

Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report

Housing Service
2024-25

1. Introduction

In April 2025 the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) lifted the Regulatory Notice put in place due to breaches in the RSH Consumer Standards in 2021. Whilst there is still much to do in improving services, this was an encouraging step in developing the housing service that our residents deserve.

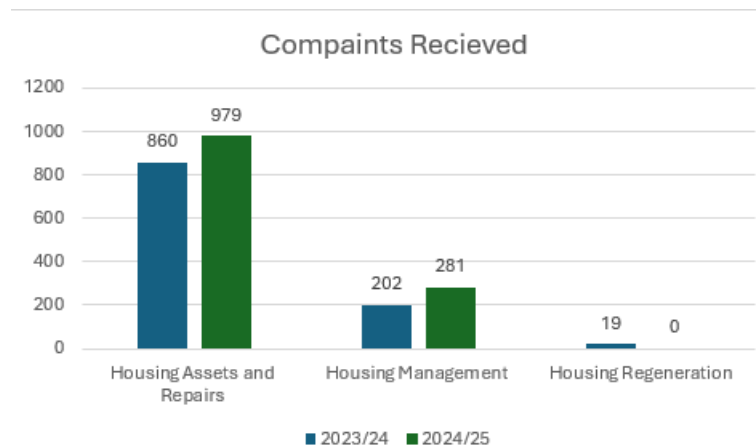
A crucial strand of the Housing Transformation Programme is improvement in the Housing complaints service. This was detailed in an extensive Complaint Improvement Plan, which was shaped by views from four focus groups held with residents who had made a complaint about the Housing service.

Progress on improvement includes:

- Training on customer care has been provided to all housing staff
- Additional training provided on the Complaints Handling Code and good complaint handling
- The service has overseen a marked decrease in severe maladministration findings by the Housing Ombudsman in the later part of 2024-25
- Making changes to our complaints handling system to ensure it complies with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code and provides more information to enable learning

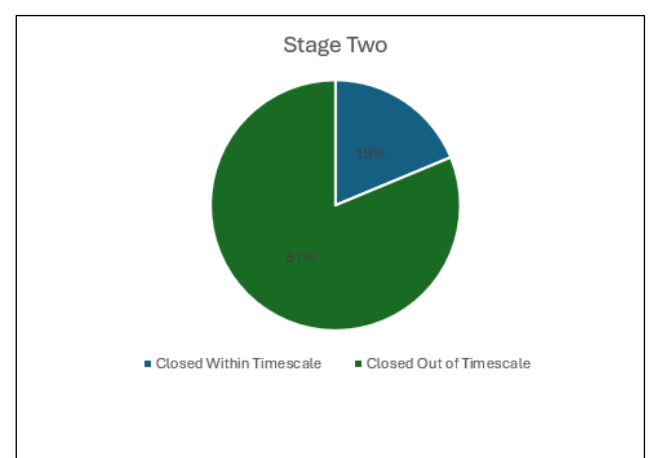
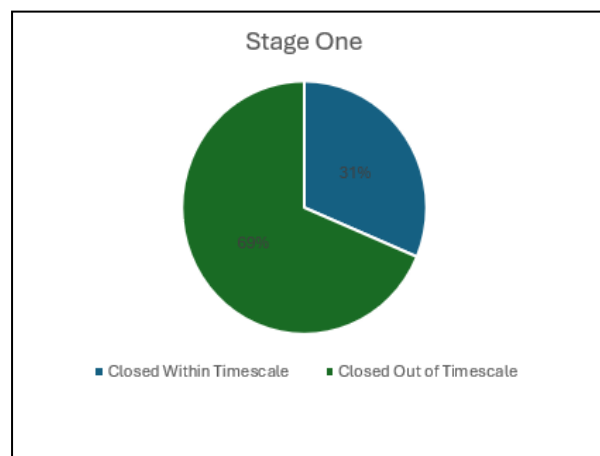
2. Complaints Performance 2024-25

1260 complaints about the landlord service were received in 2024-5 compared to 1081 in 2023-24, an increase of 16.5%. We had a 14% increase in the number of complaints about Housing Assets and Repairs and a 39% increase in complaints about Housing Management services.



