



**North East  
Derbyshire**  
District Council

# Complaint Performance and Service Improvement Report for Housing 2025/26

## Contents

|                                              |    |
|----------------------------------------------|----|
| 1. Introduction .....                        | 3  |
| 2. Key Performance Data .....                | 4  |
| 2.1 Year-on-year Complaint Performance ..... | 5  |
| 2.2 Complaints by Service Area .....         | 5  |
| 2.3 Tenant Satisfaction Measures.....        | 6  |
| 3. Housing Ombudsman Service Activity.....   | 7  |
| 4. Compensation and Redress .....            | 8  |
| 5. Learning and Service Improvements .....   | 9  |
| 6. Communication and Publication .....       | 10 |
| 7. Reporting Procedures.....                 | 10 |
| 8. Equality and Diversity .....              | 11 |
| 9. Conclusion .....                          | 11 |

# 1. Introduction

From 1 April 2024, the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 gave the Housing Ombudsman Service new powers. This includes a legal Complaint Handling Code and a duty to check that landlords follow it.

The [Complaint Handling Code](#) means all members of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme are legally required to follow its requirements.

The Housing Ombudsman Service checks whether landlords' complaints policies and responses meet the Code.

Each year, landlords must check their complaints policy and practice against the Code. The latest [Complaint Handling Code self-assessment](#) is available on the Council's website.

Rykneld Homes, as the Housing Management Company, manages tenant complaints for the Council. It does this under its [Complaints Policy and Procedures](#), which follow the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.

A complaint is recorded when a customer is unhappy with how a service request has been handled, even if the original request is still being dealt with.

The Code says landlords must have a two-stage complaints process. They must not use informal stages or add extra stages.

This report reviews housing complaints for 2025/26. It covers complaint numbers, outcomes, response times, Housing Ombudsman cases, compensation, tenant satisfaction, learning and service improvements.

## **Difference between a Service Request and a Complaint**

The Council and Rykneld Homes have adopted the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints definition as follows:

### **A Service Request is defined as:**

*'A service request is a request from the resident to the landlord requiring action to be taken to put something right. Service requests are not complaints but must be recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly.'*

### **A Complaint is defined as:**

*"An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents."*

## 2. Key Performance Data

| 2025/26 complaints at a glance                       |                                                           |                                                      |                                                           |
|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>111</b><br>Stage 1<br>complaints<br>95 in 2024/25 | <b>23</b><br>Stage 2<br>complaints<br>19% escalation rate | <b>9</b><br>Ombudsman<br>escalations<br>4 in 2024/25 | <b>£13,425</b><br>Compensation<br>paid<br>Across 26 cases |

**Summary:** The number of Stage 1 complaints increased to 111 in 2025/26, compared with 95 the previous year. There were 23 Stage 2 complaints, giving a 19% escalation rate, and 9 complaints were escalated to the Housing Ombudsman Service. Compensation paid totalled £13,425 across 26 cases.

| Response times in 2025/26                                         |                                                           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Stage 1</b><br><b>100%</b> responded to within Code timescales | <b>Stage 2</b><br><b>82.6%</b> responded to within target |

**Summary:** Response performance remained strong at Stage 1, with 100% of complaints answered within Code timescales. Stage 2 performance was lower at 82.6%, which shows this remains an area for continued monitoring and improvement during 2026/27.

| 3-year complaint trend at a glance |           |           |                                   |
|------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------------------------------|
| Measure                            | 2023/24   | 2024/25   | 2025/26                           |
| Stage 1 complaints                 | <b>51</b> | <b>95</b> | <b>111</b><br>Continued increase  |
| Stage 2 complaints                 | <b>11</b> | <b>28</b> | <b>23</b><br>Reduced from 2024/25 |
| Ombudsman escalations              | <b>2</b>  | <b>4</b>  | <b>9</b><br>Increased referrals   |

**Summary:** The 3-year trend shows a clear increase in Stage 1 complaints, rising from 51 in 2023/24 to 111 in 2025/26. Stage 2 complaints reduced in 2025/26 after increasing the previous year, which suggests fewer customers escalated their complaint beyond the first stage. However, referrals to the Housing Ombudsman continued to rise, increasing from 2 in 2023/24 to 9 in 2025/26.

