

Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report

Complaints and Compliments

1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026



Purpose

To provide analysis of all complaints and other contacts, including service requests, received during the period of 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 for Portsmouth Homes.

Portsmouth Homes values complaints and feedback as vital opportunities to learn, improve, and strengthen our relationship with residents. Every concern raised is a chance for us to listen, understand, and take meaningful action to put things right.

We are committed to treating all feedback with respect and urgency, ensuring that residents feel heard and supported throughout the process. By embracing complaints as a positive force for change, we continuously strive to deliver better services and build trust within our communities.

This report is written in the context of obligations under the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code (the Code) and the Social Housing Regulator which both came into effect from 1 April 2024.

Prior to 1 April 2024 complaints were dealt with by the corporate complaints team however, the directorate has recruited a specialist role of Complaints Lead in response to the revised requirements, the service has also recruited a complaints officer to manage the complaints process in line with the ombudsman's code.

As of 1 April 2024 all Portsmouth Homes (landlord specific) complaints are administered by the Landlord Complaints Team in line with the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Code. Working as part of Portsmouth Homes we have an established complaints handling culture and tools to support this, such as the intranet complaints hub.

From January 2025, Councillor Darren Sanders, Cabinet Member for Housing and Tackling Homelessness, took on the role of Member Champion for Portsmouth Homes complaints, providing dedicated oversight and strengthening governance and accountability for complaint handling across the service.

Identified learning is being fed back to the relevant staff. Analysis of compliments, complaints, and service request data is helping to build a clear picture of where learning needs to be shared. Appropriate training sessions are planned for frontline staff and will be delivered regularly. Ongoing training will continue to be informed by continuous learning as the service develops.

Complaints Handling Code

Under section 8.1 of the Code, the Council in its role as a social housing landlord must produce an 'Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report' for scrutiny and challenge, which must include:

1. An annual self-assessment against the housing ombudsman code

to ensure our complaint handling policy remains in line with their requirements. A self-assessment of our adherence to the housing ombudsman complaint handling code can be found on page three.

2. A qualitative and quantitative analysis of our complaint handling performance,

which must include a summary of the types of complaints we have refused to accept.

3. Any findings of non-compliance with the code by the ombudsman.

4. The service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints.

5. Any annual report about the landlord's performance from the ombudsman; and

6. Any other relevant reports or publications produced by the ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord.

In addition, section 8.2 of the Code states that the annual complaints performance and service improvement report must be reported to the landlord's governing body (or equivalent) and published on the on the section of its website relating to complaints. The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside this.

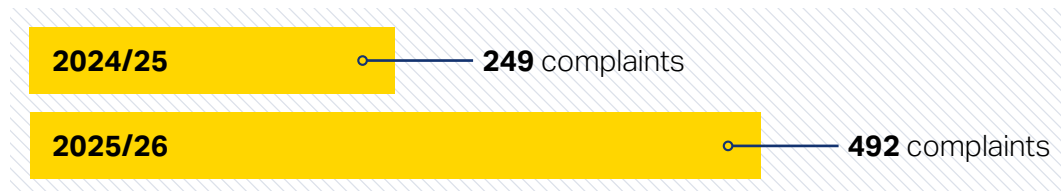
In December 2025, the Housing Ombudsman carried out a policy review of our Landlord Complaints Policy as part of its wider oversight activity. The review identified a number of recommendations to ensure continued alignment with the Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code and sector good practice. All recommendations were fully implemented, and the Housing Ombudsman subsequently confirmed in writing that the policy meets their requirements and that the review has been concluded. The updated policy has been published on our website, ensuring it is clear, accessible, and transparent for residents.

Our self-assessment is published on our website¹

¹ <https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/services/housing/portsmouth-homes/our-landlord-performance/>

Analysis of complaints

Complaints relating to landlord services



In the 2025/26 financial year, Portsmouth Homes received 492 complaints relating to landlord services, compared with 249 complaints in 2024/25.

This represents an increase of 243 complaints, equivalent to a 97.6% year-on-year rise. Overall, this equates to approximately 28.1 complaints per 1,000 homes, or 2.81% of the total housing stock.

Of these, 263 complaints were related to the **Repairs service**, which completed 81,354 repairs during the same period. This equates to around **3.23 complaints per 1,000 repairs**, or approximately **0.32% of all repairs carried out**.

