



Council Housing Service Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Plan from June 2025

1. Purpose:

- To ensure that our annual self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Code of Conduct is complete and in line with the requirements
- To ensure that our Housing Complaints Policy is in line with the Housing Ombudsman's requirements
- To record a qualitative and quantitative analysis of our complaints handling performance
- To record a summary of the types of complaints we have refused to accept
- To show any findings of non-compliance with the Code by the Ombudsman
- To record the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints
- To note actions following any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman
- To note our actions following any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to our work

2. Reporting to the Council Housing and Advisory Board (CHADAB)

This report will be reported to the CHADAB and will be and published on the section of its website relating to complaints. The CHADAB's response to the report must be published alongside this. The data relates to complaints received between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025. The Service Improvement Plan will be implemented from when approval is received from CHADAB in June 2025.

Note that we have the following in place:

- Housing Complaints Policy
- Anti-social Behaviour Strategy & Policy
- Asset Management Strategy
- Homelessness Strategy
- HRA (Housing Revenue Accounts) Business Plan
- Resident Involvement Strategy
- Risk register
- Tenancy Strategy and Policy
- Service Improvement Plan

3. Complaints received

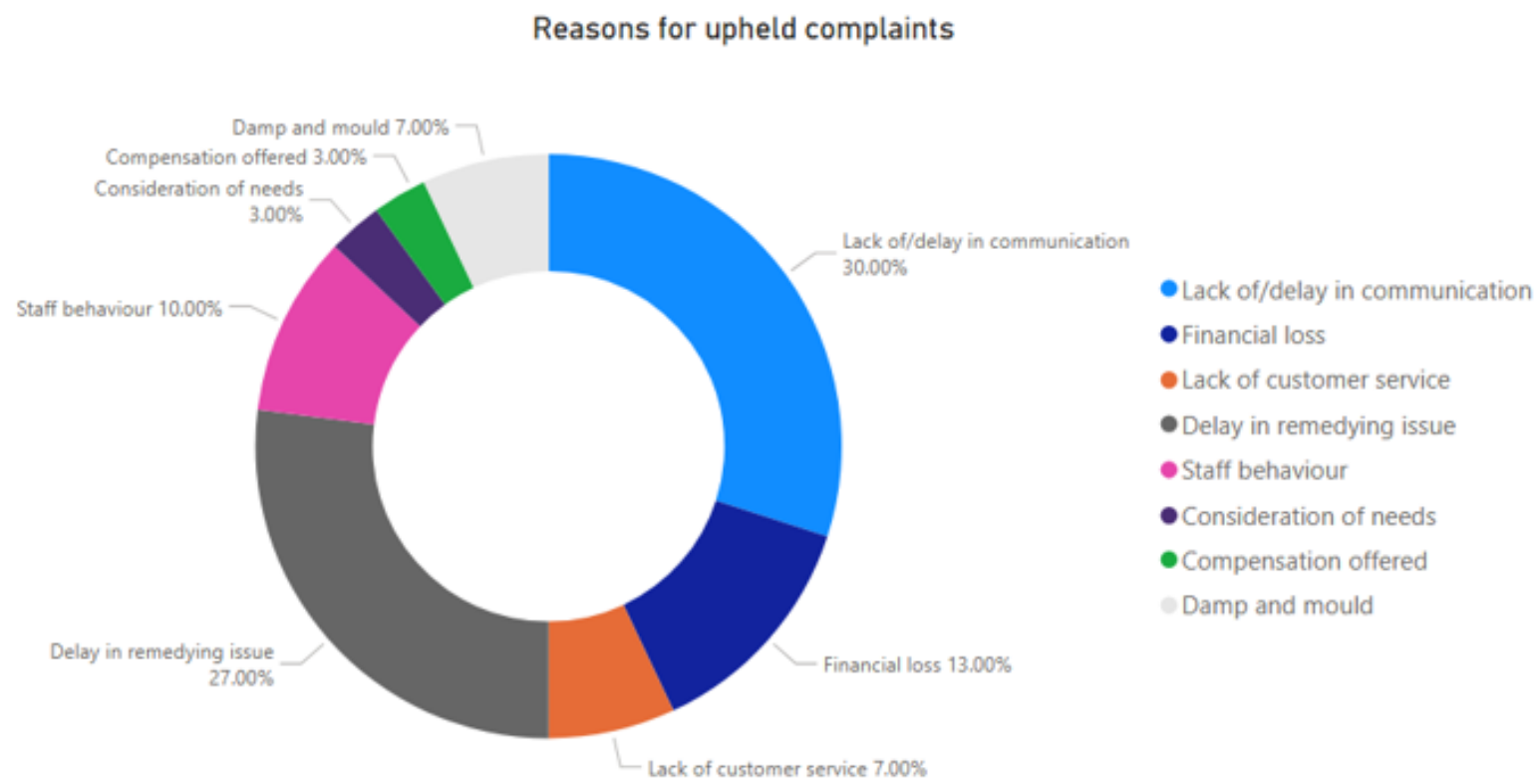
Summary of the complaints received in 24/25 with comparisons (3-year trend) and any Housemark comparisons

