

# 1<sup>st</sup> Half Year Report Apr-Sept 2024/25



**NEWARK &  
SHERWOOD**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

# CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

(COMPLAINTS, SUGGESTIONS  
AND PRAISE)



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# CUSTOMER FEEDBACK ANALYSIS

April - September 2024

**Director Lead:** Deborah Johnson, Director of Customer Services and Organisational Development

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Our Customer Complaints and Feedback Policy has been formally adopted and agreed and is designed to cover the requirement of both the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman and the Housing Ombudsman. We are bound by the requirements both Ombudsmen set out which are clear about the expectations on us in how we deal with complaints.

One of the key things that both Ombudsmen expect that we report on and use all the feedback from customers, especially complaints, to improve our services.

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This report is shared with:

- Senior Leadership Team and Business Managers
- Member Champion for complaints
- Housing Assurance Board
- Policy and Performance Improvement Committee
- Audit and Governance Committee

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## 1. Context

The Council recognises the importance of listening to the views of its residents about the services they receive from us. Our customer complaints and feedback policy provide the opportunity to capture, investigate, respond, and learn from customer feedback to assist with the delivery and shaping of Council services in the future.

Our complaints policy has two stages, with a response to the complaint provided by the relevant service at Stage 1. If the complainant remains unsatisfied, they can request the complaint is reviewed by a more senior officer, which is a Stage 2 complaint. Following our complaint process being completed, the complainant is able to request a review by the relevant Ombudsmen where they remain dissatisfied.

Both positive and negative feedback is important to us as it provides us with customer opinion, it allows us to recognise what areas need improvement and provides opportunity for us to learn. It can act as an early warning of problems that may otherwise stay unseen until they become a larger problem, which can then take up significant resource and time to remedy. Feedback helps us find the root cause of problems and to recognise where specific systems or processes aren't working as they should, and it enables us to create meaningful and effective changes in policies, procedures, or the training of staff.

Considerable work has been undertaken in the last year around complaints, policy, procedure, and training. Staff who respond to complaints have undertaken comprehensive training which included how to respond to complaints, our policy, and the role of the Ombudsmen. A complaints toolkit has been developed for staff which includes guidance in how to carry out an investigation and how to respond to a complaint. To support this, we have created complaint response templates which aid consistency in the responses. The Housing Ombudsman have made changes to the response times for complaints, these are now in place. We are currently working on amending our systems to accommodate the changes and prompts provided to officers and are updating the guidance to reflect these changes. Training on this amendment will be rolled out shortly.

If a complainant has been through both stages of our complaints procedure and is still unhappy, they can ask the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, or if the complaint is regarding a housing tenancy, the Housing Ombudsman, to review their complaint. Tenants can contact the Housing Ombudsman at any point for additional support, and do not have to complete our full complaints process before they do so.

*The Housing Ombudsman (HO) and Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) carried out individual consultations on their joint complaint handling code proposals, with the aim of having one joint code, setting out standard for complaint handling across the local government and social housing sector. Unfortunately, they have concluded that it isn't possible at this time to do this.*

*The LGSCO have issued their Code as "advice and guidance" and intend to start considering the Code as part of their process from April 2026. Councils are encouraged to adopt the Code as soon as they are able to do so.*

*LGSCO Complaint Handling Code - February 2024*

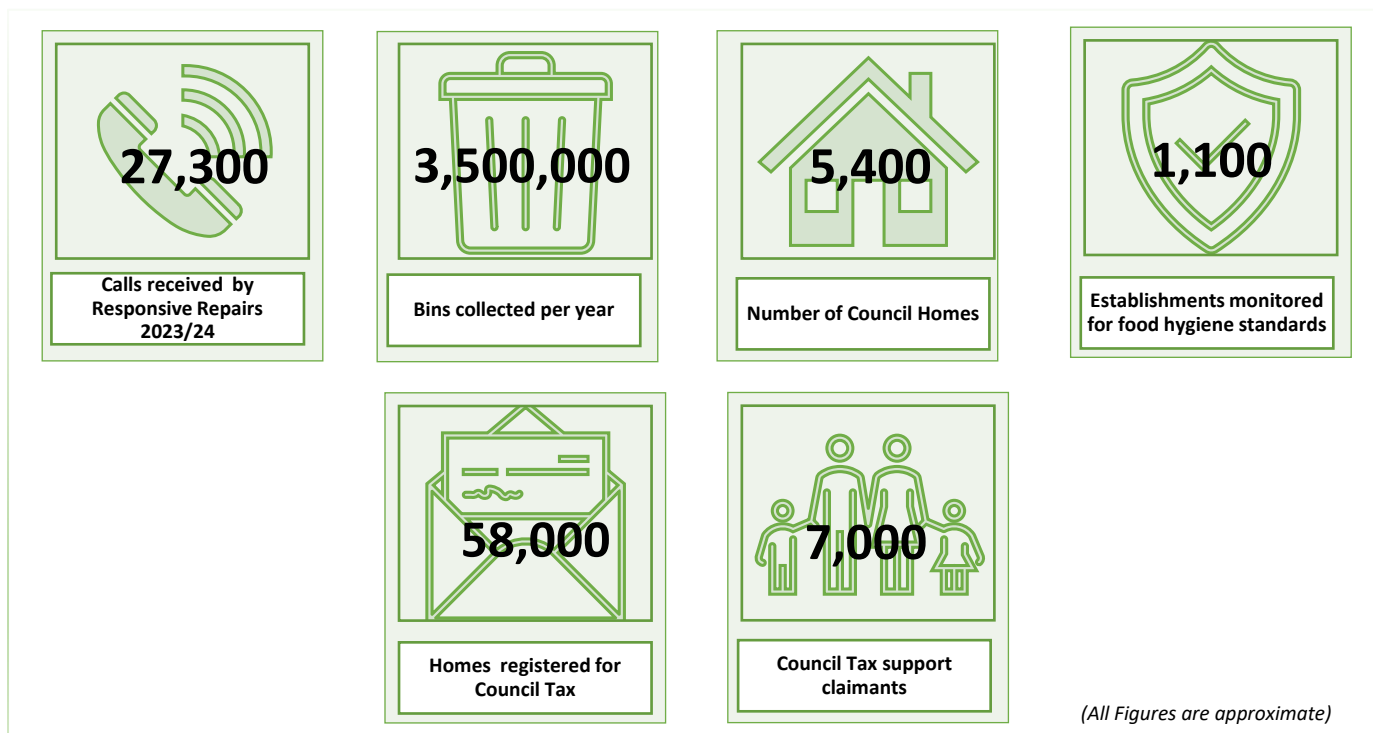
To accommodate the escalation in numbers referred to the Ombudsman, we are currently developing a procedure and guidance for staff on how to manage Ombudsman requests.



# Our Responsibilities

The Council delivers services, across various areas, and feedback is received for all these services. Some data to provide context can be found in fig 2 below, which was correct as of 24/25:

Fig 2



## 2. Overview of feedback

Table 1 illustrates the total feedback received during the first half of 2024-25.

Table 1

Stage 1 Complaints	Stage 2 Complaints	Suggestions	Compliments (Praise)
326	35	23	67

All Figures shown include withdrawn complaints unless stated otherwise. These tend to be enquiries which are submitted as complaints but upon investigation, found to be service requests. The customer is contacted and if they agree with this approach then the complaint is withdrawn and treated as a service request.

