

Derby City Council

Complaints Performance and Service Improvement

Annual Report April 2024 – March 2025



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Foreword and governing body response

Derby City Council has received and reviewed this Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2024 - 25, produced by Derby Homes. As the Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC), I have regularly reviewed complaints information throughout the year provided in Derby Homes' Board reports, sent directly, or relayed at briefings and individual meetings.

Self-assessment against The Complaint Handling Code

I am satisfied this year's self-assessment is a true reflection of Derby Homes' approach to complaint handling and the organisation's compliance with the code. The evidence statements clearly correspond to the policies held on the organisations' intranet and on its external facing website. There is also evidence of what takes place operationally in customer newsletters, performance reports, in complaint responses, and other relevant documentation. Direct observation of how the organisation communicates and interacts with customers, continues to highlight the organisation's positive complaint handling culture.

Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report

The report is comprehensive, yet manages to provide clarity to the complex subject, ensuring the analysis breaks down the information in a meaningful and transparent way. The Performance team at Derby City Council separately verify the Tenant Satisfaction Measures relating to complaints. These highlight the adherence to regulatory requirements for reporting and it's clear that recording and reporting in this area is robust.

Nationally, numbers of formal complaints to registered providers are increasing. This is not necessarily because social landlords are performing any worse. Complaining to landlords has featured heavily in the media in recent years and this increase is likely to include dissatisfaction that was previously masked or unreported. Now that these concerns are being dealt with through the proper channels, it means tenants are getting a consistent approach, that follows a strict code of practice. Derby's increase in complaint numbers demonstrates that customers are more aware of how to complain and have faith that the process is thorough and fair. It's encouraging that even though complaint numbers have increased, so too has performance on the handling of them.

The updated learning framework for this year is much more comprehensive than the previous year and demonstrates progress towards understanding root causes of issues and putting plans in place to deal with them to avoid future complaints arising.

The commentary on *complaints satisfaction* is interesting (*TP09, page 5*). Further work is underway to understand customers and the customer complaints', to better understand customer perceptions on complaint handling to facilitate improvement in complaints satisfaction.

The new complaint categories in this year's report reveals, more learning opportunities, especially when compared alongside financial redress. It will be interesting to see how these develop and inform operational changes.

Cllr Shiraz Khan

Cabinet member for Housing, Strategic Planning
and Regulatory Services

Ian Fullagar

Director of Housing and
Regulatory Services

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. Derby Homes' self-assessment for 2025 has been reviewed by Derby Homes Board on the 24 April 2025, and is available at: www.derbyhomes.org/advice-support/complaints

Derby Homes is fully compliant with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code which applied from 1 April 2024.

Complaint handling performance: April 2024– March 2025

Note that complaints figures for Tenant Satisfaction Measure only includes data from Derby City Council and Derby Homes tenants, as per the regulator's technical requirements. All other figures, tables and charts will include all complaint data unless specified otherwise.

Quantitative analysis of complaints

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

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)	43.3%
Number of stage one complaints received per 1,000 homes. (CH01a)	52
Number of stage two complaints received per 1,000 homes. (CH01b)	10
Proportion of stage one complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales. (CH02a)	97.8%
Proportion of stage two complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales. (CH02b)	100%

Table 1: Tenant Satisfaction Measures (Derby City Council and Derby Homes)

Performance commentary

The Housing Ombudsman's code cites high levels of complaints as a positive, in that it demonstrates that a landlord is listening and learning from customer feedback. They do not see more complaints as a negative.

Housemark insight also informs us that, as a sector, the number of complaints raised has continued to increase. We anticipate that the increase in CH01a and CH01b will be broadly similar to an increase in other authorities and associations.

Additionally, we anticipate that our rate of complaints per 1,000 properties is above the national average. This shows the proactive and positive approach Derby Homes has to logging complaints for our customers. For 2025/26 we will be reviewing the way we approach submitted complaints, to ensure that we have robust alternative routes available to our customers and that these are widely promoted, such as appeals processes.

Stage one complaints have increased by 30% compared to last year, and Stage two complaints have doubled. New operational processes have been introduced and despite the adjustment our overall time taken to reply to complaints is on-track to be close to upper quartile performance despite the increase in cases.

Housemark reported that in January 2025, the number of complaints recorded across the UK topped 30,000 for the first time. By the end of March, they estimated that the sector will have recorded 345,000 formal complaints in 2024/25, an increase of 20% on 2023/24. They attributed this as previously masked informal complaints being recorded formally.

With our perception satisfaction score, after meeting with other organisations, we understand there is trend that many customers who answer this question have not actually been through a formal complaints process. Early analysis of our complaint records for 23/24 and 24/25 indicates that 69 of the 224 respondents who answered that they have made a complaint within the last 12 months have been through the complaints process in the last two years. This indicates that customers may be regarding a request for service as a complaint.

