



Cambridge City Council

Annual Customer Feedback Report 2024 - 25

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Cambridge City Council's Annual Customer Feedback Report - Introduction

Every year Cambridge City Council publishes an Annual Customer Feedback Report, which gives an overview of the complaints and compliments the Council has received and how we have dealt with them (though we do not publish names or other personal details of people who have complained).

Cambridge City Council welcomes customer feedback, to help us to identify and address problems for customers, and to improve our services. This report shows how we have increased customer feedback about services and how we are responding to complaints.

Why we produce this report

- To learn from our mistakes so that we can improve our services.
- To encourage people who have cause to complain to make comments and suggestions to help us make these improvements.
- To be transparent about the complaints we've received, how we've responded to them and what we've done to try to put things right.
- To publicise and explain our complaints process.

Our Complaints Procedure

What is a complaint?

A complaint can be wide-ranging, but can be defined as an expression of dissatisfaction with the service provided, or lack of action by the Council, or its staff. This can include failure to achieve specific standards of service.

It should be highlighted that issues brought to the Council for the first time, are dealt with as a request for service and so are not processed as a formal complaint. However, service requests can then escalate into a stage 1 complaint if the customer remains unsatisfied. This may occur from delays in response or dissatisfaction with staff behaviour or policies.

Customers complain to the Council if they:

- Are unhappy about something we have or haven't done.
- Are not satisfied with the way a member of staff has treated them.
- Are not happy with the way a councillor has treated them.

Cambridge City Council has a two stage complaints process:

Stage One: An issue raised by a complainant which is escalated beyond a service request for the first time.

Stage Two: Internal review of a complaint where the complainant is unsatisfied with the response to their initial complaint or the way in which the complaint has been handled, and they wish for their complaint to be considered further.

The **Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)** or **Housing Ombudsman** is the final stage - the person affected must have gone through our internal complaints process before going to the LGO or Housing Ombudsman for an independent review.

Complaints to Cambridge City Council in 2024-25: summary

Total number of complaints received

In 2024-25, the total number of complaints received was 855, which is a decrease of 98 cases (10.3%) from the previous year's total of 953. When put into context with the amount of service requests and contacts made to the Council, 225,000, this accounts for less than 0.1% of contact received resulting in a formal complaint.

Proportion resolved at stage 1 and stage 2

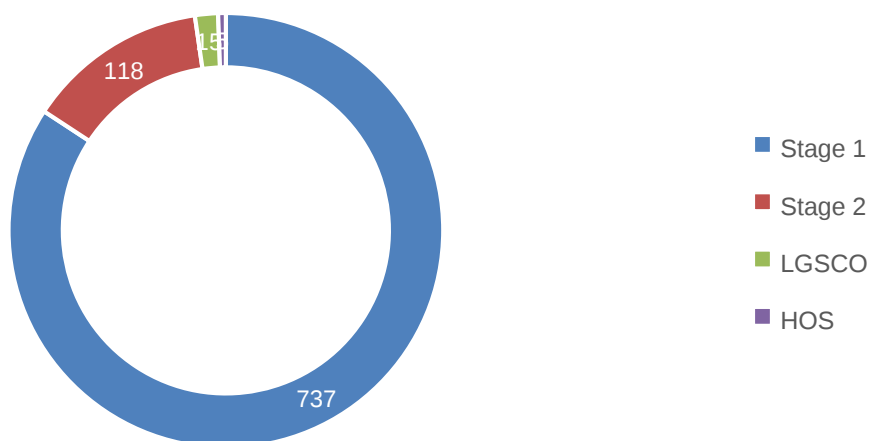
Of those 855 complaints, 86% (737) were resolved successfully at the first stage without need for escalation. This compares with 90% in 2023-24, and 93% in 2022-23.

118 complaints were escalated to stage two, which is 20 more than in the previous year. This was anticipated as the requirements to escalate a complaint to the second stage of the process were removed. A further expression of dissatisfaction following a stage 1 complaint was enough to be considered a request to escalate, so we did expect to see a rise in the number of stage 2 escalations.

Proportion resolved within the target timescale

Across all complaints submitted at both stages, 80% were resolved within the target time of ten working days. This represents an increase on recent years, where 72% were responded to within time in 2023-24, and 77% in 2022-23. The target is for 85% or over to be answered within the target time, so it is encouraging to see a step closer to that target this year.

Fig 1. Total Complaints received, by resolution stage



Stage 1	Stage 2	LGSCO	HOS
737	118	15	5

Overview of complaint trends

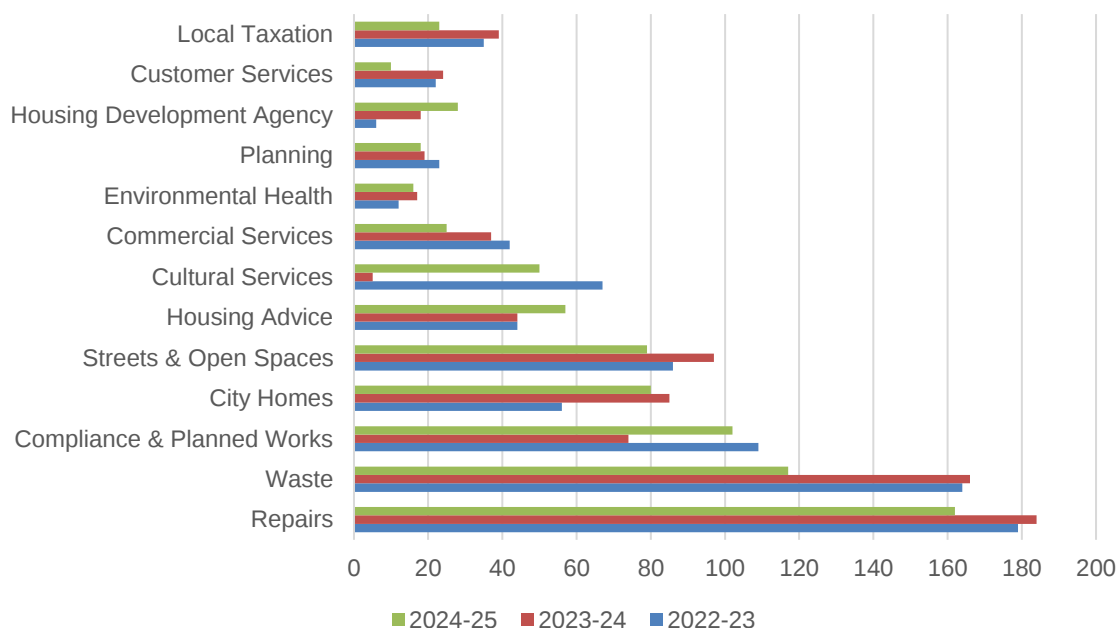
264 (28%) of all complaints received by the Council were for the Housing Assets and Maintenance service, with the majority relating to Responsive Repairs (162). This is a very slight increase from 258 complaints overall in the previous year, the Planned Works & Compliance areas had an increase of 28 compared to 2023-2024..

This trend is in line with previous years where Housing Maintenance and Assets, Waste, and Streets & Open Spaces receive the greatest volumes of complaints.

Whilst the Responsive Repairs service saw the highest volume of complaints overall, they did have 22 less complaints compared to 2023-24. Some changes within the service such as the introduction of a specialist Damp, Condensation and Mould (DCM) Team contributed to this reduction. A large proportion of the services complaints related to DCM, and having a specialist team in place to tackle the issues before they reach the complaints stage has had a positive impact on the service and outcomes for residents. The majority of services across the Council saw a reduction in the volume of complaints received. Shared Waste decreased by 49, Streets & Open Spaces decreased by 18, Local Taxation decreased by 16 and Customer Services decreased by 14. The only Services not already mentioned which saw their number of complaints increase were Housing Advice, who increased by 13, and Housing Development Agency which increased by 10.

The Shared Waste service saw a reduction of 49 complaints compared to 2023-24. More accurate and timely reporting by collection crews has played a key role in reducing complaints within the service, especially relating to repeated missed bins. Crews now use InCab devices to log issues in real time, allowing for quicker identification and resolution of problems. This proactive approach has ensured fewer service disruptions throughout the year and has improved overall reliability of the service.

A comparison of complaints by higher volume services can be seen below.



Service	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Environmental Health	12	17	16
Customer Services	22	24	10
Local Taxation	35	39	23
Commercial Services	42	37	25
Streets & Open Spaces	86	97	79
Housing (City Homes)	56	85	80
Housing (Housing Advice)	44	44	57
Housing Development Agency	6	18	28
Cultural Services	67	58	50
Housing Repairs (Responsive)	179	184	162
Housing Repairs (Planned & Compliance)	109	74	102
Planning	23	19	18
Waste	164	166	117

Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) and Housing Ombudsman

15 complaints were made to the Local Government Ombudsman. Of these, no cases were progressed to be investigated by the LGSCO. 9 cases were closed following initial enquiries, and 6 were outside of the Ombudsman's jurisdiction.

5 complaints were investigated and determined by the Housing Ombudsman Service. Of these, there were 7 findings of maladministration, 14 remedial orders made, and 2 remedial recommendations made. Further commentary on this can be found on page 43 of this report.

Reporting, monitoring and driving service improvement

The City Council's managers work hard to understand the reasons for the complaints, and where a consistent theme or issue has been established, they have taken action to prevent the poor service that triggered those complaints from being repeated. We continue to focus on delivering high quality services to all residents and customers and welcome all feedback on our services and suggestions for improvement.

The Lead Complaints Officer has continued to review data on a regular basis to establish themes and trends. This data is reported on a quarterly basis to Leadership and Corporate Management Team to prompt reflection on what services need to do to improve, change or prevent a reoccurrence. Particular attention is focused on responding appropriately to complaints first time and reducing complaints being escalated to the higher stages. This reporting has led to some constructive discussions with Senior Management, and as a result we have been able to take feedback and apply it across many areas of the complaints process. An example of this was creating a template which guides the investigating Officer through everything that is required to be included in a complaints response. This has increased the quality of responses being sent at both stages, and ensures compliance with Ombudsman codes of practice.

Persistent and Unreasonably Persistent Complainants

Sometimes when pursuing their complaint, complainants can become unreasonably persistent in a way that can hinder the way their complaint is investigated. This can include excessive repeat contact, which is not necessarily abusive or aggressive. In 2024-25 it was necessary to impose restrictions on two customers and limit their contact with the Council. These restrictions were made in line with the persistent and unreasonably persistent complainants policy and both were given a single point of contact within the Council to report any other issues outside of their complaint. The restrictions on both complainants will be reviewed after 12 months.

Reporting on complaints about Council Policy

Where a complainant raises a complaint about a Council Policy, this will still be responded to under the complaints policy. If the complainant wishes to give general feedback or have a policy explained further, the Council will respond to this as an enquiry for service, and provide an explanation or rationale behind the policy.

Should the complainant be dissatisfied with how the Council reached the decision on the policy, or feel that an injustice has been caused by a policy, this would be investigated as a complaint. These complaints will then be considered when reviewing policies in future.

LGSCO and Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code

Our complaints handling guidance is based upon the code laid out by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. In November 2022 the LGSCO announced that they would be publishing a joint handling code alongside the Housing Ombudsman. This code was published in November 2023, and the guidance within it became mandatory in casework from April 1 2024.

Part of this code requires the Council to assess our process and policy annually against the latest guidance from both the Housing Ombudsman and the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. In 2023-24, this was done later in the year and reported to committee in November, however this year, the self-assessment is included at the same time as this report. Following the self-assessment in November several minor changes were made to the complaints service.

