Thrive Homes

Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2024/25

Driving improvement through feedback - a year of progress and learning.

Service improvements: what's new?

At Thrive, we believe every complaint is a chance to learn and improve. Over the past year, your feedback has helped us make some important changes, including:

- Setting up a central complaints team to make sure issues are handled more quickly and fairly
- Hiring more repair engineers – which has reduced overdue repairs and wait times by 55.5%
- Bringing in new cleaning and maintenance contractors to meet our communal standards across our estates

Complaints handling

After centralising our complaints team, we updated our Complaints Policy to reflect the changes. It also now clearly outlines how we handle safety-related concerns in high-rise buildings, requests for extended investigation time on complaints, that Thrive accepts complaints about staff behaviour and accessibility options available.

View the latest version at **thrivehomes.org.uk/complaints**

Our complaints have increased by 150% in the past year. This is partly because of new rules from the Housing Ombudsman and national campaigns like the Government's 'Make it Right'. We welcome this, as it helps us learn and improve. But we know there's more to do:

- 48% of complaints relate to repairs
- 16% concern estate management

Most of these are due to delays or things not being done properly. Keeping to our promises and improving the quality of record keeping are just some of the ways we're looking to improve. Learn more on page 17 - 19.

Limitations with our current system have affected how quickly we acknowledge complaints, but we continue to works towards enhancing our systems to improve tracking and timeliness.

Your feedback helps us make meaningful improvements and Thrive Customer Voice members will be invited to have a say and influence any changes.

Become a member and help us continue to thrive together at
thrivehomes.org.uk/getinvolved

Our Board's response to complaints

Customer feedback drives everything we do. We welcome complaints, take them seriously, and use them to make our services better - every voice matters. Our performance reflects the dedication of our teams and our commitment to meeting the standards set out in our **self-assessment** against the Complaints Handling Code.

In 2024/25, we didn't always meet our target to acknowledge complaints within five working days. Where delays happened, we explained the reasons, responded fully, and offered compensation where appropriate.

To improve this, our complaints team has introduced better ways to track response times until our systems are upgraded. They're working hard to stay on track, and this will remain a key focus of mine this year.

We worked with Thrive Customer Voice members to shape the contents of this report. Thank you to everyone who shared their views. You asked for clearer information about why complaints happen, how quickly we resolve them, and what changes we've made to our complaints process. Some of you also said you didn't know about the report or found it hard to access.

We've listened. This report now includes detailed data and examples of how complaints have led to improvements (see page 2). We'll be publicising this report in our newsletters to customers, and making customers aware that you can use the ReachDeck tool on our website to listen to the report aloud, translate it into different languages, or enlarge the text for easier reading – or contact us for a printed copy.

You also asked for more transparency around service charges, contractor performance, and anti-social behaviour (ASB). These are usually service requests unless we've failed to act – then they become complaints. Knowing you're interested in these topics, we'll include more updates on these in our newsletters, too.

We know there's more to do to improve our services and our commitment remains strong. We'll keep learning from feedback and making changes that have a lasting impact to improve customer satisfaction.

Craig

Craig O'Donnell
Board Member & Member Responsible for Complaints

What's going well?

In 2024/25, we received 159 compliments from our customers.

Most compliments we received were around staff attitude, their hard work, and politeness when carrying out works in customers' homes. Customers also praised our colleagues for their customer service skills and professionalism on the phone.

"Thank you for honouring the compensation, very greatly appreciated, and thank you for being a woman of your word with regards to timeline and expectations."

"The operative fixed the leaking valve and explained the process, reassuring us completely."

Complaint handling: actions a year on

In 2023/24's report, we took valuable lessons from complaints handling and set key priorities to help us improve throughout the year. Here's what we promised and how we've acted...

Respond to all complaints within our agreed timescales

We remain committed to replying to complaints on time. However, limitations in our current systems meant some complaints were acknowledged later than they should have been. This led to a drop in our performance—from 95% to 83.75% for stage 1 complaints, and from 95% to 66.84% for stage 2. We've taken steps to improve our systems and introduced changes to help our teams track and respond on time.

Reduce the number of escalations to stage 2 complaints by providing better quality stage 1 responses

Many stage 2 complaints arise because agreed actions at stage 1 were not completed, or because compensation offers were challenged. We've increased monitoring and will review our compensation policy to improve first-time resolution.

Improve record keeping

Our current systems make it hard to track actions and notes consistently. We have introduced interim measures while we improve our system. This will allow us to log everything in one place, helping teams follow up more effectively and keep to promises.