The sample size for respondents who answered TP09 (*Satisfaction with landlord's approach to complaints handling*) is significantly less than any other question, at 224 out of 1,829, which means that smaller differences in responses will translate to larger percentage differences. The satisfaction figure remains above the Regulator's top quartile for 23/24, but we will not know how we compare to other providers until the regulator publishes this year's results.

The question is very subjective, and we need to increase our understanding of people's perceptions of when they believe they have raised a complaint, or whether they have simply requested a service. More analysis of this will be carried out to understand our position on this indicator.

We will be comparing our data against other landlords when comparative data is available to see if other landlords have seen similar trends. However, when the above data is compared to 2023/24 year-end out-turn, we still are performing in, or close to, the upper quartile.

2024-25 has been a year of significant change within the Complaints Team, which has involved the implementation of a newly formed team structure. We have also recently moved from distributing out a selection of complaints to other teams, to holding all Stage One complaint ownership entirely within the Complaints Team. The barriers associated with case distribution, which include delays to outcomes, are therefore decreasing.

Total complaints received

Quarter	Stage one complaints received by landlord		Stage two complaints received by landlord		Total
	Derby Homes and Derby City Council	Other (non-tenants)	Derby Homes and Derby City Council	Other (non-tenants)	Combined landlords
1	145	40	25	4	214
2	129	17	28	6	180
3	167	24	35	4	230
4	204	30	42	9	285
Total	645	111	130	23	909

Table 2: Number of complaints received in each quarter, by landlord type (TSM grouped) and by stage.

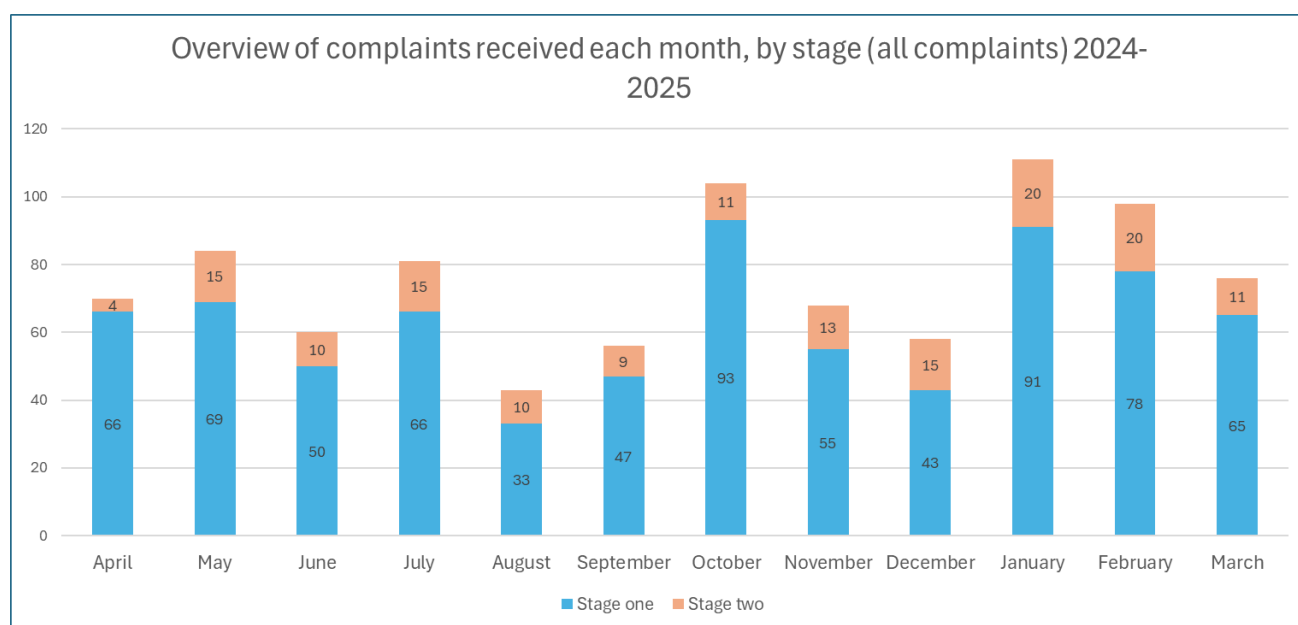


Chart 1: Complaints received each month across 2024/25

Complaint outcomes 2024/25

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.

Complaints reported overview for TSMs and all complaints 2024/25

- Derby City Council and Derby Homes stage one complaints (TSMs): **645**
- Derby City Council and Derby Homes stage two complaints (TSMs): **130**
- Total stage one complaints received for all complaints: **756**
- Total stage two complaints received for all complaints: **153**

Outcome definitions

A complaint outcome is captured as either not upheld or upheld. The definition for these are:

Complaint not upheld

Our investigation finds that Derby Homes was not at fault. If there are any complaints the customer has chosen to withdrawn, we have added them into this category.

