DECISION-MAKER:	**Cabinet**
SUBJECT:	**Annual Complaints Report 2024/5**
DATE OF DECISION:	**25 September 2025**
REPORT OF:	**COUNCILLOR LETTS** **CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND RESOURCES**

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STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY
N/A

BRIEF SUMMARY

This report provides an annual update on the Council's complaints resolution performance and learning from complaints for the year 2024/25. The report includes a summary of complaints considered and determined under the Council's complaints policy together with the Annual Reviews of performance and complaints considered by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman ('LGSCO') and Housing Ombudsman ('HO').

RECOMMENDATIONS:

	(i)	To receive and review complaints outcomes and service based learning arising from the annual complaints reports 2024/5
	(ii)	To approve the updated Complaints Policy (Corporate & Adult Social Care) (Appendix 1) to reflect changes required by the Housing Regulator and Ombudsman to comply with their new Codes of Practice.

REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

1.	It is a requirement of the Ombudsman's respective Complaints Handling Codes (and good practice) for elected members to receive an annual report on the Council's complaints service, performance monitoring against previous years and national comparators and to keep our complaints policy updated to comply with any Regulator / Ombudsman Codes of Practice. The report also provides a valuable insight as to where service failures have occurred and not been recovered as part of business as usual service delivery and where the Council can use learning from complaints to improve future service performance and outcomes for our residents and other service users.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED	
	N/A – It is a requirement of the Complaints Handling Codes to provide Members with an annual performance report in relation to complaints . In addition, the Council would not be compliant with the Codes if it failed to update its Complaints policy in line with the recommendations made by the Housing Ombudsman.
DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)	
1	**Changes to the complaints policy to comply with Complaints handling Codes:**
	The Housing Ombudsman has conducted a review of the Complaints policy as part of its annual Complaint Handling Code compliance submission. The review is to ensure that the requirements of the Code are met based on what residents can reasonably expect to be included in a policy document. The review identified 23 recommendations. The Council's response to the recommendations will be reviewed through next year's annual submission process. There have been two main changes made to the policy in order to reflect updates to the Codes. The first relates to refreshed timeframes for response. In line with the Code, we will continue to acknowledge a complaint within 5 working days of receipt and respond within 20 working days. However, this response timeframe may now be extended to 40 working days for complex matters. Previously, the extended timeframe for responses involving complex matters was 30 working days. The second change concerns reasons given for escalation from stage 1 to stage 2 complaints. Customers are now under no obligation to tell us why they wish to escalate their complaint and, whilst it can be helpful to understand why a customer remains dissatisfied and it can also provide clarity and focus to the complaint, this is no longer a requirement and a stage 1 complaint investigation and response can simply be reviewed at stage 2. Other changes are broadly around the clarification of wording, improving transparency and improving ease of access to making a complaint.
2	**SCC Complaints handling:**
	On 27th March 2025, the Lagan system (the Council's previous customer service database) was replaced by the recently procured customer service database, CM-Pro. The complaint module of CM-Pro went live on 22nd May 2025. This system, supplied by Verint (the same company behind Lagan),
	CM-Pro now logs complaints directly from webforms, eliminating the need for staff to manually input data, which was required with Lagan. This advancement is expected to enhance complaint handling efficiency and provide a comprehensive overview of the number of complaints received by the Council across various service areas. It is anticipated that it will improve our ability to

	investigate and resolve complaints, thereby enriching the overall customer experience and enabling us to implement the learning from these complaints more effectively.
	Work is underway to ensure all staff involved in complaint handling are proficient in using CM-Pro. Training materials, including documentation on using the database and the procedures for handling stage 1 and stage 2 complaints, have been made available to staff on the Intranet. The project team are in the process of developing a buddy system to support staff as they familiarise themselves with CM-Pro and planning is underway to create training videos to further aid in this transition.
	Due to unforeseen delays in the implementation of the new system, the reporting element of CM-Pro was not available at go live and is currently under development. The Data Management Team, who are responsible for the development of this module are working with the complaints manager to implement basic reporting by early September 2025. There is potential for more customised reporting in the future once the basic reporting framework is established, but Members should note that the delay in rolling out the reporting system may have an impact on complaints reporting ability at stage 1 and stage 2 next year.
	The overall number of complaints received by the Council is very low as a proportion of the total number of services delivered to our residents and customers. Comparative data with other Councils is no longer available on a 'like for like' basis. The system at Southampton is balanced in its approach to complaints. The Council operates on a business as usual (BAU) service recovery ethos so concerns and service requests raised by customers that cannot be resolved within a short (average 48 hour) window or within normal policy timeframes for service delivery are not treated as complaints unless a pattern of failure is identified (e.g. a single missed bin would not be recorded as a complaint if it can be resolved by BAU service recovery but if the same property / road records multiple missed bins for multiple separate rounds this would be treated as a system failure and automatically treated as a formal complaint).
	Where a referral cannot be resolved as BAU in short order, it is treated as a stage 1 complaint regardless of whether the word 'complaint' is used. This is in line with LGSCO and Housing Ombudsman guidance on what is and is not a 'complaint' for their purposes. The Council had adopted a broad definition of complaint to ensure we capture dissatisfaction with our services at an appropriate level. The Council's current complaints policies and public guidance can be found at: **How to make a complaint .**
	It should be noted that the following complaints numbers for 2024/25 are those reported using the older (LAGAN) reporting system.

