



Milton Keynes
City Council

Annual Complaints Report

Housing Landlord 2025/26.

**June 2026
Version 2**

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Foreword from the Member Responsible for Complaints

I am pleased to present Milton Keynes City Council's Housing Landlord Annual Complaints Report for 2025/26.

Complaints provide an important opportunity for us to understand residents' experiences, identify where services have not met expectations, and drive improvements. They give us valuable insight into what matters most to our tenants and leaseholders and help ensure that residents remain at the heart of service development.

During 2025/26, we received 685 contacts in relation to Housing Landlord services, a reduction from the previous year. While this is encouraging, we recognise that every complaint represents a resident who feels we could have done better. It is therefore important that we not only respond effectively to complaints, but also learn from them and use that learning to improve services.

This report highlights some positive progress. Complaint response times have improved, overall complaint volumes have reduced, and nearly three-quarters of residents were satisfied with the response they received at Stage 1. We also received 665 compliments from residents, recognising the professionalism, compassion and commitment demonstrated by our housing teams every day.

However, the report also identifies areas where we must continue to improve. The number of complaints progressing to Stage 2 has increased, indicating that some residents remain dissatisfied with the outcome or handling of their complaint. The themes emerging from complaints remain consistent, with communication, repairs, decision-making and timely action being the issues most frequently raised by residents. These are areas where we are focusing our improvement efforts.

As the Council continues its Housing Improvement Programme following the Regulator of Social Housing's C2 judgement, complaints and resident feedback will remain an essential source of learning and assurance. Our ambition is not simply to resolve complaints, but to use them to improve residents' experience and build greater trust and confidence in our services.

I would like to thank all residents who have taken the time to provide feedback during the year. Whether through a complaint, compliment or comment, your feedback helps us understand what we do well and where we need to improve. It plays a vital role in shaping better services for the future.

Councillor Ed Hume

Cabinet Member for Housing / Member Responsible for Complaints

Complaints Policy

Tell us about your complaint	
Visit our website	Complaints and Compliments Milton Keynes City Council (milton-keynes.gov.uk)
Online form	Contact Us - MyCouncil (milton-keynes.gov.uk)
Email	complimentsandcomplaints@milton-keynes.gov.uk
Phone	01908 253817
Postal Address	Compliment and complaints, Milton Keynes City Council, Civic, Milton Keynes, MK9 3EJ

We recognise the importance of making it as easy as possible for all residents to provide feedback. A range of reasonable adjustments can therefore be offered to remove barriers and support inclusive participation. These may include providing information in accessible formats (such as large print, easy read or alternative languages), offering multiple channels for feedback (including online, telephone, face-to-face and paper-based options), and allowing additional time where needed. Support can also be provided through assisted digital services, advocacy or interpretation, and by making physical venues accessible. These adjustments help ensure that feedback processes are inclusive, equitable and reflective of the needs of all residents.

Definition of a complaint

Milton Keynes City Council completed its annual self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code and continues to monitor compliance through regular reviews. Any identified areas for improvement are incorporated into service improvement plans. The annual report has been reviewed by our Resident Oversight Committee (resident scrutiny) and Landlord Board with their feedback informing this report.

A service request may be defined as:

“a request that the organisation provides or improves a service, fixes a problem or reconsiders a decision”.

This provides organisations with opportunities to resolve matters to an individual's satisfaction before they become a complaint.

A complaint may be defined as:

‘an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual or group of individuals.’

We do not expect that a customer or resident has to use the word ‘complaint’ for it to be treated as such. MKCC will apply a broad view of the definition of a complaint when we receive feedback from customer. This does not include everything, but some common examples of service failure that could cause a complaint are: -

- Delay
- Poor record keeping
- Failure to take action
- Failure to follow procedures or the law
- Poor communication
- Giving out misleading information
- Failure to investigate
- The Council not doing what it said it would

Timescales

The Council follows the Complaint Handling Codes set by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and the Housing Ombudsman. These say that Stage 1 complaints should normally be responded to within 10 working days, and this is reflected in our complaints policy.

We regularly monitor how we are performing against this standard and have actions in place to improve response times. While we are not yet meeting this target in all cases, we are making steady progress and remain focused on improving consistency.

Work is ongoing to fully embed these standards across the organisation, and we are moving towards full compliance.

Process	Stage	Working days to complete
Acknowledgement [Initial triage]	ALL	5 working days
Housing	1	10 working days plus 10 or agreed extension working days for complex cases
Housing	2	20 working days plus 10 or agreed extension working days for complex cases

Our Service

Our Housing Service manages around 11,000 council homes across Milton Keynes, providing safe, secure and affordable homes for thousands of residents. The service is responsible for delivering a wide range of landlord services, including responsive repairs and maintenance, planned investment programmes, building safety, tenancy management, neighbourhood services, estate management, rent collection and support for residents to sustain their tenancies. We work closely with tenants and leaseholders to ensure homes are well maintained, communities are supported and residents have opportunities to influence the services they receive.

In 2026, the Regulator of Social Housing awarded Milton Keynes City Council a C2 grading under the Consumer Standards framework. This judgement recognises that, while the Council is delivering many important services and has strengths on which to build, there are areas where improvements are required to achieve full compliance with the Consumer Standards. Since receiving the judgement, the Housing Service has been focused on delivering a comprehensive improvement programme, strengthening governance, improving data quality, enhancing resident engagement and ensuring that services continue to meet the needs and expectations of tenants and leaseholders. Our intent is to provide high-quality, customer-focused housing services that put residents at the heart of everything we do.

Complaints continue to be a vital source of resident insight and play a key role in shaping service improvement across Housing. While the number of complaints received reduced in 2025/26, the themes emerging from complaints remain consistent and provide a clear indication of the issues that matter most to tenants and leaseholders. Complaints have highlighted that resident dissatisfaction is often driven less by the service outcome itself and more by poor communication, delays, unclear decision-making, incomplete repairs and a lack of ownership when issues span multiple teams. By analysing complaint themes alongside Tenant Perception Survey results, Landlord Measures and Housing Ombudsman learning, we have been able to identify priority areas for improvement and target action accordingly. During the year, complaint learning has informed improvements to repairs communication, case ownership, resident updates and escalation processes, while also supporting the wider Housing Improvement Programme following the Council's C2 Consumer Standards judgement. As we move into 2026/27, our focus will be on strengthening first-contact resolution, improving the quality and consistency of Stage 1 responses, embedding accountability across services and ensuring residents receive clear explanations and timely updates. Through this approach, complaints will continue to

provide valuable assurance that improvement activity is focused on delivering better resident experiences rather than simply achieving compliance.

Repairs and maintenance- specific example

Communications and Case ownership- specific example

Communal area and Estate- Specific example

Resident experience – specific example

Summary data 2025/2026

During the financial year 01 April 2025 to 31 March 2026, **685** contacts were raised about our Housing Landlord services. This figure includes comments, compliments and complaints raised by residents, customers as well as escalated contact from Members of Parliament on behalf of residents.

During this period, **658** complaints were investigated and closed.

This report provides a summary of all complaints processed during this financial year raised about MKCC's role as a Social Housing Landlord.

The Housing Ombudsman and Tenant Satisfaction Measures continue to highlight complaints handling as one of the most challenging areas for social landlords nationally. While many landlords perform strongly against operational measures such as safety compliance, repairs and asset management, resident satisfaction with complaints handling remains consistently lower than other service areas. This reflects a growing expectation from residents for clear communication, timely updates, transparent decision-making and demonstrable learning from complaints. For landlords of a similar size to Milton Keynes City Council, managing around 11,000 homes, complaint volumes are typically high as greater visibility and accessibility of complaints processes encourages residents to raise concerns when services do not meet expectations.

Against the national Tenant Satisfaction Measure benchmarks, Milton Keynes City Council's satisfaction score for complaints handling of 23% sits below both the Local Authority median of 38% and the upper quartile performance of 45%. However, our result compares more favourably against Large Low-Cost Home Ownership providers, where the median score is 22% and the upper quartile is 31%, achieving a score of 19%. This reflects the wider national picture, where complaints handling remains the lowest performing perception measure across the social housing sector.

From a management perspective, MKCC records lower than average Stage 1 complaint volumes at 40.3 complaints per 1,000 homes compared with the Local Authority median of 55.9, suggesting complaint demand is not unusually high relative to peers. Similarly, Stage 2 complaints at 10.2 per 1,000 homes perform better than the Local Authority median of 11.55. However, response timeliness remains a key area for improvement. While Stage 2 response performance at 92% is close to the sector median of 94%, Stage 1 performance at 78% falls below both the median (94%) and upper quartile performance (99%). The contrast between comparatively low complaint volumes and low resident satisfaction indicates that the primary challenge is not the number of complaints received, but the quality of the customer experience throughout the complaints journey.

Housing Ombudsman insight consistently shows that residents are more likely to remain dissatisfied where communication is poor, expectations are unclear, ownership is fragmented, or actions are not completed as promised. This aligns closely with Milton Keynes' own complaint themes, which continue to be dominated by communication, repair quality, delay, follow-through and dissatisfaction with decisions. As part of the Housing Improvement Programme, our focus in 2026/27 will be on improving first-time resolution, strengthening complaint response quality, increasing timeliness and ensuring residents experience clear ownership and accountability throughout the resolution process. This will support our wider ambition of closing the gap between operational performance and resident experience, moving beyond compliance to deliver services that residents feel confident in and trust.

Complaint numbers

- **685** contacts were raised with MKCC in 2025/26 compared to **774** in 2024/25
- **27** contacts were closed in triage (or managed through another process)
- **655** complaints were investigated and closed during the year
 - **655** were investigated under our **Housing** complaint process
- **506** complaints were investigated at Stage 1
- **149** complaints were investigated at Stage 2
 - The escalation rate from Stage 1 to Stage 2 is **29%**

Complaint decisions

There were **506** Stage 1 complaints closed in this financial year – the table shows the summary of decision outcomes. Complaint decisions are shown as upheld [which consolidates upheld and partially upheld decisions] or not upheld.

