations - Complaints Handling	Maladministration, Service failure	1100
202453015	Responsive repairs/activity - Condensation damp and mould, Responsive repairs/activity - Pest Control (internal), ASB/Abuse/Nuisance - ASB Multiple, Estate Management - Boundaries, Responsive repairs/activity - Other responsive repairs, Managing Relations - Complaints Handling	Maladministration, Service failure, Outside Jurisdiction, No maladministration	700
202417762	Moving/Buying/Selling Home - Transfer Application/Mobility Schemes	Maladministration	200
202513950	Responsive repairs/activity - Other responsive repairs, Managing Relations - Complaints Handling	Maladministration	1200
202448818	Responsive repairs/activity - Windows, Responsive repairs/activity - Other responsive repairs, Responsive repairs/activity - Condensation damp and mould, Responsive repairs/activity - Leaks	Severe Maladministration, Maladministration, Service failure, No maladministration	1800
202511862	Responsive repairs/activity - Condensation damp and mould, Managing Relations - Complaints Handling	Severe Maladministration, Maladministration	2036
202432454	Responsive repairs/activity - Other responsive repairs, Managing Relations - Complaints Handling	Maladministration	650
202329214	Responsive repairs/activity - Other responsive repairs, Managing Relations - Complaints Handling	Maladministration, No maladministration	400
202450546	ASB/Abuse/Nuisance - ASB Multiple, Responsive repairs/activity - Other responsive repairs, Managing Relations - Complaints Handling	Service failure, No maladministration	200

Reference	Category	Finding(s)	£ Award
202502246	Responsive repairs/activity - Condensation damp and mould	Maladministration	2100
202507127	ASB/Abuse/Nuisance - Noise, Managing Relations - Complaints Handling	Service failure	150
202430563	Responsive repairs/activity - Leaks, Managing Relations - Complaints Handling	Maladministration, No maladministration	500
202415671	Responsive repairs/activity - Leaks, Managing Relations - Complaints Handling	Service failure, No maladministration	200
202435641	Responsive repairs/activity - Condensation damp and mould	Severe Maladministration	5963.63
202443295	Responsive repairs/activity - Pest Control (external), Managing Relations - Complaints Handling	Service failure, Maladministration	700
202447302	Managing Relations - Complaints Handling, Responsive repairs/activity - Condensation damp and mould	Maladministration	4254.05
202435916	Responsive repairs/activity - Other responsive repairs, Managing Relations - Complaints Handling, Moving/Buying/Selling Home - New application for housing	Maladministration, Service failure, No maladministration	350
202503165	Responsive repairs/activity - Other responsive repairs, Responsive repairs/activity - Pest Control (internal), Managing Relations - Complaints Handling	Maladministration	600
202427559	Responsive repairs/activity - Pest Control (internal), Managing Relations - Complaints Handling	Maladministration	600
202408476	Responsive repairs/activity - Other responsive repairs, Responsive repairs/activity - Condensation damp and mould, Managing Relations - Complaints Handling	Maladministration	1000
202426019	Responsive repairs/activity - Condensation damp and mould, Responsive repairs/activity - Other responsive repairs, Responsive repairs/activity - Heating & hot water, Responsive repairs/activity - Windows, Managing Relations - Complaints Handling	Maladministration, Service failure	2350
202411470	Responsive repairs/activity - Communal Areas, Managing Relations - Complaints Handling	Maladministration, Service failure	500
202422601	Responsive repairs/activity - Leaks, Moving/Buying/Selling Home - Condition of property upon letting (e.g. void works), Financial - Service charges – amount or account management, Managing Relations - Complaints Handling	Maladministration	1225

Reference	Category	Finding(s)	£ Award
202421618	Health and Safety (inc. building safety) - Gas inspections and safety, Managing Relations - Complaints Handling	Service failure, Maladministration	200
202423990	Responsive repairs/activity - Condensation damp and mould, Managing Relations - Complaints Handling	Maladministration, No maladministration	400
202439765	Responsive repairs/activity - Other responsive repairs, Responsive repairs/activity - Condensation damp and mould, Information and Data Management - Information held on file	Maladministration, Severe Maladministration, Service failure	1300
202416712	Responsive repairs/activity - Condensation damp and mould, Responsive repairs/activity - Plaster / Walls, Managing Relations - Complaints Handling	Maladministration, Service failure	450
202440401	Responsive repairs/activity - Leaks, Responsive repairs/activity - Other responsive repairs, Managing Relations - Complaints Handling	Maladministration, No maladministration	2560.82
202415441	Responsive repairs/activity - Leaks, Managing Relations - Complaints Handling	Maladministration, Service failure	1100
202415887	Managing Relations - Complaints Handling, Health and Safety (inc. building safety) - Gas inspections and safety	Service failure, Redress	170
202424526	Responsive repairs/activity - Leaks, Managing Relations - Complaints Handling	Service failure	150
202437098	Responsive repairs/activity - Condensation damp and mould, Managing Relations - Complaints Handling, Health and Safety (inc. building safety) - Lifts	Maladministration, No maladministration	300
202400587	Responsive repairs/activity - Heating & hot water, Responsive repairs/activity - Condensation damp and mould, Responsive repairs/activity - Leaks, Managing Relations - Complaints Handling	Service failure, Maladministration	1000
202407407	Health and Safety (inc. building safety) - Fire Safety	Mediation	none
202424214	Responsive repairs/activity - Condensation damp and mould	Maladministration	700
202425782	Responsive repairs/activity - Other responsive repairs, Responsive repairs/activity - Condensation damp and mould, Managing Relations - Complaints Handling, Financial - Reimbursement of costs incurred by resident, Moving/Buying/Selling Home - New application for housing	Maladministration, No maladministration,	950
202419019	Responsive repairs/activity - Condensation damp and mould	Mediation	400

