

Annual Complaint Performance and Service Improvement Report 2024/25

1. Background

A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions, or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.

Waverley Borough Council has a two-stage complaint process. When a complaint is received it is first investigated by the appropriate service manager within the housing service as a level one complaint and responded to within 10 working days. If the resident is not satisfied with this response, then they can choose to escalate the complaint to level two. At this stage the Head of Housing reviews the level one response, carries out any necessary further investigations, and provides a response within 20 working days.

If the resident remains dissatisfied after the level two response, they can escalate their complaint to the Housing Ombudsman Service. The Housing Ombudsman Service provides a free, impartial, and independent service to investigate complaints and resolve disputes involving the tenants and leaseholders of social landlords.

2. Summary

From 1 April 2024 Social Housing Landlords are required to complete an annual report about housing complaints. This bespoke Complaint Performance and Service Improvement Report aims to provide more detailed information about complaint handling performance in 2024/25 compared to 2023/24.

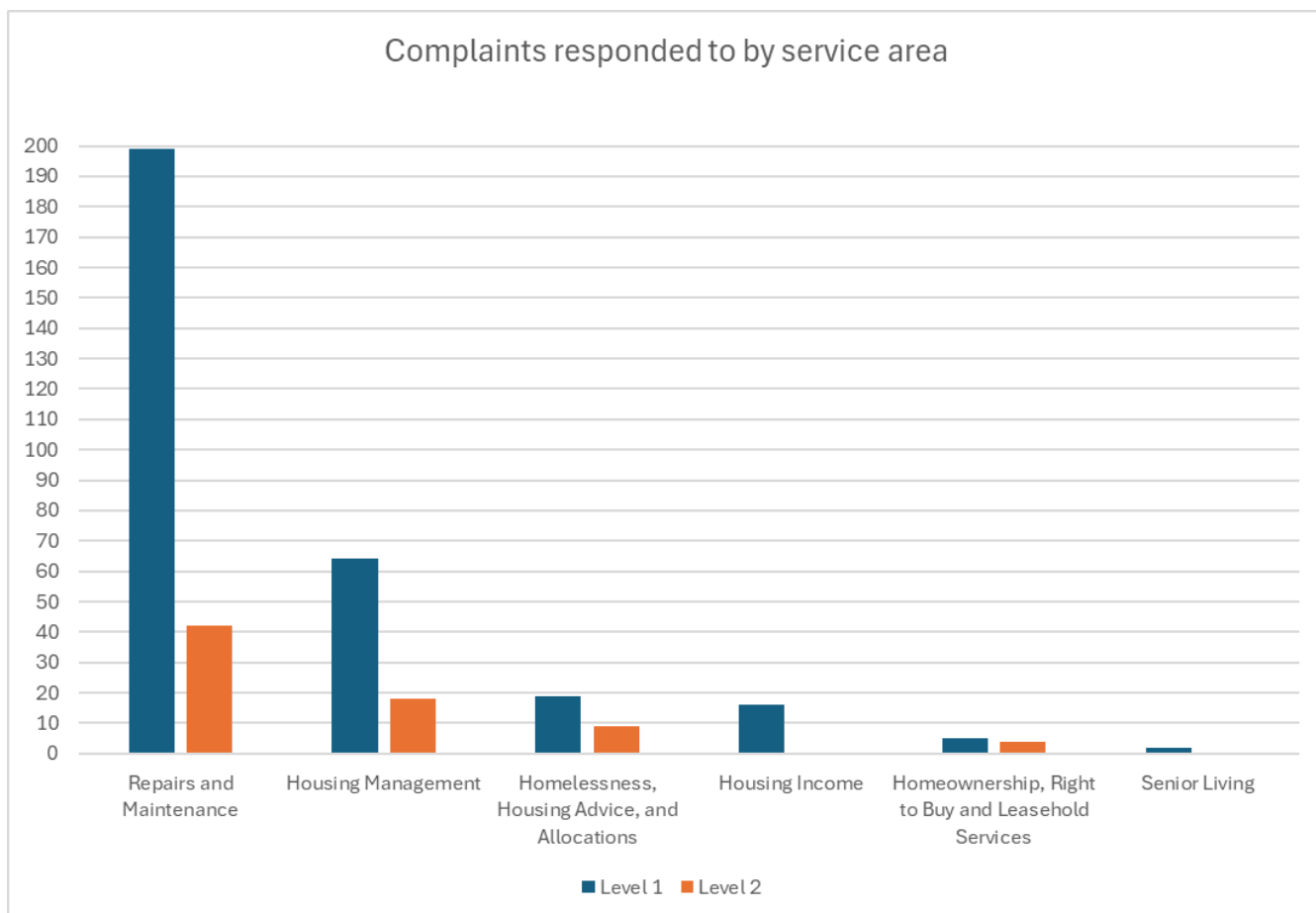
3. 2024/25 overview

Between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025, the Housing Service received 306 level one complaints and 77 level two complaints, compared to 2023/24, when 207 level one and 49 level two complaints were received. In comparison to the previous year, there has been a 47.8% increase in level one complaints and a 57.1% increase in level two complaints.

This can be attributed to the Government's "Making Things Right" campaign encouraging social housing tenants to complain to their landlords, as well as new legislation relating to Right To Buy and Stamp Duty meaning an increased demand on this service. The number of complaints received includes complaints from

leaseholders, tenants, and some private residents affected by Waverley Housing issues. No complaints were refused by the Council.

