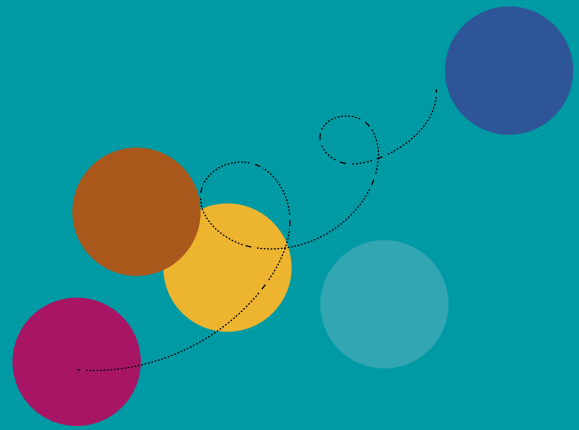




Housing Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report

2024-2025



Introduction

Welcome to our complaint's performance and service improvement report for 2024-25.

Handling complaints effectively allows us to address issues, learn from them, prevent future occurrences and improve our services.

We recognise that there are times when we do not meet the expected level of service. Where this is the case, it is important that we put things right.

The Housing Ombudsman is responsible for investigating complaints about social housing providers.

In April 2024, the Housing Ombudsman introduced a new complaint handling code to ensure complaints are addressed fairly, effectively and promptly.

In this report we'll cover how we've scrutinised our compliance against the Housing Ombudsman complaint handling code. We'll provide information on the complaints we received during 2024-25, some examples of service improvements we have made as a result of learning from complaints and an overview of our Housing Ombudsman cases.

Our complaints policy sets out our approach to complaint handling, so we can resolve complaints effectively and comply with the Code.

[Corporate complaints policy](#)

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Section 1: Complaint handling code annual self-assessment

We have completed a self-assessment (July 2025) against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.

This ensures we align our policies and practices to provide a prompt and effective complaints service.

We achieved full compliance with the code in 2024-25, and we're focused on continuous improvement throughout 2025-26.

[Our full self-assessment is published online.](#)

Section 2: Analysis of our complaint handling performance

Overall

We received 1,094 complaints about council housing between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025, which is a 20.6% reduction in complaints compared to the previous year.

920 complaints were responded to at stage 1 of our complaints process and 174 were escalated to stage 2.

The tables below show our stage 1 and stage 2 performance for 'number of complaints received' and '% of complaints responded to in target', compared to previous year.

Year	Number of Stage 1 complaints received	Year on year change in volume	Stage 1 % of complaints responded to in target	Year on year change in responded to in target
2023-2024	1187		44.8%	
2024-2025	920	(-267) -22.5%	64.0%	+19.2%

Year	Number of Stage 2 complaints received	Year on year change in volume	Stage 2 % of complaints responded to in target	Year on year change in responded to in target
2023-2024	191		64.9%	
2024-2025	174	(-17) -8.9%	73.6%	+8.7%

The Housing Ombudsman and the Regulator of Social Housing both regard effective complaint handling, listening to tenants and learning as important, and so do we.

This year, we've applied learning from the Housing Ombudsman to strengthen our housing services. As a result of the Housing Ombudsman's follow-up report: Spotlight on noise complaints (published June 2024), we have taken steps to improve how we manage and respond to noise-related issues. The report reviewed

progress since the original Time to be heard spotlight in 2022 and encouraged landlords to treat noise complaints more seriously and sensitively.

As part of our commitment to improving neighbourhood relations and tenant wellbeing, we are developing a Good Neighbour Policy. This will provide a clear framework for addressing noise concerns, promote early intervention, and support a more consistent and tenant-focused approach across our services.

During 2024-25 we refused to accept 1 complaint in line with the exclusions in our published complaint policy. In the previous year we had no record of exclusions.

