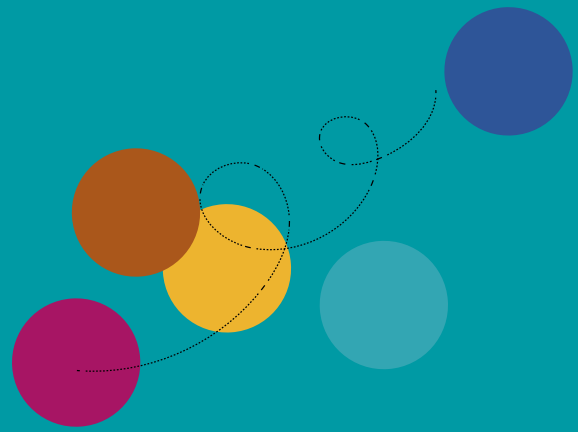




NORWICH
City Council



Housing Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report

2025-2026





Introduction

Welcome to our complaint's performance and service improvement report for 2025-2026.

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 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 2025-2026, 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](#)

28 September 2026



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Section 1: Complaint handling code annual self-assessment

We completed a self-assessment (June 2026) 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 April 2026, we updated our complaints policy following recommendations from the Housing Ombudsman.

The changes made things clearer and fairer for residents. This included explaining what is and isn't a complaint, ensuring all expressions of dissatisfaction are logged correctly, extending the time residents have to escalate complaints, and making it clearer how we communicate delays and keep residents updated.

We also explained how complaints are handled alongside other processes, such as staff conduct issues, and confirmed that every complaint is considered on its own circumstances.

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



Section 2: Analysis of our complaint handling performance

Overall

The council is responsible for 13,947 homes and 3,486 leaseholder properties. We received 795 complaints about council housing between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026, which is a 27.3% reduction in complaints compared to the previous year and a 42.3% overall decrease since 2023-2024.

679 complaints were investigated at stage 1 of our complaints process and 116 were escalated to stage 2.

The tables below show our stage 1 and stage 2 performance for the number of complaints received and the percentage 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%
2025-2026	679	-241 -26.2%	85.7%	+21.7%

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%
2025-2026	116	-58 -33.3%	84.5%	+10.9%

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

The sustained reduction in complaints is the result of listening to residents and learning from your feedback. By understanding what went wrong, and why, we've been able to target improvements and make services better for you.



By stopping repeat issues from happening again, we've been able to reduce complaints by 27% in 2025-2026.

We know there is more to do in 2026-2027, and residents are telling us, we must improve communication, deliver services consistently every time, see requests through to completion and ensure our contractors are held to the same service standards.

Exclusions

During 2025-2026 we refused to accept two complaints in line with the exclusions in our published complaints policy. In the previous year we had one exclusion.

Exclusion reasons

- Legal proceedings started
- A matter had previously been considered under the complaints policy