This highlights that complaints represent only a very small proportion of overall activity, demonstrating the service's ability to deliver a high volume of repairs while maintaining a consistently low level of dissatisfaction.

Portsmouth Homes also logged a total of 1,380 anti-social behaviour (ASB) cases. Of these, 93 resulted in formal complaints, equating to approximately 67 complaints per 1,000 cases, or 6.7% of all ASB cases. This indicates that the vast majority of ASB cases were managed without escalation to a complaint.

The increase in complaints reflects the improved visibility and accessibility of the Landlord Complaints Team, making it easier for residents to raise concerns and engage with our services.

This has been supported by the introduction of an online complaints hub, the use of leaflets and posters in communal areas, and the delivery of online positive complaint handling training for staff. Alongside this, improved staff awareness and clearer signposting have ensured residents are consistently directed to the appropriate channels.

More broadly, there is increasing public awareness of complaints processes. Over the past two to three years, there has been a noticeable shift towards actively encouraging tenants to report repair issues and raise complaints.

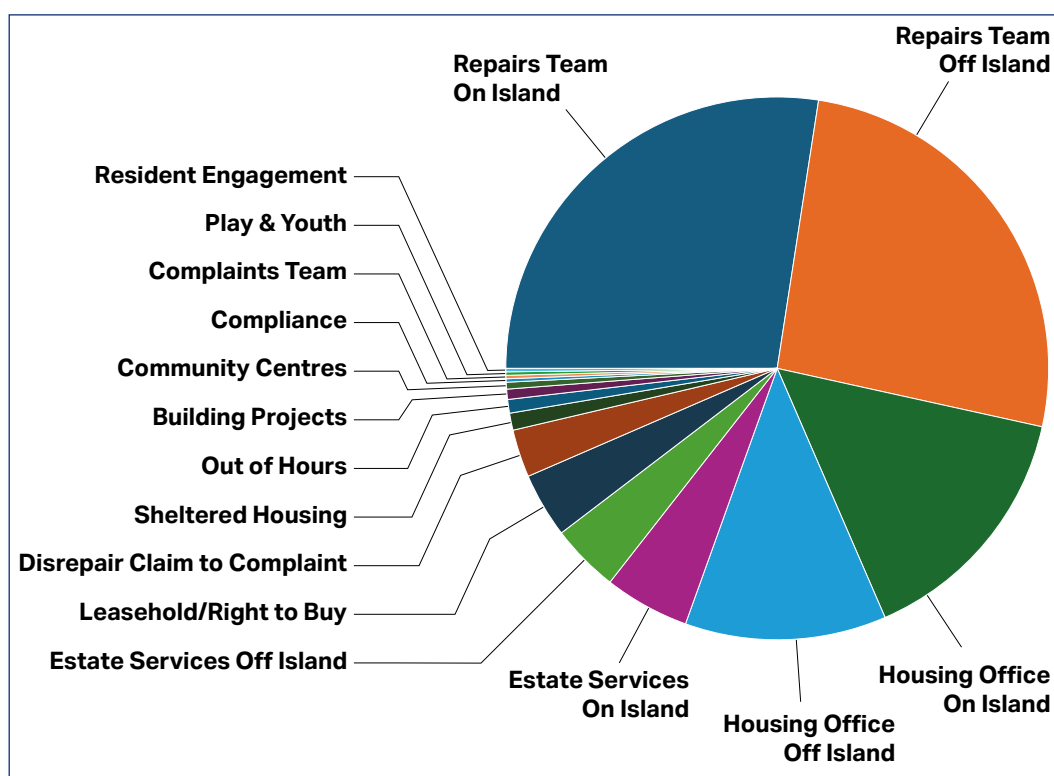
This has been driven by heightened regulatory focus, alongside high-profile cases that have brought national attention to housing standards, and the introduction of Awaab's Law, all of which have reinforced the importance of landlords responding promptly and effectively.

National campaigns and communications from the Housing Ombudsman and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government have further strengthened awareness of residents' rights, with public-facing messaging often using repairs as a key example of when and how to complain. In addition, information is now more accessible than ever, with simple online searches providing clear guidance on how to escalate concerns.

