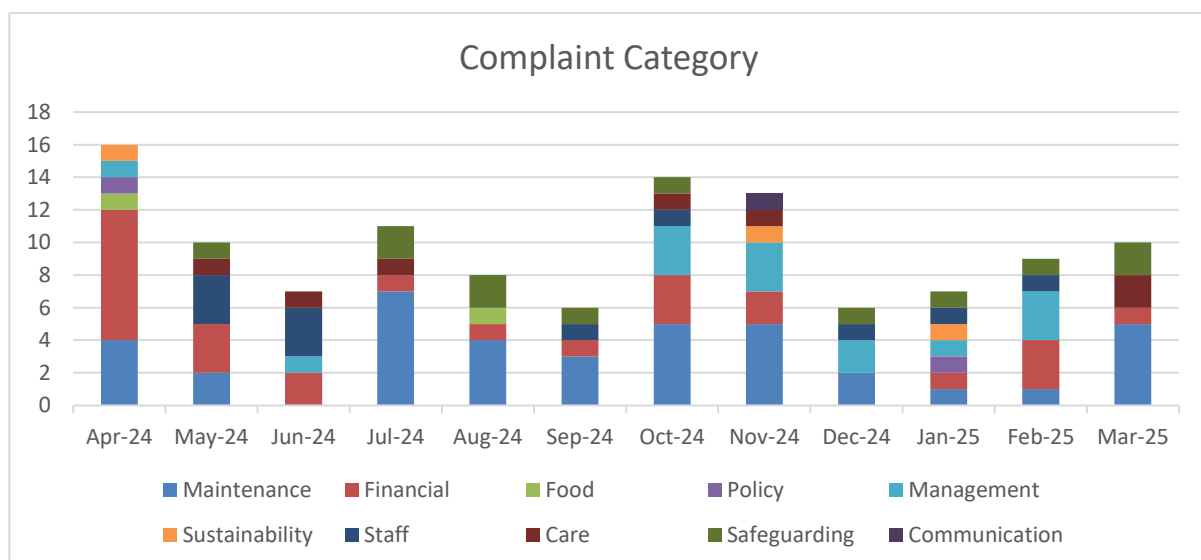
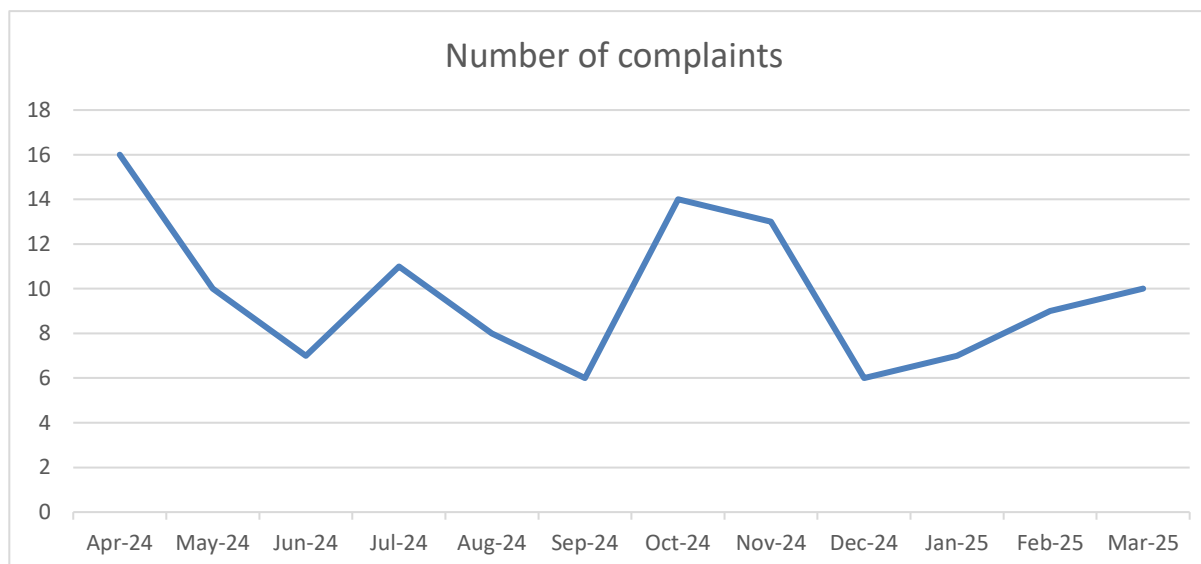


