



Housing Ombudsman Service Complaint Handling Code

Annual Complaint Handling and Service Improvement Report 2024–2025



DRAGONFLY
MANAGEMENT

A: The Arc, High Street, Clowne S43 4JY
T: 01246 242424
E: enquiries@bolsover.gov.uk
W: www.bolsover.gov.uk

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Foreword

Governing Body Response

Bolsover District Council remains dedicated to providing outstanding customer service. We fully appreciate the value of tenant feedback and complaints, and we are committed to addressing them promptly and effectively. We continuously learn from the concerns raised by our tenants and use this insight to drive ongoing improvements in our services.

The Council have followed the revised Compliments, Comments and Complaints (CCC) Policy from April 2024. This has been embedded through comprehensive staff training alongside consistent and high-quality complaint handling.

The self-assessment provides evidence that the Council adheres to the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code. Any complaints received are managed in full compliance with the Code's standards.

The Council is proactive in continually analysing data for service improvements. Multiple measures have been employed in order to facilitate this during 2024-2025, including changes to record keeping, increased service reviews and altered agendas. The Council will continue to use complaints in a positive way to further improve services to our tenants.



Cllr Mary Dooley Portfolio Holder for Health & Wellbeing (Including Customer Services)



Cllr Sandra Peake (May 2019 – February 2025) Portfolio Holder for Housing



Cllr Phil Smith (February 2025 – present) Portfolio Holder for Housing

Housing Liaison Board Response

As tenants, we are pleased to see that the annual complaints performance and service improvement report for 2024/25, together with the Council's self-assessments against the Complaint Handling Code, show that we are compliant.

We are pleased that the introduction of quarterly complaint performance reports being presented at the Housing Liaison Board meeting gives tenants the opportunity to monitor and scrutinise the Council's complaints handling and provide constructive challenge where required. The further adaptation of this information to create a specific repairs-based report, further enhances the challenge by RANT (Repairs Action Network Team) tenants reviewing service delivery.

Introduction

The Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code became statutory from 1 April 2024, which means that social housing landlords are now obliged by law to follow its requirements.

The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 places a legal duty on the Ombudsman to monitor social housing landlord's compliance with the Code. Section 8 of the HOS Complaint Handling Code requires that landlords must produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge.

This annual report provides an analysis of the complaints, comments and compliments received by the Council during 2024/25.

This report seeks to provide information on the performance of the Council's complaint handling in terms of the volume and timeliness of the responses. In addition, the report seeks to identify themes, trends, and lessons learnt that drive service improvements.

The Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) has a two-stage complaint handling process which the Council adopted within its CCC Policy from April 2024 which requires:

- All Complaint Acknowledgements responded within 5 working days.
- Stage 1 complaints must be responded to within 10 working days.
- Stage 2, within 20 working days.

Whilst the main driver for the report is to look at complaints, the Council are able to learn a lot from the comments, compliments and M.P. enquires received and so this report also seeks to analyse this data.

Analysis of complaints performance for 2024/25

Types of complaints

The Customer Advisors who work front line for customer services have all had thorough training of the CCC Policy. Through this training the Council's Customer Advisors can appropriately determine whether the issue raised is a service request/enquiry or a complaint.

The CCC Policy defines a complaint as an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual or group of individuals. However, a service request is defined as a request that the organisation provides or improves a service, fixes a problem or reconsiders a decision.

The Council also receives Member of Parliament enquiries (M.P. enquiries) which are dealt with under the CCC Policy. The M.P. was appropriately updated with the changes to the CCC Policy to follow the Housing Ombudsman Statutory Code. Within this training, the M.P.'s Office agreed to determine whether a customer would like to raise their enquiry as an M.P. enquiry or as a complaint. The M.P. was given a copy of the CCC Policy and an explanation of the stages of a complaint so their constituents can be appropriately informed. In addition to this, further discussions were held with the M.P., to highlight the scope of the Council's complaints policy. As a result, the M.P.'s office has created email and letter templates to accurately signpost customers.

Currently, if a customer makes a complaint which does not fall within the CCC Policy the customer is appropriately directed to the correct place to complain or be assisted with their enquiry/request. For example, the Council has the right to deal with service requests for the first time before a complaint is made.

During 2024/2025, the Council rejected 3 complaints as out of scope of the Policy (not classed as service requests).

- Contact from customer determined as not a complaint, out of scope letter sent.
- Contact from customer raises same issues already dealt with by the complaints process, advised Ombudsman was next step.
- Contact from customer wanting to escalate to stage 2 but stage 1 and initial compensation request still in progress, out of scope letter sent.

Volume of complaints (as per Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) figures)

Tenant Satisfaction Measures form part of the revised system developed by the Regulator of Social Housing to assess how well social housing landlords are doing at providing good quality homes and services, with specific measures being around effective complaint handling and volume of complaints in relation to the organisations size. There are 22 Tenant Satisfaction Measures in total which include 12 Tenant Perception Measures and 10 Management Information Measures.

Each Registered Provider are required to complete the Tenant Satisfaction Measures annually and upload the data to the Regulator of Social Housing. The Council, as a registered provider, are also required to publish the result on the Councils' website, so it is accessible to tenants.

The data below summarises the Council's compliance with the Housing Ombudsman response times. These figures reflect performance in accordance with the Housing Ombudsman Code and the CCC Policy. It also compares volume of complaints by tenants versus residents, and how many respondents to the TSM Perception Survey made a complaint in the previous 12 months.

While the Council's handling of HOS Stage 1 complaints was compliant, one of the Stage 2 complaints received exceeded the HOS response times and Council timescales by one working day. For this complaint, no formal extensions were agreed.

Table 1 – Number of Housing related complaints received and compliance with response times

| Complaint Stage | Total number received | Number received from Tenants | Number received from Residents | Number received from out of area | Within BDC timescales | Within HOS timescales |
|-----------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| HOS Stage 1 | 102 | 94 | 7 | 1 | 102 | 102 |
| HOS Stage 2 | 21 | 20 | 1 | 0 | 20 | 20 |

This data on number of tenant complaints is used to calculate the complaints Management Information Measures:

| Management Information Measures | |
|--|--|
| CH01(1) Complaints relative to the size of the landlord – Number of stage one complaints per 1,000 homes | <p>A. Total number of stage one complaints for 2023/24 – 94</p> <p>B. Number of dwelling units owned at year end – 4939</p> <p>$94/4939 \times 1000 = 19.03$ (19.0)</p> |
| CH01(2) Complaints relative to the size of the landlord – Number of stage two complaints per 1,000 homes | <p>A. Number of stage two complaints for 2023/24 – 20</p> <p>B. Number of dwelling units owned at year end – 4939</p> <p>$20/4939 \times 1000 = 4.04$ (4.0)</p> |

| Management Information Measures | |
|--|---|
| CH02(1) Complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales – Proportion of stage one complaints responded to within timescale | <p>A. Number of stage one complaints made by tenants during the year responded to within Housing Ombudsman Code timescales – 94</p> <p>B. Number of stage one complaints made by tenants during the year – 94</p> <p>$94/94 \times 100 = 100\%$</p> |
| CH02(2) Complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales – Proportion of stage two complaints responded to within timescale | <p>A. Number of stage two complaints made by tenants during the year responded to within Housing Ombudsman Code timescales – 19</p> <p>B. Number of stage two complaints made by tenants during the year – 20</p> <p>$19/20 \times 100 = 95\%$ (95.0%)</p> |

When responding to the TSM Perception Survey, a total of 112 tenants (weighted data) indicated they had made a complaint in the last 12 months. When comparing complaint levels by stock type, the rates mirror our stock breakdown between General needs and Housing for older people.

Have you made a complaint to the Council in the last 12 months?

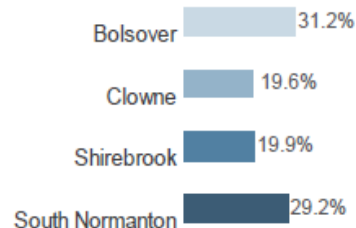
| Counts | Analysis % | Respondents |
|---|------------|-------------|
| Base | | |
| Unweighted | 644 | 100.0% |
| Weighted | 642 | 100.0% |
| Have you made a complaint to the Council in the last 12 months? | | |
| Yes | 112 | 17.5% |
| No | 530 | 82.5% |

Respondents who made a complaint in the last 12 months by stock type



A slightly higher number of respondents in General needs housing made a complaint in the last 12 months. No complaints were received from respondents in Sheltered housing.

Respondents who made a complaint in the last 12 months by geographic area



The highest number of complaints is from respondents in Bolsover area, with the lowest number of respondents complaining in the Clowne area. Complaints levels in respondents are second highest in South Normanton area.

Satisfaction with the complaints handling process (as per TSM figures)

| Counts Analysis % Respondents | |
|--|---------------|
| Base | |
| Unweighted | 107 100.0% |
| Weighted | 110 100.0% |
| How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the Council's approach to complaints handling? | |
| Very satisfied | 18 16.0% |
| Fairly satisfied | 24 21.8% |
| Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | 22 20.0% |
| Fairly dissatisfied | 25 22.4% |
| Very dissatisfied | 22 19.7% |
| % Satisfied | 37.8% |
| % Unsatisfied | 42.2% |

As part of the Tenant Perception Survey element of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures, respondents who had made a complaint within the last 12 months were asked to declare their level of satisfaction with the complaints handling process. As noted previously, 112 out of the 642 valid respondents had made a complaint in the last 12 months.

When adding together those that were 'very satisfied' and 'fairly satisfied' out of the 112, this represents a 37.8% satisfaction level. It should be noted that not all respondents answering 'yes' to making a complaint then answered the subsequent question on satisfaction.

This low number of complainants is reflective of the fact that traditionally the Council receives a low level of complaints.

Those indicating their satisfaction with complaints handling can also be broken down by stock type and contact centre area. Satisfaction was relatively equal across General needs housing and Housing for older people. There were no respondents in Sheltered Housing that had made a complaint in the last 12 months so satisfaction could not be analysed.

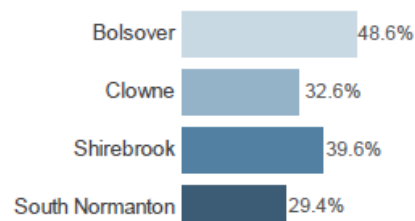
As noted in the previous charts, there were a higher number of survey respondents within the Bolsover and South Normanton areas that made a complaint, and the following charts show highest satisfaction in the Bolsover and Shirebrook areas. Tenants in South Normanton had the lowest satisfaction.

Satisfaction of respondents with the Council's approach to complaints handling by stock type



Satisfaction is broadly similar across the two stock types where respondents reported making a complaint in the last 12 months.

