



Annual complaints performance and service improvement report

2025/2026

1. Cabinet's response to the report from Cllr Freer– 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 2025/26. 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 2026. The Council welcomes the recent detailed review of its complaints policy carried out by the Housing Ombudsman. The recommendations arising from the policy review have been properly considered, including as part of the Council's Scrutiny and overall governance arrangements, and have been incorporated into the refreshed policy. It is positive that the Housing Ombudsman has prioritised review of policies for council's subject to Local Government Reorganisation, so that there is confidence in compliance and alignment as we contemplate aggregation of housing services in the future.

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.

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

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

Councillor Alison Freer

**Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Waste and Environmental Services
Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC)**

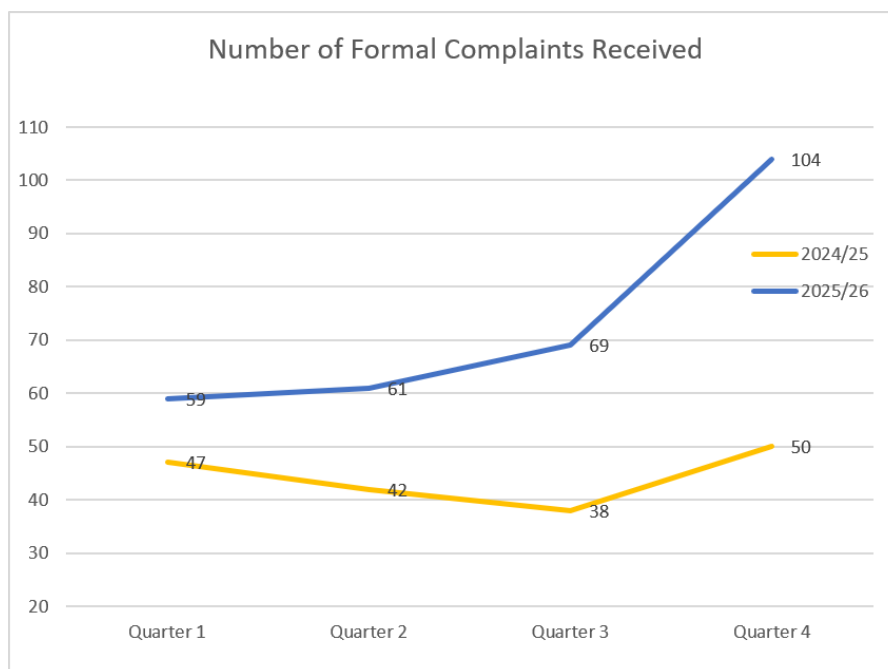
2. Qualitative and quantitative analysis of our complaint handling performance - this must also include a summary of the types of complaints that we have refused to accept.

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 Team Leaders, Senior Officers and 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.

2025/26 performance

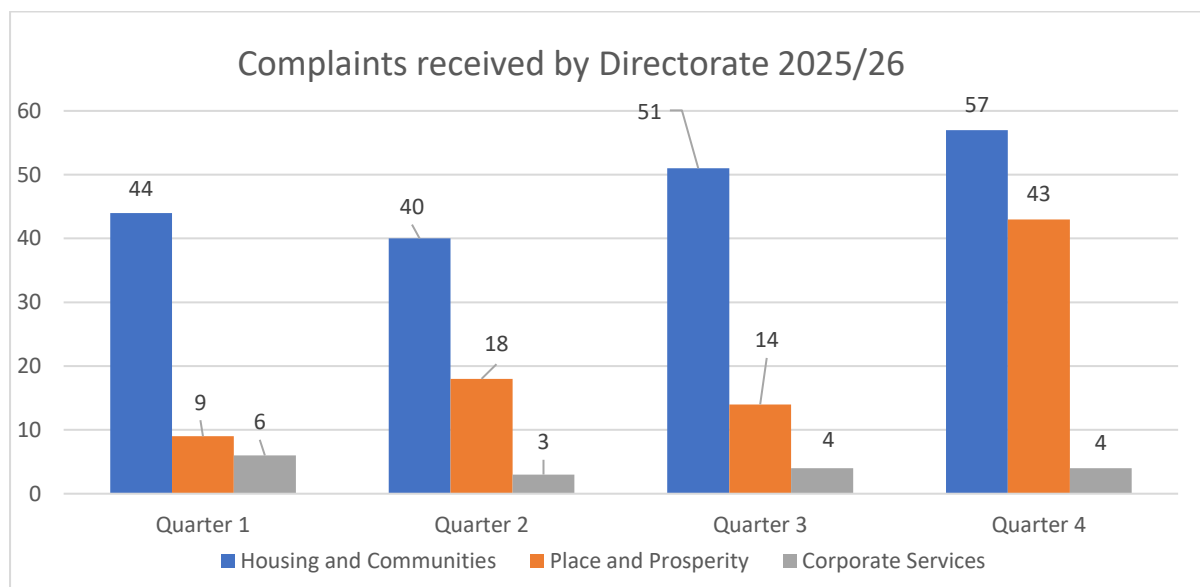
In 2025/26, the Council received 293 formal complaints from customers. The number of formal complaints was a significant increase on the 177 received in the same period last year.



