



IPSWICH
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Complaints Performance & Service Improvement Annual Report

April 2024 – March 2025

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Introduction

All local authorities must establish and maintain a formal Complaints Policy and Procedure, ensuring complaints are recorded and addressed in a transparent and timely manner, adhering to legislative requirements.

This report presents an overview of corporate complaints received by Ipswich Borough Council between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025, emphasising key trends, lessons learned, and resulting service enhancements. Additionally, it details the Council's compliance with the standards outlined in the Housing Ombudsman Service Code.

The Council values complaints as opportunities to uphold high performance standards and as a means to continually evaluate and enhance the quality of services provided to residents. In line with the Housing Ombudsman's definition, we outline a complaint as:

"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"

This definition is deliberately broad to ensure that complaints are easily recognised, meaning they can then be addressed effectively and in a timely manner.

From the 1st of April 2024, the Council adopted a 2-stage process when handling complaints in unity with the Housing Ombudsman Service's Complaint Handling Code. This adaption has also been documented under Ipswich Borough Council's Complaints policy and procedure. We continue to proudly align with the statutory requirements dictated by the Housing Ombudsman regarding acknowledgement, response, and extension timeframes.

At all stages of the Complaints process we advise complainants of the relevant Ombudsman to contact if they are dissatisfied with our determination or the way in which the complaint was managed.

Access and Awareness (Complaints)

Accessibility

Customers can access the complaints service across multiple channels including:

- Online at www.ipswich.gov.uk/contactus
- By telephone to our Customer Services team on 01473 432000
- In person by talking to a member of staff at any of our Council venues
- By email to complaints@ipswich.gov.uk
- In writing to Customer Services at:

Ipswich Borough Council,
Grafton House,
15-17 Russell Road,
Ipswich,
Suffolk,
IP1 2DE

Social media should not be used to make a complaint. If a customer makes contact to complain in person, or by phone, they will be directed to complete the complaints online form or to send their complaint in writing if able to do so. This is to ensure that there is a full audit trail of information captured to allow the Council to follow the Complaints Procedure, to conduct a thorough investigation and to provide a full response to the complainant. In the event of any accessibility issues, the Council will take details of the complaint over the phone.

Equality and Diversity

The Council values diversity and is committed to promoting equality of opportunity to ensure all residents are treated fairly. The Council's equality and diversity policy which is available on our website sets out our approach to promoting and upholding the principles of equality, diversity, fairness, and inclusion.

The Council is committed to promoting equality by ensuring equal access to our complaint's Procedure, including making reasonable adjustments to allow for flexibility in the Procedure to accommodate an individual's need. For example:

- If a customer requires assistance to take forward their complaint, they can appoint a representative to deal with their complaint on their behalf (verification will be sought before the complaint is investigated).
- Any individual representing or assisting a customer with a complaint can accompany them at any meeting with the Council if a meeting is required to consider the complaint.
- If a customer requires assistance with their complaint but do not have anyone to help them, they can let the Council know by contacting our Customer Services team on 01473 432000, where one of our trained Customer Service Advisors can take their complaint verbally for our Quality Assurance Complaints Officer to raise.

Oversight and support provided by the Complaints Service

From April 2024 onwards, the Quality Assurance Complaints Officer has been providing the following support to ensure consistency and best practise for complaints management.

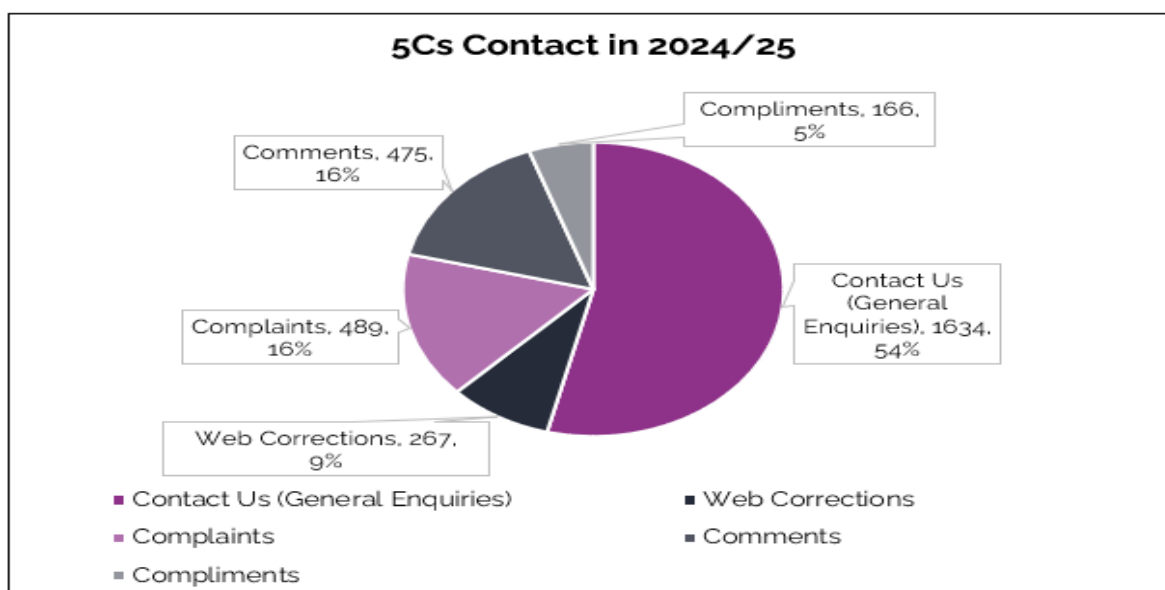
1. Complaint advice and guidance
2. Production of performance reports
3. Liaison with the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and Housing Ombudsman
4. Quality assurance of complaint responses
5. Complaint handling training for Complaint Champions and managers
6. Acting as an impartial consult to challenge service practice, putting customers at the heart of service delivery
7. Support with managing unacceptable behaviour or complex complaints

Quarterly complaint reports are compiled and shared with Management Teams and Senior Leadership Teams, as appropriate. By analysing complaint data, the Complaints team helps service areas identify root causes and implement measures to prevent recurrence.

Complaints, Compliments, Comments, Corrections, Contact Us

A suite of online contact forms was created in 2017 for each enquiry type to allow customers to self-serve through the Council's website, where customers can raise a complaint, leave a compliment, comment on a service, highlight an issue with the website or send a general enquiry via our 'contact us' forms. Figure 1 shows the popularity of each service used in 2024/25 with Contact Us (general enquiries) being the highest.

Figure 1 – "Complaints, Compliments, Comments, Corrections, Contact Us" 2024/25



Unlike complaints, a significant number of enquiries do not need to be formally investigated. The public are instead assisted to access the appropriate service and resolve any concerns they may have.

Summary of Complaints

In the 2024/25 reporting period, a total of 489 complaints were classified and dealt with as a formal complaint. Of the 489 complaints 425 were Stage 1 and 64 Stage 2. The number of formal complaints received across all departments is as represented in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2 – Complaints by Directorate 2024/25



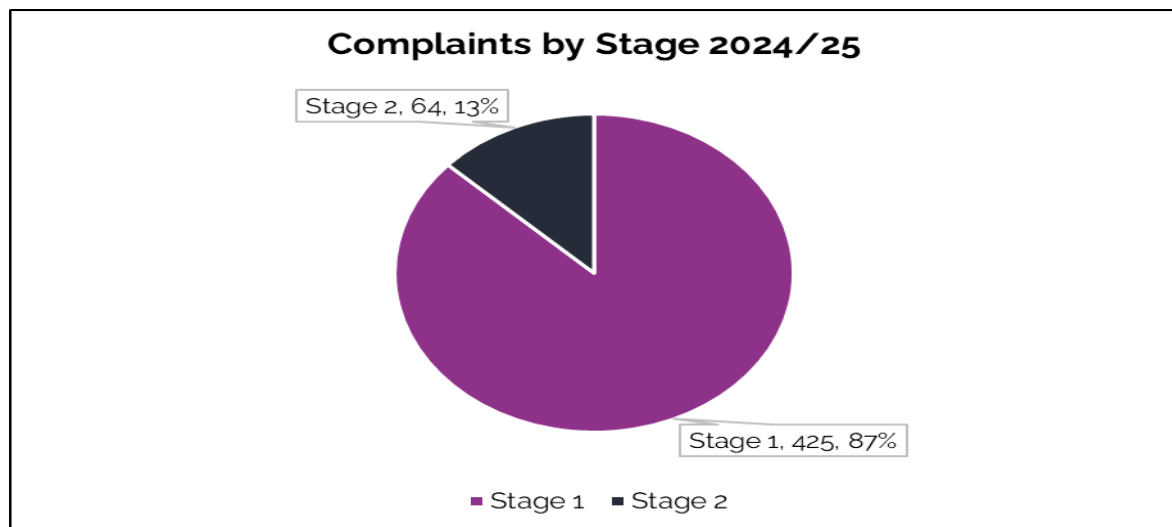
The following five service areas received the most complaints in the 2024/25 reporting period, as represented in Table 1 below.

