

Complaints and Service Improvement

2025-26 annual report

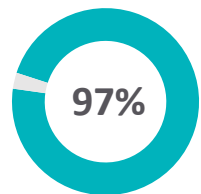
Stage 1: Resolve

Resolve



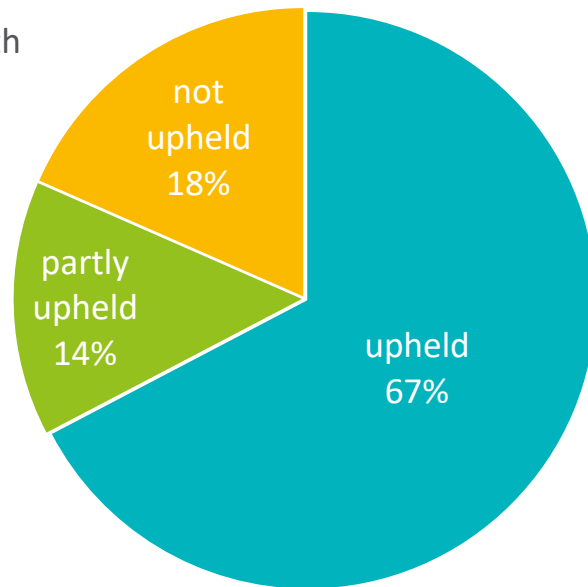
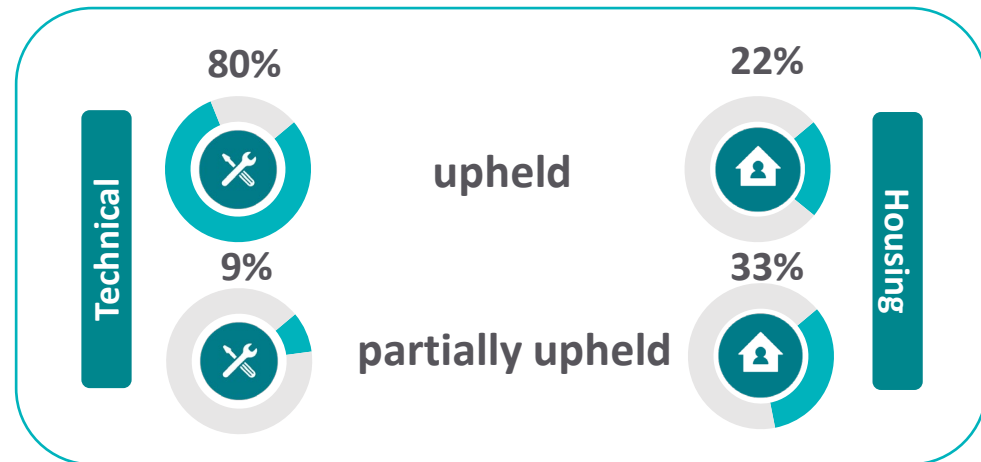
505

423 residents logged **505** stage 1 complaints, down by 18% from last year (617)



responded to within HOS target

88% within 10 working days, **9%** within 20 working days with residents' agreement



Stage 1: Resolve

Top themes

Resolve



505

Repairs

319



- 1 Heating & hot water (22%)
- 2 Leaks (17%)
- 3 Damp & mould (8%)
- 4 Bathroom & WC condition (6%)
- 5 Lifts (5%)

All the top repair's themes stem from delays, outstanding repairs, the overall quality of repairs and repeat issues.

Housing

119



- 1 Tenancy issues (19%)
- 2 ASB and nuisance behaviour (17%)
- 3 Rehousing (10%)
- 4 Service charges (8%)
- 5 Safeguarding (8%)

Tenancy issues include a number of different types of complaints generally in relation to housing management. For e.g. new tenants, communication issues, staff conduct, request to use communal facilities etc Antisocial behaviour often stems from delayed responses and a lack of timely action.

Estate services

12



- 1 Cleaning (58%)
- 2 Horticulture (25%)
- 3 Rubbish collection (17%)

Development

55

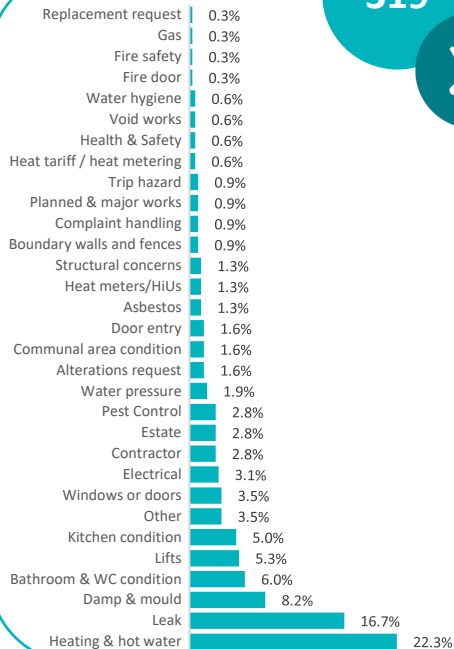


- 1 Heating and hot water (76%)
- 2 Alterations requests, electrical, estate (4% each)
- 3 All other complaints are fire safety, structural works, site issues.

Stage 1: Resolve The themes

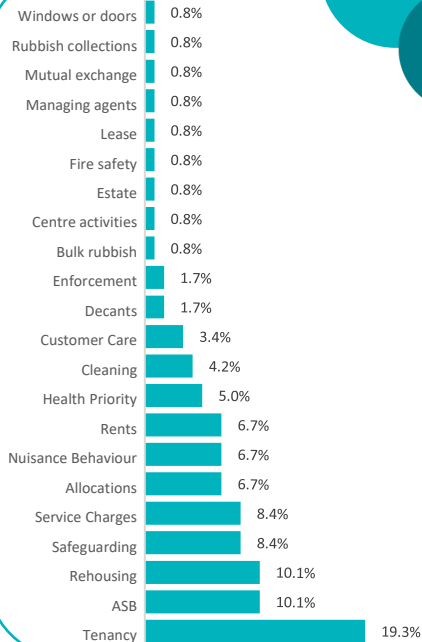
Repairs

319



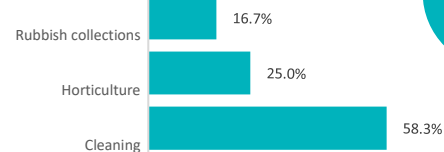
Housing

119



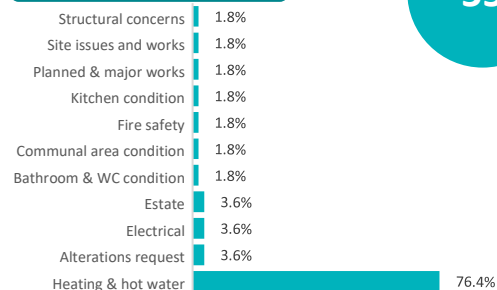
Estate services

12



Development

55



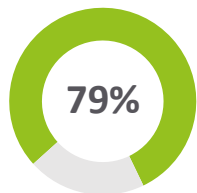
Stage 2: Review

Review



166

128 households logged **166** reviews. 18% increase from last year (141)



