

Housing Annual Complaints Performance Report 2023/24

Complaint handling performance

The Regulator of Social Housing requires Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) to be published. Three of these measures relate to Landlord related complaints and complaint handling performance. The Housing Ombudsman's complaint handling code sets out that these three measures should be included within this annual report, as well as reported to the Regulator of Social Housing.

Our full published data can be found here – [Housing performance and tenant satisfaction measures - South Cambs District Council](#)

These complaints performance figures will be published by the Social Housing Regulator later in the year for all landlords.

2023/2024

TSM ref	Tenant Satisfaction Measure	Our result
TP09	Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling complaints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 29% very or fairly satisfied • 21% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied • 51% very or fairly dissatisfied
CH01	Complaints relative to the size of the landlord	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18.9 - Number of stage one complaints received per 1,000 homes • 3.8 - Number of stage 2 complaints received per 1,000 homes
CH02	Complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 73% - Proportion of stage one complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales • 80.9% - Proportion of stage 2 complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales

Housing Ombudsman's new Complaint Handling Code Self-Assessment

- Published link [Housing complaints and compliments - South Cambs District Council](#)
- Sign off link [2024.09.26 - HEB Agenda Pack](#)

Volume of Complaints

Below is our complaint handling performance for our whole Housing Department which includes both landlord and non-landlord related complaints. For future reporting for 2024/25, the reports will be separated for the two functions.

Volume Looking back at previous years

We have seen an increase in Stage 1 complaints received from the previous year 2022/23. The Housing Ombudsman has stated that high volumes of complaints must not be seen as negative as they can be indicative of a well-publicised and accessible complaints process. Low complaint volumes are potentially a sign that individuals are unable to complain.

Financial year	Total Number of stage 1 complaints	Total Number of stage 2 complaints	Total Number of stage 3 complaints (Housing Ombudsman)
2023/2024	128	23	2
2022/2023	112	23	1
2021/2022	145	16	3
2020/2021	100	11	1
2019/2020	61	8	4
2018/2019	81	7	4
2017/2018	77	3	2
2016/2017	64	2	0
2015/2016	79	3	0
2014/2015	91	7	1
2013/2014	89	5	0

2023/24 Volumes

Complaints received during quarter, broken down by stage	Q1 April – June	Q2 July - September	Q3 October - December	Q4 January – March	Year end totals
Stage 1 = Expression of dissatisfaction that is not able to be resolved at first contact so requires investigation and response from Service Manager	27	35	23	43	126 (*2)
*Number that had an extension of time	(3)	(2)	(1)	(6)	(12)
Stage 2 = Unresolved at stage 1 so investigation required by Head of Service	4	3	5	11	23 (*2)
*Number of complaints that had an extension of time	(0)	(0)	(2)	(2)	(4)
Stage 3 = Housing Ombudsman	0	0	0	2	2
*Complaints logged but later withdrawn by the complainant	0	*1	*3	0	*4
Total	31	38	28	56	151

*Extensions of time for the following reasons:

