

Derby City Council

Complaints Performance and Service Improvement

Annual Report April 2025 – March 2026



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Foreword and governing body response

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erby City Council has received and reviewed this Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report for 2025/26, produced by Derby Homes.

As the Member Responsible for Complaints, I have continued to receive regular information about complaints performance throughout the year through Derby Homes' governance arrangements, reports and briefings. This provides assurance that complaints remain visible at a senior level and that emerging issues and areas for improvement are being considered.



Self-assessment against The Complaint Handling Code

I have reviewed Derby Homes' annual self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, and I am satisfied that it provides an accurate reflection of the organisation's approach to complaint handling and its compliance with the Code.

The self-assessment is supported by evidence from policies, procedures, complaint responses, performance reporting and information provided to and by customers. It also reflects the way complaints are handled in practice and the continued focus on providing a fair and accessible complaints service.

Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report

This report provides a clear overview of complaints during 2025/26, the main themes arising from them and the learning identified during the year.

Complaints provide an important source of information about customers' experiences of services. The continued development of complaint categorisation and analysis provides greater insight into recurring themes and the underlying causes of dissatisfaction, allowing learning to be more clearly linked to service improvement.

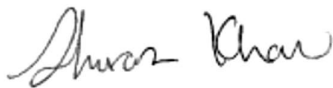
Repairs and property condition remain prominent themes within complaints, alongside communication. These remain important areas of focus, and the Council will continue to seek assurance that learning identified through complaints is reflected in how services are delivered and improved.

Housing Ombudsman findings provide a further important source of independent scrutiny and learning. The report sets out the findings received during the year, together with the actions, orders and recommendations arising from them. The Council expects learning from these cases to be considered across the organisation, including where individual cases highlight opportunities for wider service improvement.

Derby City Council's recent C1 consumer grading provides independent assurance that the organisation is delivering the outcomes of the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards. Maintaining this position requires continued focus on customers' experiences and an effective response where services do not meet expectations.

The Council will continue to scrutinise complaints performance and seek assurance that learning from complaints, customer feedback and Housing Ombudsman findings results in demonstrable improvements for customers.

Having considered the annual self-assessment, complaints performance, Ombudsman findings and the learning and service improvements set out in this report, I am satisfied that appropriate arrangements are in place for the handling, oversight and learning from complaints. I endorse this report and the annual self-assessment for submission to the Housing Ombudsman.



Cllr Shiraz Khan

Cabinet member for Housing, Strategic Planning and Regulatory Services

References to Derby City Council and Derby Homes

Derby Homes manages and delivers Derby City Council's housing services on behalf of the Council. Throughout this report, references to Derby Homes generally relate to the delivery and management of housing services, while Derby City Council is used where referring to the landlord, regulatory reporting or formal Council governance. Where appropriate, the organisations are reported together in accordance with regulatory requirements.

Self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code

All landlords must carry out an annual self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code to ensure their complaint handling remains in line with its requirements. Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure and/or change in procedures. For the purposes of this submission and self-assessment, Derby City Council and Derby Homes operate as a group. The self-assessment for 2026 has been reviewed by the Member Responsible for Complaints and the Strategic Partnership Board.

It is available at: www.derbyhomes.org/advice-support/complaints

Additional assurance was provided through a review of the Complaints Policy undertaken by the Housing Ombudsman as part of its duty to monitor compliance with the Complaint Handling Code. The review resulted in 12 recommendations, principally relating to wording, clarification and confirmation of existing practice, which have been incorporated into the revised policy. Following further engagement on the handling of complaints involving both Derby Homes and Derby City Council, the Ombudsman confirmed that the additional wording captured its recommendation and provided the required clarity.

Derby City Council is fully compliant with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code which came into effect on 1 April 2024.

Executive summary

During 2025/26, Derby Homes received 840 formal complaints, an 8% reduction from 909 in the previous year. Stage One complaints reduced from 756 to 665, while Stage Two complaints increased from 153 to 175. Complaint volumes remain considerably higher than earlier in the five-year period, reflecting both service experience and a national environment in which customers are increasingly encouraged and enabled to raise complaints.

Complaint handling remained timely, with 99.3% of Stage One and 100% of Stage Two complaints responded to within the Complaint Handling Code timescales. Satisfaction with the approach to complaint handling (TP09) increased from 43.3% to 45.9%, although analysis continues to show that this perception measure captures wider experiences of dissatisfaction as well as customers who have used the formal complaints process.

Repairs and property condition remained the most prominent complaint theme, alongside communication and customer service. These themes were also reflected in Ombudsman findings and financial redress. During the year, 18 Ombudsman determinations resulted in 29 individual findings, including 12 adverse findings. Derby Homes' Housing Ombudsman maladministration rate for 2025/26 is anticipated to be 50%, compared with 78% in 2024/25. The LGSCO made no findings of fault and there were no findings of non-compliance by either Ombudsman.

Learning during the year has included improvements to repairs communication, monitoring commitments made through complaint responses, recognising and explaining the distinction between complaints and service requests, and responding to customers' individual circumstances. Derby Homes has also continued to develop a more systematic approach to organisational learning, bringing together complaints, Ombudsman findings and wider customer insight and strengthening how resulting actions and outcomes are monitored.

Overall, the report demonstrates strong compliance with complaint-handling timescales and continued development of learning from complaints, while identifying Stage Two escalation, repairs and property condition, communication and the delivery of agreed actions as areas requiring continued focus during 2026/27.

Complaint handling performance: April 2025– March 2026

Note that complaints figures for Tenant Satisfaction Measures only include data from Derby City Council and Derby Homes tenants. As per the regulator's technical requirements both organisations report as a group for the purposes of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures submission. All other figures, tables and charts in this report include all complaint data, unless specified otherwise. The Tenant Satisfaction Measure TP09 below is collected through a rolling perception survey from a random selection of participants and not directly from transactional feedback on those who have raised complaints in the period. Tenant Satisfaction Measures should be considered together, and alongside other performance and customer insight, to build an overall picture of customers' experiences. Complaint-handling satisfaction should therefore not be considered in isolation from wider service experience, including overall satisfaction and satisfaction with repairs.

Related Tenant Satisfaction Measures (Landlord: Derby City Council and Derby Homes)

<i>Satisfaction with overall service. (TP01)</i>	84.8%
<i>Satisfaction with the overall repairs service. (TP02)</i>	82.6%
<i>Proportion of respondents who report making a complaint in the last 12 months who are satisfied with their landlord's approach to complaints handling (TP09)</i>	45.9%
<i>Number of stage one complaints received per 1,000 homes. (CH01a)</i>	46.1
<i>Number of stage two complaints received per 1,000 homes. (CH01b)</i>	12.2
<i>Proportion of stage one complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales. (CH02a)</i>	99.3%
<i>Proportion of stage two complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales. (CH02b)</i>	100%

Table 1 Tenant Satisfaction Measures 2025/26 (Derby City Council and Derby Homes)

The Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code recognises that a high volume of complaints should not automatically be seen as a negative. Complaints provide landlords with valuable information about residents' experiences and an opportunity to identify where services can be improved.

During 2025/26, the number of stage one complaints received per 1,000 homes reduced to 46.1, compared with 52.0 in 2024/25. Stage two complaints increased from 10.0 to 12.2 per 1,000 homes. The number of complaints received therefore needs to be considered alongside the wider picture of complaint handling, outcomes and learning rather than as a measure of performance in isolation.