4. Complaints responded to by service area 2024/25

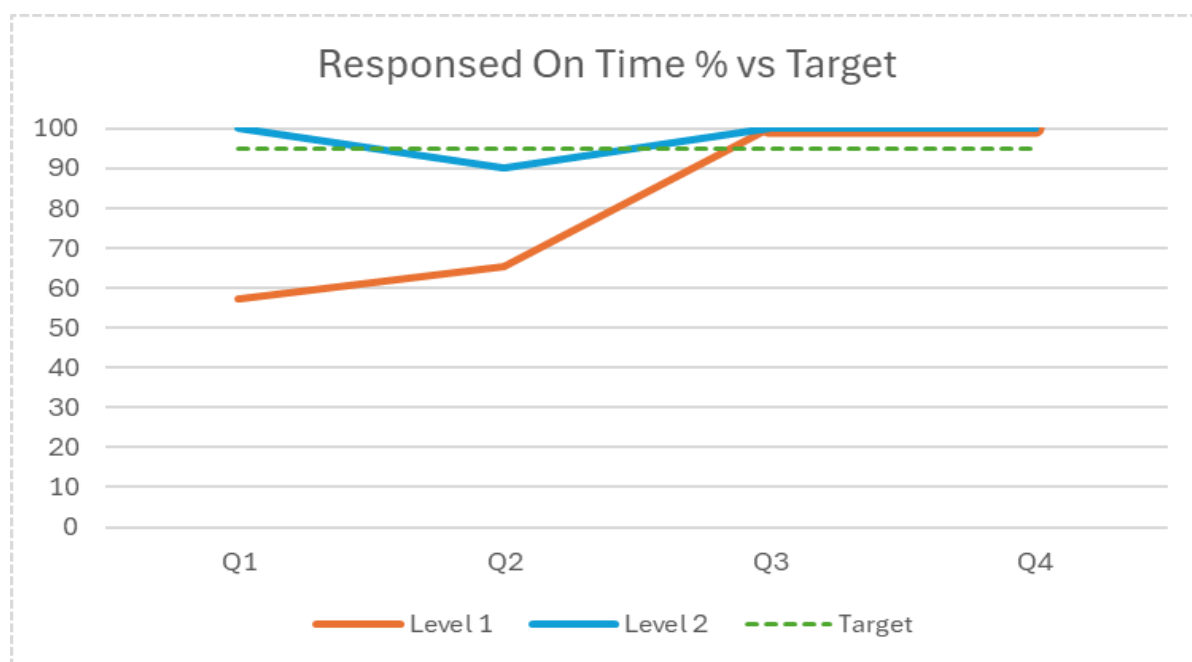


Service area	Level 1 Complaints responded to	Level 2 Complaints responded to	Total
Repairs and Maintenance	199	42	241
Housing Management	64	18	82
Homelessness, Housing Advice, and Allocations	19	9	28
Housing Income	16	0	16
Homeownership, Right to Buy and Leasehold Services	5	4	9
Senior Living	2	0	2
Total	305	73	378

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5. Response times

Overall, in 2024/25, 86.89% of level 1 complaints were responded to within the target timeframe of 10 working days, and 99% level 2 complaints were responded to within 20 working days. The Council’s target is for 95% of all complaints to be responded to within the agreed timeframe.



Quarter	% Level 1 responded to on time	% Level 2 responded to on time
Q1	57.14%	100%
Q2	65.22%	90%
Q3	100%	100%
Q4	100%	100%

Since the dedicated Service Improvement Officer for Complaints started and complaints management was centralised in September 2024, there has been a marked and sustained increase in the percentage of level 1 complaints responded to on time. The expectation that all complaints are to be responded to within the prescribed timeframe has been successfully embedded into the Housing service. Looking forwards, the focus will be on improving the quality of level 1 responses to prevent escalation and monitoring remedial actions to sure tenant satisfaction.

