



# **Annual complaints performance and service improvement report**

**2024/2025**

## **1. Cabinet's response to the report from Cllr Glancy – Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC)**

The report before you sets out the Council's overall approach to complaints and includes a summary of our performance and the annual report and self-assessment as required by the Housing Ombudsman as part of their Complaints Handling Code (CHC) sets out the number of cases dealt with by the Housing Ombudsman and the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

The report sets out the Council's performance on complaints for 2024/25. The Council takes responsibility for addressing issues through formal complaints at the earliest opportunity. It also sets out our position against the CHC and contains evidence that we comply with all aspects of the code.

The Council's Customer Feedback and Complaints Policy are reviewed and updated as required to remain compliant with the CHC and was last updated during the summer of 2024.

I would just like to add that we consider the customer experience is crucial for our residents. We have a more mature and embedded approach considering, analysing and responding to our customers. As we know a key example of this is the decision to reprocure major housing repair maintenance contracts and to involve our tenants in the design and foundation process and application.

We continue to take complaints and all customer feedback seriously. Not because we must but because it is the right thing to do.

**Cllr Margaret Glancy**

**Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Governance, Environment and Regulatory Services**

**Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC)**

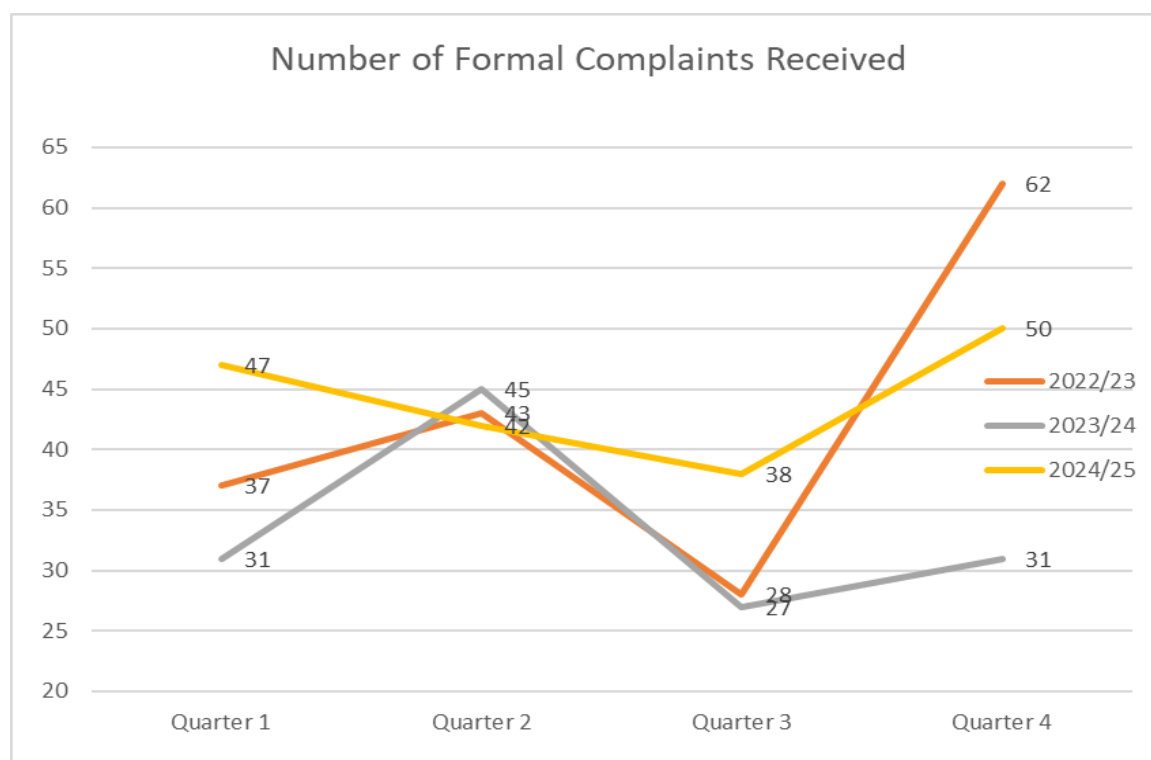
## 2. Qualitative and quantitative analysis of our complaint handling performance - this must also include a summary of the types of complaints that we have refused to accept.