Performance in responding to complaints within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales remained strong. 99.3% of stage one complaints and 100% of stage two complaints were responded to within the required timescales, compared with

97.8% and 100% respectively in 2024/25. This is particularly positive given the continued importance placed on timely complaint handling through the statutory Complaint Handling Code.

Satisfaction with Derby Homes' approach to complaint handling (TP09) increased from 43.3% to 45.9%. Complaint handling remains one of the more challenging perception measures across the sector, but the result compares positively with the available Housemark benchmarking. The latest Housemark information considered during the year placed complaint-handling satisfaction at around 40% at the median and 47% at upper quartile, putting Derby Homes between median and upper-quartile performance.

There are some important limitations when interpreting TP09. Unlike the other perception measures, the question is only asked of respondents who say they have made a complaint during the previous 12 months, resulting in a considerably smaller sample. Analysis undertaken by Derby Homes has also shown that customers do not always distinguish between a formal complaint and other expressions of dissatisfaction or requests for service.

A review undertaken during the year found that, of 212¹ customers who answered the complaint question in the 2025/26 customer survey (*"Have you made a complaint to Derby Homes in the last 12 months?"*), only 63 (29.7%) could be confirmed as having been through the formal complaints process during the previous two years (2024/25 or 2025/26). The remaining 149 (70.3%) had not. Some customers are likely to have instead reported issues such as anti-social behaviour or multiple repairs, which they may have understood or described as making a complaint.

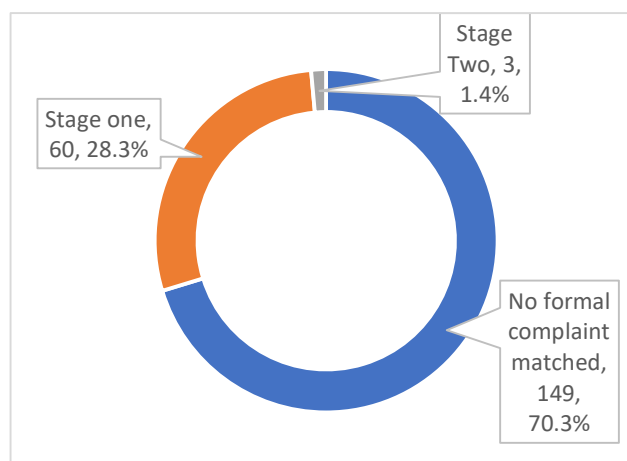


Chart 1 Formal complaint records matched for customers who reported having complained in the 2025/26 Customer Survey

This closely mirrors the previous year's analysis, when the same proportion (70.3%) of respondents who considered that they had recently complained could not be matched to the formal complaints process. This suggests a consistent difference between customers' understanding of a complaint and its formal definition.

This does not lessen the significance of customers' dissatisfaction, but it demonstrates that TP09 reflects wider customer perceptions and service experiences as well as experience of the formal complaints process. Work has therefore continued to better understand these perceptions and make it clearer to customers when a formal complaint has been raised.

¹ **Context note:** This analysis includes all 212 customers who reported having made a complaint in the previous 12 months. This differs from the TP09 sample of 205 because seven respondents did not provide a valid response to the subsequent complaint-handling satisfaction question and were therefore excluded from the TSM calculation. As this was a brief desktop analysis of customers who identified themselves as having complained, all 212 respondents have been retained.

Total complaints received

This section gives an overview of all complaints received by Derby Homes, which includes complaints not included in the Tenant Satisfaction Measures, such as complaints from leaseholders, and neighbouring properties that are not Derby City Council or Derby Homes housing stock. Therefore, the numbers of complaints will be higher than what is reported as part of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures.