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 2025/26 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 increase in complaints for the Place and Prosperity directorate particularly in quarter 4 was expected given the scale of changes that have been introduced to improve the Planning service, with new processes and ways of working still bedding in. During this period, customers often experience uncertainty or heightened sensitivity, which can lead to more complaints. The breakdown of these complaints by Directorate is shown below.



Housing (Landlord Services) Complaints

In 2025/26, the Council as landlord received 183 formal complaints from tenants (147 Stage 1 and 36 Stage 2 complaints) which is 62% of the total complaints received by the Council.

In 2024/25 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 an increase from 14.5% in 2024/25 to 24.5% in 2025/26 of Stage 1 complaints progressing to Stage 2. This indicates a decreased satisfaction at stage 1 in terms of the complaints progressing to Stage 2. We will look at the patterns/trends causing this and work with officers to review decision making processes at Stage 1.

During 2025/26 the Council responded to 88% of stage 1 complaints and 94% of all stage 2 complaints in the timescales set out in our policy and in line with agreed extensions agreed in the ombudsman code. Where response times have fallen short of what is required, they have been investigated and reported to the Landlord Assurance Board. In these cases, the main factor has been turnover of staff.

The biggest area for complaints were unreasonable delays (31%), poor communication (27%) and dissatisfaction with repairs (19%). Together, these account for 77% of all housing complaints received. The findings indicate that the key drivers of dissatisfaction are service delivery timescales, customer communication and the quality of repairs services provided.

Combined, delays and communication issues account for 58% of all housing complaints across 2025/26, highlighting the importance of timely service delivery and proactive customer engagement in improving customer satisfaction and reducing complaint volumes.

Complaints upheld or partially upheld.

Of the 293 formal complaints so far received this year from customers, 136 of these have been upheld or partially upheld by the Council at stage 1 and 2 which is 46.42% and is a decrease on the 61.58% upheld last year.

Housing (Landlord Services) Complaints

Of the 180 formal complaints received this year in Housing from tenants that required a response in year 125 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 the same as last year and 23% higher 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.