- Previously we would keep complaints open on our system until any follow-on work had been booked and completed where required. The point of resolution for a complaint is now when this follow-on work has been booked, rather than completed. We will still keep complainants informed of follow-on work timelines and appointments, but now complaints are closed when the work required to resolve the complaint is booked.
- Our template for responding at stage one previously asked complainants why they considered their complaint still unresolved, and what they seek as a preferred resolution from escalating their case to stage two. Complainants are no longer required to answer these questions before we will escalate a case, but we do still ask for the information to help guide stage two investigators. A simple further expression of dissatisfaction is enough to escalate a case.
- Our complaints form now asks complainants if the Council need to make any reasonable adjustments when investigating the complaint or communicating with the complainant. 38 requests for a reasonable adjustment were made since the feature went live in November, and the most common use of this feature so far has been to request a certain communication method or to inform us of any circumstances which may cause communication difficulties.

Council Group Design

Following the Council group structure redesign, it will be necessary to amend our complaints system hierarchy to mirror this new structure. This work will take place early in Q2 2025-26, and will give new Service Managers more visibility of the complaints their services are receiving, giving them opportunities to take improvement actions. Quarterly reports will continue to be taken to Corporate Management Team Meetings, which are also attended by Leadership Team, and training is provided to those who have not had experience of investigating complaints in the past.

How complaints were received

Year	Email	Web	Telephone	Face to Face	Letter
2024-25	9%	84%	6%	<1%	<1%
2023-24	7%	86%	5%	<1%	1%
2022-23	8%	84%	6%	<1%	1%

The majority of complaints were received via a digital channel, predominantly via customers submitting their complaints themselves. 84% of complaints were logged by members of the public using the web form to report directly into the Council's Complaints Tracker, which is a slight decrease from 86% last year.

The face-to-face customer service staff have continued to assist customers to self-serve using digital options. Five complaints were submitted using this contact method, which is one more than last year.

Compliments

In 2024-25 the Council received 76 compliments across all services via Complaints Tracker, which is a minor increase of 9 compared to 2023-24.

However, some frontline services found that compliments were received directly to operatives or officers from residents. These have been mentioned in the service-by-service summaries where available.

Temporary Accommodation and Supported Housing received the highest number of compliments, with the majority relating to helpful staff members.

Officers are encouraged during training to formally record compliments as well as complaints, as managers had mentioned more than once that the number of compliments formally recorded was lower than expected. This is evidenced by only four compliments being formally registered on the case monitoring system, however a larger amount are received directly by Customer Services staff anecdotally following calls or appointments, and also via the newly implemented customer satisfaction system.

Customer Satisfaction Feedback System

In Q3 2023-24 Customer Support (Customer Services) implemented a new system to measure how satisfied customers were following their interactions with the team. Any customer who calls from a mobile number will be sent a text message automatically at the conclusion of their call, which contains a link to a form where they can leave feedback on the experience they had with the advisor who served them. Customers can opt-out of receiving this survey, but we do still receive a good number of responses.

Since launching the feedback form, we have analysed the responses and have removed the option to leave neutral feedback, ensuring customers give a positive or negative response facilitates targeted improvements. Neutral responses may not have been considered as important enough to investigate.

The Business Improvement team analyse the feedback gathered within these forms to identify potential improvements to the Customer Service offering within the centre.

Telephone	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Apr	Total	Percentage
Positive	174	45	226	320	253	284	304	264	208	271	268	351	2968	85%
Negative	34	10	34	65	42	44	58	44	44	41	43	61	520	15%

A link to the survey is included within the signature for all emails that leave the Council's contact system, however the response rate for email is much lower. Similarly, there is a console within the front of house area of the Customer Service Centre, but with the low number of appointments each month, the response rate has also been low for this.

Email	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Apr	Total	Percentage
Positive	2	2	2	3	3	1	1	2	0	2	4	4	26	63%
Negative	0	0	2	0	4	2	0	2	2	0	3	0	15	37%

F2F	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Apr	Total	Percentage
Positive	1	0	0	3	3	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	10	100%
Negative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%

Clarissa Norman, Customer Services Operations Manager:

In 2024-2025 we received 3004 customer satisfaction surveys, all but 36 of the responses related to the contact centre.

85% of customers were satisfied with the service they had received from the advisor.

Managers in Customer Services look into every dissatisfied report customers submit - 15% or 451 responses across the year.

Of the 15% of customers who submitted negative feedback, 61% (275) of these customers used this outcome to represent their feelings with the outcome of the call, or their feedback was found to be unwarranted. Our investigations have found this outcome is also selected where we have not been able to give the customer an update to their original service request, or where customers have been transferred to back office teams and we do not know the content of the conversation.

The feedback we are receiving is allowing us to better identify knowledge gaps/training needs for the team, improve our processes and update websites/information sources to give customers a better experience. In the past year as a result of feedback we have:

- Improved our call routing for customers reporting traveller encampments and Pinder enquiries so they avoid unnecessary messaging
- Ensured the waste web pages are updated to reflect the correct process for bulky collections
- Reviewed and rationalised our contact centre messaging for Council Tax callers, with updated Waste messaging going live in June 2025
- Prioritised customers calling about Benefits as well as Elections calls (on polling day only) to ensure customers who are vulnerable or who's call is time sensitive have their calls answered as quickly as possible.
- Updated a number of incorrect web pages and telephone numbers

Digital Options:

The customer satisfaction survey asks customers about their awareness of our digital options and why they chose to call/email/visit Customer Services.

In 2023 – 2024, 52% of customers stated they were aware of our digital options, in 2024-2025 the percentage was 51%.

Customers reasons for calling:						
Year	Easier to Call	Prefer to speak to a person	Online not working/not available	Following up previous contact	Emergency	Other
2023 – 2024	21.4%	26%	20.7%	10.7	10.5%	10.7%
2024 - 2025	16.8%	47.4%	19%	9.1%	7.7%	0

In 2023 -2024, 52% of customers said that they are aware of the digital options available to them but still call the Council to speak to an advisor. This trend has continued into 2024 – 2025 with 51% of customers confirming they were aware of digital options.

The reasons why customers decided to call customer services have changed in 2024 – 2025, potentially as a result of specific options being offered rather than free form text boxes. These themes were created from the feedback customers submitted in 2023 - 2024 and were introduced last year to make analysis easier.

This feedback makes it clear that customers prefer to/ comment that it is easier to call and speak to an advisor - 64.2% of customers told us this was why they telephoned despite having knowledge of our Digital options.

Online options not working or not available continued to account for approximately 20% of calls where customers knew about digital options.

Service-by-Service Complaint Trends and Management Response

Each council department reviews the complaints and compliments it receives on a quarterly basis. This enables services to identify if there are any trends in the types of complaint being made or the services that complaints are being made about. As a result, changes can be made to services and how they are provided.

The next section of this report details comments from Services on actions they have taken to prevent, improve or change as a result of the feedback received in previous years. The total figure in the first column is the sum of Stage 1 and 2 complaints.

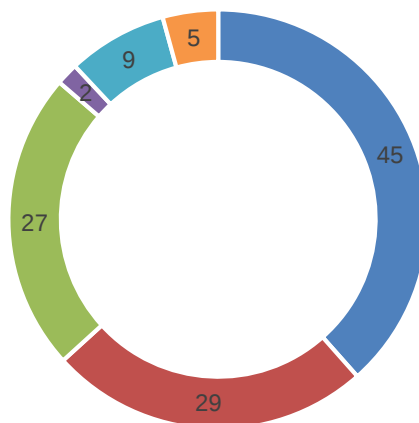
Complaints by sub-service are identified in the pie chart, this is how a service is broken down into the individual service request areas within. The bar graph displays resolution themes, or where these themes are too diffused and a trend cannot be identified, the bars will display root causes.

A resolution theme is the service specific content of the complaint (missed bin for example), whereas a root cause is a reason for the complaint which is generic across all services (service delivery failure).

Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service

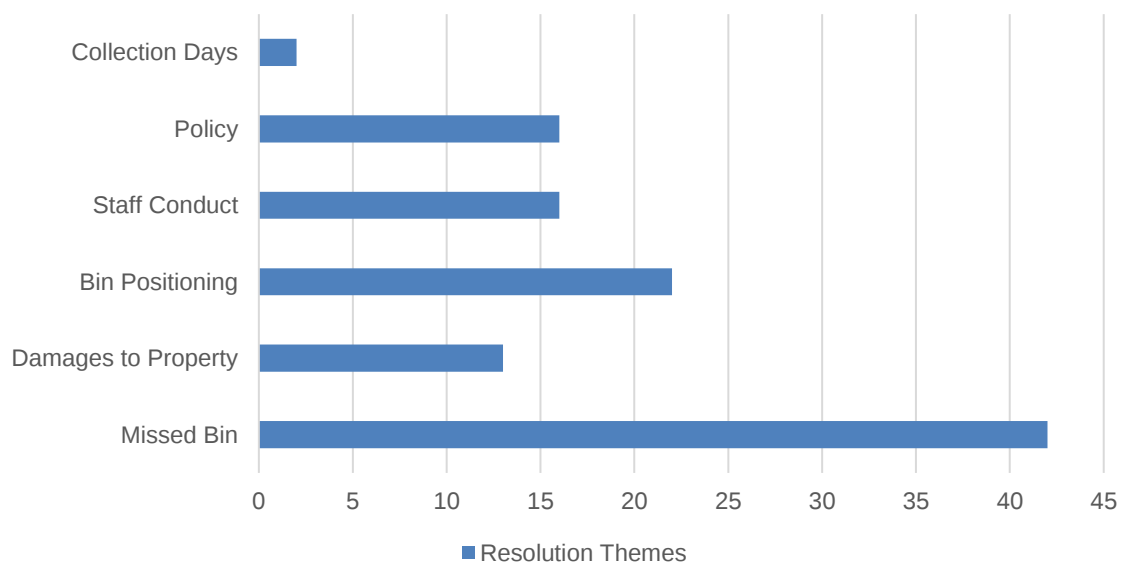
Waste	Total Complaints	Stage 1 Complaints	Stage 2 Complaints	Complaints in Target	Compliments
2024-25	117	111	6	92%	7
2023-24	166	159	7	93%	5
2022-23	164	153	11	60%	4

Cases by Sub-Service



■ Black Bins ■ Blue Bins ■ Green Bins ■ Collection Schedule Changes ■ Damages ■ Trade Waste

Resolution Themes



Greater Cambridge Shared Waste: Service Comments

Bode Esan, Head of Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service:

The Shared Waste Service undertakes in the region of 798,500 collections per month, collecting an average of 3 bins per household per fortnight, of which approximately 40% of total bin collections per month are within City. The service has maintained the number of successful collections at 99.89%

During 2024-2025, Shared Waste Services saw the addition of 2,400 properties, each with an average of 3 bins per household, resulting in approximately 7,200 extra collections compared to the previous year.

This year saw a reduction in complaints from 139 to 115 with the same 97% response rate of the corporate timeframe of 10 days for stage 1 and 20 days for stage 2

A total of 42% of complaints during this period were related to missed bin collections and of those 39% of were marked as unjustified. The issues reported included residents disputing crew notifications, bins being only partially emptied, repeated missed collections, and missed underground bins

There was a 15% increase in complaints that related to disputed crew notifications – including contaminated bins and bins marked as ‘not out’ for collection. This trend suggests that crews are demonstrating increased vigilance in monitoring and reporting bin issues via the InCab devices

This year, we have seen a noticeable reduction in complaints about repeated missed bin collections. This improvement is largely due to more accurate and timely reporting from our crews, which has helped us address issues related to bin collection points more effectively. Additionally, increased feedback from operatives, who regularly work across the district and have a clearer understanding of the status of new developments, has played a key role in ensuring the timely delivery of bins to new properties. This has further contributed to maintaining consistent and reliable service delivery.