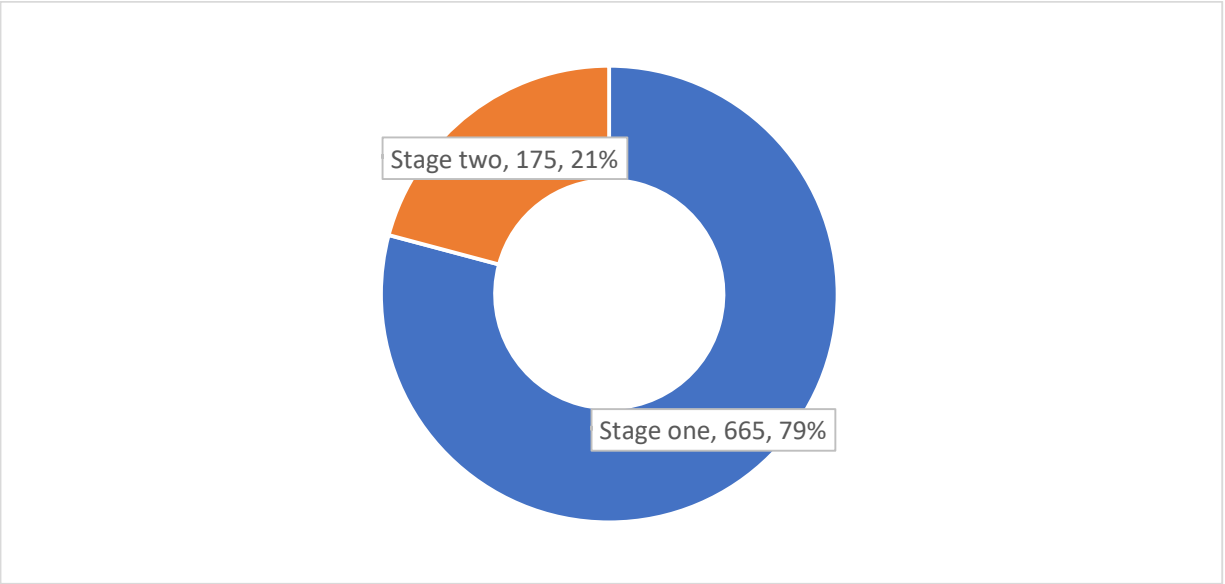


Chart 2 Breakdown of 840 total complaints received in the year

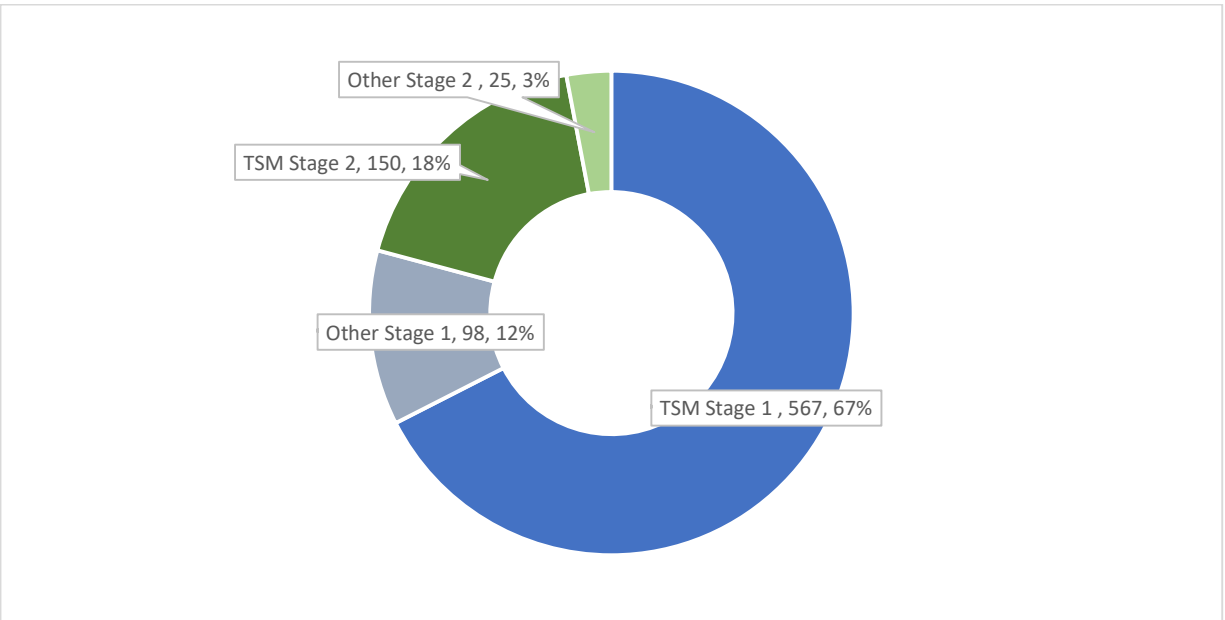


Chart 3 Complaints broken down by stage and whether in scope for TSMs

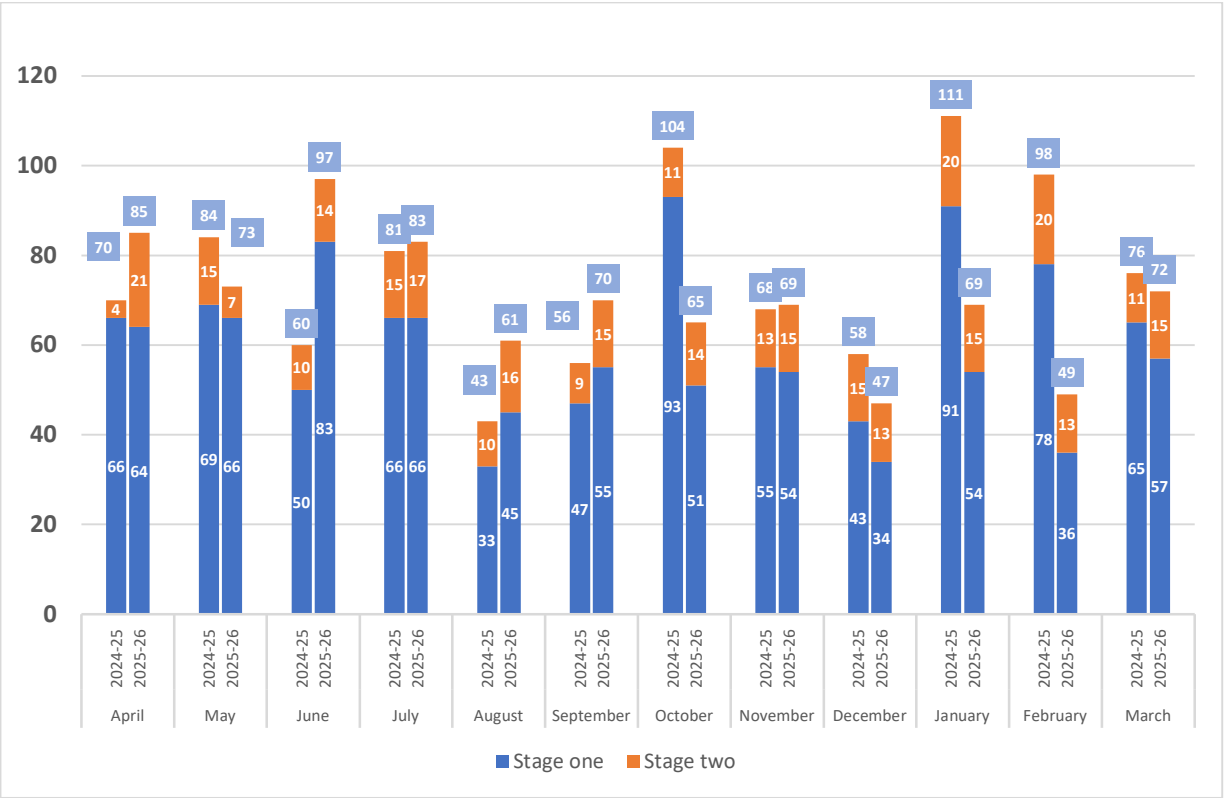


Chart 4 Total complaints received each month, broken down by stage and compared against the previous year

Monthly complaint volumes fluctuated during the year, with total complaints lower than the previous year in eight of the 12 months. There were, however, notable increases in June and October 2025, demonstrating that the overall annual reduction was not consistent throughout the year. Stage Two complaints were also higher than the previous year in several months, contributing to the overall increase in Stage Two complaints considered in the five-year analysis below.

Monthly variation should be interpreted with caution, as complaint volumes can fluctuate according to service activity and individual circumstances. Longer-term trends and the nature and outcomes of complaints therefore provide a more meaningful indication of performance than individual monthly movements.

Complaints received over the past five years

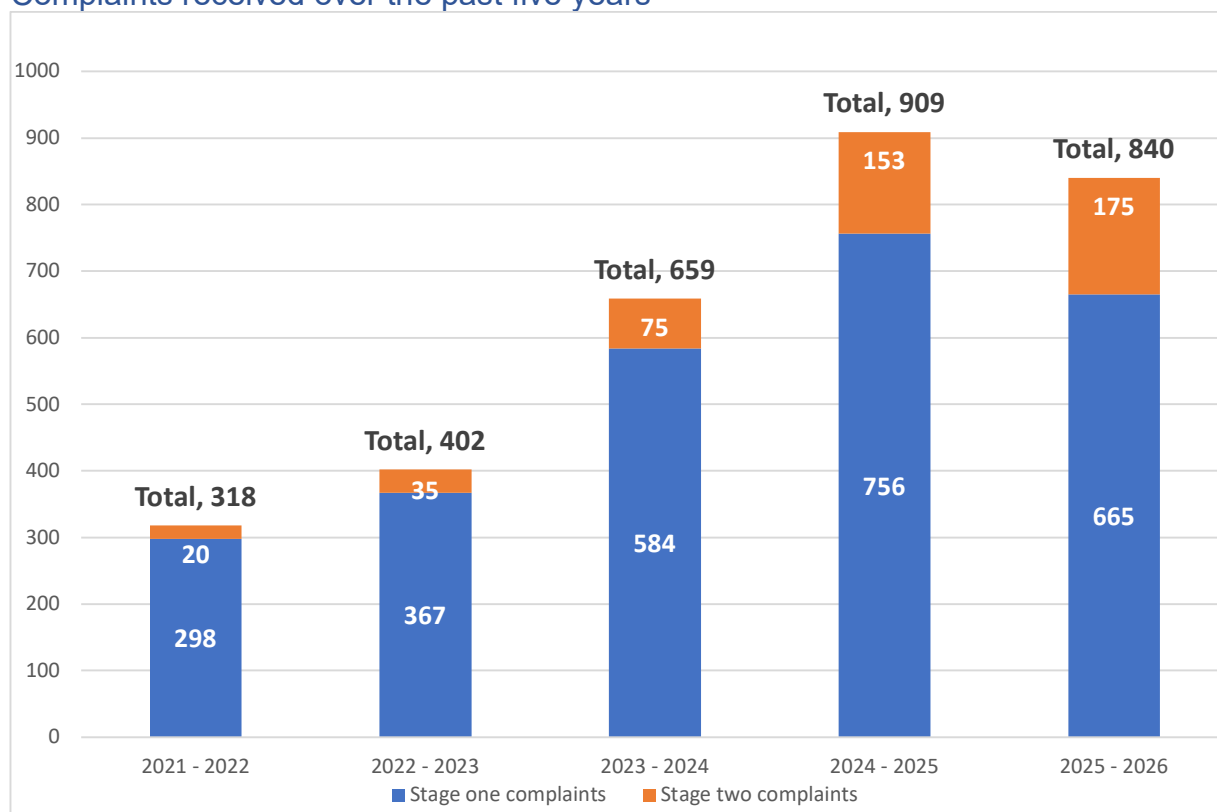


Chart 5 Total complaints received over the past five years, by stage

Complaint volumes increased substantially between 2021/22 and 2024/25, before reducing in 2025/26. This longer-term trend should be considered in the context of significant changes to the national complaints environment. During this period, the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code progressively strengthened expectations around recognising, recording and providing access to complaints, becoming statutory from April 2024. National Make Things Right campaigns also actively encouraged social housing residents to understand and exercise their right to complain.