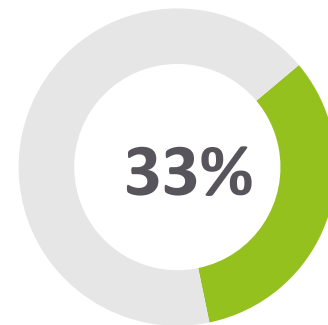
79% responded to within Housing Ombudsman's target

31% within 20 working days

48% within 40 working days (extension agreed with complainant)

In Stage 2, our process involves a panel review that allows residents to share their perspectives firsthand, enhancing fairness and transparency in decisions. Key factors affecting response times include complex cases, aligning panel members with resident availability, volume of cases and resource availability, and awaiting information from third party. Our approach continues to ensure residents are kept informed of delays, and a comprehensive answer is provided at the earliest opportunity.

Escalated complaints



1 in 3 complaints were escalated to Stage 2

Stage 2: Review

Review



166

Cases upheld by department

36%



technical upheld

44%



technical partially upheld

9%

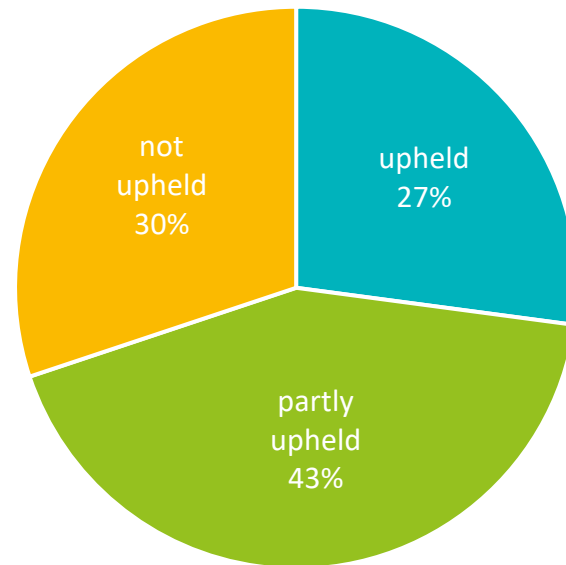


housing upheld

34%



housing partially upheld



Stage 2: Review Top themes

Review



166

Repairs

108



- 1 Outstanding general repairs – listed as “other” (25%)
- 2 Heat & hot water (24%)
- 3 Leaks (10%)
- 4 Damp & mould (7%)
- 5 Bathroom & WC condition (6%)

The main issues identified in stage 2 involve continued delays in repairs, as well as follow-up actions following stage 1.

Housing

43



- 1 ASB and Nuisance (38%)
- 2 Tenancy issues (12%)
- 3 Service charges, allocations & enforcement (7%)
- 4 Customer care (5%)

The ASB escalations were around timely communication, the perceived lack of action and overall being kept informed.

Estate services

5



- 1 Cleaning (80%)
- 2 Rubbish collection (20%)

Development

10

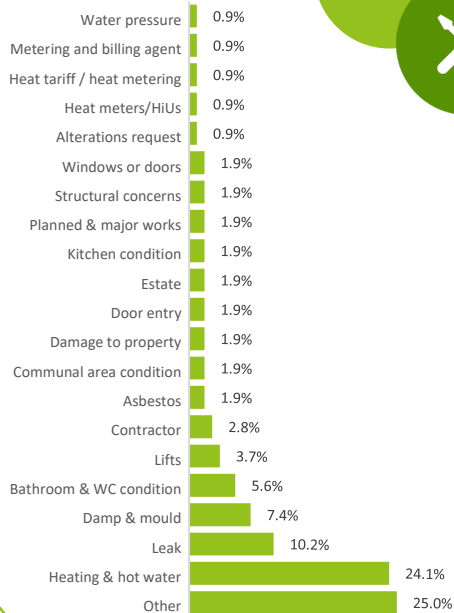


- 1 Heating & hot water (50%)
- 2 Site issues & works (30%)
- 3 Communal condition & fire safety (20% each)