Taken together, this increased visibility, accessibility, and awareness is contributing to higher volumes of complaints, reflecting a more informed and empowered resident base.



Breakdown of Stage 1 Complaints



Team	Number of complaints
Repairs Team On Island	135
Repairs Team Off Island	128
Housing Office On Island	74
Housing Office Off Island	59
Estate Services On Island	25
Estate Services Off Island	20
Leasehold/Right to Buy	19
Disrepair Claim to Complaint	14
Sheltered Housing	5
Out of Hours	4
Building Projects	3
Community Centres	2
Compliance	1
Complaints Team	1
Play & Youth	1
Resident Engagement	1

The majority of complaints were attributed to frontline service areas, with Repairs Teams accounting for the highest proportion (263 complaints combined across on-island and off-island services), followed by Housing Offices (132 complaints). Estate Services also contributed a notable volume (45 complaints across both locations). Smaller volumes were recorded across specialist and support services, including Leasehold/Right to Buy (19), Disrepair (14), and Sheltered Housing (5), with very low numbers across other service areas.

This distribution reflects that complaints are most concentrated in high-demand, resident-facing services, particularly repairs, where the volume and complexity of work increases the likelihood of service failure or dissatisfaction. The higher numbers within Housing also indicate the breadth of tenancy-related interactions, whereas lower volumes in specialist areas suggest more limited customer contact or more controlled service delivery environments.

Root Causes

The complaints received during the reporting period were predominantly concerned with repairs and property condition, with a significant number referencing multiple or ongoing repair issues, delays, poor workmanship, and incomplete works. Common specific issues included leaks (particularly from neighbouring properties), damp and mould, fencing problems, boiler failures, and general property disrepair. This indicates that repairs performance and contractor management remain the most significant driver of dissatisfaction.

A second key theme relates to anti-social behaviour (ASB) and the perceived management of ASB cases, including reports of lack of action, delays, and dissatisfaction with outcomes. This was often linked with communication concerns and support from Housing Officers, suggesting that both response quality and resident engagement are influencing escalation.

There is also a consistent theme around communication and customer experience, including concerns about staff conduct, lack of updates, delays in response, and dissatisfaction with decisions or service handling. This spans both Housing and contractor services, reinforcing the importance of clear, timely, and empathetic communication across all touchpoints.

Additional recurring issues include:

🔧 **Estate and communal services** (cleaning, bins, grounds maintenance)

🐛 **Pest infestations** (particularly bed bugs, rodents, and pigeons)

🚗 **Parking and garages** (allocation, damage, access, and enforcement)

🏠 **Tenancy and leasehold matters** (Right to Buy, charges, mutual exchange, and tenancy changes)

Lower-volume but notable complaints relate to compliance, safeguarding, data handling, and policy decisions, which, while less frequent, may carry higher risk and reputational impact.

Key Insight

Overall, the profile of complaints demonstrates that dissatisfaction is most heavily driven by high-volume, high-impact services, particularly repairs, where delays, repeat issues, and contractor performance have a cumulative effect on resident experience.

This is compounded by communication gaps and perceived lack of action, particularly in ASB cases, suggesting that improving end-to-end case handling, communication, and contractor oversight would have the greatest impact on reducing complaint volumes and improving resident satisfaction.



Performance

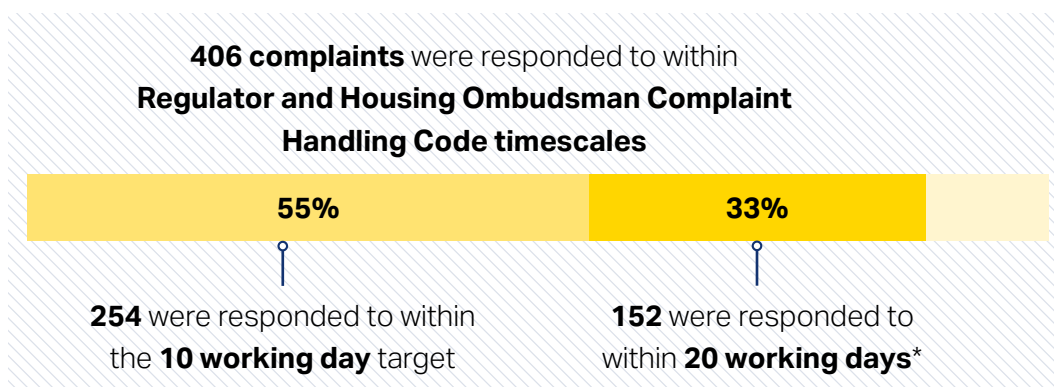
Under our complaints procedure, we aim to provide a full response within 10 working days.