Satisfaction of respondents with the Council's approach to complaints handling by geographic area



Satisfaction is highest in the Bolsover area, followed by Shirebrook. Respondents in the South Normanton area are least satisfied.

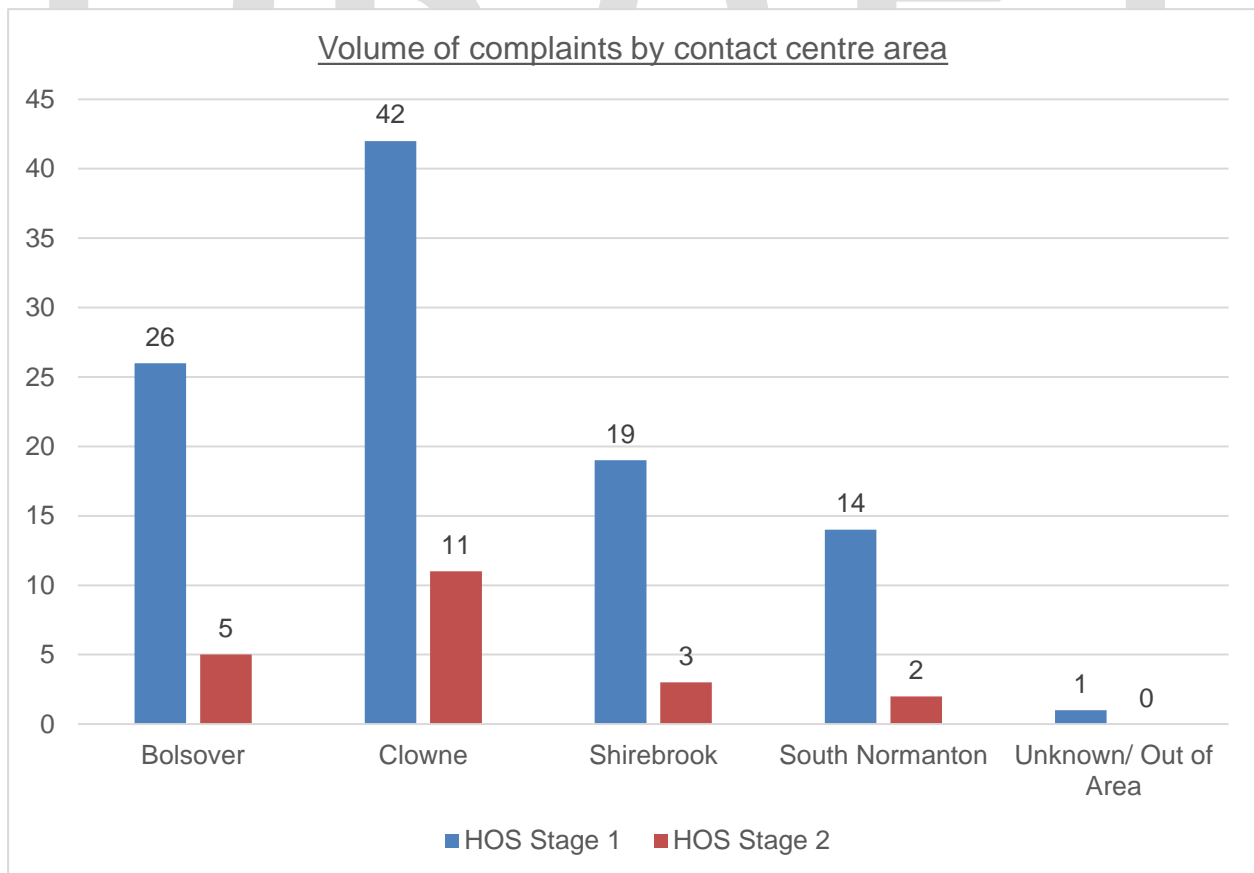
Volume of complaints by contact centre area

When analysing Customer Services data on the complaints received by contact centre area, a larger proportion in total are received from the Clowne and Bolsover areas, which matches the 2023-2024 data. This data also partially mirrors the TSM Perception Measures survey responses indicating that tenants in those areas are more likely to complain which requires further investigation into whether this is related to property types found in those areas or whether dissatisfaction can be attributed to the teams operating in those patches. According to the complaints data for 2024/25, tenants in the South Normanton area have complained the least.

In contrast as explained previously, Bolsover and South Normanton tenants complained the most according to TSM survey responses.

Table 2 – Volume of complaints received by contact centre area

| Contact Centre Area | HOS Stage 1 | HOS Stage 2 | Total |
|----------------------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| Bolsover | 26 | 5 | 31 |
| Clowne | 42 | 11 | 53 |
| Shirebrook | 19 | 3 | 22 |
| South Normanton | 14 | 2 | 16 |
| Unknown/ Out of Area | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Total | 102 | 21 | 123 |



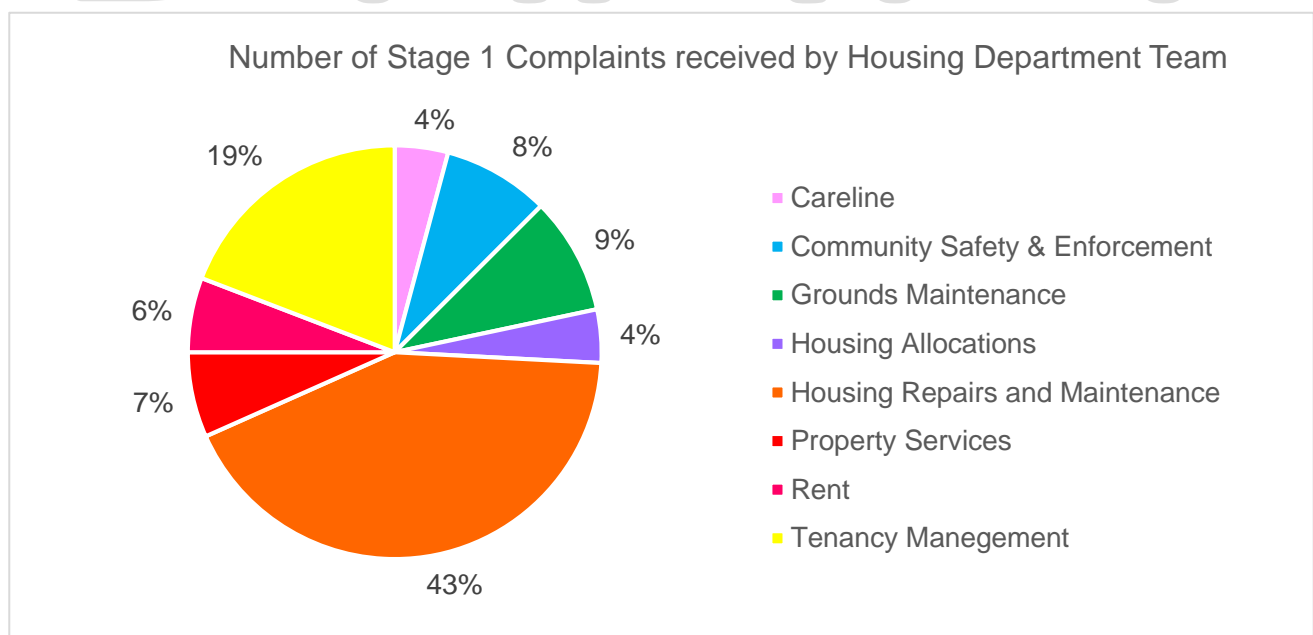
Themes and trends in the complaints received

Some customer contacts/complaints received during 2024/25 covered more than one service area; therefore, the totals below do not mirror the actual volume of contacts received. Out of 151 complaints (HOS 1 and HOS 2), 58 related to Dragonfly (Housing Repairs and Maintenance). The next most common service area was Tenancy Management (33).

Table 3 – Breakdown of customer contact by team – complaints

| Team | HOS Stage 1 | HOS Stage 2 | Total for Team |
|---|-------------|-------------|----------------|
| Careline | 5 | 1 | 6 |
| Community Safety & Enforcement | 10 | 5 | 15 |
| Grounds Maintenance | 11 | 3 | 14 |
| Housing Allocations | 5 | 0 | 5 |
| Dragonfly (Housing Repairs and Maintenance) | 51 | 7 | 58 |
| Property Services | 8 | 3 | 11 |
| Rent | 7 | 2 | 9 |
| Tenancy Management | 23 | 10 | 33 |
| Total | 120 | 31 | 151 |
| Total (excluding cross cutting) | 102 | 21 | |

The following chart shows the breakdown of complaints received by team for those at HOS Stage 1. The largest proportion related to Dragonfly (Housing Repairs and Maintenance).



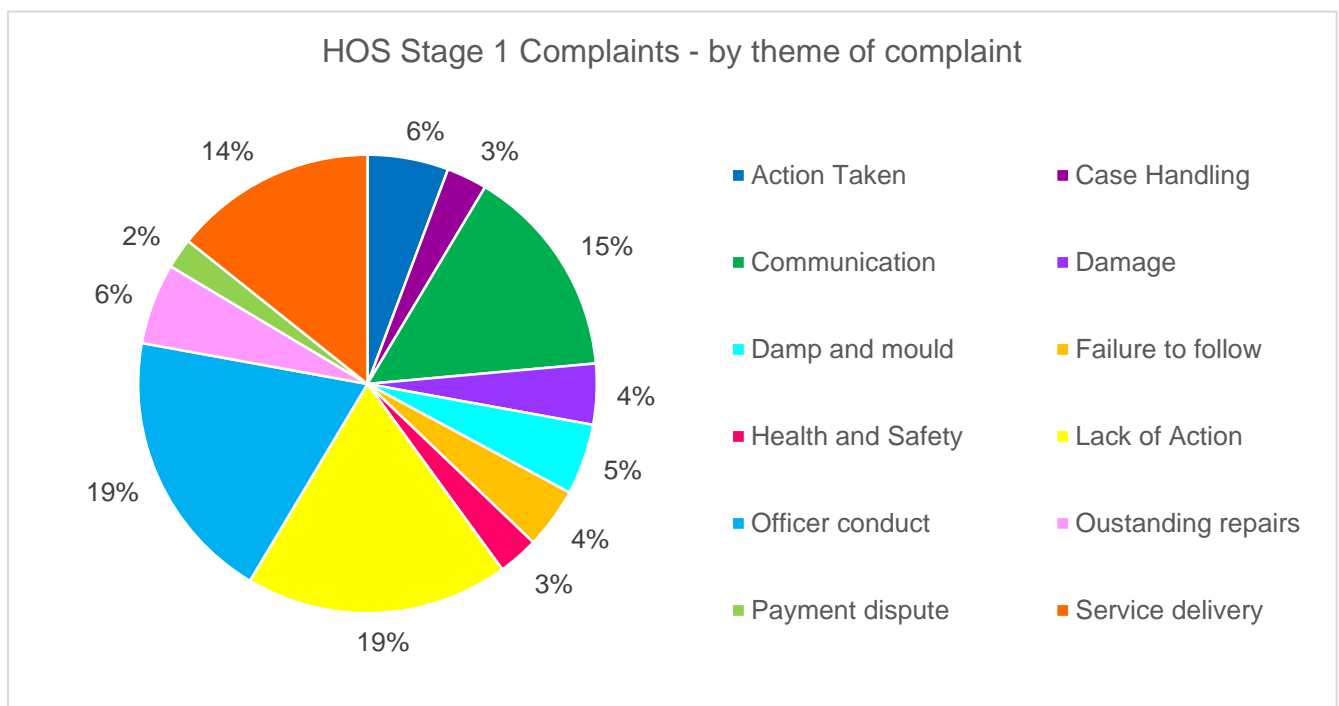
OFFICIAL

When analysing the themes of the HOS Stage 1 complaints, the most common factors were officer conduct and lack of action, followed by communication.