Analysis of upheld housing complaints shows that delays in repairs and maintenance remain the predominant cause of complaint escalation, as you would expect as proportionately more complaints are made about repairs, followed by communication failures and contractor performance issues. Together, these themes account for the majority of upheld outcomes and highlight opportunities to strengthen resident communication, contractor oversight and repair delivery processes.

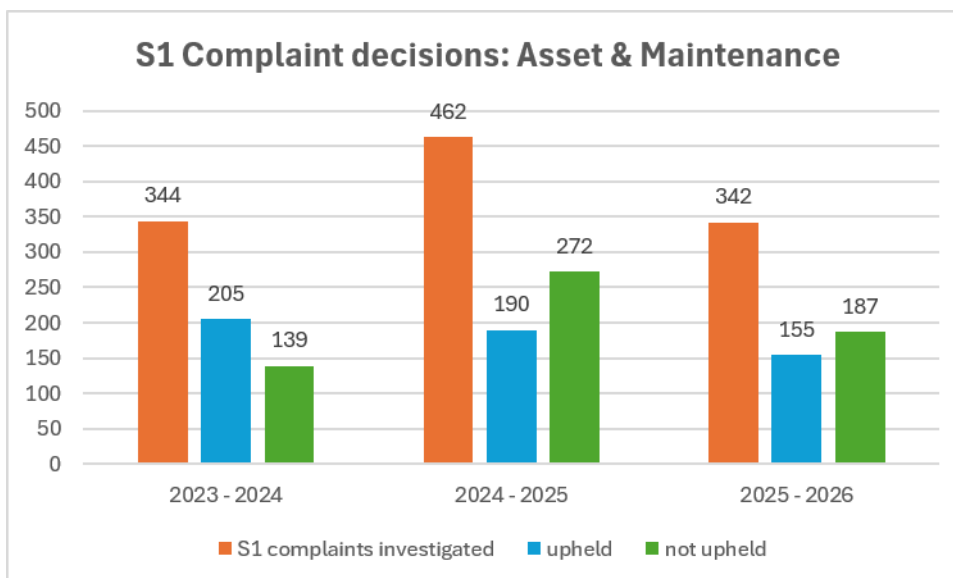
Poor communication was a significant factor in a number of upheld complaints during the year. Residents reported not receiving updates on the progress of repairs, complaints or service requests, often resulting in repeated contact with the Council to seek information. In some cases, appointments were changed or delayed without adequate notification, while in others responses to emails and telephone enquiries were not provided within expected timescales. Although the underlying service issue was not always the primary cause of dissatisfaction, the lack of clear and timely communication frequently exacerbated residents' concerns and contributed to complaints being upheld

Some complaints were upheld where established procedures, policies or complaint handling requirements had not been followed. These cases included failures to progress matters through the correct process, delays in completing required actions, and instances where necessary documentation or information was not provided in a timely manner. While such issues represented a smaller proportion of upheld complaints, they highlighted the importance of maintaining compliance with statutory, regulatory and organisational requirements. Learning from these cases has informed service improvements aimed at strengthening oversight, consistency and adherence to agreed procedures.

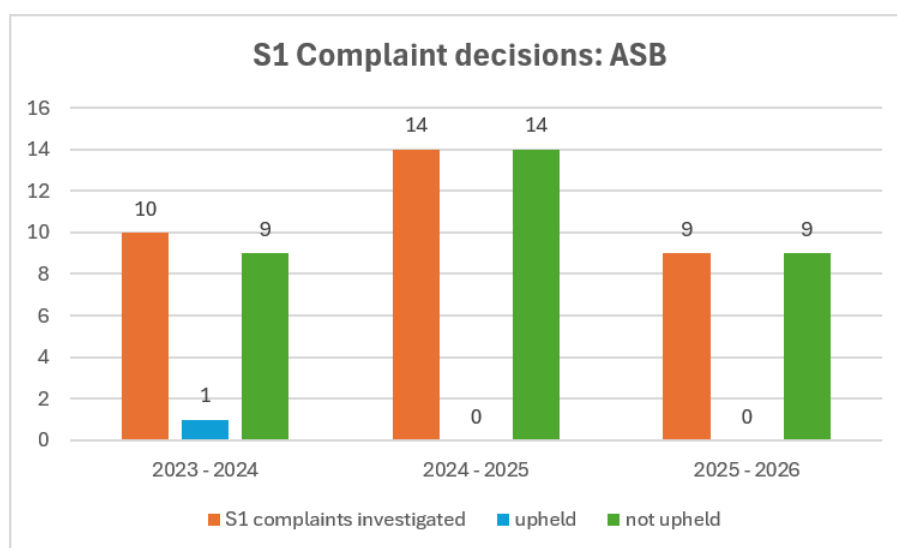
Housing

Stage 1 total	506
Complaint upheld	225
Complaint not upheld	281

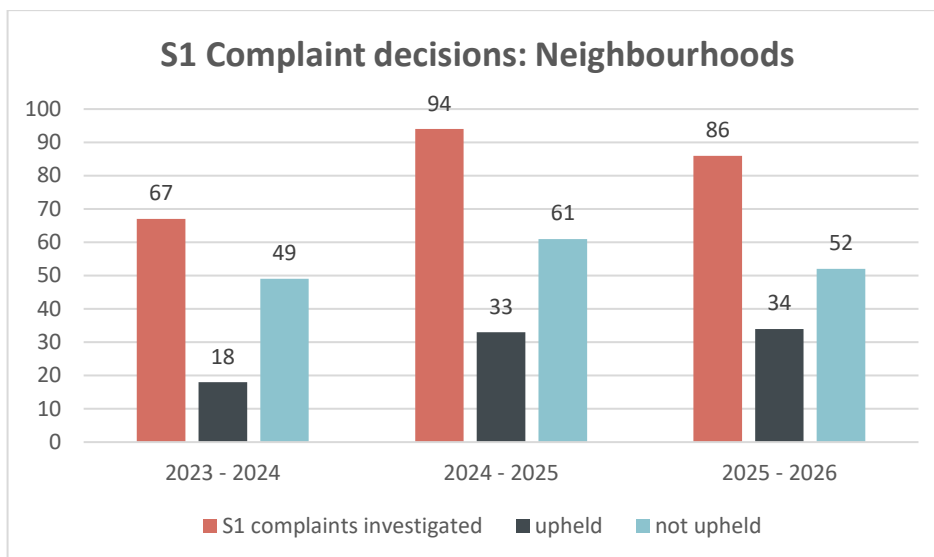
By service (main HRA services)



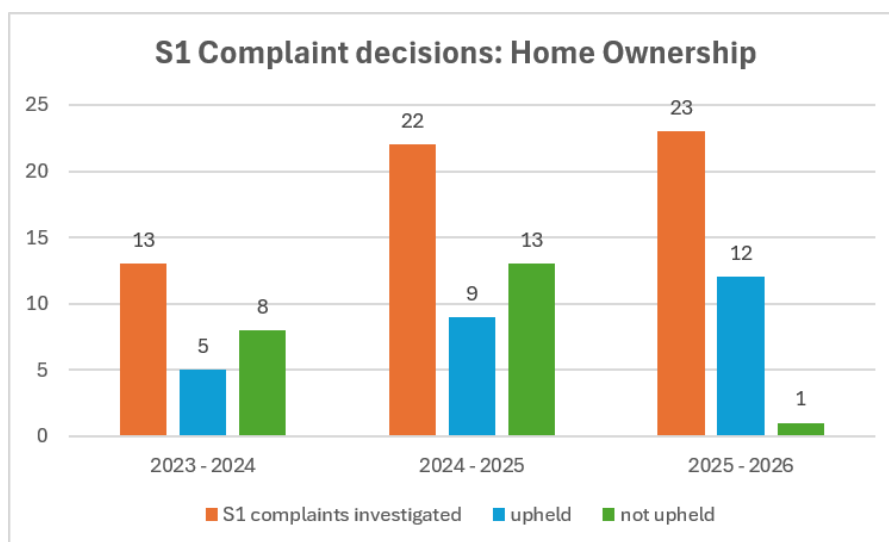
Asset & Maintenance	2023 - 2024	2024 - 2025	2025 - 2026
S1 complaints investigated	344	462	342
upheld	205	190	155
not upheld	139	272	187



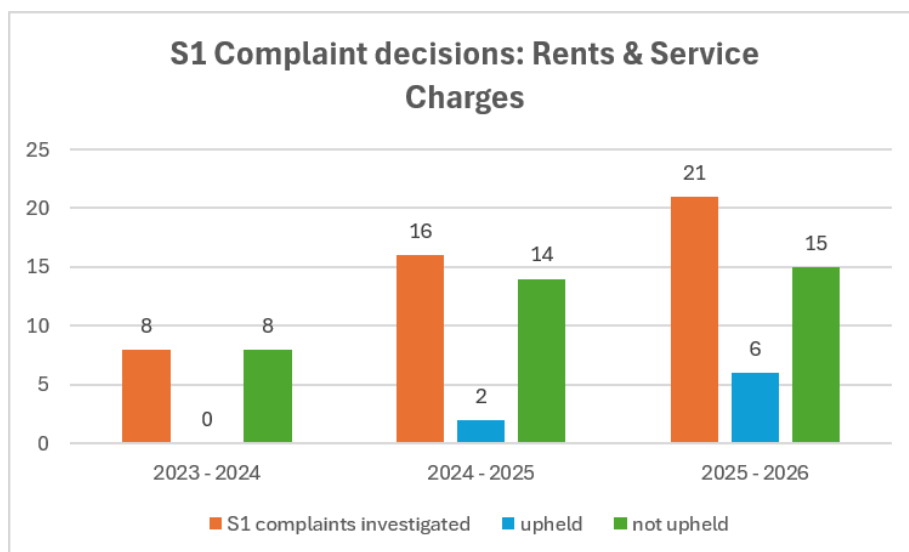
ASB	2023 - 2024	2024 - 2025	2025 - 2026
S1 complaints investigated	10	14	9
upheld	1	0	0
not upheld	9	14	9



