



FIRST CHOICE HOMES OLDHAM ANNUAL COMPLAINTS PERFORMANCE AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT REPORT

2024-2025

INTRODUCTION

This report, for our Board and customers, provides a comprehensive overview of our complaint handling performance, key insights gained, and lessons learned for the 2024-25 financial year.

At First Choice Homes Oldham, our mission is to enhance the lives of our customers by offering safe, well-maintained homes and delivering exceptional services. It is crucial for us to understand our performance, share this information with our customers, and take proactive steps to continuously improve our services.

Our complaints process is governed by the Housing Ombudsman Service Complaint Handling Code.

More information on our complaints process and the role of the Housing Ombudsman and the Complaint Handling Code is on our website:

How to complain - First Choice Homes Oldham

Each year we assess our compliance against the requirements of the Complaint Handling Code, we share this assessment with our Board and Customer Forums, and publish a copy of our self-assessment on our website.

The Housing Ombudsman introduced a new Complaint Handling Code on 1 April 2024. This includes guidance on Code compliance, which provides for 'Compliance through Scrutiny and Oversight'. This sets out the information that should be included in this annual report.

- ✓ Our annual self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code
- ✓ An overview of our complaint handling performance
- ✓ Learning from complaints
- ✓ Service improvement plan for 2024-25
- ✓ Housing Ombudsman Determinations 2024-25
- ✓ Our Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC) and Board's response to this report.

OUR COMPLAINT HANDLING PERFORMANCE

In 2024-25, we received a total of 1052 formal complaints, representing an increase of approximately 26.44% compared to the previous year. Of these, 48% were related to repairs, while 11% concerned communication with our customers.

We operate a two-stage complaints process. Our performance review shows that most complaints are resolved satisfactorily at the first stage when we take the right actions, offer appropriate compensation, and apply learning from our mistakes.

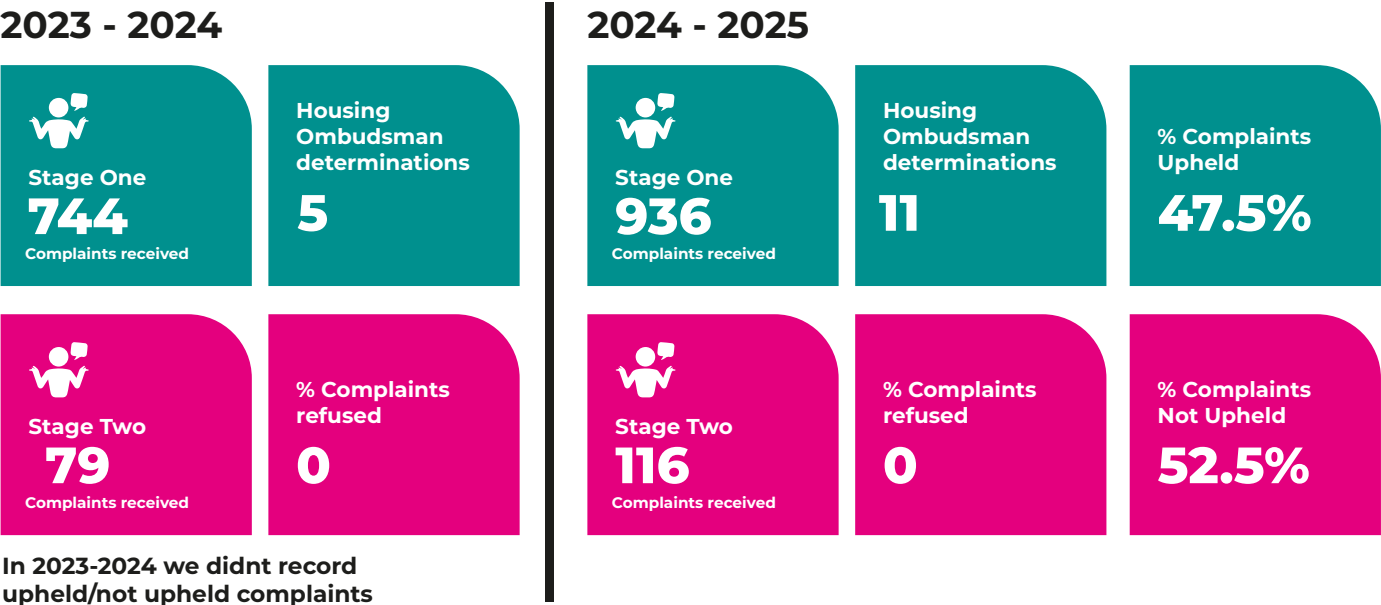
We are committed to listening to our customers and putting things right when our service falls short. At every stage of the complaints process, we ensure customers are informed of their right to escalate their concerns to the Housing Ombudsman.