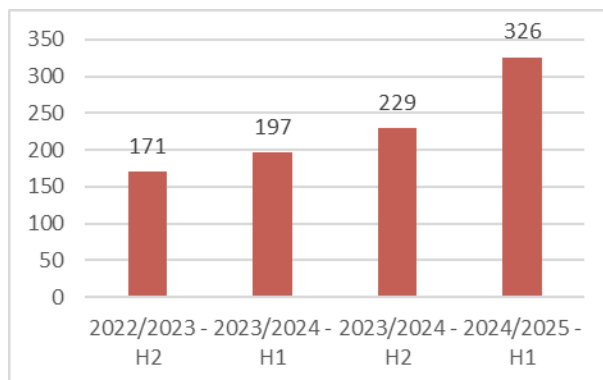
### 3. Complaints – Stage 1

It is important for us to use many different methods to engage and consult with our customers, so as to receive as broad and as representative view of our services as possible. Complaints are a valuable source of information that help us pinpoint areas for improvement and offer insight into where we are delivering a good service.

#### 3.1. Number of Stage 1 Complaints received

There is a 66% increase in complaint numbers during the first half of 2024/25, when compared to the same period in 2023/24. The gradual increase across the two years is illustrated in Chart 1

Chart 1 (2-Year trend)- half years Stage 1 complaints



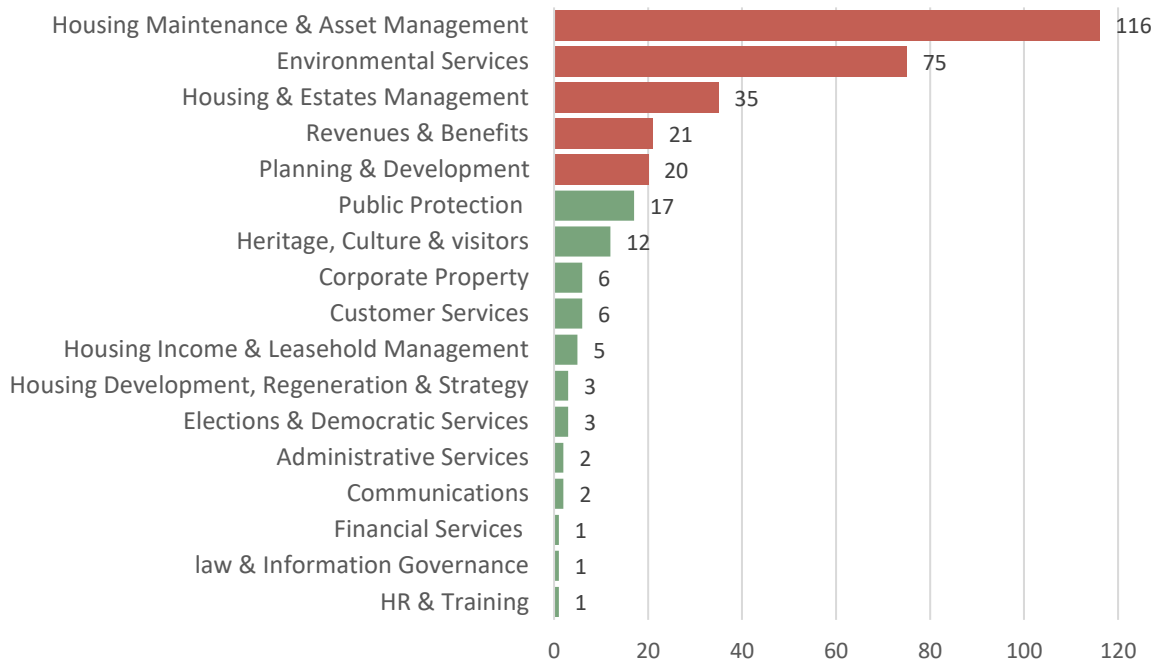
#### 3.2. Complaints by Business Unit

As expected, the largest proportion of complaints received in the period (Chart 2, below) were for the front facing services (*displayed in red*) with:

- Housing Maintenance & Asset Management receiving 36% of all reported issues.
- Environmental Services 23%
- Housing & Estates Management 11%
- Revenues & Benefits 6%
- Planning & Development 6%

Twelve further business units also received complaints during the period which, together, accounted for approximately 18% of the total received (*displayed in green*):

Chart 2 (Stage 1 complaints received by business unit)



All Figures shown include complaints withdrawn. This provides a more accurate measure of demand

### 3.2a Housing Maintenance & Asset Management – 116 stage 1 complaints received (Chart 3)

The largest proportion of complaints received for the service were for Responsiveness (Delay/Lack of Action) – 25 complaints. There were 17 each received for Contractor (standard of work) and Officer (standard/quality of work). Over the past 18 months, significant government campaigns such as “Putting It Right” , promotion by the Council of how to complain and an improvement in the recording of complaints has contributed to this increase.

These complaints relate to both our in-house repairs service, contractors delivering specific repairs and contractors delivering our investment programme and gas servicing programme. There is a similar picture across the sector with many landlords reporting an uplift in complaints and the scale of this will be know when the next round of Tenant Satisfaction Measures are published. Some complaints can be complex and involve a number of services areas which is time consuming to resolve effectively.

Chart 4 below shows the breakdown of categories reported for the service:

Chart 3 (2-year outturn Stage 1 complaints)

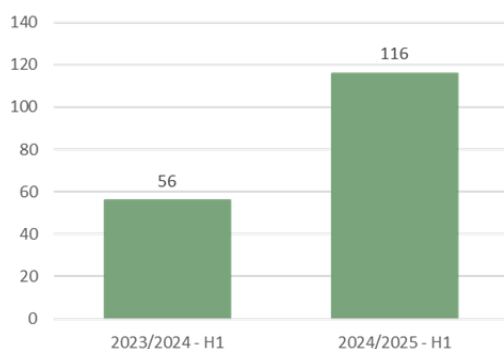
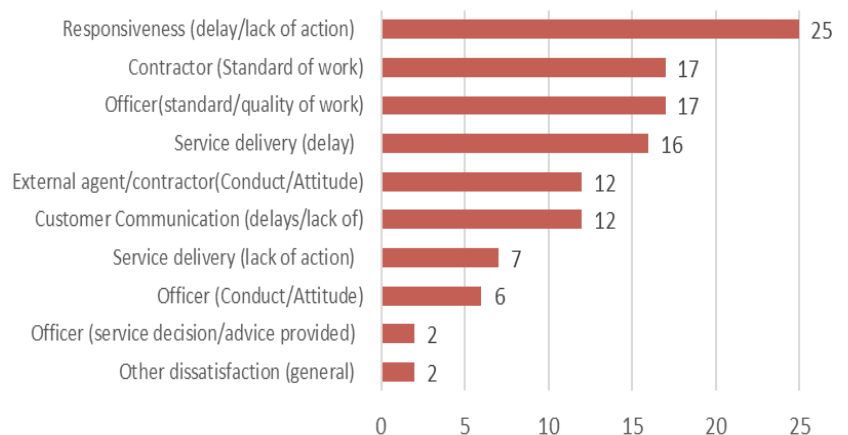


Chart 4 (Stage 1 complaints by category)



In response, we have taken the following steps to improve performance:

**Increased budgets** – additional budget has been proposed in repairs to improve repair completion times.

**Additional training** – more officers have been trained to respond effectively to complaints with refresher training planned in response to changes in the Complaint Handling Code.

