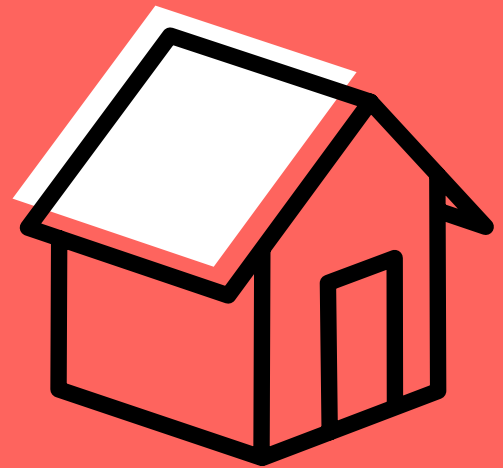


thirteen

Homes. Communities. Support.



2025/26

Annual complaints performance and service improvement report

August 2026

Section 1 - Introduction

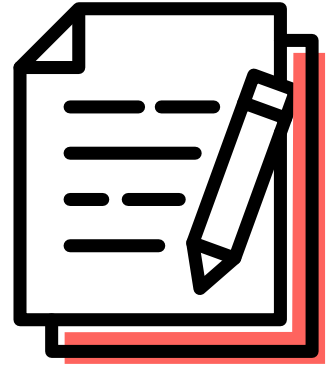
The purpose of this report is to provide customers and the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) assurance that we have analysed our complaints service and included any service improvements because of feedback from customers.

At Thirteen, we value feedback from all our customers, as it helps us identify areas where our services can be improved.

Annually, we carry out a self-assessment of our complaints handling against the HOS Complaint Handling Code (CHC) to ensure compliance, and to drive continuous improvement. You can view our self-assessment [here](#)

To make a complaint or share concerns, our customers can contact us via email, phone, in person, or through our social media channels. For more information about making a complaint to Thirteen please visit our website www.thirteengroup.co.uk

This report has been published to provide an overview of our complaints performance and the service improvements we've made in the year 2025/26.



Self-assessment

We started working on our self-assessment in June 2026 against the CHC as outlined by the Housing Ombudsman. The new CHC has been developed following consultation with more than 600 individuals and landlords nationally. The new code is aligned with the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Act (LGSCO) and follows the Social Housing (Regulation) Act in an effort to provide a single set of standards for complaints procedures. The Code aims to achieve earlier resolution of complaints directly by the landlord.

Our assessment ensures that our complaint handling policy and process remains fully aligned with the provisions set out in the Code, which was reviewed with customers, colleagues, our Customer Committee and our Member Responsible for Complaints.

Section 2 - 2025/26 volumes

We carry out an analysis of complaints every month with this information being shared to our leadership team, service directors and heads of service. This information is also shared and scrutinised quarterly with our involved customer group, Member Responsible for Complaints, Chair of Thirteen Board, and Customer Committee so that all stakeholders are kept informed of complaints performance, as well as any trends and learning.

As part of our commitment and drive to improve continuously we've also introduced separate meetings with our Board Chair and Chair of the Customer Committee to keep the voice of the customer at the forefront of all our discussions and decisions.

We've monitored our performance over the last financial year 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026. The following details relate to this time period.