Complaint upheld

Our investigation finds that Derby Homes was at fault.

Tables 3 and 4 summarise whether the complaints received in the year were not upheld or upheld. Some of the numbers will differ as extensions may have been required when investigating the complaint, or the complaint is still not closed.

Stage one complaint outcomes

Quarter	Closed complaints	Upheld		Not upheld	
		Derby Homes and Derby City Council	Other (non-tenants)	Derby Homes and Derby City Council	Other (non-tenants)
1	185	103	22	42	18
2	146	85	9	44	8
3	191	116	13	51	11
4	234	142	10	62	20
Total	756	446	54	199	57

Table 3: Number of stage one complaint outcomes (upheld or not upheld), by landlord type (TSM grouped) for each quarter

Stage two complaint outcomes

Quarter	Closed complaints	Upheld		Not upheld	
		Derby Homes and Derby City Council	Other (non-tenants)	Derby Homes and Derby City Council	Other (non-tenants)
1	29	16	1	9	3
2	34	15	1	13	5
3	39	24	0	11	4
4	51	28	4	14	5
Total	153	83	6	47	17

Table 4: Number of stage two complaint outcomes (upheld or not upheld), by landlord type (TSM grouped) for each quarter

Complaint outcomes by trends

Derby Homes are developing their trends to align with the new consumer standards. Based on this, all complaints have been put into the following categories:

- Safety and Quality
- Transparency, Influence and Accountability
- Neighbourhood and Community,
- Tenancy
- 'Other'

These trends are still being developed but an overview can be shown in Figure 2.