**Additional resources** – new roles are being introduced to support the effective management of repairs including additional work planners to co-ordinate repairs and empty homes work, a complaints co-ordinator to support effective complaint handling and support for teams to identify and implement improvements resulting from the learning from complaints, providing a better service to tenants.

**Increased contractor meetings** – to discuss dips in performance and address the impact this has on the customer experience, putting monitored improvement plans in place.

**Focus on service improvement** – working with teams to review and improve our processes in conjunction with tenants and ensuring more quality checks are in place to ensure a good service is being provided. For example, the Repairs Policy has recently been reviewed by tenants and suggestions for improvements are being explored to agree changes that can be implemented.

**Increase focus on complaints and learning** – complaints are reviewed weekly by the Business Managers and monthly to consider learning and trends from complaints that then form an action plan to address. These are measured along with satisfaction with complaint handling to look for good practice and areas for further improvement.

### 3.2b Environmental Services – 75 complaints received

The business unit has received 27% more complaints compared to the same period in 2023/24 (Chart 5). The top 3 reasons for complaints in this area are as follows:

- The category “Service Delivery (Missed Action)” accounted for 43% of all complaints, primarily concerning missed bin collections. These issues were subsequently resolved either by returning to empty the bins or contacting the customers to address their concerns.
- Additionally, there were 14 complaints related to the standard and quality of work by officers. Of these, 5 complaints were about untidiness in parks, grounds, or streets, and 4 were regarding the placement of bins after emptying or delivery. Other reasons were noted in singular or smaller numbers
- Officer conduct/attitude received 12 complaints. Other reasons were noted in singular or smaller numbers.

Whilst Environmental Services received 27% of the stage 1 complaints, only 1 complaint of the 75 was escalated to stage 2. To have such a low level of complaints progress to stage 2 is excellent. Upon examination there are 2 elements that contribute to this, 1. Comprehensive reports are drafted to for the stage 1 complaint response and 2. The work/remedies detailed within the response are consistently delivered.

These improvements have come during a reporting period that has included the implementation of glass collecting in the district which has seen the number of bins collected each day rise significantly.

Chart 5 (2-year outturn Stage 1)

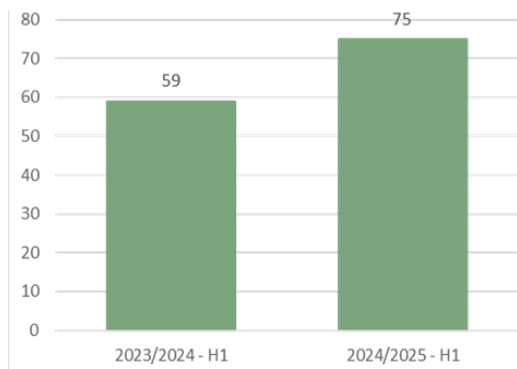
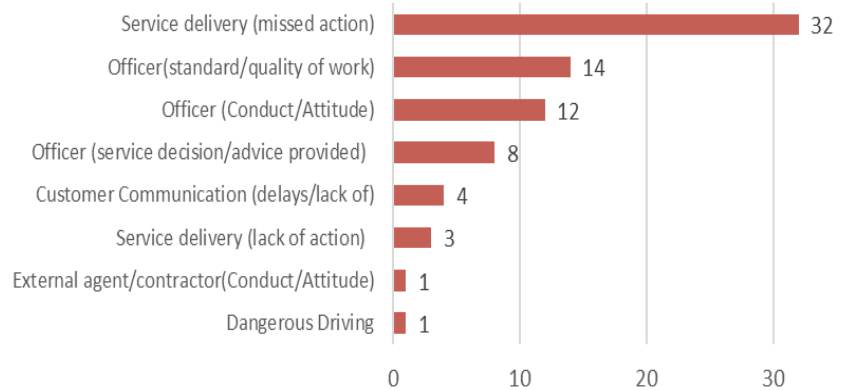


Chart 6 (Stage 1 complaints by category)



### 3.2c Housing & Estates Management – 35 Complaints received

The business unit received 2 more complaints than in the same period in 2023/24 with the majority (12) for the category, Officer conduct/attitude. Officer (Service Decision/ Advice given) received 9 complaints, for example, 3 complaints concerned issues with neighbours which hadn't been successfully resolved, and 2 mentioned our Council home banding process and decisions. Another person disputed our complaints procedure following parking issues at one of our social housing sites.

Complaints around officer conduct and attitude often relate to dissatisfaction with the application of policy and from April 2025, investigating officers can re-categorise where investigations establish a more appropriate category for the complaint.

Chart 7 (4-year outturn Stage 1 complaints)

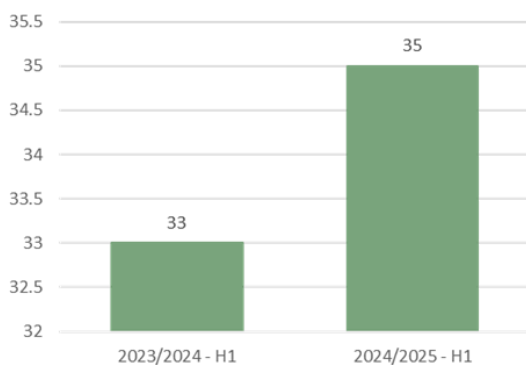
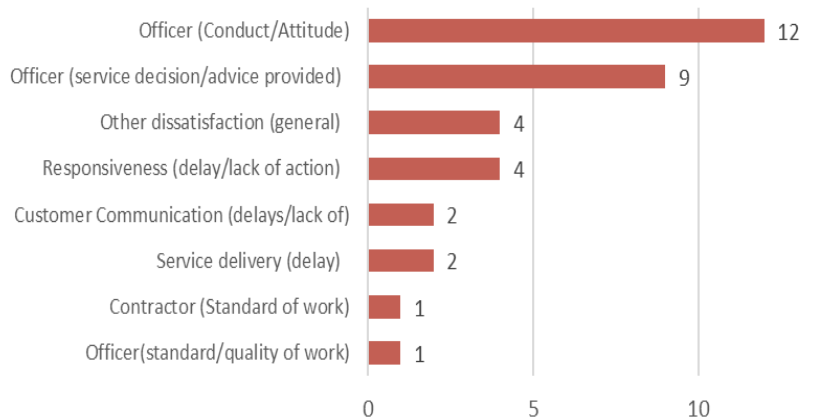


Chart 8 – Stage 1 complaints by category



### 3.3 Complaints by Category

During this period, 23% of the complaints received fell under the category “Officer (service decision/advice provided).” For example, 37 complaints were from customers who were dissatisfied with the outcome of a council decision, and 11 customers expressed dissatisfaction with our communication 5(Table 2).



**Table 2 (Stage 1 complaints by category)**

Complaints Category	Received	% of total
Officer (service decision/advice provided)	76	23%
Officer (Conduct/Attitude)	40	12%
Customer Communication (delays/lack of)	36	11%
Responsiveness (delay/lack of action)	34	10%
Officer (standard/quality of work)	34	10%
Service delivery (missed action)	32	10%
Service delivery (delay)	19	6%
Contractor (Standard of work)	18	6%
External agent/contractor (Conduct/Attitude)	14	4%
Other dissatisfaction (general)	12	4%
Service delivery (lack of action)	10	3%
Dangerous Driving	1	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Note:** The complaints category ‘Officer (Conduct/Attitude)’ is a broad category that does not only cover the behaviour of an officer but could also include a complaint raised for either noise during a waste collection or response given by the officer with which the customer is not happy. Work is ongoing to review the categories to simplify them and ensure consistency.