Reference	Category	Finding(s)	£ Award
202117071	Responsive repairs/activity - Other responsive repairs, Managing Relations - Complaints Handling	Service failure	200
202301512	Managing Relations - Contact restrictions, Managing Relations - Complaints Handling, Managing Relations - Staff conduct	Service failure, No maladministration	100
202423546	Responsive repairs/activity - Leaks, Estate Management - Cleaning / Refuse, Managing Relations - Complaints Handling, Health and Safety (inc. building safety) - Asbestos/MMF	Maladministration, Service failure, No maladministration	350
202413394	Responsive repairs/activity - Pest Control (internal), Responsive repairs/activity - Condensation damp and mould, Responsive repairs/activity - Other responsive repairs, Managing Relations - Complaints Handling	Service failure, Redress, No maladministration	250
202217704	Responsive repairs/activity - Leaks, Managing Relations - Complaints Handling	Maladministration, Service failure	900
202428707	Responsive repairs/activity - Leaks	Maladministration	800
202408551	Planned works - Kitchen Replacement, Responsive repairs/activity - Condensation damp and mould, Managing Relations - Complaints Handling	Maladministration	800
202418158	Responsive repairs/activity - Leaks, Responsive repairs/activity - Other responsive repairs	Maladministration, Service failure	850
202337288	Responsive repairs/activity - Other responsive repairs, Responsive repairs/activity - Leaks, Managing Relations - Complaints Handling	Maladministration, Severe Maladministration	2100
202400846	Responsive repairs/activity - Condensation damp and mould, Responsive repairs/activity - Leaks, Managing Relations - Complaints Handling, Responsive repairs/activity - Pest Control (internal)	Maladministration, Service failure, Outside Jurisdiction	1270
202419068	Responsive repairs/activity - Leaks, Responsive repairs/activity - Other responsive repairs, Moving/Buying/Selling Home - New application for housing	Maladministration, Service failure	1050
202406967	Responsive repairs/activity - Condensation damp and mould	Maladministration	600
202407102	Responsive repairs/activity - Leaks	Maladministration	1000
202328037	Responsive repairs/activity - Communal Areas, Responsive repairs/activity - Leaks, Managing Relations - Complaints Handling	Maladministration	950

Reference	Category	Finding(s)	£ Award
202345032	Responsive repairs/activity - Heating & hot water, Managing Relations - Complaints Handling	Severe Maladministration, Maladministration	867
202410375	Responsive repairs/activity - Other responsive repairs, Managing Relations - Complaints Handling	Maladministration, Service failure	550
202414095	Responsive repairs/activity - Windows	Maladministration	200

Annex B: Housing Ombudsman Special Report Recommendations 2025

The updated Housing Improvement Plan 2026/27 has been revised to incorporate learning from the Housing Ombudsman's Paragraph 49 investigation and other critical service improvement actions.

The plan is organised into six priority areas. Below is a summary of actions linked to the P49 recommendations.

P49 Recommendation: Complaints & Learning

Action	Target
Embed learning-from-complaints culture	Ongoing
Demonstrate service improvement from complaints learning	Ongoing
Equalities analysis of TSMs	Sep 2026
Publish TSM information more frequently	Apr 2026
Review Vulnerable Residents Policy	Jul 2026
Implement complaints internal audit recommendations	Dec 2026
Implement Ombudsman recommendations regarding the Complaints Policy	Apr 2026
Implement Ombudsman recommendations regarding Complaint Handling Code self-assessment	Sep 2026

P49 Recommendation: Data Quality, Record Keeping & Contractor Oversight

Action	Target
Embed Knowledge and Information Management Strategy	Nov 2026
Continue Home Checks and "3 Questions" programme to improve resident data	Ongoing
Improve HMS property data quality	Aug 2026
Deliver MRI implementation	Jul 2026
Re-procure Totalmobile	Nov 2026
Integrate housing systems and improve reconciliation	2026
Establish consistent contract management approach across Housing	Dec 2026
Improve procurement and contractor performance management arrangements	Ongoing

P49 Recommendation: Culture, Conduct & Resident Respect

Action	Target
Workforce Plan implementation	Apr 2026
Customer Service Essentials training	Jul 2026
Role-specific frontline training	Dec 2026
Housing induction programme	Apr 2026
Competence and Conduct Standard policy	Oct 2026
Housing Staff Code of Conduct	Oct 2026
Embed Code of Conduct in services	Oct 2027
Extend competence and conduct standards to contractors	Oct 2026

P49 Recommendation: Hazards, Damp & Mould, Awaab's Law Readiness

Action	Target
Complete remaining stock condition surveys	Mar 2027
Develop approach to no-access properties	Oct 2026
Publish Asset Management Framework	Dec 2026
Deliver capital investment priorities	Oct 2026
Reduce non-decency to below 5%	Apr 2027
Maintain performance on Category 1 hazards	Ongoing
Achieve closure of Category 2 hazards	Apr 2027

P49 Recommendation: Repairs Performance & Quality

Action	Target
Improve customer repair journey	2026

Post-work satisfaction monitoring	May 2026
Proactive complaints team	Jun 2026
Damp & mould post-work satisfaction measures	Sep 2026
Maintain repair call answering under 5 minutes	Sep 2026
Achieve 95% emergency repairs on time	Oct 2026
Achieve 80% routine repairs on time	Oct 2026
Improve right-first-time performance	Aug 2026