In 2024-25, the Housing Ombudsman investigated 11 complaints. These investigations resulted in 18 findings of maladministration or service failure.



COMPLAINT OVERVIEW

Complaints & Service Requests

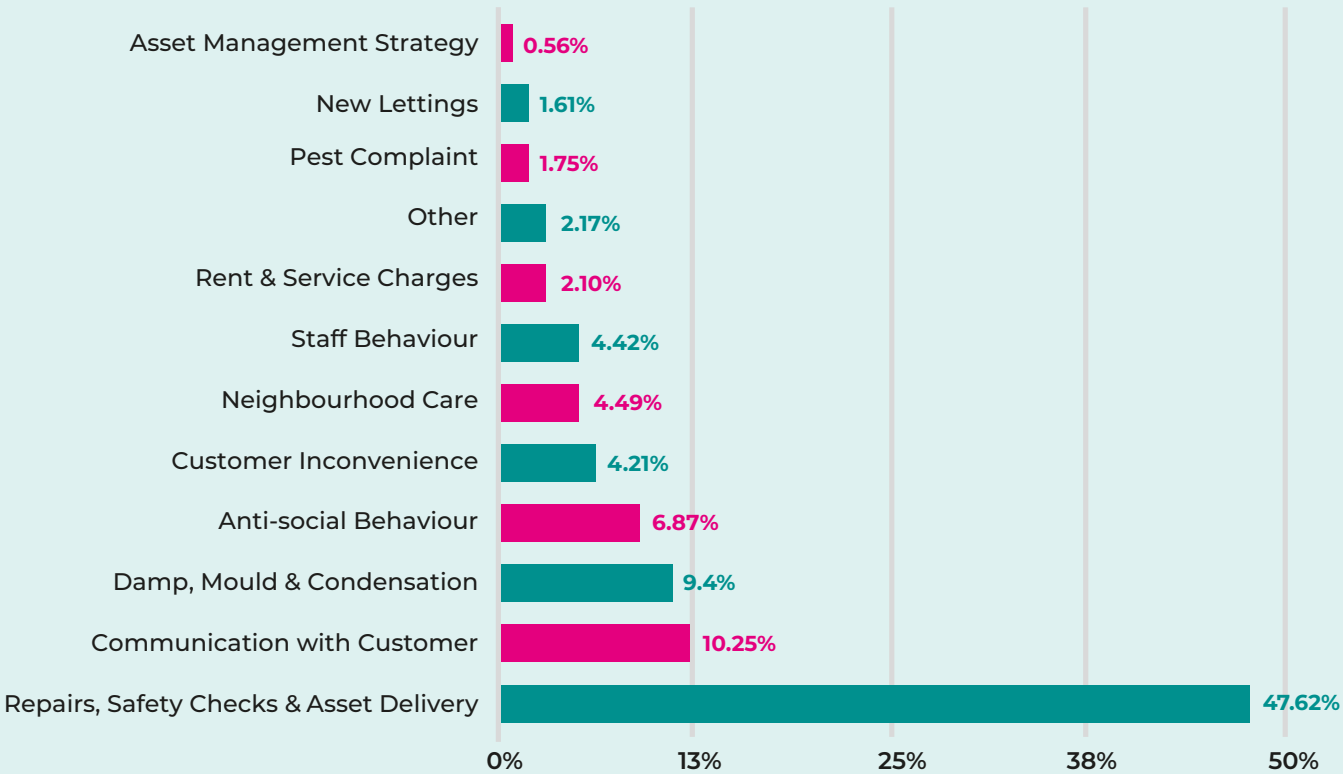


REASON FOR COMPLAINTS

In 2024-25, we introduced new complaint reasons and sub-reasons, allowing us to record multiple reasons for each complaint.





The table below shows the % of complaints received by reason. Last year, our Property Care team received the highest number of complaints, making up **48% of all complaints**. As repairs are a key service we provide, feedback shows that the quality of our repair services greatly affects overall customer satisfaction.