Meeting Timescales

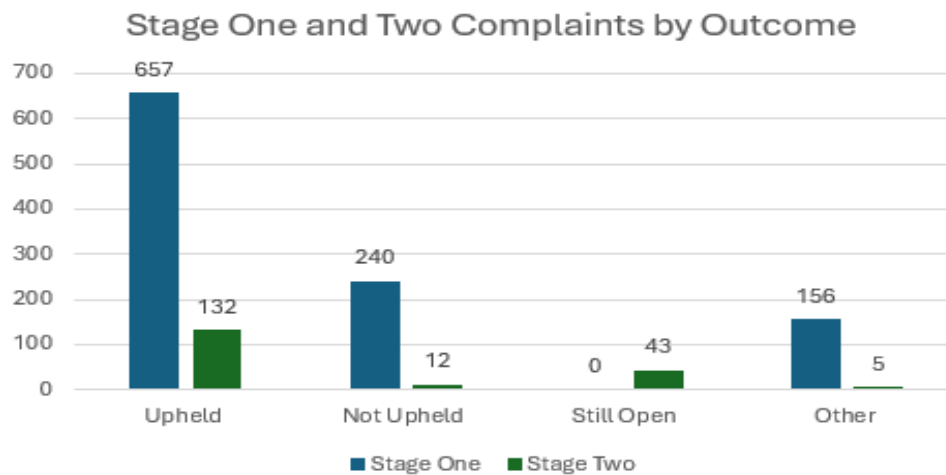
Continued high volumes of complaints has affected our ability to meet the Housing Ombudsman timescales of providing a response in 10 working days at stage one of the complaints process and 20 working days at stage two. We managed 33% of cases within 10 working days at stage one and 19% of cases within 20 working days at stage two.



Our performance was actually better than this, but during 2024-5 our corporate complaints system did not have the functionality to include the permissible five-day acknowledgment stage in our process or the ability to extend cases where the complaint is complex by 10 working days at stage one and 20 working days at stage two, as allowed in the Housing Ombudsman Service Complaint Handling Code. The system has now been updated to allow for these timescales.

Outcomes

The number of complaints that we have upheld has increased in 2024/25 with 86% of stage 1 and stage 2 complaints partially or fully upheld.



The 'other' outcome is selected where a complaint has been incorrectly logged or does not meet the criteria for complaints investigation.

Reason for Complaints

The main reason for residents making a complaint in 2024-25 was a delay in service. As part of our system improvements, we have made changes to enable us to more accurately capture the reason for housing complaints and to improve the insight we can gain from this. We will be able to report this information in the 2025-26 report.

Category	Stage One	Stage Two
Breach of Confidentiality – Concerned about personal data sharing	1	1
Delay in decision / response – unhappy with time taken to provide them with a decision or response to query	89	19
Delay in service – unhappy with time taken to provide them with service requested	407	71
Incorrect action or advice – unhappy with the information provided or believe action is incorrect	18	5
Incorrect decision made / service provided – unhappy with outcome of their query and believe it to be incorrect	15	6
Information or service unavailable – have been unable to access information or service required	7	0
Poor communication – no or limited communication	42	5
Quality of service provided – have not received a good quality service	215	42
Service changed or withdrawn by the Council – unhappy the service provided has been changed/withdrawn	1	0
Staff conduct/behaviour – unhappy with conduct of staff member	38	6
Other reason for complaint*	235	37

*Reasons for complaint outside of those currently codified in Infreemation. This list is currently being expanded to enhance the learning we can gain from complaints.

Refused Complaints

There are some landlord services complaints that we are unable to investigate in line with our complaints policy; these include:

- Service requests which are incorrectly logged as complaints – we define service requests as ‘a request that the organisation provides or improves a service, fixes a problem or reconsiders a decision’.

- Issues referred to us over 12 months since the issue or since the resident became aware of the issue
- Matters that have already been considered in full under our complaints policy
- Where legal proceedings have begun and a claim has been filed at court
- We have built 'reasons for refusing complaints' into our complaints system improvements and so will be able to report on the numbers of complaints we refused in our 2025-26 report.

3. The Housing Ombudsman Service

The Housing Ombudsman Service is in place to investigate complaints and resolve disputes involving tenants and leaseholders of social landlords including local authorities. The Housing Ombudsman (HO) works collaboratively with the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO), the New Homes Ombudsman, and the Regulator of Social Housing.

The Housing Ombudsman Service through its Complaints Handling Code (the Code) sets out remedies for service failure which can be either discretionary ('should') or mandatory ('must') for the landlord to undertake.

The Code defines what constitutes a complaint and describes best practice in terms of accessibility of the complaints process for residents and for the administration of complaints.

When a resident refers a complaint to the HO there are a range of findings the HO may arrive at following an investigation. The most serious of these potential findings are:

- Severe Maladministration – for the most serious failings.
- Maladministration – Where a failure has adversely affected the resident.
- Service Failure – Where there is a minor failing but action to put this right is still needed.
- Redress – Where there is evidence of maladministration, but the landlord has identified and acknowledged this prior to the HO's formal investigation and has taken steps and/or made an offer of compensation, that puts things right.