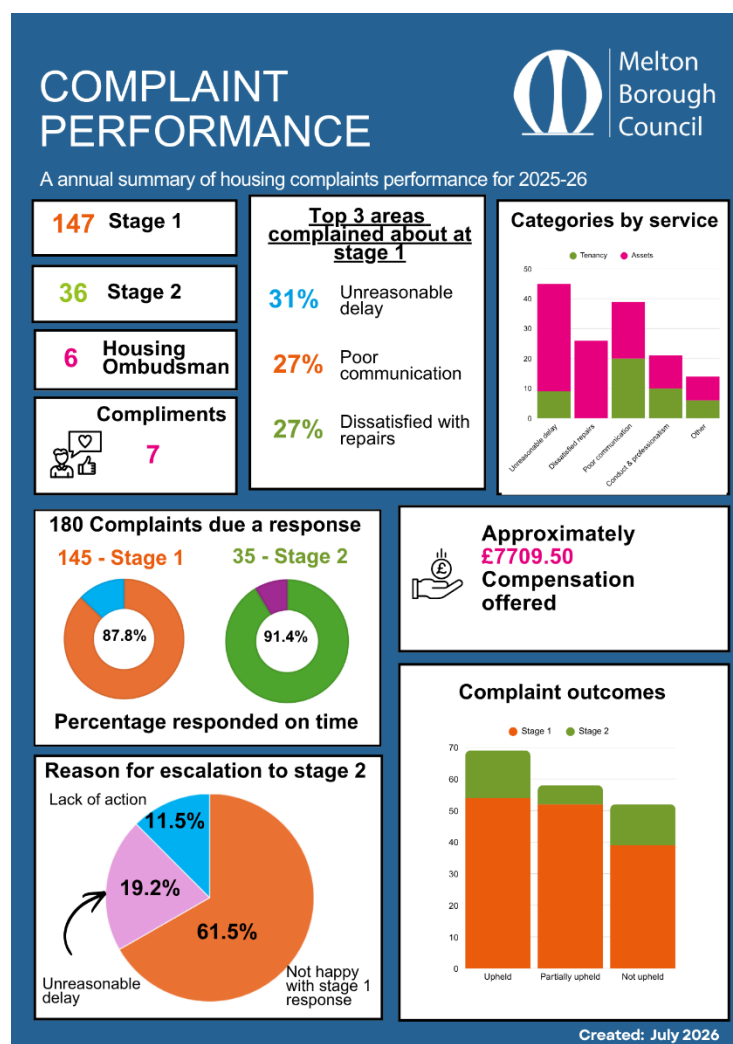
The most recent Melton BC annual report to tenants 2024-25 which was posted out to all tenants in November 2025 included a section on customer feedback which included complaints.

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 2026 Silktide Index confirmed Melton's position in joint 1st place in UK Councils.

Information about making a complaint is on the Council's main website and 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. Complaints performance for 2025/26 can be seen overleaf:



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. We have implemented 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 includes regular updates on repair status, clear explanations of procedures, and providing avenues for clients to easily reach out with concerns or enquiries. We have an agreed an internal action to focus on staff training around keeping complainant informed throughout the process (including any actions to be concluded after the complaint response).

- **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. We have agreed an internal action to retrain staff on the refreshed policy around response letters and communication. We will also ensure that the outcomes from our tenant scrutiny on complaints are shared and discussed with our staff to support future learning.
- **Regular Monitoring and Feedback:** Establishing regular monitoring mechanisms to track complaint progress and client satisfaction can help identify issues early on and proactively address them. We have set up processes to track and monitor actions to completion coming from complaints and these feed into analysis to improve the way we manage feedback and in our policy. We have agreed an action to strengthen our internal tracking systems, and this will be routinely discussed at Leadership Team meetings across the Council.

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 several concerns. The Council has strengthened its contractor management processes and has developed a new repairs service, with input from tenants, and appointed new contractors starting from May 2026 to manage its voids, day to day repairs and planned maintenance contracts. The changes made to the service are designed to improve the customer journey, improve the customer journey and ultimately lead to higher levels of satisfaction.
- **Process to improve communication with tenants**

In Tenancy Services we are a year into the process to continually improve our communication with tenants. This process involves Housing Teams, Customer Services and tenants to improve the contact and create a simpler process for officers to contact tenants following any contact into the Council. We have seen many benefits to tenants which include:

- **Direct link from the tenant to Tenancy Services** - All contact from tenants is logged in a system and it can be tracked from point of call to resolution of the issue.
- **360 views of the outcome for Customer Services** - they can see what we did.

- **Respond to tenants via the portal** - If tenants 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 before the tenant feels the need to escalate their issue. We can re-allocate work easily when the officer is on leave or pulled into an emergency. This is subject to manager oversight to ensure we contact tenants and respond in a timely manner.
- **Strengthening staff awareness and learning from complaints**

Throughout the year, we continued to deliver quarterly Housing Briefings for all housing staff, providing regular opportunities to share learning, promote good practice and reinforce key service priorities. Complaints management has been a topic of focus within these sessions, helping colleagues understand the importance of their role in delivering positive customer experiences and preventing service failures.