Directorate	Division	Team Name	Case Ref	Complaint Type	Number of cases received			TOTAL
					Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	
	⊟Assessment Support Planning and Options SECURE				66	10	0	76
		⊞Complex Social Work			63	9	0	72
		⊞Learning Disabilities			3	1	0	4
	⊟Council Housing and Neighbourhoods				341	0	0	341
		⊞Council Housing Services			130	0	0	130
		⊞Housing Operations (DLO)			211	0	0	211
	⊟Customer Experience				1	0	0	1
		⊞Service Improvement			1	0	0	1
⊟Children and Families					52	7	0	59
	⊟Childrens Social Care				52	7	0	59
		⊞Children In Need			50	7	0	57
		⊞Foster Care			1	0	0	1
		⊞Looked After Children			1	0	0	1
⊟Digital and Business Operations					9	0	0	9
	⊟Business Services				9	0	0	9
		⊞Business Services			9	0	0	9
⊟Economic Development					1	0	0	1
	⊟Customer & Business Improvement				1	0	0	1
		⊞Communities And Customers			1	0	0	1
⊟Environment					1	0	0	1
	⊟Environment				1	0	0	1
		⊞Environment			1	0	0	1
⊟Environment and Economy					1	0	0	1
	⊟Highways Transport and Parking				1	0	0	1
		⊞Highways Transport and Parking			1	0	0	1
⊟Gateway					5	0	0	5
	⊟Gateway				5	0	0	5
		⊞Gateway			5	0	0	5
⊟Growth					22	4	0	26
	⊟Building Control				1	0	0	1
		⊞Building Control			1	0	0	1
	⊟Infrastructure Planning and Development				21	4	0	25
		⊞Development			2	0	0	2
		⊞Highways			3	1	0	4
		⊞Planning			6	3	0	9
		⊞Planning Enforcement			3	0	0	3
		⊞Transport			7	0	0	7
⊟Legal and Governance					1	0	0	1
	⊟Legal Partnership Services				1	0	0	1
		⊞Legal Partnership Services			1	0	0	1
⊟Revenues and Benefits					24	3	0	27
	⊟Revenues and Benefits				24	3	0	27
		⊞Revenues and Benefits			24	3	0	27
Total					524	24	0	548

The areas with the highest areas of complaints are, understandably, those with public facing services / who have the most contact with and deliver the most services to members of the public.

Of the 548 complaints record, 341 relate to Housing (the area currently receiving additional complaints support from the Council's complaints team to manage its service improvement journey). This is the same number of complaints as last year and remains disproportionately high despite the additional support measures in place. Adult services received 76 (increase from last year), Childrens 59 (lower than last year), Revenues and Benefits 27 (a marginal increase) and Growth (Planning & Transport) 26 (a slight increase).