Section 3 - Complaints/claims breakdown

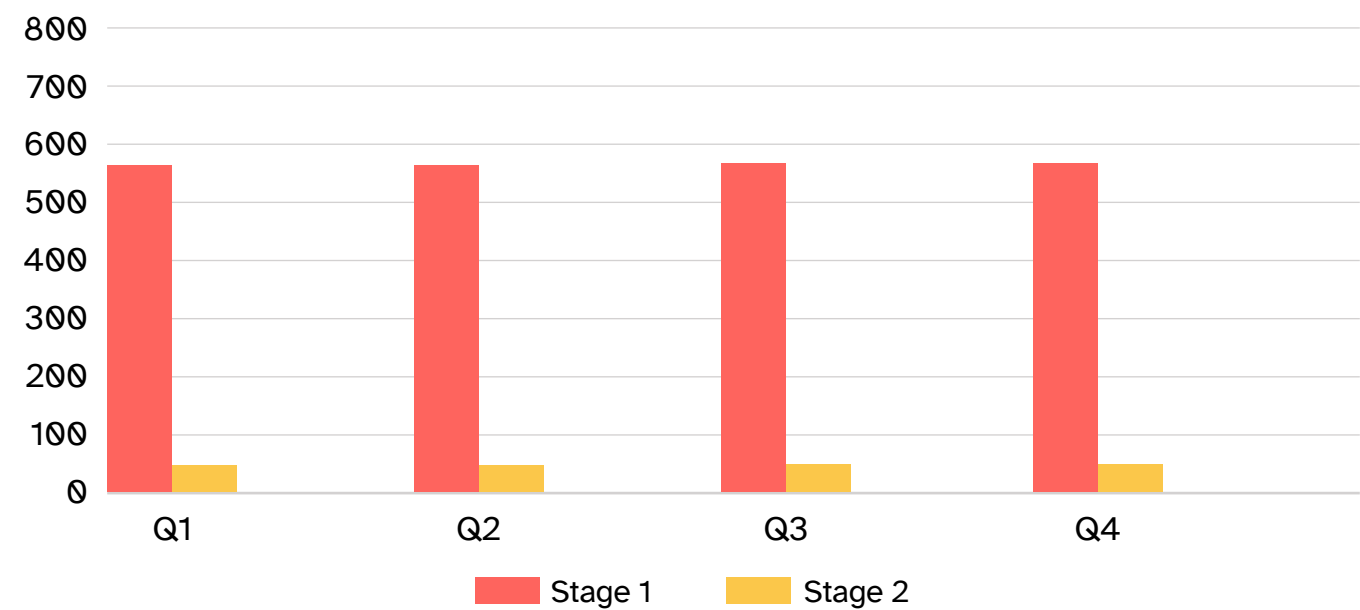
The table below shows the volume of complaints handled and our performance against the timescales for closing complaints.

	Stage 1	Stage 2
Total number of complaints received (including low level claims)	2403	314
% of complaints closed within timescale (5 working days for S1 and 10 working days for S2)	90.42%	79%
Average time to respond (in working days)	4.99	10.76

While performance has reduced at both Stage 1 and Stage 2 compared to last year, this reflects the increasing complexity of complaints and the need to ensure each case is fully reviewed and resolved appropriately.

Quarterly breakdown 2025/26				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Stage 1	600	565	598	640
Stage 2	91	82	77	64

Complaints by quarter



Quarterly comparison with 2024-25 (shown in brackets)				
	Quarter 1 Apr - Jun	Quarter 2 Jul - Sep	Quarter 3 Oct - Dec	Quarter 4 Jan - Mar
Stage 1	600 (568) ↑32	565 (543) ↑22	595 (565) ↑33	700 (640) ↓60
Stage 2	91 (46) ↑45	598 (565) ↑29	77 (67) ↑10	64 (113) ↓49

Complaint demand has remained stable across the year, with no significant spikes in volume.

Complaints by outcome

	2024/25	2025/26
Stage 1 - Not upheld	57.8%	59.8%
Stage 1 - Partially upheld (we are still learning from these)	13.8%	18.94%
Stage 1 - Upheld (we got it wrong)	28.4%	21.62%
Stage 2 - Not upheld	62.0%	56.7%
Stage 2 - Partially upheld (we are still learning from these)	14.8%	18.94%
Stage 2 - Upheld (we got it wrong)	23.2%	21.62%

Outcomes remain consistent year-on-year, demonstrating a steady and proportionate approach to complaint resolution.