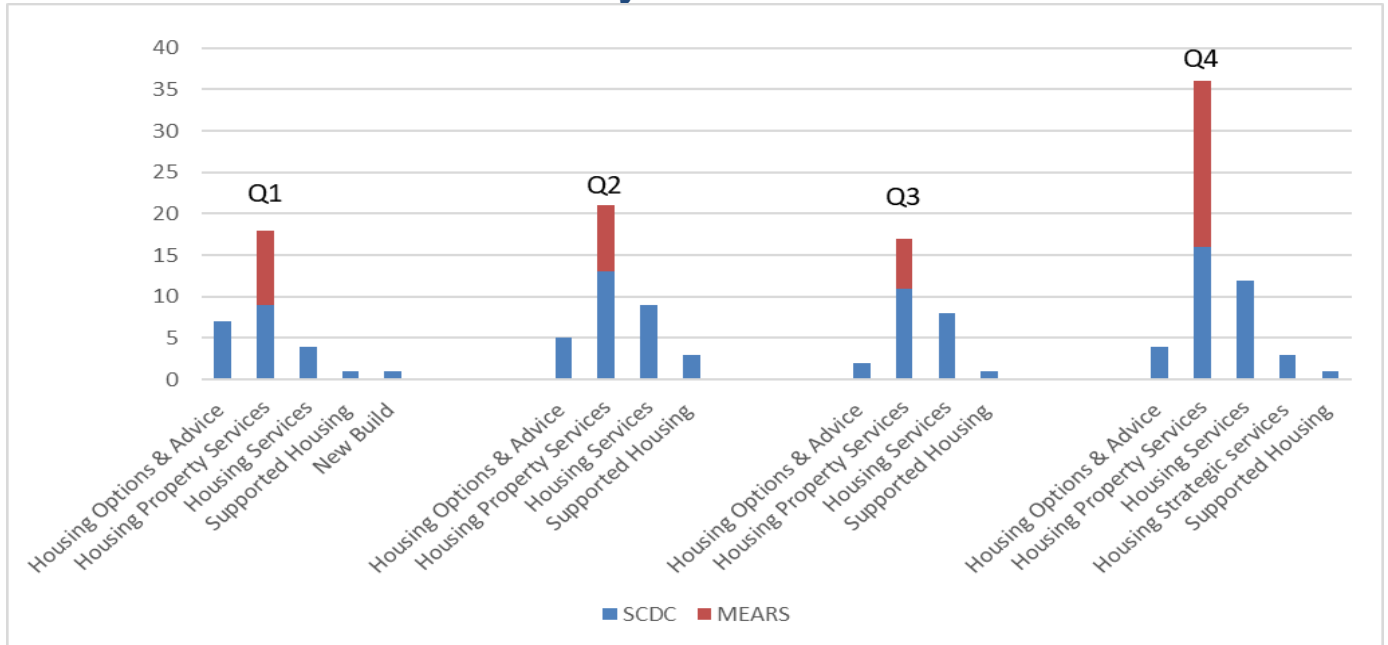
- Further investigation or communication needed to fully respond
- Lack or no contact from complainant to be able to access property or discuss further etc

Within the complaints breakdown above, this includes 21 complaints that relate to non-landlord services, such as housing advice and homelessness or disabled facility grants. For complaints relating to our landlord services it should be noted that the number of complaints correlates to around 2% of our tenants overall.

No complaints were refused, but we do also receive feedback via our complaints system which were recorded and followed through but were not treated as a complaint for the following reason:

- Service Requests – feedback received that was not related to the Housing Service or its contractor’s actions.
 - These also include any enquires that were received in error and required redirecting to another Landlord or Support Services
- Report of nuisance or ASB about another resident, where it was not related to the way we have handled their case
- MP & Councillor enquires

Volume by service area



- ❖ Housing Property Services, which deals with repairs and maintenance, received the most complaints with 59%
- ❖ The second highest was Housing Services, which deals with tenancy related issues with 23%.

The above volume’s per service area is consistent with previous year’s performance

Complaints received falling within the SCDC Theme

Theme	Q1 Total	%	Q2 Total	%	Q3 Total	%	Q4 Total	%
Lack of communication	1	3%	5	13%	8	29%	4	7%
Failure to act	10	32%	4	11%	9	32%	18	32%
Service Delivery	10	32%	12	32%	4	14%	6	11%
Not understanding processes	1	3%	2	5%	1	4%	6	11%
Staff Conduct	4	13%	4	11%	3	11%	6	11%
Misinformation	2	7%	1	1%	1	4%	0	0
Charges	2	7%	1	1%	1	4%	1	2%
Other	1	3%	9	24%	1	4%	15	27%

- ❖ The top two themes are Failure to act and Service Delivery

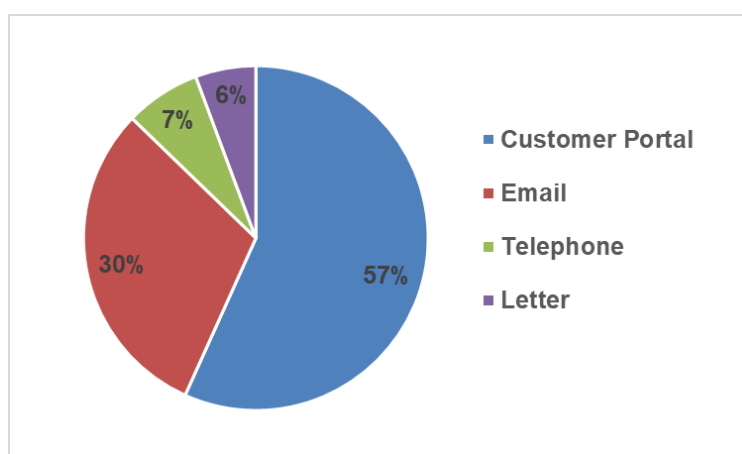
The above themes are consistent with previous year’s performance results