Get back to customers when we say we will

We have improved reporting to monitor when actions become overdue, and this is being used by managers to ensure customers are responded to as promised.

Review complaints letter and email templates with Thrive Customer Voice members

Plans are underway to work with Thrive Customer Voice members to review the way we communicate and respond to complaints in 2025.

Keep customers informed throughout the complaints process

Our complaint letters explain when you'll hear back from us and offer the option to speak directly with your complaint handler about any part of your case.

Centralise the complaints team to allow teams to identify causes and implement fixes before it turns into a complaint

We centralised our complaints team in April 2024. This gives us better oversight and helps teams spot and fix issues before they become complaints.

Every three months, service managers review insights at Listening & Learning workshops, and we hold weekly meetings to resolve complex cases quickly.

Regularly share lessons learned from complaints and complaints performance with customers

We share lessons learned from complaints every three months on a dedicated page of our website at **thrivehomes.org.uk/yourfeedback**. It's a popular read with customers who receive our newsletters and follow us on social media.

Results from our Tenant Satisfaction Measure surveys with customers show an increase in a number of areas as a result of our actions

35.6% complaints satisfaction (+0.7%)

61.2% feel we do what we say (+0.2%)

72.7% feel kept informed (+1.1%)

75% repairs satisfaction (+3.3%)

71.2% repairs timescale satisfaction (+4.2%)

Read about more service improvements in our **Annual Report for Tenants**

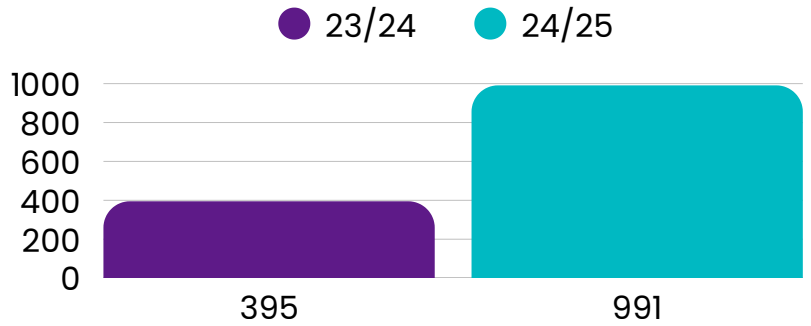
**Figures are based on combined survey responses from residents in Low Cost Rent Accommodation (LCRA – social and affordable rent) and Low Cost Home Ownership (LCHO – shared ownership).*

Complaints overview

In 2024/25 we received 991 complaints. This is a 150% increase in formal complaints compared to 2023/24.

We welcome complaints as valuable feedback and have made it easier for customers to raise issues. Media coverage, new legislation (like Awaab's Law), and changes to how dissatisfaction is recorded are contributing to higher complaint volumes across social housing.

Although formal complaints have risen, this is still 7% fewer than the 1,074 recorded in 2023/24. That figure included expressions of dissatisfaction, which are now counted as formal complaints under the updated code — giving a sense of how volumes of dissatisfaction might have looked this year if the code hadn't changed.



991
total complaints in 2024/25

Complaint outcomes

What happened after these complaints were raised

£ 59,739.85 paid in compensation

8 cases referred to the Housing Ombudsman

35.8% Satisfaction with our approach to complaint handling (+3.2% above the landlord average)

There were a number of complaints we didn't investigate

40 Complaints refused

Some complaints were outside our jurisdiction and could not be investigated under our formal process. This includes **service requests**, where the request is reported for the first time; **complaints from third-parties** where we don't have the relevant authority; and cases already **subject to legal proceedings**.

Some complaints require referral to the First-Tier Tribunal where customers are looking to challenge charges and this does not sit within the complaints process.

12 customers withdrew their complaint after we resolved the issue, as they no longer felt it needed to go through the formal process.

Trends

Comparing our complaints to key services

We looked at our key services and compared them to the number of complaints we received for that service.