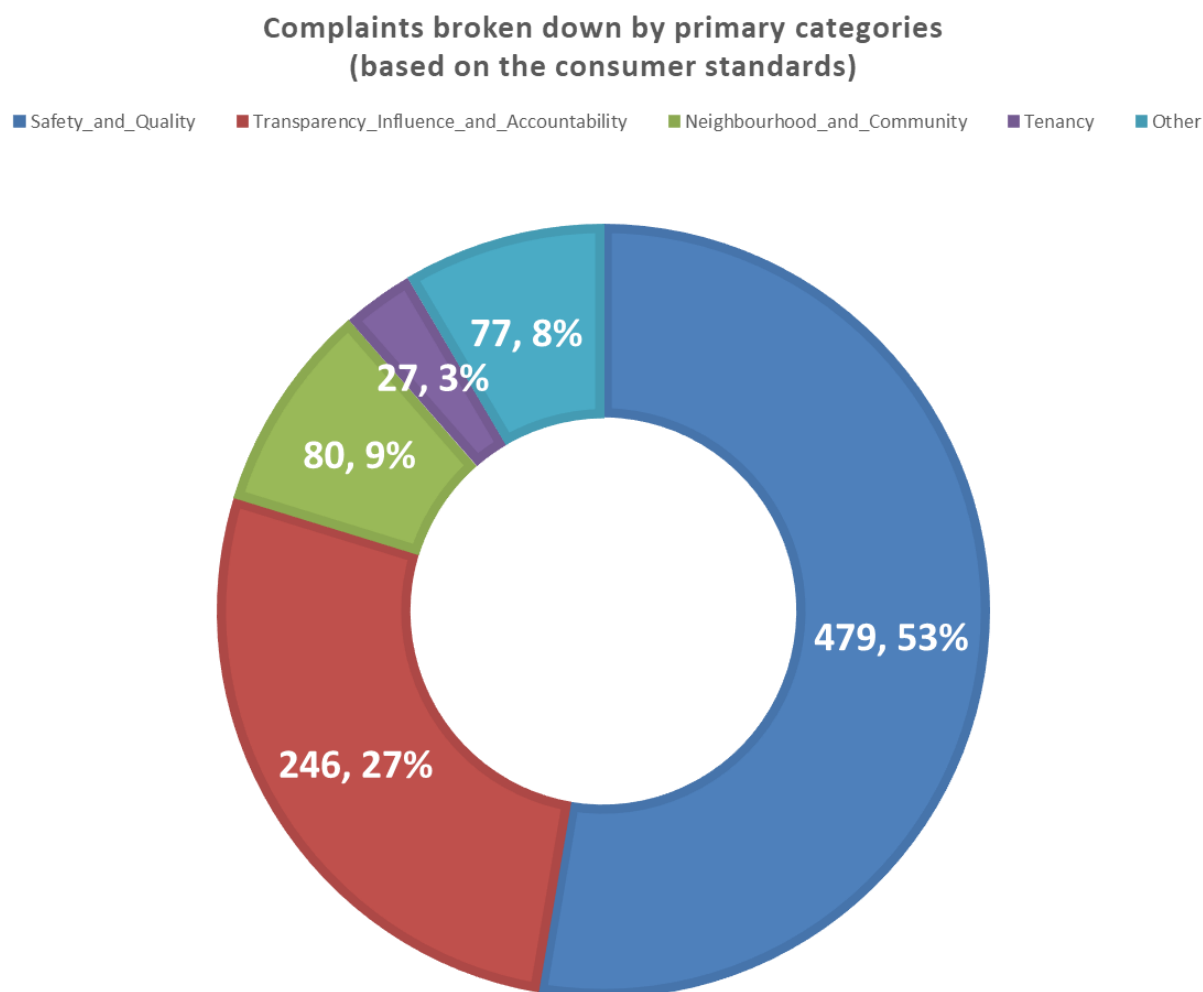


Figure 2: Trends of complaint numbers, based on consumer standard themes

The two categories that contain the largest numbers of complaints are broken down further in tables 5 and 6 below, to help understand the main causes of Derby Homes complaints:

Safety and Quality	479
Responsive repair not complete/Out of Target	147
Damp, mould and condensation	66
Planned and cyclical work	56
Gas	31
Pest Control	28
Leak/Flooding	24
Poor quality of work	23
Contractors	22
Work not followed on	22
Rechargeable repairs	15
Void repairs work	12
Furniture Packs	10
Adaptations	9
Electrical	5
Materials not ordered/in stock	5
New Build	3
Disrepair	1

Table 5: Top complaint categories for 2024/25 in Safety and Quality

Transparency Influence and Accountability	246
Staff Complaints	142
Damage to property or belongings	37
Poor/no communication	34
out of hours/contracted services carelink/careline	19
AI helper (chatbot, web or phone)	7
Accessibility to services	2
Discrimination	2
Improvements carried out by tenants	1
Data protection/FOI	0
Discretionary payments	0
Home loss or disturbance payment	0
Inaccurate or out of date information	0
Landlords handling of complaint, including delays	0
Missed appointments	0

Table 6: Top complaint categories for 2024/25 in Transparency, Influence and Accountability

From this we can see the biggest complaint trends are Derby Homes are:

- Responsive repairs not complete/out of target (147)
- Staff complaints (142)
- Damp, mould and condensation (66)
- Planned/cyclical works (56)
- Damage to property or belongings (37)

This is a new way of tracking complaint trends compared to last year, where numbers of complaints were broken down by teams instead of the complaint subject or theme. This will be developed more in the year as some complaints may cover more than one trend, meaning some trends may not be fully accurate.

We are also reviewing how we categorise complaints once they are received by the team to develop training on improving accuracy in how these are recorded. For example, we believe many *Staff complaints* could be recategorized as lack of/no communication, rather than being specifically about the behaviour of a members of staff.

For more information of service improvements and lessons learned, see *Appendix five*.

Trends in total numbers of complaints received over the past four years

Stage one complaints

This table outlines the stage one complaints received over last four years. This includes **all complaints received**, not just those from Derby City Council or Derby Homes properties.

Quarter	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Q1	89	67	100	185
Q2	72	92	148	146
Q3	75	96	158	191
Q4	62	112	178	234
Total	298	367	584	756

Table 7: Stage one complaints from 2021/22 to 2024/25

Stage two complaints

In circumstances where a complaint has not been resolved satisfactorily and the customer can provide reasons why the complaint has not been fully investigated, the customer can escalate this to the second stage of the complaint's process. This includes **all complaints received**, not just those from Derby City Council or Derby Homes properties.

Quarter	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Q1	2	3	12	29
Q2	5	9	12	34
Q3	9	12	19	39
Q4	4	11	32	51
Total	20	35	75	153

Table 8: Stage two complaints from 2021/22 to 2024/25

Requests for Service

A service request is defined as “a request from a resident to the landlord, requiring action to be taken to put something right.” Over the year, Derby Homes have received 1,459 service requests. The chart below outlines the service request by service area. The top three areas were Housing Management, Housing Options and Day to Day (responsive) repairs. When a customer contacts the complaints team with a first request for service or an enquiry, this is passed to the appropriate team to respond to.

Quarter	Service requests
1	430
2	495
3	249
4	285
Total	1,459

Table 9: Requests for service by quarter 2024/25

Complaints not accepted (refusals)


Our complaints policy sets out the circumstances in which a matter will not be considered a complaint. For 2024/25, Derby Homes refused 14 complaints. The reasons for refusals are shown in the chart below.

Refusal reason	Count of refusal reason
Underlying issue not within our control or remit	7
Referred to the insurance company - legal action or disrepair case	2
Complaint already been fully investigated in line with our policy	2
Where the issue occurred more than 12 months ago	1
A report of anti-social behaviour	1
First request for service	1
Total	14

Table 10: Refusals 2024/25

Ombudsman complaints

Ombudsman determinations and annual reports

Derby Homes received a Landlord Performance report from 2023/24 from the Housing Ombudsman. This report was circulated to the Operational Committee (March 2025) and to Derby Homes Board (January 2025). The link to the report can be found here  [Enc. 10 App. 6 DCC Landlord Performance Report](#) (764Kb)

Below is a year-to-date summary of the requests from the Housing Ombudsman (HO) or Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO).