Stage 2: Review The themes

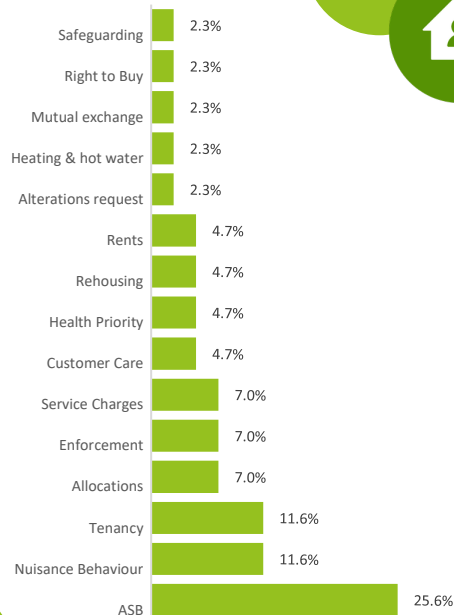
Repairs

108



Housing

43



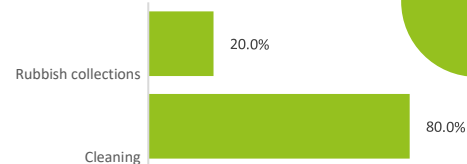
Review



166

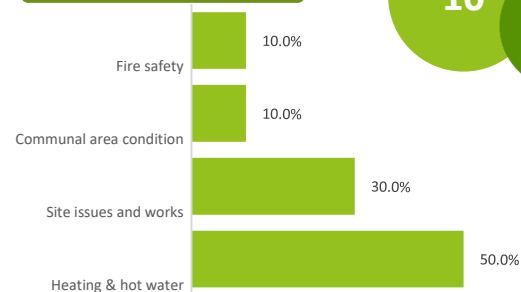
Estate services

5



Development

10



Stage 2: Review

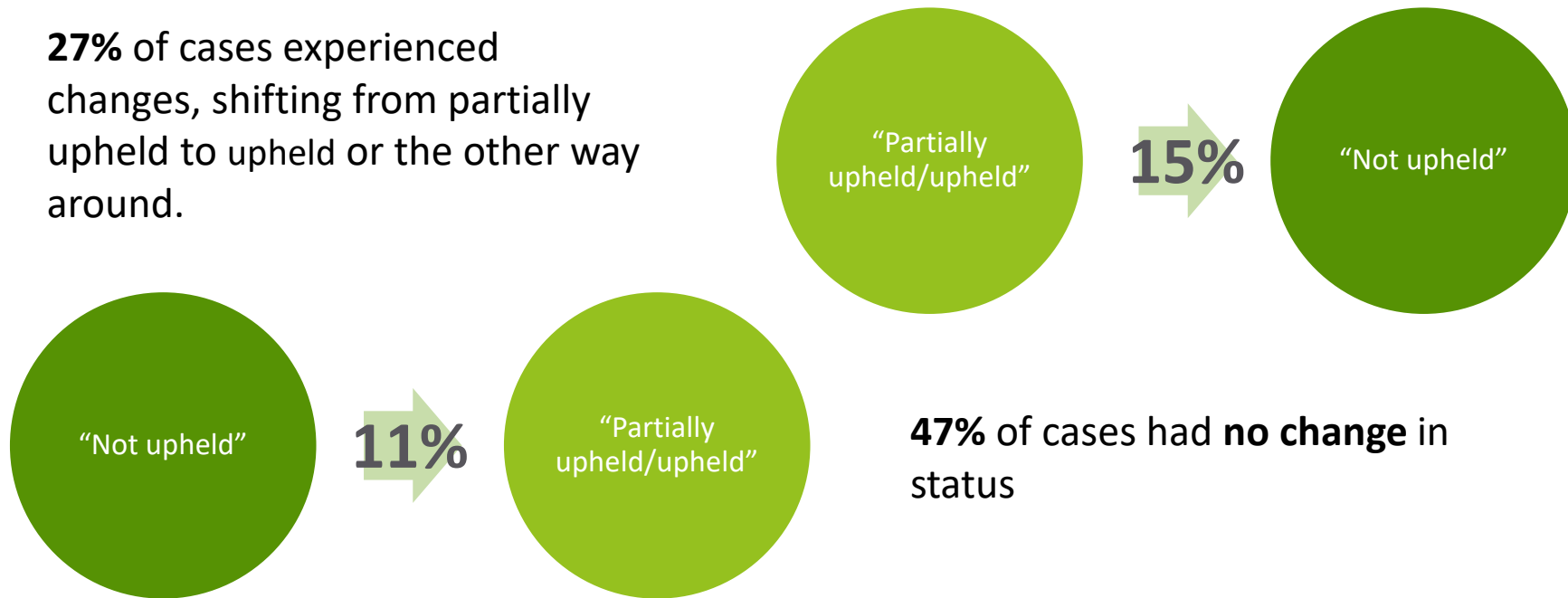
53% outcomes changed from Stage 1

Review



166

27% of cases experienced changes, shifting from partially upheld to upheld or the other way around.





Policy exclusions

25 matters were not logged as a formal complaint

Exclusions in policy

- a. **Service Requests:** requests for actions, e.g. reporting repairs or ASB or requesting breakdown of charges.
- b. **Alternative Resolution:** Matters that can be resolved through other channels, such as insurers, courts, or tribunals.
- c. **Proceedings:** Action has commenced, or has been determined, by a Court or Tribunal.
- d. **Historic Complaints:** Events or issues giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago except where evidence suggests the individual has only become aware of it now.
- e. **Previously Addressed:** considered already, unless there is new material evidence.
- f. **Third Parties:** About the actions of third parties outside PH's control.
- g. **Building Safety:** Issues covered by the separate Higher-Risk Building Complaints Policy.
- h. **Employment:** Complaints related to PH as an employer.
- i. **Parking:** Enforcement, or a remedy is outside PH's legal powers