Annual Complaint Handling & Service Improvement Report

Report author:	Jonathan Earnshaw, Complaints Manager
Reporting Period:	1 April 2024 - 31 March 2025

<p>As the Customer Operations Director and the Executive team member responsible for complaints (MRC) in the organisation, I'm pleased to present our second annual complaint handling and service improvement report which looks at our complaint handling performance between 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025.</p> <p>I have lead responsibility for complaints and alongside my colleagues its vitally important to me that we continue to work hard to support a positive complaint handling culture.</p> <p>This report confirms the number of complaints we have formally received in this period, helps identify trends and themes from the complaints received, and importantly provides an opportunity to take stock, whilst also looking forward to the ongoing exciting work we have underway to help drive service improvements.</p> <p>This report also includes details of the Housing & Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman determinations we have received in the period, and the action we have taken as a result.</p> <p>It's positive to see the progress we have made over the last year, the Customer Committee and in my role as the member responsible for complaints (MRC) we were supportive of the brand new mandatory 'complaint handling e-learning- training and awareness course that we launched in December 2024 which covers important topics in ensuring complaints are handling effectively, we all work collaboratively together and we all embrace the complaint lessons learnt approach (launched in Autumn 2024) which help promote a positive learning culture, to ensure we always listen, learn and take action to help drive further service improvements. It was great to see over 85% of colleagues completed this by the end of March 2025.</p> <p>I'm pleased to see that over the last year we have collaborated with our Residents Panel who have helped us scrutinise our approach to complaint handling whilst also reviewing our complaint handling performance, they continue to tell us what we do well but also where we need to improve – they're valuable insight is appreciated.</p> <p>Julie Freear Customer Operations Director, Customer Committee, August 2025</p>			

The graph below highlights the volumes & themes of complaints we received since April 2024 (in terms of volumes) and (on themes of complaints)



Complaints Review

During 2024/25 we received a total of **117** complaints which were handled at stage 1 of the complaint's procedure. In addition, a total of **17** complaints during 2024/25 were handled at stage 2 of the complaint's procedure.

Main complaint reasons (from the 117 complaints received in the year)

- **Maintenance – 39** (loss of heating & hot water, water leaks, delays to repairs) – **33.33% of complaints**
- **Financial – 26** (service charge increases) - **22.22% of complaints**
- **Management – 14** (local communication gaps & engagement opportunities) – **11.97% of complaints**

Complaint Lessons Learnt

In August 2024, we launched a brand new 'Complaint Lessons Learnt' approach where all complaint lessons learnt are logged, assigned an owner and regularly reviewed, capturing updates and sharing with department heads where delays occur.

We have held 80 complaint lesson learnt sessions with complaint owners and key stakeholder colleagues since we launched the approach, which looks at complaints which were fully upheld or partially upheld with 51 organisational & 29 service level actions identified.

We have already identified many learnings which have been captured and owners assigned to progress including in 2024-25, 12 specific actions for Property services, 34 process improvements, 11 communication improvements, 7 policy recommendations and 7 opportunities for further training.

Identified outputs include:

- Exploring if mandatory haircare & footcare for care staff is possible
- Policy review of setting care fees in the next finance review
- The property services team feeding back to the project team on future resident preferences on lock replacements at our locations following feedback.
- Reminding colleagues of the procedure to raise emergency repair jobs out of hours
- Delays to responding and actioning repairs
- The need for improved communication between Property services and operations so resident's can be kept fully updated
- Property services to track and ensure repair orders are fully completed & contractors arrive as planned as we see a high % of complaints related to these issues
- Review meetings with property contractors to discuss complaint outcomes and to support service improvements
- Budget packs to be revamped
- The need for a mental health first aid training course for colleagues
- Shower seat checks on safety grounds
- Review of Aids and Adaptations policy
- 19 different rent letter templates which have been identified to be reduced
- Review and check current decant process

Just some of the improvements made because of complaint lessons learnt

- Nail & toecare- new e-learning training course to be rolled out from August 2025
- Resident lock replacements - a full survey now takes place to reflect resident requirements
- Link to complete free mental health first aid course is available on the internal intranet and has been shared via the colleague weekly digest. This is an optional course for staff.
- Shower seat check – The Health & Safety team have amended the questions on the quarterly walk around in Housing & Care, to ensure bathroom fixtures and fittings (e.g., shower seats, grab rails, etc.) are secure in position and located appropriately.