The briefings have been used to increase awareness of the complaints process, ensuring staff understand how their actions and interactions with tenants can influence complaint outcomes. We have also shared learning from complaints received, including common themes and trends, and explored the factors that can lead to Stage 1 complaints escalating to Stage 2. By encouraging discussion and reflection, these sessions have helped embed a culture of learning, accountability and continuous service improvement across the housing service.

- **Strengthening complaint recording and service learning**

During the year, we delivered targeted training to all housing managers responsible for investigating complaints. The training focused on the importance of accurately recording complaint outcomes, lessons learned and agreed actions to ensure that learning from complaints is consistently captured and shared across the service.

Emphasis was placed on recording meaningful outcomes and identifying service improvements arising from complaints. This enables more effective analysis of complaint trends, recurring themes and areas requiring further attention, helping us to target improvement activity where it will have the greatest impact.

The training also reinforced the importance of setting and monitoring timescales for agreed actions and accurately recording compensation awards. This provides greater oversight, supports accountability and helps ensure that actions arising from complaints are completed and monitored effectively.

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 293 complaints received by the Council in 2025/26, 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 and this was consistent in order with 2024/25:

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 2025/26 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.
- The complainant chose to withdraw their complaint before the complaints process had concluded.
- The complaint was about another resident rather than the service provided by the Council in its role as landlord.

3. Service Improvements

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

There are several 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 is being implemented in stages. The system is in place to address Freedom of Information requests, service access or other statutory requests to enhance transparency and compliance, and the complaints module is currently being implemented during 2026/27. Once in place this 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.

Reporting and complaints tracking

During 2025/26 we have used the complaints tracker to understand the type and nature of complaints that we have received and undertake further analysis into this. The complaints tracker also enables us to see the associated actions that are coming out of these complaints and how these are being addressed.

Routine monitoring, oversight and reporting

Regular monitoring and reporting mechanism for complaints has taken place through quarterly reporting to Cabinet throughout 2025/26, 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.