Neighbourhoods	2023 - 2024	2024 - 2025	2025 - 2026
S1 complaints investigated	67	94	86
upheld	18	33	34
not upheld	49	61	52



Home Ownership <i>[including shared ownership & leasehold]</i>	2023 - 2024	2024 - 2025	2025 - 2026
S1 complaints investigated	13	22	23
upheld	5	9	12
not upheld	8	13	1



Rent & Service Charges	2023 - 2024	2024 - 2025	2025 - 2026
S1 complaints investigated	8	16	21
upheld	0	2	6
not upheld	8	14	15

Escalation to Stage 2

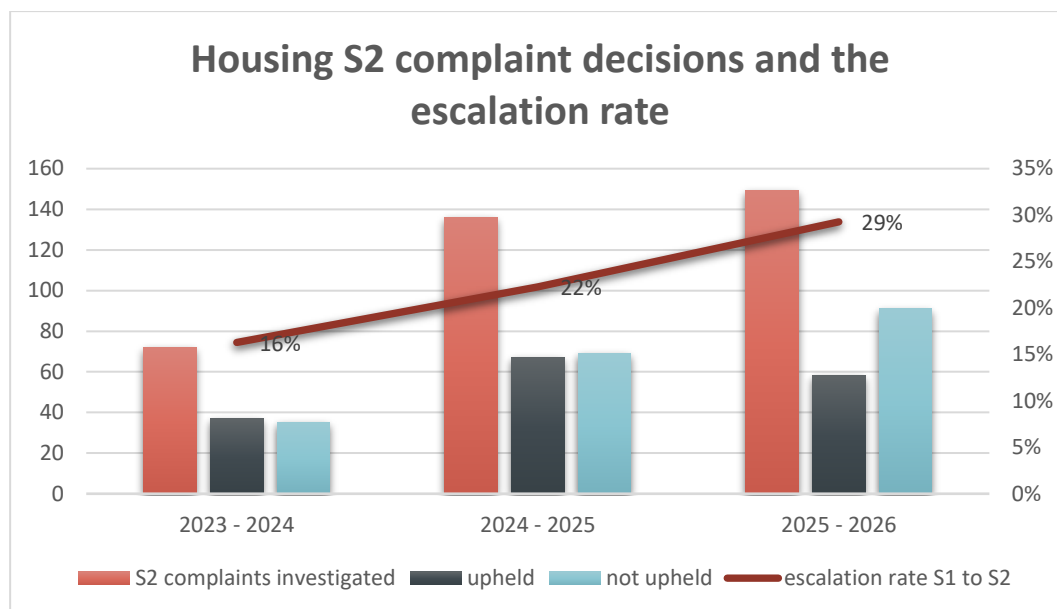
There were **149** Stage 2 complaints closed in this financial year – the table shows the summary of decision outcomes.

Stage 2 total	149
Complaint upheld	53
Complaint not upheld	91
Escalation rate from S1 to S2	29%

TREND Our escalation rate – complaints raised at Stage 2 as a proportion of Stage 1 complaints – continues to **rise**. Please see below for our decision outcomes for the past three years. We have seen a **25% increase** in Housing Landlord complaints that are not upheld compared to 2023/24, which is likely contributing to a higher rate of escalation.

Housing	2023 - 2024	2024 - 2025	2025 - 2026
S1 complaints investigated	442	611	506
upheld	229	236	225
not upheld	213	375	281

Housing			
	2023 - 2024	2024 - 2025	2025 - 2026
S2 complaints investigated	72	136	149
upheld	37	67	58
not upheld	35	69	91
escalation rate S1 to S2	16%	22%	29%

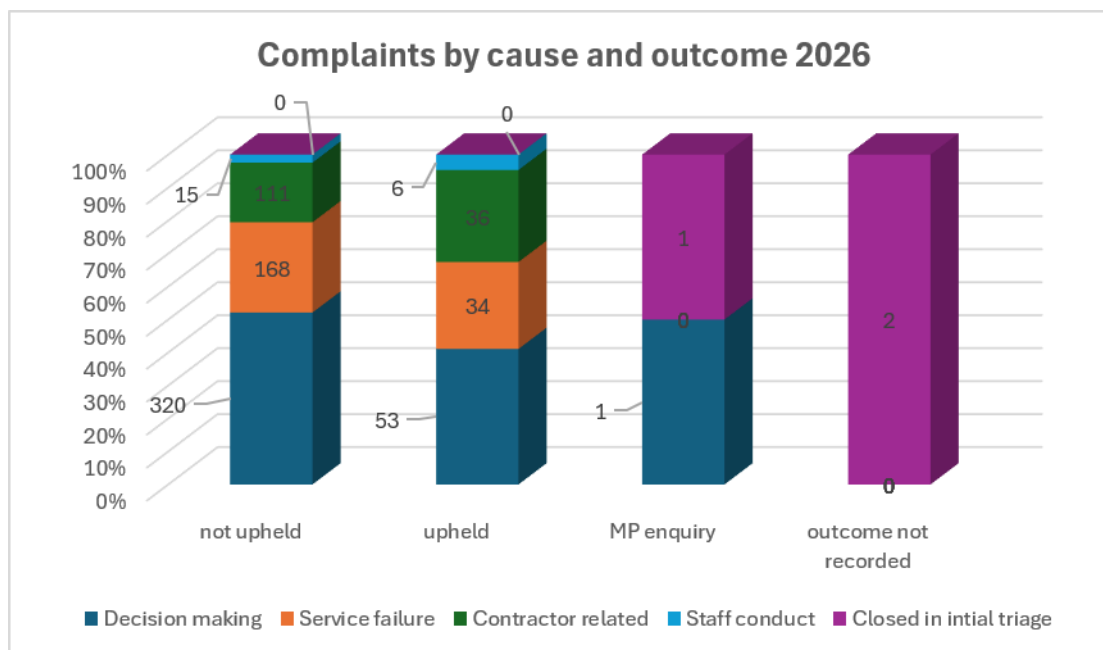


Decision rationale

Each fully or partially upheld or not upheld complaint should be given at least one reason for that decision, so one complaint / decision can have more than one reason.

The table below shows the reasons for the categorized complaints from 2025/26.

	not upheld	upheld	MP enquiry	outcome not recorded
Decision making	320	53	1	0
Service failure	168	34	0	0
Contractor related	111	36	0	0
Staff conduct	15	6	0	0
Closed in initial triage	0	0	1	2



Complex complaints

The Council recognises that complaints involving multiple services are more complex and may require longer to resolve. A defined categorisation is being embedded to support these cases, allowing for an extension of up to 10 working days where appropriate.

Complaints investigated by Directorate for the Housing Landlord

Complaint volumes this year have varied across services in line with delivery activity and external drivers. Complaint numbers within Asset & Maintenance have reduced following the peak in 2024/25, which was associated with increased reporting linked to the introduction of Awaab's Law.

Regeneration has seen a significant increase in complaints, reflecting the scale of estate improvement works being delivered through the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund across Milton Keynes.

In contrast, complaints within Neighbourhoods relating to tenancy management, including Sheltered Housing, have continued to decline year on year.

Alignment with this year's Housing Ombudsman determinations is limited due to an approximate 18-month investigation lag. However, complaint volumes have increased following the introduction of Awaab's Law, reflecting additional reporting and investigation requirements.

Complaints investigated	2023 - 2024	2024 - 2025	2025 - 2026	YoY change %
ASB	10	16	14	-13%
Asset & Maintenance	395	566	443	-22%
Home Ownership	17	28	34	21%
Neighbourhoods	82	115	101	-12%
Regeneration	0	4	20	400%
Income	10	18	26	44%

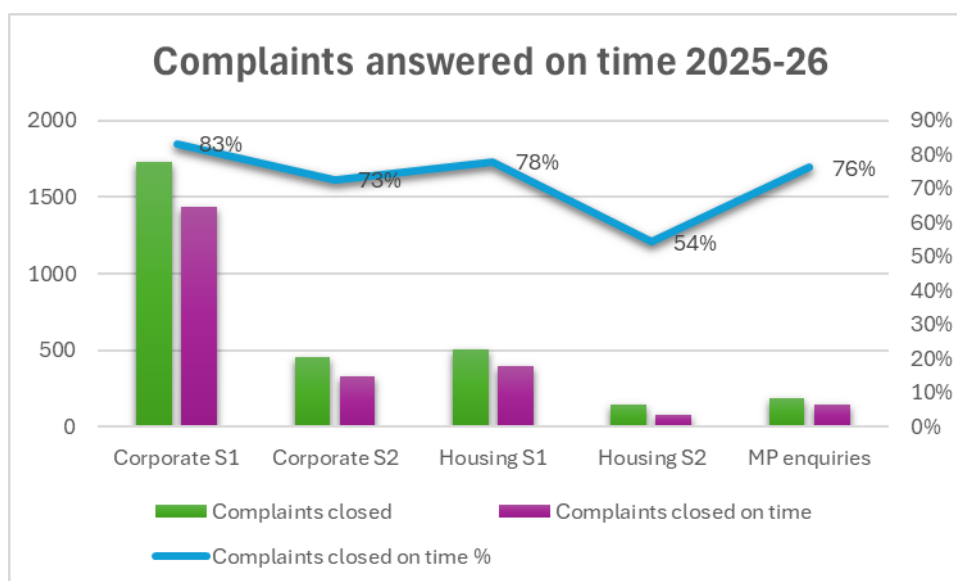
Complaint performance

685 complaints were closed during this financial year. To compare, Housing complaint performance is measured as:

- For Stage 1 complaints, the SLA target is 5 working days for acknowledgement and 10 working days for completion [total of 15 working days to complete]
- For Stage 2 complaints, the SLA target is 5 working days for acknowledgement and 20 working days for completion

Housing

- **397 S1** complaints were closed within 10 working days
 - Average complaint response time was **13** days
- **81 S2** complaints were closed within 20 working days
 - Average complaint response time was **22.6** days



Response times continue to improve, even as complaints become more complex. This underlines the value of getting issues right first time and responding quickly and transparently to maintain trust.