4

Proceedings

8

*Previously
addressed*

7

*Parking
enforcement*

1

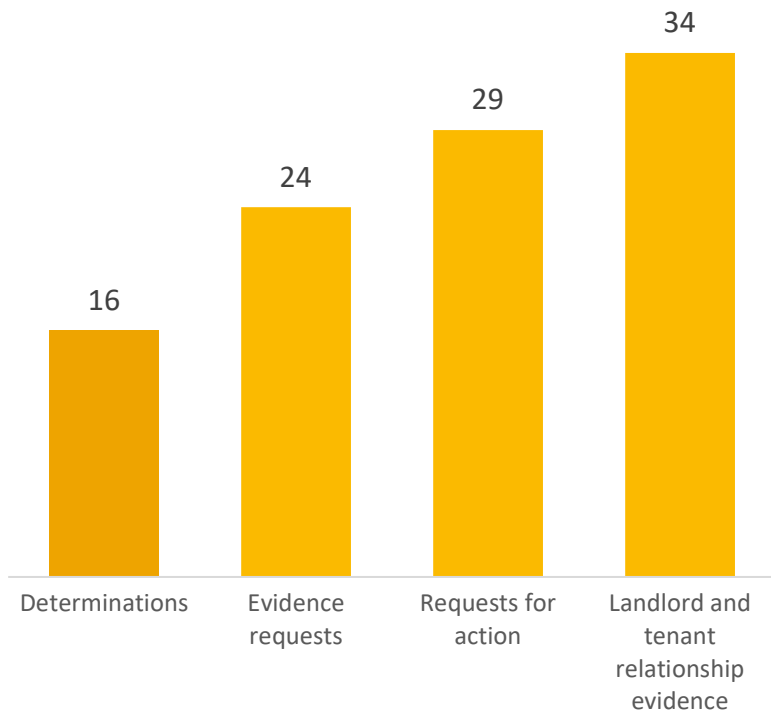
Historic complaints

3

3rd parties

2

*No contractual
relationship*



16 Determinations*: HOS decisions

24 Evidence Requests: HOS accepted matter

29 Requests for Action: HOS asked us to investigate or explain

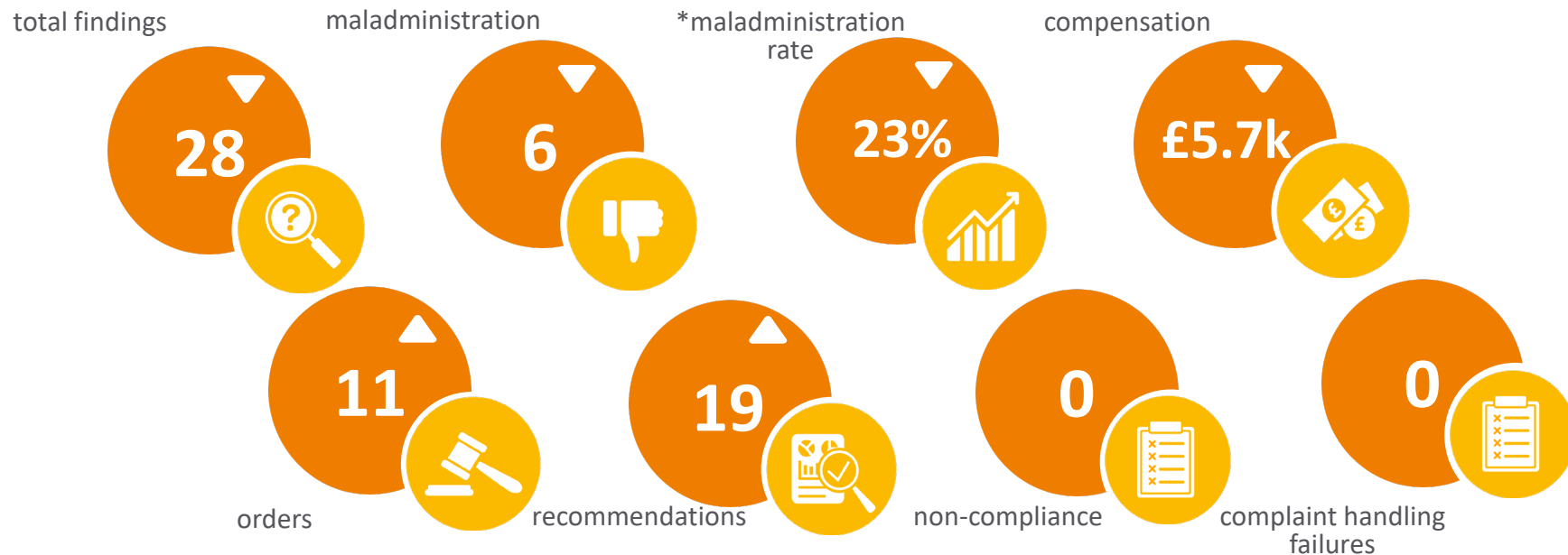
34 Landlord and tenant relationship requests: evidence of landlord/tenant relationship to establish jurisdiction

The HOS requires a published annual self-assessment:

<https://www.poplarharca.co.uk/about-us/complaints/housing-ombudsman/>

Ombudsman determinations

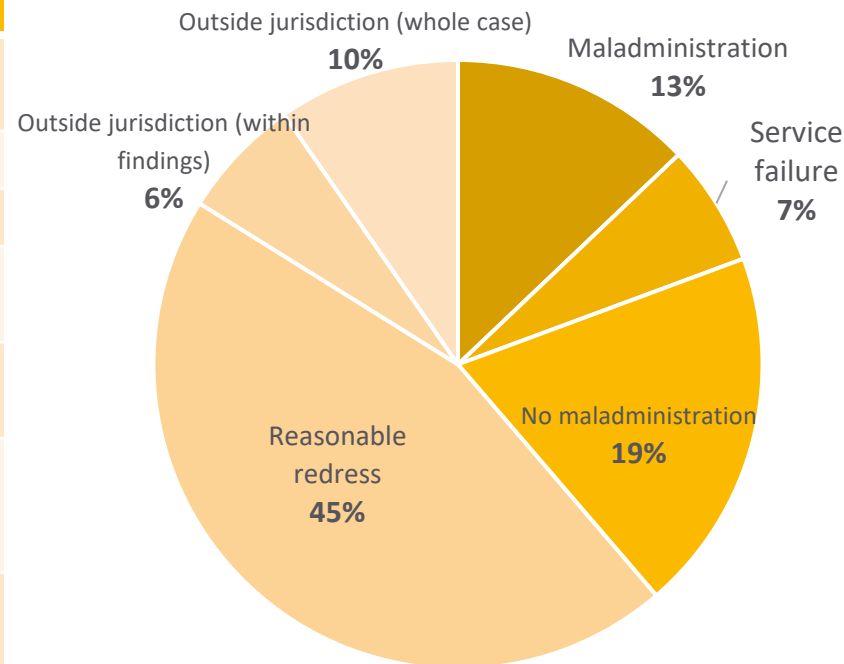
16 determinations , 28 findings, 6 maladministration (<3% of all complaints)



* calculated as per [HOS guidance on landlord reports](#); any findings "outside jurisdiction" is excluded