No	Category	HO or LGSCO	Quarter	Date evidence requested by ombudsman	Date evidence submitted	Brief summary
1	Repairs & Maintenance	HO	Q1	19/04/2024	15/5/2024	Related to a mattress that was stained due to a leak within the property
2	Planned Maintenance	HO	Q1	03/05/2024	29/5/2024	Related to a stairs carpet being damaged during a bathroom renewal.
3	Tenancy Management	LGSCO	Q1	03/06/2024	26/6/2024	Related to our failings to assist Mr X when he became homeless and had no social housing allocated to him.
4	Tenancy Management	HO	Q1	11/06/2024	31/7/2024	Related to a going issue with a tenant neighbour causing Anti-Social behaviour.
5	Staff & Customer Services	HO	Q1	20/05/2024	29/5/2024	Related to handling of ASB concerns over a period of time
6	Tenancy Management	HO	Q2	07/08/2024	10/9/2024	This concerns Derby Homes' handling of ASB reports relating to noise nuisance and alleged drug use
7	Planned Maintenance	HO	Q2	28/08/2024	8/10/2024	This relates to the suitability of a customer's current property following a change in their health, and their request to be decanted whilst adaptations were considered or a new property was found. This was previously an Ombudsman Enquiry in July 2024.
8	Tenancy Management	HO	Q2	05/09/2024	16/10/2024	This concerns the landlords handling of the customer's request for CCTV to be installed in the communal carpark.
9	Repairs and Maintenance	HO	Q3	02/12/2024	15/1/2025	This complaint is regarding the landlords handling of the residents reports of the fire in their home and the residents' concerns that the shower was the cause of the fire.
10	Repairs & Maintenance	HO	Q4	14/12/2024	24/1/2025	The resident's complaint is about the landlord's handling of: the condition of the property when the resident took over the tenancy reports of repairs needed to the doors, window board, heating system, ceiling, plasterwork, downpipe and gate. reports of damp and mould in the bathroom

						a kitchen renewal a request for higher compensation.
11	Repairs & Maintenance	HO	Q4	27/01/2025	17/1/2025	The resident's complaint is about the landlord handled the residents' reports of an emergency repair due to faults with his front door lock and the impact on his wellbeing
12	Rents & service Charges	HO	Q4	30/01/2025	21/2/2025	The resident's complaint is about the landlords handling of: The standard of service provided under the service charge agreement, specifically the charges relating to grounds maintenance, The level of service charge, The associated complaint.
13	Tenancy Management	HO	Q4	04/02/2025	19/3/2025	The resident's complaint is about the landlord's handling of: reports of antisocial behaviour (ASB), concerns about the conduct of the landlord's staff, the associated complaint.
14	Planned Maintenance	HO	Q4	07/03/2025	11/04/2025	The resident's complaint is about the landlord's handling of adaptation works to the property, including the landlord's handling of the related decant.
15	Tenancy Management	HO	Q4	15/01/2025	22/01/2024	The resident's complaint is about the landlord's provision of CCTV coverage in the car park at the property.

Table 11: Summary of Ombudsman requests for 2024/25

Non-compliance findings

There have not been any determinations of non-compliance made from the Housing Ombudsman and Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

Ombudsman determinations

Below is a table of the determinations we have received from the Ombudsmen over the last year 2024/25.

No	Category	HO or LGSCO	Date evidence submitted	Date determination received from the Ombudsman	Outcome
1	Planned Maintenance	HO	02/05/2024	17/02/2025	1 x no maladministration
2	Tenancy Management	HO	24/04/2024	31/04/2024	3 x maladministration 1 x service failure
3	Planned Maintenance	HO	29/05/2024	27/03/2025	1 x no maladministration
4	Tenancy Management	LGSCO	26/06/2024	03/06/2024	1 x maladministration
5	Planned Maintenance	HO	8/10/2024	29/11/2024	1 x maladministration 1 x service failure
6	Tenancy Management	HO	16/10/2024	28/02/2025	1 x maladministration
7*	Staff & CST	HO	27/10/2023	12/09/2024	2 x maladministration 2 x outside jurisdiction

Table 12: Ombudsman determinations received in 2024/25 (HO = Housing Ombudsman, LGSCO = Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman) *For case 7, the original determination was received in 23-24. The determination was disputed, and the final response was received 24-25

Financial redress 2024/25

A total of **£21,523.66** in financial redress has been paid during April 2024 and March 2025.

Financial redress is also paid on occasions where no complaint has been made. An example of this could be for minor damages which do not typically need to go through the complaints process. Any payments made outside the complaints process are not included in the total redress figure.

Table 13 shows breakdown of payments of financial redress following a complaint, in relation to complaint categories and overarching Consumer Standards.