Where a complaint is more complex and requires additional investigation, we may extend this timeframe to 20 working days, in line with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. Our staff are expected to exercise professional judgement in each case, tailoring their approach to the nature and complexity of the complaint, in line with the Complaint Handling Code, to ensure that investigations are thorough, proportionate, and fair.

Between 1 April 2025–31 March 2026, we received 492 complaints. Of these:

Stage 1

Of the **492 Stage 1 complaints** received during the year, **459 complaints had received a response** at the time of reporting:



* Where an extension had been agreed.

The above breakdown shows a response **compliance rate of 88%**. This compares to **138 out of 249 complaints (55%)** responded to within timescales in 2024/25, demonstrating a significant improvement in complaint handling performance, despite increased complaint volumes.

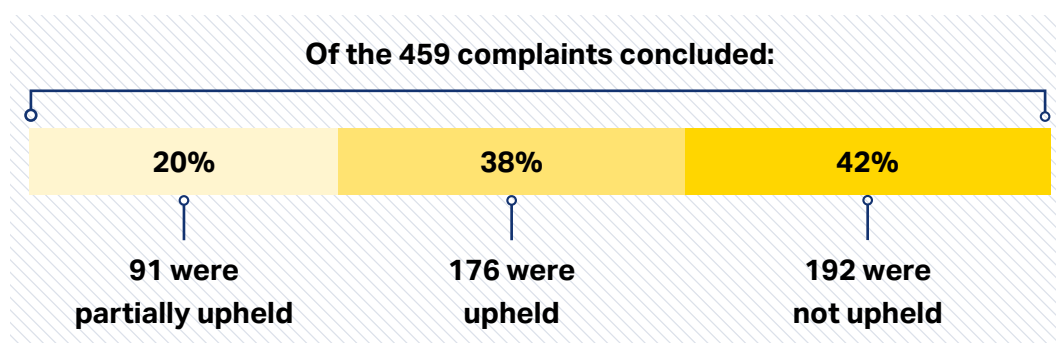
Cases outside agreed timescales

- 30 complaints** went beyond the agreed extension of 10 working days.
- 23 complaints** exceeded the 10 working day timescale without an agreed extension.
- 21 complaints** were **withdrawn** by the complainant.
- 12 complaints** remained **outstanding** at the time of reporting.

Stage 2

During 2025/26, 90 complaints were escalated to Stage 2 from a total of 492 Stage 1 complaints (18.3%). Of these, 49 were responded to within 20 working days and 28 were responded to within 40 working days where an extension had been applied.

There are currently 10 open Stage 2 complaints and 2 complaints were withdrawn. Of the 78 concluded Stage 2 complaints, 77 were responded to within the required timescales, representing a 98.7% compliance rate; 1 complaint exceeded the agreed extension. This compares with 2024/25 where 19 complaints were escalated to Stage 2 out of 249 Stage 1 complaints (7.6%). Of these, 15 were responded to within the required timescales (including 7 with extensions), equating to a 79% compliance rate. The remaining 4 complaints exceeded the 20 working day timescale and an extension was not requested.



Indicating that 58% of complaints resulted in at least some level of service failure being identified. This highlights the value of feedback in helping us improve our services. The Complaints Lead will continue to promote timely and effective complaint handling across the service. Staff will be encouraged to adopt a positive approach to complaints, recognising their value in driving service improvement.

Examples of positive attitudes include:

- 🏠 Viewing complaints as opportunities to improve services rather than as criticism.
- 🏠 Responding with empathy and professionalism, even in challenging situations.
- 🏠 Taking ownership of issues and working collaboratively to resolve them.
- 🏠 Using feedback constructively to inform future decisions and practices.
- 🏠 Using the Housing Ombudsman's compensation guidance to inform decisions.

Managers will also be supported to make quick initial assessments when a complaint is received, enabling prompt action on urgent issues and ensuring the complaint is directed to the appropriate person.

