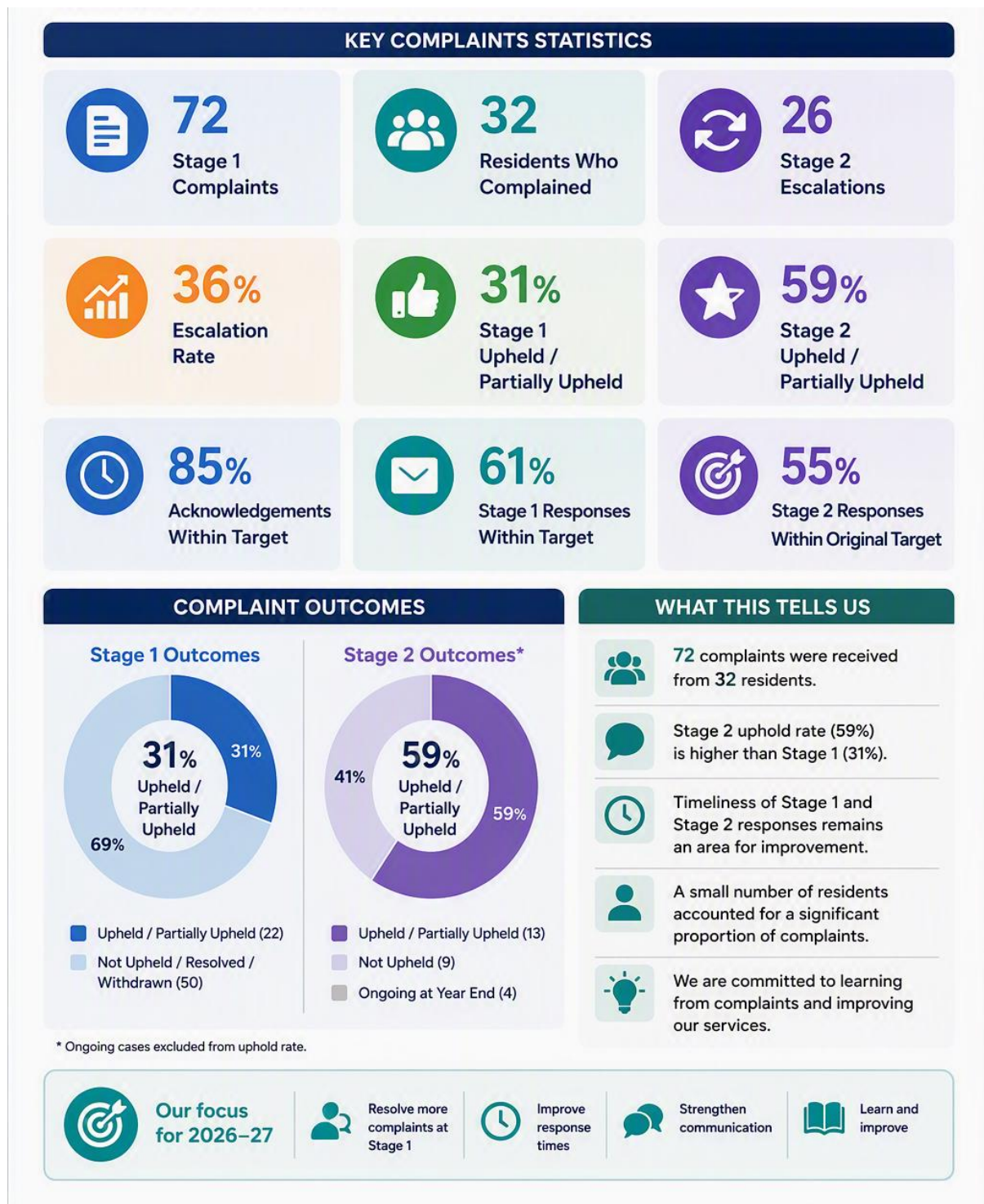


Complaint Handling Annual Report 2025-26

Complaints at a glance

Complaints provide valuable feedback about our services. They help us understand where we have got things wrong, where residents are dissatisfied and where improvements are needed.



Complaint Performance Overview

Complaint Volumes

During 2025-26, the Foundation received 72 Stage 1 complaints from 32 residents. Of these complaints, 26 progressed to Stage 2, resulting in an escalation rate of 36%. The escalation rate is higher than the Foundation would expect and indicates that some residents remained dissatisfied with the outcome of the initial complaint investigation. However, it should also be recognised that a small number of residents accounted for a significant proportion of complaints received during the year, which has influenced overall complaint volumes and escalation rates.