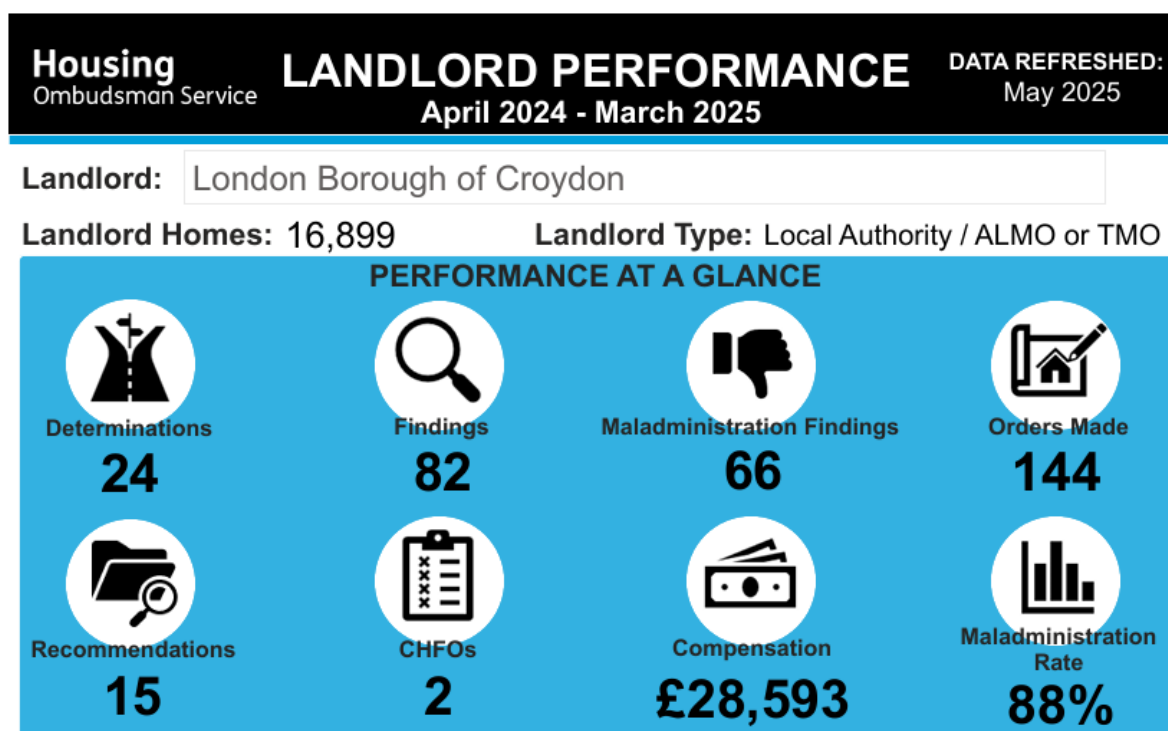
Findings of Non-Compliance with the Complaints Handling Code by the Housing Ombudsman

- There have been three Complaint Handling Failure Orders issued to Croydon by the Housing Ombudsman in 2024-25. Two are for the failure to manage complaints within a reasonable timescale and one for failure to complete Housing Ombudsman actions within the time allowed.
- The changes being introduced through the Complaint's Improvement Plan are improving our complaint response times and, to ensure that Housing Ombudsman actions are completed within timescales, we have introduced full tracking of the Housing Ombudsman orders with a fortnightly meeting to review progress against all actions.

Housing Ombudsman Landlord Performance Report

The Landlord Performance Report is provided by the Housing Ombudsman each year and gives an overview of cases that have been determined by the service in the year.

Croydon's Landlord Performance Report for 2024-25 is below and compares our performance with national averages:



Findings Outcome Comparison | Cases determined between April 2024 - March 2025

National Performance by Landlord Size: Table 2.1

Outcome	Less than 100 units	Between 100 and 1,000 units	Between 1,000 and 10,000 units	Between 10,000 and 50,000 units	More than 50,000 units	National	Landlord Findings
Severe Maladministration	5%	10%	5%	5%	5%	5%	10%
Maladministration	38%	36%	41%	41%	41%	41%	57%
Service failure	32%	24%	22%	22%	20%	21%	13%
Mediation	0%	0%	1%	2%	2%	1%	0%
Redress	3%	6%	10%	12%	17%	13%	6%
No maladministration	14%	17%	15%	13%	10%	13%	5%
Outside Jurisdiction	8%	7%	6%	6%	5%	6%	9%
Withdrawn	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

National Performance by Landlord Type: Table 2.2

Outcome	Housing Association	Local Authority / ALMO or TMO	Other	National	Landlord Findings
Severe Maladministration	4%	6%	3%	5%	10%
Maladministration	39%	45%	35%	41%	57%
Service failure	21%	22%	27%	21%	13%
Mediation	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%
Redress	16%	7%	10%	13%	6%
No maladministration	13%	11%	15%	13%	5%
Outside Jurisdiction	5%	7%	8%	6%	9%
Withdrawn	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Housing Ombudsman reports about Croydon Council

Croydon was named in a Housing Ombudsman 'learning from severe maladministration' [report published in October 2024](#) which focused on inspections and timeliness within damp and mould complaints that were received in 2022 and 2023.

