

Neighbourhoods & Housing

Complaint Handling Performance & Improvements 2024/25

1. Executive Summary

Information in this report is based on analysis of feedback received through the Council's formal feedback scheme and via official routes into the Council during 2024/25. This report fulfils the councils Obligations regarding the production of a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the Councils Complaint Handling performance in order to comply with the Housing Ombudsman Service Complaint Handling code.

2. Background

- The Neighbourhoods & Housing (N&H) feedback process is part of the wider HCC feedback scheme. Letters and documents to residents/complainants conform to corporate templates and the corporate GovService IT software is used to record Complaints, Concerns, Compliments and Suggestions.
- Feedback within N&H is divided into 2 areas;

'Repairs' – encompassing Asset Management and Compliance (HIS)

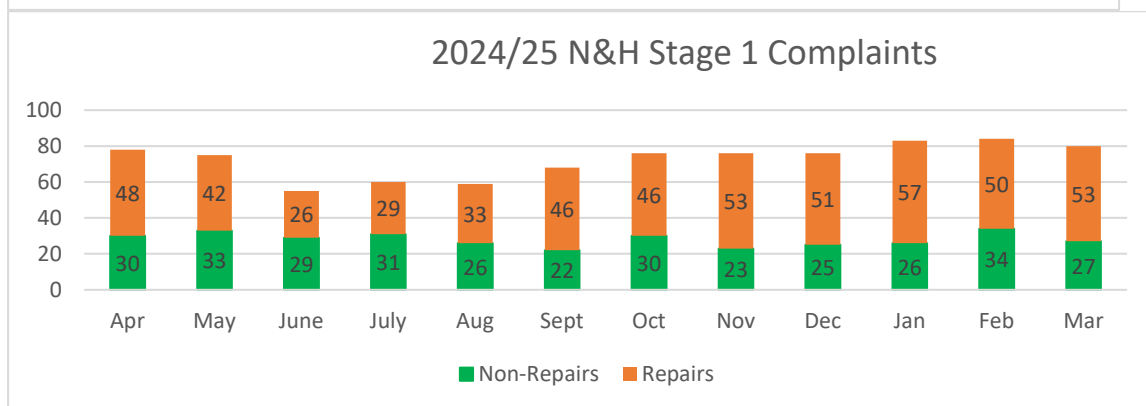
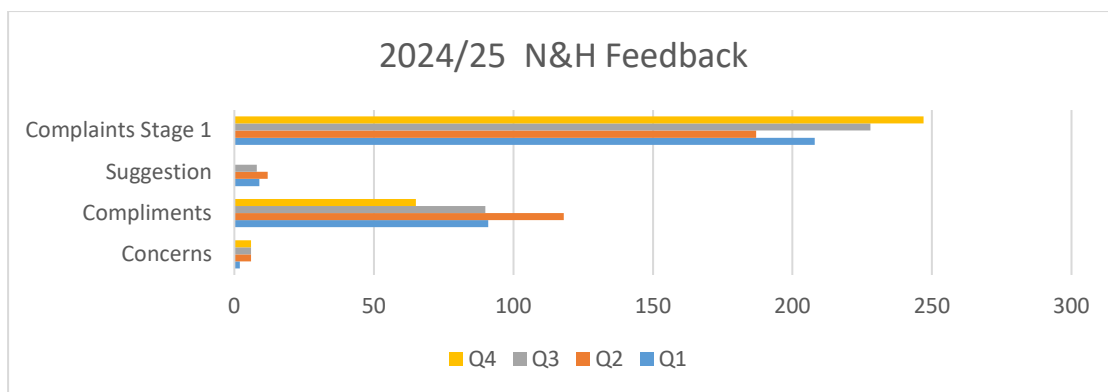
'Non-Repairs' – encompassing all other areas of N&H

- For ease and collective understanding, the terms 'Repairs' and 'Non-Repairs' are used throughout this document.
- Housing Repairs fall under the remit of the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS). Housing Non-Repairs fall under the remit of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.
- Tracy Pocklington (External Relations Manager) manages Repairs feedback.
- Hannah Dixon (Customer Feedback manager) manages Non-Repairs feedback and has oversight of all N&H feedback.
- Repairs and Non-Repairs each produce a quarterly Feedback Insight Report which is consider by their Senior Leadership Team.