When data was analysed to determine which departments contributed to the theme 'officer conduct', it was found Dragonfly (Housing Repairs and Maintenance) accounted for 41% of the complaints related to 'officer conduct' and Tenancy Management accounted for 30%.

Dragonfly (Housing Repairs and Maintenance) accounted for 50% of complaints related to 'lack of action', followed by Grounds Maintenance with 23%.

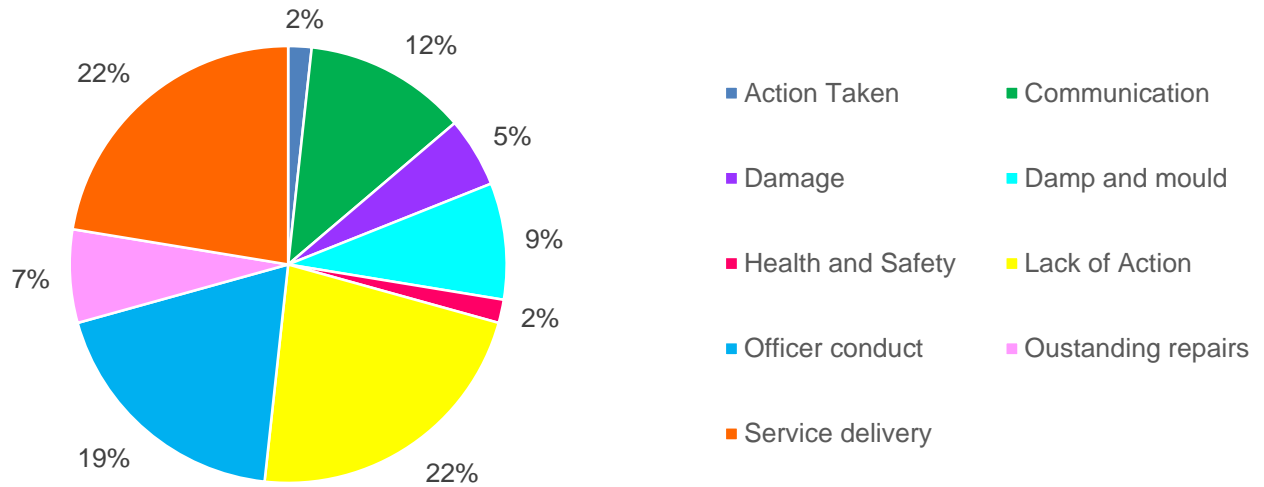
The theme 'communication' had 33% of complaints for Dragonfly (Housing Repairs and Maintenance) and 24% for Grounds Maintenance.



* Failure to follow policy/procedure/statutory obligations or rule of law

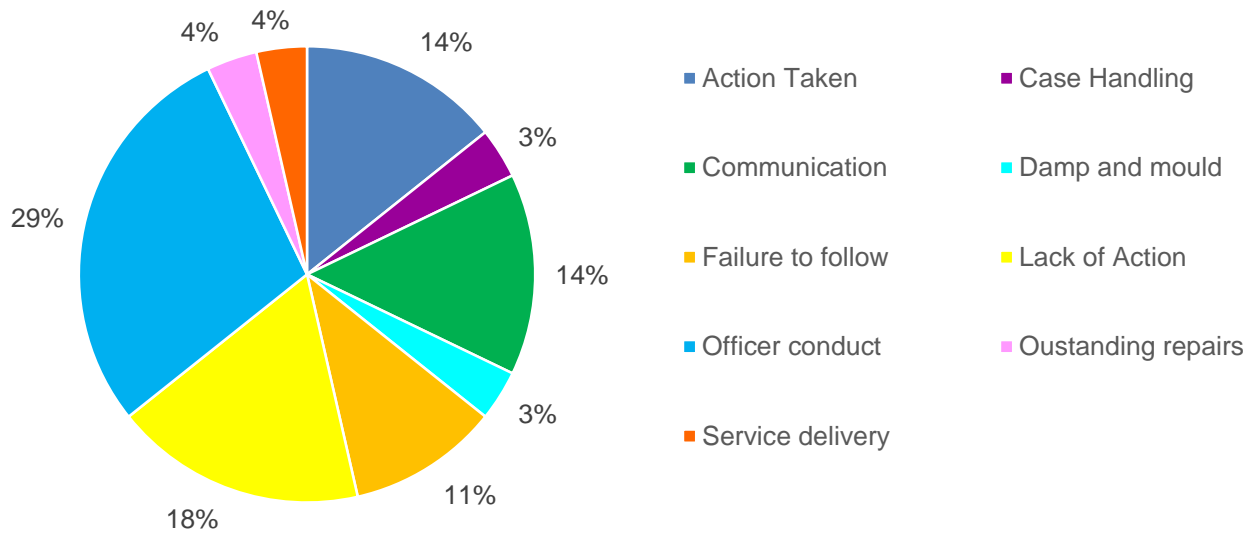
Looking at themes specifically within Dragonfly (Housing Repairs and Maintenance), 'lack of action', 'service delivery' and 'officer conduct' were the top three. The category 'service delivery' included issues such as standard of repairs, poor preparation, inefficiency, failure to investigate/complete and missed services.

HOS Stage 1 Dragonfly (Housing Repairs and Maintenance) complaints by theme



Finally, when analysing the themes within Tenancy Management 'officer conduct' was the highest, followed by 'lack of action', then both 'communication' and 'action taken'.

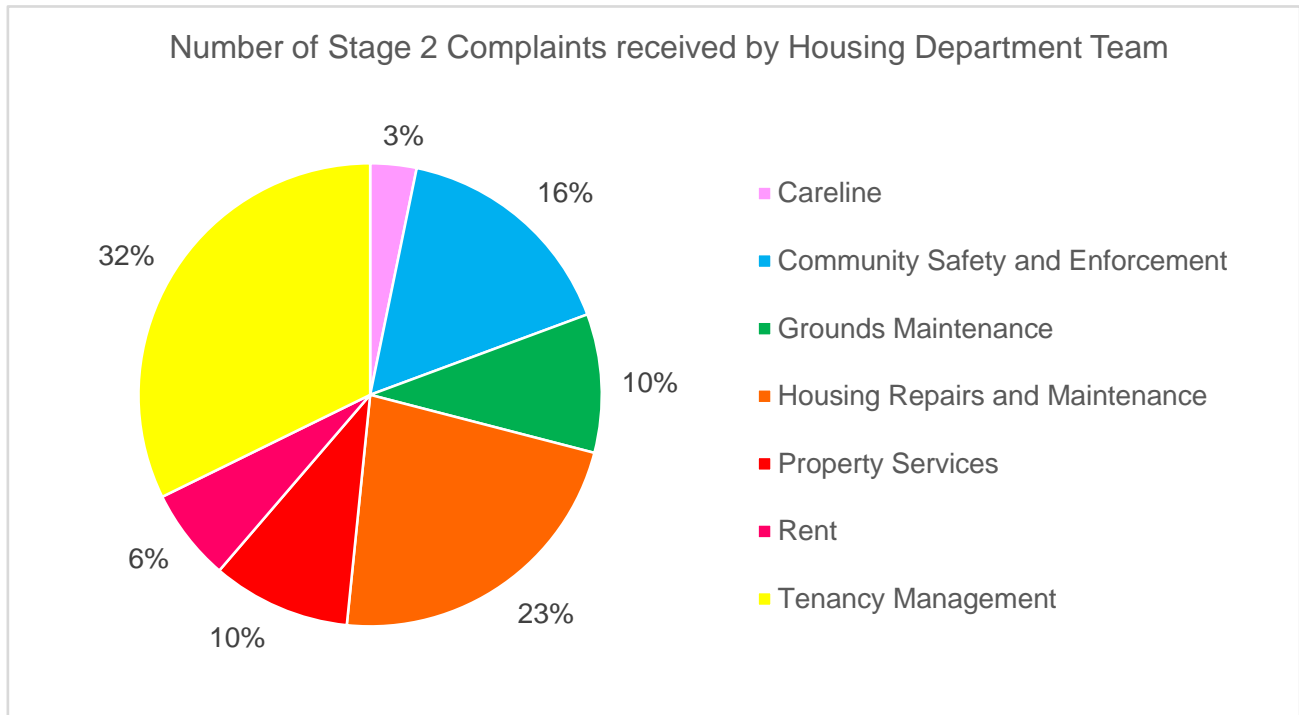
HOS Stage 1 Tenancy Management complaints by theme



OFFICIAL

For the complaints received at HOS Stage 2, (as outlined in Table 3), the largest proportion related to Tenancy, followed by Dragonfly (Housing Repairs and Maintenance).

Unfortunately, there were no clear themes that could be drawn when analysing this data.



Volume of compliments, comments and M.P. enquiries

The following charts show the volume of compliments, comments and M.P. enquires received by team. For compliments and comments the largest proportion related to Dragonfly (Housing Repairs and Maintenance). For compliments Housing Allocations and Housing Options came next. However, for M.P. enquiries the majority related to Tenancy Management.