Breakdown of complaints based on HouseMark classifications

Theme	Q1 Total	%	Q2 Total	%	Q3 Total	%	Q4 Total	%
Allocations	5	16%	3	8%	0	0	1	2%
ASB	0	0	0	0	2	7%	1	2%
Estate Services	0	0	3	8%	0	0	0	0
Rent & Services	1	3%	0	0	0	0	1	2%
Repair & Maintenance	20	65%	18	47%	15	54%	36	64%
Staff & Customer Service	5	16%	6	16%	5	18%	6	11%
Tenancy Management	0	0	0	0	4	14%	3	5%
Other	0	0	8	21%	2	7%	8	14%

❖ The top two themes are Repair & Maintenance and Staff & Customer Service
The above themes are consistent with previous year's performance results

Method for Complaints Received



Complaints response times / targets

Response times / targets	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Number of complaint responses sent within quarter (Includes roll-over from previous quarters)	27	32	30	49
Number of complaint responses that were sent within target timescale (Includes stage 1 & stage2)	21	23	17	44
% Of complaints responded within deadline (Non – YTD includes stages 1 & 2) (SX121)	78%	72%	57%	90%
How many upheld = closed in favour of complainant	9	16	16	27
Not upheld = closed not in favour of complainant	12	10	9	14
Partly upheld = closed partly in favour of complainant	6	6	5	8

❖ There was a decline in performance with regards to response times during the middle of the year. Complaints are monitored through the Housing Service Manager Performance meetings and as a result improvements were sought through regular team meetings with the Complaints Co-ordinator and training with staff. This resulted in improved performance during Q4.

Housing Ombudsman

We received two Housing Ombudsman determinations in 2023/24 which contained five findings of maladministration. The maladministration determinations related to:

Complaint 1 – Handling of repairs, mutual exchange/Homelink application and request for reasonable adjustments through disabled adaptations

Key findings:

- Maladministration in respect to the landlord's handling of the resident's application for a mutual exchange.
- Service failure in respect to the landlord's handling of the resident's application for reasonable adjustments.
- Service failure in respect to the landlord's complaint management.

Complaint 2 – Relating to the landlord's response to repairs reported during the defect period and the way the complaint was handled

Key findings:

- Service failure by the landlord in its response to repairs reported during the defect period.
- Service failure in respect to the landlord's complaint management.

The Housing Ombudsman individual landlord performance reports for 2023/24 were received/published as of November 2024 [Landlords Archive - Housing Ombudsman](#)

Continuous improvement and learning from complaints

Disabled Adaptations – following a complaint regarding how a disabled adaptation was handled, the Council has reviewed its [Disabled Adaptations Policy](#) which includes target timescales and improved record keeping and clearer communication.

Mutual Exchange – following a complaint regarding how we processed an application, the Council has reviewed its processes and published a revised [Mutual Exchange policy](#). This included subscription to 'Homeswapper' which is a national web-based portal that allows tenants to find suitable 'swaps' and investment in a back-office system, 'SwapTracker' which tracks the progress of mutual exchanges and enables tenants to access and provide documentation. The Mutual Exchange policy also gives greater flexibility to allow tenants to swap to a property with an additional bedroom than would be permitted under its Lettings Policy and also includes financial incentives to downsize.

Defects on new-build properties – Following a complaint relating to outstanding repairs on a new property, the Council have reviewed its defects reporting process to ensure that any defects are reported to the correct person and not confused with our normal repairs reporting system. A bespoke monitoring system has been implemented and additional training held for frontline staff so that they are aware of which properties are within the defects period, to ensure the correct process is used where applicable.