The Council recognises that complaints are a valuable opportunity to gain feedback, learn and improve services. The Council wants to provide a positive response to complaints and encourages feedback so that positive action can be taken.

The Corporate Complaints process comprises a two-stage internal process comprising stage one complaints which are dealt with by Service Managers and stage two complaints where a Director or Assistant Director reviews the stage one response and approach taken to investigating the complaint. Where a complainant remains dissatisfied with the Council's response, they are made aware that they can refer the matter for independent review by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman or Housing Ombudsman.

### 2024/25 performance

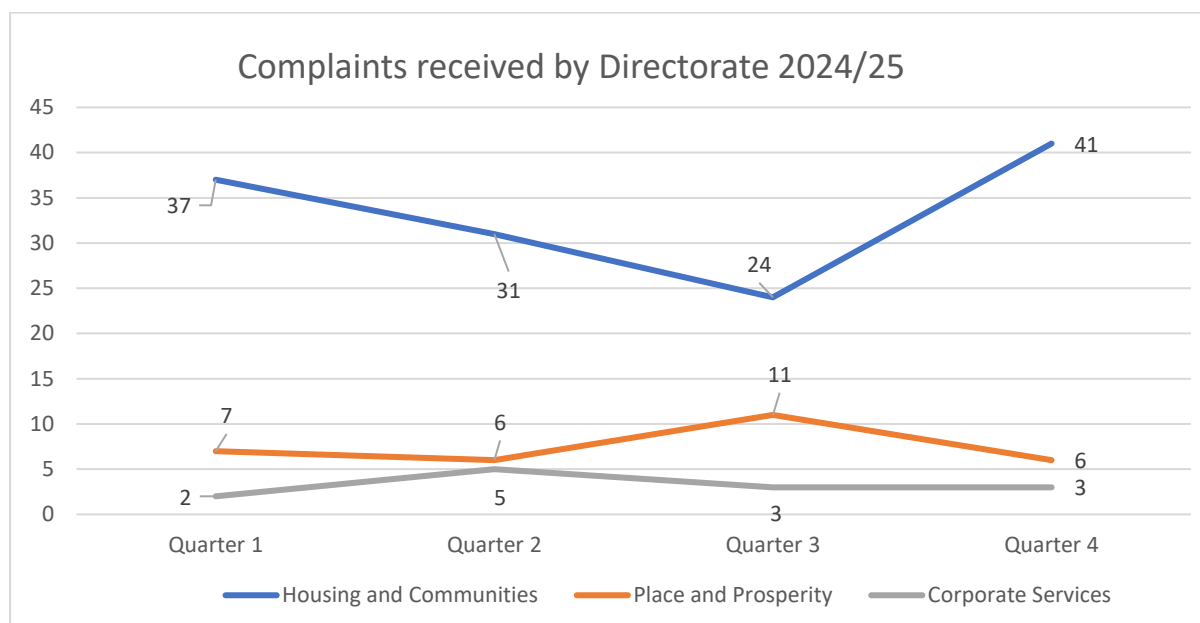
In 2024/25, the Council as a whole received 177 formal complaints from customers. The number of formal complaints was an increase on the 134 received in the same period last year.



### Complaints by Directorate

The Council is split into three directorates (Housing and Communities, Place and Prosperity, Corporate Services). Of the formal complaints received from customers in 2024/25 the vast majority relate to the more customer facing Housing and

Communities directorate. Given the outward facing nature of this directorate including the Council's Landlord function, this is not unexpected. The breakdown of these complaints by Directorate is shown below.



## Housing (Landlord Services) Complaints

In 2024/25, the Council as landlord received 124 formal complaints from tenants (106 Stage 1 and 18 Stage 2 complaints) which is 70% of the total complaints received by the Council.

In 2023/24 the Council as landlord received 76 formal complaints from tenants (64 Stage 1 and 12 Stage 2 complaints) which is 57% of the total complaints received by the Council.

There has been a reduction from 15.8% in 2023/24 to 14.5% in 2024/25 of Stage 1 complaints progressing to Stage 2. This indicates a slightly increased satisfaction and accountability at stage 1 in terms of the complaints progressing to Stage 2.