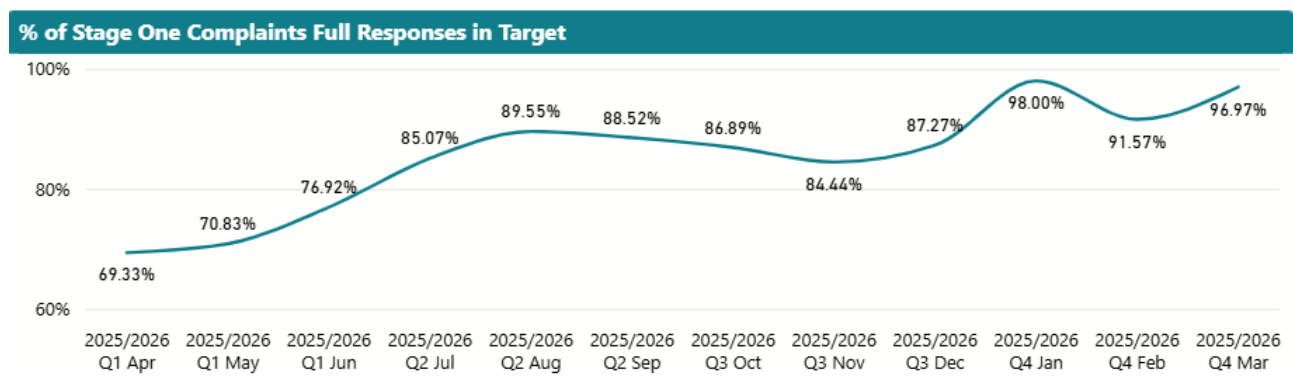
Stage 1 complaints

Of the 679 stage 1 complaints received, 582 (85.7%) were acknowledged and responded to within the Housing Ombudsman code timescales.

In 2025-2026 we achieved a 21.7%-point improvement on stage 1 complaints responded to in target compared to the previous year.

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

The visual below shows our monthly percentage of stage 1 complaints responded to in target during 2025-2026. It shows that our performance improved steadily as the year went on. We know we need to maintain this better performance, and we will keep using our dashboard to help build on it in 2026-2027.





Responsive repair issues represented the largest proportion of stage 1 complaints at 44%.

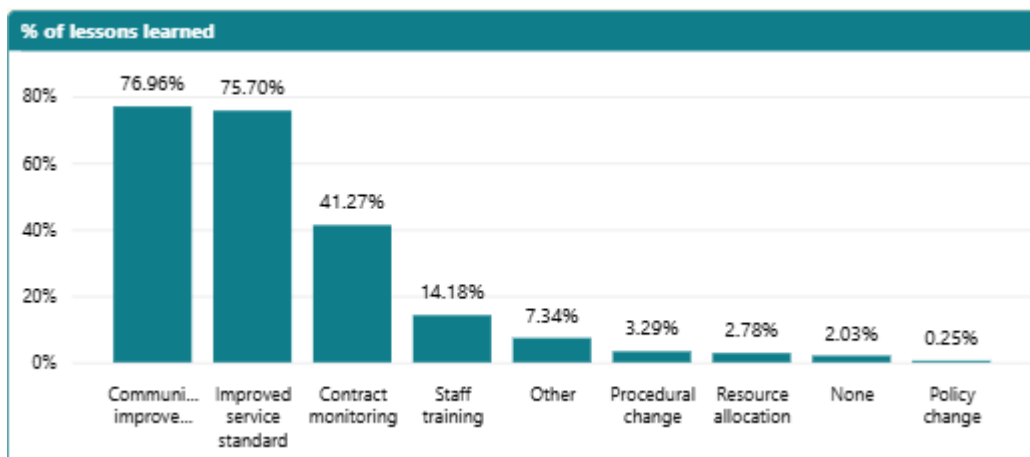
Stage 1 complaint category	% of complaints by theme
Responsive repairs	44%
Tenancy and neighbourhood issues	19%
Damp and mould	9%
Antisocial behaviour	8%
Contractors	6%
Building safety	5%
Income management	3%
Lettings	3%
Leasehold and Right to Buy	1%
Planned maintenance	1%
Garages	1%
Other	<1%

The most common theme was:

Stage 1 complaint theme	Percentage
Standard of service provided	87%
Failing to provide an agreed service	7%
Service requested but not provided	4%
Employee or contractor attitude or conduct	1%
Other	1%

489 (72%) of stage 1 complaints were upheld.

The main reasons for complaints being upheld were poor communication, service not meeting our standards, and the need to improve how we manage contractor performance and train staff.