Complaint volumes reduced in the highest-volume service areas (Asset & Maintenance, Neighbourhoods and ASB).

Growing complaint demand in Home Ownership, Income and Regeneration may indicate emerging service pressures that require closer monitoring.

Complaint timeliness remains strong, particularly at Stage 2 where 90% of LCRA complaints were completed within target.

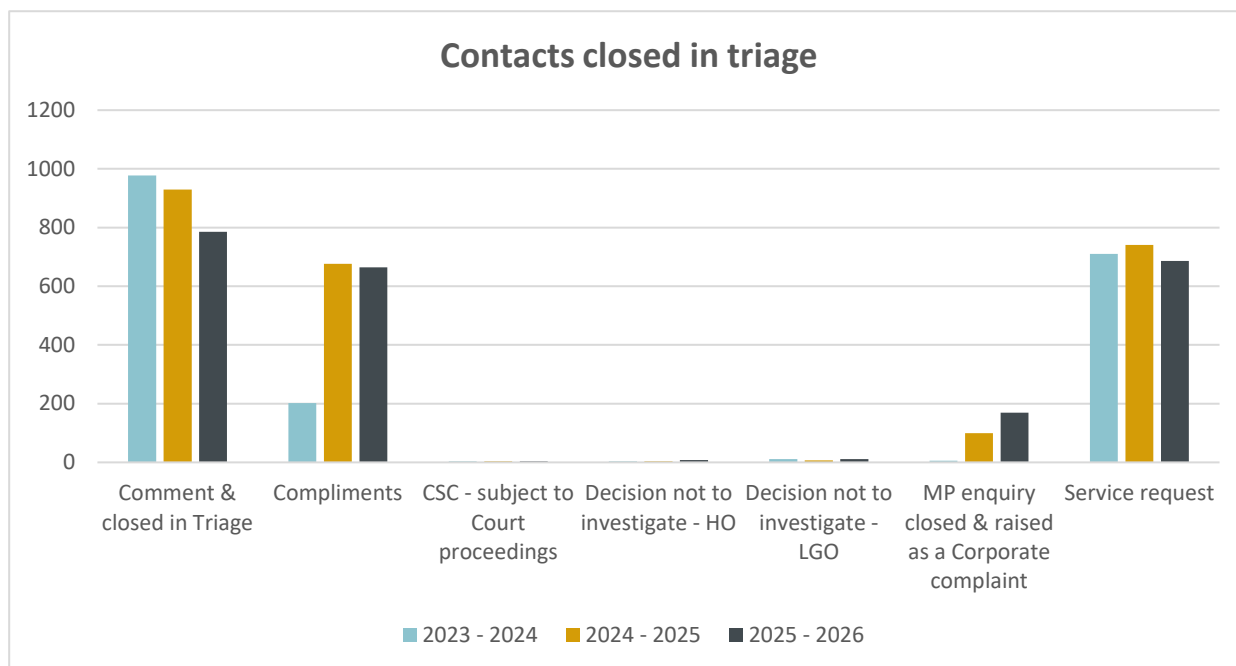
Asset and Maintenance accounts for almost 70% of all Housing complaints, suggesting repairs, maintenance and contractor performance continue to be the most significant source of customer dissatisfaction.

Complaint records closed in Triage

Closing records in Triage

Triage ensures contacts are directed to the most appropriate process. Duplicate complaints, service requests and statutory matters are closed at this stage, with residents informed of the outcome and next steps. Comments and compliments are recorded and closed in triage.

	2023 - 2024	2024 - 2025	2025 - 2026
Comment & closed in Triage	978	930	786
Compliments	202	676	665
CSC - subject to Court proceedings	3	4	3
Decision not to investigate - HO	3	4	8
Decision not to investigate - LGO	11	7	11
MP enquiry closed & raised as a Corporate complaint	6	99	169
Service request	710	741	686



Tenant Satisfaction Measures – Complaints

We report complaints performance data to the Regulator of Social Housing annually via two performance indicators, based on specific definitions of properties residents are living in;

Low Cost Rental Accommodation (LCRA). This includes for example general needs, supported housing, intermediate rent and temporary social housing.

Low Cost Home Ownership (LCHO). This includes, for example, shared ownership properties (which have not been fully stair-cased).

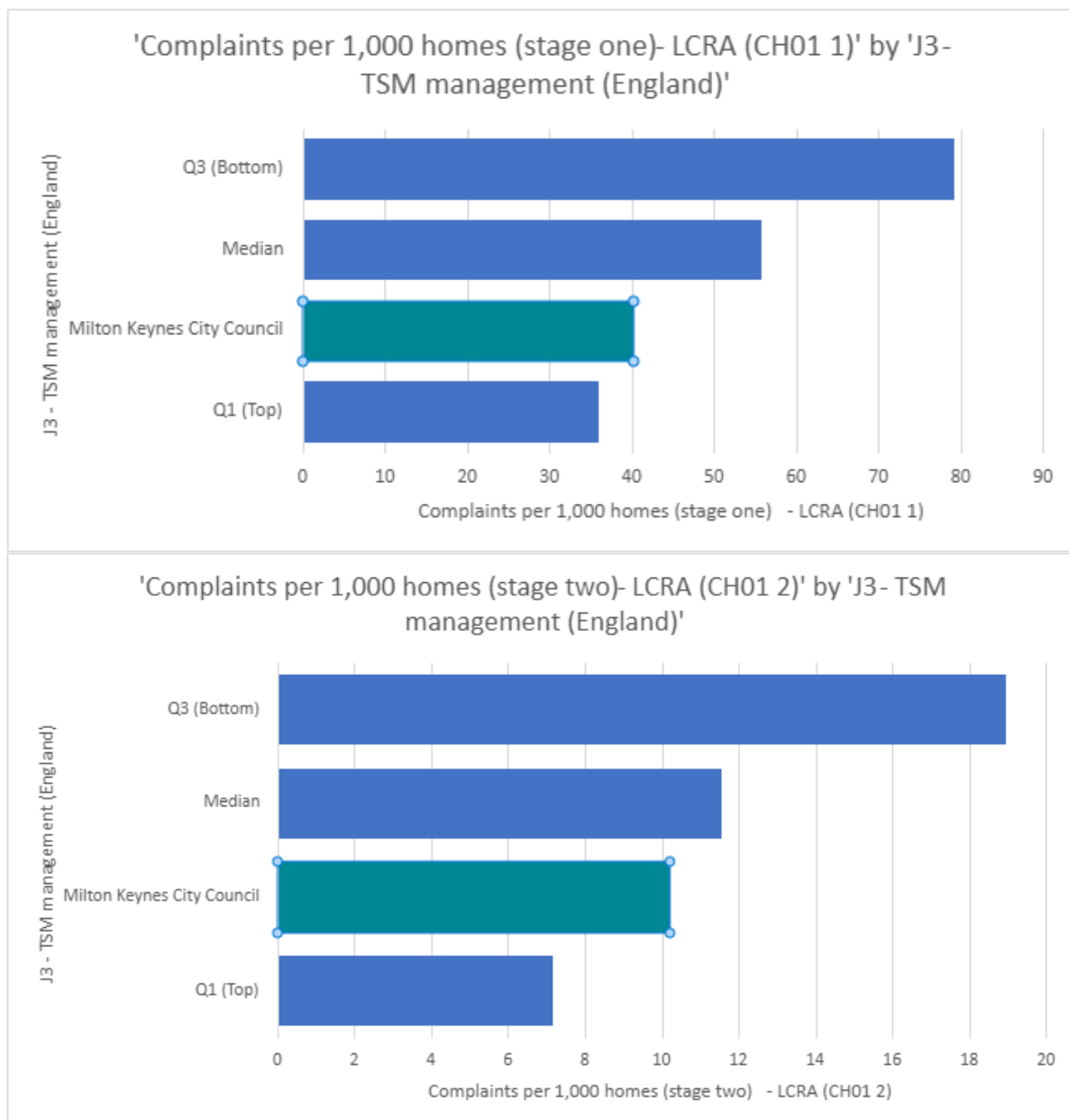
CH01: The total number of Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints received by the landlord, calculated relative to the size of the housing provider (expressed as the number of complaints per 1,000 homes).