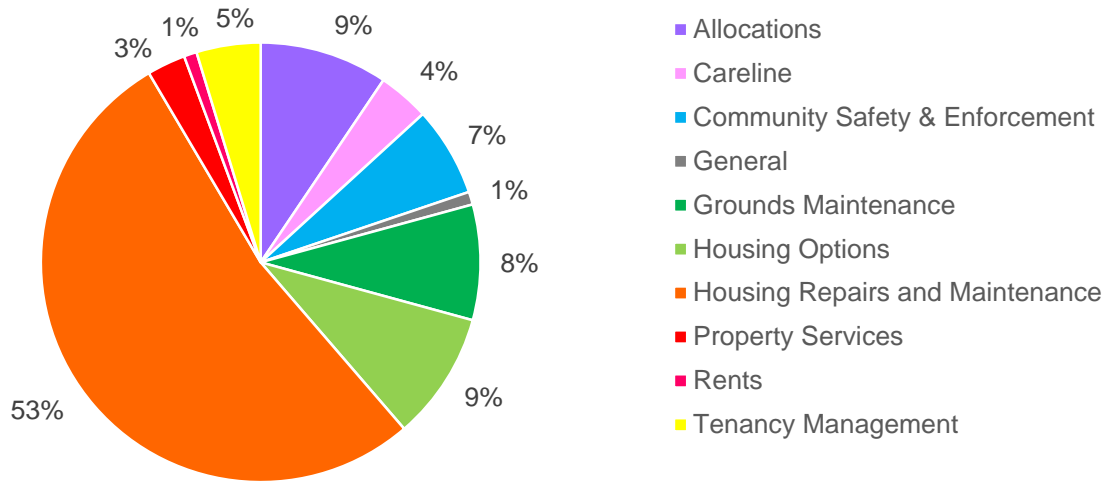
Table 4 – Breakdown of customer contact by team – compliments, comments and M.P. enquiries

| Team | Compliments | Comments | M.P. enquiries | Total for Team |
|---|-------------|----------|----------------|----------------|
| Careline* | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Community Safety and Enforcement | 7 | 0 | 1 | 8 |
| Dragonfly (Housing Repairs and Maintenance) | 56 | 7 | 2 | 65 |
| Estate Management | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| General | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Grounds Maintenance | 9 | 0 | 1 | 10 |
| Housing Allocations* | 10 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Housing Options* | 10 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Property Services | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Rent | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Tenancy Management | 5 | 1 | 5 | 11 |
| Total | 106 | 9 | 11 | 126 |
| Total (excluding cross cutting) | 94 | 9 | 7 | |

*From existing tenants

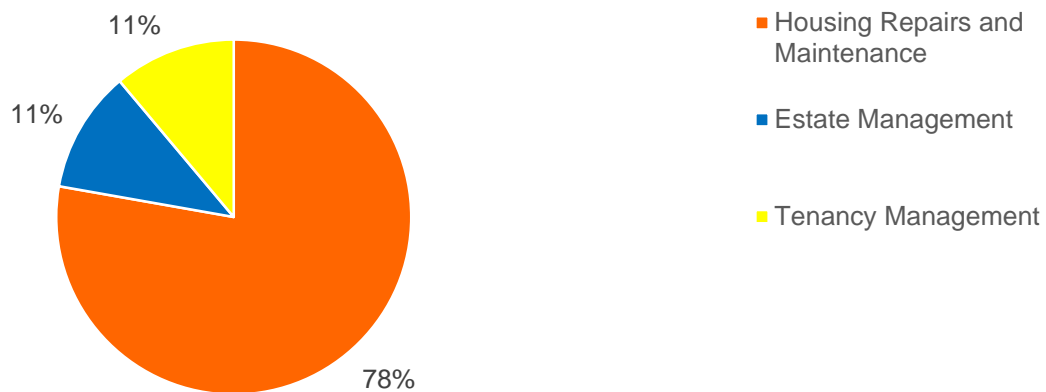
It is useful to note whilst Dragonfly (Housing Repairs and Maintenance) features heavily as a core reason for complaint, this data shows that a tenant's personal experience of the service by the team influences their bias in response to the Council. There are clearly positives to be taken from the service delivered as well as areas for improvement.

Number of Compliments received by Housing Department Team

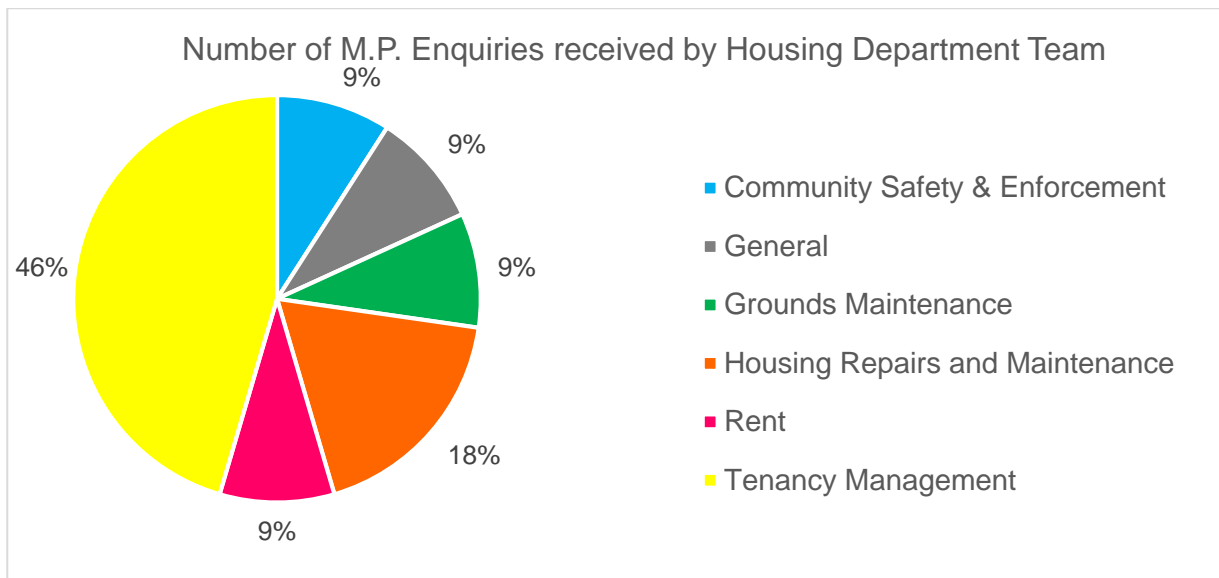


The Council received a limited number of comments from tenants during 2024/25, but most related to Dragonfly (Housing Repairs and Maintenance), most relating to poor communication and all were passed back to the teams for further action where required.

Number of Comments received by Housing Department Team



The following chart shows volume of M.P. enquires by team. When analysing the M.P. enquiries received during 2024/25, the highest number related to Tenancy Management.



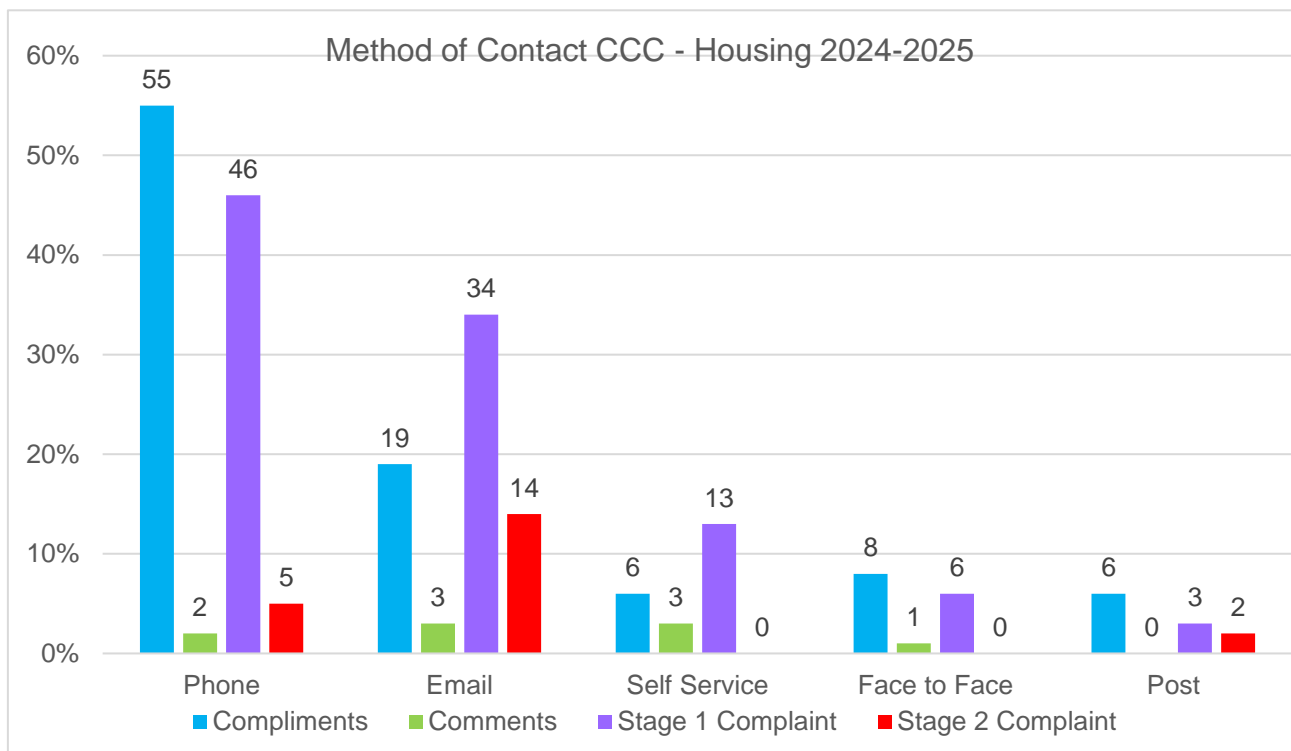
Method of contact

When analysing how tenants contact the Council to pass on a compliment or make a complaint, most compliments and stage 1 complaints were via telephone followed by email, but

Analysis of method of contact over the last year has shown a shift to use of telephone or email over the more long-standing use of post/letter.

It is worth noting that M.P. Enquiries have not been reported on in the below graph as all M.P. Enquiries are sent via email.

The Council have had a significant move towards increasing digital transactions and made several changes to the self-serve functions on the Council website, so it is encouraging to see tenants choosing to use this method of contact.



