

Portsmouth  
Homes



# Portsmouth Homes Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report

**COMPLAINTS & COMPLIMENTS 1 April 2024 - 31 March 2025**

**PORTSMOUTH CITY COUNCIL**

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## COMPLAINTS & COMPLIMENTS 1 April 2024 - 31 March 2025

### PURPOSE

- To provide analysis of all complaints and other contacts, including service requests, received during the period of 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 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 new Complaint Handling Code (the Code) and the Social Housing Regulator which both came into effect from 1 April 2024.

Prior to 1 April 24 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

Identified learnings are starting to be fed back to relevant staff. The analysis of compliment and complaints data is enabling a picture to be built of where learning needs to be shared. Relevant training sessions are planned will be delivered to front line staff and will continue on a regular basis based on continuous learnings 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:

- a. 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 [here](#).

- b. 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.
- c. any findings of non-compliance with the Code by the Ombudsman.
- d. the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints.
- e. any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman; and
- f. 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.

Our self-assessment is published on our website [Our landlord performance - Portsmouth City Council](#)

## ANALYSIS OF COMPLAINTS

In the 2024/25 financial year, **Portsmouth Homes** managed a total of **17,353 properties**. With **249 complaints** received about landlord services, this equates to approximately **14.35 complaints per 1,000 homes**, or **1.43% of the total housing stock**.

Of these, 127 complaints were related to the Repairs team, which completed 40,426 repairs during the same period. This results in around 3.14 complaints per 1,000 repairs, or just 0.31% of all repairs carried out—demonstrating a relatively low complaint rate in the context of overall service delivery.

Portsmouth Homes also logged a total of 1,364 anti-social behaviour (ASB) cases. Of these, 22 resulted in formal complaints, equating to approximately 16.13 complaints per 1,000 cases, or 1.61% of all ASB cases. This indicates that the vast majority of ASB cases were managed without escalation to a complaint.

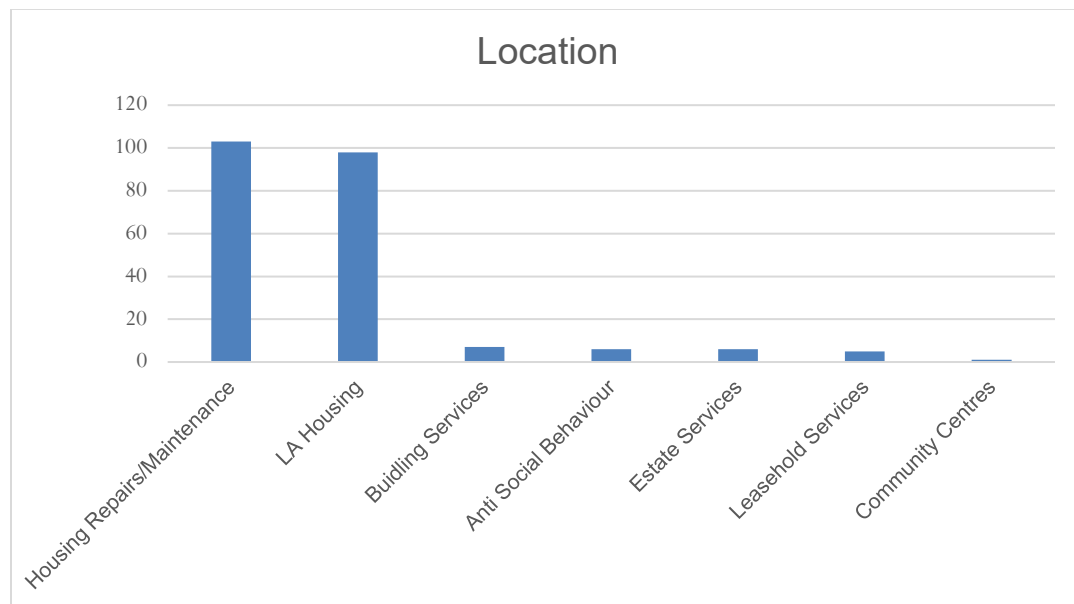
This increase in complaints reflects **greater visibility and accessibility** of the Landlord Complaints

Team, who are now more prominent through our:

- **Online complaints hub**
- **Leaflets**
- **Posters in communal areas**

These improvements are helping residents better understand how to raise concerns and engage with our services.

To set the complaints figures in context, the following chart outlines the number of complaints for each location/team.



As with the previous year, **Housing Repairs and Maintenance** received the highest number of complaints.

This is **unsurprising given the nature of the work**, which often involves urgent, complex, and high-impact issues for residents.

We continue to monitor this area closely and are working with the Repairs and Maintenance team to improve communication, response times, and service delivery.

It is also important to consider the reasons why complaints were made.

| Reason for complaint             | Number |
|----------------------------------|--------|
| ASB                              | 22     |
| Communication                    | 51     |
| Delay in providing a service     | 20     |
| Inadequate Service               | 30     |
| Repairs Issues                   | 52     |
| Policy                           | 6      |
| Loss/Damage to personal property | 7      |
| Policy issues                    | 3      |
| Damp and Mould                   | 14     |
| Staff behaviour                  | 11     |

|                           |    |
|---------------------------|----|
| Contractor behaviour      | 7  |
| Pest control              | 7  |
| Leaks                     | 6  |
| Boiler issues             | 3  |
| Quality or service/repair | 10 |

## PERFORMANCE

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

If the issue is complex and requires further investigation, we may extend this to 20 working days, in line with the Complaint Handling Code.