CH02: The proportion of complaints responded to within the Complaint Handling Code timescales, tracked as a percentage

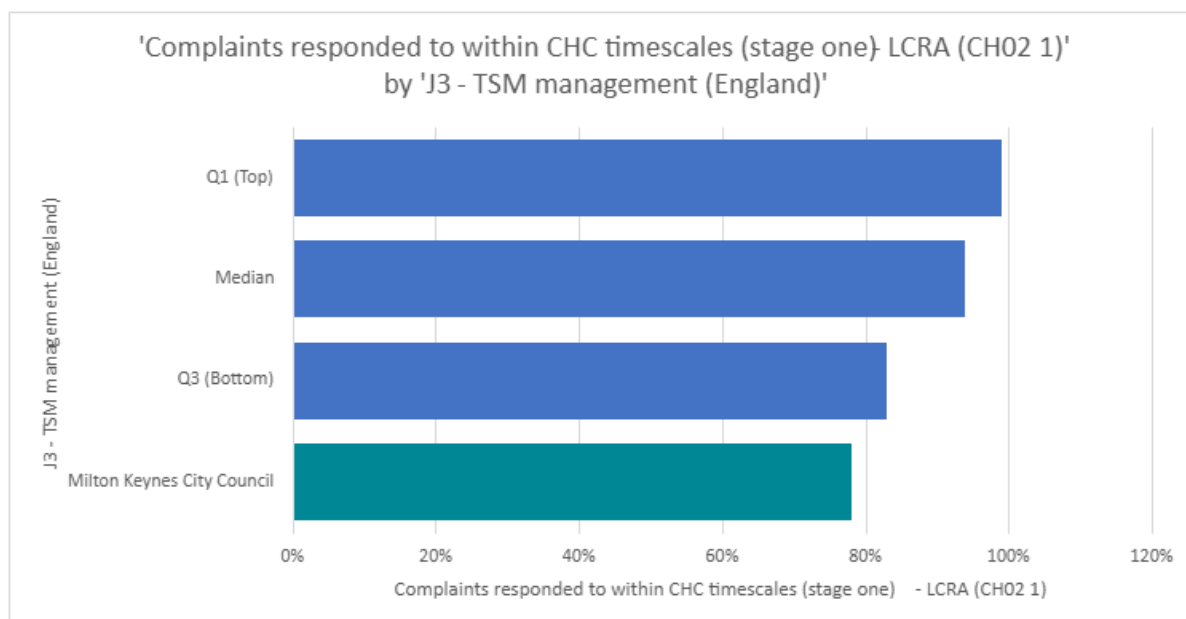
No. S1 complaints Low Cost Rental Accomodation (LCRA)	496
No. Stage1 complaints Low Cost Rental Accomodation (LCRA) completed on time	397
No.S1 Complaints Low Cost Home Ownership (LCHO)	5
No.S1 Complaints Low Cost Home Ownership (LCHO) completed on time	3
CH01 LCRA	45 complaints per 1000 tenants
CH01 LCHO	3.4 complaints per 100 tenants
CH02 LCRA	80% Stage 1 complaints completed on time
CH02 LCHO	60% Stage 1 complaints completed on time

No. S2 complaints Low Cost Rental Accomodation (LCRA)	139
No.S2 complaints Low Cost Rental Accomodation (LCRA) on time	126
No.S2 Complaints Low Cost Home Ownership (LCHO)	3
No.S2 Complaints Low Cost Home Ownership (LCHO) on time	3
CH01 LCRA	12.6 complaints per 1000 tenants
CH01 LCHO	2 complaints per 1000 tenants
CH02 LCRA	90% Stage 2 complaints completed on time
CH02 LCHO	100% Stage 2 complaints completed on time

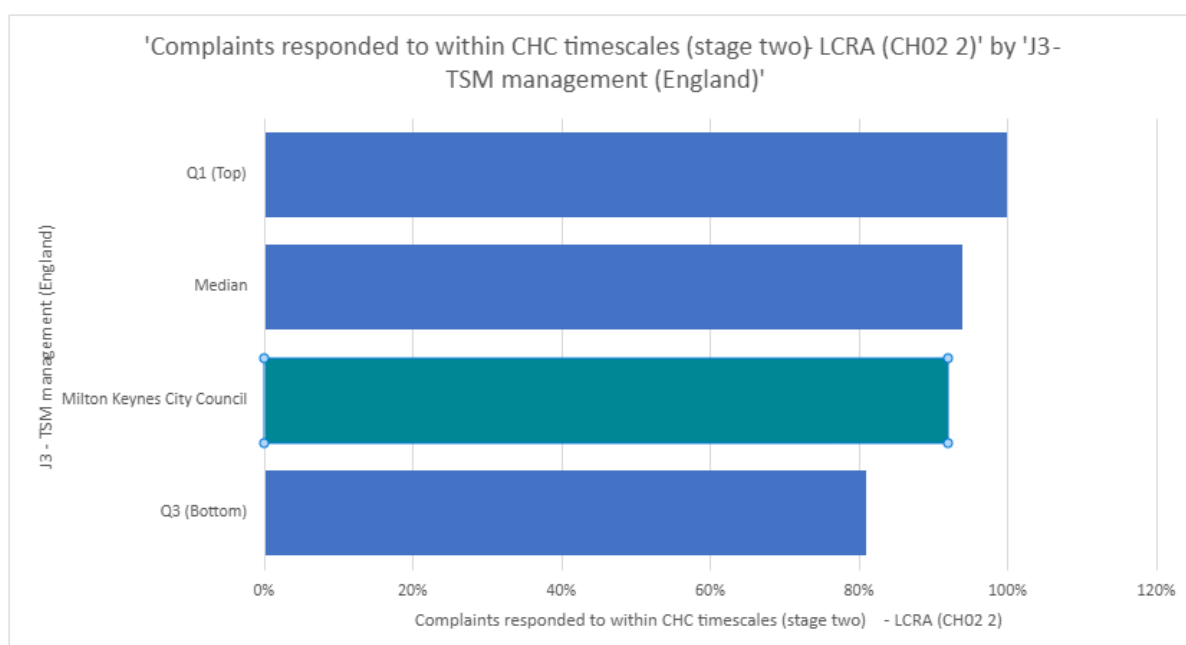
At 40.3 Stage 1 complaints per 1,000 homes, Milton Keynes City Council performed significantly better than the sector median of 55.9 and was close to the top quartile benchmark of 36.1. This indicates that complaint volumes remain comparatively low when benchmarked against other landlords, suggesting that, despite service pressures, the overall level of resident dissatisfaction is lower than many comparable organisations.



We reported 10.2 Stage 2 complaints per 1,000 homes, placing performance above the sector average and closer to the top quartile than the median. This indicates that although residents continue to raise concerns, comparatively fewer complaints require escalation to Stage 2, suggesting that Housing services are generally effective at resolving complaints at the first stage of the process. Continued focus on addressing the primary drivers of dissatisfaction, particularly repairs and maintenance issues, should help further reduce escalations and strengthen customer experience.

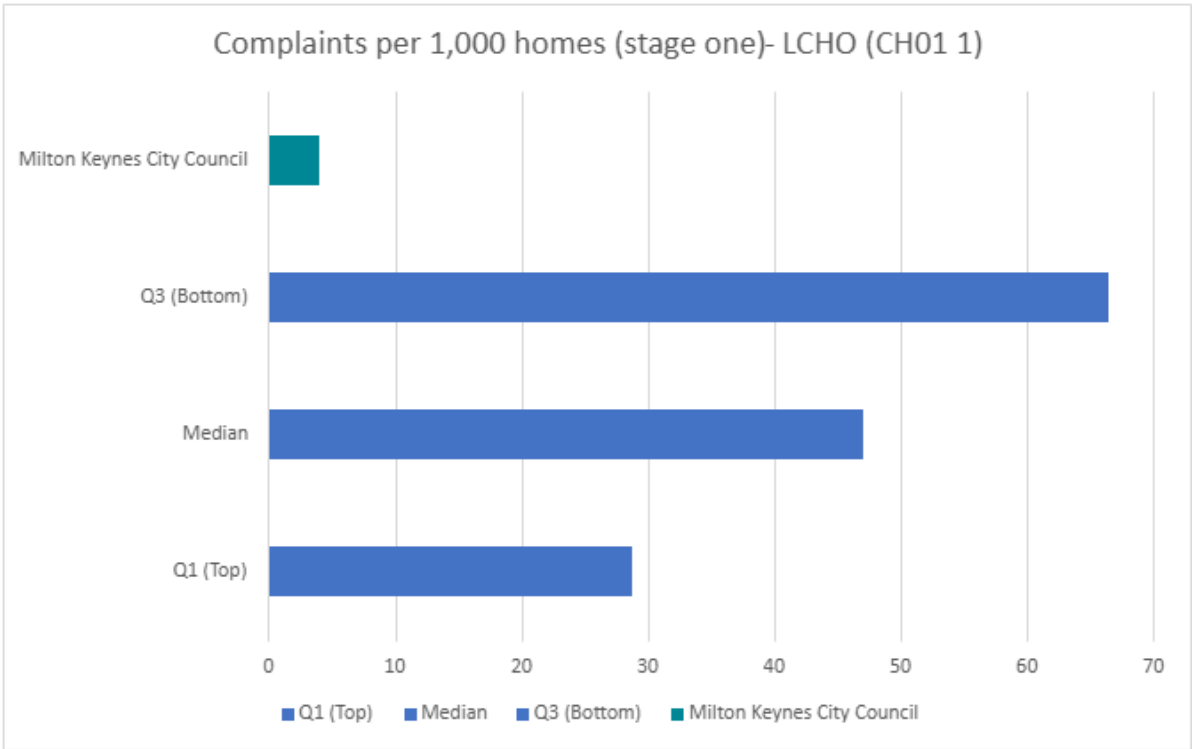


Performance against Complaint Handling Code timescales for Stage 1 complaints was 78%, below the sector median of 94%. This indicates that, although Housing services are generally successful in resolving complaints, challenges remain in responding within target timescales. Delays are likely to have been influenced by the high volume of complaints received, particularly within Asset and Maintenance services. Improving the timeliness of responses will be a priority during 2026/27 to ensure residents receive prompt resolutions and to bring performance closer to sector benchmarks.