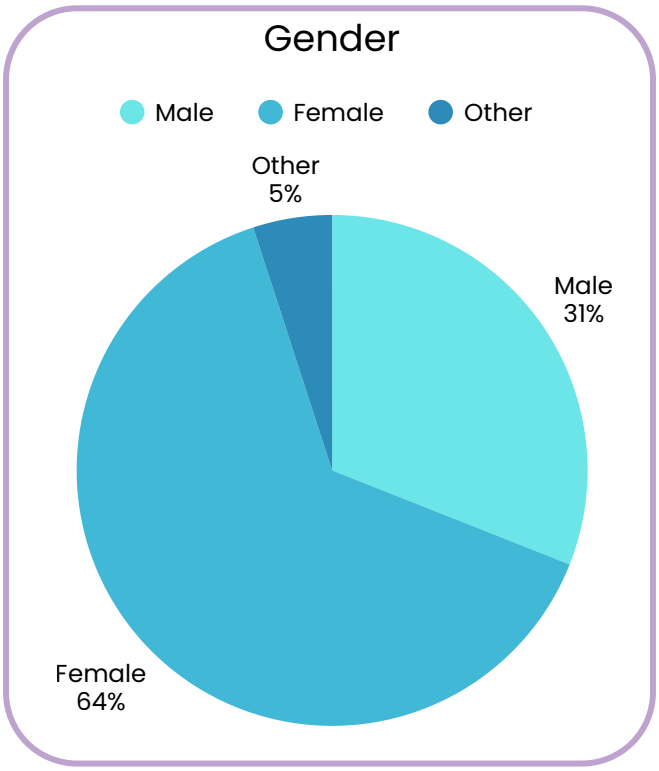
1 in 5 of anti-social behaviour (ASB) cases resulted in a formal complaint compared to 1 in 9 last year

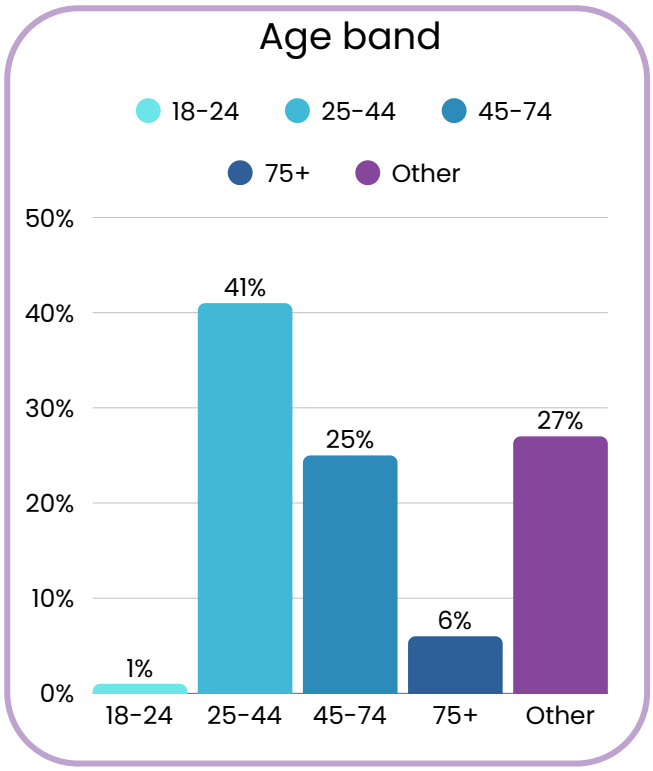
2.38% of our repairs generated a complaint
based on 475 complaints out of 19,929 repairs completed

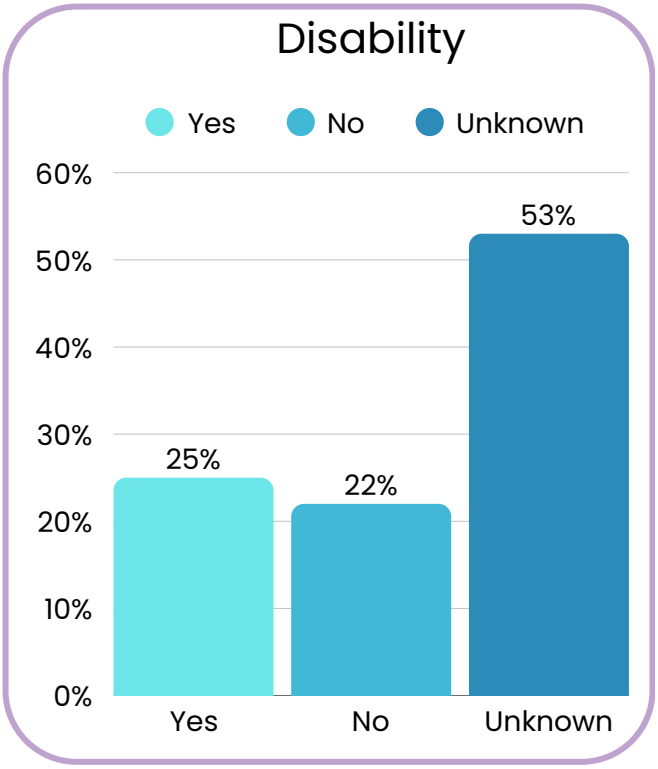
60% of complaints about estate services came from postcodes where more than one person had raised a similar issue