Table 1 – Highest-receiving Service Areas 2024/25

Service Area	2024/25
Housing Repairs (Council Tenants)	155
Housing (Council Tenants)	72
Regent Theatre & Corn Exchange	44
Bins & Waste	36
Council Tax	27

The below pie chart, figure 3, demonstrates the total number of complaints received by stage. 87% of complaints were resolved at Stage 1 and 13% of complaints were resolved at Stage 2.

Figure 3 – Complaints by Stage 2024/25

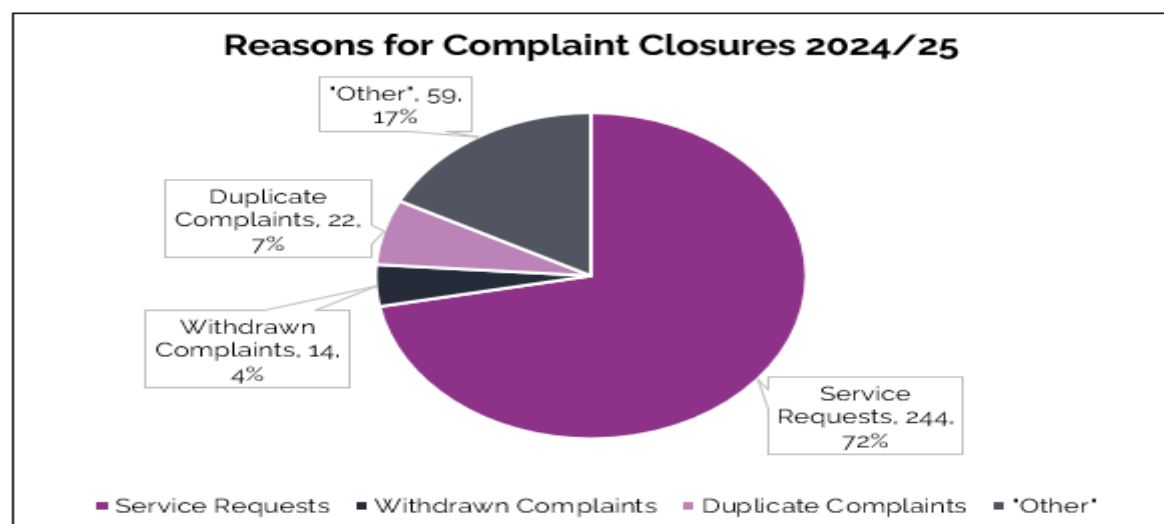


Service Requests

On top of the 489 complaints received in 2024/25, a further 339 were raised as a formal complaint by the customer but closed by the Council once identified as follows; 244 were service requests, 14 complainants had withdrawn their complaint, 22 complaints were duplicate complaints, and 59 complaints were closed under "other".

This is in comparison to 1065 complaints received in 2023/24, 289 of which were closed as a service request, 16 complainants had withdrawn their complaint, 13 complaints were duplicated, and 23 complaints were closed as "other".

Figure 4 – Complaint Closures 2024/25



Other Reasons

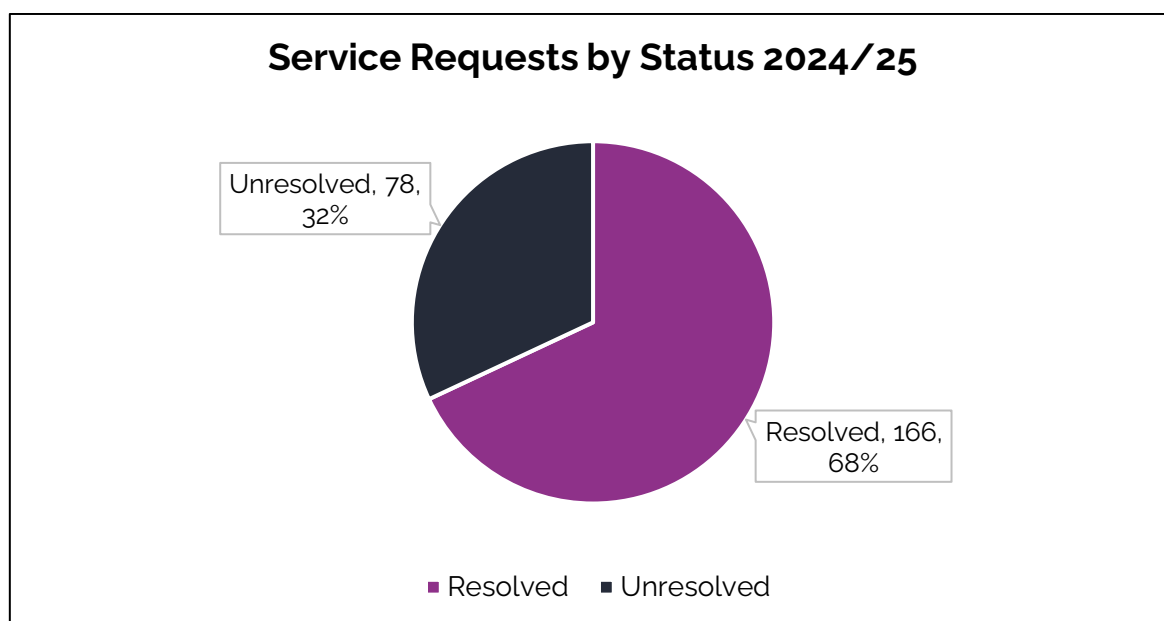
There were 59 complaints that were closed under "other" as shown in figure 4. Reasons for closing a complaint, as outlined in our Complaints Policy, include but are not limited to:

1. Requests for a change or improvement
2. Requests for information or an explanation of Council policy or practice
3. Investigating a decision where there is a formal right of appeal (such as a planning decision or Penalty Charge Notice)

Service Requests (Resolved/Unresolved)

As shown in figure 5 of the 244 complaints closed as a service request in 2024/25, 166 of these service requests were resolved either prior to or upon receipt of the customer contact. 78 cases were reported as unresolved, meaning they were forwarded to the relevant service area to action.

Figure 5 – Service Requests by Resolved Status 2024/25



Complaint Deadlines

Of the 489 complaints recorded in 2024/25, 74 complaints in total missed the deadline, which represents 15% of all complaints as identified in figure 6. This is an increase from 3% in the previous year, however when reporting on 2023/24 it was noted that the 3% was lower than expected and at the time some service areas had completed responses outside of the complaints process without closing the complaint, meaning the Complaints team then regrettably lost sight of these timeframes.

Since the introduction of the new complaints code and the new 2 stage process the full complaint journey is now tracked with timed calculations associated with complaint response times.

There is a robust signoff process now in place for the Stage 1 and Stage 2 responses with Stage 2 responses being signed off by the Chief Executive to ensure the most senior oversight of the complaints process especially during the early phases of this new complaints system.

There have been teething issues with the complaint signoffs with several modifications having been made to the CRM system to support more effectively and timely complaint resolutions.