Benchmark data

Comparison in volume of complaints received – 2023/2024

When comparing changes in local complaints data, during 2023/24, the Council's CCC Policy had a 3-stage procedure:

- Stage One Informal – 3 working days
- Stage Two Formal – 15 working days
- Stage Three Internal Reviews – 20 working days

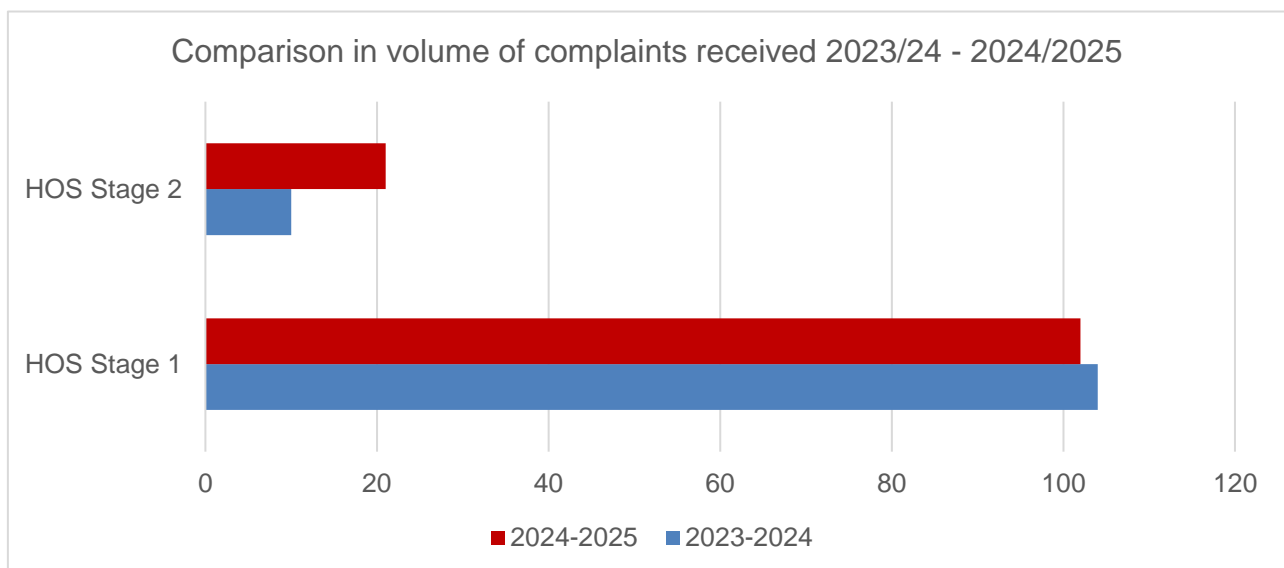
For the purpose of this report, reference to HOS Stage 1 complaints for 2023-2024 consists of the Informal and Formal stages. Consequently, a direct comparison with 2023/24 is not possible. Data is crosscutting between departments/teams and therefore one complaint may be attributed to multiple areas (e.g. both Dragonfly Housing Repairs and Maintenance and Housing Management and Enforcement).

In 2023/2024 there were 60 Stage 1 Informal complaints made. 45 of these were related to Dragonfly (Housing Repairs and Maintenance) and 15 were categorised as Housing Management and Enforcement. For Stage 2 Formal complaints in 2023/2024 there were 44. 17 of these were related to Dragonfly (Housing Repairs and Maintenance) and 32 were categorised as Housing Management and Enforcement.

Both Stage 1 informal and Stage 2 formal complaints (60 and 44 respectively) were used to calculate the HOS Stage 1 figure for 2023-2024 of 104.

There were 10 Stage 3 Internal Review complaints in 2023/2024. 1 of these was related to Dragonfly (Housing Repairs and Maintenance). The other 9 were categorised as Housing Management and Enforcement.

In comparison to the 2024/2025 data HOS Stage 1 figures have decreased from 104 to 102. However, HOS Stage 2 complaints have increased twofold from 10 to 21. This could be attributed to the new complaints policy following the new complaint handling code as of April 2024. The Council believe the updated policy has made complaints more accessible and clearer for customers meaning they may have understood the escalation process more clearly. It could also be a result of the removal of informal complaints and the system changing from a 3 stage to a 2 stage process.



Comparison with national trends on themes for complaint

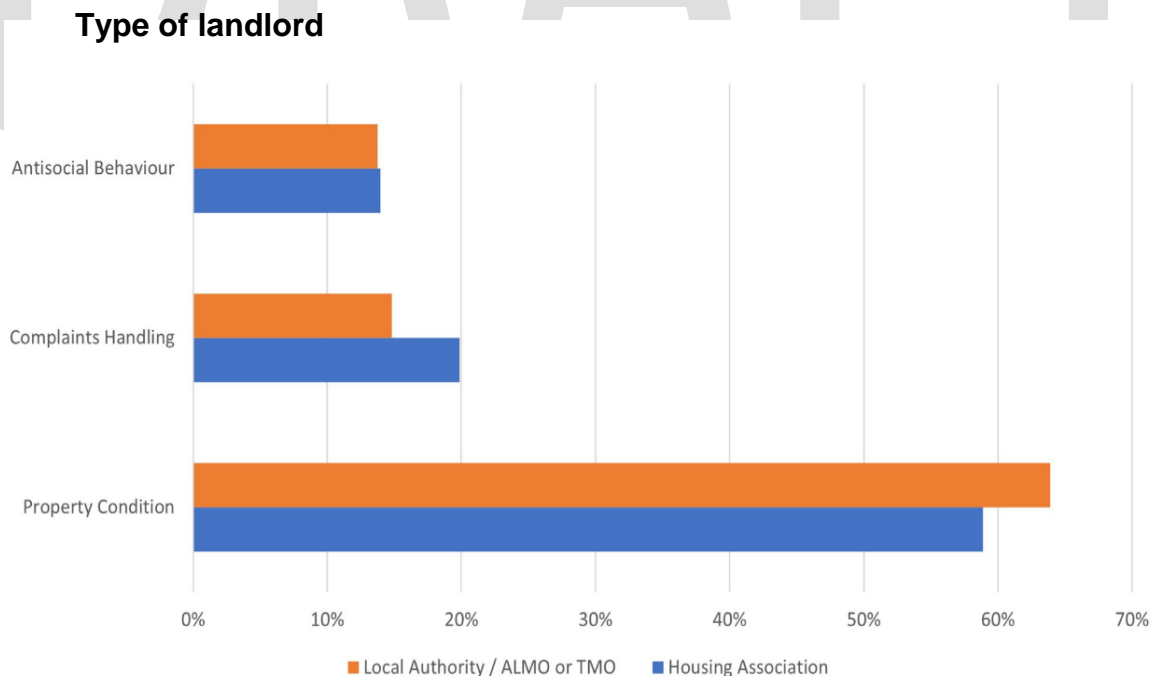
A HOS Spotlight report on repairs and maintenance (repairing trust) from May 2025 reported that following complaints analysis, repairs and maintenance complaints account for 45% of casework data in 2024-2025. This aligns with the Council's 2024-2025 data which showed that Dragonfly (Housing Repairs and Maintenance) accounted for 43% of complaints.

In addition to this, the HOS reported an unprecedented rise in complaints with a 474% increase in complaints regarding substandard living conditions since 2019/20. However, the Council have seen a small decrease of Dragonfly (Housing Repairs and Maintenance) complaints in 2024-2025 since 2023-2024 (58 and 62 respectively), although this has increased since 2022/2023, but only by a small amount (51). As the Council are not seeing such a significant increase, we feel our housing stock is in good condition which is reflected by our Decent Homes return and TSM satisfaction statistics.

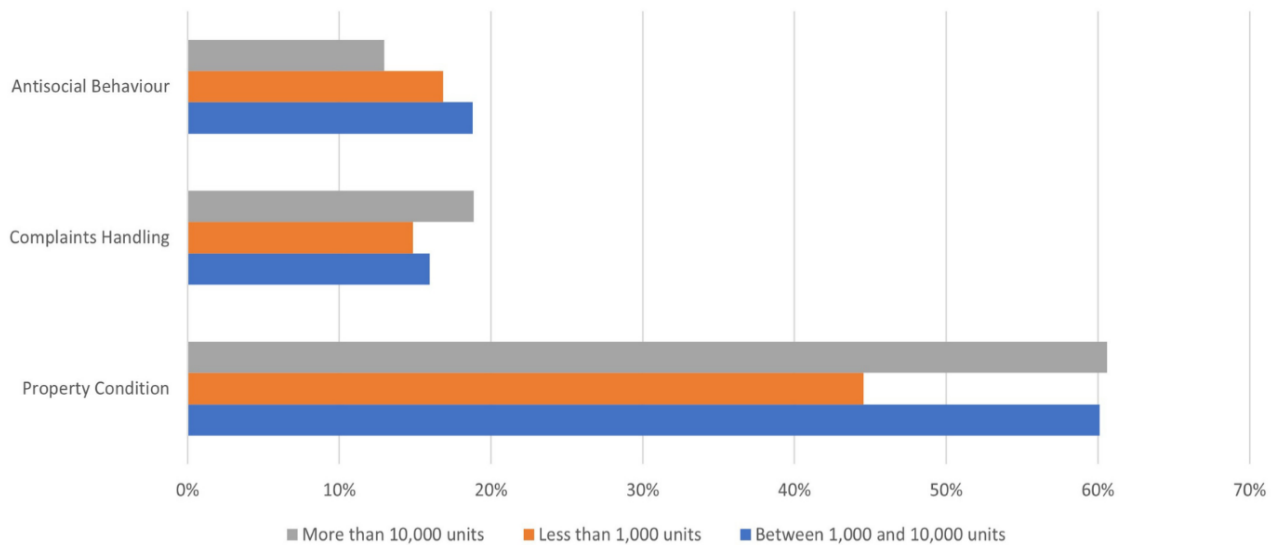
(HOS, (May 2025), Spotlight report on repairs and maintenance – repairing trust, p, 3 & 10)

Comparison with national trends in reasons for complaints 2024/25

At the time of producing this report, the HOS have not yet published their analysis of Q4 2024/25 data. However, when looking at their analysis at Q3 2024/25 and previous quarters for the year, by landlord type and size of landlord, 'property condition' was the top category of complaint they received. This indicates that the reasons for tenants complaining is comparable with the national picture.



Size of landlord



*Note: The Council have between 1,000 and 10,000 units

Q3 Quarterly Data 2024-25 | Housing Ombudsman

Findings of non-compliance

In 2024/25, all complaints were categorised as HOS Stage 1 were responded to within the Housing Ombudsman timescales of 10 working days.

1 HOS Stage 2 complaint was responded to outside of Housing Ombudsman timescales of 20 working days. This complaint was answered 1 working day later than timescales (21 working days). Unfortunately, this was due to an administrative error from the Complaints team. An email was not sent prior as the issue was only realised the next working day when the response was sent immediately, the Council did acknowledge and apologise to the customer that the response was one working day late.