Damp and mould – the Council has strengthened its processes in relation to damp and mould. This included working with 'experts' to introduce a [Damp, Mould & Condensation Policy](#), that reflected the guidance from the Ombudsman, adopting a zero tolerance approach to damp, mould and condensation, awareness training for all housing staff and the recruitment of a specialist Damp

& Mould Surveyor. We have also improved our record keeping and oversight through the introduction of a new corporate key performance indicator that ensures we have raised awareness across the Council.

Repairs – as would be expected, the majority of our complaints relate to repairs as this is the area that we have most interaction with our tenants. Over the past year we have continued to improve our repairs service by offering tenants the ability to report their repairs online and we are looking to release a dedicated housing repairs app ‘M&Me’ to allow repairs to be reported, tracked and changed by tenants at a time that suits them. We are looking to roll this out during January/February 2025.

Complaints – many of the complaints that we receive relate to poor communication. To improve how the Council communicates with its tenants and leaseholders, a [Communications Charter](#) was developed with tenant representatives. This sets out our standards in terms of timescales and we are currently in the process of developing a set of guidelines for staff to ensure we have a consistent approach in how we communicate.

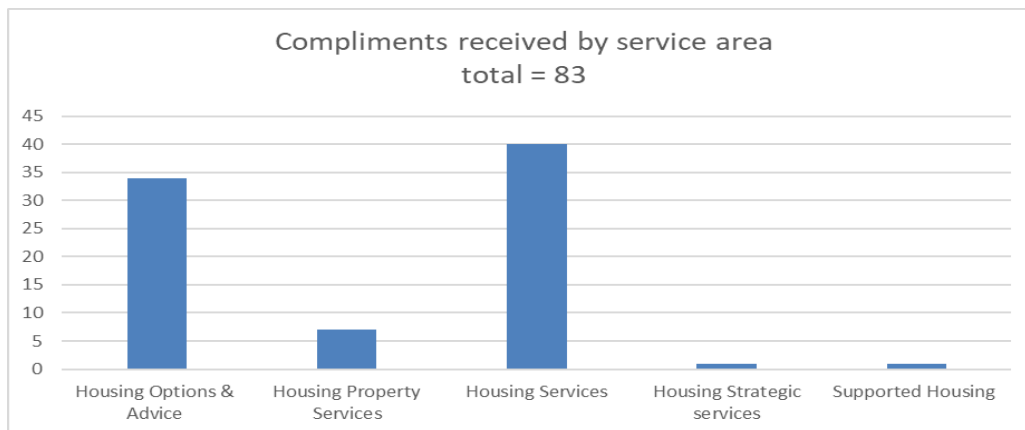
Complaint Handling – Throughout the course of the year we have carried out extensive training with teams to improve both the process and the content of our responses when we receive a complaint.

In reviewing the above policies and the Communications Charter, we have worked closely with tenant representatives on these issues, of which they have influenced and contributed to the outcome. [Tenant involvement opportunities - South Cambs District Council](#)



Compliments

A selection of compliments received by the Housing Service during 2023/24 are set out below



- *SCDC has been amazing. The contractors have been amazing*
- *Thank you for keeping my morale up these last few weeks. I 100% could NOT have got here without you.*
- *Thanks to your expertise, patience and knowledge*
- *The loveliest most professional ***** put us right at ease, totally stress free. Nothing was too much trouble thanks again.*
- *Thank you for being so friendly and helpful, it's so nice to deal with someone who is as pleasant as you when dealing with stressful times such as moving*
- *Thank you for all your help I know I definitely couldn't have done this without all your help*
- *Thank you very much for all your help and advice over the last couple of months.*

- *I would like to thank you for everything you have done for us. Thank you very much!*
- *I'm just so happy and grateful beyond words!! Thank you so much!! I've actually got a forever home!*
- *I wanted to share a thank you for all of **** assistance ***** is always willing to assist whenever I ask for any help.*
- *The locksmith who attended **** was superb in what was a very uncertain situation. their skills and attitude really helped the team*
- *I would also like to take this opportunity to thank you for all your help. I have been given a lifeline and I really appreciate your efforts*
- *Just wanted to thank you again for helping with ***** and your help with making this process a smooth transition.*