During 2024/25 the Council responded to 84% of stage 1 complaints and 89% of all stage 2 complaints in the timescales set out in our policy.

The biggest area for complaints were repairs (including day to day repairs, planned maintenance and compliance) with 69 complaints, followed by tenancy services (ASB, tenancy matters, rents and supported housing) with 55. Complaints on repairs were 39% of the total number of complaints received by the Council.

## Complaints upheld or partially upheld.

Of the 177 formal complaints so far received this year from customers, 109 of these have been upheld or partially upheld by the Council which is 61.58% and is an increase on the 54.48% upheld last year. This increase shows that the Council looks at taking responsibility for addressing issues raised through formal complaints at the earliest opportunity.

## Housing (Landlord Services) Complaints

Of the 124 formal complaints received this year in Housing from tenants 85 of these have been upheld or partially upheld by the service. This equates to 69% (2 out of every 3) of all housing complaints being upheld. This is a reduction in 9% from last year and 8% than the overall rate for the Council. The Council's Housing Team continue to promote our complaints service to tenants and encouraging them to complain if they needed to. As a service we try to resolve any complaints at the earliest opportunity.

The most recent [Melton BC annual report to tenants 23/24](#) which was posted to all council tenants in October 2023 included a section on customer feedback and complaints.

Information about the Council's Complaints Policy and process, and the ways in which complaints can be made is included on the Council's website. The Council has committed to ensuring its website is accessible and consistently has an accessibility score of 100%. In March 2025 [Silktide Index](#) confirmed Melton's position in joint 1<sup>st</sup> place in UK Councils.

Information about making a complaint is on the Council's [main website](#) and also from the [Tenants' Corner](#) area of the website. The webpages include information on:

- Complaints policy and process including how to make complaint
- Requesting a review
- Referring to Ombudsman Services
- How to raise regulatory concerns (housing) and designated officers for health and safety, and consumer standards (and their deputies).
- Make It Right Campaign

Improvements have also been to the way and format in which information about complaints is shared with tenants. It has been developed with tenants who have provided feedback on the format and ease of reading the quarterly update, which is available on the council's website. An example (from Quarter 4 of 24/25) can be seen below:

# COMPLAINT PERFORMANCE




Melton  
Borough  
Council

A summary of housing complaints performance from 1 January to 31 March 2025.

**30** Stage 1

**3** Stage 2

**0** Housing  
Ombudsman

**Compliments**  
 **7**

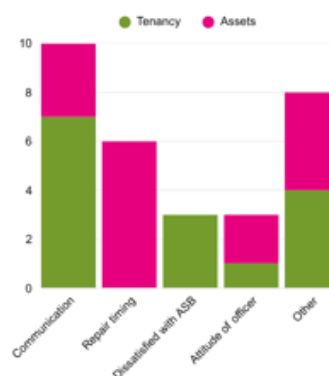
## Top 3 areas complained about at stage 1

**33.3%** Lack of communication

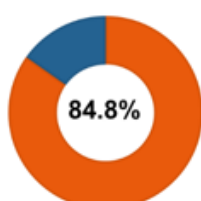
**20%** Repair took too long

**10%** Dissatisfied with the handling of ASB investigation

## Key issues



## Responses sent on time



Stage 1



Stage 2



## Compensation

**£1,592**

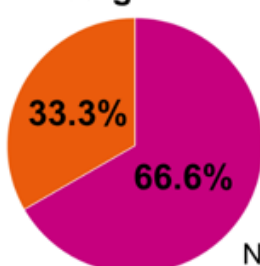


## Rent credit

**£376.07**

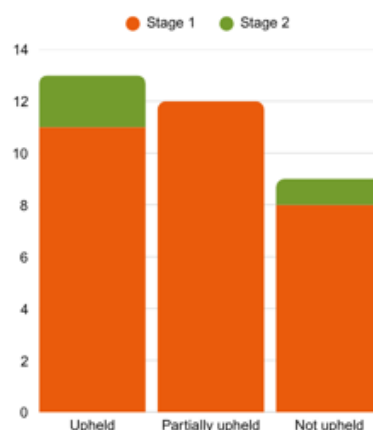
## Reason for escalation to stage 2

Not happy  
with content  
of letter



Not happy  
with stage 1  
response

## Complaint outcome



Published: May 2025

## Analysis of Complaints Upheld

We continue to undertake analysis of complaints trends and areas to improve based on those complaints upheld this year and the high-level findings are set out below. These cover all services but given the high proportion of the Council's complaints are Housing, there are specific ones that relate to our landlord function.