% Complaint Reasons



Out of the **497 complaints at Stage One and Two** related to repairs, safety checks, and asset delivery, a total of **629 sub-reasons were recorded**. On the right the table shows the most common sub-reasons.

Complaints about repairs generally focus on the quality of the repair, the time taken to complete it, or cases where the repair did not resolve the issue on the first attempt. The chart above illustrates the reasons for Stage One complaints last year.

Complaint sub-reason		Number of times mentioned	% of all complaints were mentioned
	Repair did not solve the issue	150	14%
	Waiting time for appointment	109	11%
	Cancelled appointment/operative no show	62	6%
	No follow up or second appointment	49	5%

COMPLAINT OUTCOME

When investigating complaints, we assess whether our service standards have been met. If we identify a failure in our service delivery, the complaint is upheld. If we determine that there has been no service failure, we will inform the customer that their complaint has not been upheld. Our response letter will provide a clear explanation of the reasons behind our decision.

These are the outcomes of the complaints that we investigated 1 April 2024 - 31 March 2025.

Complaint Outcomes



48%
upheld



52%
Not upheld

In the year
2024-25, we paid
out a total of
£42,857.26
in compensation
to customers.



HOUSING OMBUDSMAN SERVICE CASES & OUTCOMES

After Stage Two of our complaints process, if customers remain unhappy with our response, they can escalate their complaint to the Housing Ombudsman. More information on the Housing Ombudsman and how to escalate a complaint can be found on their [website](#).

Last year, the Housing Ombudsman made determinations on 11 cases from FCHO customers.

Housing Ombudsman Service Determination	Description	Number of determinations April 2024 – March 2025
No maladministration	Where the landlord is found to have acted appropriately.	6
Service failure	Where the landlord has provided an inadequate service, fails to uphold its obligations, or mishandles complaints.	8
Maladministration (complaints handling)	Where there has been a failure related to complaint handling e.g. failed to respond to a customer in time.	4
Maladministration (services)	Where there has been a failure related to complaint handling e.g. FCHO failed to provide a repair.	6
Severe maladministration	Where the failings have had a significant impact on the customer or have occurred over a long period.	0
Reasonable redress	Where there is some level of failing but FCHO has already acknowledged this and is putting things right, before the Housing Ombudsman have completed its review.	0

The Housing Ombudsman can make more than one determination on each case. This is why our total number of determinations is more than the number of cases investigated.

SATISFACTION WITH COMPLAINTS

The Regulator of Social Housing introduced Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) in April 2023 for all social housing providers. There are 22 measures covering areas such as repairs, safety, and complaints. One of the survey questions is, "How satisfied are you with FCHO's approach to complaints?" You can find more information about what TSMs are, why we collect them, and our results on the **FCHO website: Tenant Satisfaction Measures**

We have been collecting TSM surveys since April 2023, and here are the results related to complaints for 2024-2025*:



The key reasons for dissatisfaction with complaints are:



Listening to the customer



Communication



Acting on complaints

*TSMs only report on complaints for customers in low-cost rental accommodation (LCRA).

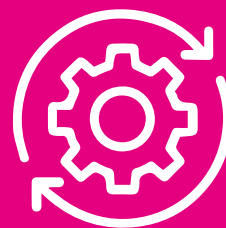
LEARNING FROM COMPLAINTS

When a complaint has been investigated and closed, we log opportunities for learning and improvements so that we can use this to improve our services.

In 2023-2024, the key areas for improvement were identified as:



Improving customer communication



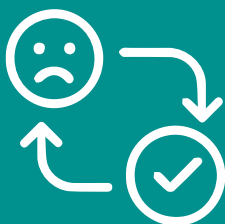
End-to-end Property Care service review



Damp and mould process review



Contract management improvements



Understanding customer complaints journey



One team approach

SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

Here are some of the actions that we have taken or are working on to improve our services as a result of complaints and customer feedback in 2024-25:



We have delivered complaints training to all relevant colleagues with a real focus on ensuring that our customers are listened to and treated with respect.



We are reviewing the way we plan and schedule repairs to improve communication with our customers and the number of repairs that are delivered right first time. In 2025-26 we will continue to implement changes to our repairs service to enhance the customer journey.



Following a review of our pest control process, we have appointed NBC Environment as our new contractor and designed a new Pest Policy to improve the customer journey when reporting pests.



We have improved how we communicate our complaints process, making it easier for customers to understand how to raise their concern and how to escalate it to the Housing Ombudsman if needed.