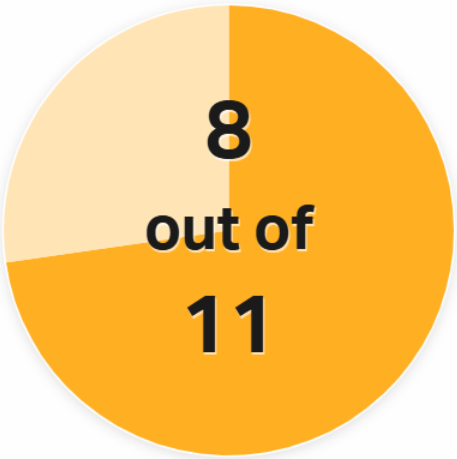
The overall number and breakdown of complaints is consistent with last year's reporting. The only reportable changes in trends are an improvement/reduction in number of children's services complaints and an increase in complaints about Adults Services but overall numbers do not raise serious concerns in adults. The primary area of concern, requiring a continuation of intensive support,

	consistent with the action plan developed in response to the Housing Improvement Plan, remains Housing (primarily repairs). For Comparison purposes – Last Year the Council received 550 total complaints, broken down as follows: • Adults Housing – 405 (of which 341 were Housing) • Childrens – 76 • Corporate – 1 • Gateway – 4 • Growth - 21 (of which 7 Planning / 12 Transport) • Revenues & Benefits – 23 • Waste – 1
	The Council's previous complaints recording system (LAGAN) did not adequately or consistently collate learning from stage 1 or 2 (service area managed) complaints. As such this report focuses on learning from complaints investigated by the Council's Complaints Team that investigates selected complaints at stage 2 which have been designated as cross service or relate to a service area in receipt of intensive improvement support (currently Housing Services). A selection of case studies, below, demonstrates the types of service failings addressed under the complaints system and some changes that have been introduced to ways of working and policy as a result:
	Case 1 - Miss X: Complaint: Miss X is a council tenant and prior to moving into her home, the Council had tidied the garden but left a large tree stump behind. There were also some outstanding repairs which had not yet been completed. Miss X stated that the tree stump ruined the family's enjoyment of the garden and was a danger to the children. The Council had agreed to remove the tree stump but due to the layout of the house and the tree stump's size, this was proving costly, and it was difficult to access the tree stump with the machinery necessary to remove it. Learning: Our internal complaints team requested that within 4 weeks, the Housing Management Team assess and document were asked to assess the viability and necessity of removing the tree stump from the garden. If it was decided that it was not viable to remove the stump, this should include a written assessment of the danger it presented (or not) to Miss X's children. In this instance, it should be communicated when the repairs would take place, as these would remain outstanding. If it was decided that the stump could be removed, the Housing Management Team should advise Miss X of a definite plan detailing when this will take place and further confirm that repairs to the back door will also take place and when. An assessment of outstanding repairs to the porch should be undertaken within 4 weeks. The decision should be communicated to Miss X and any repairs deemed necessary should be scheduled and communicated. The Council should pay Miss X £200 to remedy the delay and confusion she had experienced and the time and trouble she had taken to bring her complaint to the Council.

	The Local Housing Office undertook the requested assessment and found that the tree stump could in fact be removed. This was successfully completed within 3 weeks of the complaint response. The Housing Repairs team contacted Miss X to advise of a schedule to complete the outstanding repairs and these were completed. Miss X accepted and received the £200 goodwill gesture and as she was satisfied with the outcome of her complaint and the Council's actions, Miss X did not progress the complaint to the Housing Ombudsman.
	Case 2 - Mr Y: Complaint: Mr Y is a council tenant, his home is heated, and hot water supplied by landlord-controlled heating. Mr Y complained to the Council as he felt that the Council was making profit on the heating; Mr Y asserted he was being charged double as he had two electricity meters; the heating only came on for five months, yet he was being charged for 12 months and Mr Y asserted that a Southern Electricity engineer had stated that the heating would not come on if the outside temperature did not meet a certain level, even in winter. The Tenants Panel reviewed this complaint. The Tenants Panel did not find fault on behalf of the Council and therefore, did not uphold the complaint. The Tenants Panel did find that communication with Mr Y could be improved and further felt that the Council could check on Mr Y's welfare. They made several recommendations following consideration of Mr Y's complaint including: Exploring options for the tenant to move to a home which has heating that better suit the tenant. Undertaking a periodic tenancy check and make further arrangements to explain how landlord controlled heating works and is charged. The Housing Management Officer and or the Neighbourhood Warden worked on their relationship with the tenant to open up lines of communication for the future and build bridges. The Panel also asked the Council to review the minimum temperature of 10 degrees before the heating came on as they felt this was quite cold. The Panel felt it was a good idea to arrange for an electrician to check whether the heating is functioning correctly and to undertake a meter reading on behalf of Npower given the long history of estimated readings. Learning: Following receipt of the recommendations from the Tenants Panel, the District Housing Manager fed back that she accepted the recommendations, and that the panels' perspective and feedback was much appreciated as it had offered a valuable view into the complaints from other tenants' perspectives. A plan was made to follow up the recommendations with Mr Y.
	Case 3 - Mr & Mrs F Complaint: Mr & Mrs F are council tenants against whom a neighbour had made a complaint regarding them smoking on their balcony. The complainants