The quality of the complaint responses and in-depth investigation undertaken across the complaints received has been the number one priority and we recognise that this has hampered the responses and number of complaints signed off within the deadlines. This has been a focus moving into 2025 with extensive training being undertaken across complaint champions and for officers involved in the complaint response process.

In a number of cases complaint extensions should have been used more effectively especially where they are legitimate reasons for delays with complex cases, this is an area which is being addressed across all user areas with additional training.

In addition, an extra field is now being added to the complaints process where a reason will need to be added where a complaint is being signed off late, this is to enable continuous learning and to identify any specific patterns or additional actions.

Figure 6 – Complaint Deadlines 2024/25



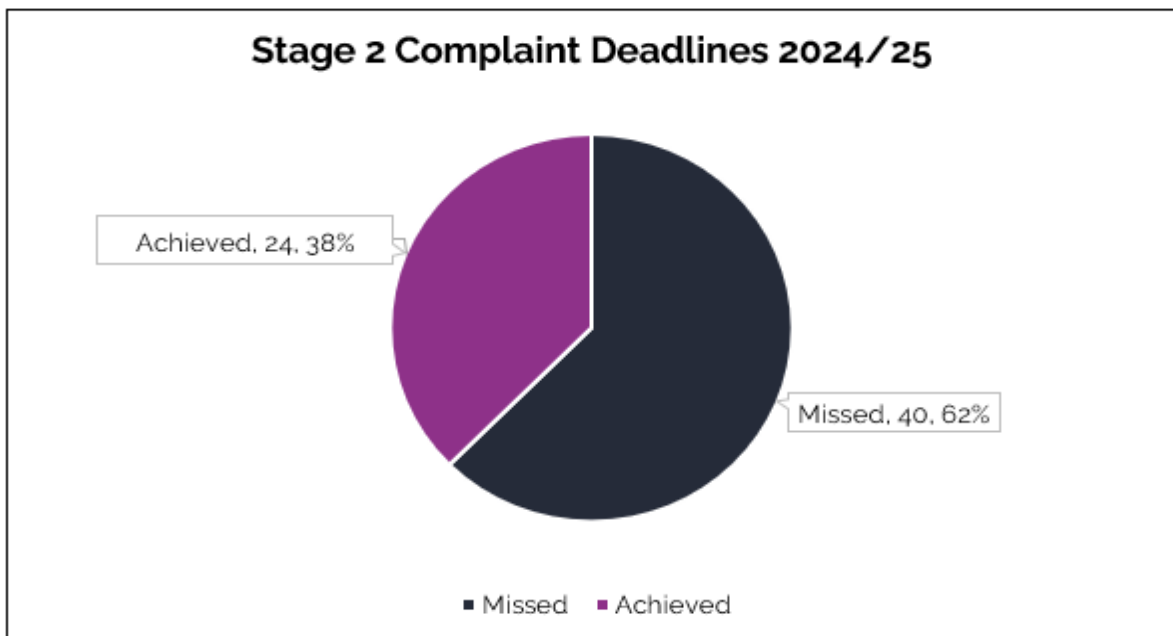
At stage 1, 34 complaints missed the deadline, which represents 8% of stage 1 complaints as shown in figure 7.

Figure 7 – Stage 1 Complaint Deadlines 2024/25



At stage 2, 40 complaints missed the deadline, which represents 62% of stage 2 complaints as shown in figure 8.

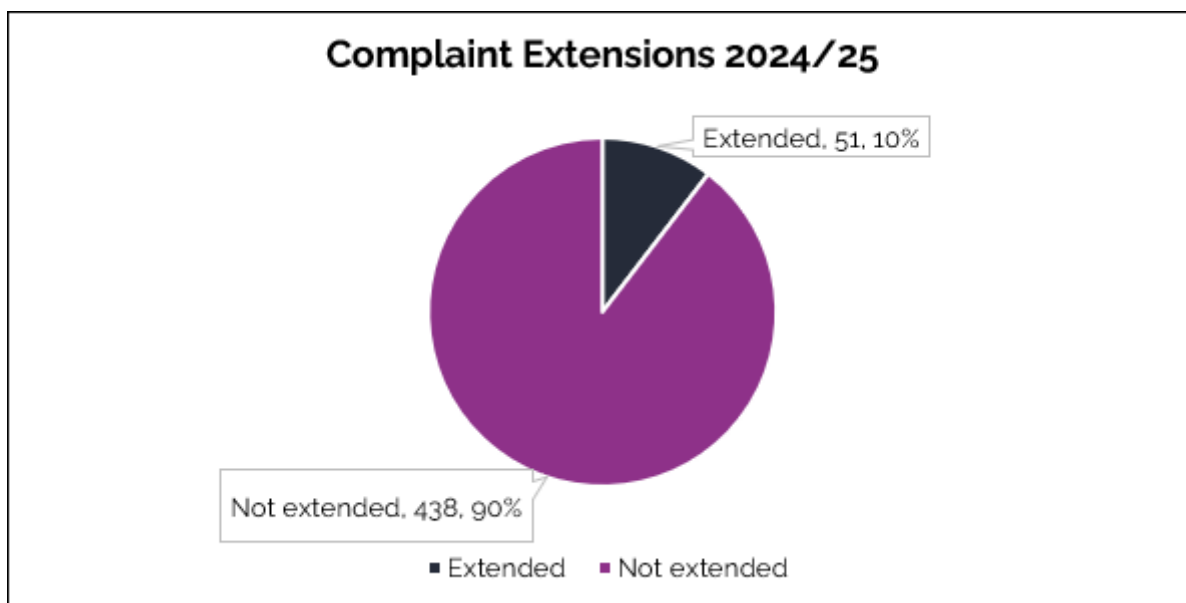
Figure 8 – Stage 2 Complaint Deadlines 2024/25



Complaint Extensions

Complaint Champions can request an extension providing they express a valid reason for doing so, such as additional time required for investigation, when an extension is made the complainant must be notified. Of the 489 complaints recorded in 2024/25, 51 (10%) of these were extended which was a reduction from 23/24 when 12% were extended as shown in figure 9. This would have had an impact on the deadlines missed and this is a focus area for improvement.

Figure 9 – Complaint Extensions 2024/25

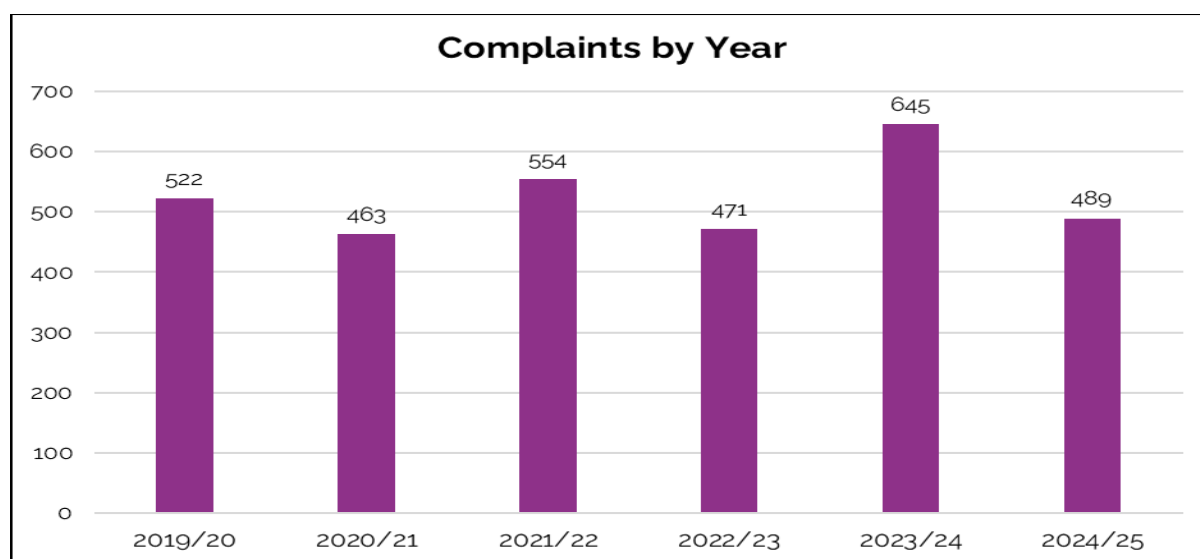


Historical Complaints by year

In 2024/25, the total number of complaints was 489 — a reduction of 156 complaints compared to the 2023/24 figure of 645, this represents a 24% decrease and brings the level of complaints down to a figure which is more consistent with the number received in the previous years of 2022/23 and 2021/22. The comparison across the last six years is shown in Figure 10.