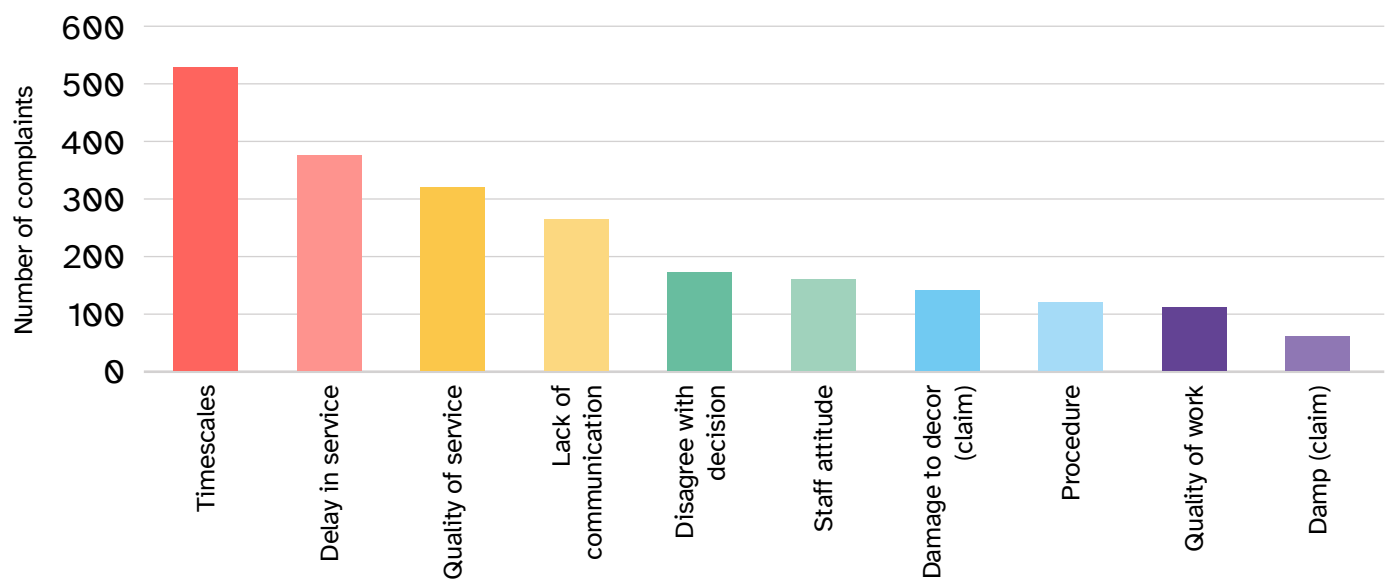
Compensation awarded

	Complaints awarded compensation 2024/25	Complaints awarded compensation 2025/26
Stage 1	£88,818.42	£113,116.81

Top 10 main reasons for complaints/claims 2025/26

Theme	Number	% of total
Timescales	530	21.5%
Delay in service	380	15.5%
Quality of service	320	13.1%
Lack of communication	270	11.0%
Disagree with decision	180	7.3%
Staff attitude	160	6.5%
Damage to decor (claim)	130	5.3%
Procedure	110	4.5%
Quality of work	105	4.3%
Damp (claim)	65	2.6%

Compensation reasons 2025/26



Section 4 – Housing Ombudsman determinations

The Housing Ombudsman follows a structured process when reviewing complaints:

- 1. Initial information request** – the Ombudsman requests key documents, including Stage 1 and Stage 2 responses, the original complaint, and relevant tenancy information.
- 2. Full investigation stage** – if the case proceeds, a detailed information request is issued to gather further evidence from across the organisation.
- 3. Initial determination** – a decision is made based on the evidence. If this is accepted by all parties, it becomes the final outcome.
- 4. Final review (if challenged)** – where the determination is disputed, the case is independently reviewed and a final, binding decision is issued.



Housing Ombudsman – year to date	
Complaint information	79
Full information requests	45
Final determinations	29
Disputes raised	8

A total of **29 final determinations were issued within the reporting period**. These relate to cases across a range of submission dates, recognising that Ombudsman investigations are conducted over an extended period and do not necessarily conclude within the same reporting year.

Breakdown of determinations

Number of determinations	Number of orders	No maladministration	Service failure	Maladministration	Severe maladministration	Mediation	Redress	Outside jurisdiction
29	66	21	18	18	2	1	3	3

While the Ombudsman issues a single overall decision for each case, that decision often contains multiple findings and orders affecting different service areas.

For example, a case may conclude with no maladministration in relation to repair handling, while at the same time identifying a service failure in complaint handling. Each element of the determination should be reviewed individually to understand the specific actions and learning needed across the organisation.

Housing Ombudsman determinations by outcome

Outcome	Number	% of total
No maladministration	21	31.8%
Service failure	18	27.3%
Maladministration	18	27.3%
Reasonable redress	3	4.5%
Outside jurisdiction	3	4.5%
Severe maladministration	2	3.0%
Mediation	1	1.5%
Total	66	100.0%

Themes from adverse findings

Outcome	Main areas impacted	Key themes identified
Service failure	Customer relations, complaint handling, repairs, Touchpoint, home ownership	Issues included complaint recognition, escalation handling, communication, poor record keeping, ineffective outcomes, repair follow-up, and incorrect routing of a complaint as an early resolution route.
Maladministration	Repairs and maintenance, customer relations, complaint handling, housing services	Themes included repair delays, damp and mould handling, pest control, poor communication, failure to properly recognise customer impact, weak complaint responses, ASB expectation management and poor record keeping.
Severe maladministration	Repairs and maintenance, customer relations	Severe findings related to significant repair failures, delays affecting the suitability of accommodation, logging complaint delays found.