Complaint Outcomes

At Stage 1, 22 complaints were upheld or partially upheld, while 50 complaints were either not upheld, resolved, or withdrawn, resulting in an overall uphold rate of 31%.

Of the 26 complaints escalated to Stage 2, 13 were upheld or partially upheld, 9 were not upheld, and 4 remained open at the end of the reporting period. Excluding ongoing cases, the Stage 2 uphold rate was 59%.

The significant increase in the uphold rate between Stage 1 and Stage 2 suggests there are opportunities to strengthen complaint handling at the earliest stage. In particular, the findings indicate that some service failures may not be consistently identified during initial investigations, that appropriate remedies are not always offered at the earliest opportunity, and that opportunities to resolve concerns before escalation may be missed. Improving the quality and consistency of Stage 1 investigations will therefore remain an important focus during 2026-27.

Response Time Performance

Performance against complaint response targets was mixed during the year.

At Stage 1, 44 responses were issued within the target timescale, while 28 responses were overdue, resulting in 61% compliance with the Foundation's response target. Delays were most commonly associated with complaints involving multiple issues, repair matters requiring input from contractors, or cases requiring information from several teams.

Of the 26 complaints escalated to Stage 2, 22 were concluded during the reporting year. Of those concluded cases, 12 were completed within the original response timescale, while 10 required additional time to complete the investigation.

Many Stage 2 complaints involved complex circumstances, multiple complaint issues, detailed reviews of previous decisions or the gathering of additional evidence. Where additional time was required, extensions were generally discussed and agreed with residents, and regular contact was maintained throughout the investigation process. As a result, the data reflects the complexity of investigations rather than a lack of engagement with residents.

The Foundation recognises that lengthy investigations can affect resident confidence and satisfaction. Reducing investigation times, improving response efficiency and minimising the need for extensions, while maintaining thorough and fair investigations, will remain a key priority during 2026-27.

Housing Ombudsman Cases

During 2025-26, seven complaints were referred to the Housing Ombudsman Service. One case was concluded during the year and related to repairs and maintenance and staff

communication. The Ombudsman recommended an increase to the compensation offered to the resident, which the Foundation accepted and implemented. No findings or recommendations were made in relation to complaint handling. The remaining six cases were ongoing at the end of the reporting period. Learning from Ombudsman cases will continue to be used to improve services and resident outcomes.

Trustee Review

One Resident raised a concern to the Board of Trustees for their consideration.

What Went Well

85% of complaints acknowledged within target.

Increased resident access to complaints.

Ombudsman made no findings regarding complaint handling.

Complaint Rates per 1,000 Homes

Indicator	Stoll	Sector Comparator
Stage 1 Complaints per 1,000 homes	288	Varies by provider
Stage 2 Complaints per 1,000 homes	104	Varies by provider
Residents Complaining per 1,000 homes	128	Not routinely reported
Escalation Rate	36%	Typically 20-25%
Stage 1 Response Compliance	61%	90% target
Stage 2 Response Compliance	55%	90% target

The Foundation received 288 Stage 1 complaints per 1,000 homes during 2025-26, with 104 Stage 2 escalations per 1,000 homes and 128 residents per 1,000 homes submitting complaints. Given the relatively small stock size, complaint activity is significantly influenced by a small number of residents with recurring concerns. However, the 36% escalation rate remains above levels commonly reported by comparable housing associations and suggests further opportunities to improve complaint resolution at Stage 1. Response time performance also remains below sector expectations, where many providers work towards achieving at least 90% compliance with Complaint Handling Code timescales

What Residents Complained About

Complaint Key Themes

Complaint Type	Number	Percentage
Repairs & Maintenance	17	24%
Staff Conduct & Communication	15	21%
Rent, Service Charges & Financial	14	19%

Key Themes

Repairs and Maintenance

Repairs remain the largest cause of complaints. Delays, contractor performance and communication failures continue to be key drivers of dissatisfaction.

Staff Communication

Communication failures appear across most complaint categories and are a significant contributor to escalation.

Repeat Complaint Demand

A small group of residents accounts for a disproportionate percentage of complaints, indicating unresolved underlying issues and the need for a coordinated resolution strategy.

What We Learned

Main Causes of Complaints

Root Cause	Impact
Poor communication	Dissatisfaction and escalation
Delays in service delivery	Reduced confidence and frustration
Inconsistent Stage 1 investigations	Escalation to Stage 2
Repairs and contractor issues	Repeat service failures
Repeat unresolved issues	High complaint volumes from a small number of residents

Year-on-Year Trends

Comparing Performance: 2024-25 and 2025-26

Reviewing complaint data over the last two years provides valuable insight into emerging trends and helps us understand where further improvements are required.