It was considered that the increase seen in 2023/24 could have been attributed to several factors, including the increased engagement with online services in line with the Councils Customer Access Strategy and the growing awareness of the complaints process propelled by service areas. A direct link was also added to the complaints page and built into the CRM system to allow Customer Service Advisors to directly signpost telephony customers to our online services.

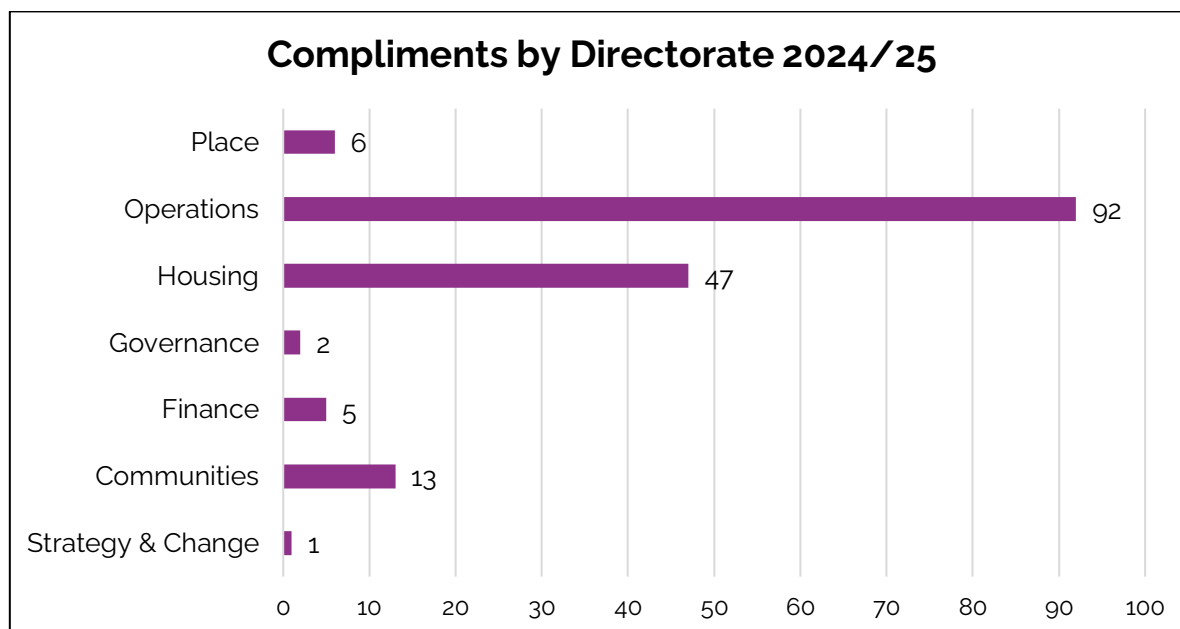
Figure 10 – Historical Complaints by Year



Summary of Compliments

The Council received a total of 166 compliments in 2024/25 with Operations receiving 92 of these and Housing 47 as shown in figure 11.

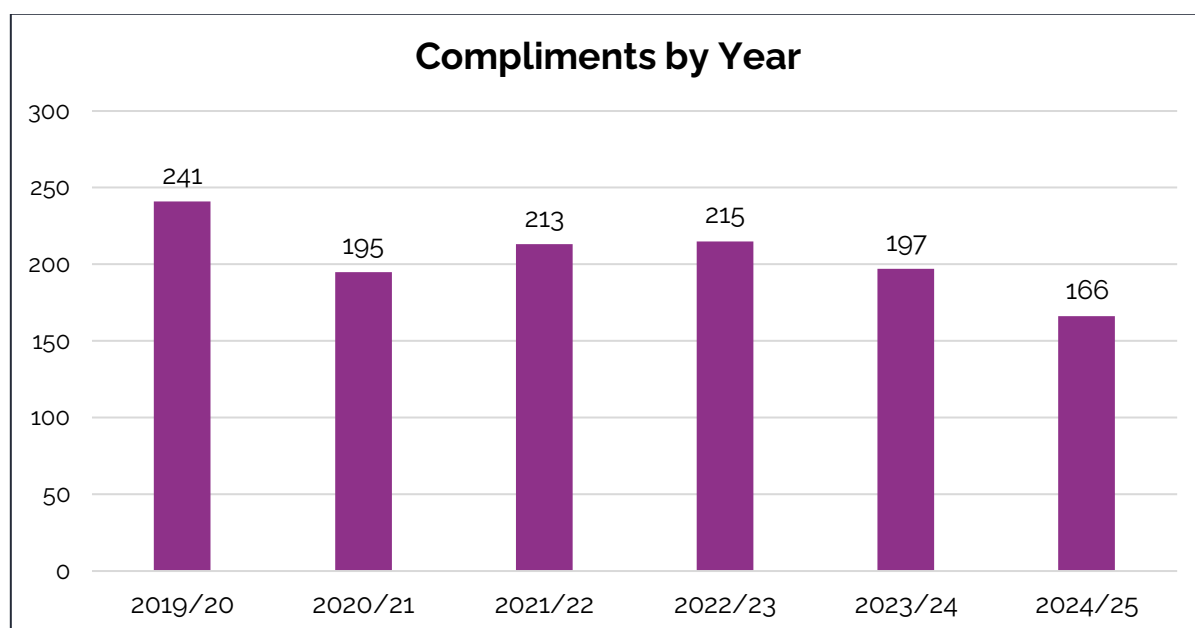
Figure 11 – Compliments by Directorate 2024/25



Historical Compliments

Figure 12 shows a trending decline in compliments, this year (2024/25) compliments were manually checked and verified to ensure they were not service requests or comments which is a new process and could have resulted in a small decline in the reported number.

Figure 12 – Historical Compliments by Year



A sample of compliments received in 2024/25 are detailed below.