These changes have helped to establish a more open and accessible complaints culture across the sector and mean that increasing complaint volumes cannot, in isolation, be interpreted as declining service performance. The increase to 909 complaints in 2024/25 is consistent with a maturing approach in which dissatisfaction is more readily recognised and recorded through the formal complaints process. In 2025/26, overall complaints reduced by 8% to 840, while remaining considerably above the levels recorded earlier in the five-year period.

Stage Two complaints have followed a slightly different pattern. Although overall complaints reduced in 2025/26, Stage Two complaints increased from 153 to 175. This reinforces the importance of looking beyond complaint volumes alone and considering outcomes, escalation rates, themes and learning to understand what the data is telling us about service quality and complaint resolution.

Requests for Service

In addition to 840 formal complaints, the Complaints Team received and redirected 1,344 requests for service during 2025/26, a reduction of 7.9% compared with the previous year.

A service request is a contact where a customer is seeking action, information or assistance to put something right, rather than expressing dissatisfaction about the landlord's response to that issue. These contacts are passed to the appropriate service to respond and are recorded separately from formal complaints.

The volume of service requests is significant: for every 100 formal complaints received during the year, the Complaints Team dealt with approximately 160 additional contacts which required service action rather than investigation through the complaints process.

Almost seven in ten (68%) related to four service areas: Housing Management (30%), responsive repairs (14%), Housing Options (12%) and ASB (12%).

This provides useful insight into how customers understand and access the complaints process. Many of the services concerned involve circumstances which are inherently negative or concerning from the customer's perspective, for example, something in the home requiring repair, unwanted behaviour from a neighbour, or a housing problem requiring resolution. It is therefore understandable that customers may describe these circumstances as a "complaint", even where what they primarily need is for the service to act.

The distinction is important. Customers should not need to understand organisational structures or the technical definition of a complaint to get help. The role of the Complaints Team is therefore not simply to determine whether a contact meets the definition of a formal complaint, but to ensure that requests for action reach the right service while identifying and formally recording dissatisfaction where there is evidence that the organisation's service or response has fallen short.

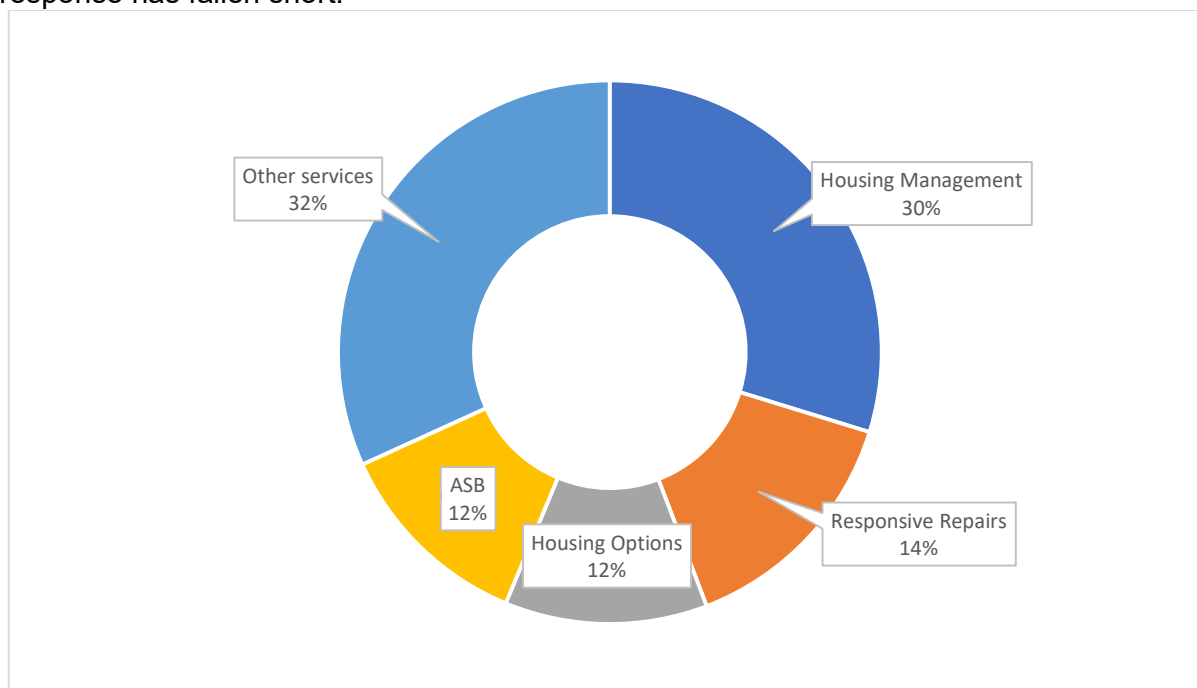


Chart 6 Service requests received by the Complaints Team – 2025/26

Complaints not accepted (exclusions)

Only 16 complaints were excluded from the formal complaints process during 2025/26, equivalent to approximately 2% of the 840 complaints recorded during the year.

More than half of exclusions (9) related to matters which had occurred more than 12 months previously. The remaining seven concerned matters outside Derby Homes' responsibility or remit, or cases being dealt with through an alternative legal or insurance route.

The low number of exclusions provides assurance that access to the complaints process is not being unnecessarily restricted, with exclusions used only in the limited circumstances provided for within the Complaints Policy and Complaint Handling Code.