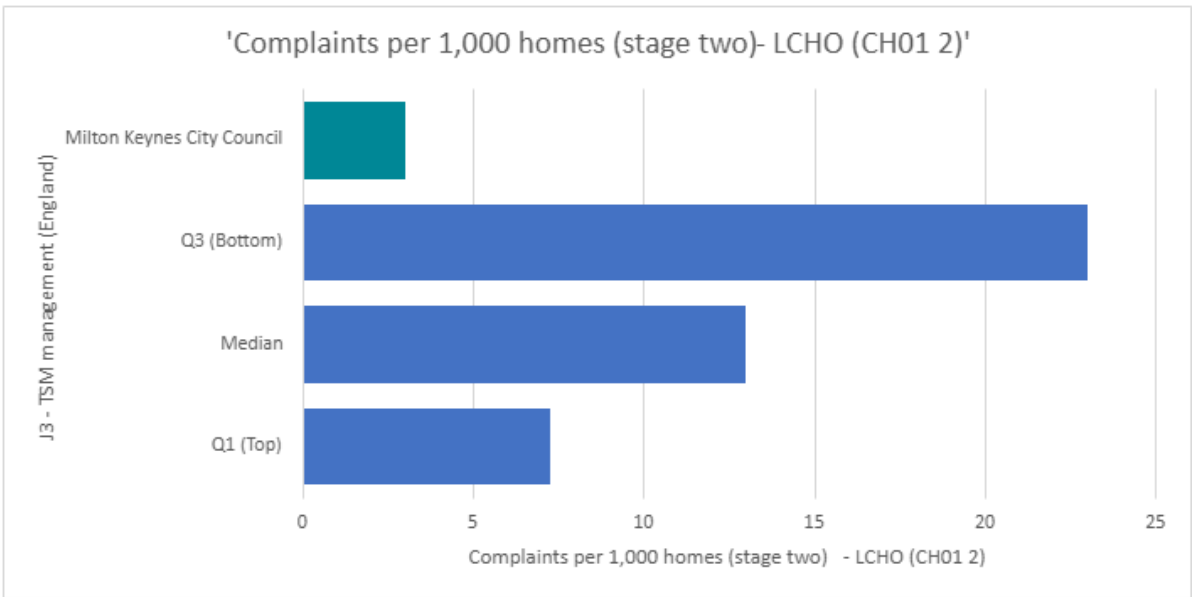


We responded to **92%** of Stage 2 complaints within the Complaint Handling Code timescales, performing in line with the sector average of **92%** and above the bottom quartile benchmark of 81%. While performance was slightly below the sector median of 94% and the top quartile benchmark of 100%, the results demonstrate a strong level of compliance with complaint handling requirements once complaints have escalated to Stage 2. This suggests that Housing services have effective processes in place for managing

complex complaints and providing timely reviews, although there remains an opportunity to further improve performance and move closer to top quartile levels through continued focus on complaint monitoring and resource management.

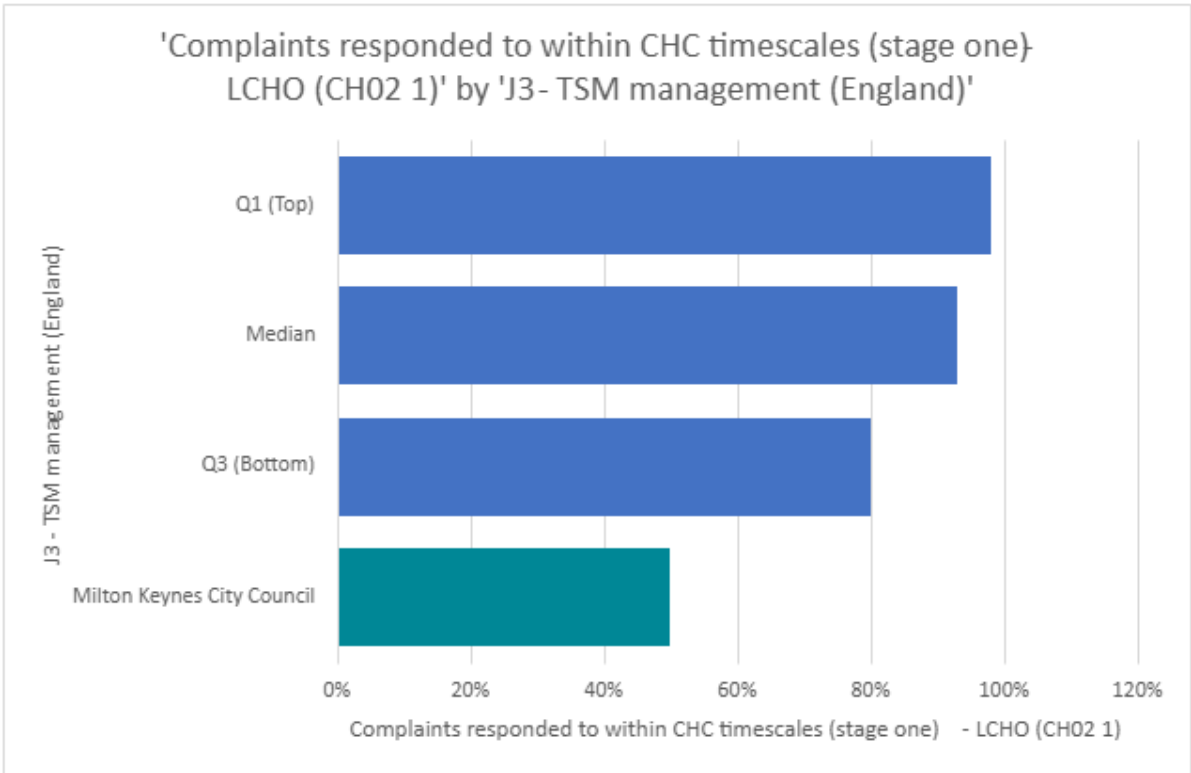


Milton Keynes City Council recorded just 4 Stage 1 complaints per 1,000 Low Cost Home Ownership homes, significantly outperforming the sector median of 47 and the top quartile benchmark of 28.75. This exceptionally low complaint rate suggests that LCHO residents are generally satisfied with the service they receive and that concerns are being resolved effectively before escalating into formal complaints.

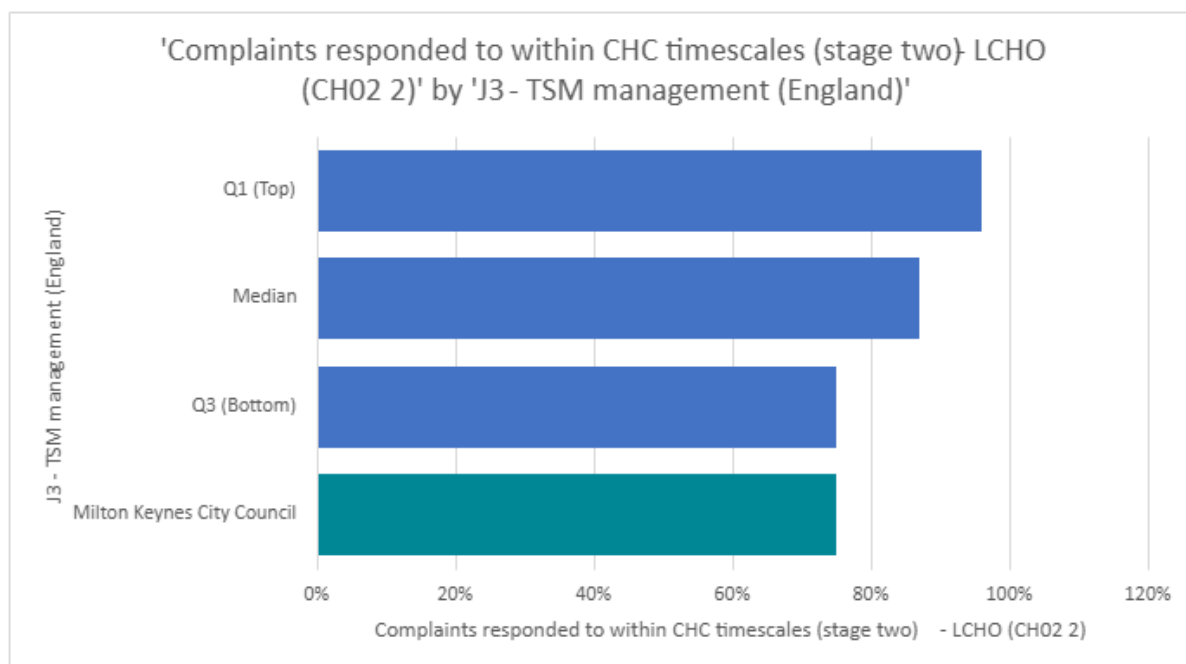


Milton Keynes City Council recorded 3 Stage 2 complaints per 1,000 Low Cost Home Ownership homes, significantly outperforming the sector median of 13 and the top quartile benchmark of 7.25. This low rate of escalated complaints indicates that concerns raised by

LCHO residents are generally resolved effectively at an early stage, reflecting strong overall complaint handling performance.



Performance for responding to Stage 2 complaints within Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code timescales was 75%, placing Milton Keynes City Council at the lower quartile benchmark level. Comparator data shows that upper quartile performance was 96%, with a median of 87% and a lower quartile of 75%. This means the Council's performance was 12 percentage points below the median and 21 percentage points below upper quartile performance. While the Council achieved the minimum level seen amongst comparator organisations, the results indicate an opportunity to improve the timeliness of Stage 2 complaint responses and move performance closer to sector median and upper quartile standards.



Performance for responding to Stage 2 complaints within Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code timescales was below the sector benchmark. The upper quartile performance among comparator landlords was 96%, with a median of 87% and a lower quartile of 75%. Milton Keynes City Council achieved 75%, placing it at the lower quartile level and 12 percentage points below the median. Overall performance across the benchmarking group was 83%. This indicates that while the Council met the performance achieved by the lowest quartile of peers, there remains significant scope to improve the timeliness of Stage 2 complaint responses and move closer to median and upper quartile performance levels.