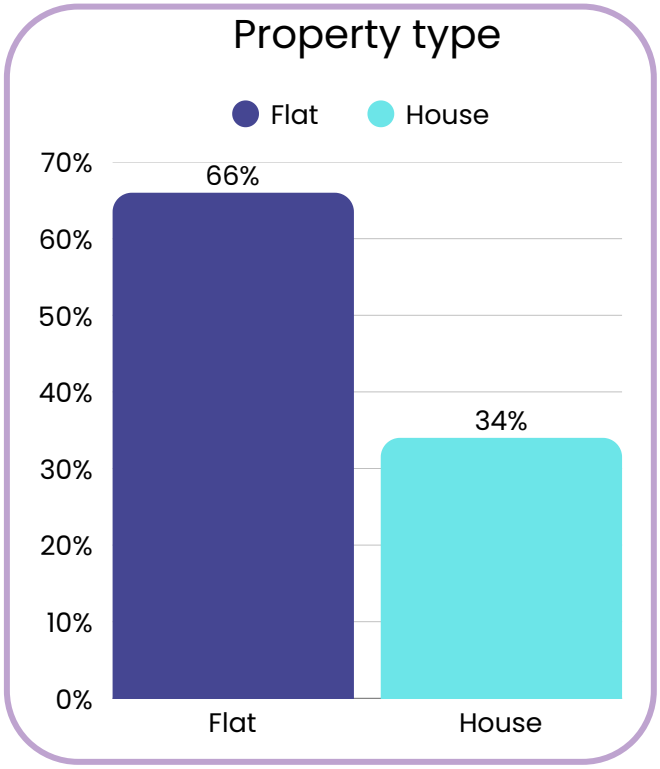
160
total complaints compared to 1,659 estate inspections

Comparing complaints to our customers and properties









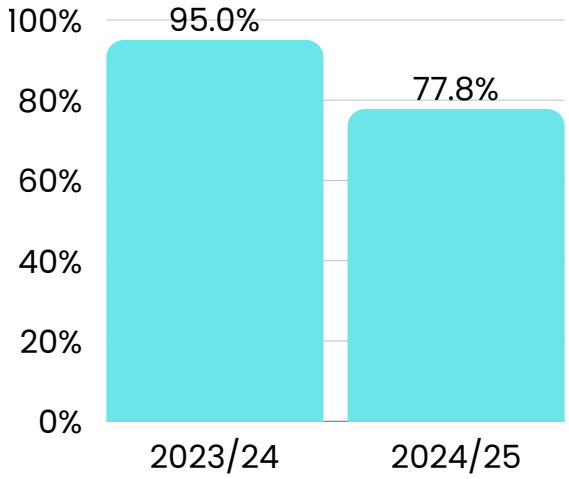
We found no evidence that complaints are linked to someone's ethnicity or the area they live in.

Customers aged 25-44 are around 10% less satisfied compared to other aged customers – and are more likely to make complaints. Taking this into consideration, we'll be working with customers in this age range to understand what we can do more to improve.

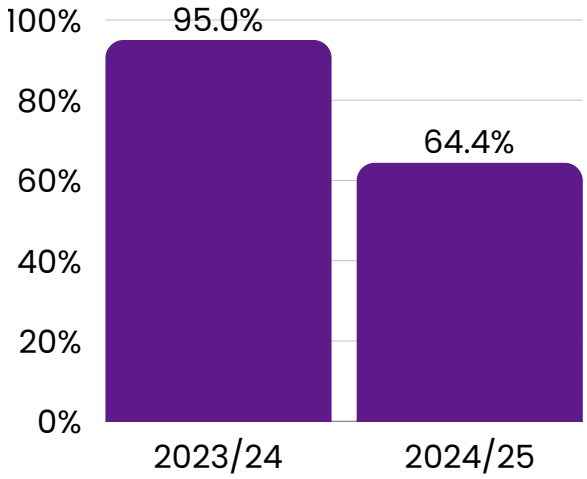
Complaint timescales

In 2024/25 we responded to 77.7%* of stage 1 and 65.8%* of stage 2 complaints in time.