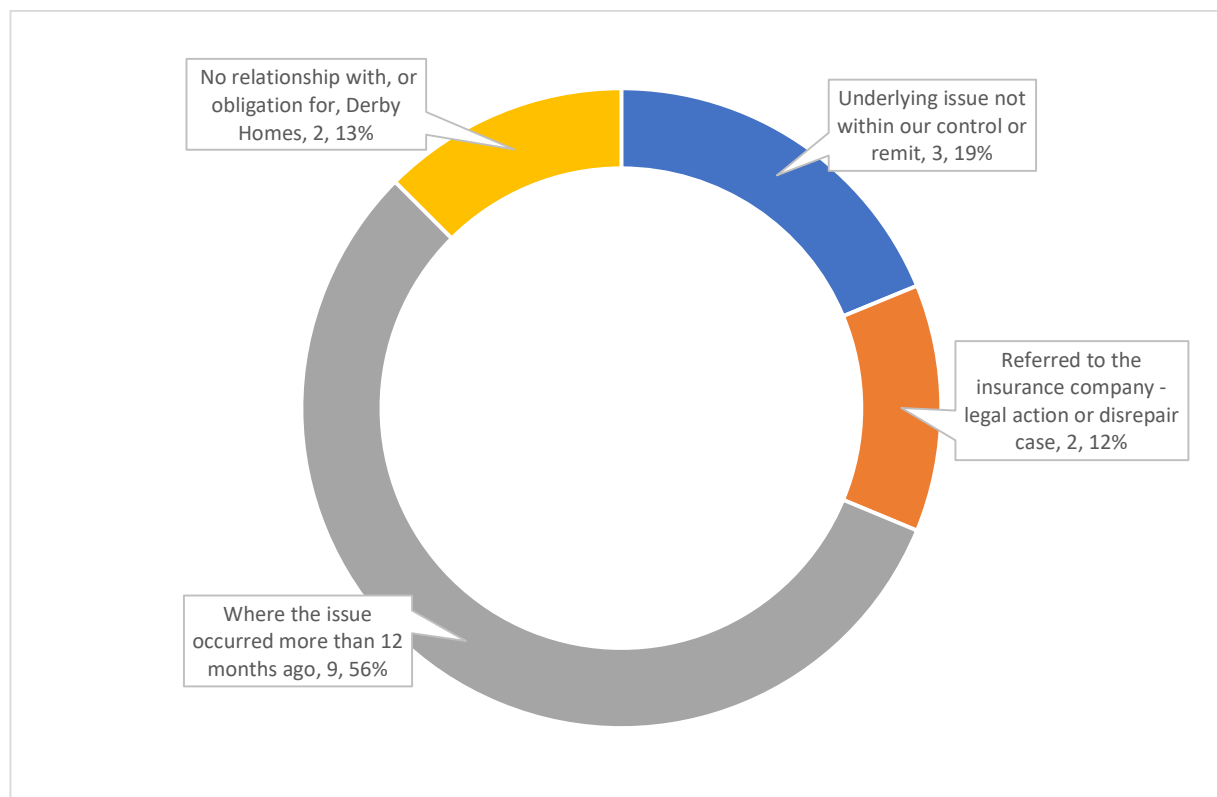


Chart 7 Exclusion reasons 2025/26

Complaint outcomes 2025/26

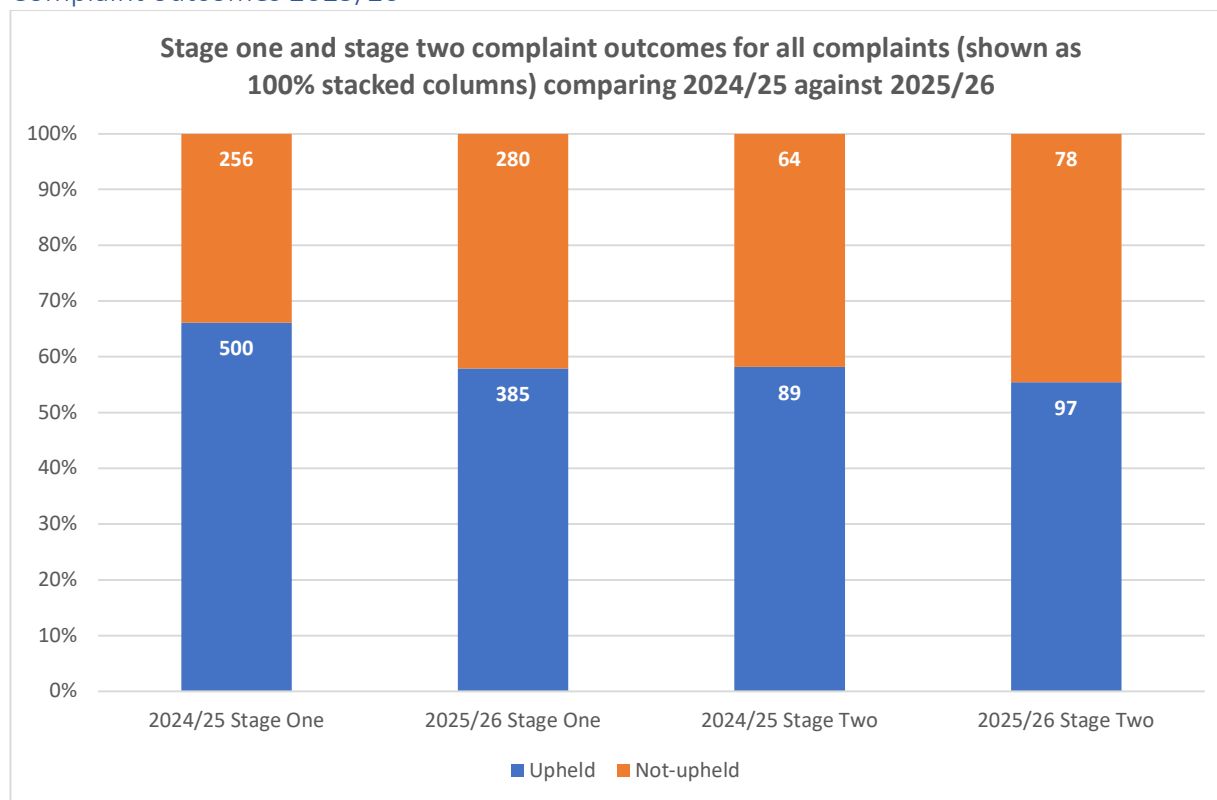


Chart 8 Stage one and stage two complaint outcomes for all complaints shown as 100% stacked columns, comparing 2024/25 against 2025-26

The proportion of complaints not upheld increased at both stages during 2025/26. At Stage One, the proportion increased from 33.9% to 42.1%, while at Stage Two it increased from 41.8% to 44.6%. Correspondingly, the proportion upheld reduced from 66.1% to 57.9% at Stage One and from 58.2% to 55.4% at Stage Two.

This indicates a reduction in the proportion of complaints where fault was identified, particularly at Stage One. However, the outcome data should be interpreted alongside the reporting limitation below, as withdrawn complaints were included within the 'not upheld' category during 2025/26.

A complaint outcome is recorded as either upheld or not upheld.

Complaint not upheld - Our investigation finds that Derby Homes was not at fault. During 2025/26, withdrawn complaints were also recorded within this category, slightly overstating the number where an investigation concluded there was no fault.

From 2026/27, complaints withdrawn before a Stage One response is issued will be excluded from completed complaint outcome statistics, while the issues raised will still be considered where appropriate.

Complaint upheld - Our investigation finds that Derby Homes was at fault in at least one aspect of the complaint.

Complaint themes and trends

To provide a consistent framework for analysing complaints, complaints are grouped against the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards as primary categories, with secondary categories adding further detail. This helps to show which areas of the standards customer dissatisfaction relates to, while more detailed categories are used to identify specific service themes and areas for learning. Complaints are grouped under the following primary categories: Safety and Quality, Transparency, Influence and Accountability, Neighbourhood and Community, Tenancy, and Other.