	believed the Council had investigated the matter poorly and addressed it incorrectly under the Anti-Social Behaviour policy. Mr & Mrs F felt aggrieved and attacked for living normally in their own home. They were concerned the stage 1 response regarding future action was ambiguous and this left them with uncertainty regarding whether the case could be progressed at a later stage. The complaints team investigated the complaint and found that the incorrect policy had been followed and because of this, Mr & Mrs F had experienced distress and uncertainty as they could not defend the allegation until the case went to mediation, some weeks after the neighbour made their complaint. The investigation further found that although smoking was not against tenancy rules, neither Mr nor Mrs F smoked, meaning that the complaint had not been investigated thoroughly before mediation was attempted. The investigator further found that wording used in a letter to Mr & Mrs F was ambiguous and that this was linked to the Council enforcing the wrong policy. The complaints team recommended: That the Housing Office refreshes their knowledge on the ASB process and what constitutes ASB and to communicate with their tenants when any concerns are raised and also that the templated letters were reviewed to see if amendments were needed to ensure they are clear with their message and do not cause more confusion. In recognition of the distress the situation complained of had caused Mr & Mrs F and the time and trouble gone to in making the complaint, the Council should pay £150 as a goodwill gesture. The Local Housing Office fed back that the neighbour's complaint had been considered under the ASB policy following some training that housing management staff had received which suggested that this was the correct policy to use in these situations. However, it recognised that this was incorrect advice and would communicate to staff that this advice had been incorrect to prevent further issues and complaints arising.
	Case 4 – Miss J Complaint: Miss J is a council tenant and complained the Council had ignored reasonable adjustments when serving a Notice Seeking Possession and that the Council had not adhered to its own complaint policy timescales when responding at stage 1 of the process. The investigation found fault with the way in which the Council holds information pertaining to reasonable adjustments and that, on this occasion, these reasonable adjustments had been overlooked. It also found minor fault with how the complaint had been managed at stage 1. It was recommended that the Local Housing Office clarify the records it held regarding the reasonable adjustments in place for Miss J and visit Miss J to agree what information the Council should hold; update the records and the information to ensure it is conveyed clearly and obviously and that the

	reasonable adjustments are adhered to in the future and shared with other involved departments, as necessary. Learning: The Assistant District Housing Manager fed back that he agreed with the outcome and recommendations and had arranged to visit Miss J at a convenient time to discuss these with her and agree and confirm how the records would be held. This was completed successfully.
3	**LGSCO Complaint – Annual Review 2024/5**
	The LGSCO provides all Councils with an annual letter in the summer summarising their complaints performance for the preceding year, along with how that compares to complaints nationally.
	Southampton historically performs well in dealing with complaints referred to the LGSCO (the final stage for all complaints except those relating to Council tenants which are dealt with by the Housing Ombudsman). Only a very small percentage of complaints are referred to the LGSCO and of those, approximately 15% are accepted for investigation. Those rejected are either out of jurisdiction, premature, already satisfactorily dealt with by the Council or not in the public interest to investigate. This is indicative of a strong performing complaints system in place within the Council.
	Of the 70 complaints that were referred to the LGSCO, 33 were determined to be premature (and referred back to the Council to resolve) or outside of the jurisdiction of the LGSCO (usually because they related to matters that another Regulator or Court should more properly deal with).
	26 complaints were assessed and closed with no further action (either because the LGSCO found that there was no case to answer or it was not in the public interest to pursue / the Council had already offered a suitable resolution through its own complaints process).
	11 Complaints were investigated and 8 were upheld with a finding of fault causing injustice. This equates to an uphold rate of 73% of complaints accepted for investigation and compares favourably to / is below the national rate of 80%.
	