### Council Wide Complaints Learning and Insights and Action Taken

- **Keeping the complainant informed:** Many of the upheld complaints cite lack of communication as a reason for dissatisfaction. Implementing better communication protocols between staff and residents/customers as well as contractors can help manage expectations and keep both parties informed throughout the process. This may include regular updates on repair status, clear explanations of procedures, and providing avenues for clients to easily reach out with concerns or enquiries.
- **Training and Development:** Addressing issues related to lack of responsiveness and communication may require additional training for staff. Providing training sessions on effective communication strategies, customer service skills, and conflict resolution techniques can empower staff to better address client concerns and minimise complaints. Training is booked in for Housing managers and information is available through Skillgate (the Council's training portal) on effective complaints handling and providing good customer service.
- **Regular Monitoring and Feedback:** Establishing regular monitoring mechanisms to track repair progress and client satisfaction can help identify issues early on and proactively address them. Additionally, seeking feedback from clients about their experiences with repairs and communication can provide valuable insights for continuous improvements.

### Housing (Landlord Services) Complaints Learning, Insights and Action Taken

- **Contractor performance:** Several complaints related to issues with contractors, such as cancellations, quality of repairs and feedback from our tenants setting out a number of concerns. The Council has attempted to strengthen its contractor management processes to address these issues, including rigorous vetting of contractors, ensuring they have necessary parts before appointments, and holding them accountable for delays. However, performance has not improved, and we have used this data to inform our decision to retender the repairs contract following this feedback and Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) data.
- **Making our Processes more customer friendly:** Complaints about delays in repairs highlight potential inefficiencies in our repair processes. Our Assets team have conducted a thorough review of repair workflows, identified

bottlenecks, and are implementing measures to streamline processes can help expedite repairs and reduce client dissatisfaction. We looked at and improved the repairs customer journey and this is feeding into the council wide review underway around the corporate customer journey review.

- **Process to improve communication with tenants**

In Tenancy Services we have launched a new process that will allow Customer Services and tenants who contact us using the form on the website to contact us and then create a work item for the officer in question when a tenant wants to call us to discuss something. There are many benefits to this process:

- **Direct link from the tenant to Tenancy Services** - We get contact directly to a separate workflow and no longer must we search for emails for who we need to call back.
- **360 views of the outcome for Customer Services** - they can see what we did.
- **Respond to them via the portal** - If they contact or have an email, we can push the reply directly to them on their customer portal and they get an email notification.
- **Manager overview** – As managers we can see when someone has not contacted a tenant in the timescale and chase prior, we can re-allocate work easily when there is an officer off or pulled into an emergency.

We also use customer feedback and complaints as an opportunity to learn and / or improve our services, processes or systems and to prevent the same thing happening again. For example, including changing or improving our policies, changing or improving information on our website and improving the way we respond to and record concerns.

### **Why were these formal complaints made?**

In terms of the 177 complaints received by the Council in 2024/25, there are five main themes as to why our customers were not satisfied with the service we provided and felt the need to put a complaint into the Council. These were ranked into the following order in terms of most frequent cited:

1. Quality of Service
2. Unreasonable Delay
3. Treatment & Behaviour
4. Processes & Procedures not followed
5. Issue not resolved informally

### **Summary of the types of complaints that we have refused to accept.**

The complaints that we refused to accept that related to our role as landlord were for the following reasons in 2024/25 were in line with those set out in our Customer Feedback and Complaints Policy. They were:



- Considered to be a request for service and not a complaint.
- The complaint referred to an ongoing matter that was under a live legal/appeals process.
- Complaints that were about elected members that were redirected to our Member Complaints process

### **3. Service Improvements**

#### **Looking to the future – changes to better manage the complaints process**

There are a number of actions in progress which will improve how we manage and learn from complaints at Melton, these include:

#### **Implementing a new Complaint Management System and data oversight arrangements:**

A crucial step is the implementation of a new complaint management system that not only streamlines the complaint-handling process but also supports robust and effective data management. Following approval in the 2024/25 budget, this system has been procured and will be implemented in 2025/26. This will also address Freedom of Information requests, service access or other statutory requests to enhance transparency and compliance. It will mean that the Council no longer relies on an excel document and file-based recording system.