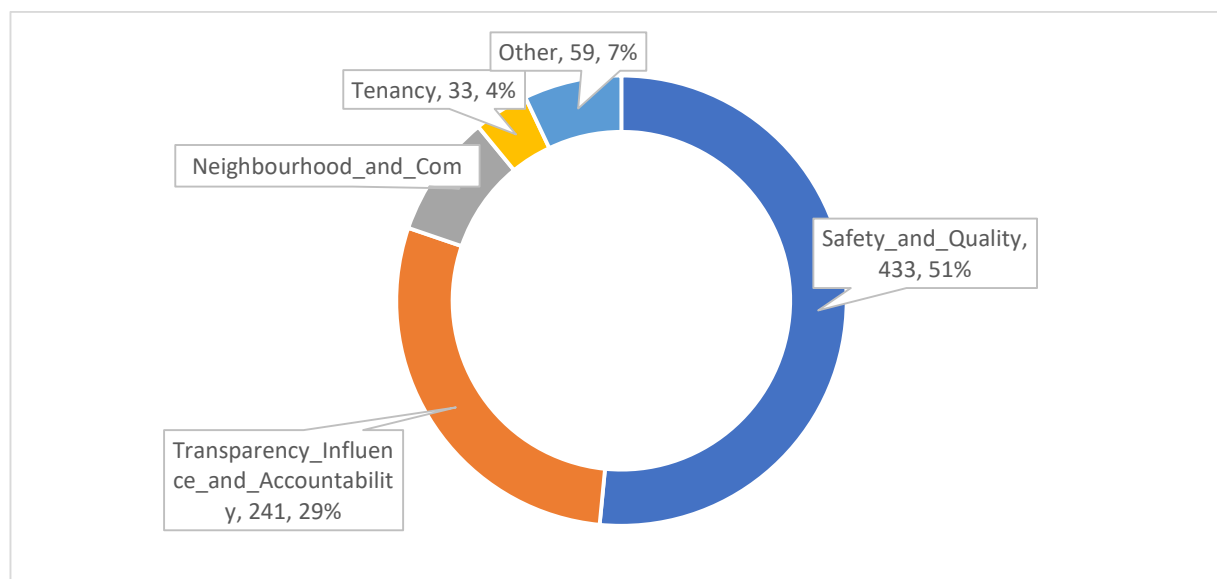


Chart 9 Complaints categorised by Consumer Standard

Within those primary Categories are a greater number of Secondary Categories. The Secondary Categories provide a clearer pinpoint regarding the cause of complaint. In the instance of the Primary Category 'Other', all the complaints were within the Secondary Category 'Housing Options and Homelessness'. Therefore, to give a more focussed view on the complaint trends, below is a table of the ten highest secondary categories of complaint, across all primary categories.

Total	Secondary category	Primary category
122	Repair not complete/Out of Target	Safety and Quality
113	Staff Complaints	Transparency, Influence & Accountability
58	Housing options and homelessness	Other
52	Planned and cyclical work	Safety and Quality
52	Damp, mould and condensation	Safety and Quality
46	Poor/no communication	Transparency, Influence and Accountability
42	Leak/Flooding	Safety and Quality
41	Gas	Safety and Quality
38	Damage to property or belongings	Transparency, Influence and Accountability
36	Anti-social behaviour (Handling of)	Neighbourhood and Community

Table 2 Secondary complaint categories ranked by frequency

Complaints continue to be grouped against the Consumer Standards, with more detailed categories used to identify the specific subjects and themes arising from complaints. This provides a consistent framework for monitoring trends and helps identify areas where further analysis or service improvement may be required.

Work has continued during 2025/26 to improve the accuracy and usefulness of complaint categorisation. When interpreting current trend data, we must consider the limitations of the existing categories:

- They remain broad and do not always identify the underlying cause of dissatisfaction. For example, *Staff complaints* may relate to communication, a service decision or process rather than conduct or behaviour.
- Only one category can apply to a complaint, yet a complaint may well contain multiple causes of dissatisfaction or instances of potential service failures.
- They are recorded at the point of receiving the complaint, and therefore represent the customer's understanding of the issue at the point it was raised, rather than the root cause, for example, a delayed repair may have been caused by poor communication or a failure to consider a customer's needs.

Further development of the categories will focus on identifying the root cause of complaints more consistently, allowing recurring issues and learning to be identified more accurately.

Ombudsman referrals

The Housing Ombudsman and Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman provide independent routes of redress where customers remain dissatisfied following the completion of the relevant complaints process.

During 2025/26, 23 cases entered formal consideration by an Ombudsman, following a request for information about the case. Of these, 21 were referred to the Housing Ombudsman and two to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

Referrals were predominantly associated with repairs and maintenance and tenancy management, which together accounted for 20 of the 23 cases. Individual referrals frequently involved more than one issue, including repairs, damp and mould, ASB, pest control, housing applications and the handling of the associated complaint.

Ombudsman referrals represent a small proportion of overall complaint activity: the 21 Housing Ombudsman cases equate to approximately 2.5% of the 840 complaints received during the year. Referral volumes should nevertheless be considered alongside subsequent Ombudsman determinations and findings, which provide a stronger indication of whether services and complaint handling met expected standards.

<i>Area</i>	<i>Housing Ombudsman</i>	<i>Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Repairs & Maintenance</i>	10	–	10
<i>Tenancy Management</i>	8	2	10
<i>Planned Maintenance</i>	2	–	2
<i>Staff & Customer Services</i>	1	–	1
<i>Total</i>	21	2	23

Table 3 Overview of cases referred to Ombudsman services in 2025/26²

For reporting purposes, a case is recorded as an Ombudsman referral when the Ombudsman requests information from Derby Homes to formally consider the complaint.

² Context note: Referrals have been categorised by their primary service area for reporting purposes. Individual cases may involve multiple and overlapping issues, so the categories should be treated as a broad indication of referral themes rather than a complete description of the matters considered by the Ombudsman.

Ombudsman determinations

At the time of producing this report, the Housing Ombudsman had not published Derby City Council's Landlord Performance Report for 2025/26. The most recent available report therefore relates to 2024/25. This was received and reported through Derby Homes' governance arrangements, including Board and Operational Committee, providing oversight and tenant scrutiny of the Ombudsman's findings and performance information.

The 2025/26 Landlord Performance Report will be considered through the same governance arrangements when published.

During 2025/26, Derby Homes received 18 Ombudsman determinations (decisions on cases referred to the Ombudsmen), compared with seven in 2024/25. Of these, 15 were issued by the Housing Ombudsman and three by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO).

Determinations do not directly correspond to complaints or referrals made during the same year. Ombudsman investigations take place over different timescales and can span reporting periods; the determinations received in 2025/26 therefore relate to cases referred at different points in time.

Eight determinations contained at least one finding of maladministration or service failure, five were wholly found to have no maladministration or fault, and five concerned matters wholly outside the Ombudsmen's jurisdiction. A determination may consider several aspects of a complaint and reach a different finding on each; an adverse finding within a case does not therefore mean that every aspect considered resulted in maladministration.

<i>Overall outcome of determination</i>	<i>Cases</i>
<i>Contained at least one maladministration/service failure (adverse) finding</i>	8
<i>Wholly no maladministration/no fault</i>	5
<i>Wholly outside jurisdiction</i>	5
<i>Total determinations</i>	18

Table 4 Summary of Ombudsman determinations received in 2025/26³

The increase in determinations should be interpreted in the context of the continued maturation of the complaints process and greater customer awareness of escalation routes following national changes to complaint handling and promotion of residents' rights. It should also be recognised that determinations received in-year reflect referrals made over different reporting periods.

More meaningful assurance is provided by the findings within those determinations, the Housing Ombudsman's maladministration rate, and the learning and service improvements arising from individual cases, rather than the number of determinations alone.

³ Context note: Where a determination considered several aspects of a complaint, it is shown as containing an adverse finding where at least one aspect resulted in maladministration or service failure. Cases outside jurisdiction are shown separately as the Ombudsman did not make a finding on the substantive matter.

Ombudsman findings and maladministration rate

A single Ombudsman determination can consider several aspects of a complaint and make a separate finding on each. The 18 determinations received during 2025/26 resulted in 29 individual findings, providing a more detailed picture of outcomes than the number of determinations alone.