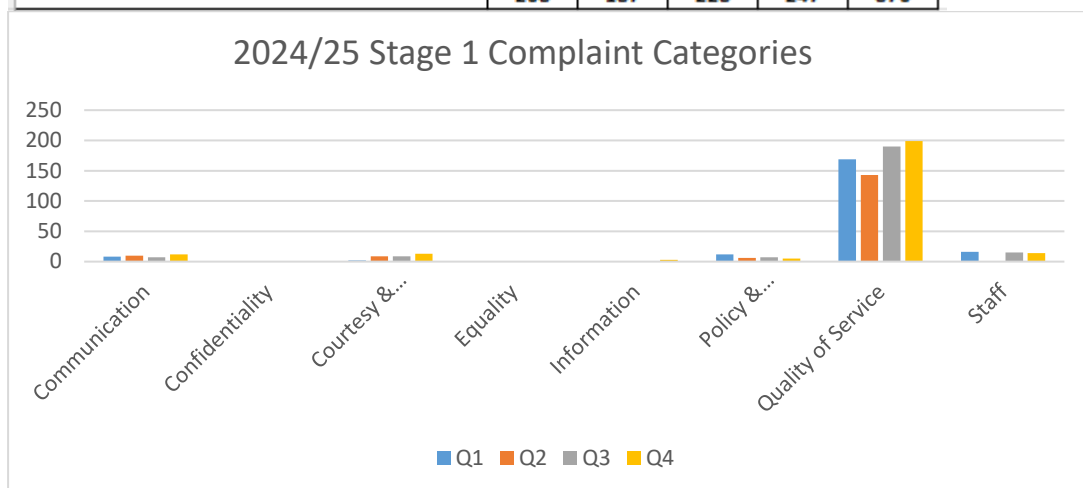
3. Data and performance on formal feedback for Neighbourhoods & Housing 2024/25

3.1.1 Feedback by year and quarter;

Feedback Received	2019/20	2020/21**	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25				
						Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Comments	26	20								
Concerns	20	18	6	13	16	2	6	6	6	20
Compliments	137	101	124	116	262	91	118	90	65	364
Suggestion		6	13	11	22	9	12	8	0	29
Complaints Stage 1	791	746	908	754	861	208	187	228	247	870
Total	974	891	1051	894	1161	310	323	332	318	1283
Complaints Stage 2 (accepted/rejected)	76	60	77/38*	71/30*	82/37*	42	33	41	46	162



N&H Stage 1 Complaints by business area 2024/25	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Housing Investment Service	37	30	40	57	164
KWL	70	70	98	91	329
Other Contractors	9	8	12	12	41
Strategy, Market Intervention & Growth	18	6	16	11	51
Business Development & Change	2	0	0	0	2
Access & Wellbeing	26	24	9	18	77
Area & Neighbourhood Management	46	49	53	58	206
	208	187	228	247	870



3.1.2 Complaints continue to form the bulk of all feedback, with the highest category for complaints relating to quality of service, and the business area receiving the most complaints within 2024/25 being KWL.

3.1.3 The number of complaints in 2024/25 (870) is only slightly higher than the numbers experienced in 2023/24 (861).

- 3.1.4 The number of complaints in Q4 (247) has increased by 8% from the number received in Q3 (228).
- 3.1.5 The number of Stage 2 Review requests seen in 2024/25 is a significant increase on the figures experienced in previous years. This is expected as on 1 April 2024, the revised Complaint Handling Codes for HOS and LGSCO came into effect. Both Codes state that all Stage 2 requests must be accepted and investigated.
- 3.1.6 The number of Stage 2 Review requests in Q4 (46) has increased by 12% from the number received in Q3 (41), however, the numbers have been somewhat consistent across the year.
- 3.1.7 The number of Compliments continues to show a positive trend. The number received in Q4 (65) is lower than what was received in Q3 (90), however, we have received 364 in total in 2024/25, which is significantly higher than the total of 262 received for the full year of 2023/24 (39% increase). As much as complaints continue to rise, so do compliments and it should not be overlooked that this is a real positive step in the right direction.

3.2. Stage 1 Complaints answered within target.

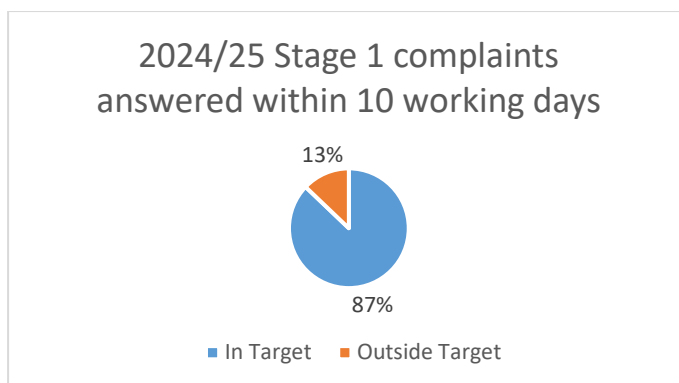
KPI's

- answer Stage 1 complaints with 10 working days (HOS and LGSCO KPI)
- answer Stage 2 Reviews within 20 working days (HOS and LGSCO KPI)

- 3.2.1 84% of Stage 1 complaints in Q4 have been answered within 10 working days. It has been noted that there needs to be a push on bringing this percentage up. This does not, however, impact on quality of response.