### 3.4 Complaint Processing Times

To ensure compliance with the Housing Ombudsman’s complaint handling code, our policy includes specific timescales for responding to complaints. We have revised our response timescales to align with those stipulated by the Ombudsmen.

- Stage 1 - acknowledge the complaint within 5 working days of the request being received and provide a full response within 10 working days
- Stage 2 -acknowledge the complaint within 5 working days of the escalation request being received and provide a full response within 20 working days.

It is important that we take complaints seriously and meet the timescales of our policy and the Housing Ombudsman. When a customer has complained to us it is right that they expect a response within a reasonable timescale. There will be occasions where the timescales need to be extended in cases where obtaining the relevant information may take longer as it’s from a third party or because an officer who had dealt with the customer is on leave. Wherever this delay is necessary, the complainant will be kept updated.

Table 3 below details the number of complaints which haven’t met our statutory deadlines. The complaints which have not made the deadline in the period are being investigated to understand why. The volume of complaints received has significantly increased and this is impacting the ability to meet deadlines.

**Table 3 (Stage 1 Complaint processing summary)**

Period	Met Deadline	Missed Deadline	Total completed	% on Target
April- September 2023	182	3	195	93%
April - September 2024	211	94	326	65%

*9 Withdrawn and 2 suspended complaints are excluded from the above calculations*

Of the 326 complaints received between April and September 2024, 211 were responded to within the statutory time period, with a further 94 missing their deadline. A further 21 complaints were still in progress at the time of writing this report.

A weekly meeting to proactively chase responses have been introduced and we hope to see improvements in half 2.

Housing is particularly struggling with the number of complaints and are actively seeking to resolve this in two ways; initially to put additional resource in dealing with complaints which should be in place within the next few weeks and to undertake a service improvement project which will look at common causes of complaints and address the root cause of these.

**Table 4 – (Late responses by delivery team – Stage 1 complaints)**

Delivery Team	Received	Overdue	%
Housing Maintenance & Asset Management	113	59	52.2%
Waste & Transport	50	10	20.0%
Housing & Estates Management BM	33	7	21.2%
Planning Development	20	2	10.0%
Council Tax	19	3	15.8%
Street Scene/Grounds Maintenance	10	4	40.0%
Public Protection/CCTV/ASB	8	2	25.0%
Housing Income & Leasehold Management	5	1	20.0%
Housing Development, Regeneration & Strategy	3	1	33.3%
Communications	2	1	50.0%
Financial Services	1	1	100.0%

*Table 4 excludes complaints which were withdrawn/suspended complaints and Delivery teams with all complaints dealt with on time*

### 3.5 Outcome of Complaints by Delivery Team

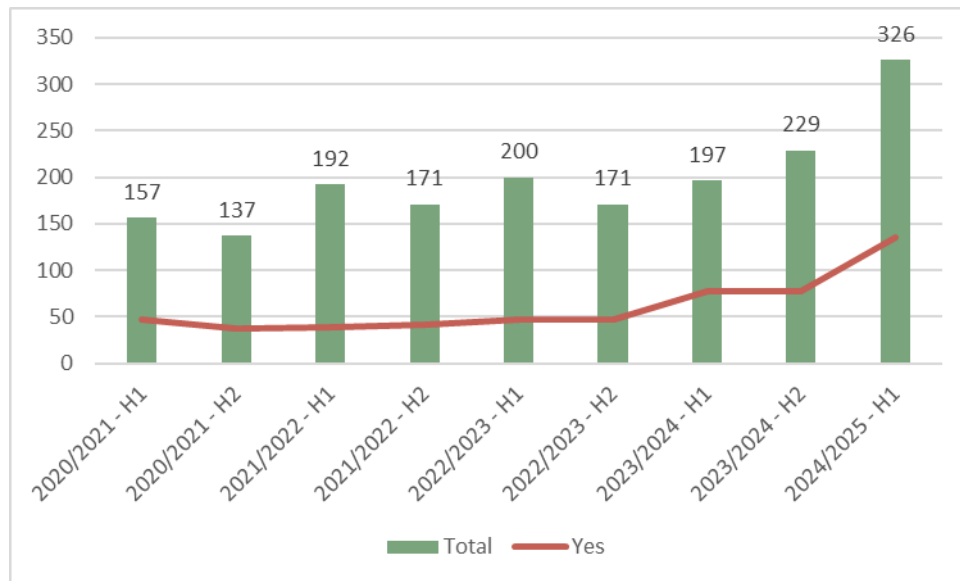
- Once the officer responsible for responding to a complaint has undertaken the appropriate investigation they will determine if the complaint was fully upheld, partially upheld, or not upheld. In writing the response they clearly state the outcome and record this within the ESB system.
- It is important to note that sometimes customers are unhappy with a decision or process but upon investigation it is found that the council has acted appropriately, and these complaints are not upheld.
- Often complaints contain more than 1 issue, complaints partially upheld are where some of the issues raised are upheld but others are not
- Complaints that haven't been decided may be addressed after the reporting period and will be included in future reports once their decision process is complete.

**Table 5 (decision status of stage 1 complaints)**

Complaints Upheld	Complaints Partially Upheld	Complaints Not Upheld	Complaints not decided
136	83	81	17
<i>*2 complaints were suspended and 9 were withdrawn from the process</i>			

On further examination of our data over a period of 4 years, we observed that while the number of complaints at Stage 1 has increased significantly, the number of upheld complaints has remained consistent, with most periods having over 90% of complaints upheld or partially upheld. The average percentage of upheld complaints over the previous 4 years is 94% (chart 7). This indicates that we are open to accepting when we have got something wrong and looking to learn and improve.

**Chart 9 – Stage 1 complaints upheld**



### 3.6 What have we learned?

Analysis of customer feedback enables us to identify and tackle specific issues:

Table 6 provides examples of actions taken to improve services as a result of customer complaints. These examples offer a snapshot of our efforts to enhance our services by learning from customer feedback, the majority of complaints upheld have some recorded learning and improvement logged.

**Table 6 (Lessons learned)**

Area of concern	Action taken to improve
<b>Administrative Services</b>	
<p>The customer is unhappy with communications regarding the termination of their garage tenancy. Communication was delayed by the request being directed incorrectly to the repairs team, causing a further rental payment to be deducted by direct debit.</p>	<p>We have reviewed and updated the Termination of a Garage Tenancy form to ensure the terms and conditions in relation to dates and times are clear. We will also endeavour to address terminations in a timely manner.</p>
<b>Environmental Services</b>	
<p>The customer was locked in a park while walking their dog. They were unable to contact staff by phone. Signage stating times for opening /closing or park gates was missing from the entrance used.</p>	<p>Town Council run park - The contractor in charge of locking the gates was contacted in this instance and we will contact the Town Council and recommend they review their information signs and ensure they are located at all entrances to the park with clear opening hours and contact information. Officer also left contact details for future issues.</p>
<p>Early morning noise complaint during glass recycling bin round.</p>	<p>Investigate practicalities to varying round start points to minimise noise issues for properties on this route. Officer left contact details for future reference.</p>
<b>Public Protection</b>	
<p>The customer waited 4 months from first communication to renew a personal licence, despite making payment and regularly chasing this up via calls and email.</p>	<p>New Licensing Support Officer is now in post, this should improve both communications and waiting times for Licensing requests and renewals</p>
<b>Housing &amp; Estates Management</b>	
<p>Inconsiderate parking causing access and safety issues around the Clipstone Village Community Centre.</p> <p>The customer felt harassed and distressed by the responses received when asking individuals to move their vehicles to enable access and now feel that they will have to involve the police if this continues.</p>	<p>Groups using community centre have been spoken to about inconsiderate parking.</p>