	 We investigated **11** complaints and upheld **8**. **73%** of complaints we investigated were upheld. This compares to an average of **80%** in similar authorities.
	To provide context for the proportion of complaints upheld in relation to overall service provision by the Council, this equates to 3.1 complaints upheld per 100,000 residents (and compares favourably to the higher national rate of 5.3% per 100,000 residents). The Council's overall number of complaints and proportion of complaints upheld is consistently lower than the national rate and that of our unitary peer groups (other unitary Councils with similar size populations and demographics).
	Summary of Cases Upheld:
	Cases upheld by the LGSCO this year include three (3) relating to Adult Social Care. Of these two (2) related to charging and financial assessment with highlighted delays in completed financial assessments within normal timescales. In both cases, the financial assessments, once completed, were accurate but the complaints were upheld due to delays in carrying them out. One (1) complaint related to noise / anti-social behaviour arising out of a dog boarding activity. In a similar vein to above, the actual service delivery was found to be correct but the complaint was upheld because the service did not deal with the complaints within the Council's published timeframe for doing so under its own complaints policy. Two (2) further complaints relating to a homelessness assessment and a children's services fostering financial assessment were also upheld on the basis of delays in completing assessments rather than on the final decision of the Council or a mistake in the actual service provision. This demonstrates a pattern of robust decision making and substantive decisions but pressure on resources leading to delays in completing work / addressing complaints resulting in avoidable adverse complaints findings. The compensation awards relating to the above are all very low (£3,658 in total) but highlight the need to deal with assessments and complaints within timescales more effectively.
	The one significant case determined in 2024/5 related to a home improvement load offered to a family guardian / foster carer within children's services. A summary of that complaint is set out below as a case study of what went wrong, and what changes the Council has made to its policies and systems as a direct result of learning from this complaint. The compensation payable in relation to this complaint alone amounted to £1,500 together with a further £53,000 of 'lost' loan paid to the original contractor to be re-credited to the foster carer along

	with a remaining balance of £22,000 to complete works (original approved loan amount of £75,000). It should be noted that this complaint outcome was reported for this year but the complaint itself spanned three years and multiple attempts by the service area to resolve the issue with the homeowner, issues around a contractor selected by the homeowner failing to complete work, the homeowner and their insurance company not being able to afford recovery action against that contractor and involved multiple Council departments responsible for several different elements of the loan application, approvals and monitoring.
	Foster Carer Home Improvement Loan Case: There was fault found by the LGSCO regarding the investigation into this complaint, lack of communication between the resident and the Council and fault found for incorrect oversight and administration of the complainant's home improvement loan resulting in insufficient funds for the complainant to complete the project. In particular the LGSCO found that the Council failed to manage the loan process and have effective accountability for such across departments, failed to monitor and challenge spend by a contractor, left it to the home owner to source and manage a contractor and make pre-payments, paid invoices without checking work was completed and failed to resolve the complaint over an extended period of time (over a year once the matter had been accepted as a complaint). The contractor failed to complete the works they were paid for, the home owner could not afford to take legal recovery action and the Council had no lawful standing to take legal action on behalf of the homeowner on the basis of the arrangement in place. Recommended actions and learnings: An immediate apology was made to the complainant in addition to compensation to recognise the avoidable frustration and the experience of poor complaints handling, together with a requirement to recover and repay the amount of loan lost through prepayments for incomplete works. Since receiving the LGSCO order, the Council has created a comprehensive procedure note for the process to follow when dealing with Special Guardian Home Improvement Loans. The Council has also repaid the money to the complainant which was incorrectly sent directly to a contractor who did not complete the contracted works and loans have been secured against the property in the original amount loaned. The build is now being supervised by the Council with an approved contact for the homeowner to work with to deliver the building works required to secure the accommodation for the foster child's use.
	Housing Ombudsman:
	The Housing Ombudsman has recently changed their reporting periods, now requiring landlord self assessment reports by end of September for publication of outcomes in November, however the Council does have interim 'headline' reporting for the period April 2024 – March 2025 from which it has drawn its data to support this report.

Housing Ombudsman Service

LANDLORD PERFORMANCE

April 2024 - March 2025

DATA REFRESHED: May 2025

Landlord: Southampton City Council

Landlord Homes: 18,485 **Landlord Type:** Local Authority / ALMO or TMO

PERFORMANCE AT A GLANCE

Determinations	Findings	Maladministration Findings	Orders Made
8	16	14	26

Recommendations	CHFOs	Compensation	Maladministration Rate
4	1	£5,793	88%

PERFORMANCE 2022-2023

Determinations	Maladministration Rate
3	33%

PERFORMANCE 2023-2024

Determinations	Maladministration Rate
8	76%

Maladministration Rate *Comparison* | *Cases determined between April 2024 - March 2025*

NATIONAL MALADMINISTRATION RATE: 71%	National Maladministration rate for Landlords of a similar size *and* type: 80%