## 2.1 Year-on-year Complaint Performance

| Measure                                     | 2025/26      | 2024/25 comparator | 2023/24 comparator |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Stage 1 complaints received                 | <b>111</b>   | 95                 | 51                 |
| Stage 1 upheld                              | <b>81</b>    | 64                 | 36                 |
| Stage 2 complaints received                 | <b>23</b>    | 28                 | 11                 |
| Escalation rate                             | <b>19%</b>   | 29%                | 22%                |
| Stage 1 responded to within Code timescales | <b>100%</b>  | 100%               | 100%               |
| Stage 2 responded to within Code timescales | <b>82.6%</b> | 96.4%              | 100%               |

**Summary:** The data compares key complaint performance for 2025/26 with 2024/25 and 2023/24, where figures are available. Stage 1 complaints continued to increase in 2025/26, rising to 111 compared with 95 in 2024/25 and 51 in 2023/24. However, fewer complaints progressed to Stage 2 than in the previous year, with the escalation rate falling from 29% to 19%. Stage 1 response performance remained strong at 100%, but Stage 2 response performance reduced to 82.6%, so this will remain an area for monitoring in 2026/27.

### National Comparison

Nationally, social landlords are receiving more complaints and more cases are going to the Housing Ombudsman. In 2024/25, the Ombudsman reported a 30% rise in decisions and a 43% rise in repairs complaints. This is similar to the local picture, where Stage 1 complaints and Ombudsman escalations have both increased.

Housemark's early 2025/26 data shows complaint-handling satisfaction rose by 1.5 percentage points to 37%, while 97% to 98% of complaints were resolved within target timescales. This highlights that timely responses alone are not enough; clear communication, learning and visible service improvement are also needed to improve resident confidence.

## 2.2 Complaints by Service Area

| Stage 1 complaints by service area 2025/26 |        |            |           |           |
|--------------------------------------------|--------|------------|-----------|-----------|
| Service area                               | Upheld | Not upheld | Cancelled | Total     |
| Repairs                                    | 37     | 8          | 0         | <b>45</b> |
| Damp                                       | 17     | 4          | 0         | <b>21</b> |

|                        |           |           |          |            |
|------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------|------------|
| Multiple Service Areas | 13        | 6         | 0        | <b>19</b>  |
| Housing                | 7         | 5         | 0        | <b>12</b>  |
| ASB                    | 2         | 6         | 1        | <b>9</b>   |
| Other                  | 5         | 0         | 0        | <b>5</b>   |
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>81</b> | <b>29</b> | <b>1</b> | <b>111</b> |

**Summary:** Repairs accounted for the highest number of Stage 1 complaints in 2025/26, with 45 complaints recorded. Damp was the second highest area with 21 complaints, followed by Multiple Service Areas with 19 complaints and Housing with 12 complaints. These areas account for most complaints and will remain key priorities for learning, monitoring and service improvement in 2026/27.

## 2.3 Tenant Satisfaction Measures

| Tenant Satisfaction Measures at a glance                         |                                          |                                                               |                                                          |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>42.6%</b><br>Complaint<br>handling<br>satisfaction<br>2025/26 | <b>43.6%</b><br>Previous year<br>2024/25 | <b>37%</b><br>Housemark<br>average<br>Early 2025/26 reporting | <b>100%</b><br>Stage 1 within<br>Code timescales<br>CH02 |

**Summary:** Complaint handling satisfaction was 42.6% in 2025/26, slightly below the previous year's result of 43.6%, but still above the early 2025/26 Housemark average of 37%. Stage 1 complaint handling remained strong, with 100% of complaints responded to within Code timescales.

Satisfaction with complaint handling is reported through the Tenant Satisfaction Measures survey.

The full Tenant Satisfaction Measures results can be viewed on [Rykneld Homes Limited's](#) website.

The complaint handling measures are CH01 and CH02. They show how many complaints were received for every 1,000 homes and how many were answered within the Housing Ombudsman's timescales.