All complaints which are out of the Housing Ombudsman timescales are documented and investigated to determine explanations and if any service improvements can be derived from the issue.

| Complaint Stage | Number received | Within BDC timescales | Within HOS timescales |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| HOS Stage 1 | 102 | 102 | 102 |
| HOS Stage 2 | 21 | 20 | 20 |

Service Improvements

General Improvements 2024/25

- 1) The Council record departments by their individual teams, this is useful when analysing data themes to identify trends within teams and make improvements. Although 'method of contact' data was gathered previously, this was not analysed to determine if there is a preferred method or any accessibility issues. This information is fed back to Council tenants quarterly in reporting at the Housing Liaison Board and with Councillors at the Customer Services Scrutiny Committees. These meeting reports and minutes are published on the Councils website which will ensure customers are kept informed.
- 2) The Complaints Officer attends the biannual service review meetings to discuss complaint data, themes and any potential services improvements. This is to identify any service improvements that have been implemented which may have not been identified when recording the complaint or as a result of a trend in complaints.
- 3) From April 2024, all tenants have been informed of the complaints process as part of the property sign-up process and new tenancy visits and given advice on how to contact the Council should they wish to make a complaint. This is due to the revised consumer standards that became operational as of 1 April 2024 where the Council are required to ensure under the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard that officers are addressing complaints fairly, effectively and promptly to build trust with the Council's tenants. The Council also endeavors to ensure that regular updates are provided to the tenant throughout the complaints process, so they are aware of steps to be taken by the Council and clear timescales.
- 4) Since 1st April 2024 the Council has kept a formal record of all complaints refused, including an explanation which reflects the CCC Policy. This helps to track all contact with the Council Council's including where a complaint is redirected elsewhere under the outside the scope of the CCC Policy.
- 5) This report and Housing Liaison Board Reports have been adapted for the removal of Housing options, addition of Grounds Maintenance, removal of allocations, careline and community safety if not tenancy related, to ensure these reports remain focused on tenancy related data.
- 6) In January 2025, a newly appointed Complaints Administrator joined the Complaints team. This was to allow the Customer Standards and Complaints Officer to focus service improvements by additional time spent on analysing and identifying themes within complaints. The division of work improves efficiency for both Officers which in turn increases the quality of work which can be produced.
- 7) In 2025, the Customer Services, Standards and Complaints Manager drafted and released a new Unreasonable Behaviour Policy. Previously unreasonable behaviour, including vexatious and habitual complaints were included within the CCC Policy. A dedicated policy allows the topic to be addressed in greater detail with precision and enhances compliance. Accessibility has also increased as it is easier and quicker to find upon consultation.

- 8) Additional meetings with the M.P.'s Office were undertaken to ensure Caseworkers were appropriately updated with the changes to the CCC Policy to follow the Housing Ombudsman Statutory Code. They were provided with a copy of the CCC Policy and an explanation of the stages of a complaint so their constituents can be appropriately informed. In addition to this, further discussions were held with the M.P., to highlight the scope of the Council's complaints policy. As a result, the M.P.'s office has created email and letter templates to accurately signpost customers.
- 9) The Council record additional demographics for analysis of complaints. Including whether a customer is a tenant, resident or out of area / unknown. Not only does this help to identify patterns and trends within the data, it can also highlight systematic problems or barriers to complaints. This data can then be used to establish service improvements.
- 10) In February 2025, all tenants were written to, to advise them of the annual rent change. Based on feedback from the 2024 letter, we have updated the content of the letter sent to make it clear how the rent is formed, e.g. where there are support charges added. This significantly reduced the number of enquiries we received after these letters were issued.

Service Related Improvements 2024/25

- 1) The gas safety check letter has been amended to advise that both gas and electric will need to be switched on and the electrical safety check letter has been amended to advise the electric will need to be switched off for a short period.
- 2) Reviewing procedure so that tenants' expectations are set regarding defect periods following major works / new builds.
- 3) A shrub bed has been added onto the Council's grounds maintenance list.
- 4) Implemented a fully automated system for the fire alarms and CO2 detector dates to prevent alarms going out of date.
- 5) Central Control have asked the Officer to call the Manager if any similar issues arise.
- 6) The Council's Contractor is to implement a measure to inform the Council if the contracted hours cannot be met.
- 7) In the future, the Support Officer has been advised to contact 111 to seek further advice to reassure service users of the decisions being made, if it is felt that a 999 call is not necessary.
- 8) Ensure that the Contractor uses base sheets in the future.
- 9) Updated the tenancy sign up script for transfer of assisted gardening services as was not integrating properly to Grounds Maintenance Staff on the back-office system.
- 10) The Repairs Operative is to be reminded of the Customer Service Standards.

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- 11) The Repairs system has been updated to ensure that all jobs are locked to a date and the specific Operative.
- 12) The Repairs team must double check the appliance type for properties to ensure the correct Operatives and tools are taken to jobs.
- 13) Job tickets will be presented to the Contact Centre when the Grounds Maintenance team updates the case notes which allow Customer Advisors to contact the customer with updates. This may be in cases where the Department has not been able to make contact, passed to another authority, work has been assigned, or a customer has requested information.
- 14) The Gas Engineer has been spoken with regarding the importance of informing the Office of any further work required.
- 15) Repairs Operative in question will be given further training procedures and expectations for customer services and working practices.
- 16) If the Council does any Stock Condition Surveys again or anything similar, the Council will ensure an established way of sharing data at the beginning of contracts.
- 17) Decision to provide all properties whose outbuildings are due to be demolished with replacement storage.
- 18) The Grounds Maintenance team will receive additional training to ensure the quality of the service, including how tasks are managed, improved communication, that all items are handled with care, and all properties are treated with respect.
- 19) Repairs Team have changed their working practices and external follow-on works will now be contacted and receive an appointment date.
- 20) All Housing Officers have been reminded that a tenant should be alerted to their presence at a property.

Forward Improvements 2025/26

- 1) Locality Groups – Tenants specifically asked for a focussed discussion on complaints. Designed interactive and informative session to encourage tenants to report. It is hoped the sessions will increase accessibility and transparency with the Council, so tenants know what we do with complaints etc. The sessions will also give us an opportunity to assess tenants experience and make service improvements, including understanding and removing barriers which tenants may experience when reporting complaints.
- 2) In 2025/2026 the Council is looking to convert all corporate training to online. As a result, the training will be adapted to ensure a clear and concise format which conveys relevant aspects of the Housing Ombudsman Code.
- 3) Data collecting reports have been improved to ensure advanced data analysis. The Council is also considering altering the complaints system for further accurate data processing.

- 4) The Council will add the Council's compliments, comments and comments online page as the landing page for all Housing related surveys.
- 5) Appointment of Housing Performance Manager – the post will include a focus on complaints analysis to identify additional service improvements.

Tenant scrutiny of complaints

The Council now include complaints reports as part of the Housing Liaison Board meetings. This group is the most strategic tenant consultative group and consists of an equal mix of tenants, Councillors and officers.

Tenants were consulted in March 2024 as to potential future report formats and reviewed the information currently presented to Councillors via Customer Services Scrutiny Committee. Tenants were happy with the format and understand that the report will be specific to Housing related complaints rather than all services across the Council.

Tenants use the data presented to assess any trends related to service areas/teams, any changes in volume, identify areas that need to be consider by the Challenge and Change Group (tenant scrutiny group), and compliance/non-compliance with response times.

A further focused complaint report has also been developed during 2024/25 specifically on repairs and maintenance, which is presented to the tenant Repairs Action Network Team (RANT). This tenant group has an operational focus and meets quarterly with senior repairs officers to review service performance.

Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) reports to landlord

The HOS only investigated 1 complaint for Bolsover District Council during 2024/25 regarding a noise complaint. The Ombudsman found that there was no maladministration by the landlord on its handling of reports of noise nuisance.

The HOS only create individual reports for landlords with five or more findings of maladministration to ensure meaningful interpretation can be achieved.

While the HOS are yet to publish their Annual Complaints Review 2024/25, officers are not aware of any other cases outstanding by the HOS during 2024/25.

The latest HOS Annual Complaints Review was published in 2023/24. Bolsover District Council did not have an individual report therefore the HOS did not make a formal determination for us in 2023-2024.

Appendix A: Self-assessment form

This self-assessment form has been completed by the complaints and housing management services teams, and has been reviewed and approved by the landlord's governing body (Executive) and Bolsover Tenants Challenge and Change Group (tenant scrutiny).

The Council have published this self-assessment as both a standalone document and as part of the annual complaints performance and service improvement report on the website, with hard copies available in each contact centre.

Section 1: Definition of a complaint

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|---|------------------|--|
| 1.2 | A complaint must be defined as: <i>'an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.'</i> | Yes | <p>Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 3.1, page 6 and page 9. Policy uploaded to website.</p> <p>Within 'Compliments, Comments and Complaints' page of the Council's website.</p> <p>Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Procedure – section 3.1, page 4.</p> <p>Complaints Corporate Training (slide 20) delivered quarterly. Tenant Locality Event Groups delivered in July 2025 – slide 3.</p> |

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|---|------------------|---|
| 1.3 | <p>A resident does not have to use the word 'complaint' for it to be treated as such.</p> <p>Whenever a resident expresses dissatisfaction landlords must give them the choice to make complaint. A complaint that is submitted via a third party or representative must be handled in line with the landlord's complaints policy.</p> | Yes | <p>Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 4.7, page 9 and section 3.2, page 6.</p> <p>CIS (customer information system) scripts updated to reflect Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy changes.</p> <p>Third party authorisation form is provided upon request and if sent out to any resident who submits a complaint which needs consent. The Council allow 3rd party complaints and complaints from the local MP.</p> <p>Cllrs and the MP were updated with Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy and changes in April 2024.</p> |
| 1.4 | <p>Landlords must recognise the difference between a service request and a complaint. This must be set out in their complaints policy. A service request is a request from a resident to the landlord requiring action to be taken to put something right. Service requests are not complaints, but must be recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly.</p> | Yes | <p>Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 3.1, page 6.</p> <p>Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Procedure – section 3.1, page 4.</p> <p>Training has been delivered to all assistant Directors and Heads of service. They have cascaded this to staff which includes a detailed explanation as to the difference between a Service request and a complaint.</p> <p>Recording of training available on staff portal.</p> <p>Complaints Corporate Training (slide 19) delivered quarterly. Tenant Locality Event Groups delivered in July 2025 – slide 3 and 20.</p> |

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|--|------------------|---|
| 1.5 | A complaint must be raised when the resident expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, even if the handling of the service request remains ongoing. Landlords must not stop their efforts to address the service request if the resident complains. | Yes | Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Procedure – section 5, page 6. |
| 1.6 | An expression of dissatisfaction with services made through a survey is not defined as a complaint, though wherever possible, the person completing the survey should be made aware of how they can pursue a complaint if they wish to. Where landlords ask for wider feedback about their services, they also must provide details of how residents can complain. | Yes | <p>Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 3.2, page 6.</p> <p>Real Time Satisfaction Survey landing page is Compliments, Comments and Complaints website page, also references self-service link for reporting Compliments, Comments and Complaints within satisfaction question.</p> <p>Link to the Council's complaints page will be added all housing related surveys.</p> |

Section 2: Exclusions

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|---|------------------|--|
| 2.1 | Landlords must accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so. If landlords decide not to accept a complaint they must be able to evidence their reasoning. Each complaint must be considered on its own merits | Yes | <p>Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 4.7, page 9 and section 4.8, page 9-11.</p> <p>Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Procedure – section 4.1, page 4-6 and section 5, page 7.</p> |
| 2.2 | <p>A complaints policy must set out the circumstances in which a matter will not be considered as a complaint or escalated, and these circumstances must be fair and reasonable to residents.</p> <p>Acceptable exclusions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago. • Legal proceedings have started. This is defined as details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been filed at court. <p>Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy.</p> | Yes | <p>Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 4.8, page 9-11.</p> <p>Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Procedure – section 4.1, page 4-6.</p> <p>Out of scope templates</p> |