We have seen a rise in complaints from residents regarding the positioning of bins after collection. Reports indicate that bins are sometimes not returned to their designated collection points, or are left obstructing pavements, roads, or driveways. To address this, part of the crew training delivered in the first quarter of this year focused on the importance of safe and correct bin placement. In addition, reminder notifications are issued to crews to reinforce this message

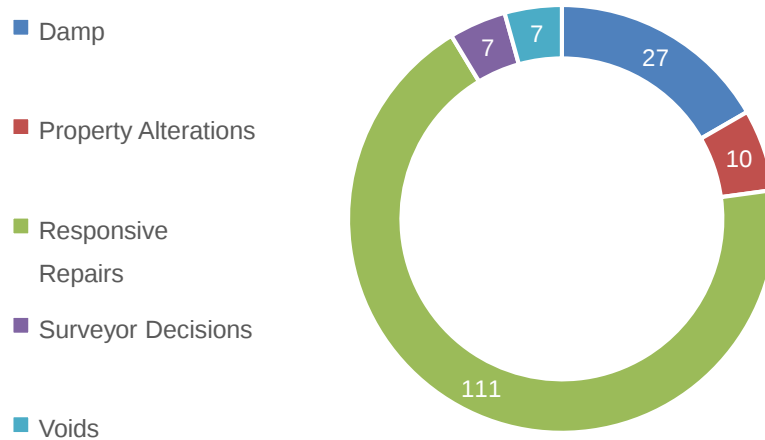
We have seen an increase in compliments from residents, particularly praising the friendly and helpful attitude of our crews. Many have gone out of their way to assist residents and have been described as impressive, fast, and efficient.

The Shared Waste Service routinely gathers data on collections and carries out monthly reviews of missed collection reports. This proactive approach allows us to identify patterns and recurring issues, enabling timely interventions and helping us maintain consistently high collection performance.

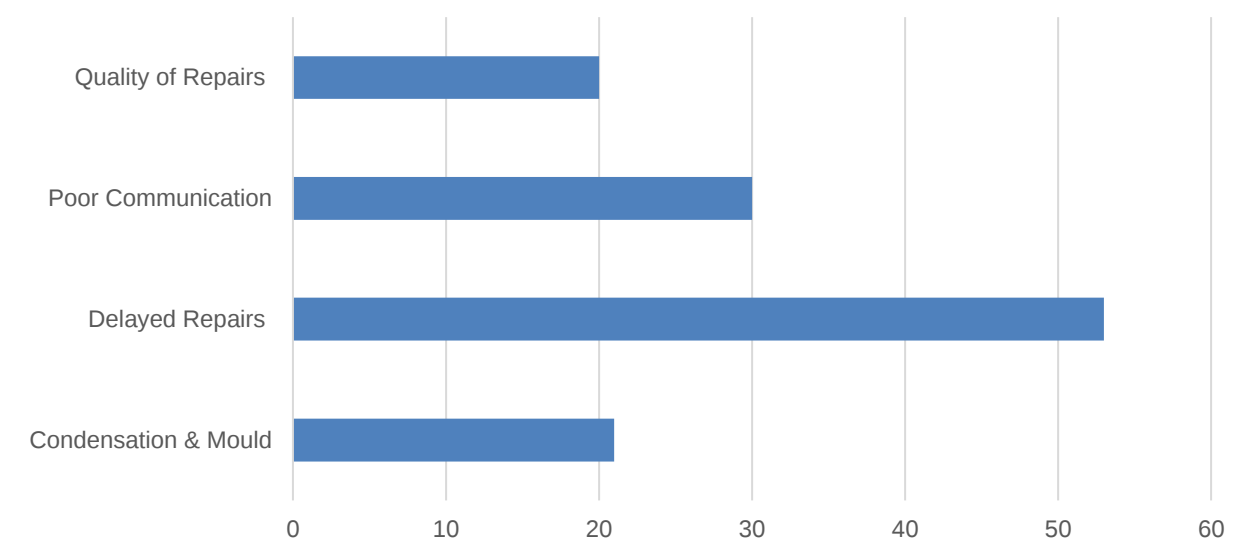
Housing Maintenance: Responsive Repairs

Repairs	Total Complaints	Stage 1 Complaints	Stage 2 Complaints	Complaints in Target	Compliments
2024-25	162	142	20	86%	9
2023-24	184	164	20	46%	12
2022-23	179	155	24	78%	18

Cases by Sub-Service



Resolution Themes



Housing Assets & Maintenance - Service Comments

Laura Herrera-Martin, Service Improvement Project Officer:

In 2024–25, the Housing Repairs and Maintenance team made strong progress in improving the quality and responsiveness of its services. Over the course of the year, 16,373 in-house repair jobs were completed, along with 6,939 jobs from other work streams. In total, 192 complaints were received—representing just 0.82% of all jobs. This low complaint rate highlights the overall effectiveness and reliability of the service delivered to our tenants.

Of the total complaints received, 142 were resolved at Stage 1 and 20 escalated to Stage 2, consistent with previous years. Significantly, 86% of complaints were resolved within target timescales, a major improvement from 46% in 2023–24. This improvement reflects the success of operational changes, particularly the decision to pass complaints directly to key service staff, enabling faster and more efficient resolutions at the first point of contact.

Another positive development was the positive feedback from residents, with 9 compliments received this year—up from zero in 2023–24—indicating a growing level of tenant satisfaction.

A key development since November 2024 has been the introduction of a specialist surveying service focused on damp, mould and condensation cases, and disrepair claims, along with a dedicated contractor to complete all remedial works identified in the reports. This has enabled targeted use of resources and reduced the number of appointments to fix reported issues.

In parallel, the team has placed a renewed emphasis on enhancing communication channels, including ongoing updates to the Housing Repairs section of our website. These improvements are aimed at increasing transparency, managing expectations, and making it easier for tenants to access information and report damp and mould issues.

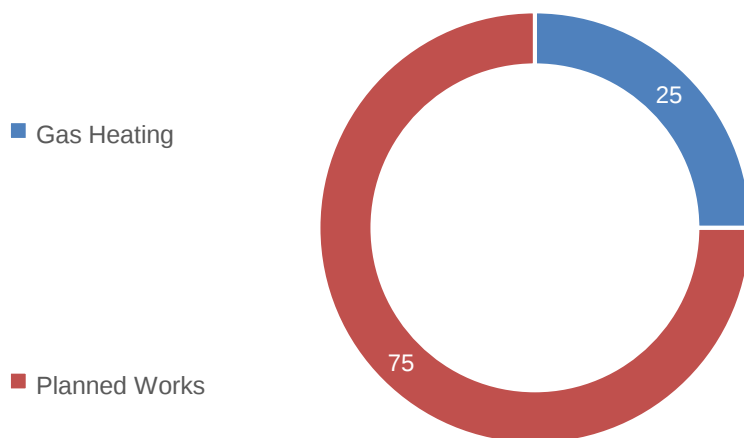
The majority of complaints—111 out of 162 categorised cases—were related to Responsive Repairs, accounting for nearly 69% of all complaints by sub-service. This is consistent with the high volume and day-to-day nature of responsive repair jobs.

Damp-related issues accounted for 27 complaints (17%), reflecting ongoing concern from residents about property conditions. This highlights the importance of our investment in specialist damp and mould surveyor services and dedicated contractors, brought on board in late 2024. Our focus for the year ahead will remain on improving repair timeframes, enhancing the quality and consistency of communication with tenants. Building on the progress made in 2024–25, we are committed to delivering a responsive, high-quality repairs and maintenance service that tenants can rely on, alongside ensuring tenants feel heard, respected, and fully supported to reside in good quality homes.

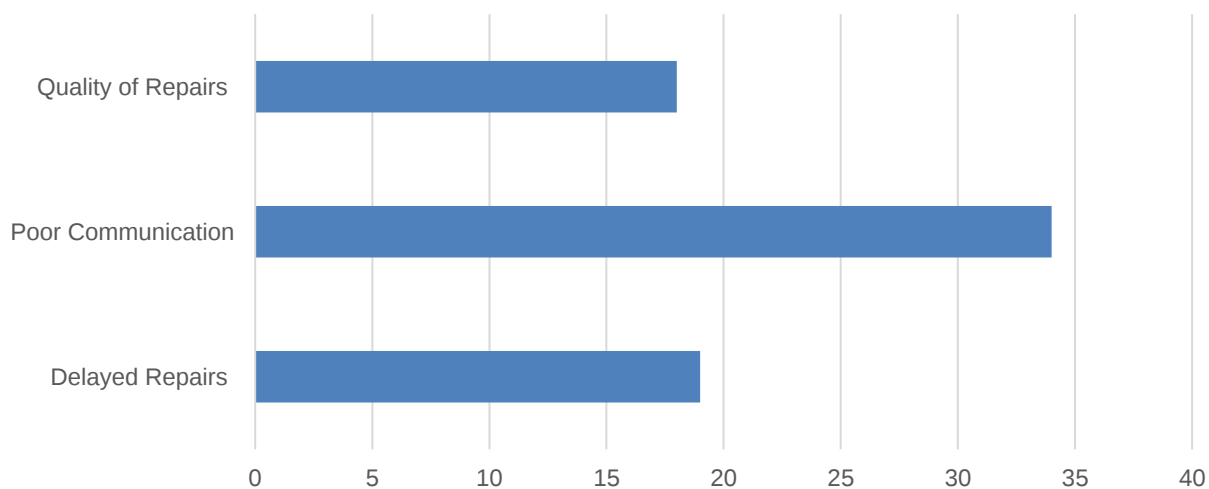
Housing Maintenance & Assets: Planned Works & Compliance

Compliance	Total Complaints	Stage 1 Complaints	Stage 2 Complaints	Complaints in Target	Compliments
2024-25	100	84	16	56%	1
2023-24	74	66	8	64%	2
2022-23	109	99	10	82%	2

Cases by Sub-Service



Resolution Themes



Planned Works & Compliance - Service Comments

Will Barfield, Asset Manager:

The Asset Management Team in City Services Group are responsible for planned building maintenance and investment in the Council's housing stock, operational, and commercial buildings.

We carry out an annual programme of planned maintenance work across the Council's 7,600 homes, 1,200 leases, operational buildings, car parks and commercial properties. During the year 2024/2025 we completed over 3000 planned maintenance jobs, 1700 planned maintenance service inspections and over 1000 surveys and inspections to help us plan works and record the condition of property.

In 2024/2025 the total number of complaints we received increased to 100, although this represents a small percentage of all services provided. The Council invested over £22m in the delivery of planned maintenance services in 24/25.

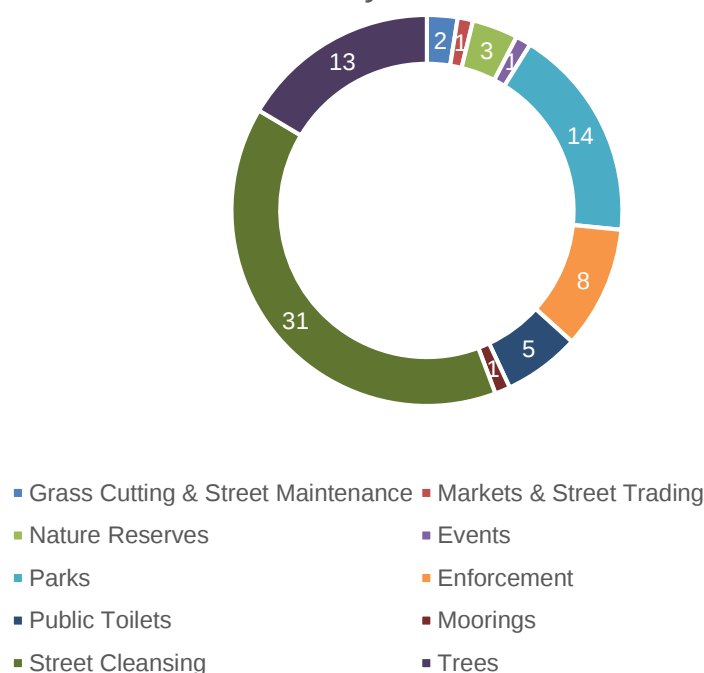
Many of our complaints are about things done by external contractors who are carrying out work for the Council – for example failing to keep people informed, or not completing work to the quality expected. We collect customer satisfaction feedback from tenants who have received planned maintenance work, and this shows a consistent high level of customer satisfaction with planned maintenance. We also proactively inspect completed planned work using our surveying teams and work is generally completed to a very high standard.