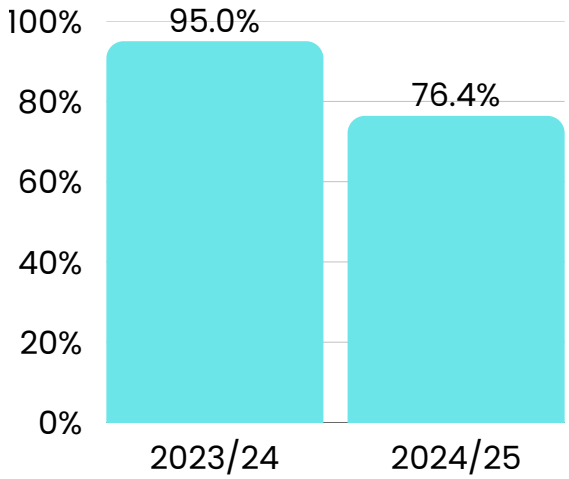
Stage 1 LCRA



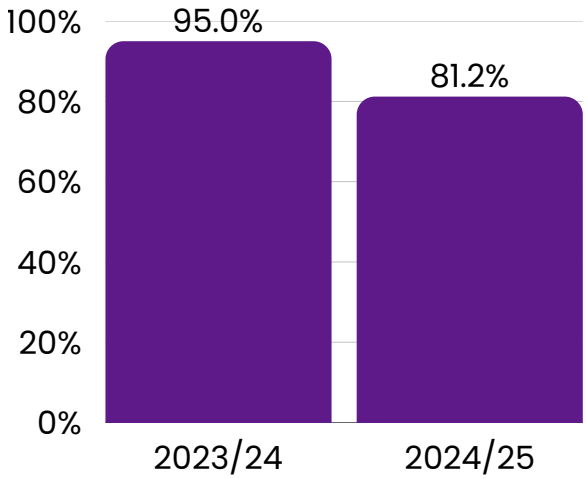
Stage 2 LCRA



Stage 1 LCHO



Stage 2 LCHO



In 2024/25, response times to complaints dropped. This was caused by a misinterpretation of the Complaint Handling Code and errors with reporting the time taken to acknowledge complaint. Once identified, we improved our systems, and ensured these changes were checked and approved by external auditors.

If you're interested in learning about how these volumes compare to our number of homes, learn more in our Annual Tenant Satisfaction Measure report:

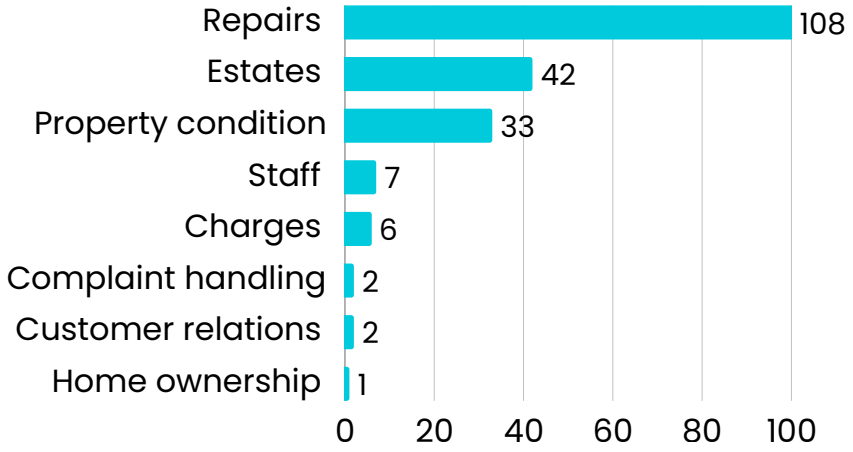
thrivehomes.org.uk/TSM-2024-25

**Figures combine complaints from Low Cost Rent Accommodation (LCRA – social and affordable rent) and Low Cost Home Ownership (LCHO – shared ownership)*

Stage 1 complaint themes 2024/25

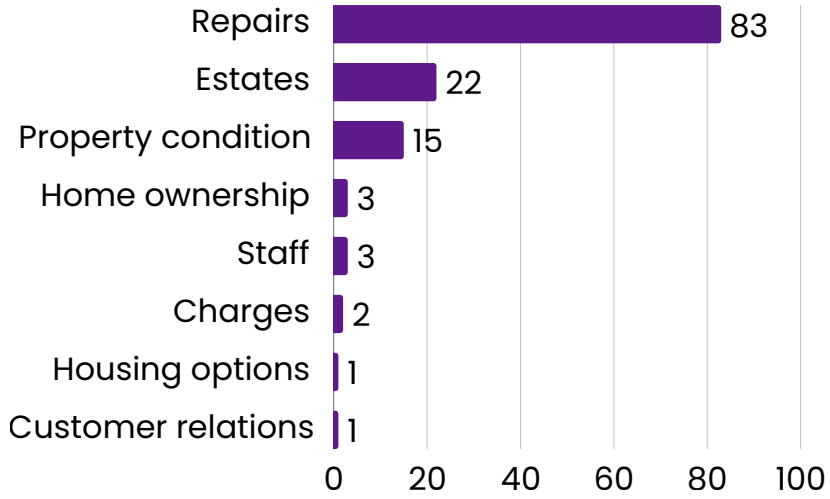
Looking at the common reasons for complaints, we've pinpointed three main areas as follows:

Do what we say



Typically 'doing what we say' complaints are about failing to keep our promises. Last year, this mainly related to carrying out follow-on-works for repairs or actioning service requests across our estates.

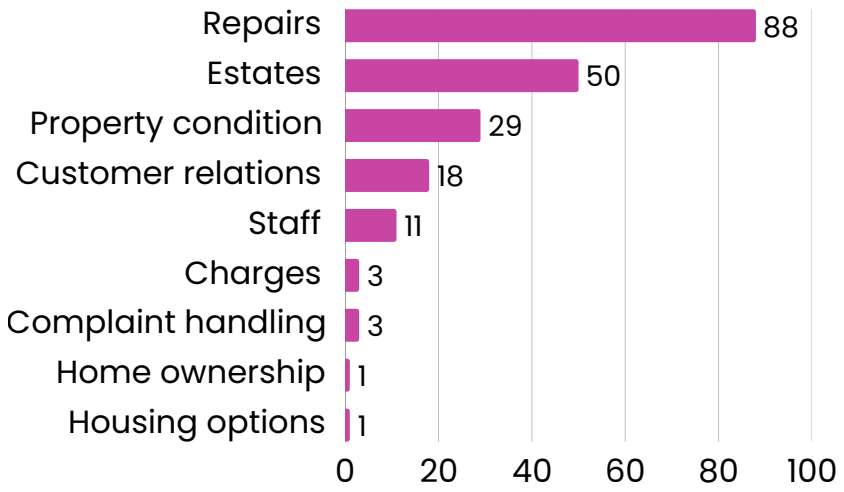
Effective and Efficient



Effective and efficient complaints are those that are not resolved promptly and thoroughly. Last year, common issues included delays in completing repairs within expected timeframes, limited communication with customers, and slow resolution of estate-related problems.

Stage 1 complaint themes 2024/25

Listen and act

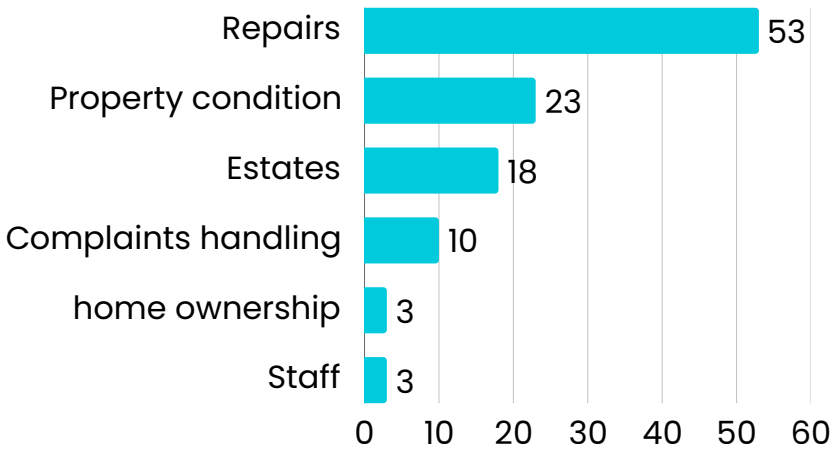


Last year, some customers told us they didn't feel listened to despite raising service requests multiple times for repairs, cleaning, or grounds maintenance. The most common concerns were missed visits, poor-quality work, and a lack of response from Thrive.