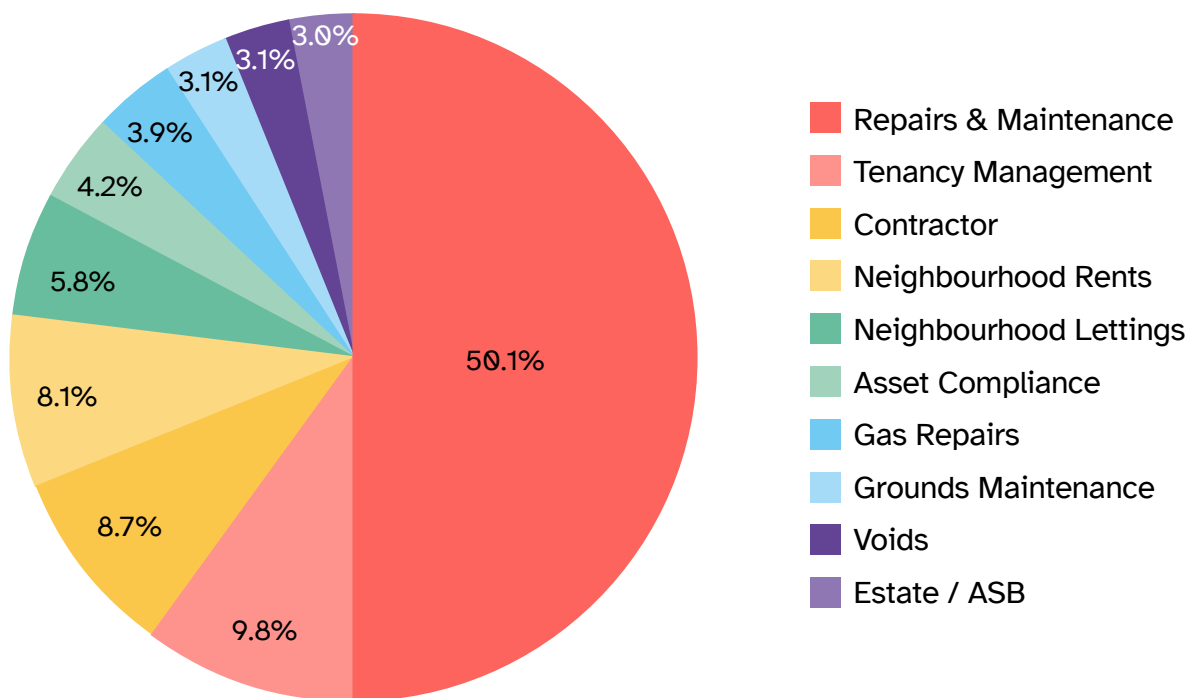
Section 5 - Complaints by directorate

This section shows the core service area the complaint related to at the point it was raised. Complaints are recorded in this way so we can understand where customers are experiencing issues, identify trends and use this insight to improve services.

The data shows that repairs and maintenance remains the highest area for complaints, with 672 complaints recorded. This reflects the scale, complexity and frequency of customer contact within this service area, and is consistent with wider complaint trends where timescales, delays, quality of service and communication remain key drivers of dissatisfaction.

The next highest areas were tenancy management, contractor services, neighbourhood rents and neighbourhood lettings. These are all services where customers are likely to have regular or direct contact with the organisation, meaning the customer journey, clarity of communication and follow-up actions are particularly important.

The chart below shows the service areas in which we received complaints.



Section 6 - Themes from customer feedback log

We monitor customer dissatisfaction through the customer feedback log (CFL), which captures feedback outside of the formal complaints process.

During 2025/26, a total of **1,279 CFL entries** were recorded. This represents a change in how feedback is recorded, as complaints are no longer duplicated within the CFL.

In previous years, each complaint was also logged as a CFL entry, which increased overall volumes. When considered alongside **2,403 complaints recorded**, overall levels of customer dissatisfaction remain **consistent with the previous year**.



CFL data is analysed on a monthly basis to identify trends, understand the underlying causes of dissatisfaction and support service improvement across the organisation.