Area of concern	Action taken to improve
<b>Housing Maintenance &amp; Asset Management</b>	
<p>Faulty outdoor light flashing into customers bedroom and living room windows for several weeks, customer has to close curtains. Several reports made of this issue by complainant and other residents.</p>	<p>Follow up works completed outside of target timescales, this has been discussed with both the Works Planning and Trade Supervisor team meetings to look at ways in which we can better monitor and ensure follow up works are raised and completed within target.</p>
<b>Revenues &amp; Benefits</b>	
<p>Council tax demands were received after the customer had made payment. The customer used an incorrect reference number during bank transfer and the payment did not reach the intended destination.</p>	<p>The payment was located in suspense account and allocated to the customer's account. Officers reminded that a suppression should be put on accounts where the customer claims payment has been made and this is sent to Finance for payment to be traced. This will stop any reminders being issued unnecessarily.</p>

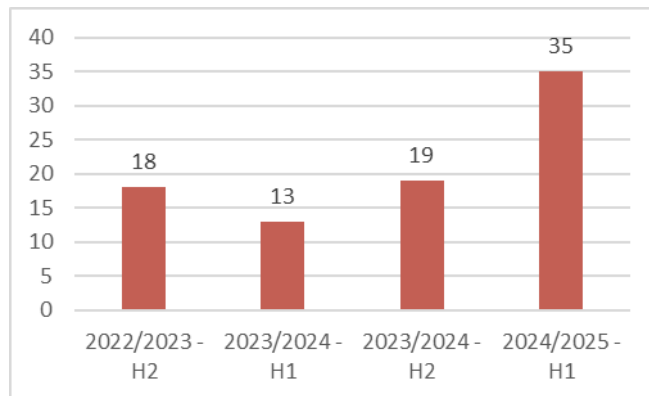
#### 4. Complaints - Stage 2

It is important to pay particular attention to Stage 2 complaints, this is where a customer remains unsatisfied with the response that they have received at Stage 1. By reviewing these in some detail we are able to learn and improve both in terms of direct service delivery and the approach to the initial response.

This is also the opportunity to do a deep dive into some complaints to see how effectively and efficiently we deal with them. It should be remembered that the number of complaints we receive is proportionally very small compared to the number of services and transactions we deliver.

The number of stage 1 complaints escalated to stage 2 has increased significantly with 35 complaints received for Half 1. This is an increase of 84% when compared to the same period in 2023/24.

Chart 10 (2-Year trend) - half years



Of the 35 stage 2 complaints received in the period, 12 were upheld with a further 6 being partially upheld

Table 7 (Stage 2 Complaints)

Complaints Upheld	Complaints Partially Upheld	Complaints Not Upheld	Complaints not decided/in progress
12	6	15	2

Of the 33 complaints processed during Half 1, 76% met the response deadline of 15 working days. Two further complaints are in progress or not decided.

Table 8 – All Stage 2 complaints received in Half 1 2024-2025

Service Area	Nature of complaint	Category	Outcome at Stage 1	Reason not resolved at Stage 1	Outcome at Stage 2	Lessons learned
Community Relations (5621376)	Unhappy with road closures due to Tour of Brittain, impact on ability to get in and out of his property and lack of information on road closures.	Council Policy - Impact of road closures due to TOB	Not upheld	Customer dissatisfied	Not upheld	Complainant invited to give views in relation to the planning of any future events involving road closures.
Housing Assets - Originally allocated to Corporate Property at stage 1 (5470724)	Repairs not actioned on new build council house.	Assets- delay	Not upheld	Not all elements of the complaint responded to in stage 1	Upheld	The handoff between corporate property and repairs new build council houses (less than 1yr old) was not in place. This has since been rectified.
Council Tax (5455345)	Council tax arrears collection spanning a number of years	Council process	Not upheld	Customer dissatisfied with response	Not upheld	All attachments to the account were correctly applied.
Council Tax (5510231)	Informed Council Tax dept in April that complainant was leaving the property on 30 May but was still billed for the whole year. Then told council tax again that was leaving, and customer requested a bill up to the leaving date. Subsequently received another bill which had the new address on (out of the district), unhappy how you obtained the new address.	Council process	Partially upheld	Customer dissatisfied with response, queries the amount due and requests full breakdown.	Partially upheld	Bills should not be addressed to the new address until the date of occupancy, whether sent by post or email. All staff advised.
Council Tax (5511199)	The complainant was a landlord and was unhappy they were issued with a council tax bill as they were not liable the tenant was. The tenant had informed the council they were leaving on x date, but the council	Council process	Not upheld	Customer dissatisfied, not all elements of the complaint had been addressed in	Upheld	Amend procedure so that council tax bills and due dates are not issued/set in advance of actual liability commencement date - specifically with regard to landlord liability.

Table 8 – All Stage 2 complaints received in Half 1 2024-2025

Service Area	Nature of complaint	Category	Outcome at Stage 1	Reason not resolved at Stage 1	Outcome at Stage 2	Lessons learned
	issued the bill to the landlord before this date. The Landlord queried how they could issue a bill before the tenant had left, as there was no agreement that the tenant would actually leave on this date. At stage 2 it became apparent the tenant hadn't left on the date advised to council tax but a month later.			stage 1 response.		
Council Tax (5569865)	Recovery action taken when bill was in dispute, online form for single persons discount didn't explain what documents needed to be provided, bailiffs chasing for money not owed.	Council tax – council process	Partially upheld	Customer dissatisfied. A number of points in the complaint not addressed.	Partially upheld	Review the SPD online form to provide information on what evidence is required for a backdated claim.
Customer Services (5531019)	Made an overpayment on son's council tax account and was unhappy with the amount of visits it took to obtain a refund.	Council process	Upheld	Customer dissatisfied	Not upheld	Reminder to the team how important it is to raise urgent refund or finance issues. Noted that anyone can pay on someone else's account but need account holder's permission to refund.
Democratic Services (5441359)	Southwell Leisure Centre – how the petition was dealt with	Communication	Not upheld	Did not answer all elements of the original complaint	Not upheld	
Environmental Health (5436177)	Neighbour dispute re high hedges	Communication	Partially upheld	Customer dissatisfied with response	Not upheld	Where there is a difficult and ongoing issue, communication in addition to a standard notification should be undertaken.
Heritage and Culture *(5515134, 5527328 and 5527293)	During a show interval a male dressed as a female was using the female toilets	Council process and staff conduct	Not upheld	Customer dissatisfied with response	Partially upheld	Improved signage and opening of gender-neutral toilets at all times the building is in use