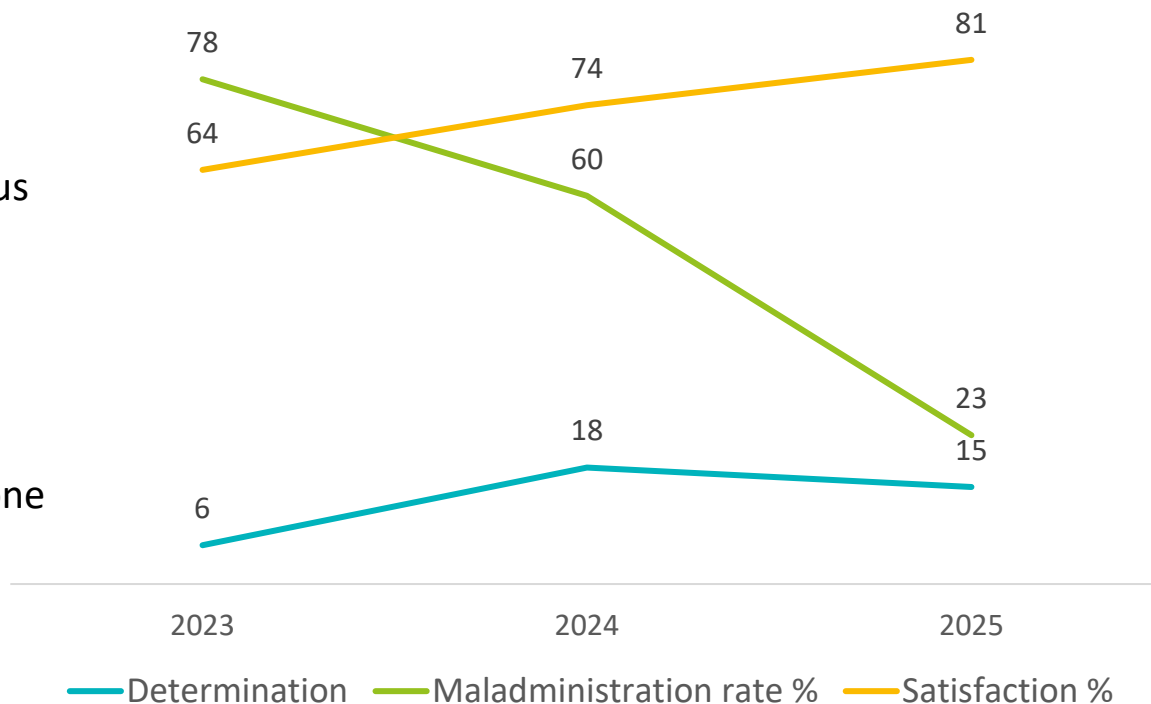
Ombudsman determinations

Determinations	findings	notes
Severe maladministration	0	<i>maladministration</i>
Maladministration	4	<i>maladministration</i>
Service failure	2	<i>maladministration</i>
No maladministration	6	<i>Not maladministration</i>
Reasonable redress	14	<i>Not maladministration</i>
Outside jurisdiction (within findings)	2	<i>*not included in maladministration rate</i>
Outside jurisdiction (whole case)	3	<i>*not included in maladministration rate</i>



Ombudsman determinations

- determinations have slightly decreased, we also received 2 revised decisions from the previous year
- Maladministration rates are continuing to decrease, with HoS finding more cases of reasonable redress
- satisfaction rates continue to be one of the highest in country (TSM)



Ombudsman determinations

6

Maladministration

Damp, mould & condensation

1

Contents insurance

1

Antisocial behaviour (inc. noise, dogs)

1

Heating & hot water

2

Complaint handling

2

Total findings*

26

No Maladministration or reasonable redress

20

1

Parking

1

Communiation

1

CCTV request

1

Safeguarding

1

Damp, mould & condensation

1

EWS1 (fire safety)

1

Rent arrears

2

Outstanding repairs

2

Communal repairs (inc boiler, lift, lights)

2

Antisocial behaviour (inc. noise nuisnace)

7

Complaint handling

* Not including "outside jurisdiction"

Learnings and lessons: Repairs



	What we did
Heating and Hot Water	• New repair and maintenance contractual arrangement with NHG • Revised communication and support available for resident
Leaks	• Strengthened our access procedure, and resources to progress and monitor access • Repairs redesign with residents led to improvements to complex leak cases and how its managed • New leaseholder to leaseholder leaks procedure for clear responsibilities between teams • Post inspections
Damp and mould	• Utilising our in-house case management system to capture and report on damp & mould • New structure changes (Property Inspectors and Repairs Assistant)
Contractors	• Procured 5 measured term contracts which include more rigid KPIs to monitor performance • Annual contractors' conference briefing on customer care, complaints, health and safety, resident feedback
Revised team structure	• Created and recruited to a dedicated Property inspector roles to manage complex repairs cases • Recruited a surveyor's manager and team to oversee complex repairs and high-profile cases • Weekly managers team meeting discussing complex cases through Repairs tracker and post inspections
Repairs Forum	• Residents involved in Repairs Redesign, now commencing a phase 2 of this including leaks
Other	• Property MOTs, Compliance inspections includes exploring support required or repairs needed in homes. • Ops Management Monthly Walkabout (Connect and Inspect) • Property Services and Housing Management now under one Chief Operating Officer for accountability

Learnings and lessons: Housing management



	What we did
Tenancy:	• Neighbourhood Action Plan pages signposting contact and useful information for tenant
Anti-social behaviour:	• ASB Policy redesigned with residents, and revised ASB procedure briefings with staff • Estate walkabouts with partner agencies, and resident walkabouts • Introduction of regular interval risk assessments / review before case closure • Wider review of solutions to ASB problems (noise machine, app, mediation, escalation)
Parking:	• Estate parking audit, new anti-vandal signages and increased enforcement • Tenancy action against frequent offenders • Tenants who move homes sign up to parking on tenancy sign up avoiding delays • Grace period of garage owners to park cars on estates without receiving a ticket
Other:	• Ops Management Monthly Walkabout (Connect and Inspect) • Property Services and Housing Management now under one Chief Operating Officer for accountability • New leaseholder to leaseholder leak procedure outlining clear responsibilities between teams • Rents/Service charge - FAQs and revised communications in estimates and actuals, and increases • Managers required to follow up with residents after stage 1 complaint to avoid escalation

Lessons: complaints handling

	What we did
Casework	• Comprehensive panel packs highlighting key issues for improved investigation • Management meetings on complex caseworks • Revised response templates
Policy changes	• Mandatory to make contact at stage 1 and 2 (including calls or visits) • Aligned to HOS Complaints Handling Code following HOS Compliance Review • Widened senior management pool to deal with increasing volume of stage 2 cases
Staff guidance	• Staff required to complete Housing Ombudsman dispute resolution training • Guidance on dealing with rent and service charge increase complaints • Guidance on compensation payments • Guidance on complaints decisions • Guidance on complaints responses to include chronology
Performance monitoring	• 25% tenancy audits • Monitoring response quality and consistency • Standard agenda item for CMT

Service improvements

	What are we working on?
Complaint handling	• Customer Care and Complaints Briefing for all staff • Complaints Investigation briefing for all staff
Policy	• Creating a heat network policy and framework to get better understanding on complaints in relation to heat networks
One team neighbourhood (patches model)	• Introducing local neighbourhood teams with clear responsibility for each patch • Increasing staff visibility on estates and in the community • Bringing services together (housing, repairs & estate services) for phase 1
Service charge review	• Reviewing service charge teams, structure and model • Reviewing our data to ensure we have the scheme of each estate, block, managing agents, S20 to ensure more accurate and transparency for residents
Connect & inspect	• Monthly walkabouts, speaking to residents and follow up on actions
Competency and Conduct	• Roll out of competency and conduct (qualifications, mandatory training, code of conduct and supervision)
Other	• Roll out of STAIRS Publication Scheme – making information readily available for residents • Complaints review (end to end) to improve complaints handling, reducing repeat complaints and embedding lessons learnt • Property MOTs and tenancy audits • Developing our new HARCA Home Standard with residents