Complaint handling e-learning

In December 2024 we launched a new e-learning complaint handling mandatory training course and by the end of March 2025 over 85% of colleagues had completed the training which covers topics ensuring complaints are handled effectively, we all work collaboratively together and we all embrace a new complaint lessons learnt approach (launched in Autumn 2024) which help promote a positive learning culture to ensure we always listen, learn and take action to help drive further service improvements.

Compliments & Complaints Toolkit

In October 2024, we launched a new dedicated Compliments & Complaints toolkit for all colleagues, so they could find the help & resources they need to help them handle complaints effectively, in one place.

We welcome your Feedback

In Autumn 2024, we also launched a new 'We welcome your feedback' poster for all our services, encouraging residents, their families and our visitors to share their feedback with us, including sharing examples of great service, or colleagues who have made a difference to their customer experience, alongside opportunities for us to listen, learn and take action when something has gone wrong.

Housing Ombudsman Determinations – 2024/25

During 2024/25 we have received two Housing Ombudsman determinations regarding complaint cases which had been referred to the Housing Ombudsman

1. The complaint

-The complaint was about the handling of the resident's request for reimbursement of costs relating to relocation, due to the closure of the home

Determination (decision)

In accordance with paragraph 52 of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme, there was **no maladministration** in relation to the landlord's handling of the resident's request for reimbursement of costs relating to relocation, due to the closure of the home

The full report can be read here:

Complaint: 202332725 - [Decisions Archive - Housing Ombudsman](#)

2. The complaint

The complaint was about the handling of:

- a. The resident's concerns about the quality and quantity of meals provided by the landlord and the lack of options available to her.
- b. The resident's request to have a cooker installed in her flat

Determination (decision)

In accordance with paragraph 52 of the Scheme, the Housing Ombudsman Service finds service failure with the landlord's handling of the resident's concerns about the lack of options and the quality of meals provided by the landlord.

In accordance with paragraph 52 of the Scheme, the Housing Ombudsman Service finds service failure with the landlord's handling of the resident's request to have a cooker installed in her flat

The full report can be read here:

Complaint 202315916 - [Decisions Archive - Housing Ombudsman](#)

Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman Determinations

We also received a determination from the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman during 2024-25 too.

3. The Complaint

Mrs X complained on behalf of her late sister about care provided to her at a residential care home.

Determination (Decision)

The Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman found fault. We agreed to apologise to Mrs X, provide a financial remedy, and make service improvements to prevent a reoccurrence of the fault identified.

Complaint Handling satisfaction

After every formal complaint, we invite the complainant to share their feedback with us about their complaint handling experience, providing another opportunity to understand what worked well and where we could improve. The survey invitation link is now included within our complaint response when this is issued, so we can receive feedback timelier, but this also allows us to address any remaining concerns that may have arisen.

Resident Panel Involvement

Throughout 2024-25, we have worked with our resident panel, they have scrutinised how we handle complaints, review redacted complaint responses and have provided valuable insight to help shape our service for the future and allowing us to bring our complaint handling approach closer to the voice of the customer.

We are proud of the work we have completed thus far and look forward to working collaboratively with them in 2025-26 and beyond.

Compliments

Whilst it's right that we focus on ensuring that when things do go wrong that we have a responsive and efficient complaint handling process, however – we also encourage our residents, their families and our visitors to share their feedback with us when something has gone well, a particular colleague has impressed them and/or made a difference. We love to see this feedback as it allows us to recognise the colleague(s) involved but also to share best practice and celebrate the compliments we receive through our monthly virtual 'All Staff Briefing' where we have recently launched a 'compliment of the month' initiative to do just that.

Complaint Self-Assessment

We have recently completed our complaints self-assessment and submitted our findings to the Housing Ombudsman, along with this annual report, we publish our annual complaints self-assessment via our website [Compliments and Complaints | Abbeyfield Living Society](#)

Jonathan Earnshaw
Complaints Manager
August 2025