Where there are complaints about planned works carried out by contractors, we follow this up at contract meetings and expect the contractor to help resolve the situation, to ensure we minimise repeat complaints in future.

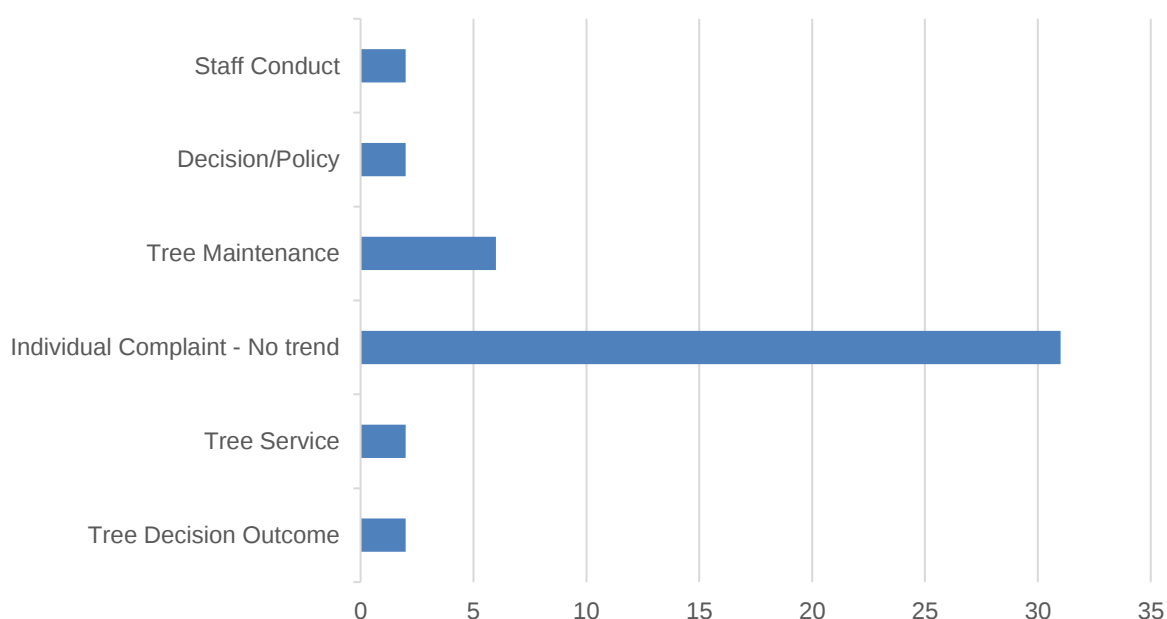
Environmental Services – Streets & Open Spaces

Streets & Open Spaces	Total Complaints	Stage 1 Complaints	Stage 2 Complaints	Complaints in Target	Compliments
2024-25	79	71	8	82%	13
2023-24	97	88	9	78%	21
2022-23	86	80	6	85%	16

Cases by Sub-Service



Resolution Themes



Streets & Open Spaces - Service Comments

Alistair Wilson, Strategic Delivery Manager:

Our Streets and Open Spaces (S&OS) service, comprising around 130 staff, is responsible for maintaining the city's streets, parks, and open spaces (approximately 300 hectares), including public trees (c.33,000), play areas (c.107), public toilets (13), allotment sites (26), and a seven-day-a-week market and street trading service. We also provide daily street cleansing, grounds maintenance, and enforcement services.

Over the past year, we have continued to see strong community use of our parks and green spaces for informal leisure and recreation. However, this high level of usage—particularly during summer evenings and weekends—has also led to seasonal challenges, particularly littering and wear on key infrastructure.

In the reporting period from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, the S&OS service received **79 formal complaints**, a modest reduction from the **95 received in 2023–24**. Considering the scale of our operations and customer interactions, this represents a relatively low level of complaint activity.

Complaint breakdown by service area:

- **Street Cleansing – 31 complaints (39.2%)**
The largest proportion of complaints, many of which were received during the summer months when public use of parks and city spaces peaks. There is no notable pattern beyond seasonality.
- **Parks and Open Space Management – 14 complaints (17.7%)**
Includes concerns about event-related activity and noise. In 2024, updated licence conditions for events on Midsummer Common introduced a requirement to supply a Noise Management Plan to help mitigate such issues.
- **Trees – 13 complaints (16.5%)**
These primarily relate to concerns about tree maintenance, planting positions, and storm-related damage. Where necessary, complaints were reviewed on site and responses provided.
- **Public Realm Enforcement – 8 complaints (10.1%)**
These typically reflect dissatisfaction with the outcome or focus of enforcement activity rather than process errors.
- **Public Toilets – 5 complaints (6.3%)**
Complaints were mostly related to cleaning standards and maintenance. Where issues were raised, additional inspections and remedial actions were carried out.
- **Nature Reserves – 3 complaints (3.8%)**
Limited complaints relating to maintenance or access concerns.

- **Grass Cutting and Grounds Maintenance** – 2 complaints (2.5%)
Both complaints related to early mowing during the ‘No Mow May’ period. These cuts were carried out for health and safety or operational access reasons.
- **River Moorings, Open Space Events, and Markets and Street Trading** – 1 complaint each (1.3% each)
Each of these represents isolated issues with no broader pattern.

Other Key Updates:

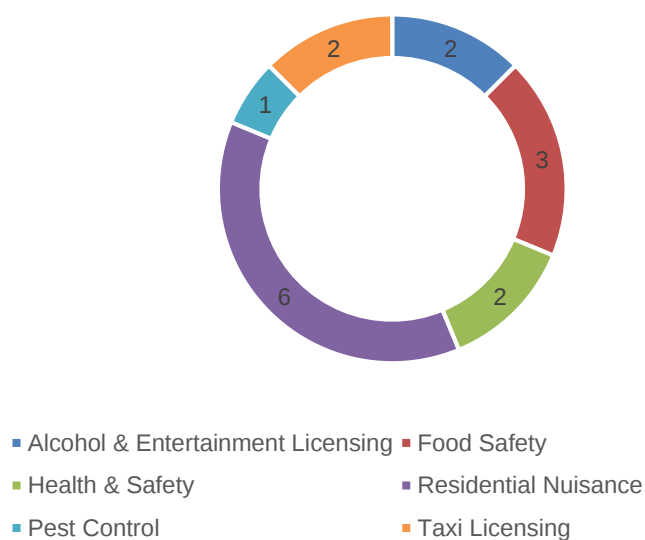
- A new review of litter bin placement and collection schedules will be undertaken in 2025–26 to better align with footfall and usage patterns.
- Driving-related complaints (logged separately in previous years) were not a distinct category in 2024–25; no clusters were identified.

While challenges remain, especially during peak seasons, the year-on-year decrease in complaint volumes suggests that improvements in service coordination, event management planning, and customer communication are having a positive impact.

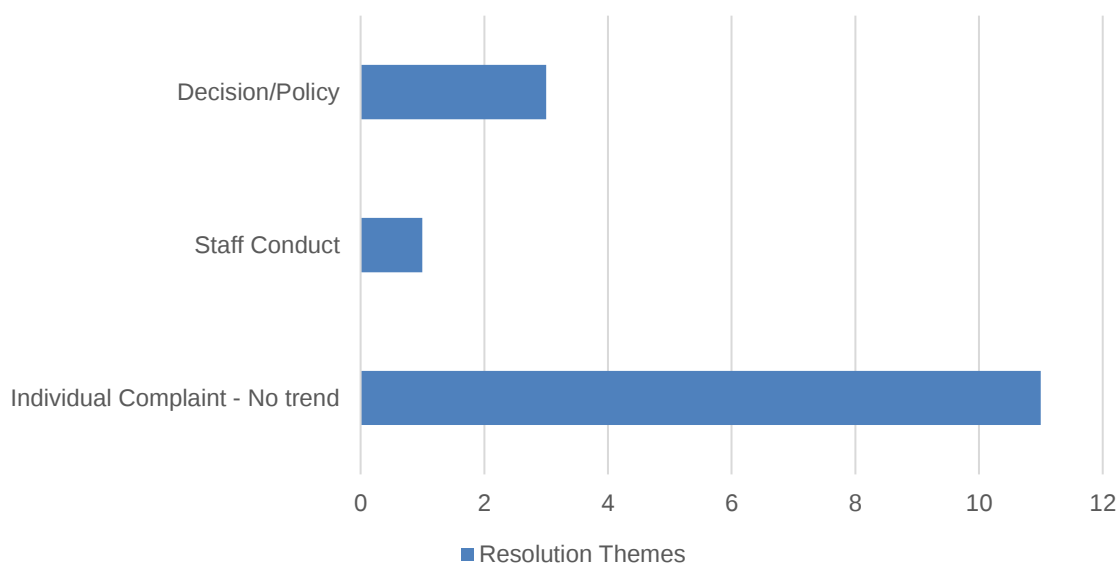
Environmental Services – Environmental Health

Environmental Health	Total Complaints	Stage 1 Complaints	Stage 2 Complaints	Complaints in Target	Compliments
2024-25	16	14	2	88%	2
2023-24	17	16	1	82%	-
2022-23	12	12	0	92%	5

Cases by Sub-Service



Resolution Themes



Environmental Health - Service Comments

Yvonne O'Donnell, Environmental Health Manager:

Environmental Health (EH) service employs c44 staff and is responsible for taxi and premises licensing, food safety, health and safety and infectious disease control. The service also provides technical input to Planning on all aspects of EH, including air quality, noise and contamination. It also provides services to improve the private rented sector through education, enforcement, licensing of houses in multiple occupation and bringing empty homes back into use and energy efficiency. It also provides a pest control service.

Over the course of 2024/25, the EH has delivered the following services:

428 Private Sector Homes brought up to a safe and suitable standard for occupation

15 Empty Homes brought back into use

687 Food Safety Inspections

26 Licensing Inspections including 3 night time operations

980 Pest Control cases

1654 Planning consultations

1881 Licensing Applications processed

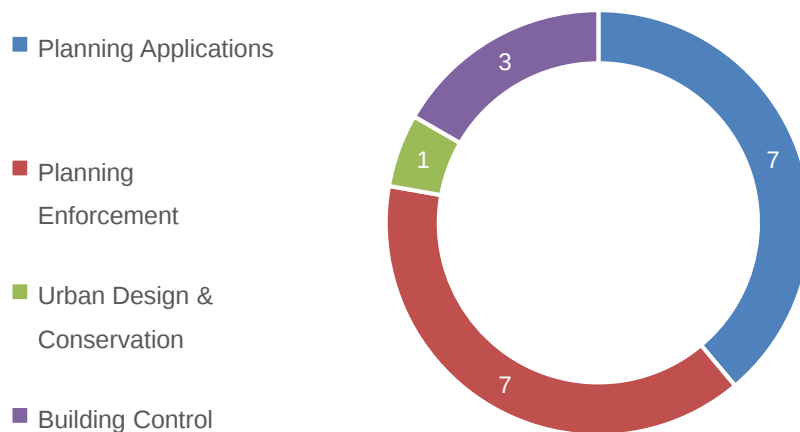
2588 Service Requests, including housing, food safety, health and safety, licensing, taxis, noise nuisance

Despite the scale of operation and associated customer contact, as outlined above, the EH service received a total of just 16 complaints in 2024/25, which is a slight decrease from the previous year's figure of 17. Of the 16 cases received, the service areas with the included in the numbers of cases were respectively: Domestic Noise (6); Food Safety (3), Licensing (2) Taxi (2) Health and Safety (2) and Pest Control (1). These figures are not considered significant and an analysis of each of the associated cases shows there was no particular complaint type or underlying causal theme.