Resident voice and regulatory requirements

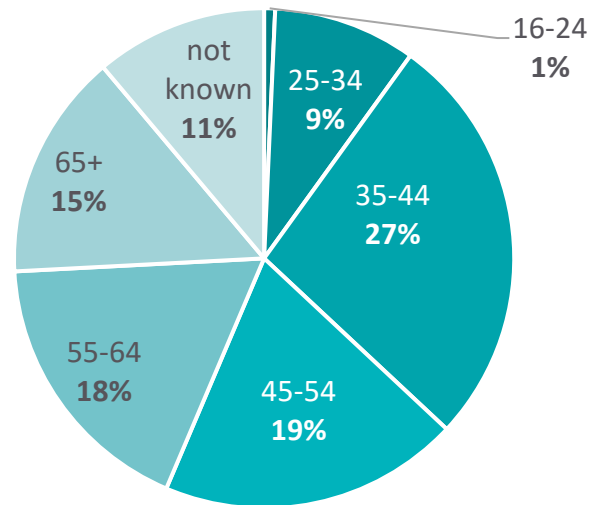
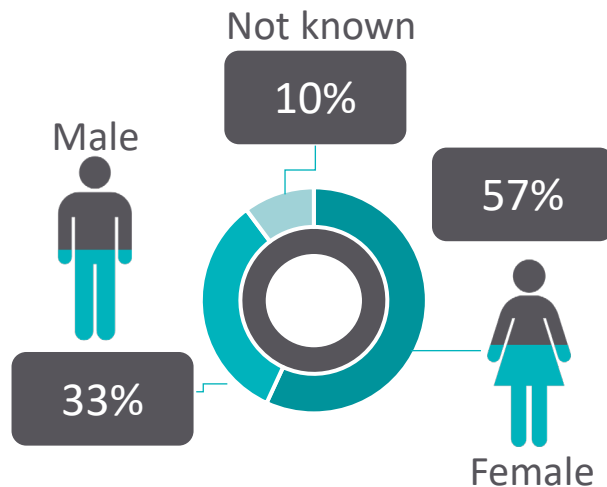
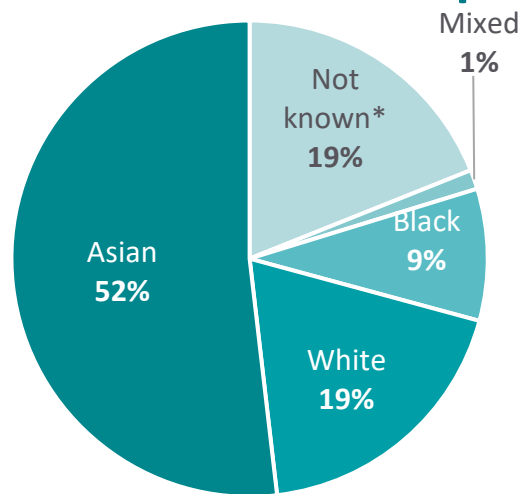
Resident voice

- Lessons learnt from complaints, translated to improvements
- Joint Estate Panel reviewing performance quarterly
- Resident feedback from TSM data triangulated with complaints and walkabout findings
- Service redesigns shaped by residents (ASB, Repairs, Service Charges)
- Residents shaping our Values and Code of Conduct

Housing Ombudsman

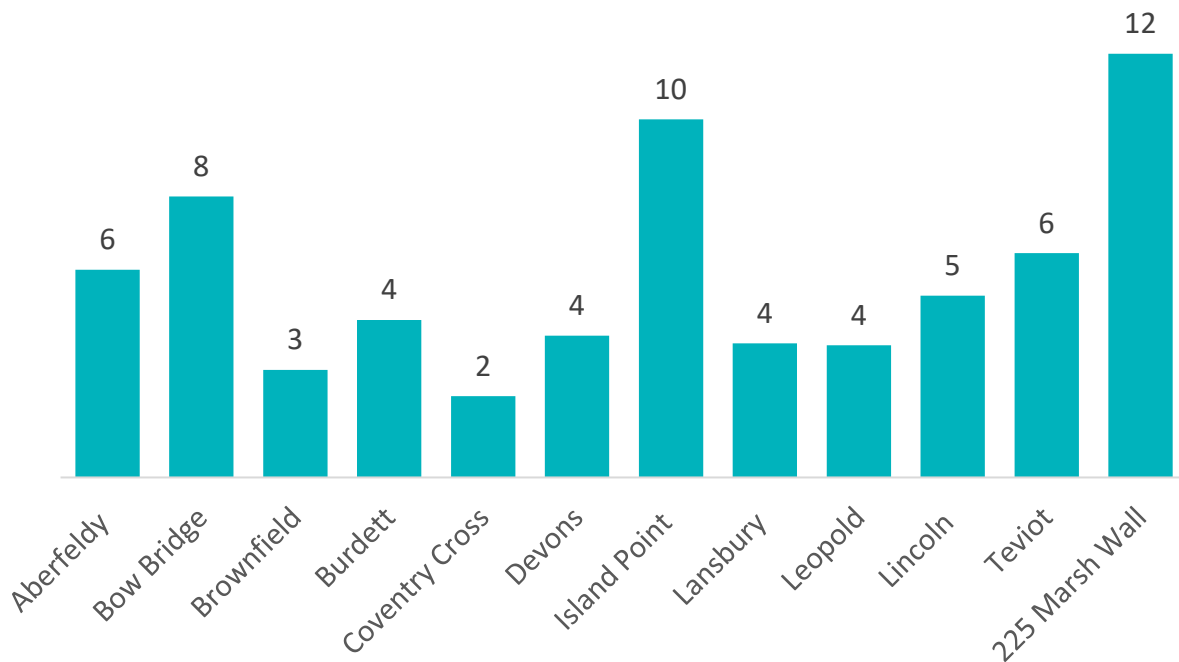
- Policy compliance review July 2025 – 21 recommendations
- Policy Compliance second review Jan 2026 – 2 recommendations
- Awaiting landlord performance data
- Submission to HOS – end of September
- Complaints Handling Code – May 2026, no material changes. Fully compliant with Code.