J3 - TSM management (England)	Housing Stock figure	Complaints per 1,000 homes (stage one) - LCRA (CH01 1)	Complaints per 1,000 homes (stage two) - LCRA (CH01 2)	Complaints responded to within CHC timescales (stage one) - LCRA (CH02 1)	Complaints responded to within CHC timescales (stage two) - LCRA (CH02 2)
2024/2025					
Units		Number	Number	%	%
Q3		71.9	13.3	60.2	60
Median		55.4	10.4	81.8	82.1
Q1		44.9	7.2	90.3	98.6

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council	9500	28.5	8.8	98%	97%
Crawley BC	8000	31.3	7.3	73%	59%
Derby Homes	12100	46.1	12.2	99%	100%
Fairhive	9500	78.7	10.1	79%	67%
Golding Homes	8500	55.9	10.4	100%	99%
Milton Keynes Council	11000	47.5	10.2	53.2	61.6
MHS Homes	10000	72.5	15.7	77%	79%
Northamptonshire Partnership Homes	11400	65	13.3	73.6	57.2
Oxford City Council	7800	44.7	10.3	56%	27%
Reading Borough Council	7000	79.5	9.7	62%	36%
Norwich City Council	14500	65.3	12.4	64	73.6
Stevenage BC	8600	88.7	10.9	94.6	81.1
Sutton Housing Partnership	6000	20	3.8	93.2	100
Westminster City Council	11500	66.8	30	83	71.8

J3 - TSM management (England)	Housing Stock figure	Complaints per 1,000 homes (stage one) - LCHO (CH01 1)	Complaints per 1,000 homes (stage two) - LCHO (CH01 2)	Complaints responded to within CHC timescales (stage one) - LCHO (CH02 1)	Complaints responded to within CHC timescales (stage two) - LCHO (CH02 2)
2024/2025					
Units		Number	Number	%	%
Q3		38.25	4.75	79.5	36.5
Median		27.5	3.5	81	41
Q1		16.75	2.25	82.5	45.5
Milton Keynes Council	11000	6	1	78	50
MHS Homes	10000	124	40	70%	75%

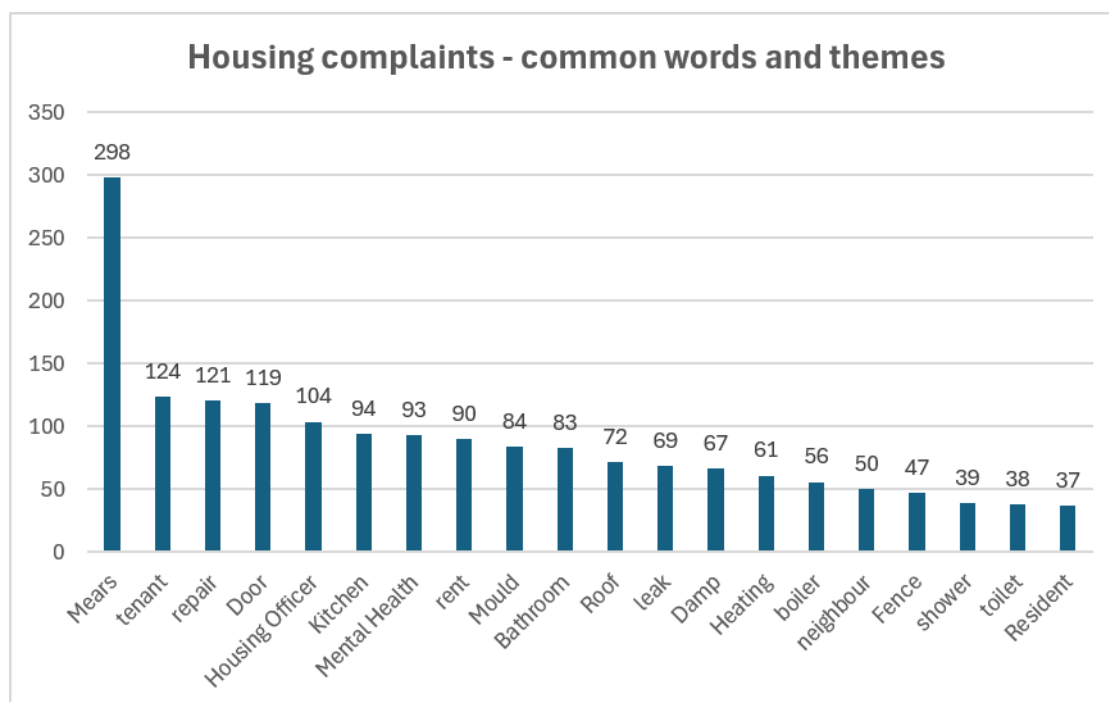
Curo Group	13000	38	12	100%	90
Cross Keys Homes	14000	15	5	100%	100
LB of Hackney	21500	12	3	73%	86%
Accent Group	22000	53	20	88%	62%

In our customers' words

Most complaints are resolved at the first stage. However, around 1 in 4 complaints (27%) still need to be looked at again at the next stage.

We are also seeing more complaints written using AI tools. While this can help people explain their concerns, it can sometimes include unclear or incorrect information. Our teams are trained to carefully review each complaint, focus on the key issues raised, and check the facts before responding. They take time to explain decisions clearly, correct any misunderstandings, and make sure responses are accurate, fair and easy to understand.

Looking at the language and words that residents use within their complaints:

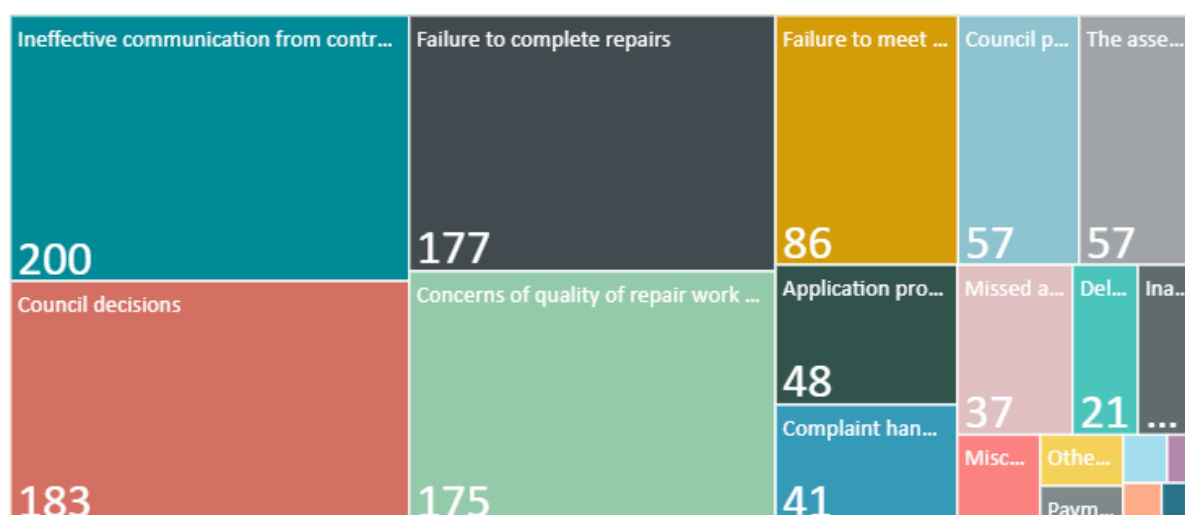


Complaint themes

Analysis of our complaint records, upheld decision rationale and service trends indicate that the most prominent complaint themes in 2025/26 were:

- service reliability,
- communication and
- the management of increasingly complex customer circumstances.

The themes below are drawn from this year's housing complaints, including outcomes, escalations and service trends. They help us identify recurring issues, compare performance year on year and drive service improvements.



Top 5 Housing complaint themes

1. Poor communication, including lack of clarity, updates or explanations
2. Dissatisfaction with Council decisions
3. Failure to complete repairs
4. Quality concerns about completed repairs
5. Failure to take action or progress matters in time

Complaint trends are informing targeted service improvements to deliver quicker resolutions, clearer communication and better outcomes for residents.

- Strengthen accountability and oversight across housing services to ensure residents receive timely responses, clear information and services that are delivered consistently, using complaint learning to drive continuous improvement and comply with the Regulator of Social Housing's consumer standards.

- Embed a resident-focused approach to service delivery by using complaint trends, feedback and performance information to identify areas for improvement, improve transparency in decision-making, and ensure residents are kept informed and treated fairly throughout their interactions with the Council.

Customer data

Housing Complaints Profile

The Council continues to improve the completeness of tenant demographic information to strengthen equality monitoring and customer insight. Data quality is highest for age, with records available for 91.8% of tenants, and ethnicity data is available for 67.7% of tenants. However, information on disability and vulnerability is currently only recorded for 13.5% of tenants, which limits the conclusions that can be drawn from analysis of these characteristics. Ongoing work to enhance resident records will improve the robustness of future reporting.

During the reporting period, Housing Services managed **11,951 tenancies**, of which **368 generated a formal complaint**, giving an overall complaint rate of **3.1%**. Analysis of tenancy and customer characteristics indicates that complaints are broadly representative of the wider tenant population, with no significant over-representation of vulnerable or disabled tenants.

The complaint rate among tenants recorded as disabled was **2.9%**, compared with **3.1%** for tenants without a recorded disability. Similarly, tenants identified as vulnerable had a complaint rate of **2.9%**, broadly consistent with the overall housing population. This suggests that vulnerability or disability status alone is not a significant predictor of complaint activity.

Analysis by property type shows that most complaints were received from tenants living in **houses**, reflecting both the size of this group and its representation within the housing stock. Houses account for just over half of all tenancies and just over half of all complaint tenancies. Complaint rates across most property types remain relatively consistent, although flats show a slightly higher rate of complaint than the housing average.