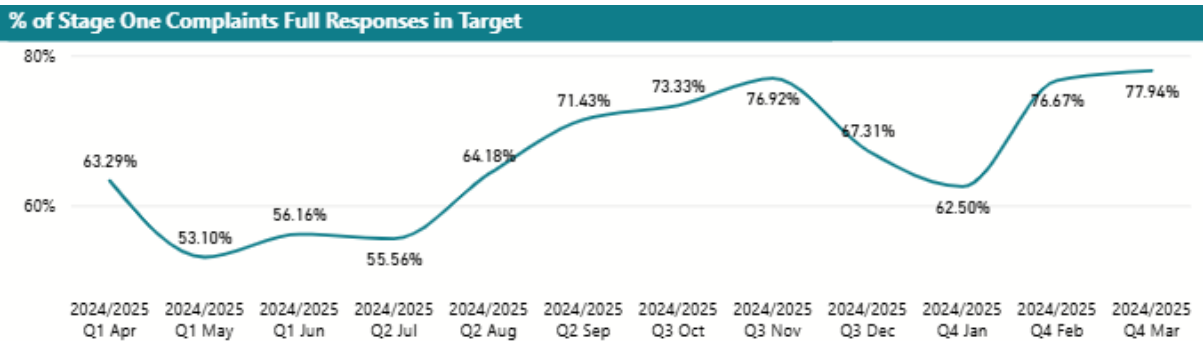
Stage 1 Complaints

Of the 920 stage 1 complaints received, 589 (64%) were acknowledged and responded to within the Housing Ombudsman code timescales.

We aim to respond to all complaints within the Housing Ombudsman code timescales, and we’re using a performance dashboard to improve our results.

In 2024-25 we’ve achieved a 19.2%-point improvement on stage 1 complaints responded to in target compared to the previous year.

The visual below shows our monthly % of stage 1 complaints responded to in target during 2024-25. You can see the positive upward trend in our performance from Q1 onwards. We know we need to improve further, and we’ll continue to use the performance dashboard and the data to drive improvements in 2025-26.



Responsive repair issues represented the largest proportion of stage 1 complaints at 48%.

Stage 1 complaint category	% of complaints by theme
Responsive repairs	48%
Tenancy and neighbourhood issues	16%

Stage 1 complaint category	% of complaints by theme
Contractors	11%
Antisocial behaviour	7%
Rent and service charges	5%
Leasehold and right to buy	3%
Planned maintenance and upgrades	2%
Lettings	1%
Building safety	1%
Garages	1%
Other	5%

The most common theme was:

Stage 1 complaint theme	Percentage
Standard of service provided	55%
Failing to provide an agreed service	22%
Service requested but not provided	19%
Employee or contractor attitude or conduct	2%
Other	2%

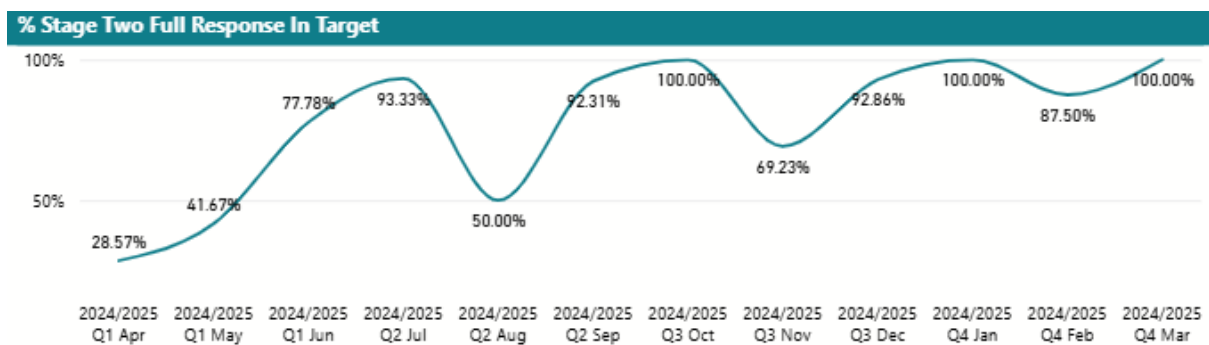
567 (62%) of stage 1 complaints were upheld.

Stage 2 Complaints

Of the 174 stage 2 complaints received, 128 (74%) were acknowledged and responded to within the Housing Ombudsman code timescales.

In 2024-25 we've achieved an 8.7%-point improvement on stage 2 complaints responded to in target compared to the previous year.

The visual below shows our monthly % of stage 2 complaints responded to in target during 2024-25. In six of the last nine months of the year we achieved over 90%. It's evidence that our improvement, and we're working on being more consistent throughout 2025-26.



Responsive repair issues represented the largest proportion of stage 2 complaints at 58%.

Stage 2 complaint category	Percentage
Responsive repairs	58%
Tenancy and neighbourhood issues	9%
Contractors	6%
Planned maintenance and upgrades	2%
Antisocial behaviour	8%
Rent and service charges	3%
Lettings	3%
Building safety	1%
Garages	1%
Leasehold and right to buy	3%
Other	7%

The most common theme was:

Stage 1 complaint theme	Percentage
Standard of service provided	51%
Service requested but not provided	25%
Failing to provide an agreed service	21%
Employee or contractor attitude or conduct	0%
Other	3%

110 (63%) of stage 2 complaints were upheld.