6. Complaint decisions

In 2024/25, 73.44% (224) of level 1 complaints were upheld, and 62.5% (45) of level 2 complaints were upheld. As per the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code, complaints must be either upheld (compliant accepted – the Council failed to meet standard and/or obligation) or not upheld (complaint not accepted - no evidence to support the complaint). A complaint cannot be partially upheld. If any element of a complaint is upheld, the entire complaint is upheld.

7. Tenant Satisfaction Measures

Our 2023/24 Tenant Satisfaction Measures data indicates a slight decline in tenant satisfaction with complaints handling from 34.5% in 2023/24, to 32.8% in 2024/25. This reflects a sector wide challenge with low satisfaction with complaint handling. The sector average was 34% in 2023/24.

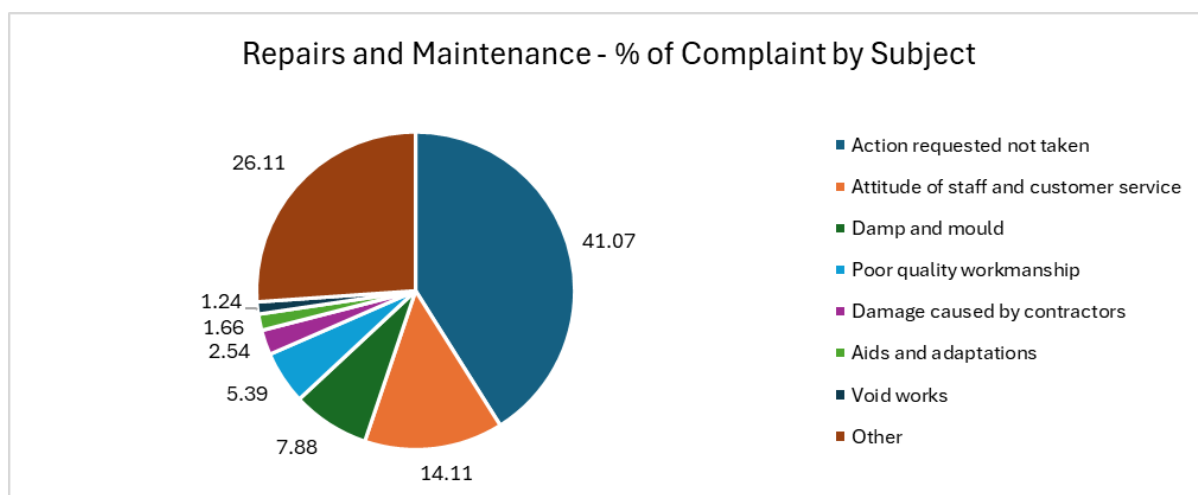
Satisfaction with complaint handling can be more challenging if the resident's desired outcomes cannot be met, and tenant perception of a complaint (versus a service request) however, more detailed analysis of the experience of residents who complained has shown that satisfaction improves when:

- Residents are engaged with throughout the complaint journey to demonstrate they have been listened to and understood
- Complaints are responded to quickly, with the necessary actions carried out within the timeframes we set
- Responses are clear, fair and thorough, and the explanation helps the resident make sense of what has happened

8. Complaints by service areas

8a. Repairs and Maintenance

As 63.8% (241) of all complaints received related to maintenance and repairs, this was a key focus for improvements made to the service over the year. The three trends that emerged from the complaints were poor quality workmanship, time taken for repair issues to be resolved, and poor communication and customer service from our contractors.



Complaint subject	% of complaints relating to subject
Action requested not taken	41.07%
Attitude of staff and customer service	14.11%
Damp and mould	7.88%
Poor quality workmanship	5.39%
Damage caused by contractors	2.54%
Aids and adaptations	1.66%
Void works	1.24%
Other	26.11%

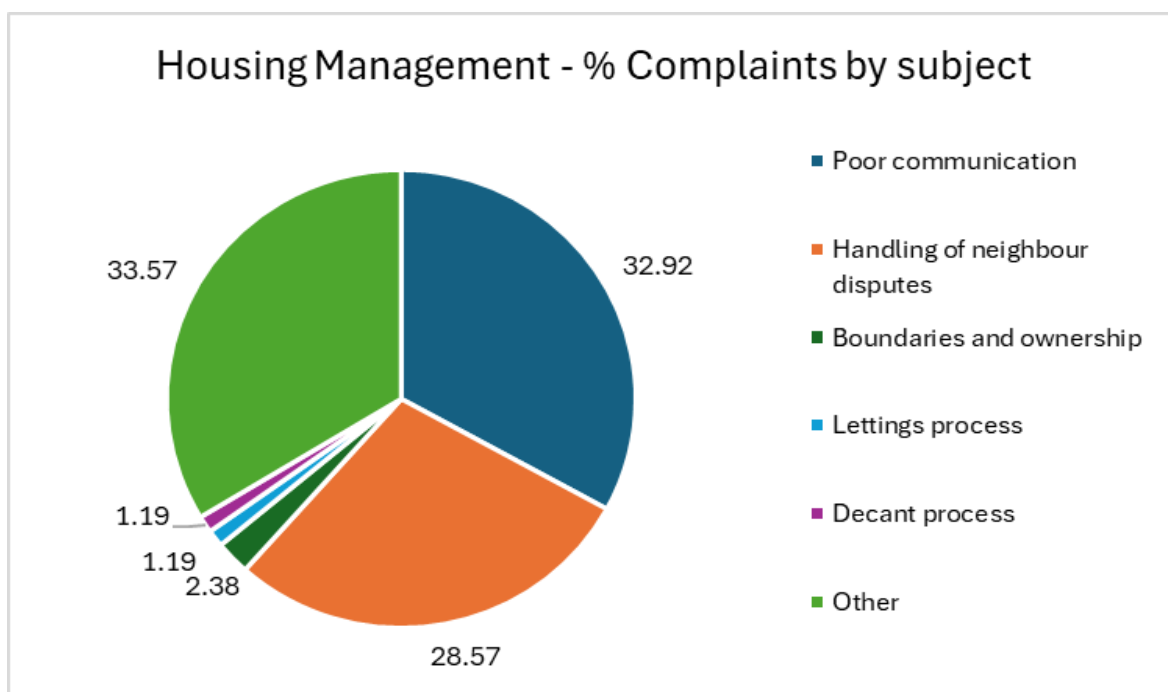
Of the 241 level 1 and 2 complaints received relating to repairs and maintenance, 188 (78%) were upheld. A large proportion of complaints regarding maintenance and repairs resulted from poor communication. Residents complain when appointments are missed or rescheduled without appropriate notice. Ian Williams have implemented a tracking service for residents to be able to see the location of the operative prior to their appointment.