Feedback by service area

Service area	Volume
Repairs / scheduling / contractors	599
Housing services	442
Compliance (gas and electricity)	113
Touchpoint	88
Grounds	54
Pest control	47
Internal investment	38
Environmental	35
Building services / facilities	28
My Thirteen	25
Leasehold / shared ownership	24
Other	61

Key themes from customer feedback

Theme	Insight
Communication	Customers continue to raise concerns about clarity, updates and overall engagement
Timescales	Delays in service delivery and completion of works remain a key driver
Chasing for updates	Customers frequently report needing to follow up for progress
Quality of work	Feedback relating to contractor performance and standards of work
ASB handling	Concerns around responsiveness and management of cases
Repeat issues	Instances where problems are not fully resolved first time

Overall, the themes identified through customer feedback remain consistent with previous years, particularly in relation to communication, timescales and the need for customers to chase for updates.

Feedback continues to be concentrated within repairs and housing services, reinforcing that the highest levels of dissatisfaction occur in areas with the greatest volume of customer interaction. This further supports the wider findings of the report that the customer experience is most influenced by how services are delivered, communicated and followed through to resolution.

Section 7 - Learnings, actions and service improvements

What we've seen

Complaint volumes in 2025/26 have remained broadly consistent with the previous year, indicating that demand has stabilised following the significant increase seen in 2024/25.

What has changed is the complexity of complaints. More cases now involve multiple issues, several service areas and longer customer journeys. This has increased the level of investigation required, particularly at Stage 2.

The key drivers of complaints remain consistent:

- Timescales (21.5%) – expected or agreed timeframes not being met
- Delay in service (15.5%) – services not progressing as they should
- Quality of service and communication
- Customers needing to chase for updates or experiencing repeat issues

This confirms that complaints are not driven by new issues, but by ongoing service challenges linked to delivery, communication and follow-through.

Housing Ombudsman outcomes continue to provide a balanced and independent view of our service. A high proportion of findings resulted in no maladministration, demonstrating that, in many cases, decisions are fair, proportionate and in line with expectations.

The Ombudsman now routinely considers complaint handling as part of all investigations, regardless of the original reason for referral. This means findings in this area are expected as part of a broader review, rather than being the sole focus of a complaint.

Where learning has been identified, the most consistent themes relate to record keeping, communication and ensuring the full customer journey is clearly evidenced, which continues to shape our improvement activity.



What we've done

During the year, we've focused on strengthening service delivery, improving oversight, and responding to the issues that matter most to customers.

Targeted action has been taken in key areas. In repairs, a demand squad has been introduced alongside increased investment to improve capacity and reduce delays. Additional funding has also been allocated to address backlogs, including fencing following storm damage.

Our approach to damp and mould has been strengthened through a dedicated team, increased contractor capacity and improved oversight of appointments and delivery.

We've improved how services work together, supporting quicker resolution and clearer communication for customers with closer collaboration between contractors and internal teams.

Complaint handling and learning have also been strengthened through:

- A structured case review process for Ombudsman determinations
- Increased leadership oversight and clearer escalation routes
- Greater focus on early complaint recognition and resolution

Customer feedback continues to inform service delivery, with monthly insight shared across teams and regular engagement with customers to review performance and identify improvement areas.



What's next

A revised approach to record keeping will go live from July 2026, providing a clearer single view of the customer journey when dealing with complaints and Housing Ombudsman enquiries.

We're also strengthening how we capture and act on learning from complaints. This includes a more structured approach to:

- Clearly recording the learning from each complaint
- Tracking actions and recommendations we've committed to, ensuring they are completed
- Providing greater visibility of improvements across services

This will support a more consistent approach to follow-through and ensure that learning is not only identified but also embedded.

Alongside system and process improvements, there will be a continued focus on people and culture. Ongoing training and targeted campaigns are being embedded across the organisation to reinforce our core values, supporting colleagues to:

- Take ownership and follow through on commitments
- Communicate clearly and proactively with customers
- Deliver services in a way that is consistent, accountable and customer-focused

Our priorities for the year ahead remain focused on the areas that matter most to customers:

- Improving communication and reducing the need for customers to chase
- Reducing delays and repeat issues through stronger follow-through
- Maintaining focus on high-risk areas, including damp and mould
- Using customer and Housing Ombudsman insight to drive continuous improvement

Overall, while complaint levels have stabilised, the increasing complexity of cases means the focus is now on **quality, consistency and delivering a more connected customer experience**.