Tenant Satisfaction Measures

During 2024-25 we commissioned a market research organisation, Viewpoint, to carry out an independent satisfaction survey of our tenants.

One of the questions we asked respondents was “How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with Norwich City Council’s housing service complaint handling?”.

Of the 240 respondents who answered this question, 29.6% were satisfied. Whilst this represents an 8.6%-point increase compared to the previous year, it falls short of our own aspirations and tells us we are not meeting the standard you expect from us.

The 2023/24 results of this standardised survey from other large housing providers reflect that this figure is low across the housing sector, with a national average of 34.5%. We recognise the need to improve and the importance of putting things right to satisfy our tenants.

Section 3: Learning and Service Improvements

Improving the learning and insights from complaints is a priority for the housing service. In 2024–25, we introduced several improvements to the way we manage and respond to complaints:

To support more effective complaint handling, we developed a performance dashboard that is updated daily. It enables real-time case management, tracks performance trends, and captures lessons learned, helping teams respond more proactively and identify areas for continuous improvement.

We added a mandatory Housing Ombudsman complaint handling training program for all complaint handlers. The training covers the types of complaints it can consider, the statutory Complaint Handling Code, principles of dispute resolution, how to deliver effective apologies, and understanding vulnerability within the context of social housing.

We created a dedicated team channel to communicate effectively with all complaint handlers. We share updates on guidance, news, and Housing Ombudsman insight and spotlight reports for learning.

We added a new mandatory field at the beginning of the complaints process which requires complaint handlers to indicate whether the complainant has a vulnerability which may impact how the complaint is processed and how quickly it should be responded to.

Managers in the housing service meet on a quarterly basis to review the quality of complaint handling, to ensure timely responses are being provided and to share learning from cases.

One in ten cases is sampled by our director and executive director to monitor the quality.

Here are some examples of the learning points for us from complaints received during 2024-25:

You said: Communication around roofing repairs was poor, and this was reflected in the high number of complaints.

We did: We identified that 16.5% of all Stage 2 complaints in 2024-25 related to roofing, twice as many as any other category. In response, we appointed a new roofing supervisor, leading to noticeable improvements in service quality. We also improved our communications around repair timescales, and we've seen a substantial reduction in complaints.

You said: There was a build-up of leaves, and the general maintenance of your estate wasn't good enough.

We did: We expanded the caretaking team, increased spot checks and estate inspections, and provided officer training. These changes aim to improve estate conditions and proactively identify issues. As estate walkabouts and audits continue, we expect to see further improvements in satisfaction.

You said: Communication and updates on your ASB case were not good enough.

We did: Coaching was provided to ASB officers and timeframes guidance was issued to reflect the Housing Ombudsman's requirement for regular updates when complaint responses are delayed. Complaint handlers are now expected to agree on a communication plan with tenants and record this to ensure transparency and accountability.

You said: There should be a way to prevent automated text messages being sent to tenants with mental health conditions or other vulnerabilities.

We did: We created a new function on our housing system that will allow us to flag when automated texts should not be sent, helping us to respect your communication preferences.

You said: Your garage was cleared without checking with you first

We did: Our investigation found this was due to an officer error and incorrect logging. We've introduced a new process to ensure all garage clearances are properly recorded and verified with tenants beforehand, helping to prevent this from happening again.

You said: Our letter regarding small arrears came across as overly strong.

We did: We're reviewing and updating our standard letter templates across all housing services to ensure they are clear, respectful, and appropriate for all circumstances.

Section 4: Housing Ombudsman findings

If a tenant is not satisfied with our response after a stage 2 final response has been issued, they have the right to approach the Housing Ombudsman and request an impartial review.

The Housing Ombudsman published eight decisions against Norwich City Council housing service during 2024-25. The complaints included by the Housing Ombudsman were received by the council between October 2022 and December 2023.

[Case 1 \(click to view full published report\)](#)

The council received the complaint in April 2023. For our handling of repairs following a leak from a wet room, a finding of 'maladministration' was made by the Ombudsman. The finding related specifically to our failure to complete repairs in a timely and coordinated manner, which caused distress and inconvenience to the tenant. The tenant, who lives with multiple health conditions, reported that the situation negatively impacted her wellbeing.

There was also a finding of 'service failure' in respect of how we handled the complaint, with the Ombudsman determining that our communication lacked clarity and consistency, and that we failed to properly record and respond to the tenant's vulnerabilities and concerns.

A sincere apology was given to the tenant along with financial compensation. We have since reviewed our contractor management processes, improved our scheduling systems, and developed a process for identifying, recording and responding to tenant vulnerabilities.