Complaint category	Consumer Standard	Amount
Furniture Packs	Safety and Quality	£3,466.04
Repair not complete/Out of Target	Safety and Quality	£3,190.00
Pest Control	Safety and Quality	£2,124.00
Leak/Flooding	Safety and Quality	£1,722.18
Damp, mould and condensation	Safety and Quality	£1,698.94
Damage to property or belongings	Transparency Influence and Accountability	£1,455.00
Work not followed on	Safety and Quality	£1,300.00
New Build	Safety and Quality	£1,100.00
Gas	Safety and Quality	£965.00
Poor quality of work	Safety and Quality	£905.00
Adaptations	Safety and Quality	£900.00
Planned and cyclical work	Safety and Quality	£815.00

<i>Poor/no communication</i>	Transparency Influence and Accountability	£455.00
<i>Staff Complaints</i>	Transparency Influence and Accountability	£317.50
<i>Contractors</i>	Safety and Quality	£280.00
<i>Ending Tenancy (e.g. Notice period)</i>	Tenancy	£250.00
<i>Out of hours/contracted services</i>	Transparency Influence and Accountability	£205.00
<i>Void repairs work</i>	Safety and Quality	£135.00
<i>Gardening scheme/ground maintenance</i>	Neighbourhood and Community	£100.00
<i>Electrical</i>	Safety and Quality	£60.00
<i>Materials not ordered/in stock</i>	Safety and Quality	£50.00
<i>AI helper (chatbot, web or phone)</i>	Transparency Influence and Accountability	£30.00
Total		£21,523.66

Table 13: Financial redress paid for the year 2024/25 in order of amount, according to complaint category and Consumer Standard.

Ombudsman related compensation payments for 2024/25

Derby Homes will only make a compensation payment where it has been determined by the Ombudsmen that we are at fault and a maladministration has been received. For all other payments to remedy a complaint, these payments are classed as either a goodwill gesture or financial redress. The below amount was made over 3 payments for the 2024-25 financial year.

<i>Housing Ombudsman and Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman</i>	£1,550.00
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Table 14: Compensation payments determined by the Ombudsman

Service improvements and learning

Learning from complaints

This approach represents a new and developing process for Derby Homes. As an organisation, we are still learning how best to embed customer feedback into our service improvement strategies, drawing on both internal experience and external best practices. Since the start of 2024/25, we have delivered training to service managers to clarify expectations around using customer feedback to drive meaningful change.

Regular meetings and discussions are held with managers to review insights from both the complaints team and our customers. These conversations help identify areas of concern and explore where changes in practice may be needed.

Having now reviewed all feedback up to the end of the year, we are beginning to see consistent trends, while also recognising that some issues are isolated incidents. These one-off cases are being monitored to determine whether they indicate emerging concerns. Where relevant, service improvements have been identified and discussed with managers to ensure continuous learning and development.

Learning from other feedback

Work this year has also focused on identifying lessons learned and potential service improvements from a range of other feedback sources. These include comments from the Tenant Satisfaction Measure (TSM) survey, results from transactional and consultation surveys, and, more recently, case reviews from the Housing Ombudsman. From 2025–2026, the team will also analyse trends in *service requests* received by the Complaints and Feedback Team to help identify areas where services can be improved to ensure customers have better access from the outset.

The team will continue to monitor complaints and feedback, document any resulting actions, and share updates with customers on a quarterly basis via the *Let's Talk Derby Homes* platform (<https://lets-talk.derbyhomes.org/hub-page/you-said-we-did>). In the interest of transparency, the team also highlights any actions that could not be taken forward, providing explanations where possible. These instances are reported on the *Let's Talk* platform as they arise.

The table below summarises key discussions held with managers regarding lessons learned from customer feedback and the actions agreed to support service improvements.

No.	Reason for recommendation	Learning recommendation	Comments from management/update
1	<p>Delays</p> <p>Delays in repairs and responsive repairs going out of target is the largest complaints category.</p>	<p>Improve on the number of responsive repairs going out of target</p>	<p>By the end of the year, the number of repairs going out of target had reduced to 50%. Repair completion times had also halved in 2024-25.</p> <p>A related trend in Quarter 4 was subsequent/follow-on repair jobs not being reported back or raised. Some of these were attributable to human error and these have been dealt with at the individual level. Future monitoring: quarterly.</p> <p>Other service improvements that may reduce complaints in this area include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appointments for external repairs, where access is required, and; • allowing our local supplier to purchase materials from other suppliers, where materials are repeatedly out of stock and delaying work. These are due to be discussed in Quarter one.
2	<p>Gaps in the adaptations process were identified in a Housing Ombudsman maladministration order.</p>	<p>Reviewing the Welfare Adaptations policies and procedures</p>	<p>The adaptations policy was reviewed and approved by the Operational Committee in Quarter four.</p> <p>Changes include clarifications on the use of private Occupational Therapists, and a review of the internal group that look at adaptations.</p>
3	<p>External contractor work, including delays in repairs.</p> <p>Some customers called multiple times for updates because of delays.</p> <p>Derby Homes were unable to provide updates due to</p>	<p>Review how contractors are managed by the Repairs team</p>	<p>Regular meetings are to be planned in with contractors to ensure contractors are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • following the same standards as Derby Homes when contacting customers, making appointments, and keeping within out repairs priority timescales.