Who are our complaints coming from



*high proportion of “not knows” are leaseholders about who we do not hold profile information

Complaints per 100 homes by Estate



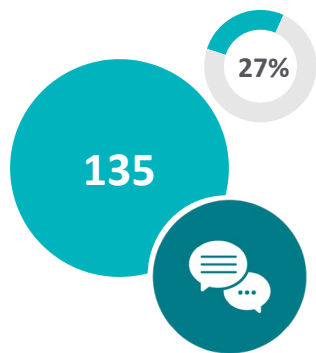
- Disproportionately high Marshwall and Island Point due to very small numbers of homes on each estate, most complaints in Island Point are about heating and leaks
- Marshwall – complaints regarding snagging issues
- Burdett - top 3 themes: heating and hot water, from a few blocks including the new build, electrical works, and outstanding works

Compensation

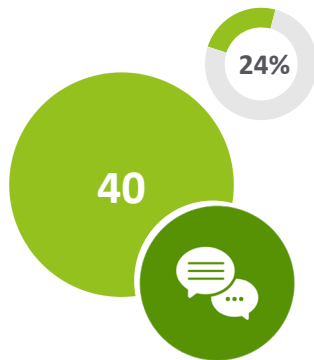


Compensation paid this year is lower than last year, mainly due to better complaint handling, quicker issue resolution, and fewer severe service failures. There are less cases with serious or long-term impact, which usually require higher compensation. More remedies, such as practical solutions, apologies, and service improvements, are being used per HOS guidance. HOS notes that addressing complaints early reduces the need for compensation.

Managing agents



Stage 1 complaints for those associated with managing agents



Stage 2 complaints for those associated with managing agents

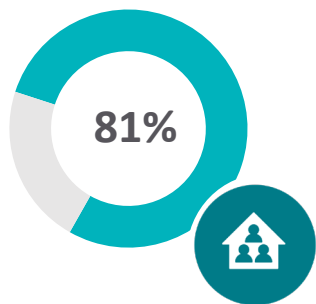
Key themes

- Repairs handling and quality
- Majority of the repair's cases were heating and hot water, these can be complex due to the nature of responsibilities of heat networks.
- Service charges
- Antisocial behaviour issues

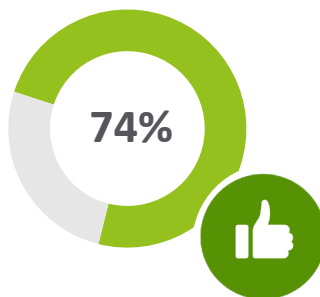
Satisfaction and Scrutiny

889 residents filled-in TSM survey - overall satisfaction 82% in 2024-25. The “combined” and “leaseholders and shared owners” satisfaction are from 2024-25, as we conduct all resident surveys every 3 years.

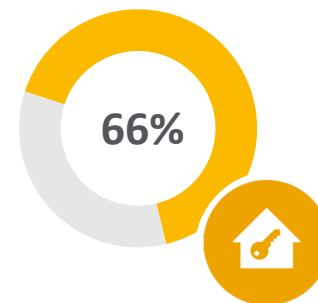
For this years(2025-26) TSMs we only focussed on social tenants which gave us the 81% satisfaction in complaints handling.



Tenants



combined



Leaseholders and Shared Owners

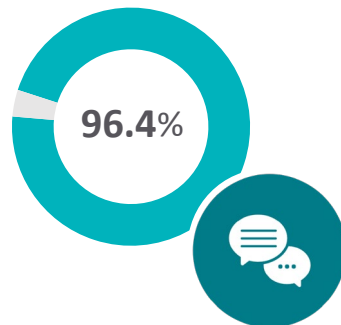
Poplar HARCA has highest complaints handling satisfaction in the country

Satisfaction and Scrutiny – TSMs

Board, Services Committee, and Joint Estate Panel (JEP), reviews performance quarterly



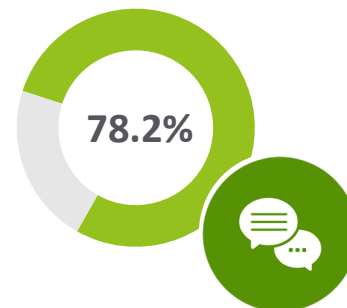
Stage 1 complaints
relative to size
(per 1,000 homes social tenants only)



Stage 1 complaints
responded to within
timescale
(social tenants only)



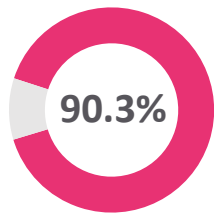
Stage 2 complaints
relative to size
(per 1,000 homes social tenants only)



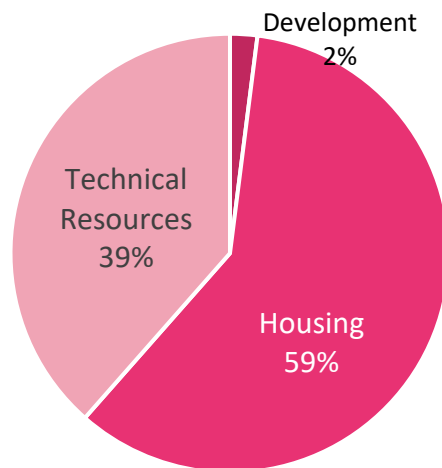
Stage 2 complaints
responded to within
timescales
(social tenants only)