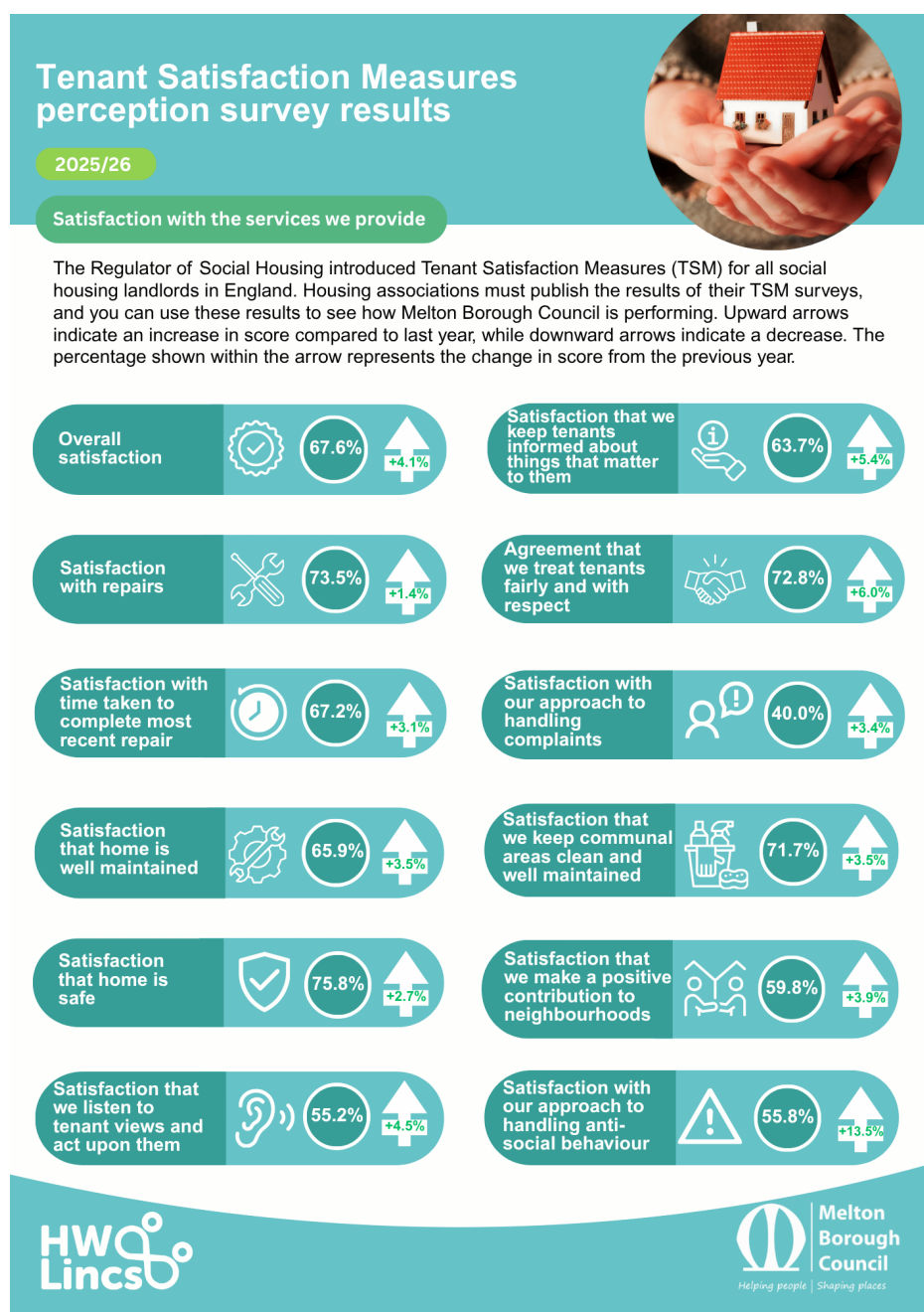
The Council established a Landlord Assurance Board in 2024, and this meets on a quarterly basis with tenant representation which receives updates on complaints as part of its remit and uses data from this to inform on decisions of policy change such as the retendering of the repairs contract. We report quarterly on complaints to the Landlord Assurance Board and reports to the Council's Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis – the 2025/26 report can be found [here](#). 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 2025/26 annual compliance report can be found [here](#).

The Council takes the Tenant Satisfaction Survey 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 was the most significant use of customer feedback (including complaints) to shape policy and service delivery decisions.

It is positive that in 2025/26 the TSM data showed significant improvement in tenant perception of the way in which the Council handles ASB (13.5% increase) and complaints (3.4% increase) which is reflective of the increased focus on positive and proactive complaints handling and accountability.

The 2025/26 TSM data can be found [here](#) and the associated infographic is set out overleaf. The Council has now moved to a quarterly approach to TSM data collection to support real time understanding of tenant satisfaction and service improvement requirements.



Involving tenants in complaint analysis

Tenant involvement remains a key element of our approach to learning from complaints and driving service improvement. Complaints performance is a standing agenda item at our tenant-led group, Your Voice, Your Choice (YVYC), where tenants review complaint trends, outcomes and key themes. Where areas of concern are identified, the group can refer matters to the Tenant Scrutiny Panel (TSP) for more detailed consideration.

The TSP has recently selected complaints handling as a service area for review. The exercise will focus on how tenants are communicated with throughout the Stage 1 complaints process, including whether information is clear, timely, accessible and easy to understand. It will also assess whether tenants understand the complaints process, the outcome reached and any next steps available to them.

The findings and recommendations from the review will be presented to the Landlord Assurance Board (LAB) in November 2026, helping to ensure that tenant feedback continues to shape improvements to our complaints service.

Following consideration by the LAB, the recommendations will be used to inform service improvements, and an action plan will be developed. Progress against agreed actions will be monitored through the YVYC group to ensure that tenant feedback leads to meaningful changes and improved outcomes for tenants and leaseholders.