The following table shows the 2025/26 results. The measures follow the Regulator of Social Housing's Tenant Satisfaction Measures.

| Tenant Satisfaction Measures summary 2025/26                 |                              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Tenant Satisfaction Measure                                  | Year-end performance 2025/26 |
| CH01: Stage 1 complaints received per 1,000 homes            | <b>14.7</b>                  |
| CH01: Stage 2 complaints received per 1,000 homes            | <b>3.00</b>                  |
| CH02: Stage 1 complaints responded to within Code timescales | <b>100%</b>                  |
| CH02: Stage 2 complaints responded to within Code timescales | <b>82.6%</b>                 |

**Summary:** The Tenant Satisfaction Measures show that Stage 1 complaint handling remained strong, with 100% of complaints responded to within Code timescales. Stage 2 response performance was lower at 82.6%, which mirrors the wider complaint performance data and will continue to be monitored. Complaint handling satisfaction was 42.6%, slightly below the previous year but still above the early 2025/26 Housemark average.

### 3. Housing Ombudsman Service Activity

| Housing Ombudsman activity at a glance        |                                                                    |                                                           |                                                                 |                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>9</b><br><b>Escalated cases</b><br>2025/26 | <b>4</b><br><b>Pre-Ombudsman enquiries</b><br>Information provided | <b>5</b><br><b>Full enquiries</b><br>Information provided | <b>8</b><br><b>Open at year end</b><br>Still with the Ombudsman | <b>1</b><br><b>Maladministration finding</b><br>Compensation ordered |

In 2025/26, 9 complaints were escalated to the Housing Ombudsman Service. Rykneld Homes provided information for these cases. 4 were at Pre-Ombudsman enquiry stage and 5 were full enquiries.

Maladministration was found in one complaint which resulted in an apology to the customer, an order of works to their home and an award of compensation to the amount of £749.19. This was broken down into £439.19 for loss of enjoyment of a room and £300 for inconvenience and distress.

Of the 9 complaints escalated to the Housing Ombudsman Service in 2025/26, 8 remained open at year end, as summarised in the following table.

| Open Housing Ombudsman cases at year end |                                                                                                                                                                      |
|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Enquiry type                             | Main issues raised                                                                                                                                                   |
| Pre-Ombudsman enquiry                    | Rykneld Homes' handling of a housing application.                                                                                                                    |
| Pre-Ombudsman enquiry                    | Reports of an ongoing rat infestation and a request to move to a new home.                                                                                           |
| Full enquiry                             | Reports of damp and mould; management of rent arrears; recharges following tenancy termination; and the associated complaint, including the level of redress.        |
| Pre-Ombudsman enquiry                    | Arrears and recharges from the previous property; a housing application; and antisocial behaviour allegations.                                                       |
| Full enquiry                             | Reports of noise disturbance in the property, including requests to transfer due to the ongoing issue; and the handling of the complaint.                            |
| Full enquiry                             | Reports of the property being cold, including draughty windows resulting in increased energy costs; and the complaint and requests for compensation.                 |
| Pre-Ombudsman enquiry                    | Handling of the resident's requests for rehousing and a safeguarding referral.                                                                                       |
| Full enquiry                             | Concerns about the habitability of the property; damage to the property and personal belongings; access to personal items placed in storage; and complaint handling. |

**Summary:** At year end, 8 cases remained open with the Housing Ombudsman Service. The cases covered a range of issues, including housing applications, damp and mould, rent arrears, recharges, noise, heating, safeguarding referrals, property condition and complaint handling. These themes link closely to the wider complaint trends and will continue to inform learning and service improvement work.

## 4. Compensation and Redress

| Compensation and redress at a glance                                     |                                                                         |                                                                          |                                                                        |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>£13,425</b><br><b>Compensation paid</b><br>Across 26 cases in 2025/26 | <b>£16,096.79</b><br><b>Previous year</b><br>Across 29 cases in 2024/25 | <b>£2,671.79</b><br><b>Lower than 2024/25</b><br>Despite more complaints | <b>2025/26</b><br><b>Policy review</b><br>Using new Ombudsman guidance |

**Summary:** Compensation paid in 2025/26 was lower than the previous year, reducing from £16,096.79 across 29 cases to £13,425 across 26 cases. The compensation policy is under review using the Housing Ombudsman's new guidance, helping to ensure redress remains fair, consistent and proportionate.

## 5. Learning and Service Improvements

The Council and Rykneld Homes use complaints to understand what went wrong, how customers were affected and what needs to improve. Learning from complaints is shared with the relevant service area to help get things right first time.