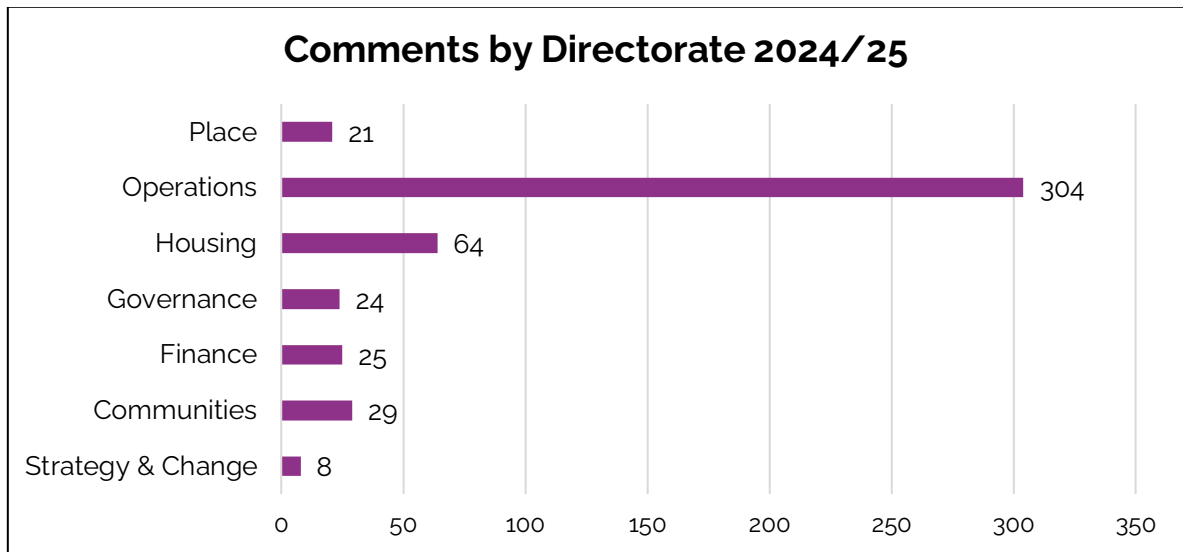
- *"I want to thank and congratulate you because of having a great employee. I had a phone conversation with her a week ago, and found her a supportive, kind person. Please convey my regards to her and of course her manager because without a great management system you cannot have a great employee."* **(Housing Leaseholders)**
- *"Great well enhanced work, greatly completed, thank you, so much, thank you."* **(Housing Repairs)**
- *"I contacted electoral services today to help with a problem my granddaughter has with the passport office. The staff from reception through to the electoral services were superb. They were polite, courteous and very help and resolved the difficulty for us. Thank you."* **(Customer Services and Electoral)**
- *"Your operator was well informed, professional and helpful"* **(Benefits)**
- *"I am in the process of moving my Great Auntie into sheltered accommodation, I have had the support and lots of help from your Officer, she has been an absolute god send, and she really has gone the extra mile to help with the whole process. I can't thank her enough."* **(Housing Council Tenants)**
- *"I phoned through to Customer Service last week to report some graffiti and I wanted to say a big thank you to the team for clearing this over the weekend and acting on it so quickly, it makes a huge difference to our tenants, we and the barber shop would like to say thank you and that it is very much appreciated that it was acted on very quickly. I would like to drop some sweets off but unsure where I am able to."* **(Waste)**

- *"You've made my day, thank you so much for arranging alternative seats in the stalls to accommodate my fractured knee and torn cartilage. As a result, i cannot walk very well on crutches and cannot get upstairs. I cannot wait to come along and enjoy the show. In all this pain you've made a struggling lady so happy – great customer service! Thank you for your time and effort" (Regent Theatre & Corn Exchange)*
- *"I would like to pass on my thanks to the bin collectors. I am disabled and they always empty my bins fully. I am so pleased not to have to worry about their efficiency. They are working in sweltering heat today and still did a fabulous job". (Bins & Waste)*
- *"I really wanted to leave a compliment about the man that came out to xxx on Tuesday or Wednesday of this week and did the gardening. He done such a fantastic job and even cleared away every single bit of foliage/cuttings after. I'm very grateful for this as I would normally try to do some of it to keep it tidy, but it was just so overgrown and too much for me to manage with my back, so I would like to say a massive thankyou you done an amazing job. I think he is a new gardener as I have not seen him before but if he is ever in the road again a cup of tea will be waiting at [ADDRESS]. Many thanks" (Parks & Cemeteries and Housing - Council Tenants)*
- *"Just a quick note to share my appreciation of how gently my son has been welcomed into his new swimming lessons. My son was quite disappointed to move up classes as this meant I would not be in the water with him... [OFFICER 1] has interacted with him and ensured he knows he is welcome to join when he is ready: she greets him by name, offers him swimming aids at the same time as the other swimmers and this reminds him he has a valued place in her lesson. When he does enter the water [OFFICER 2] speaks to him calmly with short instructions and supports him to access the lesson at the point where the others are. They both offer appropriate feedback and praise, and I believe he will make good progress over time". (Sports & Leisure)*

Summary of Comments

The Council defines a comment as "feedback about something or someone that has not met your expectations so we can learn from and improve our services". There were a total of 475 comments recieved in 2024/25 with the vast majority of these being received by Operations with 304 followed by Housing with 64. The comments per directorate are shown in figure 13.

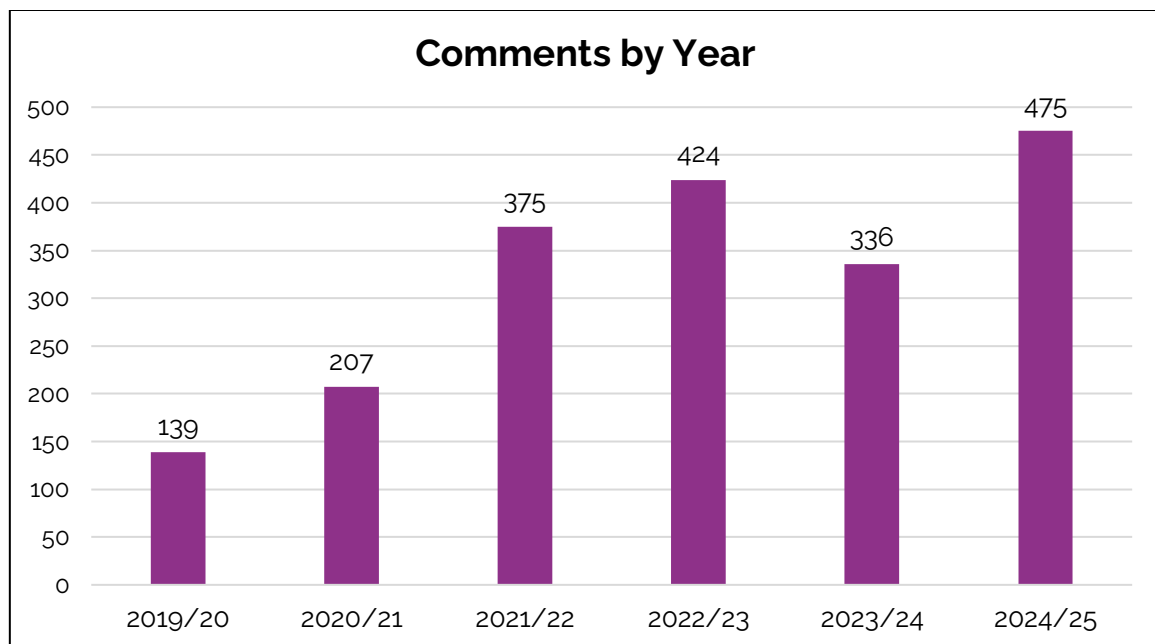
Figure 13 – Comments by Directorate 2024/25



Historical Comments

The trend for comments had a two-year low before and during the Covid-19 pandemic and continued to rise from 2021/22 consistently until 2023/24, where we saw a drop in comments comparatively as identified in figure 14. In 2024/25 the Council has seen an increase in customers leaving comments. An explanation for why may be because leaving a comment is a very quick way of communicating, the customer does not need to leave any details. With the demand for quick accessibility to services this may explain the increase as there is no trend identified in the comments.

Figure 14 – Historical Comments by Year



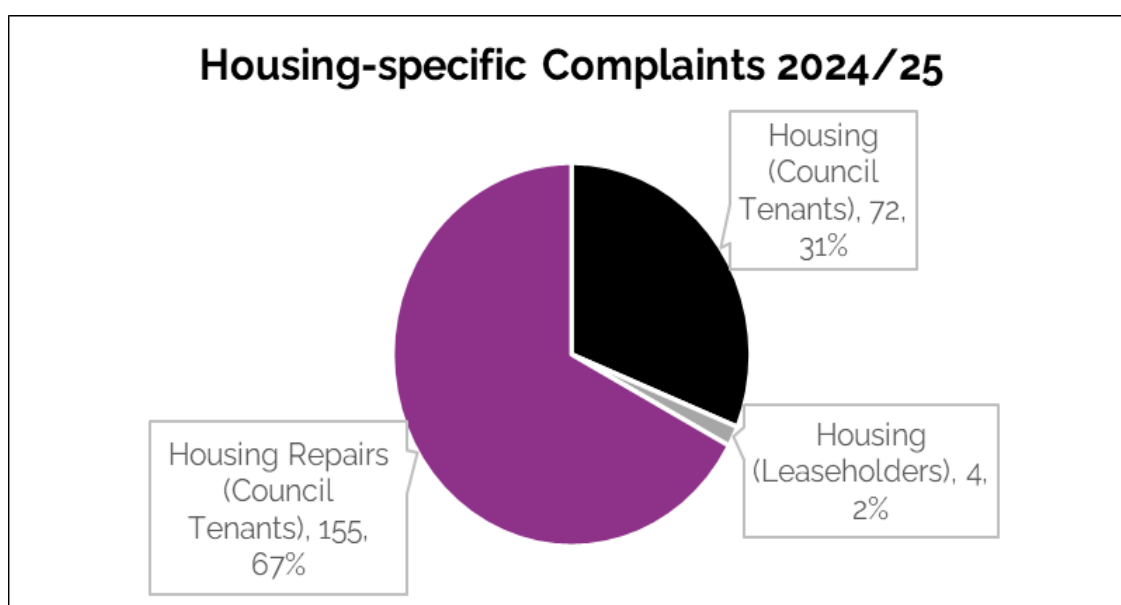
Housing Ombudsman Service Complaints

The following service areas fall under the Housing Ombudsman Service:

- Housing (Anti-Social Behaviour)
- Housing (Council Tenants)
- Housing (Leaseholders)
- Housing Repairs (Council Tenants)

In total, the Council received 231 complaints in our 2-stage complaints procedure that fall under the Housing Ombudsman Service, this is a reduction from last year where 283 were recorded. Although Housing (Anti-Social Behaviour) received 0 complaints this year, it is important to note that 6 of the 72 complaints received to Housing (Council Tenants) were identified as relating to ASB. Figure 15 identifies the full breakdown.

Figure 15 – Housing-specific Complaints 2024/25



Housing Repairs (Council Tenants)

Housing Repairs for Council tenants accounted for 67% of all complaints received under the Housing Ombudsman Service in 2024/25, totalling 155 cases.

The Council manages 7,879 properties within the borough, and the Housing Repairs service provides tenants with a seamless way to book, cancel, and reschedule repairs online via the Housing Repairs portal. Accessible through the Council's website, this portal allows residents to sign up for an account, streamlining the repair process. To support residents, the website offers step-by-step guidance, including a video tutorial demonstrating how to register and book a repair.

Since 11th December 2024, the Council has actively assisted tenants in setting up online accounts, providing direct coaching and guidance.

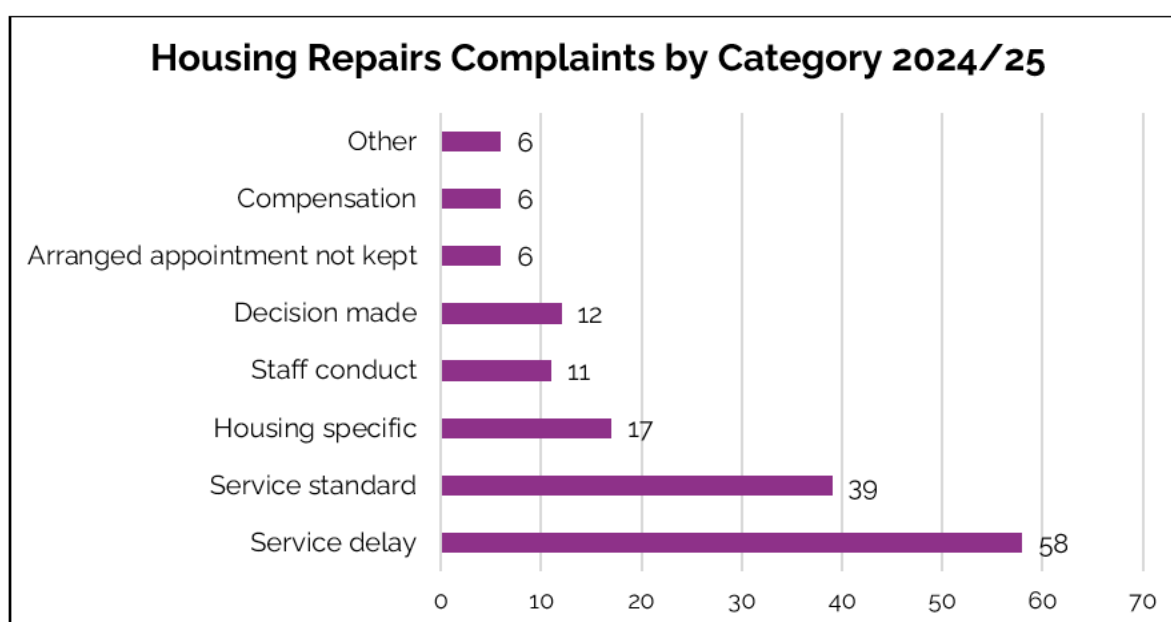
Additionally, the Customer Services team has tested the portal themselves, collaborating with the Housing team to implement key improvements, ensuring the system remains intuitive, user-friendly, and accessible. To raise awareness of the online portal and the improved accessibility and convenience for customers, Customer Services arranged a social media campaign to promote the portal, in addition, callers contacting Customer Services are advised whilst they are waiting for their call to be answered that they can book repairs online to save them holding on. Customers who do not use online services remain supported by Customer Service who will take their bookings over the phone.

As of 31st March 2025, 3,045 residents had registered for an online account, enabling repair bookings 24/7 and significantly reducing reliance on phone-based customer service. This marks a substantial increase of 31% from the 2,100 residents detailed as being registered in 2023/24.

The complaint categories for Housing Repairs are detailed in figure 16. "Service delay" is the highest category with 58 complaints. "Arranged appointment not kept", "Compensation" and "Other" were the lowest attributed category, with 6 cases each. The 'other' category applies to a complaint which does not fit into any other category, examples of complaints under the 'Other' category includes a dispute between two tenants with no fault by the Council and delays with access to a leaseholder flat above the complainant's property. Complaint categories are reviewed ongoing to identify any areas for improvements and the 'Other' category has been identified as an area for review moving forwards, this category has seen a reduction from 2023/24 where there were 15 cases logged under the category of 'Other'.

Note: As data is captured from quarterly snapshots and cases may still be live in the system, some complaints received were uncategorised at the time of reporting.

Figure 16 – Housing Repairs Complaints by Category 2024/25



The highest number of complaints for Housing Repairs were regarding repair work, followed by Surveyors and then Planned Maintenance. A full breakdown can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2 – Housing Repair Complaints by Type 2024/25

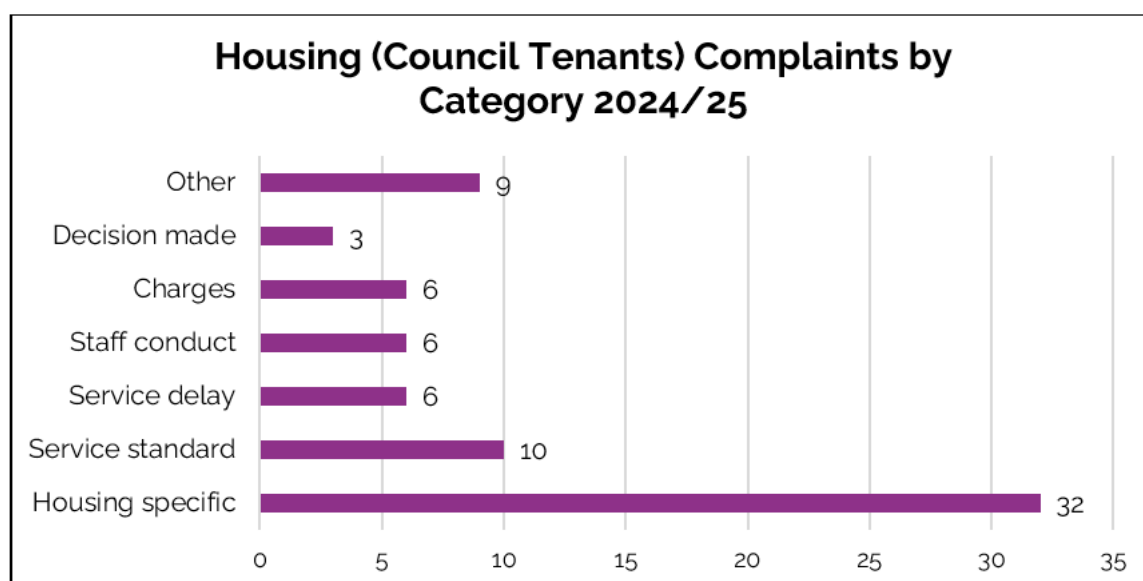
Repairs Service	Total
Repairs	93
Surveyors	21
Planned Maintenance	18
Mechanical & Electrical	12
Voids	4
Disabled Adaptions	3
Repairs – Damp & Mould	2
Tenancy Management	1
Property Condition	1
Total	155

Housing (Council Tenants)

The Council has a total of 9052 tenants within the Borough. Housing (Council Tenants) which represented 31% of the overall volume of complaints under the Housing Ombudsman Service, where 72 complaints were recorded for 2024/25. This is a decrease from last year when 44 of complaints were from Council Tenants.