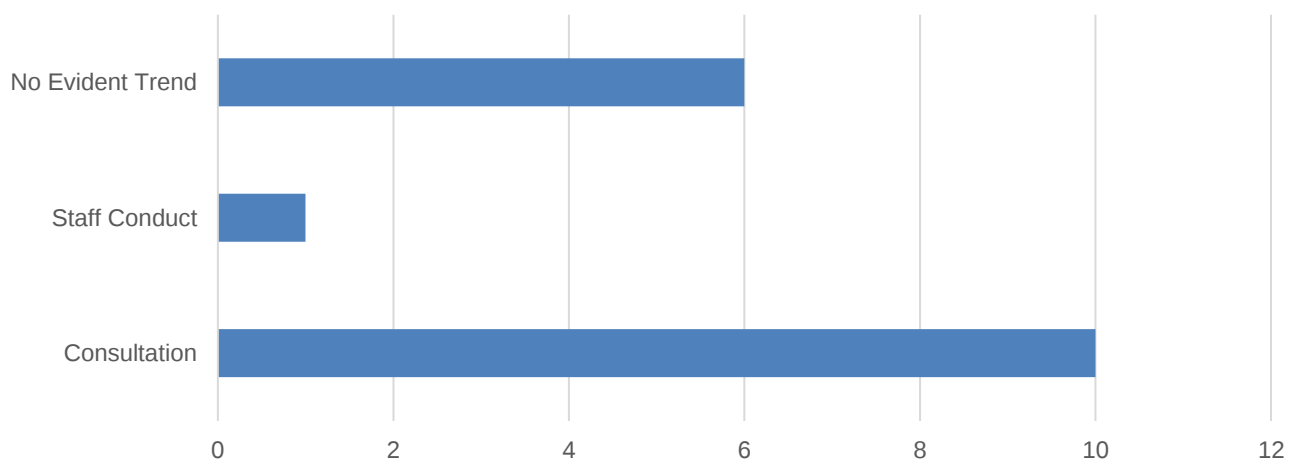
Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service

Waste	Total Complaints	Stage 1 Complaints	Stage 2 Complaints	Complaints in Target	Compliments
2024-25	18	14	4	83%	-
2023-24	22	17	5	68%	1
2022-23	23	21	2	76%	-

Cases by Sub-Service



Resolution Themes



Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service - Service Comments

Heather Jones, Deputy Director of GCSP and Building Control:

The team are continuously improving the handling of complaints, and there is a continuing trend of real time reduction again from 17 total stage 1 complaints in 2023/2024 to 14 total stage 1 complaints in 2024/2025 which is a year on year reduction. Stage 2 complaints have reduced in that time although this is a modest 5 to 4. Complaints responded to in target timescales has increased significantly from 68% to 83% and is an area the team will continue to target to improve to meet the internal response performance indicator of 90%.

Review of complaints performance form part of the Quality Management System the team adopted in July 2023 for DM and Compliance, which was expanded to the whole service in 2024, achieving ISO9001:2015. The external auditors are complimentary on the handling of complaints by the service.

In 2024/2025 the team focused on improving householder decisions reaching an average of circa 7.8 weeks to determine applications, this has been very much appreciated by applicants. The team have also achieved their goal to reach second quartile in the overall performance rating for the Country, which is excellent news.

Again, the majority of the complaint cases have remained consistent with previous years, with most related to planning applications and planning enforcement. The resolution themes also remains consistent, where the majority are related to “consultations” replicating last year. This is an external factor outside of the control of the planning service. Otherwise, the next highest theme is “no evidence of any trend” and again illustrates an improvement across the service in responsiveness.

The achievement of the service of the ISO9001:2025 Quality Management System for the whole service illustrates the commitment to continuous improvement. The live dashboard of performance statistics has been expanded across the functions and is accessible by every team member encourages accountability and reinforces empowerment for every individual in the service.

Customer Services

Customer Services	Total Complaints	Stage 1 Complaints	Stage 2 Complaints	Complaints in Target	Compliments
2024-25	10	9	1	100%	3
2023-24	24	22	2	100%	2
2022-23	22	22	-	100%	11

Customer Services - Service comments

Clarissa Norman, Customer Services Operations Manager:

In 2024-2025 Customer services handled in excess of 225,000 contacts via telephone, email and face to face and received 10 complaints down from 24 in 2023-2024, which equates to a nearly 60% reduction. Complaints continue to be very low in relation to the amount of contacts the team receive, 0.005%.

The low numbers of complaints can be attributed to acting responsively on customer feedback. Customer Service Managers review every negative feedback submitted by customers to determine the cause and whether process changes, customer communications or staff training is required. Where the feedback relates to back-office processes this is also passed onto the appropriate service manager for them to act on.

In October 2023 the team launched a customer satisfaction survey to replace govmetric. The survey is attached to email footers, is available on a tablet in reception and is also texted to all customers who speak to an advisor. In 2024-2025 customer satisfaction continued to be positive, on average 250 responses are received each month, and 85% of customers said that they are satisfied with the service they received.

For the fourth year running 100% of complaints received in Customer Services were responded to within target and only one complaint was escalated to stage 2.

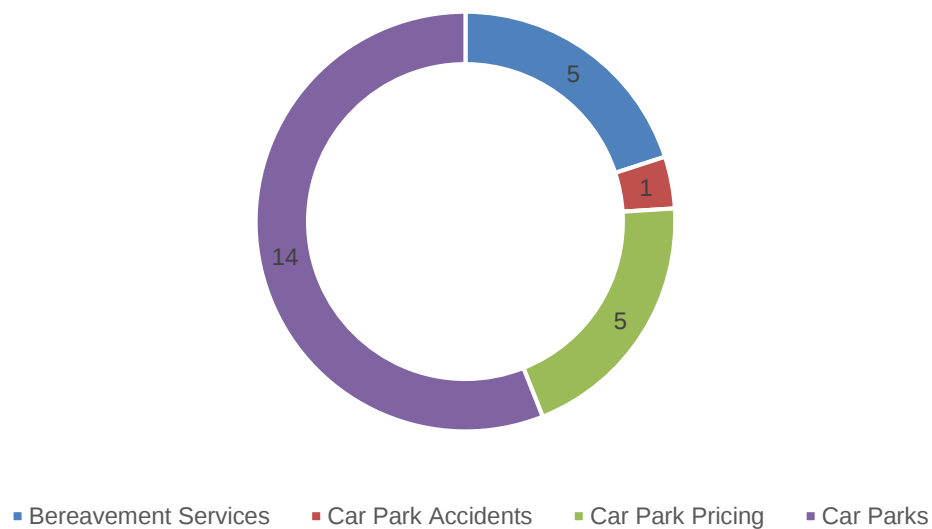
In 2024-2025, 40% of the complaints submitted were not upheld, 30% were upheld and 10% were partially upheld, with only one complaint being escalated to stage 2 this indicates that customer service managers are listening and acting on complaints/feedback even when

With the number of complaints received, trends could not be identified.

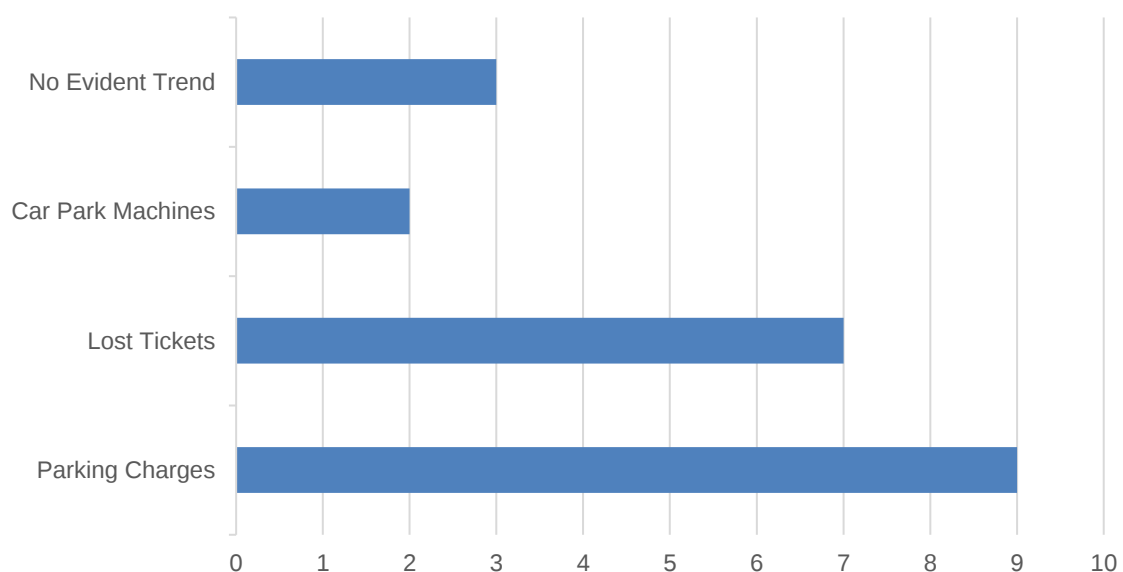
City Services (formerly Commercial Services)

City Services	Total Complaints	Stage 1 Complaints	Stage 2 Complaints	Complaints in Target	Compliments
2024-25	25	19	6	48%	-
2023-24	37	26	11	78%	5
2022-23	42	37	5	95%	3

Cases by Sub-Service



Resolution Themes



Commercial Services - Service Comments

Daniel Morgan, City Services Operations Manager:

Overall Parking & Bereavement Services received few complaints than 23-24 (25 compared to 37) 20 related to Parking Services & 5 for Bereavement Services.

The most common subjects of complaint linked to parking services were:

- *Car parking charges* (11 complaints, of which 6 were specifically around the lost ticket charge)
- *General comments* (5) mostly linked to faulty lifts (both Shopping Centre & Car Park related)
- Other single-instance themes included car park machine faults and issues related to antisocial behaviour

In terms of root causes, the most frequently identified were:

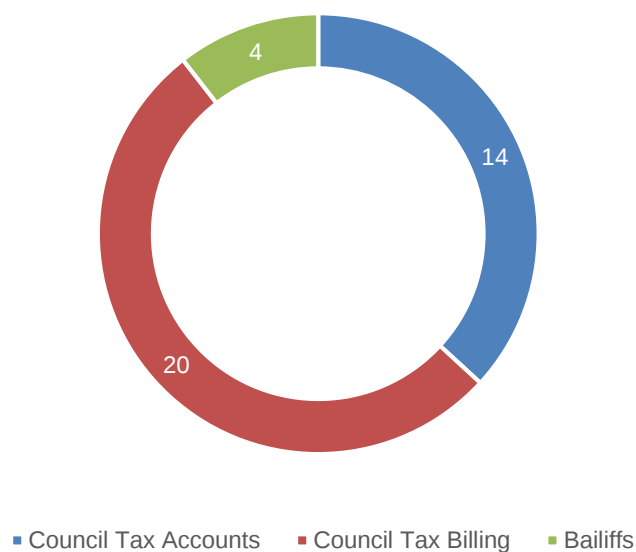
- *Decisions or policies* (11 complaints)
- *Procedures or planned & unplanned works* (4)

This data will continue to inform service reviews, with a focus on ensuring proportionate responses, clear communications, and early resolution to prevent escalation.