Landlord Findings by Category | *Cases determined between April 2024 - March 2025*

Table 2.3

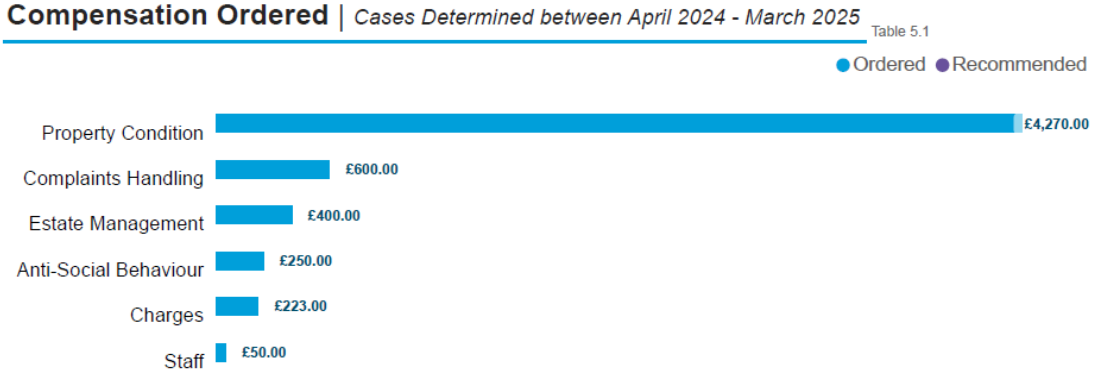
Category	Severe Maladministration	Maladministration	Service failure	Mediation	Redress	No maladministration	Outside Jurisdiction	Withdrawn	Total
Property Condition	0	3	1	0	1	1	0	0	6
Complaints Handling	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	5
Anti-Social Behaviour	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Charges	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Estate Management	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Information and data management	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Staff	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	0	9	5	0	1	1	0	0	16

Findings by Category *Comparison* | *Cases determined between April 2024 - March 2025*

Top Categories for Southampton City Council Table 3.1

Category	# Landlord Findings	% Landlord Maladministration	% National Maladministration
Property Condition	6	67%	73%
Complaints Handling	5	100%	77%
Anti-Social Behaviour	1	100%	66%
Charges	1	100%	58%
Estate Management	1	100%	64%
Information and data management	1	100%	90%
Staff	1	100%	45%

Compensation Ordered | *Cases Determined between April 2024 - March 2025* Table 5.1



The Council maintains its own performance data relating to the complaints year 2024/25 and the key information is as set out below:

Number of HO complaints received 2024/25: 21

Upheld complaints: 6

Not upheld but compensation to be offered (SCC offered a suitable remedy as part of our complaints process): 1

Upheld complaints:

1. Complaint about underfloor heating not working. Apology to the resident and compensation of £425
2. Complaint about damp and mould in new build property. Apology to resident and compensation of £300
3. Complaint about misuse of disabled parking bays at housing complex. Apology to resident, discussed options to manage the parking, and £500 compensation.
4. Complaint about anti-social behaviour from neighbours. The resident was met in person, apology provided to resident and compensation of £550
5. Leaks and disrepair at property. Apology to resident and compensation of £600.
6. Housing repairs and damp and mould at property. Resident was provided with £2,670 compensation.

Not upheld (as resolved at earlier stage) but compensation offered (at earlier stage):