Measure	2024-25	2025-26	Trend
Stage 1 Complaints	28	72	▲ Increase
Stage 2 Complaints	4	26	▲ Increase
Escalation Rate	12.5%	36%	▲ Increase
On-Time Responses	66%	61%	▼ Decrease
Stage 1 Upheld / Partially Upheld	68%*	31%	▼ Decrease
Stage 2 Upheld / Partially Upheld	75%*	59%	▼ Decrease

What the Data Tells Us

The most significant change during 2025-26 was the substantial increase in complaint volumes. Stage 1 complaints increased from 28 to 72 complaints, while Stage 2 complaints increased from 4 to 26. While this increase has placed additional demands on the organisation, it may also indicate that residents have greater awareness of how to raise concerns and greater confidence in accessing the complaints process.

The increase in complaint volumes was accompanied by a significant rise in the escalation rate, from 12.5% in 2024-25 to 36% in 2025-26. This suggests that more residents remained dissatisfied following the Stage 1 response and highlights the importance of improving early resolution and the quality of Stage 1 investigations.

Response time performance declined slightly during the year, reducing from 66% to 61% compliance with response targets. Complaint handlers were required to manage a significantly larger caseload, and a greater proportion of complaints involved multiple issues, contractor involvement or complex investigations. Nevertheless, improving timeliness remains a key objective for 2026-27.

Complaint themes have also evolved. Whilst repairs and maintenance continue to generate the highest number of complaints, the Foundation saw an increase in complaints relating to communication and financial matters. This broader range of complaint types indicates the need for continued focus on communication, consistency and organisational learning.

Overall, the data demonstrates that complaints have become a more significant source of resident feedback and organisational learning. The challenge for the Foundation during 2026-27 will be to improve the quality and timeliness of complaint handling while maintaining an open and accessible complaints process.

Actions Taken to Improve Complaint Handling

Improving Access to the Complaints Process

During the year, the Foundation continued to promote its complaints procedure across all sites and through its website. Online complaint forms remain available to make it easier for residents to raise concerns, and translation support can be provided where required to ensure the process remains accessible to all residents.

Strengthening Governance and Oversight

Complaints continue to be reported quarterly to the Board of Trustees and remain a standing item for senior management review. This provides greater oversight of complaint performance, emerging trends, lessons learned and service improvement actions.

Staff Training and Awareness

The Foundation has quarterly team reviews of complaints where we promote good complaint handling practices and learning from complaints. Lessons arising from upheld complaints have been used to highlight areas where communication, service delivery and complaint investigation can be strengthened.

What We Are Doing Differently in 2026-27

Introduction of a Customer Service Team

The Foundation has introduced a dedicated Customer Service Team. The team is responsible for triaging complaints when they are first received and ensuring they are directed promptly to the appropriate service area. Complaint handling is overseen by the Head of Customer Services, providing greater accountability, consistency and oversight across the complaints process.

This new approach is intended to improve response times, support earlier resolution of concerns, improve communication with residents and strengthen monitoring of complaint performance and trends.

Resident feedback will continue to be gathered during 2026-27 to help us better understand residents' experience of the complaints process and identify areas for improvement.

Improving Complaint Handling During 2026-27

Improve Early Resolution

Introduce a Stage 1 investigation checklist

Ensure all complaint points are addressed

Consider remedies earlier where service failure is identified

Target: Reduce escalation rate below 25%.

Improve Response Times

Maintain weekly complaint tracking

Monitor deadlines

Agree extensions early where required

Review reasons for delays

Target: 90% Stage 1 responses within target.

Strengthen Communication

Review response templates

Provide regular updates on open complaints

Update residents regularly during extended investigations

Share examples of good complaint responses

Target: Reduce communication-related complaints.

Learn from Complaints

Review upheld complaints quarterly

Share lessons learned with staff

Record service improvements

Monitor recurring themes

Target: Demonstrate clear service improvements resulting from complaints.

Manage Repeat Complaints

Identify residents making three or more complaints in a year

Allocate a lead officer where issues are recurring

Review complex cases earlier

Monitor repeat complaint trends

Target: Reduce repeat complaint demand and achieve earlier resolution.

Looking Ahead

Our priorities for 2026-27 are simple:

Improve Response Times

Resolve More Complaints at Stage 1
Communicate Better and More Frequently
Learn From Every Upheld Complaint
Prevent Repeat Service Failures

Governance

The Annual Complaint Handling Report is presented to the Housing Services Committee and the Board of Trustees.

The Board's Member Responsible for Complaints has reviewed:

- Annual complaint performance.
- Complaint trends.
- Learning from complaints.
- The improvement plan.
- Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code.