Enhancing the complaints experience

As part of our commitment to continuous improvement, the Tenant Engagement Team will be introducing Customer Journey Mapping to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of tenants and leaseholders navigating the complaints process. This will enable us to identify areas where the customer experience can be improved and ensure that our approach remains focused on the needs of tenants and leaseholders.

During 2026/27, we will introduce transactional satisfaction surveys for customers on their experience with the complaints process. The feedback received on the process will help us better understand customers' experiences, identify areas for improvement and measure the effectiveness of our complaint handling arrangements. We have set an initial target of receiving at least 10 completed surveys per quarter, which will provide a robust evidence base to inform service improvements.

The survey will be about understanding the complainants experience, identify learning opportunities and provide assurance that our complaints process is operating effectively and in line with the ombudsman's code. This will be done initially by phone call so we can explain the purpose and get consent for participation. Then the survey will be done to their correspondence preference. Each

quarter we will have a report which will go to Your Voice Your Choice and show 'we listened, this is what we are doing with your feedback.

Complaints Improvement Action Plan for 2026/27

The table below sets out our key actions to improve our complaints process and make this experience simpler and easier to access for residents.

Action	Lead	Target Date
Staff training on the new policy and supporting processes	Policy and Comms Manager	Dec 26
Development of our internal tracking systems to understand the type and nature of complaints that we have received and undertake further analysis into this.	Policy and Comms Manager/ Tenant Engagement & Regulatory Compliance Lead / Legal	Dec 26
We will introduce transactional satisfaction surveys for customers who have completed the complaints process.	Tenant Engagement & Regulatory Compliance Lead	Mar 27
Update the complaint management system to support robust and effective data management.	Policy and Comms Manager/ Legal	Mar 27
Review the categorisation of complaints to ensure they reflect the range of complaints received and to improve data insight and learning	Policy and Comms Manager	Mar 27
Tenant Scrutiny Panel will undertake a review on the Council's approach to complaints handling. We will also ensure that the outcomes from our tenant scrutiny on complaints are shared and discussed with our staff to support future learning.	Tenant Engagement & Regulatory Compliance Lead	Mar 27
Review the internal processes regarding complaints to give assurance around Ombudsman cases	Policy and Comms Manager / Legal / Housing	Dec 26

Corporate Priority

We delivered against our commitments against Our Corporate Delivery Plan 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.

None for HO

Ombudsman Complaints performance

From 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026, 13 complaints were received by the LGSCO in respect of Melton Borough Council. Of these, five were not for them or not ready for them to investigate. They assessed and closed six complaints and investigated and upheld two complaints.

From 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026, 12 complaints were of which five complaints were determined by the HO in respect of Melton Borough Council. Of these five complaints, one was classed as a service failure, two were classed as maladministration, two were closed with no outcome, details of these are set out below:

Maladministration

In one case the HO found that there was maladministration in the Council's handling of the tenant's reporting of ASB. The Council has since apologised to the resident in writing for the failures noted in this determination and has paid the resident compensation to acknowledge and redress the distress and inconvenience caused by the landlord's handling of the resident's reports of ASB.

In one case the HO found that there was maladministration in that the Council did not fully follow its ASB policy and process. The landlord took some positive actions to address the reports of ASB. It sent warning letters, replaced a fence and requested diary sheets and noise recordings. However, it failed to fully follow its ASB policy and process. The HO, therefore, made a failure finding and ordered the Council to pay compensation for the likely distress and inconvenience.

Service Failure

This case concerned ASB impacting on a resident, the HO found that there was a minor failure by the landlord in the service it provided, and it did not appropriately acknowledge this. The reports of ASB from the resident were not frequent, but the landlord did miss opportunities to do more to support the resident, causing some distress and inconvenience. The HO found shortfalls in our record keeping and communication in this case and the Council did not demonstrate that it took all the necessary actions in line with its ASB policy. It has also not demonstrated that it clearly communicated to the resident what actions they needed to take to progress an ASB investigation.

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.

We received feedback from the HO in April 2026 following a review of our Customer Feedback and Complaints Policy and recommendations of changes to this policy. These changes were incorporated into this policy following a review and update undertaken in July 2026.