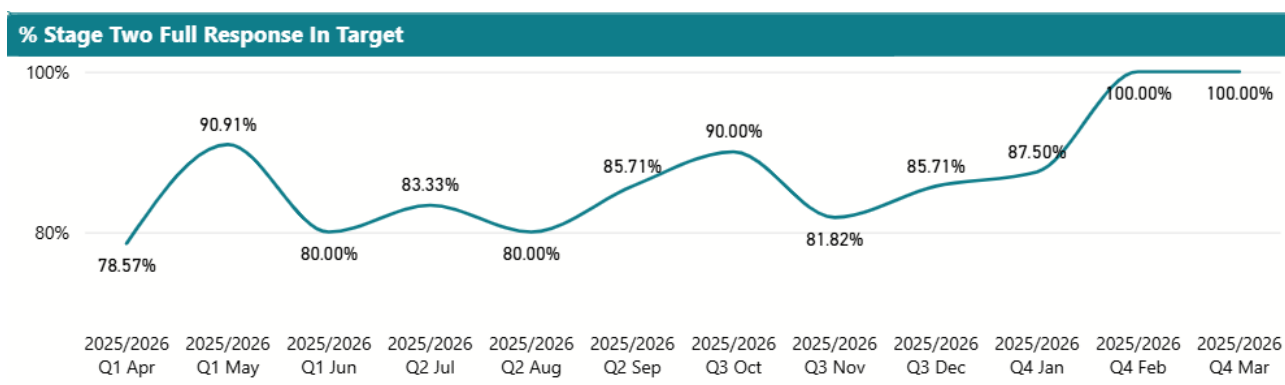


Stage 2 complaints

Of the 116 stage 2 complaints received, 98 (84.5%) were acknowledged and responded to within the Housing Ombudsman code timescales.

In 2025-2026 we achieved a 10.9%-point improvement on stage 2 complaints responded to in target compared to the previous year.

The visual below shows our monthly percentage of stage 2 complaints responded to in target during 2025-2026. In the last two months of the year, we achieved 100%. In 2026-2027 we aim to be more consistent throughout the year. We've improved communication and co-ordination of responses through an internal team channel, helping us manage responses more effectively.



Responsive repair issues represented the largest proportion of stage 2 complaints at 35%.

Stage 2 complaint category	Percentage
Responsive repairs	35%
Tenancy and neighbourhood issues	24%
Antisocial behaviour	12%
Damp and mould	12%



Stage 2 complaint category	Percentage
Contractor	6%
Rent and service charges	3%
Lettings	3%
Building safety	2%
Leasehold and right to buy	2%
Planned maintenance	1%

The most common theme was:

Stage 1 complaint theme	Percentage
Standard of service provided	89%
Service requested but not provided	7%
Failing to provide an agreed service	3%
Other	1%

85 (73%) of stage 2 complaints were upheld.

The main reasons stage 2 complaints were upheld are the same as stage 1: poor communication, services not meeting our standards, and the need to improve how we manage contractors and train staff.

Tenant satisfaction measures

During 2025-2026 we asked 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 200 respondents who answered this question, 30% were satisfied. This is a very small increase from last year (0.4%), but it shows we are not yet meeting the standard you expect from us.



The 2024-2025 survey results from all other social housing providers show that this figure is low across the housing sector, with an average of 35.5% and 31.3% satisfaction for local authorities. We recognise the need to improve and the importance of putting things right to satisfy our tenants.



Section 3: Housing Ombudsman performance

Housing Ombudsman Tier 1 investigation

In March 2025, due to a high maladministration rate in 2023-2024 (84%) and an increase in the number of complaints referred to them, the Housing Ombudsman carried out a Tier 1 review of our services. This type of review is used to look at patterns in complaints and identify where improvements are needed.

The Ombudsman reviewed complaints from 2022 and 2023. They found some repeated issues, including problems with how we handled complaints, gaps in record keeping, and areas where services like repairs, damp and mould, and antisocial behaviour were not always managed well.

We took this feedback seriously. Many improvements to our service were already underway, and we had clear plans to continue building on this progress. We worked closely with the Ombudsman and demonstrated the improvements we had made in the areas identified. In December 2025, the Ombudsman closed the investigation at Tier 1. This means they were satisfied that we understood the issues and had either resolved them or had strong plans in place to fix them.