[Case 2 \(click to view full published report\)](#)

The council received the complaint in September 2023. For our handling of reports of antisocial behaviour (ASB) relating to noise nuisance, a finding of 'service failure' was made by the Ombudsman. The finding related specifically to our failure to manage the tenant's reports effectively. This caused frustration and inconvenience to the tenant, who felt his concerns were not taken seriously.

The Ombudsman found that while the noise was assessed as everyday living noise, our handling of the case lacked consistency and clarity, particularly in how we responded to the tenant's escalation and concerns about being targeted.

A sincere apology was given to the tenant along with financial compensation. We have reinforced staff training on handling noise-related ASB reports and improved our communication.

[Case 3 \(click to view full published report\)](#)

The council received the complaint in December 2023. For our handling of a roof leak at a leasehold property, a finding of 'maladministration' was made by the Ombudsman. The finding related specifically to our failure to carry out timely and effective repairs. The delay in resolving the leak, caused ongoing damp and distress to the tenant, who raised concerns about the impact on her health.

There was also a finding of 'maladministration' in respect of how we handled the complaint. The Ombudsman found that we failed to provide a timely stage 1 response, gave inaccurate information about the completion of repairs, and did not adequately acknowledge or address the tenant's concerns during the complaints process.

We offered a sincere apology to the tenant and provided financial compensation in recognition of the distress caused. We've taken steps to improve our repairs scheduling and contract management processes to prevent similar delays in the future. We are also using our complaints dashboard to monitor and ensure timely responses, and we deliver officer training on accurate record-keeping and communication.

[Case 4 \(click to view full published report\)](#)

The council received the complaint in May 2023. For our handling of repairs and adaptations following a tenant's move into a property, a finding of 'maladministration' was made by the Ombudsman. The finding related specifically to our failure to ensure the property was in a habitable and functional condition at the start of the tenancy. The tenant, who lives with a disability affecting her mobility, experienced inconvenience and distress as a result.

There was also a finding of 'maladministration' in respect of how we handled the associated complaints. The Ombudsman found that we did not adequately consider the tenant's vulnerabilities, failed to provide timely updates, and did not demonstrate a coordinated or empathetic approach to resolving the issues raised.

We provided a sincere apology to the tenant along with financial compensation. In response, we have improved our pre-tenancy property checks, and in compliance with the code, developed our complaints process to better identify and prioritise cases involving vulnerable tenants.

[Case 5 \(click to view published report\)](#)

The council received the complaint in January 2023. For our handling of multiple tenancy related issues, including unauthorised access to the tenants' garden, and communication failures, a finding of 'maladministration' was made by the Ombudsman. The finding related specifically to our failure to respect the tenant's communication preferences, to provide adequate notice before accessing the property. The tenant, who has recorded vulnerabilities, experienced distress as a result of our actions.

There was also a finding of 'maladministration' in respect of how we handled the complaint. The Ombudsman found that we did not respond within published timeframes, and did not demonstrate a clear approach to resolving the tenant's concerns.

A sincere apology was provided to the tenant, along with financial compensation. We've strengthened our training on record-keeping and developed our processes on identifying vulnerabilities, reinforced our property access procedures with contractors and created training videos on managing communication preferences to ensure that officers are adequately trained.

[Case 6 \(click to view published report\)](#)

The council received the complaint in October 2022. For our handling of repairs to a cracked balcony and the resulting damp and mould in a tenant's property, a finding of 'maladministration' was made by the Ombudsman. The finding related specifically to our failure to carry out timely and effective repairs, despite the tenant reporting the issue numerous times. The delay in addressing the balcony defect allowed water ingress to continue, leading to damp and mould, which caused significant inconvenience and distress to the tenant.

There was also a finding of 'maladministration' in respect of how we handled the complaint. The Ombudsman found that we failed to provide consistent communication, missed appointments without adequate explanation, and gave conflicting information about the repair timeline, which impacted the tenant's trust in our service.

A sincere apology was offered to the tenant, along with financial compensation. We've reviewed our contractor management procedures, introduced stricter oversight of long-standing repair cases, and implemented clearer escalation processes to ensure persistent issues are addressed promptly and transparently.

[Case 7 \(click to view published report\)](#)

The council received the complaint in January 2023. For our handling of a leaseholder's concerns about service charges, the Ombudsman determined that the complaint was 'outside of its jurisdiction' and therefore did not proceed to a formal investigation. The tenant raised concerns about the fairness and transparency of the management fee and block repair costs, alleging that the revised calculation method was not properly consulted on and resulted in unreasonable charges.