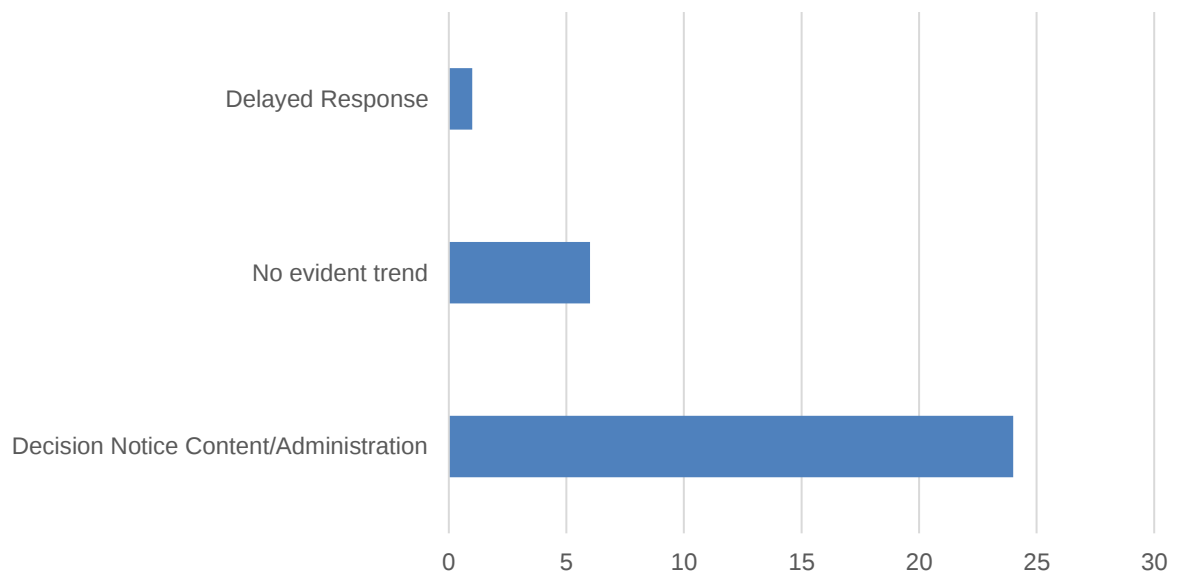
Local Taxation

Council Tax	Total Complaints	Stage 1 Complaints	Stage 2 Complaints	Complaints in Target	Compliments
2024-25	23	20	3	96%	5
2023-24	39	39	-	100%	2
2022-23	35	34	1	100%	4

Cases by Sub-Service



Resolution Themes



Local Taxation – Service Comments

Kevin Jay, Local Taxation Manager:

During 2024/25, the Revenues team sent over 220,000 documents, including council tax, business rates and Bid bills, reminders, final notices and summons and correspondence relating to customers moving in and out of properties and the administration of various discounts and exemptions.

Overall, the numbers of complaints received remains extremely low compared to the number of changes made to accounts and the direct interactions with residents.

The team bills and collects Council Tax , Business Rates and the Bid Levy and issues in excess of 100,000 bills annually which in turn generate a similar number of interactions including awards and decisions related to various discounts and exemptions.

The number of complaints remains consistently low and have reduced by over 40% compared to the previous years. The team focus on the quality and accuracy of the work being carried out with any emerging issues being dealt with quickly which helps to avoid customers having to resort to making formal complaints. Those that are raised through the formal complaint channel rarely escalate to stage 2.

The process of recovering and enforcing unpaid charges can generate complaints, however, processes are in place to be responsive to the needs of customers particularly the most vulnerable numbers. Complaints that do arise are handled sensitively to secure amicable outcomes with decisions balanced against the requirement to collect charges that fall due.

Complaint trends are not immediately apparent, some are linked to enforcement procedures where activities are primarily driven by a statutory process or relate to decisions connected to Council policy or Council Tax regulations. Previously there had been some complaints relating to processing delays, these have been virtually eliminated following the introduction of various internal processes which include prioritisation of work and suppressing recovery action on cases where work is outstanding.

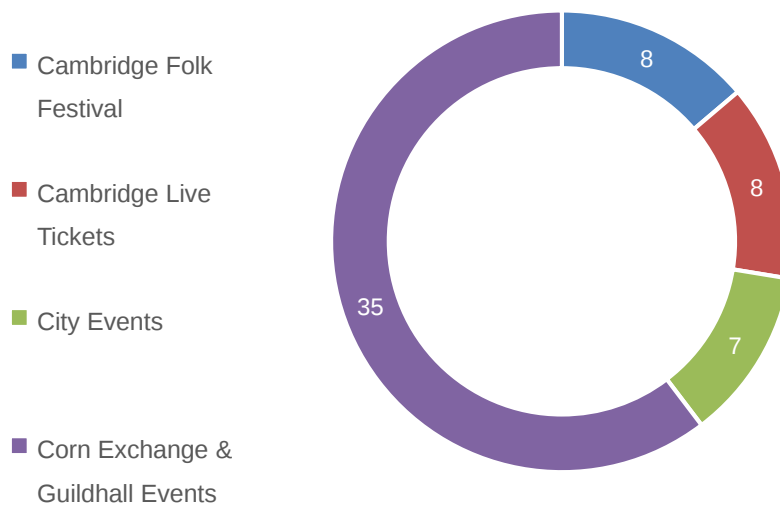
Some complaints arise from residents being unhappy with the wording of some enforcement documents, where possible we have addressed this by reworded some documents although we are limited in part to wording requirements of legislation. We work with those customers to find amicable solutions and to help reduce the impact further we have embedded text messaging into our recovery process to provide soft payment prompts prior to the issue of formal reminder notices.

Supporting vulnerable residents and those facing financial difficulties remains a priority for the team, balancing the need to ensure that bills are paid promptly whilst providing support, help and advice and understanding the needs of the most vulnerable.

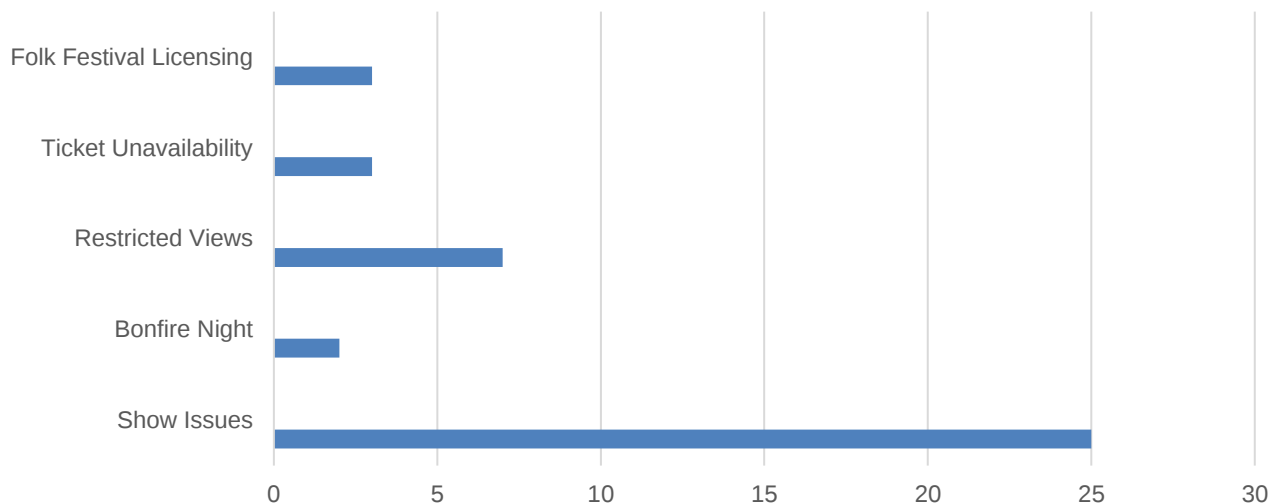
Cultural Services

Waste	Total Complaints	Stage 1 Complaints	Stage 2 Complaints	Complaints in Target	Compliments
2024-25	50	45	5	58%	3
2023-24	58	51	7	36%	3
2022-23	67	62	5	49%	3

Cases by Sub-Service



Resolution Themes



Cultural Services - Service comments

Service information by Thomas Thurbon, Venues Manager:

As in previous years, the majority of complaints within Cultural Services have continued to relate to events held at the Corn Exchange. This year, a significant number of complaints were specifically about the behaviour of other audience members particularly customers dancing in front of seated patrons, obstructing their view and concerns about the overall quality of certain shows.

To address these issues, we now have a dedicated programming team in place who are focused on improving the quality and consistency of our event schedule. This team will work more closely with promoters and artists to ensure audience expectations are better managed and show content is more clearly communicated in advance.

In response to complaints about disruptive behaviour during performances, we have introduced restricted dancing zones within the venue. These are clearly marked areas which are made clear at booking stage, designed to minimise impact on other customers' enjoyment, while still allowing for lively audience engagement where appropriate.

As with previous years, where issues are raised during an event, our front-of-house staff aim to resolve them at the time. When problems are reported after the fact, we have in some cases offered credit notes or refunds as a goodwill gesture.

Other improvements remain in progress. New seating addressing previous feedback about comfort—is scheduled to be completed in August 2025. Further work on the BMS, Air Handling and Boilers have also begun.

City Events information by Lewis Anderson, City Events Manager:

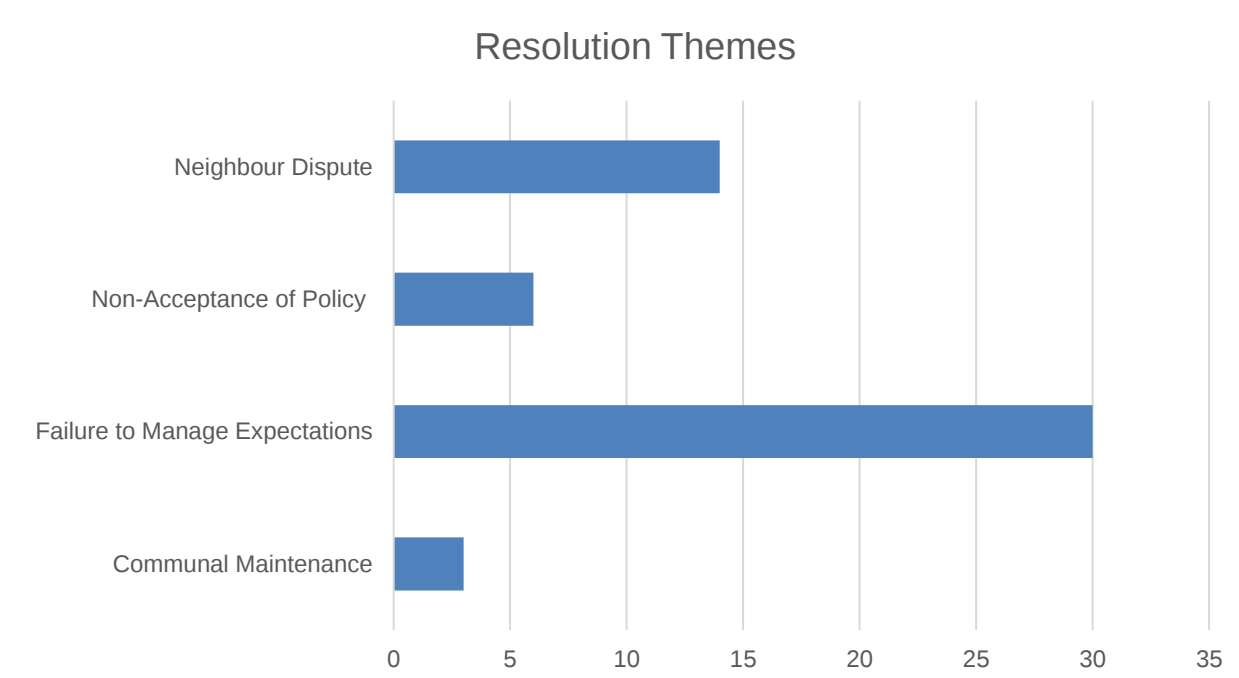
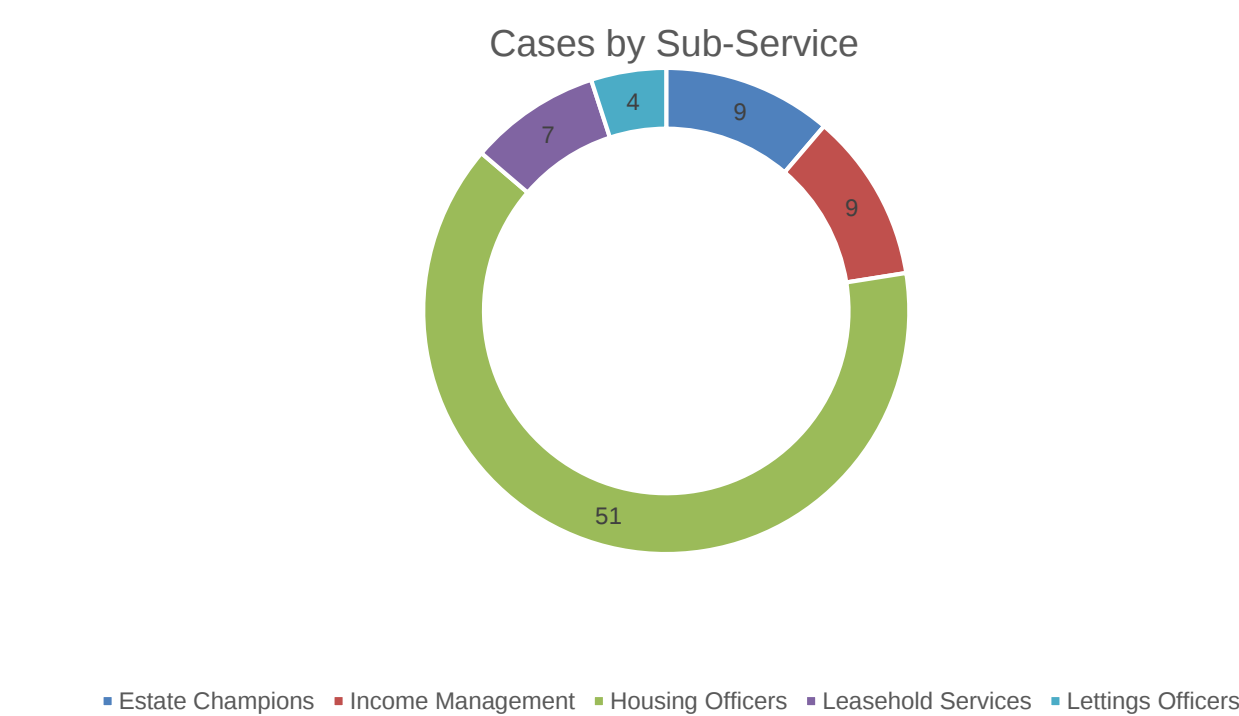
As with previous years, a lot of the complaints are members of the public criticizing or commenting on events, changes to events and issues beyond our control e.g. removing the bonfire (councillor decision), rain affecting the fireworks display, and general concerns. All comments/complaints of this nature are for information, with no action needed.