Compliments

We received 72 compliments for this period compared to 41 for the period of 2024/25:

Team	Number of Compliments
Leasehold/Right to Buy	16
Housing Office On Island	14
Landlord Complaints Team	10
Repairs On Island	6
Play & Youth	6
Housing Office Off Island	6
Sheltered Housing	4
Estate Services On Island	4
Estate Services Off Island	2
Repairs Off Island	2
Resident Engagement	1

Examples of Resident Feedback

-  A Paulsgrove resident praised the empathy, professionalism, and support they received from staff, noting that it made a real difference during a particularly difficult time.
-  A resident shared their thanks for the support provided by their Housing Officer, which enabled them to remain in employment during challenging circumstances.
-  A leaseholder expressed appreciation for the swift response to an emergency water leak, highlighting how operatives acted quickly to prevent further damage and provided excellent support on the day.
-  A resident recognised the high standards of one of our cleaners, praising their attention to detail and friendly approach, and noting the noticeable difference when they are not present.

Tenant Satisfaction Measures

Tenant Satisfaction Measures are mandatory performance indicators that all social housing providers must collect and report annually to the Regulator of Social Housing.

These measures are designed to give tenants greater transparency about how well their landlord is performing in key service areas, including:



The Landlord Complaints Team plays a vital role in supporting this process by feeding into the TSM data each year. This ensures that our complaints performance contributes to a broader understanding of service quality and tenant experience.

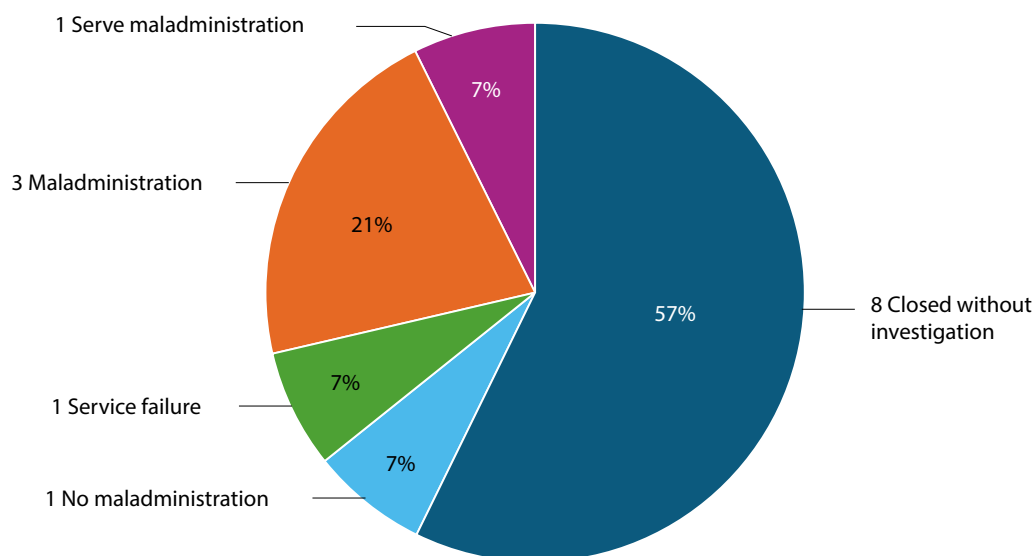
The 2025/26 Tenant Satisfaction Measures results show an improvement in satisfaction with complaint handling, increasing from 42.7% in 2024/25 to 45.5% in 2025/26.

While further improvement is still needed, this is an encouraging step forward and suggests that the actions being delivered through the Complaints Improvement Plan are beginning to have a positive impact on residents' experience of the complaints process.

Housing Ombudsman

If the resident remains unhappy following a stage 2 complaint investigation, we will signpost them to the Housing Ombudsman.

There were a total of 14 Housing Ombudsman referrals concluded.



Eight cases were closed without investigation, primarily due to jurisdictional reasons, lack of a completed Stage 2 complaint, or issues falling outside the Ombudsman's remit or timescales. Of the six investigations that progressed to full determination, outcomes included one finding of no maladministration, one service failure, three findings of maladministration, and one case of severe maladministration.