Complaints were also made due to poor quality workmanship. Ian Williams have adapted their working practices to ensure more works are post inspected. They have allocated resource to this by assigning the task to post-inspect jobs to their Resident Liaison Officer.

Regular contract management meetings have taken place to ensure that the number of outstanding jobs taking longer than the agreed timescales have reduced. The number of overdue jobs has decreased to c. 7% which is within target.

8b. Housing Management

21.69% (82) of complaints received this year related to Housing Management. The key themes in these complaints were poor communication, record keeping, and the unsatisfactory handling of neighbour disputes. Of the 82 complaints, 53 were upheld.



Complaint subject	% of complaints relating to subject
Poor communication	32.92%
Handling of neighbour disputes	28.57%
Boundaries and ownership	2.38%
Lettings process	1.19%
Decant process	1.19%
Other	33.57%

Complaints review meetings have identified a need for more joined up working between the Housing Management Team and Housing Operations Team.

8c. Homelessness, Housing Advice, and Allocations

7.04% (28) of complaints received this year related to Homelessness, Housing Advice, and Allocations. The key themes in these complaints were dissatisfaction with housing register decisions, and dissatisfaction with the bidding process. Of the 28 complaints, 5 were upheld.

8d. Homeownership, Right to Buy and Leasehold Services

2.3% (9) of complaints received this year related to Homeownership, Right to Buy and Leasehold Services. The key theme in these complaints was delays with information being provided. Of the 9 complaints, 7 were upheld.

The Homeownership team are currently experiencing an extremely high demand for their services. Additional resource has been allocated to ensure this demand is met.

Our income team have undertaken a project to recoup historic outstanding service charge amounts which has generated a relatively high volume of complaints.

8e. Housing Income

4.23% (16) of complaints received this year related to Housing Income. The key themes in these complaints were disputes with rent accounts, and communication. Of the 16 complaints, 15 were upheld.

8f. Senior Living and Careline

0.25% (2) of complaints received this year related to Senior Living and Careline. The key themes in these complaints were dissatisfaction with the handling of neighbour disputes. Of the two complaints, both were upheld.

A key theme from complaints relating to senior living and careline was dissatisfaction with the handling of neighbour disputes. Regular forums are held at sites where there are high levels of dissatisfaction so tenants can report issues in person to their Senior Living Officer and work together to resolve issues.

9. Housing Ombudsman Service

In 2024/25, the Council received four determinations about four complaint cases investigated by the Housing Ombudsman Service. These contained nine findings of maladministration and included 18 orders for remedial action. Orders included making apologies, rectifying issues, and paying compensation. The Council paid £4,788 in compensation ordered by the Housing Ombudsman. The Housing Ombudsman provides annual reports on complaints performance, briefings on sector wide issues, and advice to tenants. More information can be found at [Housing Ombudsman Service](#).