Of these, 12 were adverse findings: 10 findings of maladministration, and two of service failure. Eleven findings concluded that there had been no maladministration or fault, while six matters were outside the Ombudsmen's jurisdiction.

<i>Finding</i>	<i>Number</i>
Maladministration	10
Service failure	2
No maladministration / no fault	11
Outside jurisdiction	6
Total findings	29

Table 5 Summary of Ombudsman findings received in 2025/26 ⁴

Thematic breakdown of adverse findings

<i>Theme of adverse finding</i>	<i>Findings</i>
Repairs and property condition	5
ASB handling	2
Complaint handling	2
Aids and adaptations	1
Tenancy / property security	1
Staff conduct / customer service	1
Total adverse findings	12

Table 6 Summary of adverse findings from determinations received in 2025/26

Adverse findings were concentrated in a relatively small number of themes. Five of the 12 findings related to repairs and property condition, including leaks, outstanding repairs, damp and mould and drainage. ASB handling and complaint handling each accounted for two findings, with the remaining findings relating to adaptations, property security and staff/customer service.

This thematic analysis is more useful for organisational learning than the primary service category assigned to each Ombudsman case, as individual determinations can consider several distinct aspects of service and reach a separate finding on each.

⁴ Context note: Findings outside jurisdiction are not findings on the quality of the service provided. A determination may also contain a combination of adverse and non-adverse findings relating to different aspects of the same complaint.

Housing Ombudsman maladministration rate

The Housing Ombudsman's maladministration rate is calculated using *eligible* Housing Ombudsman findings, rather than the total number of determinations or findings shown above and excludes matters outside its jurisdiction.

Derby Homes' maladministration rate for 2025/26 is anticipated to be 50%, compared with 78% in 2024/25. This represents an improvement in the proportion of eligible findings resulting in an adverse outcome. The rate will be confirmed when the Housing Ombudsman publishes Derby City Council's 2025/26 Landlord Performance Report.

The LGSCO made no findings of fault against Derby Homes during 2025/26.

There were also no findings of non-compliance by either Ombudsman.

<i>External assurance measure</i>	<i>2025/26 position</i>
<i>HOS maladministration rate</i>	50% (anticipated)
<i>Previous year</i>	78%
<i>LGSCO findings of fault</i>	0
<i>Ombudsman non-compliance findings</i>	0

Table 7 Predicted external assurance measures 2025/26

Financial redress and compensation 2025/26

During 2025/26, £23,337.94 was awarded in financial redress through the complaints process. Financial redress is considered on the individual circumstances of each complaint, including the nature, duration and impact of any identified service failure.

To provide an accessible overview of where financial redress was awarded, the existing complaint categories have been combined into broader redress groupings for the purpose of this analysis. These groupings are for presentation only and are therefore different from the primary and secondary complaint categories reported elsewhere in this report.

The underlying complaint categories should be interpreted with some caution. During 2025/26, complaints were categorised according to the main subject raised by the customer when the complaint was received. A complaint may involve several issues, and the recorded category does not necessarily identify the underlying cause of the service failure, or the specific reason financial redress was awarded. The value of payments within a category should therefore not be interpreted in isolation as an indicator of service performance.

Our approach to complaint categorisation is being reviewed during 2026/27 to provide better insight into complaint themes, root causes and learning.

<i>Redress grouping</i>	<i>Examples</i>	<i>Financial redress</i>
<i>Repairs, property condition and safety</i>	Repair delays, leaks/flooding, gas, pest control, void works, planned works, DMC, adaptations, quality of work and contractors	£16,850.00
<i>Customer service and communication</i>	Out-of-hours services, poor/no communication, staff complaints, discrimination, missed appointments and tenant improvements	£2,786.94
<i>Damage to property or belongings</i>	Damage to property or belongings	£2,141.00
<i>Tenancy and housing management</i>	Tenancy type, rent/service charges, decants and permits	£775.00
<i>Housing options and homelessness</i>	Housing options and homelessness	£760.00
<i>Neighbourhoods and communal areas</i>	Communal areas and common rooms	£25.00
Total financial redress		£23,337.94

Table 8 Financial redress paid for the year 2025/26 in order of amount, according to broad redress grouping (191 complaints, ave £122, min £10, max £800)

Financial redress by theme

Repairs, property condition and safety accounted for £16,850 (72%) of the £23,337.94 financial redress awarded during the year. This reflects the prominence of repairs and property-condition issues within wider complaint volumes and Ombudsman findings. However, financial redress is determined according to the circumstances and impact of individual cases and should not be interpreted in isolation as a measure of service performance.

Ombudsman related compensation payments for 2025/26

Derby Homes considers redress as part of the complaint process where there are clear grounds to do so, with awards made proportionately on a case-by-case basis. We are confident that our complaint outcomes are fair and reasonable, whether redress is offered or not. However, there are occasions where the Ombudsman reaches a different view and directs us to provide redress where we have not done so, or to increase the level of redress awarded.

Ombudsman-ordered compensation totalling £4,625 was awarded across eight cases during 2025/26. This was an increase of five cases and £3,075 compared with the previous year.

Total payments determined by the Housing Ombudsman and Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman	£4,625.00
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Table 9 Compensation payments determined by the Ombudsman

The increase is primarily attributable to two significant and complex cases relating to failings which took place in 2024, for which the Ombudsman found maladministration and ordered payments of £1,500 and £1,600 respectively. These cases account for most of the increase and form part of our ongoing learning and service improvement.

Service improvements and learning

During 2025/26, Derby Homes continued to develop its approach to learning from complaints and wider customer feedback. This has been a transition from identifying individual service improvements on a case-by-case basis towards a more systematic organisational approach to identifying themes, understanding underlying causes, implementing change and monitoring whether improvements have had the intended effect.

Learning and service improvements have been considered throughout the year and reported quarterly to Derby Homes' Board and Derby City Council. This has included learning from complaints, Housing Ombudsman determinations and Spotlight reports, Tenant Satisfaction Measure (TSM) feedback, customer surveys and other sources of customer insight.

A key principle established during the year is that learning should result in change or improvement. Manager and staff briefings have reinforced this approach, including consideration of learning from individual complaints and Ombudsman outcomes.

Work has also commenced on a broader organisational learning framework. This includes reviewing complaint, root cause and learning categories; developing a central learning register; bringing together insight from different sources; strengthening ownership and monitoring of resulting actions; and considering how learning is shared with employees, customers and partners.

Key learning during 2025/26

Analysis during the year identified recurring themes around repairs, communication, record keeping, the delivery of commitments made through complaints, and ensuring services respond appropriately to customers' individual circumstances.

Repairs and communication

Repairs remained one of the principal sources of complaints and wider customer feedback. Early analysis identified delays in repair work alongside communication issues, including the quality of information available to customers and communication where contractors or follow-on works were involved.

Learning from complaints has informed discussions with operational teams and contractors about communication, appointment arrangements, record keeping and the management of outstanding work.

Individual complaints have also resulted in practical changes. For example, website information was updated after a complaint identified that it was not sufficiently clear that contractors may contact customers directly to arrange appointments or that emergency repairs may not be offered as fixed appointment slots.

Further learning identified opportunities to improve the consistency and recording of offers of temporary heating during boiler breakdowns and highlighted practical issues with the condition of flooring following void works which could create difficulties for incoming tenants.

The Housing Ombudsman's *Repairing Trust* Spotlight report was also considered during the year, providing an opportunity to compare sector-wide learning around repairs,

communication, contractor management and individual customer needs with Derby Homes' own complaint and service information.