Table 8 – All Stage 2 complaints received in Half 1 2024-2025

Service Area	Nature of complaint	Category	Outcome at Stage 1	Reason not resolved at Stage 1	Outcome at Stage 2	Lessons learned
Housing Assets (5532100)	Complainant moved into property over a year ago and has not been able to decorate as structural repairs were needed which were highlighted before moving in. The tenancy officer promised that the works would be fully completed before the tenant moved in. The tenant now needs to move to another property while damp works, and other works are completed.	Repairs – delay	Partially upheld	Customer dissatisfied with response	Upheld	The process for responding to structural works has changed recently if this issue would have been raised now the complaint would not have happened. Complex damp cases are referred to the Asset team for investigation and to coordinate 1 contractor to complete all works.
Housing Assets (5333483)	Tenant was promised that pointing and repairs to brick work would be undertaken prior to a flat roof being installed. This was not done. Water quality issue which seven Trent has said is a council responsibility to replace a lead pipe and have a separate water feed into the kitchen. Lack of communication.	Repairs delay	Upheld	Customer dissatisfied some elements of complaint not addressed at stage 1. No date for the work to be undertaken	Partially upheld	Assumptions were made with regards to what works our contractor were contracted to do as part of the contract. Better communication and contractor management is being addressed by the Assets team.
Housing income and leasehold mgmt. (5506534)	When leaving a council property was advised by tenancy officer is now being charged far more for removal of items than promised.	Council process – dispute on recharge for void works	Not upheld	Customer dissatisfied and is adamant that the tenancy officer did advise a lower amount for removing belongings.	Upheld	All recharge costs and works descriptions will be provided in writing to increase transparency and minimise misunderstanding. This will be incorporated into the Recharge Policy
Housing income and leasehold mgmt. (5518068)	Personal items including floor covering damaged during repair. Repeated attempts to get someone to update complainant about the insurance claim	Communication – lack of updates	Upheld	Customer dissatisfied as claim has been going on too long and believes this is deliberate	Not upheld	Reminder to all officers involved with the complainant to respond to his requests for contact and ensure regular feedback is given even if there is no update on his claim (insurance team)

Table 8 – All Stage 2 complaints received in Half 1 2024-2025

Service Area	Nature of complaint	Category	Outcome at Stage 1	Reason not resolved at Stage 1	Outcome at Stage 2	Lessons learned
Housing Repairs (5473013)	Damp in kitchen for a year that requires external pointing/ rendering repair but operative attended to patch up internally only. Decoration and floor now ruined. Also fence at front directly on to road blown down, was told would be repaired but now past that date and it has not been completed.	Repairs -delay	Upheld	Customer dissatisfied – poor workmanship to repairs, poor quality fence replacement, not given notice of appointments damage to floor covering.	Upheld	It was acknowledged that the length of time taken to complete repairs and lack of communication with tenant were an issue, this is being addressed internally.
Housing repairs (5351600)	Ceiling leaking water, bedroom window issue – both causing damp and mould. Reported as a repair but its taking too long.	Repairs delay	Partially upheld	Some of the work agreed in stage 1 not undertaken	Partially upheld	Acknowledged and is being addressed internally.
Housing Repairs (5499061)	Leaking flat roof – workers attended but had not identified or solved the issue. Also repointing/ repair to brickwork not undertaken. They had attended but not done any works.	Repair – standard of work	Upheld	Customer dissatisfied as work promised in stage 1 response not undertaken	Upheld	At stage 1 it was identified that better descriptions of the work required and follow up details were needed from trade operatives. Better investigation into repairs history and warranty. Addressed with the team.
Housing Repairs (5405411)	Roof leak was not repaired when reported and this has led to damp and mould issues.	Repairs -delay	Upheld	Customer still had not had the repair undertaken	Upheld	The new works orders were put into the wrong category – they should have been set as ‘urgent’. Addressed with the team.
Housing Repairs (5494768)	Community facility – hot water has not worked for 6 months and toilets haven’t worked for 2 months	Repairs delay	Upheld	Customer dissatisfied with response.	Upheld	Ensure there is a triage for repairs requests based on information obtained and urgency to make sure they are prioritised accordingly and in line with our priority guidelines. Repairs call takers to ensure relevant questions are asked

Table 8 – All Stage 2 complaints received in Half 1 2024-2025

Service Area	Nature of complaint	Category	Outcome at Stage 1	Reason not resolved at Stage 1	Outcome at Stage 2	Lessons learned
						when receiving calls so that accurate information can be recorded. Being addressed with relevant teams.
Housing Repairs (5555500)	Waiting 18 months for a repair, when received a call about arranging for a plasterer to attend, they hadn't been told about the surveys and the extent of the damage.	Repairs -delay	Partially upheld	Customer dissatisfied with the poor information they have received and the need to now decant to an alternative property.	Upheld	We have added into the process adding a flag to capita when structural monitoring/works are in progress so that we don't raise repairs without first speaking to the asset surveyor who manages the structural works.
Housing Repairs (5520200)	Damage to his property (private owned) whilst roof works were being undertaken on a neighbouring council owned property	Contractor – quality of work	Partially upheld	Customer dissatisfied – Response not accurate and remedial works promised not undertaken	Upheld	The council's roofing contractor did make a mistake and will rectify the issues.
Housing Repairs (5518625)	New heating system had led to pipes banging, low water pressure. Repeated visits have left floorboards broken, damage to floor coverings, leaks from radiators and the problem remains.	Repairs -Quality of work	Upheld	Customer dissatisfied; appointments promised in stage 1 did not take place	Partially upheld	Examine a solution to centralise information and communication when works crossover through multiple teams.
Housing repairs (5605754)	Cracks throughout the house and problems with heating system and drains despite a number of visits from trades.	Repairs - Quality of work	Upheld	Customer dissatisfied with level of compensation offered	Partially upheld	Poor service received across multiple repairs to be addressed with relevant teams/contractor.
Housing Repairs (5455138)	Continuous mould issues in the bathroom spreading through the property.	Repairs delay	Partially upheld	Customer dissatisfied with response and	Partially upheld	Engagement with the tenancy officer is required where this property had a large volume of

Table 8 – All Stage 2 complaints received in Half 1 2024-2025

Service Area	Nature of complaint	Category	Outcome at Stage 1	Reason not resolved at Stage 1	Outcome at Stage 2	Lessons learned
				requests compensation for delay		possessions and was not ventilated appropriately therefore contributing to the issue.
Planning Development (5471005)	Planning didn't follow due process, including consultation, in relation to a neighbour's planning application	Council process	Not upheld	Customer dissatisfied with response	Not upheld	Process was followed appropriately
Planning development (5494994)	Customer did not get written notification of a planning application nor were any public notices put in her cul-de-sac. Although development on a different road, the extension will run alongside her garden. As customer didn't know about the planning application, she could not object and the time limit for objections has now gone. The development will impact on her privacy.	Council process	Not Upheld	Customer dissatisfied with response	Not Upheld	Process was followed and all required notifications sent.
Planning Development (5528734)	The way a planning application was dealt with, lack of response to an email.	Planning process	Partially upheld	Customer dissatisfied	Not upheld	Process followed appropriately – no change required.
Planning Development (5563488)	Planning process not properly applied. Drainage elements at church car park not taken into account.	Council process	Not upheld	Customer dissatisfied with response	Not upheld	Process followed appropriately – no change required.
Planning Development (5397540)	Neighbour shed overhanging property. Officers who visited did not do their job and didn't respond to update requests.	Officer conduct and poor communication	Partially upheld	Customer dissatisfied	Not upheld	Communication from officers to members of the public to be improved - officer training.
Planning Development (5613382)	Unhappy with planning officers not taking into account the impact of a planning application as they had not	Council process - Planning	Not upheld	Customer dissatisfied	Not upheld	Case Officers and the wider planning team have been reminded to always put

Table 8 – All Stage 2 complaints received in Half 1 2024-2025

Service Area	Nature of complaint	Category	Outcome at Stage 1	Reason not resolved at Stage 1	Outcome at Stage 2	Lessons learned
	visited them (the neighbouring property).					themselves in a neighbours' shoes when it comes to requests to view a proposed development site from their perspective. If a site visit is requested, we should try and accommodate.
Public Protection (5619478)	Damage caused to doors and windows as part of the closure notice.	Contractor – quality of work	Not upheld	Customer dissatisfied – does not agree with the answers given	Not upheld	Complaint not upheld; decision made by council's insurance company
Public Protection (5615333)	Neighbour – noisy exhaust. Council says it's the police, the police say it's the council. Lack of response by council.	Communication -Lack of response	Not upheld	Customer dissatisfied	Not upheld	This is a police responsibility.
Waste and Recycling (5526448)	Repeated missed bin collection	Missed Bin	Upheld	Customer dissatisfied. Bins continue to be missed.	Upheld	New Operational process now in place.