	having limited information.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> updating the contractor portal with job updates in a prompt manner, allowing the Customer Service Team to give updates to customers, and the Repairs team to monitor any repairs which go out of target and to track any delays for follow-on repair work. <p>A new surveyor has been employed to perform spot checks on contractor work and process invoices. This quality monitoring of jobs should further improve the service to customers.</p>
4	<p>Communication</p> <p>Lack of adequate communication to explain repair work required or and follow-on work after an initial repair appointment.</p>	Reduce use of jargon and technical language when communicating with customers	Specific examples were shared with relevant managers. This will be added to Toolbox talk agendas and will also be discussed with other service areas in Quarter 1, where applicable.
5	<p>Record keeping</p> <p>Lack of information, or incorrect information, on Open Housing.</p> <p>Some customers given incorrect information, e.g. kitchen refurbishment, leading perceived delay when not in the original timescale.</p>	Using Open Housing to update information	<p>These issues will be discussed in management team meetings.</p> <p>The updating of Open Housing by teams in this service area has room for improvement.</p> <p>Examples of where poor record-keeping and communication contributed to complaints being made were discussed.</p> <p>The way Leasehold properties are identified in Open Housing, has caused some delays when attempting to rectify some leaks in flats.</p>
6	Inadequate consideration from out- of-hours service of customer's vulnerability attributes or	Discuss inclusion attributes with the out-of-hours provider	<p>The Customer Service Manager agreed to meet with the out-of-hours provider in November 2024 to outline Derby Homes' expectations.</p> <p>Currently, if a customer advises the out-of-hours provider of a</p>

	adjustments because they were not on the system. Some repairs not treated as emergencies.		vulnerability that is not on the system, they make a note of this on the repairs spreadsheet for Derby Homes to update.
7	Not taking vulnerability attributes into account in customer interactions. No record of customer inclusion attributes on record. Some customers stated that their diverse needs were not met by our services.	Ensure customers individual needs are considered in all of our interactions with them.	‘About You’ survey launched in October 2024 to refresh information on our customers and record on the system. 1,358 responses to the survey at the end of March 2025. The Quality and Inclusion Manager attended a Customer Service team meeting to discuss inclusion attributes and training, and these complaints will be reviewed to monitor the success of the project. It will be discussed with operatives in upcoming Toolbox Talks about using clear language and not using jargon or technical language in our interactions with customers.
8	Negative comments about AI chatbot Ali in Customer Survey comments have been a recurring trend throughout 2024-2025.	Review Ali chatbot feedback and identify improvements.	Derby City Council’s digital helper Darcie has been updated with 9 new languages and has undergone significant improvements as of March 2025. Improvements to the phone version of Darcie are set to follow in the coming weeks. The Derby Homes digital helper will be upgraded later in 2025. The levels of comments and complaints on the subject will continue to be monitored and fed back to the Council’s IT team.
9	A customer waited over a week for an appointment before calling again, and the Customer Service Advisor advised how to repressurise the boiler over the phone.	Provide training to all Customer Service Advisors on how to repressurise a boiler. The team will also be trained again on where to find the guidance and videos for boilers.	The video and guidance for boilers was discussed with all Customer Service Advisors in one-to-ones and a refresher will be sent out to all staff in Quarter 4. Going forward, this will be included in the formal e-learning for all new starters. The possibility for other repairs-based knowledge training with staff was also discussed and will be considered.

10.	<p>Customer comments show a preference to book appointments online. There were 5 comments from in Quarter 2 and Quarter 3.</p> <p>Complaints might have been mitigated if the customer was able to book or move their repair appointment online, and 4 mentions in Customer survey comments.</p>	<p>Allow customers to book their own repair appointments.</p> <p>Customers are now able to book appointments for certain repairs online when they report them. The online booking service went live in November 2024 and as such more communication and marketing need to be shared with customers.</p> <p>The next phase of this project is to allow customers to rearrange appointments, but this is still in the development phase.</p>
11.	<p>Quality monitoring assists in identifying potential gaps in the service.</p> <p>Quality monitoring calls in the Customer Service Team</p>	<p>Quality monitoring was reintroduced in Quarter 3. In addition to regular quality monitoring, supervisors listen to new Customer Service Advisors to ensure the service given is consistent and to a high standard.</p> <p>Areas that have been monitored include emergency priority repair advice and standard telephone greetings.</p> <p>The out-of-hours provider do not have call recording but there is a discussion underway to see what options are possible for the future.</p> <p>The Income Team Manager has confirmed that quality monitoring of calls will be reintroduced in the future, and Team Leaders do listen in on calls when in the office with Income Officers.</p> <p>The Housing Options Manager confirmed that quality monitoring is carried out as both spot-checks and targeted when issues have been identified.</p>