Each year we receive a small number of complaints regarding safety concerns which are taken very seriously and investigated, with the member of the public receiving a thorough response and reassurances. Often these are issues beyond our control, for example member of the public climbing over a fence and falling or a member of the public not requesting accessible transport at point of booking for Mayors Day Out.

This year complaints were received about Stagecoach Bus Company, who are an external partner in the event, therefore we treat these types of complaints as information, whilst giving a response and reassurance. Following a review, changes have been made going forward in partnership with Stagecoach Bus Company to try to reduce traffic congestion on the event date in the city.

Housing Services (City Homes)

Housing Services	Total Complaints	Stage 1 Complaints	Stage 2 Complaints	Complaints in Target	Compliments
2024-25	80	67	13	96%	2
2023-24	85	74	11	89%	3
2022-23	56	49	7	93%	13



Housing Services (City Homes) – Service Comments

Anna Hill, Housing Services Manager:

We observed a slight reduction in the number of complaints received by City Homes during 2024–2025 compared to 2023–2024. However, the top two complaint themes remain unchanged:

- Neighbour Disputes – 17.5%
- Failure to Manage Expectations – 37.5%

It's important to note that the overall number of complaints remains low relative to the size of our customer base. With a combined housing stock of 8,807 tenants and leaseholders, only 0.9% of customers submitted a complaint.

Of the complaints received:

- 7 were upheld
- 9 were partially upheld
- 18 were not upheld
- 46 were resolved through other options that currently lack clear reporting value
- Financial redress was provided in 7 complaints.

To improve future reporting accuracy, we are refining the resolution categories. Additionally, the team has received further training on the complaint closure process to ensure consistency and clarity.

Where complaints involved a failure to manage customer expectations, the individuals concerned were addressed directly following the investigations.

Only three cases were not responded to within the target timescales. These delays were addressed with the relevant staff, and clear expectations around response times have been reinforced.

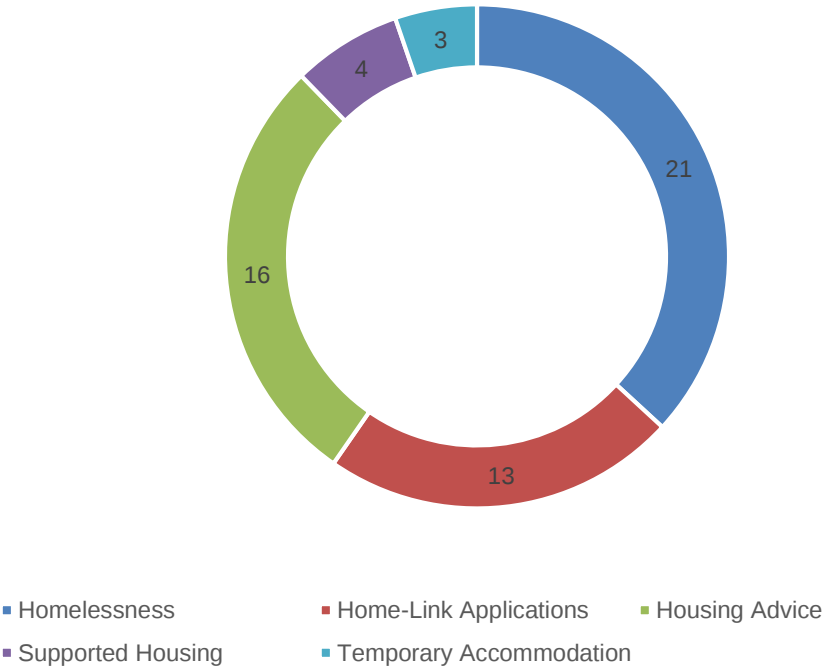
Some of the key recommendations for improvement are:

- Refine the complaint resolution categories in the system to ensure all outcomes are trackable and meaningful.
- Conduct regular audits of complaint closures to ensure accuracy and consistency.
- Continue targeted feedback and coaching for staff involved in upheld complaints

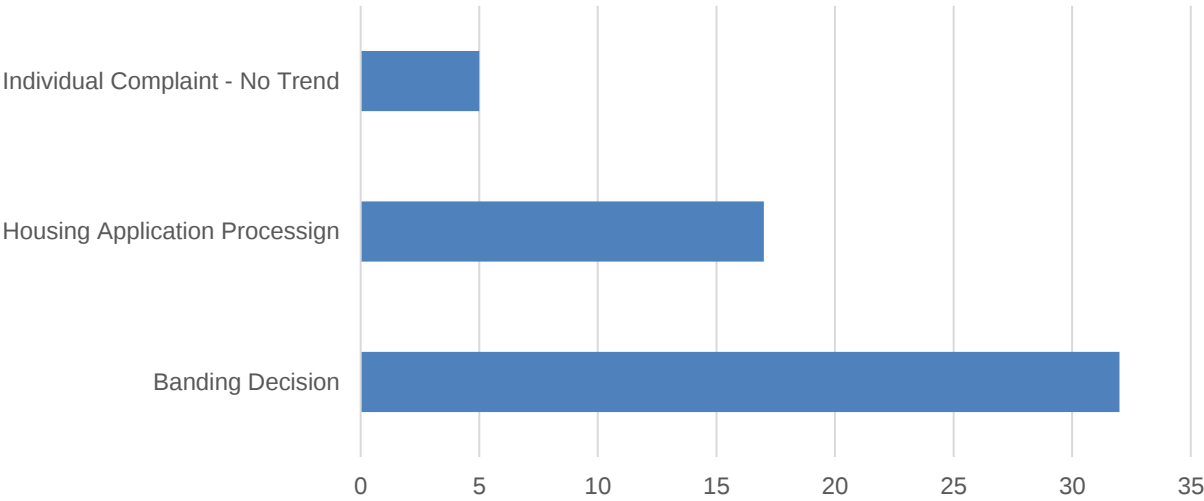
Housing Needs & Options Services

Housing Services	Total Complaints	Stage 1 Complaints	Stage 2 Complaints	Complaints in Target	Compliments
2024-25	57	45	12	83%	23
2023-24	44	40	4	87%	8
2022-23	44	40	4	84%	1

Cases by Sub-Service



Resolution Themes



Housing Needs & Options Services – Service Comments

Simon Hunt, Housing Services Manager:

The number of complaints received increased by 20% from 44 to 53. The proportion of complaints escalated from stage 1 to stage 2 increased from 9% to 21%.

However, the increase in complaints should be considered in the context of overall demand on the service. 9 % increase in total approaches to Housing Advice Service. It should also be noted that we received 23 compliments about the service in 2024/25, compared to 8 the previous year.

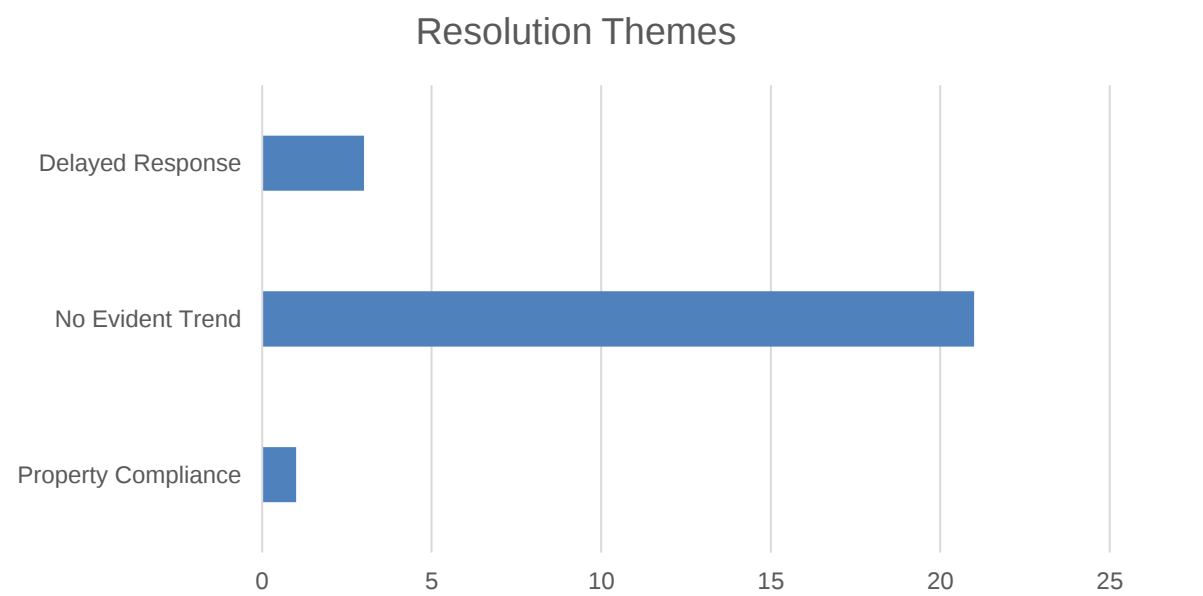
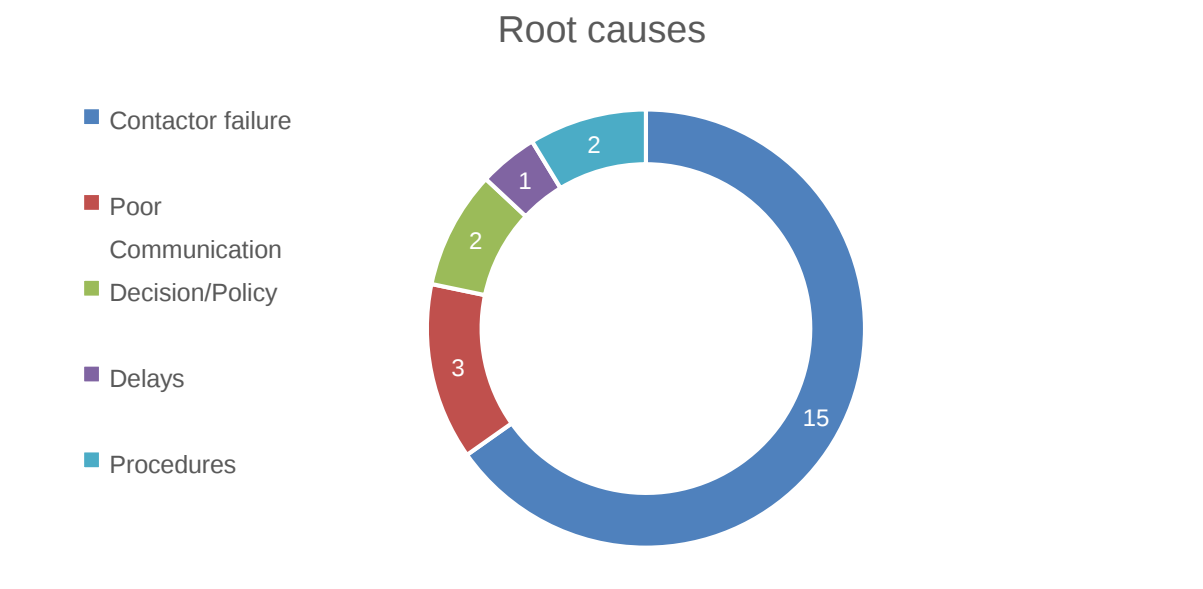
87% of complaints were responded to within target, identical to performance for last year.