[Delivering commitments made through complaints](#)

During 2025/26, Derby Homes began analysing the reasons customers gave when requesting escalation of their complaint to Stage Two.

A recurring reason was that an action or commitment agreed following the Stage One complaint had not subsequently been delivered. This demonstrated that providing an appropriate complaint response was not sufficient in itself: actions promised as part of the resolution also needed clear ownership and oversight.

In response, a central commitment tracker was introduced during Quarter 4. This provides oversight of service-level actions promised through Stage One complaints and supports accountability for their completion.

Early monitoring following its introduction indicated a reduction in the proportion of Stage Two escalations associated with failed commitments. This will continue to be monitored during 2026/27.

[Complaint recognition and customer understanding](#)

Customer survey analysis identified that some customers believed they had previously made a complaint when there was no record of their concerns having entered the formal complaints process. In some cases, customers had instead reported issues such as anti-social behaviour or multiple repairs.

This prompted further consideration of how clearly Derby Homes explains the distinction between complaints and service requests and how customers are informed when an issue is not being dealt with through the formal complaints process.

During the year, correspondence was improved to make this clearer. This supports transparency for customers and helps ensure dissatisfaction is recognised appropriately while allowing service requests to be resolved without unnecessarily entering the complaints process.

Feedback received through Tenant Perception Surveys is also reviewed for potential expressions of dissatisfaction. During 2025/26, 639 comments from 1,636 surveys were analysed and categorised, including 267 identified as possible dissatisfaction and 256 as service requests. Customers are contacted where appropriate to clarify their concerns and identify whether a complaint or service response is required.

Individual needs and inclusive services

Complaints and Ombudsman outcomes have continued to reinforce the importance of understanding customers' individual circumstances and ensuring these are considered when services are delivered.

Learning arising from a Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman case concerning neurodiversity contributed to further organisational activity, including inclusivity e-learning and wider work relating to sensory processing and sharing good practice.

This complements wider work to improve the information held about customers' individual needs and to ensure that reasonable adjustments and other relevant information inform service delivery.

Developing our learning approach

The learning identified during 2025/26 demonstrates both individual service improvements and broader organisational themes.

The year has also highlighted the importance of moving beyond recording that an action has been completed towards understanding whether the change has produced an improved outcome for customers.

During 2026/27, Derby Homes will therefore continue developing its organisational learning framework, including:

- strengthening complaint, root cause and learning categories;
- establishing a central learning register with clear ownership and monitoring;
- combining complaint learning with wider customer, performance and Ombudsman insight;
- improving how learning and resulting changes are communicated;
- involving customers and employees in identifying and evaluating learning; and
- strengthening the measurement of whether actions taken in response to learning have achieved the intended improvement.

This will build on the quarterly approach established during 2025/26 and support a more consistent cycle of identifying learning, implementing change, monitoring outcomes and sharing the resulting improvements.

Learning from other relevant Ombudsman reports or publications

Responses to spotlight reports

During 2025–26, Derby Homes continued to review Housing Ombudsman Spotlight reports and discuss the learning with the Complaints Team and relevant service areas.

Spotlight on Knowledge and Information Management

We have continued to consider the learning from the Knowledge and Information Management Spotlight report and its follow-up. This has reinforced the importance of accurate, accessible and well-managed information to support effective decision-making, service delivery and complaint handling. We continue to develop our Knowledge and Information Management arrangements as part of our wider service improvement and consumer regulation work.

Spotlight on Repairs and Maintenance – Repairing Trust

The Housing Ombudsman's *Repairing Trust* Spotlight report, published in May 2025, highlighted the importance of trust, communication, empathy and effective relationships between residents, landlords and contractors. The recommendations have been considered alongside our own complaints and Ombudsman learning, particularly given the number of repairs and property-condition complaints received by Derby Homes during the year.

Our approach continues to focus on improving communication with customers, effective monitoring of repairs through to completion, and learning from recurring issues. This learning was also discussed directly with the Housing Ombudsman when Derby Homes contributed to a podcast in November 2025, discussing our repairs improvement journey and preparations for Awaab's Law.

Spotlight on damp and mould

We have continued to strengthen our approach to damp, mould and condensation, building on the learning from the Ombudsman's Spotlight report and subsequent sector guidance. Our approach places emphasis on prompt investigation, identifying and addressing underlying causes, effective communication with residents, consideration of vulnerabilities and appropriate follow-up to ensure remedial works have been effective.

Learning from Housing Ombudsman maladministration publications

During 2025–26, Derby Homes also reviewed the Housing Ombudsman's Learning from Severe Maladministration publications. These reports relate to cases involving other landlords and are not findings against Derby Homes; they provide wider sector learning by identifying recurring service failures and examples of good practice. The publications were reviewed and discussed with the Complaints Team to consider whether the learning identified any opportunities to further improve our own services.

The publications covered areas including communication and complaint handling, emergency repairs, ASB, adaptations, damp and mould, leaks, repairs, compensation and hazards. Many of these themes are consistent with the learning from our own complaints and determinations, particularly the importance of timely communication, accurate record keeping, clear ownership of repairs, consideration of individual circumstances and vulnerabilities, and ensuring that actions are monitored through to completion. The Ombudsman's December 2025 repairs publication, for example, reinforced the need to consider the person behind the repair and the impact that individual circumstances can have on the resident's experience.

Our engagement with the Ombudsman has also provided an opportunity to share our own learning and improvement journey. The November 2025 **Derby Homes repairs and maintenance podcast** discussed our preparations for Awaab's Law and our approach to providing a high-quality modern repairs and maintenance service. This complemented our review of the wider sector learning and helped us reflect on how our own improvements align with the Ombudsman's expectations.

We will continue to review future Ombudsman publications alongside our own complaints, determinations and customer feedback, using this wider learning to identify opportunities to improve our policies, training, communication, record keeping and service delivery.

Learning and improvements arising from Ombudsman determinations

A number of determinations related to **repairs and property condition**, including damp and mould, leaks, blocked drains and adaptation works. These have reinforced the importance of timely action, clear ownership of repairs and effective communication with residents where works are delayed or more complex. We have also been required to

provide action plans and timescales for outstanding repairs and major works, ensuring that commitments are clearly recorded and monitored through to completion.

We have continued to strengthen our **Complaint Handling**, with a specialist Complaints Team now responsible for complaints from start to finish. The determinations have reinforced the importance of responding to all aspects of a complaint, within the required timescales, and ensuring that residents receive clear and complete responses. Where complaint handling has been identified as a factor in a determination, case reviews have been undertaken to identify learning and further improve our approach.

The determinations relating to **Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)** have highlighted the importance of appropriate investigation, follow-up and communication with residents. We have also identified the need to ensure unreasonable behaviour reviews are completed within appropriate timescales and that decisions are clearly recorded and communicated.

We have also learned the importance of consistently identifying and considering **resident vulnerabilities**, reviewing communication arrangements and making reasonable service adjustments where required. The recent Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman outcome has also supported our existing commitment to improving **neurodiversity and tolerance training** across the organisation.

Further learning has been identified around **security and access to residents' homes**, fire response and aftercare, and ensuring that appropriate actions are taken and communicated following incidents. In some cases, the Ombudsman found no maladministration or service failure, which also provides assurance that aspects of our existing policies and practices are working appropriately.

All outcomes and orders have been complied with. While Ombudsman determinations can relate to incidents that occurred months or, in some cases, years previously, they provide an important opportunity to reflect on our services and identify improvements. Going forward, we will continue to review determinations for themes and emerging issues, using this learning to improve our policies, staff training, record keeping, communication and overall responsiveness to residents.