12.	<p>The main trend in Customer Service-related complaints were concerning the out of hours provider rather than the Derby Homes Customer Service Team.</p>	<p>Proactively work with the out-of-hours provider to improve overall service</p>	<p>This is an on-going action from Quarter 3. The manager is holding regular meetings with the out-of-hours provider to improve the service.</p> <p>In April 2025, it was agreed that Derby Homes would arrange a training session on raising emergency repairs on Open Housing, the use of video calling, and checking inclusion attributes on Open Housing.</p> <p>Flow-charts for actions on common repairs are being created so that the out of hours provider are clear on the correct procedures to follow.</p>
13.	<p>Customer complaints are not passed on with enough information for the complaints process without needing to ask the customer for clarity. This can be frustrating for customers who feel that they are having to repeat themselves.</p>	<p>Improving Customer Service Team complaint handling by asking team to include their name</p>	<p>This was agreed and discussed in team meetings. The manager has also asked for the Complaints and Feedback team to provide examples of forms that do not provide sufficient information so that this can be discussed with individual Customer Service Advisors in one-to-ones.</p>
14.	<p>This was a recommendation by the Customer Voice in their Quality of Home report that Derby Homes produce an easy-read and visual Lettable Standard booklet.</p>	<p>Easy-read or customer friendly versions of front-facing strategies and policies</p>	<p>A meeting will be set up in Quarter 4 with the Repairs and Communications teams and progress reported by the Customer Voice, who are presenting to Operational Committee in June 2025. More broadly, this is something that could be applied to various policies, and will be included in consultations going forward to ascertain if the policy or strategy could benefit from this.</p>
15.	<p>31 out of 70 requests for support needs in the 'About You' survey (to date) were for operatives</p>	<p>Extra time to get to the door.</p>	<p>Inclusion attributes, warnings, and additional information are discussed with operatives in Toolbox talks. Inclusion attributes were also discussed in the Staff Briefing by the Quality and Inclusion Manager.</p>

	to allow extra time for the customer to get to the door due to mobility issues. This requirement was also discussed in the Missed appointments payments consultation meeting with the Customer Voice.		
16.	There were 5 complaints concerning a lack of communication from customers on the Housing Register.	Explanation of process and when to expect contact in initial automated email when customers sign up to the housing register.	Manager receptive of idea and is already in process of updating email and sees value in adding this to manage expectations.
17.	There were 5 complaints from customers on the Housing Register concerning a lack of communication.	Manage expectations on contact at the beginning of the process when customers are assigned a homelessness advisor.	<p>Customers are currently advised to contact Derby Homes if there is a change in circumstances.</p> <p>Exploring adding information into emails for customers to promote regular contact with any change of circumstances to help deliver this message.</p> <p>Review of Customer Journey and the use of the self-serve module to see if any improvements may be made. This would allow customers to get updates on their file without having to speak to a housing advisor.</p>
18.	Customers have said it is not always clear that their appointment is for a measure only.	Repair appointment texts for plastering and glazing jobs to say that measurement might be required .	It was agreed that adding this information would help manage customers' expectations.

Other relevant Ombudsman reports or publications

Responses to spotlight reports

Spotlight on Knowledge and Information Management

We are working towards developing our own Knowledge and Information Management Strategy. This is being coordinated through the Quality and Consumer Regulation Service area and anticipated to be discussed with Derby Homes Board in 2025-26.

Spotlight on attitude, respect and rights: Relationship of equals

Our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy was approved in January 2025, using the spotlight report as a basis. We have also introduced our 'About You' survey as part of the Reasonable Adjustments Policy approved in March 2025. This survey contains questions about household members long-term health conditions and support needs. All colleagues have been tasked with encouraging customers to complete this survey when contacting us, particularly in instances of us becoming aware of new information.

Spotlight on damp and mould

We are using a new module in our Housing Management Software to monitor cases of damp and mould and follow up progress within three months of the initial visit.

Lessons learned from Housing Ombudsman Orders and Recommendations 2024-25

Derby Homes has complied with all Housing Ombudsman Orders and fully considered all recommendations made. A proportion of these were to issue apologies and to award redress, however, there have also been further actions taken.

We have reviewed our **Adaptations Policy** to ensure the customer journey is improved and we are more transparent with the actions Derby Homes can and cannot consider.

We have also conducted refresher training to ensure complaints are logged correctly when submitted, and our **Record Keeping** has improved.

Our **Complaint Handling** has also improved, with all new complaints now being held by the centralised Complaints Team, and a more aligned procedure assists us in our investigations.