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| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|--|------------------|--|
| 2.3 | Landlords must accept complaints referred to them within 12 months of the issue occurring or the resident becoming aware of the issue unless they are excluded on other grounds. Landlords must consider whether to apply discretion to accept complaints made outside this time limit where there are good reasons to do so. | Yes | <p>Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 4.8, page 11.</p> <p>Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Procedure – section 4.1, page 6.</p> |
| 2.4 | If a landlord decides not to accept a complaint, an explanation must be provided to the resident setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the Ombudsman. If the Ombudsman does not agree that the exclusion has been fairly applied, the Ombudsman may tell the landlord to take on the complaint. | Yes | <p>Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 4.8, page 9-11.</p> <p>Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Procedure – section 4.1, page 4-6.</p> <p>Out of scope templates</p> |
| 2.5 | Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint. | Yes | <p>Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 4.7, page 9.</p> <p>Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Procedure – section 5, page 7.</p> |

Section 3: Accessibility and Awareness

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|---|------------------|--|
| 3.1 | Landlords must make it easy for residents to complain by providing different channels through which they can make a complaint. Landlords must consider their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and anticipate the needs and reasonable adjustments of residents who may need to access the complaints process. | Yes | <p>Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 3.3, page 6.</p> <p>Multiple channels – letter, email, face to face, via staff.</p> <p>Complaints leaflet and form</p> <p>Policy includes Equality Act 2010 and catering for individual needs. A full Equality Impact Assessment has been published to support the updated policy.</p> |
| 3.2 | Residents must be able to raise their complaints in any way and with any member of staff. All staff must be aware of the complaints process and be able to pass details of the complaint to the appropriate person within the landlord. | Yes | <p>Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 3.3, page 6, section 5.4, page 18 and section 7.5, page 23.</p> <p>Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Procedure – section 5, page 6.</p> <p>Recording of training available on staff portal.</p> |

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|--|------------------|---|
| 3.3 | High volumes of complaints must not be seen as a negative, as they can be indicative of a well-publicised and accessible complaints process. Low complaint volumes are potentially a sign that residents are unable to complain. | Yes | <p>Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 1.1 and 1.5, page 5</p> <p>Performance reporting monitored by Scrutiny, and Executive.</p> <p>Service Review meetings are held annually and biannually depending on the service are requirements, Corporate Complaints and Customer Service Standards have been introduced as an agenda item to discuss Compliments, Comments and Complaints outcomes and trends, volumes and type, information will be shared, and service areas will be required to provide any updates to recurring complaints and evidence any improvements. In addition, any Complaints that also result in a Compliment will be recorded. Through the training for Compliments, Comments and Complaints / Customer Service Standards the message is to not view a complaint a negative but as a mechanism for learning.</p> |
| 3.4 | Landlords must make their complaint policy available in a clear and accessible format for all residents. This will detail the two-stage process, what will happen at each stage, and the timeframes for responding. The policy must also be published on the landlord's website. | Yes | The Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 is on the website in an accessible format, information leaflets have been reviewed to incorporate the Policy changes and timeframes. |
| 3.5 | The policy must explain how the landlord will publicise details of the complaints policy, including information about the Ombudsman and this Code. | Yes | Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 5.2, page 18, section 4.12 - 4.24, page 15-16, section 4.25 – 4.27 page 17. |

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|--|------------------|--|
| 3.6 | Landlords must give residents the opportunity to have a representative deal with their complaint on their behalf, and to be represented or accompanied at any meeting with the landlord. | Yes | <p>Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 3.2, page 6.</p> <p>Third party authorisation form includes section for complaints. Form provided on request or if a complaint is received that requires third party the form is sent with instructions. The Council allow 3rd party complaints and complaints from the local MP.</p> |
| 3.7 | Landlords must provide residents with information on their right to access the Ombudsman service and how the individual can engage with the Ombudsman about their complaint. | Yes | <p>The Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 is on the website and staff portal in an accessible format Complaints leaflet updated in April 2024 to include Ombudsman details.</p> <p>Housing Ombudsman Service poster in Contact Centres.</p> <p>Tenant Locality Event Groups delivered in July 2025 – slide 10 - 13.</p> <p>Will include a section regarding the Ombudsman in issues of Bolsover Homes (Tenant Magazine) going forward.</p> <p>Included within Stage Two response template.</p> |

Section 4: Complaint Handling Staff

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|--|------------------|---|
| 4.1 | Landlords must have a person or team assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling, including liaison with the Ombudsman and ensuring complaints are reported to the governing body (or equivalent). This Code will refer to that person or team as the 'complaints officer'. This role may be in addition to other duties. | Yes | <p>Customer Service, Standards and Complaints Manager Customer Standards and Complaints Officer.</p> <p>Employment of a Complaints Administrator in January 2025 to maintain effective complaint handling.</p> <p>These officers present Complaints handling and performance monitoring reports to Customer Services Scrutiny Committee.</p> |
| 4.2 | The complaints officer must have access to staff at all levels to facilitate the prompt resolution of complaints. They must also have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes promptly and fairly. | Yes | <p>CCCAadmin@bolsover.gov.uk</p> <p>Complaints are a key priority for the authority, emails come from a designated Compliments, Comments and Complaints Admin email address. Customers can make a complaint via a number of channels which are also forwarded directly to the 'CCCAAdmin' email inbox for the attn of the Customer Standards and Complaints Officer.</p> <p>Updates to portfolio holder monthly.</p> |

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|---|------------------|--|
| 4.3 | Landlords are expected to prioritise complaint handling and a culture of learning from complaints. All relevant staff must be suitably trained in the importance of complaint handling. It is important core service and must be resourced to handle complaints effectively that complaints are seen as a | Yes | <p>Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 5, page 17-19.</p> <p>Customer Service, Standards and Complaints Manager and the Customer Standards and Complaints Officer attend relevant Ombudsman training. Employment of a Complaints Administrator in January 2025 to maintain effective complaint handling.</p> <p>Service reviews meetings held with the key service areas monthly, biannually or annually depending on service needs agenda to include Customer Service Standards and Complaints.</p> <p>Customer Standards and Complaints Officer to update re performance and services areas to update re improvements to service delivery following comment or complaint.</p> |

Section 5: The Complaint Handling Process

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|---|------------------|---|
| 5.1 | Landlords must have a single policy in place for dealing with complaints covered by this Code. Residents must not be treated differently if they complain. | Yes | Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024. |
| 5.2 | The early and local resolution of issues between landlords and residents is key to effective complaint handling. It is not appropriate to have extra named stages (such as 'stage 0' or 'informal complaint') as this causes unnecessary confusion. | Yes | Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 4.9, page 11. 'Informal' stages removed in April 2024 when new Policy was implemented to comply with HOS Code. |
| 5.3 | A process with more than two stages is not acceptable under any circumstances as this will make the complaint process unduly long and delay access to the Ombudsman. | Yes | Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 (2 stage process only) section 4.9, page 11. |
| 5.4 | Where a landlord's complaint response is handled by a third party (e.g. a contractor or independent adjudicator) at any stage, it must form part of the two stage complaints process set out in this Code. Residents must not be expected to go through two complaints processes. | Yes | These are carried out in accordance with the 2- stage process as set out in the policy. All complaints administered and responses provided by the Complaints team. Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 2.2, page 6. |

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|--|------------------|---|
| 5.5 | Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code. | Yes | <p>Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 2.2, page 6.</p> <p>Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy shared with third party organisations and also available on website. All complaints administered and responses provided by the Complaints team.</p> |
| 5.6 | When a complaint is logged at Stage 1 or escalated to Stage 2, landlords must set out their understanding of the complaint and the outcomes the resident is seeking. The Code will refer to this as “the complaint definition”. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification. | Yes | <p>Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – Section 4.9, page 11.</p> <p>Included within the Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaint acknowledgement templates.</p> |
| 5.7 | When a complaint is acknowledged at either stage, landlords must be clear which aspects of the complaint they are, and are not, responsible for and clarify any areas where this is not clear. | Yes | <p>Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – Section 4.9, page 11.</p> <p>Included within the Stage 1 and Stage 2 acknowledgement templates.</p> |

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|---|------------------|---|
| 5.8 | At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers must: a. deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind; b. give the resident a fair chance to set out their position; c. take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest; and d. consider all relevant information and evidence carefully. | Yes | Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024, section 1, page 5 and 4.7, page 9. Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Procedure – section 5 page 7. |
| 5.9 | Where a response to a complaint will fall outside the timescales set out in this Code, the landlord must agree with the resident suitable intervals for keeping them informed about their complaint. | Yes | Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 4.9, page 11. |
| 5.10 | Landlords must make reasonable adjustments for residents where appropriate under the Equality Act 2010. Landlords must keep a record of any reasonable adjustments agreed, as well as a record of any disabilities a resident has disclosed. Any agreed reasonable adjustments must be kept under active review. | Yes | Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 3.3, page 6-7. Complaints Leaflet includes access for all statement. The Housing department records any disabilities a resident has disclosed, record not kept by the Complaints Officer. If a disability is disclosed during a complaint the Housing department will be informed and the Council will ensure that any reasonable adjustments are met. |

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|---|------------------|--|
| 5.11 | Landlords must not refuse to escalate a complaint through all stages of the complaints procedure unless it has valid reasons to do so. Landlords must clearly set out these reasons, and they must comply with the provisions set out in section 2 of this Code. | Yes | <p>Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 4.8, page 9-11.</p> <p>Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Procedure – section 4.1, page 4-6.</p> |
| 5.12 | A full record must be kept of the complaint, and the outcomes at each stage. This must include the original complaint and the date received, all correspondence with the resident, correspondence with other parties, and any relevant supporting documentation such as reports or surveys. | Yes | <p>Excel Spreadsheets with all complaint data. Complaints system keeps a record.</p> <p>Folders within a dedicated drive on the system where all correspondence is saved.</p> <p>Bespoke admin system for recording all stages of Complaints and monitoring response timeframes, templates embedded within system and golden thread of hierarchy for responding to complaints dependent on level. 3-year data retention for all records.</p> |
| 5.13 | Landlords must have processes in place to ensure a complaint can be remedied at any stage of its complaints process. Landlords must ensure appropriate remedies can be provided at any stage of the complaints process without the need for escalation. | Yes | <p>Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 4.11, page 13-14.</p> |