\*3

*complaints received from one customer were amalgamated and dealt with collectively as one stage 2 complaint.*

## 5. Ombudsman Complaints

Each Ombudsman produces Annual Review Letters detailing how many complaints they have received for individual councils and how many decisions they have made. These are reported to the Audit and Governance Committee. Table 11 below summarises the number of complaints received by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) for the previous 4 years.

**Table 9 (LGSC Ombudsman complaints decisions)**

Year	Decided by the LGSCO	Number Upheld
April 2023 – March 2024	9	0
April 2022 – March 2023	9	0
April 2021 – March 2022	12	0
April 2020 - March 2021	11	1

None of the complaints decided were upheld the by LGSCO throughout 2021 - 2023. This is testament to the detailed responses to the complaints submitted to the Council and our commitment to putting right anything we got wrong.

The received and decided figures are different due to several reasons including:

- The complaint may have been received during 2022 - 2023 but a decision made in 2023 - 2024 (or even later) and therefore the complaint will show in a later year's report.
- The complaint did not relate to a service provided by us e.g., highways.
- The complaint was classed as premature

The LGSCO have published two good practice guides aimed at helping authorities to get things right before cases are escalated:

- Appendix 1. [Section 117 Aftercare guidance \(lgo.org.uk\)](http://lgo.org.uk)
- Appendix 2. [Guidance for practitioners: Deprivation of Capital \(lgo.org.uk\)](http://lgo.org.uk)

The Housing Ombudsman outcomes for the past 3 years are shown in Table 12. Figures for 2023/24 are expected to be published in November 2024 and reported in the 2024/25 (Half 2) Customer Feedback report

**Table 10 (Housing Ombudsman complaints decisions)**

Year	Decided by the HO	Number Upheld
April 2022 – March 2023	1	0
April 2021 – March 2022	1	0
April 2020 - March 2021	1	0

## 6. Suggestions

In the period, 23 suggestions were initially received. On examination, 10 suggestions were considered to be service requests and 1 was a complaint (Table 11). Four further suggestions were subsequently withdrawn. A sample of suggestions received are shown below.

**Table 11 (Suggestions)**

Suggestion	Outcome
<b>Revenues &amp; Benefits</b>	
<p>Suggestion that names of individuals exempt from council tax due to Severe Mental Impairment (SMI) should still appear on their bill. Customer feels dehumanised by this and would like his name to appear on the bill, albeit, marked as exempt. This would also allow him to use the bill as proof of address'</p>	<p>At present it is not a legal requirement to show the name(s) of the disregarded persons on the bill giving rise to the discount, and in certain circumstances, may not be practical however the software provider will be consulted to see if this is something that could be accommodated in the future.</p>
<b>Corporate Property</b>	
<p>Free short stay parking time removed from Southwell car parks, customer feels that people popping to the shops for a few minutes should not have to pay these charges and suggests that the free parking time be reinstated</p>	<p>The car park referred to is externally managed, the comments and suggestions have been forwarded to Southwell Town Council to review how to make the user experience better.</p>
<b>Environmental Services</b>	
<p>Sherwood Avenue play zone facilities We have paid our first of many visits. Great upgrade just a few points I would adjust... Needs more places to sit only 3 benches for the whole park area. Also add some more older children swings, you could add them on grass near the zip line."</p>	<p>Thank you for the feedback, we're delighted that you've enjoyed your visit to see some of the new facilities. At this time, we have installed the zip-wire and the new children's play area, but there is still much more to come – a new skatepark, water feature, active zone, and nature area. More benches and seating areas will be installed as part of those developments</p>
<p>I tried to use the QR code on the new glass recycling to determine when the glass would be collected. Instead I get sent to generic page on what can and can't be recycled. The most helpful info for the most people would be to state when the glass recycling is collected</p>	<p>The link on the QR code should take you to a page that has a link to sign up for bin reminders. you would need to confirm your address so that the calendar draws the correct information. When I checked your address, there was no glass round linked to it so I have updated our records and uploaded the new calendar which should now show the collections. I recommend to everyone to sign up for the bin reminders as collections are every 8 weeks and it is easy to forget.</p>
<b>Customer Services</b>	
<p>I have just submitted an on-line compliment regarding your refuse collection. I found it would be much simpler to make a complaint than to find a way to say something positive or make a suggestion. Please consider making it much easier to do this as I nearly gave up. If it was more prominent it may result in people feeling more inclined to say</p>	<p>Thank you for taking the time to submit your feedback about how hard it is to find out how to leave us a compliment. We regularly review the content of the website to make sure it is customer friendly, and that information is easy to find, so your comments are particularly helpful. We recently updated our feedback pages to bring them into line with the latest legislation, which puts the emphasis on to how to raise a grievance or complain. It is important that our</p>

<p>something nice and viewing the council in a more positive light. I'm sure you do some statistics on complaints, and this may reduce the numbers if people made suggestions rather than complaints. Thank you.</p>	<p>residents are able to tell us about issues easily. However, it is still important for us to receive praise, as we do also need to know when we are getting it right! We have used the word 'compliments,' but this did lead to some confusion with 'complaints'. We do want to make it as easy as possible for residents to submit comments, either positive or negative, so we will take your comments on board. thank you again for contacting us.</p>
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## 7. Praise (Compliments)

Compliments can help us identify what our customers' value and highlight good practice. This includes compliments to the Council by a customer relating to the quality of service provided by individual staff members or service teams. On a few occasions, customer have submitted a compliment instead of a complaint, to prevent confusion we have amended the wording to Praise

*I went to the council office on 27th September with a problem with my council tax. I was very stressed and scared to go to the office. It made me have anxiety. I would like to thank the receptionist who listened carefully to my explanation of the problem. And the second person, Laura, she listened, solved the problem, and helped me to use the computer to pay my tax. In the future, I will have to go to the office again. I hope that I will be greeted with a smile and have the patience to listen as this time.  
I thank you from the bottom of my heart.*

**Table 12 (praise by BU)**





Table 13 (Praise Themes)