Age analysis highlights that complaints are most commonly received from tenants aged **31 to 60 years**, who account for around two-thirds of all complaints. The highest complaint rates are seen in the **31 to 40** and **41 to 50** age groups, while complaint rates reduce significantly among older tenants aged over 70. This may reflect differing levels of contact

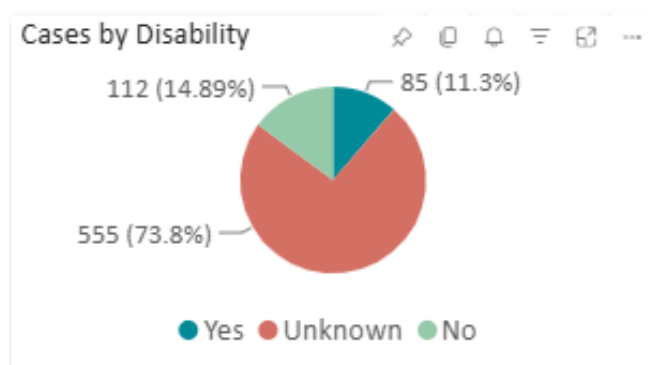
with the service, housing needs, or expectations regarding service delivery. [Complaints Customer Details](#)

Female tenants account for approximately **63% of complaint tenancies**, compared with 58% of the overall tenant population. Male tenants account for around **27% of complaints**. While this indicates a slightly higher propensity for female tenants to raise complaints, the overall profile remains broadly aligned with the demographic makeup of the housing stock.

Equality monitoring data demonstrates some limitations in the completeness of customer records. Around **10% of tenancies have missing demographic information** across several protected characteristic categories, and in some areas significantly larger proportions of customers have not provided information about sexuality, religion, ethnicity, or nationality. While the available data does not suggest any systemic disparity in complaint rates, improving data quality remains important to ensure that future analysis can more effectively identify any emerging trends or inequalities in customer experience.

Complaints by ethnic background: **16** people shared their details

Complaints by gender: **267** people shared their details



Putting things right

You said...

Residents told us that while core housing services are generally performing well, their experience is often affected by poor communication, unclear decisions, delays, inconsistent follow-through and concerns about the quality or completion of works. Complaints handling remains the lowest scoring area in our tenant perception survey, and more complaints are escalating to Stage 2 because residents do not always feel their concerns have been fully resolved at the first stage.

We did...

- Improved complaint handling performance, increasing the proportion of Stage 1 complaints responded to within target timescales to **78%**.
- Reviewed complaint themes alongside tenant perception survey results to better understand the issues that matter most to residents.
- Used complaint learning to identify recurring concerns around communication, decision-making, repair quality, delays and ownership of actions.
- Strengthened monitoring of complaint outcomes to improve consistency, accountability and the quality of Stage 1 responses.
- Focused service improvement activity on areas generating the highest levels of dissatisfaction, including property-related issues, communal areas and complex tenancy or ownership arrangements.
- Increased emphasis on providing clearer explanations, better progress updates and more transparent decision-making.
- Used resident feedback and complaint insight to target improvements where they will have the greatest impact on customer experience.

What we're doing next...

- Improve right-first-time resolution to reduce the need for complaint escalation.
- Ensure residents receive clearer explanations about decisions and the actions being taken.
- Strengthen ownership and accountability across services so agreed actions are completed on time.
- Continue improving communication at every stage of the customer journey.

- Move beyond compliance-focused improvements and adopt an **experience-led approach**, using resident feedback and complaint insight to close the gap between operational performance and resident experience.

Housing Ombudsman 2025 - 26 summary

Demand for the Housing Ombudsman continues to grow as expectations of social landlords increase and residents become more aware of their rights. This has led to an increase in enquiries and referrals to the Ombudsman, although there is often a significant lag between a complaint being raised and a determination being issued.

Ombudsman investigations can take many months to conclude, particularly where caseloads are high. In addition, urgent cases may be prioritised, meaning determinations are not always issued in chronological order. As a result, decisions published during 2025/26 largely relate to complaints raised in previous years.

All maladministration findings reported during 2025/26 relate to historical service delivery issues occurring between 2022 and 2024. These findings do not reflect the current operating environment, where substantial improvements have been made to complaint handling, governance and service performance.

Ombudsman case contacts can include:

- i) Evidence requests – providing information to support MKCC’s reply to a complaint
- ii) Information requests – providing specific details and responding to questions on a case
- iii) Premature enquiries – confirming where the customer’s complaint is in our corporate process

Ombudsman numbers (HO)

- **Over 15** new cases received during 2025 – 26
- **17** cases were determined by the Ombudsman with a total of **47** findings
 - **39** maladministration findings
- **£6,375** compensation paid to residents
- **All** compliance recommendations were completed

These case determinations resulted in a total of **39** maladministration findings against the Council as shown below:

- 0 severe maladministration
- x18 maladministration
- x20 service failure
- x1 recommendation [new]

All of these measures collectively form the maladministration rate for the landlord, which is **83%** for this financial year.

Theme	Learning Identified	Improvement Action
Responsive Repairs	Delays in completing repairs and poor communication about repair progress continue to generate maladministration findings, particularly for heating, leaks, damp and mould, and other responsive repairs.	Strengthen repair tracking, improve resident updates, and ensure vulnerable residents are prioritised.
Complaint Handling	Complaint handling remains a frequent area of service failure and maladministration, often linked to delays, incomplete responses and failure to address all complaint points.	Improve complaint quality assurance, timeliness and officer training against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.
Record Keeping	Several cases highlighted weaknesses in maintaining accurate records and case histories, resulting in poor decision making and service delivery.	Reinforce record management standards and regular case auditing.
Damp, Mould and Health & Safety	Ombudsman findings show the need for quicker investigation and resolution of damp, mould and building safety concerns.	Continue proactive inspections and ensure health and safety risks are escalated promptly.
Communication with Residents	Residents frequently escalated complaints when expectations were not managed or progress updates were lacking.	Improve communication standards and provide regular updates throughout a case.
Financial and Service Charge Administration	Ombudsman findings included service charge and rent account management issues where explanations or corrections were not provided promptly.	Strengthen quality checks on financial transactions and improve customer explanations.
Learning from Outcomes	Ombudsman orders and recommendations frequently required process reviews, policy reviews, staff training and specific corrective actions.	Embed learning reviews following every determination and monitor implementation through management oversight.

Positive Feedback

During 2025/26, Housing Services received **more than 665 compliments** from customers, residents and service users, recognising the dedication, professionalism and compassion shown by our colleagues every day.

The feedback received demonstrates that while providing housing services can be complex and challenging, our teams consistently make a positive difference to residents' lives. Customers frequently praised staff for their empathy, perseverance, professionalism and willingness to go above and beyond to provide support during difficult circumstances.

What residents told us

Compassion and empathy

Many compliments reflected the kindness and understanding shown by staff when supporting residents through challenging life events. This included helping families following bereavement, supporting vulnerable residents, and taking time to understand individual circumstances.

"She was kind and empathetic all the way. She made the effort to understand the difficulty of my situation and gave me as much time as she could."

Supporting vulnerable residents

Residents highlighted the exceptional support provided to people with disabilities, learning difficulties, health conditions and complex needs. Staff were praised for building trust, providing reassurance and helping residents access the support they needed.

"I could never have got here, nor would I be here today, if it wasn't for the support I received."

Professionalism and expertise

Customers regularly commended staff for resolving issues efficiently, providing clear advice and demonstrating professional knowledge. Compliments were received across a range of services including tenancy management, repairs, welfare support and sheltered housing.

"He was understanding, professional and fair. My client felt she was dealt with fairly and compassionately."

Going the extra mile

Many compliments described colleagues going above and beyond what would normally be expected, whether helping residents navigate complex processes, advocating on their behalf or ensuring individual needs were accommodated.

"She went out of her way many times to care for me when I needed help."

The difference our staff make

The compliments received this year demonstrate that residents value not only the services we provide, but also **how we provide them**. The qualities most frequently recognised were:

What residents valued most	Impact
Kindness and compassion	Residents felt listened to, understood and supported
Patience and understanding	Helped vulnerable residents navigate difficult situations
Professionalism	Built confidence and trust in our services
Responsiveness	Resolved problems and reduced customer anxiety
Going above and beyond	Delivered outcomes that made a lasting difference to people's lives

Looking ahead

Every compliment received provides valuable insight into what matters most to our residents. The feedback reinforces the importance of maintaining a customer-focused approach, treating residents with dignity and respect, and continuing to support those who are most vulnerable in our communities.

Learning from feedback

This year's complaints data provides a constructive opportunity to strengthen organisational learning and improve the quality of complaint handling across MKCC. Our identified complaint themes reinforce the importance of a **consistent and collaborative approach** to complaint resolution. This highlights that many complaints are not confined to a single issue or service area, and that effective handling increasingly depends on shared ownership, coordinated investigation and clear communication across organisational boundaries.

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and the Housing Ombudsman both reinforce the importance of fair, timely and effective complaint handling, supported by learning from complaints and a clear commitment to putting things right.

Taken together, these frameworks underline the need to fully understand the substance of each complaint, consider the wider context objectively, and provide responses that are constructive, evidence-based and proportionate. This is particularly important where complaints relate to professional decision-making, complex personal circumstances, statutory services, housing conditions or dissatisfaction with service standards and timeliness.

For the coming financial year, we have an excellent opportunity to address individual service issues, but also to use complaint themes more strategically to inform service improvement, strengthen cross-service working and improve the consistency and quality of complaint responses.

By maintaining a continued focus on understanding the complaint, responding objectively and constructively, and working effectively across service areas will support better customer experiences, stronger right first time resolution and increased confidence that complaints data is being used effectively to drive improvement.