In terms of service specific areas, approximately 70% of complaints related to housing advice and homelessness cases, an increase from 52% in 2023/24, with Home-Link complaints accounting for around 25% (down from 36%) and temporary housing accounting for the remaining 5% (down from 11%). That said, some of the housing advice/homelessness complaints are multi-faceted and cross into the other areas of the service. This is evidenced by the fact that a Home-Link banding decision accounts for 32 cases under 'Resolution themes' whereas only 13 complaints under the 'sub-service' category are recorded as being about Home-Link.

The outcomes show that 43.9% of cases were not upheld, 5.3% were marked as upheld (2 cases), and 31.6% were marked as partially upheld. 10.5% were marked as resolved, and the remainder marked as "N/A" Where cases were recorded as being partially upheld or upheld, whilst it is difficult to identify trends, themes here tended to be around communication errors and processing delays and minor processing errors leading to uncertainty for the applicant. In 42.1% of cases, whilst complaints were not upheld, customers were provided with advice and information for the purpose of clarifying process, policy and legislation.

Housing Development Agency

HDA	Total Complaints	Stage 1 Complaints	Stage 2 Complaints	Complaints in Target	Compliments
2024-25	28	20	8	79%	-
2023-24	18	15	3	50%	-
2022-23	6	5	1	56%	-



Housing Development Agency - Service Comments

Jaques van der Vyver, Programme Manager:

Complaints over the period categorise into three main groups; heating issues, general defects and rehousing activities pre-development.

The quantum of completed homes in 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 has been significant, totalling nearly 500 homes (c300 23/24 and c170 24/25). A two year period warrants consideration as a one year defect period applies during which complaints are directed to the development team. In addition, our pipeline schemes have involved current rehousing negotiations with 223 families.

In light of the volume of new homes being completed and considerable rehousing activities being undertaken the overall volume of complaints is very low.

The key theme emanating from complaints this year includes heating systems across a number of new build schemes, as noted in the Update Report to Housing Scrutiny committee in March 2025. Tenants have been subject to ongoing intermittent faults linked to a sub-contractor going into administration in late 2024. The sub-contract Installer, AJM Mechanical, had also been appointed to maintain the systems by the Council. Given the technical complex nature of these systems, delays have been encountered in verifying design, installation, and maintenance details, and in receiving new specialist input into remediation works. Remediation is now well underway and complaints are being addressed as a matter of urgency as received.

Other sources of complaint link to parking issues resultant from changes in policy, providing greater control and/or managing resident behaviours, and a couple of defects taking longer to satisfactorily address. We are inherently reliant on our third party partners and contractors given the nature of development work.

Moving forward we are adopting alternative heating technologies that also serve individual homes, as opposed to energy centres which impact multiple homes/blocks when issues arise.

The following services have not been reported on in detail due to the low number of complaints raised within them. However, a brief summary of performance is provided.

Commercial Property Services

Property Services received one stage one complaint. This case was not resolved within its target date.

Elections

Four stage one complaints were received relating to Elections this year. All of which were resolved within target.

Legal

Finance received two stage one complaints. One of which was resolved within target, and the other was not.

Active Lifestyles

Three stage one complaints were received relating to the Active Lifestyles team. All three were responded to within the target time.

Building Control

Building Control received three complaints at stage one this year. One of the three complaints was resolved within the target time.

Housing Benefit

Housing Benefit services received two complaints at stage one this year. Both were resolved within the target time.

Information Governance

Four cases were received relating to Information Governance this year. Two at stage one, and two at stage two. 3 of the cases were resolved within the target time. The case that missed the target was a stage one case.

Multi-Service Complaints

Multi-Service Complaints	Total Complaints	Stage 1 Complaints	Stage 2 Complaints	Complaints in Target
2024-25	47	41	6	70%
2023-24	41	36	5	83%
2022-23	42	32	10	83%

Multi-Service complaints tend to be more complex and involve more officer time to investigate, which in previous years has contributed to a low number of complaints responded to within target. This year the number of cases resolved within target has remained consistent with the previous two years which shows Officers are still handling these cases efficiently.

There were 6 more multi-service complaints in 2024-25 than in 2023-24.

This year the area with the highest number of multi-service complaints was City Homes with 17. Other high-volume areas involved in multi-service complaints are Housing Maintenance & Assets (8), and Streets & Open Spaces (8). This is the same as previous years, as Housing Maintenance & Assets complaints, and other community issues can often involve officers from the Housing service if the complaints concern decisions made by that service. The majority of the multi-service complaints involved a Housing Service as complaints had often been raised to a Housing Officer initially, but they have had to involve other services to find a resolution for the complainant.

There remains a correlation between multi-service complaints and Customer Services, as the Customer Service Centre is often the first point of contact for the majority of services offered by the Council. We are still careful to differentiate where the complainant actually complains about the service they received from the CSC, or if they are just mentioning the fact they were in contact with them as part of the background to their complaint. There were only two Multi-Service complaints which were also unhappy with the service they had received from the CSC this year.

When a multi-service complaint is allocated, potential case owners from all services involved are contacted to establish a lead officer who will then co-ordinate an investigation and response, including input from all relevant services.

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)

If customers are not satisfied with the way their complaint has been handled they can contact the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's office. The LGSCO investigates complaints of injustice arising from maladministration by local authorities and other bodies.

In 2024-25, 15 complaints about our services were raised with the ombudsman. Of these 15 complaints, six were outside of the ombudsman's jurisdiction, and nine were assessed and closed – no cases were investigated.

This is an improvement on previous years. In 2023/24 there were 17 complaints raised with one investigated and upheld in favour of the complainant. The remaining 16 complaints were not investigated, with four being outside of jurisdiction. In 2022/23, 25 cases were raised, six were investigated and five were upheld.

Comparing to similarly sized councils by population for 2024/25, Norwich City Council had 38 complaints raised, 17 assessed and two investigated, which were both upheld. Oxford had 25 cases raised, nine assessed, two investigated and one upheld.

Department	No of Complaints Received	Decision
Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	5	3 Closed after initial enquiries 1 Advice given 1 Referred back for local resolution
Housing	6	3 Closed after initial enquiries 2 Advice given 1 Referred back for local resolution
Planning & Development	4	3 Closed after initial enquiries 1 Referred back for local resolution
Total	15	9 Closed after initial enquiries 3 Advice Given 3 Referred back for local resolution

LGSCO Upheld Case summaries

Due to no cases being investigated by the LGSCO in 2024-25, there are no summaries to report.

Number of LGSCO cases, yearly comparisons 2022 – 25

The below table shows the number of complaints referred to the LGSCO, against how many cases were investigated, and how many of those investigated were upheld.

Year	Total Enquiries Received	Cases Investigated	Cases Upheld
2024-25	16	0	0
2023-24	17	1	1
2022-23	25	6	5

Reasons to not investigate a complaint include the complaint not being made within 12 months of the issue occurring, complainants not providing sufficient information to allow the LGSCO to investigate, and in some cases, the complaint not being passed through the Council's complaints procedure first before escalation. In these instances, the LGSCO gives advice, and signpost complainants to sources of further information.

Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS)

Alongside the LGSCO, customers can escalate their complaints regarding the Councils responsibilities as a landlord with the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS). The HOS investigate and determine cases in a similar way to the LGSCO, making recommendations or orders to remedy the complaint when fault is found. An order made by the HOS is an action that the Council must take and evidence demonstrating that the order has been completed must be submitted to the HOS. The HOS may also suggest recommendations in response to a complaint investigation, these are not mandatory for the Council to carry out.

When the HOS investigates a complaint, they can find fault in more than one issue and issue more than one order or recommendation as a remedy to the complaint. This is why in the report, the number of findings and orders is larger than the number of cases investigated.

Year	Number of Complaints	Number of Faults	Number of Orders	Number of Recommendations
2024-25	5	9	14	2
2023-24	4	7	11	0

In 2024-25, 5 complaints about our Housing related services were investigated by the Ombudsman. Of these 5 complaints, the Ombudsman found 9 faults. To remedy these complaints, 14 orders and 2 recommendations were made. The Council were not served with any Complaint Handling Failure Orders.

78% (7) findings related to maladministration by the Council. This is slightly higher than the national rate of maladministration which is 71%. However, it is in line with the maladministration rate for similar sized landlords (between 1,000-10,000 units) of 77%.

56% (5) findings specifically related to Service Failure. This is higher than both the national average of 21% and the average for similar sized landlords, 22%. All other categories of findings were equal to, or below the national and similar sized landlords average.

In 2024 – 25 The Council paid £2,550 in compensation as a result of remedial orders and recommendations. In 2023 – 2024 the compensation amount The Council paid was £1,575.

Compensation reason	Property Condition	Complaint handling	Anti-Social Behaviour	Estate management
2024 -25	£1700	£850*	£0	£0
2023-24	£800	£200	£375	£200

*A payment of £50 was made as a result of a recommendation. The Council paid £2,550 in compensation as a result of remedial orders and recommendations.

In both years, the Housing Ombudsman Service were satisfied that 100% of remedial orders were complied with by the Council.

Complaints under the Councillors' Code of Conduct

Councillors must adhere to the Council's Code of Conduct whenever they are conducting Council business, representing the Council or conducting the business of the office to which they were elected. The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to ensure high standards of ethics and conduct are maintained and that councillors treat everybody in an equal capacity and with respect, ensuring at all times that the integrity of the Council is not compromised in any way.

Complaints about councillors are considered initially by the Council's Monitoring Officer (who is also the Head of Legal Practice). When the Monitoring Officer receives a complaint about breach of the Code of Conduct, they consult one of two "Independent Persons" appointed by the Council. The role of the "Independent Persons" is to introduce external scrutiny of the complaints process. The Monitoring Officer can respond to a complaint, can commission a formal investigation or can refer it for consideration by the Council's Standards Sub-Committee. The Council's Standards Sub-Committee is made up of three Councillors.

Councillor Conduct Complaints, 2024-25

During 2024-25 there were 7 complaints about Councillors.

None of these complaints were passed for formal investigation with apologies provided in 2 instances, insufficient information to proceed in 1 instance and 3 complaints dismissed.

During 2023 -24 six complaints were received about Councillors.

One of these complaints was upheld with an apology provided and further training being undertaken by the Councillor. One complaint was settled by means of mediation. Three complaints were dismissed and the final complaint was concluded with no further action but a commitment to be cautious in future actions.

There were four complaints in both 2022-23 and 2021-2022. To find out more about the Council's Code of Conduct visit our website or contact the Council's Monitoring Officer Tom Lewis: tom.lewis@3csharedservices.org