What we learned

From this review, we learned that:

- We need to be more consistent and responsive in how we handle complaints
- We must keep better and clearer records
- We need to act more quickly and effectively on issues like repairs, damp and mould and antisocial behaviour
- We must make sure we communicate well with residents and keep you updated

What we have done

Since then, we have made a range of improvements. These include:

- **Complaint handling was inconsistent**

We introduced a formal quality assurance process for every complaint response, improved performance monitoring, and gave staff clearer guidance and training to improve consistency.

- **Delays and poor communication affected residents**

We launched a live dashboard to track complaints in real time, helping us respond faster and keep residents updated. We also published and embedded our [Housing service standards](#), so expectations are clear and residents can hold us to account.



- **Record keeping and information management needed improvement**

We improved our systems, including Total Mobile, our repairs tool used by staff on site. This helps us send appointment reminders, improve scheduling, and keep residents updated. We also provided training to make sure staff understand the importance of keeping clear and accurate records.

- **Damp and mould and health and safety risks were not always managed well**

We delivered on our plan to ensure we were prepared for the introduction of Awaab's law phase one in October 2025. This included an increase in resource, a staff training programme, a performance monitoring dashboard and a clear governance framework. We also implemented new standardised triage and risk assessment processes.

- **Antisocial behaviour case management was inconsistent**

We clarified processes with staff, introduced better risk assessments, triage and added quality checks to improve consistency and outcomes.

What this means for you

This process has helped us improve our services and how we respond when things go wrong. We are committed to learning from complaints and making sure services are fair and responsive.

Even though the investigation is now closed, the Housing Ombudsman will continue to review our performance through individual complaints. We will continue to improve and make sure we provide the service you expect.



Housing Ombudsman findings

If a resident 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.

Annual landlord report

The Housing Ombudsman publishes an annual report on any landlord with more than five findings against them in a year. They publish these reports in September each year, once available, we will share the latest version on our website here: [Compliments, complaints and suggestions](#)

The Housing Ombudsman made 27 determinations against our housing service in 2025-2026. Whilst this is more than the 23 determinations in 2024-2025, the number of cases where we were found at fault (maladministration) has reduced, from 83% to 75%. In 2024-2025, the national average was 71% and 80% for Landlords of a similar size and type.

The complaints included in these decisions were referred to the Housing Ombudsman between September 2023 and September 2025. Five were referred in 2023, eleven in 2024, and eleven in 2025.

We saw improvements in the most serious cases. Severe maladministration findings reduced from 6 to 1, and maladministration findings fell from 28 to 24. Whilst service failure findings increased from 9 to 14, more cases were found to have no maladministration, increasing from 2 to 12.

When things go wrong, it is important that we put them right. One way we do this is through compensation. The Housing Ombudsman can order compensation where service failures have been identified. In 2025-2026, the Ombudsman ordered the council to pay £11,218 in compensation. This is £7,722 less than the £18,940 ordered in 2024-2025.

Summary

This shows that we are preventing more complaints from developing into the most serious cases and are putting things right earlier. However, we recognise that there are still times when our service falls short of the standards you expect, and we remain committed to learning from every complaint to improve our service.



Section 4: Service improvements and learning

Introduction

Improving how we learn from complaints remains a priority for the Housing Service. All service improvements are managed through our Better Homes improvement programme, which helps us track progress and make sure changes lead to better outcomes for residents. During 2025-2026, we introduced a range of improvements to how we manage and respond to complaints:

Service improvements

Quality assurance

We introduced a formal quality assurance process for all complaint responses. Before issuing, complaint responses are assessed against a standard checklist to improve the quality and consistency of our responses. This helps make sure that when things go wrong, we put them right quickly and learn from what happened.