The findings primarily related to repairs (including damp and mould), ASB case management, and complaint handling. Common themes included delays in service delivery, poor communication, and weaknesses in risk assessment. Ombudsman remedies included apologies, compensation, learning reviews, and service improvements. While most actions have been completed or are being monitored, a small number of historic cases require confirmation that compliance evidence is clearly recorded.

In response to Ombudsman findings, particularly where maladministration or severe maladministration is identified, the landlord has introduced a senior manager review meeting. These meetings are used to review the decision in detail, agree accountability, and ensure learning and service improvement actions are identified, tracked, and embedded across the organisation.

Severe maladministration cases are also shared by the Director of HNB with the Corporate Governance Group with corrective actions. You can view Ombudsman's findings on their website: housing-ombudsman.org.uk

These results demonstrate that the implementation of the Landlord Complaints Process is having a positive impact. We are increasingly able to resolve complaints locally, and where cases are escalated, the Ombudsman often supports our decisions and outcomes.

Learning from complaints

Every complaint is an opportunity to learn and improve. For Portsmouth Homes, they serve as a vital form of feedback that helps us enhance the services we provide to residents across Portsmouth.

In response to the high volume of repairs-related complaints, we have strengthened our approach to performance monitoring, learning, and accountability across the service.

This includes the introduction of a dedicated repairs complaints dashboard to track demand, trends, and outcomes, alongside a structured monthly meeting to review performance and embed learning. A centralised learning log has been established to ensure lessons are captured, monitored, and followed through.

We have also strengthened contractor engagement by making complaints a standing agenda item at operational meetings and core group discussions, supported by regular toolbox talks and team meetings to reinforce expectations and share good practice. In addition, a dedicated Repairs Manager lead role for complaints has been created to provide clear oversight, drive accountability, and ensure a consistent and coordinated approach to improving service delivery.

The insights gained from complaints often lead to meaningful changes, whether it's refining our working practices, updating policies, improving service delivery, or investing in staff development. We're committed to listening, learning, and acting on what our residents tell us.

Learning from complaints remains a key driver of service improvement across Portsmouth Homes. Analysis of Stage 1 complaint data for 2025/26 shows that complaints most often arise where residents have experienced repeat service failure, particularly in relation to repairs and neighbourhood management, or where communication has not met resident expectations.

While many complaints are resolved at Stage 1, the learning identified highlights systemic issues rather than isolated errors. Complaints therefore continue to provide valuable insight into where services require improvement and where earlier intervention may prevent dissatisfaction from escalating.

Learning from complaints and actions taken

Analysis of complaint themes has been used to drive targeted service improvements. Key areas of learning and the actions taken include:

Repairs and First Time Fix

- Strengthened focus on accurate diagnosis and oversight of complex repairs
- Increased monitoring of repeat repairs and reviewing repairs history including damp, mould and leaks
- Emphasis on confirming issues are fully resolved before closing cases
- We have established clearer and more consistent mechanisms for sharing complaint outcomes and resident feedback with contractors, ensuring that learning is embedded and acted upon.
- Feedback is regularly reviewed with contractors to identify recurring issues, improve first-time resolution, and enhance communication with residents.
- We are strengthening partnership working through regular performance discussions, using complaints data alongside operational metrics to drive accountability and improvement.

General learning actions from repairs complaints

Updating guidance and policies for staff

- Internal guidance and procedures have been reviewed and refined to ensure clarity, consistency, and alignment with expected service standards.

Targeted training for surveyors

- Additional training has been delivered to improve diagnostic accuracy, decision-making, and oversight of repair works.

Contractor toolbox talk

- Regular sessions have been introduced with contractors focusing on:
- Scope of service and expectations
- Driving and parking protocols
- Professional conduct while on site

These sessions reinforce standards and promote a more consistent resident experience.

Improved planning of repairs

- Greater emphasis has been placed on effective planning to reduce delays, minimise repeat visits, and ensure repairs are completed efficiently.

Enhanced communication with residents

- Learning has driven improvements in communication at all stages of the repair journey, including clearer explanations at the outset and more consistent updates throughout.

Process improvements and system changes

- Updates include revised survey forms to incorporate habitability checks and enhanced training on repair diagnosis

These changes support better decision-making and help ensure risks to residents are identified earlier.