Determination type	Description	Number received by Waverley in 2024/25
No. Maladministration	Waverley acted in accordance with its obligations, both contractual (lease or tenancy agreement) and relevant policies/ procedures.	0
Service failure	There was minor failure by Waverley in the service it provided and it did not appropriately acknowledge these and/or fully put them right.	2
Maladministration	There was a failure which adversely affected the resident and Waverley has failed to acknowledge its failings and/or has made no attempt to put things right. Or Waverley has acknowledged failings and/or made some attempt to put things right but this was not proportionate to the failings identified.	5
Severe Maladministration	There was a single significant failure in service or a series of significant failures which have had a seriously detrimental impact on the resident. Waverley's response to the failures exacerbated the situation and further undermined the landlord/resident relationship.	2

In July 2025, the Council received a Complaint Policy Review Outcome Letter detailing the clauses in the Council's complaint policy which were not compliant with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code. In response to this letter, the policy has been amended to ensure compliance with the code. An updated self-assessment

of the new version of the policy has been completed. This updated self-assessment, along with this report, will be submitted to the Housing Ombudsman Service as the annual submission by the deadline of 30 September 2025.

10. Learning from complaints

Complaints provide valuable feedback, and we encourage staff to view these as a positive opportunity to learn from experiences to drive continuous improvement and prevent similar issues happening again. For staff, complaints provide a first-hand account of the customer's views and experience, and resolving complaints early saves resources and creates better customer relations.

Lesson learned	Action
Decant procedure – our Home Relocation policy needs to be embedded and followed by all housing staff.	The Home Relocation procedure to be updated to include (i) all prospective tenants are to be accompanied to every viewing of any property they may be relocated to and (ii) roles and responsibilities of staff involved in the relocation process are to be clearly defined.
Record keeping – information given at letting stage needs to be recorded and quality of record keeping needs to improve.	Additional training and performance management for staff will be implemented by managers.
Void process – more stringent checks need to be undertaken prior to properties being considered 'ready to let'.	Review of practices within the Voids team to be undertaken. Further support to be provided to staff if required.
Garden allocation – clear information about garden allocation is required for all properties.	Garden allocation to be included in the tenancy visits.
Information Sharing – needs to be streamlined and available for any staff member to access to mitigate a single point of failure in the event of staff absence.	The Customer Experience Team (CET) inbox and the Housing Complaints inbox are to be the primary points of contact between the complaints team and Ian Williams at the investigation stage. A regular report on response times will be circulated to the Ian Williams Business Manager to understand the efficacy of the CET.
Contractor to ensure residents are kept updated on the status of their repair appointment and appointments are not cancelled without appropriate warning.	Ian Williams have implemented a tracking service for residents to be able to see the location of the operative prior to their appointment.

Escalation was required, due to remedial actions not being carried out	An internal tracker has been implemented for the Service Improvement team to monitor the operational team's remedial actions identified in complaints.
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11. Service improvements

Complaints trends have been used to identify service improvement priorities and have begun to be implemented into the Housing Service. The following complaints improvement actions are included in the Landlord Services Improvement Plan for 2025 to 2026:

- Include complaint handling performance in contractor management arrangements, including KPIs as contract renewal cycles allow.
- Reduce complaints which escalate to level two and the Housing Ombudsman.
- Deliver refresher complaints handling training which includes improving the quality and timeliness of responses to housing staff, achieving at least 90% participation.
- Develop a quarterly report summarising trends and disparities in complaints made by different groups based on the protected characteristics.
- Develop a mechanism to channel the learning from complaints into service improvements and be able to demonstrate outcomes.
- Carry out five policy audits based on complaint trends to assess compliance and identify gaps in staff training.
- Carry out three record keeping audits of service delivery teams based on complaint trends to identify where records are stored.
- Review and assess Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) related to complaints every six months and identify areas for improvement.

12. Conclusion

There has been a marked improvement in complaint handling across the Housing Service in 2024/25 and positive changes have been embedded. We now consistently achieve our target of 95% of responses being sent on time. The focus for 2025/26 will be to improve the quality of responses, and to monitor follow up actions fully to ensure tenants are satisfied with the outcome of their complaint. This will reduce the number of complaints escalated to level 2 and to the Housing Ombudsman, and ensure the best possible service is provided to Waverley residents.