#### **Advancing complaint categories (Improving data quality, relevance and alignment with Council priorities):**

As part of the implementation of the new Complaints Management System, the Council will review the categorisation of complaints to ensure they reflect the range of complaints received and to improve data insight and learning. Some complaints may also be more intricate, and this initiative aligns with ongoing improvements and modernisation.

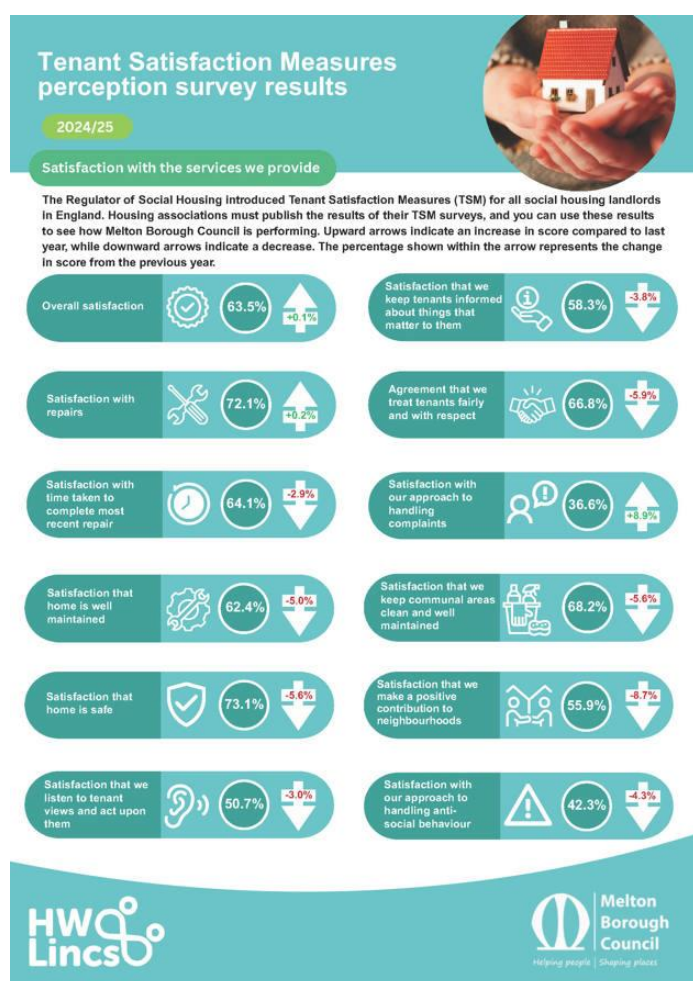
#### **Routine monitoring, oversight and reporting**

Regular monitoring and reporting mechanism for complaints has taken place through quarterly reporting to Cabinet throughout 2024/25, ensuring that trends and patterns are identified promptly. Alongside this we will incorporate data-driven insights into our decision-making processes, enabling the organisation to adapt and improve services based on evolving needs.

The Council established a Landlord Assurance Board in 2024 with tenant representation which receives updates on complaints as part of its remit and uses data from this to inform on decisions of policy change such as the retendering of the repairs contract. The Landlord Assurance Board reports to the Council's Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis – [The Landlord Assurance Board 2024/2025 report](#) is available at [democracy.melton.gov.uk](https://democracy.melton.gov.uk).

The Council also reports its regulatory compliance to the Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis which includes the approach taken to oversight of complaints. [The Regulatory Compliance in Housing 2024/2025 annual compliance report](#) is available at [democracy.melton.gov.uk](http://democracy.melton.gov.uk).