Communication During Service Delivery

- Reinforced expectations for clear, consistent and proactive updates to residents
- Delivered training to improve communication standards across teams
- Encouraged better coordination between services to avoid conflicting information

Managing Expectations in ASB Cases

- Improved early communication with residents about landlord powers and limitations
- Clearer explanation of evidential thresholds and likely outcomes
- Focus on maintaining resident engagement throughout longer investigations
- Revised ASB Policy which strengthens clarity around approach, responsibilities, and available interventions.
- Increased training to improve confidence and consistency in managing ASB cases and communicating effectively with residents.
- Increased case reviews have been introduced to ensure appropriate oversight, timely action, and continuous learning.

Identifying and Responding to Vulnerability

- Improved early identification and recording of vulnerabilities
- Increased awareness of the need for reasonable adjustments
- Embedded consideration of individual circumstances in case handling

Learning is routinely shared with service managers, and trends are monitored to inform ongoing service improvements. Where complaints identify service failure, learning is recorded and fed back to teams to support continuous improvement.

Continuous Improvement

Complaints remain a critical source of insight into how services are experienced by residents. Portsmouth Homes remains committed to using learning from complaints to:



Improve service outcomes



Reduce repeat complaints



Strengthen trust and confidence in complaint handling



Meet the expectations of the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code

The Landlord Complaints Team remains committed to supporting operational staff and managers in effectively handling and responding to complaints.

We view complaints as a valuable source of insight, offering free market research that helps us identify areas for improvement. By learning from these experiences, sharing best practices, and driving service enhancements, we aim to deliver even better outcomes for our customers and teams.

Service improvements – resident complaints scrutiny

As part of improving the landlord complaints service, the resident's scrutiny group, supported by an independent chair carried out an investigation into complaint handling. This provided an objective review of how our complaints service operates and how it is experienced by residents.

The scrutiny included:

-  Visiting housing offices and speaking with staff where appropriate
-  Reviewing information available on the Portsmouth City Council (PCC) website
-  Reviewing all housing complaints information, including posters, leaflets, the complaints policy, reports and House Talk
-  Analysing complaints data and performance reports
-  Developing and issuing a questionnaire to residents who had made complaints
-  Reviewing complaint case studies provided by the Complaints Team

The resident scrutiny group fed back their findings and recommendations. Their insight has helped us understand what is working well and where improvements are needed, with resident feedback and independent challenge strengthening our service.

We are undertaking a detailed review of our complaints processes to address the findings, strengthen good practice and make improvements where needed, developing a complaints improvement plan which sets out the actions we will take.

This includes:

Reviewing and improving our website content to make information clearer and more accessible.

Developing new posters to clearly explain the difference between a complaint and a service request.

Reviewing and updating our complaint response templates to improve clarity, tone and consistency.

These steps will help ensure our landlord complaints service is clear, accessible and consistently focused on residents' experience.

Keeping our residents up to date

We are committed to being open and transparent with residents about how we handle complaints and the improvements we are making. Information is shared through a range of channels, including our website, House Talk, and wider resident communications. We also shared the findings from our Annual Complaints Report with the Resident Consortium on 4 June 2026.

We will publish our full Annual Complaints Report, providing a clear and accessible account of our performance, the learning identified, and the actions we are taking to improve services.

These steps help ensure our landlord complaints service remains accessible, transparent, and consistently focused on residents' experience.



Improvement plans 2026/27

Moving forward we want to improve the following in 2026/2027.

Continued compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Code

Timely responses

Ensure complaints are responded to within 10 working days.

Clear communication

Inform complainants when investigations require more time, including revised timelines and reasons for delay.

Staff training

Ensure all Housing staff complete the complaints e-learning module.

Cross-department coordination

Improve collaboration and consistency in responses to complaints involving multiple council departments.

Complaints improvement plan

Following the findings of the resident scrutiny review, we have developed a structured complaints improvement plan. This sets out clear actions to address identified areas for improvement, strengthen good practice, and ensure that learning from both scrutiny and complaints is translated into measurable service improvements.

Natalie Beckett	Sally Scattergood	Cllr Darren Sanders
Complaints Lead Portsmouth Homes Portsmouth City Council	Assistant Director Portsmouth Homes	Portsmouth Homes Member Complaints Champion Deputy Leader & Cabinet member Housing & Tackling Poverty



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