The case featured concerned a resident who experienced significant issues with persistent leaks, damp, and mould in their home.

Since this case, we have set up a specialist team to look at leaks, damp and mould and work with residents to get damp and mould issues resolved. We have specialist contractors and have reviewed our policies with improved training on damp and mould. We have also put processes in place to prepare for the introduction of Awaabs Law in October 2025.

This report is available on the Housing Ombudsman website.

4. Learning from Complaints

An effective complaints process enables a landlord to learn from the issues that arise for residents and to take steps to improve the services it provides.

Complaints provide social landlords like Croydon Council with invaluable feedback and information about their day-to-day services, which can be used to drive improvement.

We are midway through a Complaints Improvement Plan that will ensure we can provide a positive complaint handling service which is compliant with the Housing Ombudsman Code. There is still much to do in this area and there will be a real focus on learning from complaints throughout 2025–26.

Complaints provide landlords with real opportunities for learning and free feedback on our service from those whom we serve. Trends in complaints, or even one-off complaints, can identify weaknesses such as a poor service, poor contractor or a flawed procedure. Complaints can also be an early warning system to highlight risks, such as problems with gas servicing procedures.

As well as complaints made by tenants about the service they receive, we also learn from the Housing Ombudsman's Reviews and Orders. As part of our commitment to learning reviews on findings of severe maladministration and wider orders, these are reviewed by our Housing Senior Leadership Team, including determinations in cases of damp and mould and the responsive repairs process. Our learning from complaints has been fed into policy change such as the new Repairs Policy.

5. Improvements to Complaints Handling

In our complaints handling and through determinations from the Housing Ombudsman we were aware that we needed to improve how we manage complaints.

We held four resident focus groups in 2024-25 to get feedback that would help shape our Complaints Improvement Plan. Issues raised included: completing the actions that are promised in the stage 1 response, making sure that staff are trained in how to manage complaints, having enough staff to investigate and respond to complaints and ensuring that complaint responses show empathy. The feedback has fed into the following improvements:

- **Case Triage:** Once logged, all cases are triaged, and any immediate health and safety concerns are flagged to the right team and service director for immediate action
- **Customer Resolution Support:** A specialist Customer Resolution Team has been introduced to support vulnerable residents and oversee complex or sensitive repair cases. They also work closely with the complaints team to ensure follow-up actions are delivered.
- **Quality of Investigations and Responses:** Training and support has been delivered to complaint handlers to improve the quality of the both the investigation and the responses. All repairs' responses are checked by a senior member of the team before they are sent.
- **Redress:** Further guidance has been provided on when to offer redress (which is usually financial compensation) with a policy drafted to provide further information.
- **Additional dedicated staffing** has been agreed to manage complaints, and we will be recruiting during 2025-26.

Improvements to Repairs Services

Learning from complaints in our repairs services has identified issues across the repairs services which have informed the following improvements:

- **Quality Assurance Checks:** We now have a dedicated team carrying out quality checks on completed repairs. Where work does not meet our

expectations, the contractor is instructed to return and complete it to the required standard.

- **Improved monitoring of Contractor Works Closures:** All requests to close jobs are monitored at a senior level to ensure that either the works have been completed or that the appropriate contact with the resident has been tried in line with our service offer.
- **Data and Service Improvement:** We are continuing to enhance our internal systems to allow for better data capture and reporting. This helps us identify service gaps, spot recurring issues, and focus our efforts where improvements are most needed.
- **Implementation of a new Repairs Policy:** To ensure that we provide a transparent repairs service we have developed and launched a new repairs policy which provides clarity on the expected timescale for repairs to be completed commensurate with their urgency.

Improvements in the Housing Management Service

Following a severe maladministration determination focused on noise nuisance, a review was conducted which implemented several changes to our management response to noise nuisance and our record keeping in these types of cases. These included:

- **Improvements to Case Management:** All actions of tenancy officers and operations managers are now being documented and uploaded onto Caseworks and SharePoint.
- **Increased Managerial Oversight:** Operations Managers review all ASB cases within meetings between Housing Officers and their manager. Improved reports can be obtained from our ASB system to check that these reviews are taking place.
- **Increased Availability of the Noise App:** Operations Managers and Tenancy Officers are sending noise app details to all tenants with noise nuisance cases.

- Training Needs Identified: The Tenancy Services Team have all attended the Customer Care training and Housing Ombudsman Dispute Resolution training.