Stage 2 complaint themes 2024/25

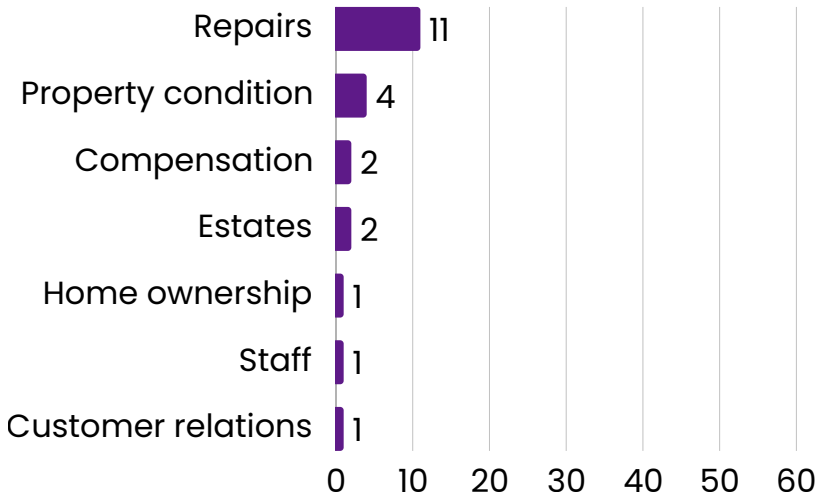
The three main areas for stage 2 complaints are similar to stage 1:

Do what we say



Many Stage 2 complaints were escalated because customers felt we didn't do what we said we would. These were mainly linked to repairs and property maintenance, where promised actions weren't completed and updates were lacking – where the works were not straight forward and involved multiple contractors or appointments.

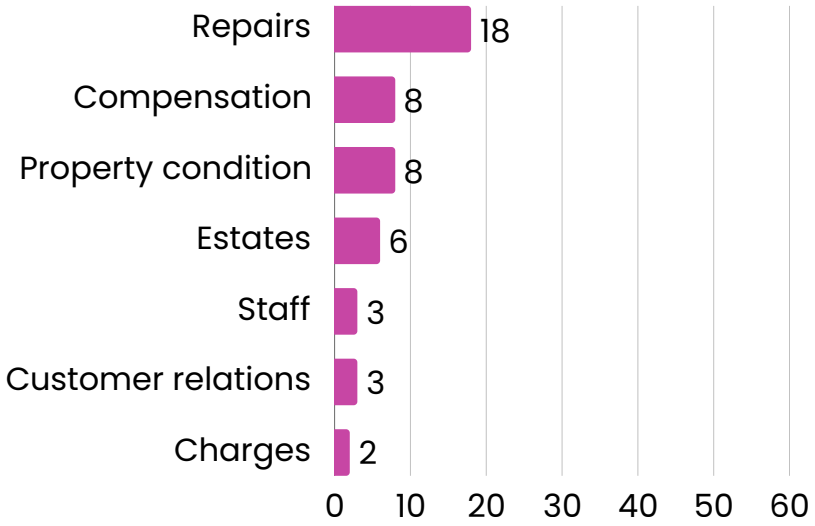
Effective and Efficient



When customers escalated their complaints to Stage 2 under the theme of 'Effective and Efficient', it was often because issues took longer than expected to resolve. In some cases, repair problems became more complex, and we didn't keep customers properly informed as things progressed.

Stage 2 complaint themes 2024/25

Listen and act



When customers escalated their complaints to Stage 2 under the theme of 'Effective and Efficient', it was often because issues took longer than expected to resolve. In some cases, repair problems became more complex, and we didn't keep customers properly informed as things progressed.

Housing Ombudsman Cases

If you aren't happy with the outcome of our complaint investigation, you can refer your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman (HO) for review.

Here are the outcomes issued by the Housing Ombudsman in 2024/25...

24
findings

what was discovered in each case

11
determinations

decisions following a complaint

18
maladministrations

when something wasn't handled properly

32
orders made

to put things right

3
recommendations

suggestions to improve

0
Complaint Handling Failure Orders

a serious warning about complaint handling

£6,505
compensation

total to be paid to customers from across all cases

75%
maladministration rate

how often Thrive got things wrong in cases referred to the HO

There has been no annual report about Thrive's performance from the Housing Ombudsman for the period of 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025, and there have been no other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to our work during 2024/25.

As Thrive has received more than five determinations (decisions regarding housing complaints) in the year, we expect to feature within the Ombudsman's annual report during autumn 2025 and will share a response to this if published.

Due to HO delays, some of these cases originate from the previous year, but were reviewed by the HO in 2024/25.

How we use the Housing Ombudsman's guidance

Each time the Housing Ombudsman investigates a case, we carry out a review to understand where we can improve. Last year the Housing Ombudsman ordered three management reviews following their investigation, this resulted in 55 actions. Of those 55 actions, at the end of 2024/25, 24 remain in progress and are on track as planned.

Spotlight reports

We actively self-assess against reports published by the Housing Ombudsman to identify key learnings for service improvements.