Reviewed our damp and mould process and procedure to ensure compliance with Awaab's Law.



We have implemented customer videos for our Board. These illustrate the customer's journey from initial concerns to raising a complaint and receiving the complaint outcome.

OUR AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT IN 2025-2026

FCHO is committed to continuing to improve our repairs service, with a focus on:



Reducing wait times.



Improving the number of repairs completed on the first visit.



Improving communication around repairs.



Reviewing and enhancing our repair systems and processes to ensure we provide customers with the best possible appointment times and excellent communication regarding the status of their repairs.



Establishing a Customer Experience Hub to enhance customer satisfaction, minimise service handoffs, and ensure a right-first-time service experience.



Reviewing the role of Customer Excellence Officers to enhance the consistency and quality of our complaint handling.



Improving communication with customers, providing clear and accurate information about our policies and procedures, and the services we offer.



COMPLAINTS PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY AND OVERSIGHT

We monitor complaints performance monthly and present our findings quarterly to the Customer and Communities Committee, our Internal Learning from Complaints group, and the Board. Alongside the performance data, we include an analysis of the factors influencing these results and outline any current or planned actions to enhance performance.

Every three months, we update our website with the latest complaints performance data, key insights from the complaints, and any actions taken in response.

This annual performance report has been reviewed by our Board, the Member Responsible for Complaints and customers before being published on our website.

Below is a summary of their feedback.

Jean Mira, Board Member Responsible for Complaints at FCHO, says:



Board members recognise the continuous development of complaint reporting over the last two years. This has significantly enhanced our oversight of complaints information, Housing Ombudsman determinations, outcomes, and learning. Information regarding all Housing Ombudsman determinations are presented to the Board, and customers at our Customer and Communities Committee and Customer Performance and Scrutiny Panel.



The Board is encouraged to see that information on how to complain is made easier for customers to access, with regular promotion of complaints information on our website and on our social media accounts. This includes reporting on numbers and service improvements as part of the 'You said, we did' policy. The report was presented at the Board on 17 September 2025 and shared with the new Customer and Communities Committee is comprehensive and provides assurance that FCHO meets the code and will continue to deliver and improve services for customers. We are assured that we are sighted on volumes, categories, and outcomes for complaints, complaint handling performance, and learning.

While we are currently compliant, I am eager for FCHO to surpass the expectations set by the code. Our standards should be significantly higher than mere compliance, ensuring we consistently deliver on our promises to our customers.

We are committed to promoting a culture that invites customers to tell us when things have gone wrong, so we can put things right and learn from the insights that complaints provide. I am pleased to see that we have been honest and transparent and that we have an action log to address any failings and implement learning. As the governing body, the Board will monitor progress on the action log and lessons learned from complaints and insights from other sources."

Spotlight Reports, Special Investigation Reports, Insight Reports, and Performance Housing Ombudsman Spotlight Reports focus on areas where the Housing Ombudsman identifies significant service failures through their casework. They examine issues and provide recommendations.

Spotlight Reports issued by the Housing Ombudsman in 2023-25 include:

Knowledge and Information Management (KIM): May 2023

Attitudes, Respect and Rights (ARR): January 2024

Repairing Trust: May 2025

These complement previously published Spotlight Reports:

Noise: October 2022

Damp and Mould: 2021, with a follow-up report in February 2023

Our approach to Spotlight Reports

FCHO has established a clear and structured process to respond to the Housing Ombudsman reports, including Spotlight Reports. We self-assess our services against the findings and recommendations, taking forward actions and embedding good practice to support continuous improvement.

Each report is assigned a Lead Officer responsible for developing and delivering action plans, tracking progress, and maintaining evidence of outcomes. Oversight is provided by the Head of Customer Services to ensure consistency and effective implementation across the organisation.



HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

Call our Contact Centre on
0161 393 7117.

Visit:

[www.fcho.co.uk/contact-us/
how-to-complain](http://www.fcho.co.uk/contact-us/how-to-complain)

Write to:

FCHO First Place,
22 Union Street,
Oldham
OL1 1BE

To contact the Housing Ombudsman

Fill in the online complaint form
[www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/residents/
make-a-complaint/](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/residents/make-a-complaint/)

Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk
Phone: **0300 111 3000**

Write to:

Housing Ombudsman Service
PO Box 1484, Unit D, Preston PR2 0ET

Fax:

020 7831 1942



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