Summary of Complaints received:	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Stage 1 received (No & %)	105 (21.92 per 1000 properties)	74 (15.42 per 1000 properties)	199 (42.15 per 1000 properties)
Stage 1 resolved (No & %)	83 of the 105 complaints (79.05%) resolved at Stage One Upheld = 67 Overturned = 38 October 2022 – Housing Ombudsman (HO) Reduced Response Times to 10 working days plus 10 days extension	65 of the 74 complaints (87.84%) resolved at Stage One Upheld = 55 (Partially Upheld = 12 of the 55) Overturned = 19	180 of the 199 complaints (90.45%) resolved at Stage One Upheld = 138 Overturned = 58 Withdrawn = 3
Stage 2 received (No & %)	22 (4.59% per 1000 properties)	9 (1.88% per 1000 properties)	39 (8.26% per 1000 properties)
Stage 2 resolved (No & %)	22 (100%) resolved at Stage Two Upheld = 15 Overturned = 7	9 (100%) resolved at Stage Two Upheld = 6 (Partially Upheld = 2 of the 6) Overturned = 3	37 (94.87%) resolved at Stage Two Upheld = 20 Overturned = 19 Ombudsman escalations = 2
Number of Complaints Refused/Rejected	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Refused (Case numbers & reasons)	N/A 1 x Complaint was outside of the Housing Ombudsman remit	N/A 1 x Tenant withdrew complaint	1 x did not have authority to discuss 2 x Tenant withdrew complaint
Rejected (Case numbers & reasons)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Response Times (within HO required deadlines)	2022/23	2023/24	2024/2025

Stage 1	Average days to respond <u>Total for year</u> 13.80 days <u>April – September (target 15 days)</u> 15.32 days <u>October – March (target 10 days)</u> 12.42 days (this includes agreed extensions) The Housing Ombudsman timescales were 10 days at Stage One and 20 days at Stage Two, until October 2022. Our organisation operated under our previous target of 15 days for Stage One and Two up until this time. Our timescales changed to align with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code for the remaining time in this year (10 days for Stage One and 20 days for Stage Two).	Average days to respond – 9.91 days. The Housing Ombudsman timescales are 10 days at Stage One and 20 days at Stage Two. Our timescales align with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.	Average days to respond - 9.66 days. The Housing Ombudsman timescales are 10 days at Stage One and 20 days at Stage Two. Our timescales align with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.
Stage 2	Average days to respond <u>Total for year</u> 16.23 days <u>April – September (target 15 days)</u> 13.78 days <u>October – March (target 20 days)</u> 17.92 days The Housing Ombudsman timescales were 10 days at Stage One and 20 days at Stage Two, until October 2022. Our organisation operated under our previous target of 15 days for Stage One and Two up until this time. Our timescales then changed to align with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code for the remaining time in this year (10 days for Stage One and 20 days for Stage Two).	Average days to respond – 14.44 days. The Housing Ombudsman timescales are 10 days at Stage One and 20 days at Stage Two. Our timescales align with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.	Average days to respond – 18.15 days. The Housing Ombudsman timescales are 10 days at Stage One and 20 days at Stage Two. Our timescales align with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.