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|---|------------------|--|
| 5.14 | Landlords must have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from residents and/or their representatives. Landlords must be able to evidence reasons for putting any restrictions in place and must keep restrictions under regular review. | Yes | Bolsover District Council – Policy and Procedure on the Management of Unreasonable Complaints or Customers |
| 5.15 | Any restrictions placed on contact due to unacceptable behaviour must be proportionate and demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010. | Yes | <p>Bolsover District Council – Policy and Procedure on the Management of Unreasonable Complaints or Customers section 1.2, 1.4 and 1.5, page 5.</p> <p>Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 3.3, page 7.</p> |

Section 6: Complaints Stages

Stage 1

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|---|------------------|--|
| 6.1 | Landlords must have processes in place to consider which complaints can be responded to as early as possible, and which require further investigation. Landlords must consider factors such as the complexity of the complaint and whether the resident is vulnerable or at risk. Most stage 1 complaints can be resolved promptly, and an explanation, apology or resolution provided to the resident. | Yes | Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 4.9, page 11-13. Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Procedure – section 8.4 - 8.7, page 14-18. |
| 6.2 | Complaints must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 1 of the complaints procedure <u>within five working days of the complaint being received.</u> | Yes | Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 4.9, page 11. Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Procedure – section 6, page 9. |
| 6.3 | Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints <u>within 10 working days</u> of the complaint being acknowledged. | Yes | Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 4.9, page 11. Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Procedure – section 6 page 9. |

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|---|------------------|--|
| 6.4 | Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 10 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident. | Yes | Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 4.9, page 11. |
| 6.5 | When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman. | Yes | Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 4.9, page 11. Stage 1 Out of Timescale Templates created |
| 6.6 | A complaint response must be provided to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident. | Yes | Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 4.10, page 13. Updates are logged within an Excel document and are monitored to provide regular updates to the customer. |
| 6.7 | Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate. | Yes | Stage 1 and Stage 2 templates Acknowledgement and Response Templates. Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Procedure – section 5, page 8. |

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|---|------------------|--|
| 6.8 | Where residents raise additional complaints during the investigation, these must be incorporated into the stage 1 response if they are related and the stage 1 response has not been issued. Where the stage 1 response has been issued, the new issues are unrelated to the issues already being investigated or it would unreasonably delay the response, the new issues must be logged as a new complaint. | Yes | Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 4.10, page 13. |
| 6.9 | Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 1 in clear, plain language: a. the complaint stage; b. the complaint definition; c. the decision on the complaint; d. the reasons for any decisions made; e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right; f. details of any outstanding actions; and details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the individual is not satisfied with the response. | Yes | Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 4.10, page 13-15. This is included as standard in all Stage 1 responses. |

Stage 2

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence Commentary / explanation |
|-----------------------|---|-------------------------|--|
| 6.10 | If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the resident's satisfaction at stage 1, it must be progressed to stage 2 of the landlord's procedure. Stage 2 is the landlord's final response. | Yes | Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 4.10, page 12. Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Procedure – section 5, page 8. |
| 6.11 | Requests for stage 2 must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 2 of the complaints procedure within five working days of the escalation request being received. | Yes | Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 4.9, page 11. Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Procedure – section 6, page 9. |
| 6.12 | Residents must not be required to explain their reasons for requesting a stage 2 consideration. Landlords are expected to make reasonable efforts to understand why a resident remains unhappy as part of its stage 2 response. | Yes | Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Procedure – section 5, page 7. |
| 6.13 | The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1. | Yes | Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 4.10, page 12. Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Procedure – section 5, page 9. |

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|---|------------------|--|
| 6.14 | Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 <u>within 20 working days</u> of the complaint being acknowledged. | Yes | Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 4.9, page 11. Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Procedure – section 6, page 9. |
| 6.15 | Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 20 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident. | Yes | Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 4.9, page 11. |
| 6.16 | When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman. | Yes | Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 4.9, page 11. Stage 2 Out of Timescale Templates created |
| 6.17 | A complaint response must be provided to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident. | Yes | Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 4.10, page 13 and section 4.11, page 14. Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Procedure – section 5, page 7. |

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|---|------------------|---|
| 6.18 | Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate. | Yes | Stage 1 and Stage 2 templates Acknowledgement and Response Templates. Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 4.10, page 13. |
| 6.19 | Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 2 in clear, plain language: a. the complaint stage; b. the complaint definition; c. the decision on the complaint; d. the reasons for any decisions made; e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right; f. details of any outstanding actions; and g. details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman Service if the individual remains dissatisfied. | Yes | Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 4.10, page 13. This is included as standard in all Stage 2 responses. |
| 6.20 | Stage 2 is the landlord's final response and must involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response. | Yes | Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 4.10, page 12-13. Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Procedure – section 5, page 9. |

Section 7: Putting things right

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|---|------------------|--|
| 7.1 | <p>Where something has gone wrong a landlord must acknowledge this and set out the actions it has already taken, or intends to take, to put things right.</p> <p>These can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apologising; • Acknowledging where things have gone wrong; • Providing an explanation, assistance or reasons; • Taking action if there has been delay; • Reconsidering or changing a decision; • Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum; • Providing a financial remedy; • Changing policies, procedures or practices. | Yes | <p>Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 4.11, page 13-15.</p> <p>Complaint Investigation Template Part C</p> |
| 7.2 | Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified. | Yes | Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 4.11, page 14. |
| 7.3 | The remedy offer must clearly set out what will happen and by when, in agreement with the resident where appropriate. Any remedy proposed must be followed through to completion | Yes | Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 4.11, page 14. |

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| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|--|------------------|---|
| 7.4 | Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies. | Yes | Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 4.11, page 14. |

Section 8: Self-assessment, reporting and compliance

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|--|------------------|--|
| 8.1 | <p>Landlords must produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which must include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements. a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the landlord's complaint handling performance. This must also include a summary of the types of complaints the landlord has refused to accept; any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman; the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints; any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman; and any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord. | Yes | <p>Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 5.5, page 18-19.</p> <p>Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Procedure – section 5, page 7-8.</p> <p>Performance reporting quarterly to the Customer Services Scrutiny.</p> <p>CCC Summary (Excel spreadsheet) of all complaints including those not accepted.</p> <p>Quarterly report analysis for Housing & Repair complaints reported to the Housing Liaison Board (a Cllr and Tenant meeting).</p> <p>Annual Performance report and Ombudsman decisions presented Scrutiny and Executive.</p> <p>Biannual Service Review Meetings for Complaints to discuss service improvements.</p> <p>You said, we did poster (lists service improvements).</p> |

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| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|---|------------------|--|
| 8.2 | The annual complaints performance and service improvement report must be reported to the landlord's governing body (or equivalent) and published on the on the section of its website relating to complaints. The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside this. | Yes | The Assessment 24 - 25 was presented for comments at Housing Liaison Board on 29 th July 2025, will be presented to the Customer Services Scrutiny meeting on 19 th August 2025 and Executive on 8 th September June. |
| 8.3 | Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures. | Yes | The Council will fully comply with this requirement. |
| 8.4 | Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation. | Yes | The Council would fully comply with any request. |
| 8.5 | If a landlord is unable to comply with the Code due to exceptional circumstances, such as a cyber incident, they must inform the Ombudsman, provide information to residents who may be affected, and publish this on their website Landlords must provide a timescale for returning to compliance with the Code. | Yes | The Council will fully comply with this requirement. |

Section 9: Scrutiny & oversight: continuous learning and improvement

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|--|------------------|--|
| 9.1 | Landlords must look beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint and consider whether service improvements can be made as a result of any learning from the complaint. | Yes | Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 4.9, page 11, section 5 page 17-18. |
| 9.2 | A positive complaint handling culture is integral to the effectiveness with which landlords resolve disputes. Landlords must use complaints as a source of intelligence to identify issues and introduce positive changes in service delivery. | Yes | <p>Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 1.5, page 5 and section 5, page 17-18.</p> <p>Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Procedure – section 5, page 7-8.</p> <p>Tenant Complaint Locality Events – slide 14 and 15.</p> <p>You said, we did service improvement posters</p> <p>Complaint Investigation Template – Part D</p> <p>Biannual Service Reviews – Complaints/Service Improvements on the agenda</p> <p>Presented at Customer services scrutiny quarterly, trends analysed.</p> |

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| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|--|------------------|--|
| 9.3 | Accountability and transparency are also integral to a positive complaint handling culture. Landlords must report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints to stakeholders, such as residents' panels, staff and relevant committees. | Yes | <p>Updates in the In Touch & Tenants Magazine, Updates on the websites reports and Self Assessments, Performance posters.</p> <p>Tenant Complaint Locality Events – slide 3.</p> <p>You said, we did service improvement posters</p> <p>Complaint data analysis presented and discussed in the Housing Liaison Board meetings quarterly.</p> |
| 9.4 | Landlords must appoint a suitably senior lead person as accountable for their complaint handling. This person must assess any themes or trends to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks, or policies and procedures that require revision. | Yes | <p>Customer Service, Standards and Complaints Manager.</p> <p>Presented at Customer Services Scrutiny quarterly, trends analysed.</p> <p>From April 24 complaint data analysis has also been presented and discussed in the Housing Liaison Board meetings quarterly.</p> |
| 9.5 | In addition to this a member of the governing body (or equivalent) must be appointed to have lead responsibility for complaints to support a positive complaint handling culture. This person is referred to as the Member Responsible for Complaints ('the MRC'). | Yes | <p>Executive portfolio holder with responsibility for complaints. Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 7.8, page 23</p> <p>Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Procedure – section 5, page 9.</p> |

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|---|------------------|--|
| 9.6 | The MRC will be responsible for ensuring the governing body receives regular information on complaints that provides insight on the landlord's complaint handling performance. This person must have access to suitable information and staff to perform this role and report on their findings. | Yes | <p>Executive portfolio holder with responsibility for complaints.</p> <p>Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 7.8, page 23.</p> <p>Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Procedure – section 5, page 9.</p> <p>Monthly meetings with Customer Services & Complaints manager and the MRC, discussed in 121s with Director for Executive, Corporate Services and Partnerships.</p> |
| 9.7 | <p>As a minimum, the MRC and the governing body (or equivalent) must receive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. regular updates on the volume, categories and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance; b. regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling; c. regular updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman's investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings; and d. annual complaints performance and service improvement report. | Yes | <p>Performance Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 5, page 17-18.</p> <p>Performance reporting quarterly to the Customer Services Scrutiny.</p> <p>Annual Performance report and Ombudsman decision presented to Scrutiny, Standards Committee and to Executive.</p> <p>Monthly meetings with Customer Services & Complaints manager and the MRC, discussed in 121s with Director for Executive, Corporate Services and Partnerships.</p> |

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|--|------------------|---|
| 9.8 | <p>Landlords must have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties that reflects the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments; b. take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and c. act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body. | Yes | <p>Performance Bolsover District Council – Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy April 2024 – section 5, page 17-18.</p> <p>Mandatory training for all new employees.</p> |