Training

All complaint handlers completed a mandatory Housing Ombudsman complaint handling training programme. 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 also delivered trauma-informed practice training to help staff better understand and respond to residents' individual circumstances. This supports a more compassionate and resident-focused approach, helping residents feel listened to, respected, and supported when they contact us.

Remedies

Using the Housing Ombudsman compensation, remedies and compensation policy guidance, we created a new compensation policy for staff. This sets clear expectations on how to provide remedies when things go wrong. By putting things right earlier and more consistently, we are providing fairer outcomes for residents and helping prevent complaints from escalating. This is reflected in the 33% reduction in stage 2 complaints during 2025-2026 compared with 2024-2025.

Performance monitoring

To support more effective complaint handling, we embedded the use of our performance dashboard. It enables real-time case management, tracks performance trends, and captures lessons learned. Through improved monitoring and oversight, the percentage of stage 1 complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman timescales increased by 22%-points, while stage 2 performance improved by 11%-points during 2025-2026.



Complaint guidance

We use a dedicated team channel to share guidance and updates with all complaint handlers. We provided guidance on recording and responding to resident vulnerabilities, keeping residents informed when there are delays, and the importance of clear and accurate record keeping. We also shared updates on improvements to our performance dashboard and changes to our complaints policy, helping staff understand what the changes mean for both colleagues and residents.

Communication issues

Analysis of our complaints found that 75% were linked to poor communication. We carried out a detailed review of resident feedback and identified three key themes, which we call the 'Three Cs': Consistent, Caring and Completion. Residents are more satisfied when they receive proactive updates consistently (Consistent), feel listened to and supported (Caring), and can trust us to see issues through to a resolution (Completion). When we fall short in any of these areas, it can have a significant impact on residents' experience.

To help address this, we will introduce customer experience training in 2026-2027, focusing on improving communication and embedding the 'Three Cs' across our housing services.

Oversight

Senior 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.



Learning

Here are some examples of the learning points for us from complaints received during 2025-2026:

You said: Residents weren't always given consistent answers when asking to use part of a communal garden, which felt unfair.

We did: We developed a new Gardens and Communal Green Spaces Policy with clear assessment criteria. This helps ensure requests are considered consistently and fairly.

You said: You had to explain the same issue to different staff, which was frustrating.

We did: We held training for more than 100 housing staff on the importance of accurate record keeping. By keeping better records, staff can understand your case more quickly and provide a more joined-up service.

You said: Our communication about upcoming repairs could be clearer.

We did: We introduced Total Mobile, a repairs management tool that allows us to send appointment reminders and schedule follow up appointments on mobile devices. This helps residents know when repairs are due to take place and keeps you better informed throughout the process.

You said: It was not always clear how to report noise problems, and some residents were still sending noise recordings after their case had been closed.

We did: We improved the way noise nuisance cases are managed. We changed our online reporting process so residents can raise a case with us more easily and made sure new reports are triaged quickly.

We also improved how we manage closed cases, helping ensure residents only uploaded recordings on active cases and reducing delays in responding to reports.

You said: Pets were living in tower blocks when they shouldn't be, and the rules were not always clear.

We did: We listened to residents and planned a consultation on a new Responsible Pet Ownership Policy. The proposed policy sets out clear and consistent rules for keeping pets in council homes, including tower blocks, helping ensure residents are treated fairly while promoting responsible pet ownership and being a good neighbour.



You Said: You weren't told that the energy supplier at your home was being changed.

You didn't know who was responsible for energy bills when your tenancy ended and then restarted.

You weren't given clear information about the existing energy supplier or your right to choose your own provider.

Communication between teams was inconsistent, which left you confused and caused unnecessary stress.

We Did: We improved communication processes between our housing officers and the void energy management team, so that any changes in tenancy status are shared promptly.

We updated all our tenancy ending and tenancy sign up documents to clearly explain the void energy process and who is responsible for energy charges.