What we learnt from our assessment against the damp and mould spotlight report, severe maladministration report and independent review:
Following a review of the Housing Ombudsman's one-year follow-up report and the original Spotlight on Damp and Mould – It's Not Lifestyle publication, we have developed a strengthened internal policy and procedure to address damp and mould. These reports have been instrumental in shaping our approach, ensuring alignment with best practice, regulatory expectations, and a resident-focused culture.

Using these findings we have:

Developed a new and more detailed damp and mould procedure that clearly defines how we identify, assess, and respond to damp and mould. This includes structured timescales and escalation routes.

We've made a clear change in how we work by setting up rules that make sure we never assume damp & mould is caused by lifestyle choices. Instead, we focus on things like buildings and the environment. This helps make sure we stick to the new way of working that everyone across our organisation has already started following.

We've started using a risk-based method that prioritises cases based on severity and resident vulnerability, as advised by the Ombudsman, to take risk-informed and early action.

Centralised our damp and mould monitoring within the Asset Team to improve oversight, consistency, and inform investment decisions for poor performing properties that show damp and mould.

Strengthened our investigation and follow-up processes, including mandatory customer touch points, post-inspections, customer satisfaction surveys and one-year follow-ups to ensure long-term resolution and customer reassurance.

Enhanced training and awareness across all teams, ensuring that both technical and non-technical colleagues can identify and escalate hazards appropriately.

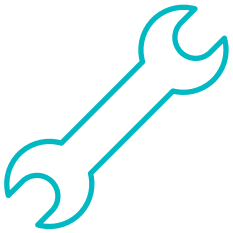
Looking forward: acting on feedback from complaints

Key focuses for 2025/26

This year we have explored many lessons as a result of complaints. We're learning from these, and look to improve by:

- Keeping to our promises
- Keeping you informed
- Improving record quality
- Increasing the number of repairs we complete right, first time
- Ensuring contractor performance
- Better recognising and supporting customer needs

Work is already underway on serval actions, including:



Increasing resources to complete more repairs on time. We're also improving communication with customers about appointment delays and ensuring priority is given to repairs that pose health and safety risks or affect individuals with specific health conditions or support needs.

We have reviewed the way we manage contractor performance and developed better oversight of the quality of the services delivered on our behalf such as repairs, cleaning and grounds maintenance. This includes introducing block representatives and extra feedback surveys to make sure the new cleaning and grounds maintenance contractors are making a meaningful difference to service standard.

Knowing that around 1 in 5 anti-social behaviour (ASB) cases led to a formal complaint in 2024/25, we've taken action to strengthen how we manage ASB. Every current ASB case has been checked to ensure it meets our ASB Policy, and we've identified areas where we can work smarter.

This includes closer collaboration across teams on complex cases, keeping risk assessments up to date throughout investigations, and planning targeted staff training with the right resources to support it. These improvements are already underway and are helping us deliver a more joined-up, confident, and customer-focused ASB service.

Improvements to our technology system remains a key priority, where we aim to benefit from a modern interface that will improve record keeping, and will help us better assist customers.

Watch out for progress updates in our newsletters or stay tuned at **thrivehomes.org.uk/feedback**

Improving complaint handling

Key focuses for 2025/26

Making sure we put things right when they go wrong remains a priority. As part of this, we're looking to improve our complaint handling performance through the following actions:

1. Acknowledge & respond to complaints within agreed timescales - and compensate where we fall short of this.

2. Reduce the number of times customers need to raise stage 2 complaints (escalations) by:

   - monitoring promised actions and keeping customers informed about their status
   - reviewing our compensation policy to make sure it's fair
   - trialling discovery calls to better understand and resolve stage 1 complaints earlier

3. Track contractor compensation to help teams monitor contractor performance and improve service delivery.

4. Share lessons learned and performance with customers regularly.

5. Track the volumes of complaints so we can make sure we have enough colleagues to respond on time.

6. Make sure complaint-handling colleagues do two training sessions a year to keep learning and ensure complaints are handled fairly, thoroughly, and in line with the complaints code.

Action is already underway in many of these areas, and we'll keep customers updated on progress through newsletters and at **thrivehomes.org.uk/feedback**

Ways to make a complaint

Email **enquiries@thrivehomes.org.uk**

Call **0800 917 6077**

Head to **complaints@thrivehomes.org.uk**

Useful links

Our self assessment: **thrivehomes.org.uk/self-assessment-2025**

Complaints policy: **thrivehomes.org.uk/complaints-policy**

Learning from complaints: **thrivehomes.org.uk/yourfeedback**

We are a member of the:

Housing
Ombudsman Service