"Housing Specific" was the highest receiving category with 32 complaints, and "Decision Made" was the lowest with 3. A full breakdown is shown in figure 17.

Figure 17 – Housing (Council Tenants) Complaints by Category 2024/25



The complaint categories for Housing (Council Tenants) are detailed above for 2024/25. "Housing specific" was the highest category, with 32 complaints, followed by "Service standard" with 10 complaints and "Other" with 9 complaints. "Decision made" was the lowest category with 3.

The majority of the complaints for Housing (Council Tenants) were due associated with Tenancy Management with 51 complaints, the full breakdown is identified in table 3.

Table 3 – Housing (Council Tenants) Complaints by Type 2024/25

Tenancy Service	Total
Tenancy Management	51
Housing ASB	9
Rental Income	5
Sheltered Housing	3
Accommodations	1
Right to Buy	1
Surveyors	1
Leaseholders	1
Total	72

Housing (Leaseholders)

As of April 2025, the Council has 431 leasehold properties. Housing (Leaseholders) represented 2% of the overall volume of complaints under the Housing Ombudsman Service, where 4 complaints were recorded for 2024/25.

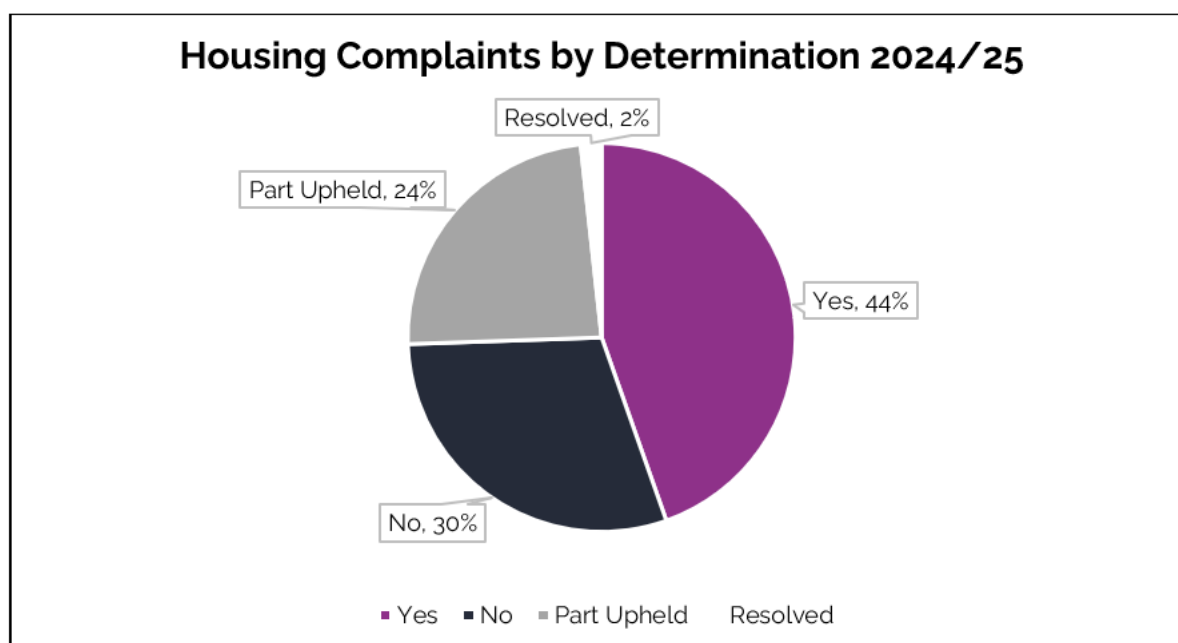
All 4 of the complaints received to Housing (Leaseholders) were categorised as relating to "Charges", with the type categorised as "Leaseholders". These four complaints were summarised as:

- Errors in service charge data and a request for consideration to payment terms offered
- Service charge dispute
- Leaseholder had been charged for charges that she felt she didn't gain use of or benefit from but are charged as per the lease agreement correctly
- Disputing the amount of service charge raised in the April 2024 to March 2025 estimate as the leaseholder believed this amount has a cap applied

Housing Complaint Decisions

At each stage of the complaints process, the Complaint Champion is required to decide the outcome of the complaint. There was a total of 231 Housing complaints, which come under the jurisdiction of the Housing Ombudsman Service, with a verifiable decision at stage 1 as identified in figure 18. 103 of these were upheld which equates to 44% of the decisions, and 69 were not upheld. The 44% is a decrease from last year when 52% were upheld. The remaining 34 complaints were determined as partially upheld, and a further 4 complaints were listed as resolved outside of the complaints process.

Figure 18 – Housing Complaints by Determination 2024/25



Of the 231 Housing complaints received, 34 were escalated to Stage 2, equating to just below 15%, a breakdown by service area is identified in table 4.

Table 4 – Housing Complaints by Stage 2024/25

Service Area	Stage 1	Stage 2	Total
Housing Repairs	142	13	155
Housing (Council Tenants)	51	21	72
Housing Leaseholders	4	0	4
Total	197	34	231

Putting things right is a core priority in the Council's complaints process. Of 207 Housing complaints that were recorded and held data at the time of reporting, the Council apologised on 176 occasions. The Housing Ombudsman Code of April 2024 stipulates the importance of an apology in putting things right, which the Council emulates in every response.

Housing Ombudsman Service Cases

The Housing Ombudsman has published decisions from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. They have stated:

"Housing Ombudsman decisions, full case details and investigation findings are published on their website as part of our commitment to being open and transparent. The decisions are anonymised, so residents' names are not used, but landlords are named. The decisions date from December 2020 and are published three months after the final decision date. In some cases, we may decide not to publish a decision if it is not in the resident's or landlord's interest, or the resident's anonymity may be compromised. You can read more in our guidance on decisions."

The Council only had one published decision for this period which was in April of 2024 and whilst the 3 stage complaints process was still being followed.

Ipswich Borough Council (202301620)

"The complaint is about: The landlords handling of reports of damp and mould in the resident's property. This service has also considered whether the landlord considered its duties under the Equality Act 2010. The landlords handling of the resident's complaint."

Determination:

- In accordance with paragraph 52 of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme, there was no maladministration in the landlords handling of the resident's report of damp and mould in the property.
- In accordance with paragraph 52 of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme there was maladministration in the landlord's consideration of its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010
- In accordance with paragraph 52 of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme, there was service failure in the landlords handling of the resident's complaint.

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Complaints

Should a complainant remain dissatisfied following internal consideration of their complaint, they can take their complaint to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman to seek independent investigation.

The Ombudsman will usually check with the Authority whether the complaint has exhausted the Local Authority's complaints Procedure. Where this has not been done, the Ombudsman will usually refer the complaint back to the Authority, to give the Council an opportunity to attempt to resolve the complainant's concerns through our internal complaints processes first.

Local Government and Social Care Cases

The local decisions, full case details and investigation findings are published as part of our commitment to being open and transparent. At the time of reporting, the Council had 10 cases received by the LGSCO between dates 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. 9 of these cases had a decision and had been decided and are therefore reported by the LGSCO. The results as identified by the LGSCO as shown below directly from their website.