The Council takes the Tenant Satisfaction Measures Survey (TSM) and findings seriously. TSM data has been reviewed, shared with our tenant engagement group and landlord assurance board, and has been used directly to inform service and contract changes. The decision and approach to procurement of the Council's repairs, voids and planned maintenance programmes is the most significant use of customer feedback (including complaints) to shape policy and service delivery decisions. It is positive that in 24/25 the TSM data showed significant improvement in tenant perception of the way in which the Council handles complaints (8.9% increase) which is reflective of the increased focus on positive and proactive complaints handling and accountability. [The Tenant Satisfaction Measures 2024/2025 data](#) can be found at [melton.gov.uk/tenantscorner](http://melton.gov.uk/tenantscorner) and the associated infographic is set out below. The Council has now moved to a planned quarterly approach to TSM data collection to support real time understanding of tenant satisfaction and service improvement requirements.



## Involving tenants in complaint analysis

Tenants will be invited to a task and finish session to review the learning outcomes from complaints. Going forward the Your Voice, Your Choice resident's group will monitor this each quarter.

## **Enhancing learning capture processes**

To help us embed learning a complaints tracker has been in place during 2024/25 until the new Complaints system is in place during 2025/26. This involves tracking the actions taken and their impact on enhancing services across the Council. To facilitate quick changes in the short term, addressing specific findings mentioned in the report is imperative. This may involve targeted interventions and adjustments based on immediate needs for particular services. Examples of actions and improvements that have been delivered as a result of this are:

- Following a complaint regarding the lack of timely response and acknowledgement of a mutual exchange application, a review of the existing process was undertaken. It was identified that the original procedure involved applications being passed directly to Housing Officers without administration oversight or tracking, which contributed to delays and lack of communication.

In response, the Tenancy Services Manager implemented a key process improvement - the introduction of a central log for all mutual exchange applications. This log is now maintained and monitored by the Admin Officers, who ensure that all applications are promptly logged, acknowledged and tracked. The new process provides administrative support to Housing Officers and enables earlier intervention to avoid delays.

As a result of this improvement, tenants now experience a more efficient and transparent mutual exchange process. Applications are acknowledged promptly, progress is monitored, and communication has significantly improved. This ensures tenants feel supported, informed, and confident that their application is being handled in a timely manner.

- We have received feedback from tenants relating to officer conduct, including poor attitude, lack of and poor communication from both our contractors and council officers and general dissatisfaction with service delivery. In response, we recognised the need to clearly define expected standards of behaviour and communication.

To address this, we have co-created with tenants through the Your Voice, Your Choice resident's group and developed a Code of Conduct for both contractors and council officers. This document outlines clear expectations around professionalism, communication, respect and accountability when engaging with residents.

The introduction of the Code of Conduct, developed in collaboration with tenants, will help set clear expectations for the behaviour and communication standards of both council officers and contractors. This will lead to improved professionalism, greater respect in interactions, and a stronger accountability when issues arise. Tenants will have a reference point to support them in

raising concerns and can expect a more consistent and respectful level of service.

### **Learning from issue related complaints:**

We need to take learning from where particular issues in services cause a rise in the number of complaints. Where this is the case, we need to look at the root cause of this and tackle the issue rather than the symptoms. Some examples are:

- The main learning for us is following feedback from complaints and TSM data has led us to tender our repairs and maintenance service and move to do a different supplier.
- Due to the repeated complaints involving lack of communication from Tenancy Services, we will be implementing a new service level agreement around timeframes with calling tenants back and reviewing the customer journey with regards to tracking contact from our customers.

### **Corporate Priority**

Our Corporate Vision 36 and Corporate Delivery Plan include a commitment to review the housing repairs customer journey and make improvements to improve the experience for our tenants when making and following up on repairs. This links in with feedback from our tenants on improving communication and feedback processes.

### **4. Any findings of non-compliance with the Code by the HO/LGSCO.**

None for LGSCO.

In January 2025 the Council received an adverse finding from the Housing Ombudsman. In accordance with paragraph 52 of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme, there was a service failure by the landlord in its handling of the resident's reports of multiple repairs, including damp and mould. This was reviewed by the council's Monitoring Officer and Senior Leadership Team and reported to Cabinet to ensure appropriate oversight and learning from the case.

### **5. Actions following any annual report about our performance from the HO/LGSCO.**

Not applicable.

### **6. Actions following any other relevant reports or publications produced by the HO/LGSCO in relation to our work.**

None received.