	1. Complaint about damp and mould at property. Compensation of £685.86 and apology to resident. Total compensation: £5,793
	The Housing Ombudsman review is broadly consistent with the Council's own assessment of areas of recommended service improvement within Housing following the Housing Regulators inspection of the Council in 2024 and its annual self assessment process for the regulator. The two biggest areas of concern are a) disrepair and condition claims (many relating to damp and mould and categorises as 'high risk' disrepair because of the health impacts for residents) and b) complaints handling.
	Disrepair claims are very high and the Council has a corresponding increase in disrepair claims being brought through the courts with additional resources being deployed to improve council housing stock and a housing improvement plan in place to target historic stock condition issues. As the improvement plan specifically addresses disrepair in housing stock it is not considered further in this report and is being separately monitored through the corporate reporting mechanism for that Plan.
	Complaints handling remains an ongoing concern. When the Council changed its complaints policy two years ago to make service areas responsible for service recovery and non statutory complaints, provision was made for the corporate complaints team to provide additional support and investigation capacity for one nominated service area to support an improvement journey. It was anticipated that any service area would receive support for 12-18 months before switching to support another area as appropriate. Housing was selected as the first area to be supported, however, after 2 years the service still requires intensive support to its complaints function. The resolution rate for complaints at stage 1 (service level) remains well below the Council average with a disproportionately high number of complaints proceeding to stage 2 and the HO. Further work is required on ensuring timely responses to complaints, use of corporate templates for all complaints, providing appropriate remedies for complaints at an early stage (new remedies guidance was developed and issued by the complaints team and Ombudsman Link Officer this year) and building confidence / an understanding of how remedying a complaint at an earlier stage of the process substantially reduces cost, impact on resources and improvement to customer satisfaction. Housing have taken action to boost their complaints handling function with the appointment of a complaints officer within the service. Having regard to the Housing Regulator Inspection findings and the HO annual reporting, it is anticipated that Housing will remain in intensive support for at least another 6-12 months. An action plan will be developed in the Autumn with Housing to begin the transition of some stage 2 complaints to their complaints officer and Heads of Service (following training) with a view to moving them to handling their own stage 2 complaints from April 2026.
	Once Housing no longer require such intensive support, the work of the Council's complaints team will be refocused, alongside the statutory child protection complaints they are required to lead on under the Childrens Act, to providing training , advice and guidance to all service areas equally to upskill complaints contacts, improve the overall quality of complaints responses and remedies offered at an earlier stage of complaints and improve the capture of learning from complaints to better understand how complaints can deliver service improvement for our customers, residents and service users.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	
Capital/Revenue	
	Compensation paid by service areas for Ombudsman complaints amounted to £10,951.
	The above does not include the cost of compensation paid by services areas in dealing with stage 1 and stage 2 complaints that do not progress to be considered by the Council's Complaints Team or the Ombudsman Link Officer. The Council does not currently have a method of capturing and recording the cost of responding to complaints at service area level until such time as the CM-Pro reporting system is sufficiently developed to capture this cost. The cost of meeting any compensation award under the complaints policy / settlements with the respective Ombudsman falls to service area budgets.
Property/Other	
	N/A
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS	
Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:	
	Section 111 Local Government Act 1972 and Section 1 Localism Act 2011 provide the framework under which the Council operates a Complaints policy to assist in the delivery of its statutory and discretionary functions. The LGSCO operates under Royal Charter and is designated by the Crown under the Local Government Act 1974 (Part III) to investigate complaints against Councils and provide advice and guidance on good administrative practice. The LGSCO has the same powers as the High Court to compel the production of evidence and information to enable them to investigate complaints and issue their findings (which are publicly available on their website). The 1974 Act provides a process under which Councils voluntarily resolve complaints and, in the event they fail to do so, a statutory order and publication process through full council. Ultimately, the LGSCO may take court action to secure Directions to comply with their Orders and may publish 'Public Interest Reports' nationally where they find serious failings it is in the wider interest to report on.
Other Legal Implications:	
	When considering and responding to complaints the Council has regard to a wide range or pervasive legislation including but not limited to the Equalities Act 2010, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Data Protection Act 2018.
RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS	
	Having an effective complaints system is a key risk management mitigation for the Council. Effective complaints handling reduces the cost of service delivery failures, particularly when focused on early service recovery as early as possible when something goes wrong. It also improves customer satisfaction with the services the Council delivers and improves the Council's reputation with residents and service users. The relatively low levels of complaints upheld demonstrates the Council has an overall 'good' approach to its handling of

	complaints and recovering from service faults but, it is important to recognise that a single complaint that is not resolved, in high risk service areas, can affect multiple users or have a significant detrimental effect on the well-being of a resident and it is important to monitor and review our complaints performance to ensure such incidents are the exception and the Council learns from, and acts on improvement recommendations.
POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS	
	The matters set out in this report are complementary to and in accordance with the Council's Policy Framework and corporate priorities.

KEY DECISION?	**No**
WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	None
SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION	
Appendices	
1.	Corporate, Adult Social Care and Housing Complaints Policy 2025

Documents In Members' Rooms

1.	None.
Equality Impact Assessment	
Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) to be carried out.	**No**
Data Protection Impact Assessment	
Do the implications/subject of the report require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) to be carried out.	**No**
Other Background Documents **Other Background documents available for inspection at:**	

Title of Background Paper(s)		**Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)**
1.		
2.		