The table shows the main learning from complaints in 2025/26 and the improvements made or are in progress.

| Learning and service improvements 2025/26  |                                                                                                                                                                         |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Theme                                      | Service improvement made or in progress                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Staff training and learning</b>         | Additional staff training delivered on damp and mould and Awaab's Law.                                                                                                  |
| <b>Staff training and learning</b>         | Case Review meetings introduced after upheld complex complaints to identify what went wrong, what could have been done better and what service improvements are needed. |
| <b>Staff training and learning</b>         | Process maps introduced as a visual learning tool, showing the customer impact, resolution and any compensation paid.                                                   |
| <b>Process and procedure changes</b>       | Weekly meetings introduced with the Head of Property Services to review ongoing complaints, trends and recommendations for improvement.                                 |
| <b>Process and procedure changes</b>       | Out of Hours Service Agreement amended following a complaint about a delay in attending a blocked toilet.                                                               |
| <b>Contractor and service improvements</b> | Window cleaning contractor sign-off introduced after each communal block clean, with feedback and spot checks where needed.                                             |
| <b>Process and procedure changes</b>       | Recharge forms and procedures improved so tenants have a clearer opportunity to address rechargeable items before tenancy termination.                                  |
| <b>Customer information</b>                | More detailed solar panel information provided to customers at installation stage.                                                                                      |
| <b>Communication and record keeping</b>    | Communication improved between Asset Investment, Property Services and the Damp Team to ensure                                                                          |

|                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                         | identified works are completed within appropriate timescales.                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Customer information</b>             | Choice Move standard letters updated to explain in advance that waiting time may be removed if an application is suspended.                                                                                                        |
| <b>Communication and record keeping</b> | Further staff training provided on communication and record keeping following a complaint about poor communication on an unresolved damp issue.                                                                                    |
| <b>Complaints process review</b>        | Rykneld Homes Customer Experience Team is reviewing the complaints process to improve ownership, accountability and learning across teams. This includes updating processes and policies and introducing staff training workshops. |

**Summary:** Learning from complaints led to a range of service improvements in 2025/26, including new staff training, case review meetings, improved procedures, clearer customer information and stronger communication between teams. These actions show how complaint learning is being used to improve services, strengthen accountability and reduce the risk of similar issues happening again.

## 6. Communication and Publication

Customers can make a complaint by phone, online, in person or in writing. Complaint information is shared through staff, the Council and Rykneld Homes websites, and social media.

Annual complaints performance will be included in the Rykneld Homes Customer Annual Report and published on the Rykneld Homes website. Satisfaction with complaint handling will also be published as part of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures.

This report will be produced each year and published on the Council's website with the annual Complaint Handling Code self-assessment.

Performance information for complaints referred to the Housing Ombudsman Service is published on the Housing Ombudsman website.

Rykneld Homes' compliance with the Complaint Handling Code will be published on its website.

The Housing Ombudsman Service has reviewed the Complaints Policy. The policy has been updated so it continues to meet the Complaint Handling Code and supports accessible, fair and timely complaint handling.

## 7. Reporting Procedures

Cabinet, the Council's main decision-making body, will consider this report. The Council's Standards Committee will also review it.

Complaint reports and performance are regularly reported to Rykneld Homes' Customer Board. This helps identify areas that may need further review.

Rykneld Homes' performance, Code compliance and learning will be reviewed by Rykneld Homes' Operational Board, the Council's Housing Client Team and the Member Responsible for Complaints.

Rykneld Homes reports key complaint performance to the Council every quarter through the Council's Key Performance Indicators.

## **8. Equality and Diversity**

An Equality Impact Assessment helps the Council check that its policies and services are fair and work well for everyone.

Rykneld Homes makes sure the complaints process is accessible. Equality Impact Assessments help identify and reduce any equality risks.

## **9. Conclusion**

This report shows that complaints have increased over the last 3 years. This reflects local service pressures and wider national trends in social housing. Stage 1 response performance remained strong, but Stage 2 performance fell in 2025/26 and will continue to be monitored.

Overall, the report shows that the Council and Rykneld Homes are using complaints to identify problems, improve policies and procedures, strengthen staff training and make complaint handling more accountable. The Council will continue to monitor performance, complete its annual self-assessment and check compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code during 2026/27.