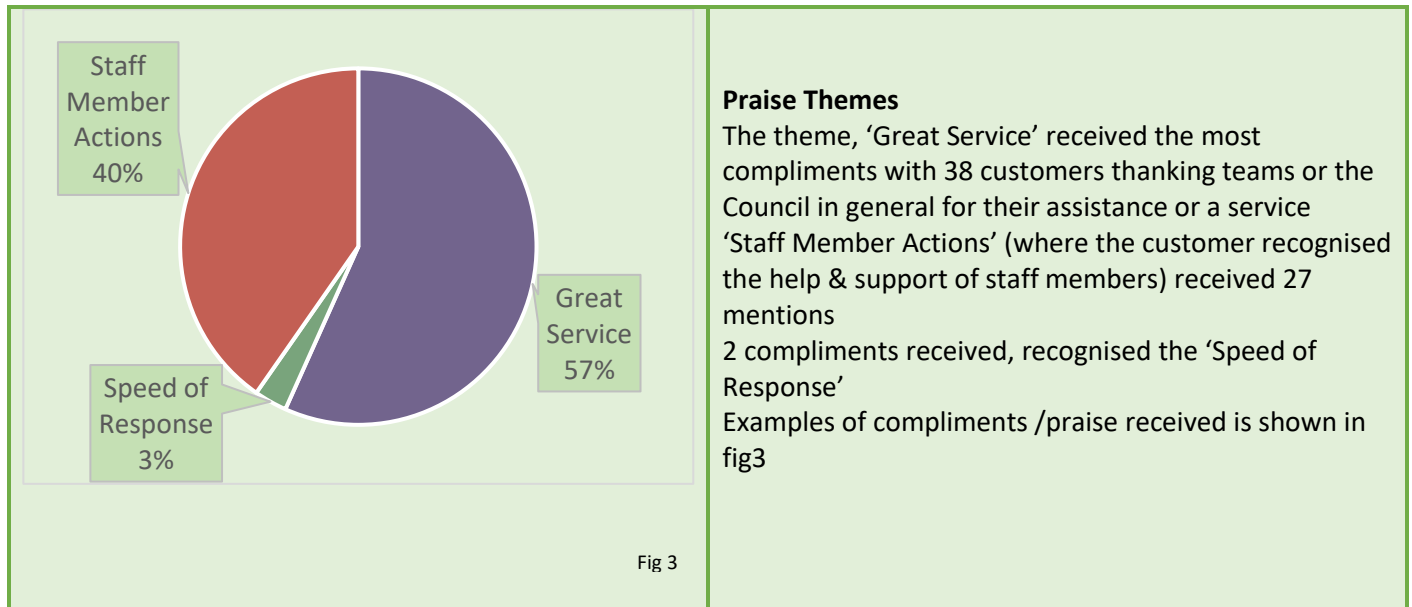

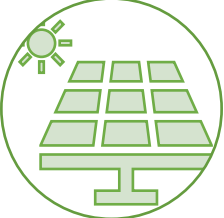





Fig 3

**Compliments Examples**

 <p>I wanted to pass on compliments for a number of staff working at Castle House. I attended to support someone presenting as homeless and was met with the kindest female staff member who completed the triage. All staff on the front desk were incredibly helpful.</p>	 <p>Thank you for the speed &amp; efficiency in granting a Lawful Development Certificate. The process took much less time than we expected &amp; we are grateful for your efficiency in allowing us to go ahead with the installation of our 16 solar panels.</p>	 <p>Just wanted to drop a note to highlight how lovely the three chaps that do the refuse collection around the Middlebeck estate on Fridays are. They've always got a smile and a wave for the children (and adults), my kids love 'bin day'!</p>	 <p>I just wanted to say we had a lovely chap come out on Friday to repair a dripping issue with the shower. Nothing was too much trouble for him. it's nice to see someone who cares about doing a good job! A credit to NSDC</p>	 <p>I'd like to leave a compliment to the waste recycling staff who collected my mattress this morning. I'd forgotten about the collection and the mattress was in the garage. They were kind enough to come and fetch it out for me. Thank you so much,</p>
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**8. Putting it Right**

Compensation is considered to be a remedy for inconvenience or distress caused by a service failure within the Council's social housing, and claims will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The amount of compensation paid will reflect the level of inconvenience, disturbance and distress caused by not getting things right sooner and the extent to which the Council is solely responsible. The Council will also take into account, the time taken to resolve the problem and whether this was excessive.

Twenty one claims were awarded compensation in the period 01 April – 30 September (Half 1 2024/25) amounting to a total of £11,765; Chart 13 shows the number of awards to each category and percentage of the total awards. Table 16 displays the costs awarded in each category in comparison to the same period in 2023/24

Chart 11 (Categories %)

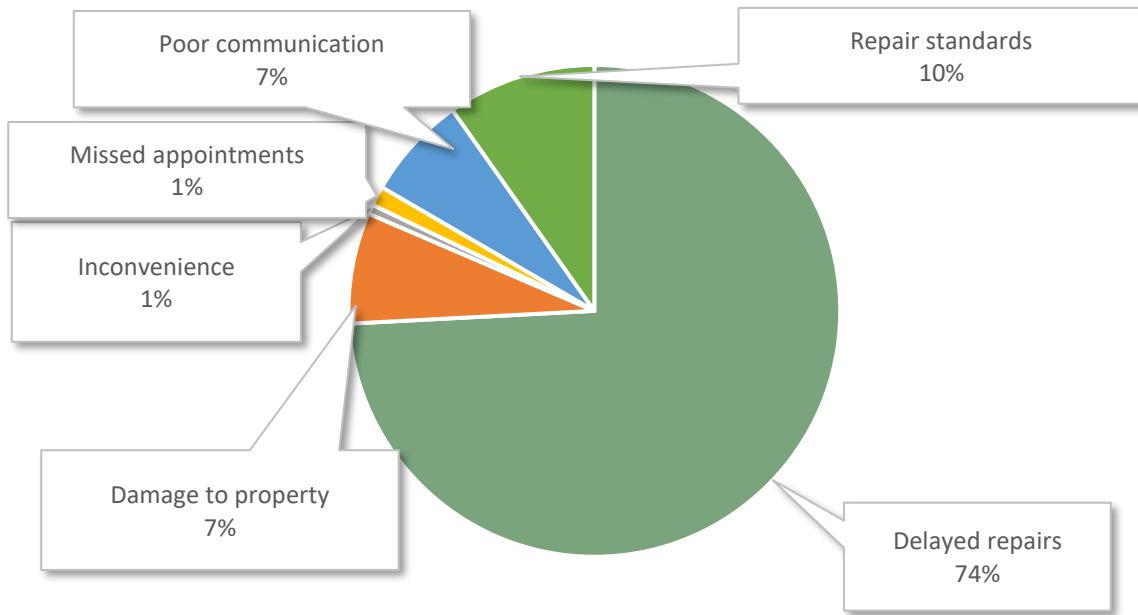


Table 14 (Cost by category)

Category of Complaint	Half 1 2023/24	Half 1 2024/25
Damage to property	£531.88	£858.98
Damp/Mould/Leaks	£709.15	
Delayed repairs/Works	£15,294.13	£8,725.63
Goodwill	£200.00	
Inconvenience	£2,707.57	£73.88
loss of income	£100.00	
Missed appointments	£172.00	£152.00
Poor communication	£801.90	£801.90
Poor service (Contractor)	£608.66	
Rent recovery	£80.85	
Repair Standards	£925.00	£1,152.11
Delay in Services	£50.00	
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>£22,181.14</b>	<b>£11,764.50</b>

Table 14 provides a comparison of compensation costs between the same periods in 2023/24 and 2024/25. Notably, costs have decreased by 47% in the first half of 2024/25. This reduction highlights the effectiveness of ongoing efforts to enhance services and address complaints more promptly.