Housing Ombudsman Referrals & Outcomes	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Cases & Outcomes (note any maladministration)	None	Case: 202214034 – Maladministration Case: 202213098 – No Maladministration	One referral by the HO was initiated towards the end of the financial year. The HO investigation remains ongoing and the outcome is yet to be published.
Non-Compliance with HO Code	2022/23	2023/24	2024/2025
Note any areas where we do not comply with the code	N/A	N/A	N/A

4. Complaint Themes & Trends



5. Reports by the Housing Ombudsman

In November 2024 Exeter City Council received a Landlord Performance Report for the financial year 2023/2024. Whilst the data relates to the previous financial year, we have included the report in Appendix 1 for transparency and information. The service improvement plan in the already published 'Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Plan from May 2024' covered the complaints within the Housing Ombudsman's report.

6. Root Cause Analysis

As a result of viewing complaint data and feedback throughout the year we identified several root causes which impacted dissatisfaction with the complaint handling service.

Customer prospective:

1. Lack of/delay in communication
2. Staff behaviour/customer service
3. Delays in remedying the issue

Staff prospective:

4. The amount of work/time required to undertake an investigation within the Stage 1 timescale
5. Confidence when deciding a compensation amount using the HO guidance
6. Confidence with writing complaint responses

Additional challenges:

7. Staff recruitment and retention challenges
8. Internal budget constraints
9. Increase in number of complaints

What went wrong/root cause	What action is required to address the cause of the problem to avoid this happening again	What evidence is available to confirm implementation of learning	Target date for completion	Lead and support
Concerns about our communication and response times.	Staff have been provided with training in order to provide clarity and a robust framework of complaint handling expectations	Complaint data for May, June, July and August will be reviewed to identify effects of staff training	June 2025	VL & SH
Staff behaviour/Customer Service	Customer Service - Staff have been provided with training in order to provide clarity and a robust framework of complaint handling expectations Staff behaviour – When a complaint is upheld the line manager will have responsibility for taking appropriate action	Complaint data for May, June, July and August will be reviewed to identify effects of staff training	June 2025	VL & SH
Delay in remedying the issue	The Complaints and Maintenance teams to continue to review processes during the pre-existing Maintenance/Complaints meetings.	Complaint data for May, June, July and August will be reviewed to identify effects of staff training	September 2025	VL
The amount of work/time required to undertake an	Staff have been provided with training in order to provide as much support as possible and identify	Data showing the number of extended/overdue complaints should reduce over May, June, July and August.	June 2025	VL & SH

investigation within the Stage 1 timescale	areas where the complaints team can provide support			
Compensation (Part 1) HO guidance on compensation/redress could be applied more uniformly	New policy and procedure have been drafted to provide comprehensive guidance which was received by Tenants Voice group.	Policy and procedure will be adopted once CHADAB have approved the policy	June 2025 during CHADAB meeting	SH
Compensation (Part 2) HO guidance on compensation/redress should be applied more uniformly	A 'calculator' is being developed which can be used alongside the HO guidance to assist Investigating Officers to determine a 'fair' level of compensation and redress, this will support a more consistent application of the service.	To be developed and adopted and then complaint service feedback data to be analysed after its implantation.	July 2025	VL
Confidence with writing complaint responses	Staff have been provided with training in order to provide as much support as possible and identify areas where the complaints team can provide support	Feedback from staff during the Complaints and Maintenance team meetings held in July and August.	June 2025	VL & SH

5. Resident Scrutiny

The Housing Service operates a number of tenant groups to ensure resident scrutiny remains a core objective when running, reviewing and improving services. In order to achieve this the groups review complaint data, feedback, relevant policies, working practices and good practice examples. The main tenant led groups which consider the complaint service are the Complaints and Performance Group and the Tenants Voice. The Complaints and Performance Group meet four times a year and at any one time between four and seven members service the group.

6. Additional Information

Housing Complaint Information	
Self-Assessment	Link for 2025 Self- Assessment: Tenant advice and information - Housing Complaints and Feedback - Exeter City Council
Housing Policy	Link to the Housing Policy: Tenant advice and information - Housing Complaints and Feedback - Exeter City Council
ECC Housing Complaints Website	Link to Housing Complaints Webpage: Tenant advice and information - Housing Complaints and Feedback - Exeter City Council
Operational Management Team meeting	Ongoing via monthly meetings
Complaints Clinic	Ongoing
Complaints Training and Workshops	Ongoing