We improved our internal processes to make sure residents are told when an energy supplier switch is started.

We completed scenario-based staff training, so officers are better prepared for different tenancy situations, for example, when someone gives notice but then remains in the home.

We clarified expectations for all teams about what needs to happen when a tenant stays in the property after a tenancy formally ends.

You Said: It was not clear who was responsible for redecorating after repairs or improvement works had been completed in your home.

We Did: We updated our website to clearly explain tenant and council responsibilities, including who is responsible for decoration following repairs and improvement works. This makes it easier for residents to find the information they need.

You Said: You had reported the same repair issue several times without a lasting solution.

We Did: We changed our approach so repeat repair visits are reviewed earlier by senior technical staff. This helps us identify recurring problems sooner and focus on finding permanent solutions rather than carrying out repeated temporary repairs.

You Said: We did not always take your individual needs and circumstances into account when arranging appointments and repairs.

We Did: We introduced Total Mobile, a repairs management tool, which improved how vulnerability and disability information is shared to operatives carrying out repairs. We also reminded staff and contractors about the importance of making reasonable adjustments and considering residents' individual needs when planning appointments and carrying out repairs.



Section 5: Governing body response

Member Responsible for Complaints response statement to Norwich City Council's self-assessment 2025-2026

As Portfolio holder for Housing and Communities and the Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC) at Norwich City Council since May 2026, I am pleased to present our annual self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's complaint handling code and our Housing Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report for 2025-2026.

These reports have been considered by the council's cabinet committee and provide an important opportunity to reflect on our performance, the feedback we have received from residents, and the progress we have made over the past year.

Supporting the council's 'New and improved housing' priority means listening to residents and learning when things go wrong. Complaints give us valuable insight into residents' experiences and help us understand where we need to improve. The Housing Ombudsman's complaint handling code provides a clear framework to ensure complaints are handled fairly, consistently and transparently, and I am pleased to confirm that Norwich City Council achieved full compliance with the Code during 2025-2026.

2025 also saw the closure of the Housing Ombudsman's Tier 1 investigation into the council's complaint handling. While the investigation highlighted issues in cases from 2022 and 2023, it also recognised the significant work already underway to improve our services. We engaged openly and constructively with the Ombudsman throughout the process and demonstrated that we understood the issues identified and had either resolved them or had strong plans in place to address them.

I am encouraged by the progress made during the year, including:

- A 27% reduction in overall housing complaints.
- A 33% reduction in stage 2 complaints.
- Significant improvements in complaints responded to within Housing Ombudsman timescales.
- The introduction of a formal quality assurance process for all complaint responses.
- An updated complaints policy following recommendations from the Housing Ombudsman.
- A new compensation policy to help ensure residents receive fair remedies when things go wrong.
- Continued investment in staff training, including complaint handling, vulnerabilities and trauma-informed practice.



I am particularly pleased to see improvements in Housing Ombudsman outcomes. The number of severe maladministration findings reduced significantly during the year, and more cases were found to have no maladministration. While every finding represents a resident whose experience did not meet our expectations, these results demonstrate that the changes we have introduced are making a positive difference.

The report also highlights an important area for further improvement. Analysis of complaints showed that communication remains the single biggest cause of dissatisfaction. Residents have told us they want clear information, regular updates, to be listened to, and confidence that we will follow through on our commitments. In response, our Better Homes improvement programme includes a Customer Resolution project that will improve communication, resolve more enquiries at the first point of contact, and deliver a more consistent service for residents.

While I am pleased with the progress made, I recognise that there is still more to do. We will continue to focus on learning from complaints and using resident feedback to shape services. We are committed to providing housing services that are fair, responsive and centred around the needs of our residents.

I would like to thank all residents who have taken the time to share their experiences with us, whether through a complaint, survey feedback or direct engagement. Your feedback helps us improve.

Councillor Denise Carlo
Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities
Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC)
Norwich City Council
September 2026

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