The Ombudsman concluded that the matter related to the reasonableness of service charges and the consultation process under Section 20 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, which falls under the remit of the First-tier Tribunal (Property Chamber), not the Housing Ombudsman.

Although no findings were made, we recognise the importance of clear and transparent communication with leaseholders about service charges.

[Case 8 \(click to view published report\)](#)

The council received the complaint in June 2023. For our handling of repairs to fascia boards and guttering, and our response to reports of mould, a finding of 'service failure' was made by the Ombudsman. The finding related specifically to our lack of clear and timely communication with the tenant regarding the status of repairs, including confusion over whether asbestos surveys had been completed and delays in addressing visible damage. The tenant experienced frustration and uncertainty due to the inconsistent information provided and the delayed resolution timeline.

There was also a finding of 'service failure' in respect of how we handled the complaint. The Ombudsman found that our responses lacked clarity, failed to fully address the tenant's concerns, and did not demonstrate a proactive approach to resolving the issues raised.

A sincere apology was given to the tenant, along with financial compensation. In response, we have improved coordination between inspection teams and contractors, introduced scheduling technology to ensure that appointments are made, and tenants are kept informed throughout the repair process.

Annual Report

The Housing Ombudsman publishes an annual report on any Landlord with more than 5 findings against them in a year.

The Housing Ombudsman publishes these reports in September each year.

We received a report for the year 2023-24. The complaints included in the report span a four-year period, having been received by the Housing Ombudsman between November 2019 and October 2023.

[Housing Ombudsman report on Norwich City Council \(click to view full published report\)](#)

Section 5: Governing body response

Member Responsible for Complaints response statement to Norwich City Council's self-assessment 2024-2025

As Portfolio Holder for Housing and the Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC) at Norwich City Council, I am pleased to present our self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code and annual complaints performance and service improvement report for 2024–2025.

These reports have been scrutinised and approved by the Council's Cabinet Committee at its meeting on 10th September 2025 to ensure that the information provided is correct and truly reflects complaint performance and our customer experience. ([Norwich City Council - committee report](#))

The Complaints Handling Code sets out clear expectations for landlords on complaint handling, promoting fairness, transparency, and continuous improvement. At Norwich City Council, we are resolutely committed to delivering high-quality services and ensuring that residents feel heard and respected when things go wrong.

I am pleased to confirm that we achieved full compliance with the Code during 2024-2025.

This reflects the work of staff and contractors over the past year to make significant strides in strengthening our complaints handling processes. Our quarterly reviews, led by managers and senior staff, have helped us monitor quality, timeliness, and fairness in complaint responses. One in ten cases is now sampled by our Director and Executive Director to ensure consistency and uphold high standards. All stage two complaint responses are reviewed by the Executive Director prior to being issued to ensure quality and consistency, and to ensure that lessons are being learned and action taken.

Other improvements include:

- A 20.6 percentage reduction in overall complaints received compared to the previous year.
- A 19-percentage point improvement in Stage 1 complaints responded to within target timescales.
- A new performance dashboard enabling real-time case management and trend analysis.
- Mandatory Housing Ombudsman training for all complaint handlers.

We've also listened carefully to resident feedback and taken meaningful action.

For example:

- Following concerns about estate maintenance, we expanded our caretaking team, increased spot checks, and introduced officer training to improve conditions and satisfaction. We are aware, however, that more work needs to be done to improve our estate maintenance and this is a priority improvement area.
- In response to a high volume of roofing complaints, we appointed a dedicated roofing supervisor and improved communication around repair timescales, resulting in a noticeable reduction in complaints for this area.
- We introduced a new function in our housing system to prevent automated messages being sent to residents with vulnerabilities, respecting individual communication preferences.
- We issued guidance and coaching to our anti-social behaviour officers to ensure regular updates are provided when complaint responses are delayed, aligning with the Ombudsman's expectations.

However, we recognise that there is still more to do. Our self-assessment and performance data highlight other areas for improvement. We are committed to addressing these issues.

Looking ahead, we will:

- Improve consistency in complaint resolution across housing repairs and tenancy services, where volumes remain high. Additional scrutiny and service reviews are underway to address these challenges.
- Publish an updated Complaints Policy.
- Engage more proactively with residents to understand their experiences and expectations and use this feedback to improve our services.
- Continue to improve our services so that residents do not have reason to complain to the council.

This self-assessment is not a one-off exercise, it is part of our ongoing commitment to accountability, fairness, and continuous improvement. I want to thank our residents for their feedback and patience, and our staff for their dedication to delivering better outcomes.

Councillor Beth Jones

Cabinet Member for Housing and Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC)

Norwich City Council

11 September 2025



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