Our staff are expected to tailor their responses to the nature and complexity of each complaint, ensuring that investigations are thorough and proportionate.

Between 1 April 2024 - 31 March 2025, we received **249 complaints**. Of these:

- **Stage 1:**
  - **138** were responded to within the Complaint Handling Code timescales.
  - **30** required extensions.
  - **This represents 55% of all Stage 1 complaints.**
  - **79 complaints went over the 10 working day timescale and an extension was not requested.**
  - In Quarter 1, data was recorded using a different system that did not track response times. As a result, timescale data is missing for 32 complaints.
- **Stage 2:**
  - **19 complaints** were escalated.
  - **15** were responded to within the required timescales (including **7** with extensions).
  - This equates to a **79% compliance rate** at Stage 2.
  - **The remaining 4 complaints went over the 20 working day timescale and an extension was not requested.**

We acknowledge that our current response times are below our expected standards. We are actively working to improve this through our **Complaints Improvement Plan**. We also want to involve residents in reviewing and shaping our complaints process. A resident consortium meeting has been organised in October.

Importantly, **61% of complaints were upheld**, meaning we recognised that a mistake had been made. 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.

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 41 compliments for this period:

|                          |    |
|--------------------------|----|
| Area Housing Offices:    | 18 |
| Green & Clean:           | 4  |
| Resident Engagement:     | 7  |
| Repairs and Maintenance: | 12 |

**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:

- Repairs
- Complaints handling
- Building safety
- 

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.

**HOUSING OMBUDSMAN**

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

We received 8 determinations from the housing ombudsman for the period of 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

- **Determinations:** A total of 8 cases were reviewed by the Housing Ombudsman.

- **Findings:** Across these cases, 17 findings were issued.
- **National Comparison:** The average maladministration rate for landlords of a similar size is 80%.
- **Portsmouth Homes Performance:**
  - We received 9 maladministration findings, resulting in a rate of 56% — a significantly better outcome than the national average.
  - In the 2023–2024 period, our maladministration rate was 80%, indicating a marked improvement this year.
  - The Ombudsman found no fault in 35% of our cases, compared to a national average of just 13%.
- **Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Cases:**
  - All ASB complaints reviewed by the Ombudsman resulted in maladministration findings.
  - In response, we have implemented a structured learning approach. A monthly Tenancy Management Meeting is held, and the Complaints Lead meets quarterly with the Head of Community Safety, the Head of Local Authority Housing, and the Policy Lead to review and improve ASB complaint handling.

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.

## HOUSING OMBUDSMAN COMPLIANCE

The Housing Ombudsman recently reviewed our Landlord Complaints Policy and recommended a number of minor changes. These updates have now been incorporated into the policy and shared with our Resident Consortium for feedback and comment.

In addition to the policy review, the Complaints Team will be updating our Self-Assessment to ensure full alignment with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.

The team continues to provide regular updates to the Customer Service Group on compliance matters. These updates are then shared with our Member for Complaints, Councillor Sanders, ensuring transparency and accountability at every level.

## 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.

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.

- We understand that many complaints require a home visit, and we aim to schedule these at times that work best for our customers. While this can sometimes lead to extension requests, we're committed to resolving issues as efficiently as possible.
- Clear and timely communication is key to reducing failure demand, and we're collaborating closely with contractors and staff to continuously improve how we manage and respond to complaints.
- We have seen a noticeable increase in complaints related to damp and mould in residents' homes. In response, a revised procedure has been implemented to ensure quicker identification, assessment, and resolution of damp and mould cases.
- In response to a recent increase in complaints regarding pests, particularly bed bugs, we have formed a dedicated working group to review current procedures and implement a more effective approach to managing infestations in residents' homes.
- We've taken steps to improve customer communication across our area housing offices, driven by valuable learning from recent complaints. These improvements include:

**Getting it right from the start:** We're ensuring customer queries are answered accurately at sign-up, and where needed, we're proactively seeking specialist advice from teams such as Right to Buy to provide clear and informed responses.

**Communicating with care during service disruptions:** Instead of relying solely on posters, we now write directly to each affected resident when a lift is out of service for an extended period—making sure everyone is kept informed in a timely and respectful way.

**Strengthening our complaint handling:** Complaints are now recorded directly with the Complaints Team to ensure they're investigated and responded to in full compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.

These changes reflect our commitment to listening, learning, and acting on feedback to deliver a better experience for our residents.

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

The below service improvements have been implemented to strengthen complaint handling and align with the Housing Ombudsman Code.

- Established the Landlord Complaints Team to provide dedicated support and oversight.
- Reviewed the Landlord Complaints Policy to ensure alignment with the Housing Ombudsman Code.
- Completed a Self-Assessment to identify service gaps and inform a targeted action plan.
- Implemented a New Complaints Record System, including migration of legacy data.
- Updated Complaints Templates to improve consistency and clarity in responses.
- Launched a New Complaints Leaflet and Online Hub, enabling customers to submit complaints via an online form.

These improvements aim to enhance transparency, responsiveness, and customer experience in complaint handling across the Housing service.

## IMPROVEMENT PLANS 2025/26

Moving forward we want to improve the following in 2025/26.

### 1. Learning from Complaints

- **Clarify complaint vs. service request**  
Refresh staff training to ensure clear distinction between service requests and formal complaints.
- **Improve cross-department handling**  
Strengthen internal processes for complaints about council properties that fall outside the Housing department's remit.

### 2. 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.

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Portsmouth City Council  
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