ME and MP Enquiries

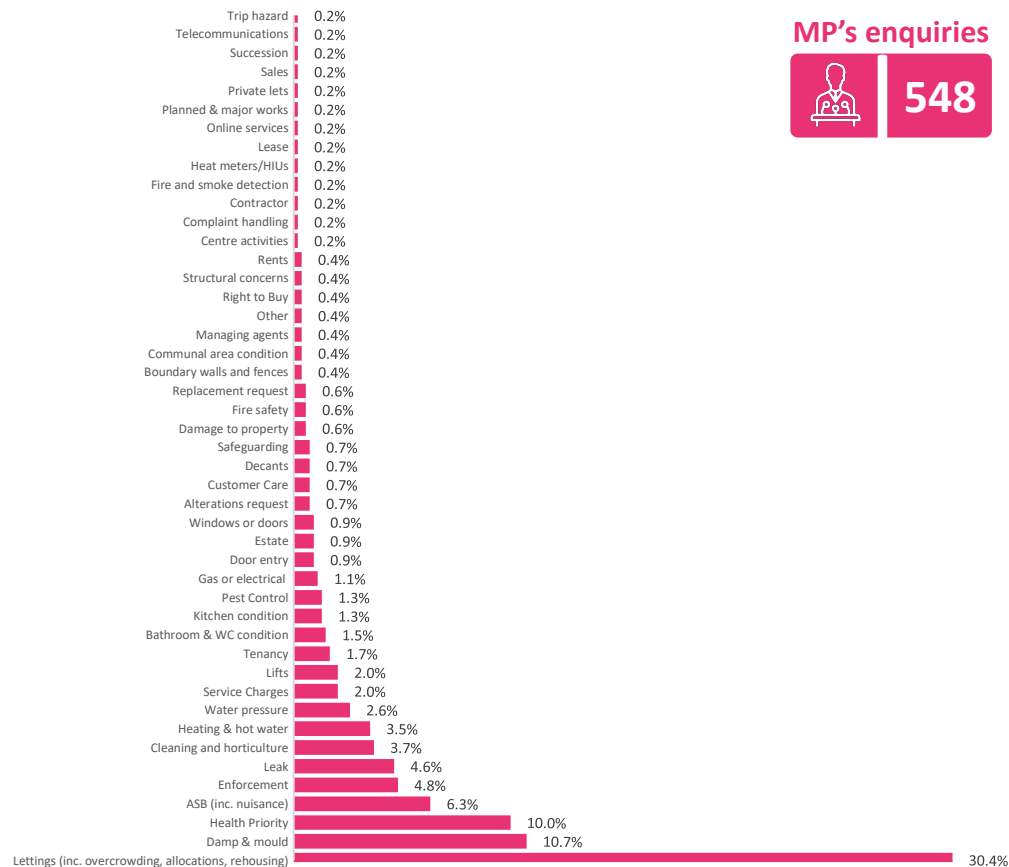
22% decrease from 548 to 447



90% responded to within target

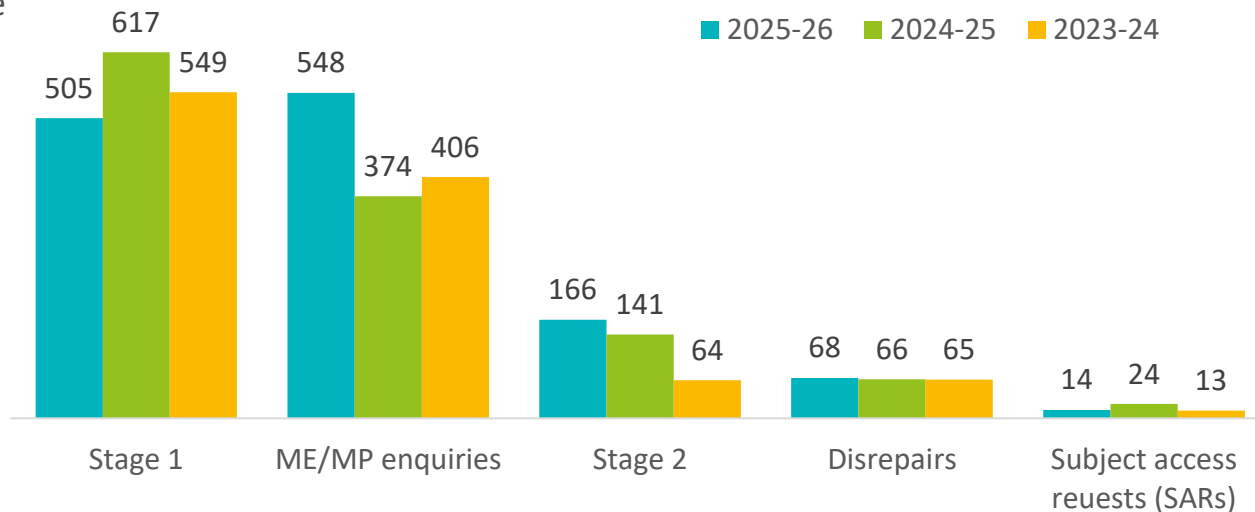


MP's enquiries



Over the years

- We've seen complaints decreasing stage 1 but increase in stage 2 escalations.
- Higher load of ME / MP contacts, which is typical of election years
- Disrepair levels remain quite steady.



Other contacts



compliments



petitions



environmental
health

subject access
& data erasure requests



disrepair claims



A few of our Compliments

“I am emailing you to express my admiration and appreciation for the amazing work Sharma Begum has conducted over the past years. I have had the pleasure of doing some joint working with her and I have observed how caring and kind she is with each and every one of my clients. Thank you to Poplar HARCA and their hard work and the great joint working you all do with the community health team.”

“I want to take a moment to sincerely thank Hanif for his outstanding support and dedication as a fellow resident. He supported me and my family with my parking applicant process, making it easier for me to understand the whole process. Hanif was very prompt with his responses and was always there at first point of contact. His swift action brought immediate relief and showed how seriously he takes residents’ concerns.”

“I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your customer service which I really appreciate. It makes a big difference when a professional is being responsive in a timely manner and is escalating concerns; and then following up with phone calls and emails which reassures me that my complaint and the repair issue is being taken seriously”

“I would like to express my sincere thanks for taking the issues I’ve been experiencing seriously. It has been a challenging few months trying to resolve the ongoing leak in my property, and I truly appreciate your attention and support in this matter.”

Governing Body Response

As we publish our Annual Complaints and Service Improvement Report for 2025/26, I want to reaffirm our commitment to ensuring that resident feedback remains central to how we improve. At Poplar HARCA, our priority is to listen to residents, respond when things go wrong, and use complaints to embed improvement.

The report highlights some important themes over the past year, including a reduction in Stage 1 complaints alongside an increase in Stage 2 complaints, and the gradual improvement in our stage 2 response in target timeframe. At the same time, we remain focussed on understanding and addressing the root causes of repeat complaints and the issues that continue to drive escalation.

Whilst Ombudsman activity is increasing, reflecting wider sector trends, our maladministration rate is decreasing year on year and resident satisfaction with complaint handling is increasing.

As Lead Board Member for Complaints, and on behalf of the governing body, we remain focused on reducing Stage 2 complaints, particularly where these continue to result in findings of service failure.

The Annual Complaints and Service Improvement Report was considered by our Governing Body in June 2026, and we are satisfied that it provides a fair reflection of complaint handling performance over the year, the lessons learned from complaints, and the actions being taken in response.

A number of initiatives are already underway in response to what residents are telling us, and we will continue to monitor delivery closely to ensure that as a Board we are assured that learning from complaints leads to meaningful and sustained improvement.

Alongside fellow Board and Committee members, we remain committed to supporting a positive complaint handling culture that is open, accountable and focused on better outcomes for our residents.

Shabana Yousaf, Lead Board Member for Complaints and Chair of the Services Committee