Complaint overview

2024 / 2025

Between 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, we dealt with 9 complaints. Of these, 3 were not for us or not ready for us to investigate. We assessed and closed 5 complaints. We investigated 1 complaints.

[More about this data](#)



Complaints dealt with



Not for us

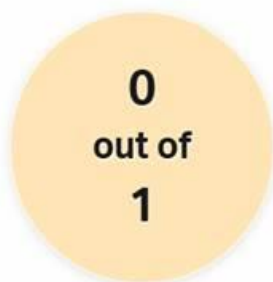


Assessed and closed



Investigated

Complaints upheld



We investigated 1 complaints and upheld 0.

0% of complaints we investigated were upheld.

This compares to an average of 66% in similar authorities.

Adjusted for Ipswich Borough Council's population, this is 0% upheld decisions per 100,000 residents.

The average for authorities of this type is 1.1% upheld decisions per 100,000 residents.

[View upheld decisions](#)

This identifies that 0% of the complaints investigated were upheld, this compares to an average of 66% in similar authorities which is a very positive result for Ipswich.

When adjusted for population and % of upheld decisions per 100,000 residents, the average for authorities of this type is 1.1% upheld decisions per 100,000 residents.

The breakdown of the 10 cases are detailed below:

Ipswich Borough Council (24 007 641)

Statement Closed after initial enquiries | Allocations | 03-Oct-2024

"Summary: We will not investigate this complaint about the suitability of accommodation provided by the Council to end the complainant's homelessness. This is because the complainant could reasonably appeal the housing decision in county court under the statutory appeals procedure."

Ipswich Borough Council (24 002 660)

Statement Closed after initial enquiries | Trees | 08-Jul-2024

"Summary: We will not investigate X's complaint about damage caused to her property by a Council owned tree, about delays in repairing the damage, and about another tree X says poses a risk. This is because it is reasonable for X to take some of the issues complained about to court, and because an investigation by the Ombudsman for the remaining matters is unlikely to achieve any additional outcome."

Ipswich Borough Council (24 002 102)

Statement Closed after initial enquiries | Allocations | 24-Jun-2024

"Summary: We will not investigate this complaint about the Council's assessment of a housing application. There is insufficient evidence of fault which would warrant an investigation."

Ipswich Borough Council (24 007 669)

Statement Referred back for local resolution | Council Tax | 14-Aug-2024

"Summary: We will not investigate this complaint about the Council's assessment of a benefits and council tax enquiry. This has been referred for a local resolution."

Ipswich Borough Council (24 008 216)

Statement Not upheld | Homelessness | 11-Mar-2025

"Summary: We will not investigate this complaint about the Council's assessment of a housing and homelessness application. There is insufficient evidence of fault which would warrant an investigation."

Ipswich Borough Council (24 012 489)

Statement Closed incomplete & invalid | Housing | 17-Oct-2024

"Summary: We will not investigate this complaint about the Council's assessment of a housing application. There is insufficient evidence of fault which would warrant an investigation."

Ipswich Borough Council (24 019 594)

Statement Closed after initial enquiries | Environmental Services & Public Protection | 31-Mar-25

"Summary: Closed after initial enquiries, not warranted by alleged fault"

Ipswich Borough Council (24 019 626)

Statement Closed after initial enquiries | Corporate & Other Services | 31-Mar-25

"Summary: Closed after initial enquiries, access to information request, other agencies better placed."

Ipswich Borough Council (24 020 689)

Statement Referred back for local resolution | Building Control | 07-Mar-25

"Summary: Premature decision, referred to organisation

The below case is the one that hasn't been included in the 2024/25 outcome by the LGSCO as is still awaiting decision.

Ipswich Borough Council (24 018 576)

Statement No decision yet | Homelessness | 27-Jan-2024 (received date)

"Summary: Awaiting decision

Learning from Complaints

Complaints serve as a crucial resource for the Council as a Local Authority, enabling the identification of deeper issues and opportunities for improvement. While statistics provide some insight, they cannot fully capture the internal perspective on complaints or the customer experience throughout the complaints process. Therefore, our focus lies in understanding the broader impact of complaints and the responses they generate. This approach allows us to draw meaningful lessons, implement organisational changes, and continually enhance the experience for everyone involved. Complaints are valuable sources of learning and enable us to identify areas for improvement within the Council. We have selected a sample of learnings from complaints across service areas that were received in 2024/25. These are as follows:

Operations

- Additional training for staff
- Website updates based on lessons learnt
- Team leaders ensuring teams are updated on changes
- Procedures revised for improvements to drive efficiency and improvements to customer service
- Complaints link added to search facility on Theatres website
- Improved communication with promoters at the point of booking theatre tickets
- Improve online seating plan accuracy for Theatre bookings
- Consideration for the provision of additional on street parking spaces in resident parking zones
- Waste supervisors conducting additional checks
- Review of escalation procedures and expectations for conflict management

Community Safety

- Revising published material

Environmental Health

- Additional training for staff
- Consideration given to how the original service request and subsequent enforcement action is dealt with to reiterate the importance of staff keeping copies of all customer communications
- Revising procedures and published material

Housing (Choice Based Lettings/Gateway to Homechoice)

- Case review with officers concerned for lessons learnt
- Ensure properties are advertised correctly - learning for Tenancy services.
- Revising procedures and published material

Housing (Council Tenants)

- Better communication required between service areas to prevent delays in decisions.
- Clear schedule of rates for recharging
- Clearer control measures between multi agency working.
- Continue to advertise how Universal Credit works to support tenants

Housing (Leaseholders)

- Review the case in partnership with residents on site
- Revising procedures and published material

Housing Repairs (Council Tenants)

- Additional training for staff
- Complete repairs in adequate timeframe
- Ensure proactive customer communication to manage expectations
- Guidance to be given to tenants that contact should be made to the landlord in instances of damage to the property.
- Reiterated driving policy to staff members
- Reminded all contractors to ensure residents are aware of work prior to start
- Reminder to staff of appropriate communication
- Complaint outcomes shared with the surveying team and the specialist contractor to ensure that any lessons can be learned.
- Improved scrutiny of outstanding repair jobs between teams
- Improve collaborative working with external contractors

Service Performance and Improvements

Further to the Housing complaint decisions that were made, there were additional observations completed as depicted in Table 5 below.

Table 5 – Housing Remedies and Lessons 2024/25

	Additional training for staff	Revising procedures	Revising published materials	Financial compensation (i.e. direct payment or decorating voucher)	Other – specific lessons(s) recorded
Housing Repairs	21	10	0	16	16
Housing (Council Tenants)	11	13	1	1	16
Housing Leaseholders	1	0	1	0	2

Summary

The Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report for 2024/25 demonstrates measurable progress and strategic enhancements in our approach to complaint management. The total number of complaints received decreased significantly to 489, marking an improvement from 645 in the previous year. This notable reduction reflects efforts to strengthen service delivery and responsiveness across the Council and in the learning from complaints and taking action to avoid repeated failings.

While performance in meeting deadlines and managing extensions has fallen slightly below target, reporting has proven vital in highlighting this as an important area for continued focus. Addressing these challenges will be integral to achieving higher efficiency and response times in the coming year.

Key improvements implemented during 2024/25 underscore the Council's commitment to refining its complaints process. This included mandatory introductory training for all complaint handlers and stakeholders, ensuring a consistent understanding of best practices across the organisation. Voluntary refresher sessions further emphasised the value of continuous learning, enabling personnel to address complaints with greater expertise and empathy. In addition, Council-wide quarterly reporting provided an in-depth, analytical view of complaints data, facilitating more informed decision-making and proactive resolution strategies.

These initiatives were complemented by the highest levels of staff engagement and corporate scrutiny observed in recent years. This enhanced focus has not only strengthened accountability within the council but also elevated the importance of complaints management as a vital tool for improvement. Through these efforts, the council aims to deliver a complaints process that is transparent, effective, and responsive, ultimately enriching the experience for residents and driving meaningful organisational change.