Stage 1 Complaints	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Non Repairs within 10 working days	78	70	59	74	281
Non Repairs over 10 working days	14	9	19	13	55
	92	79	78	87	336
Non Repairs completion rate	85%	89%	76%	85%	84%
Repairs within 10 working days	109	103	132	133	477
Repairs over 10 working days	7	5	18	27	57
	116	108	150	160	534
Repairs completion rate	94%	96%	88%	83%	90%

- 3.2.2 87% of Stage 1 complaints in 2024/25 to date have been answered within 10 working days. We completed 81.5% in target by the end of 2023/24, so this is a positive increase.



3.2.3 In relation to Repairs complaints in Q4 answered over 10 working days – The delays were due to;

- Complaints that require multi team input. The team can experience delays when co-ordinating replies from across N&H and wider council services and contractors.
- Complex cases where significant interactions are required with customers/other service areas/agencies
- Actioning Officer delays (both internal and from contractor Fortem)

Where delays have been attributed to AO delays, HIS are introducing an additional layer of oversight and monitoring where the HIS senior management team will be sighted on cases.

3.2.4 In relation to non-repairs complaints in Q4 answered over 10 working days – The delays were due to;

- Adaptations – There has been a lot of pressure on this team that has been highlighted in the recent overdue complaint reports
- Complaints that require multi team input, extra time required for the investigation
- Complexity of cases
- Needing to investigate by speaking with a member of staff who is on leave
- Waiting for further information from the tenant
- Waiting for information on ownership of the land
- Waiting for information from Occupational Therapist
- Reviewing volume of data

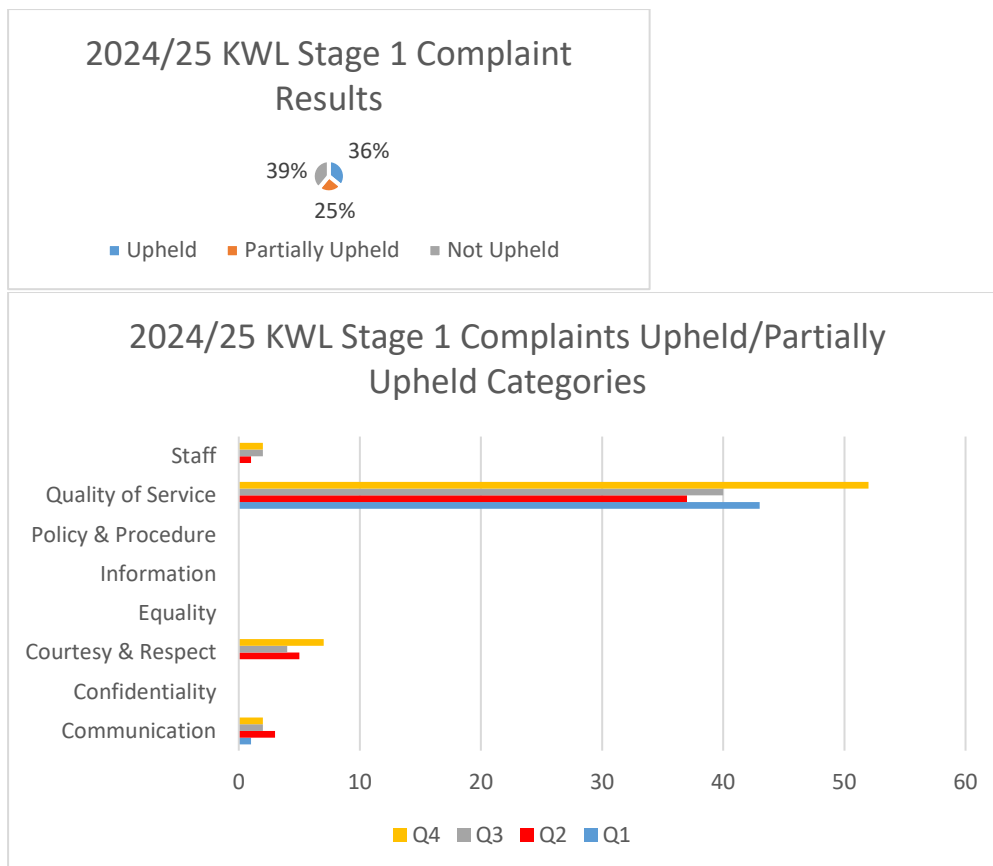
3.2.5 In relation to non-repair complaints by Business Area - Access and Wellbeing, and Area and Neighbourhood Management continue to perform well in completing complaints within timescales.

Strategy, Market intervention and Growth lag in this performance area, and therefore the continued attention on improving the overall percentage of complaints completed within target should be heavily focussed on within this business area.

2024/25 Non-Repairs Complaints by Business Area	Q4 Stage 1 Complaints	Q4 % completed within 10 working days	2024/25 Stage 1 complaints	2024/25 % completed within 10 working days
Access & Wellbeing	18	89%	84	86%
Area & Neighbourhood Management	58	93%	206	90%
Strategy, Market Intervention & Growth	11	27%	44	50%
Business Development & Change	0		2	100%
	87	65%	336	87%

3.3 Stage 1 Complaints – Repairs

- 3.3.1 Repairs continue to receive the most complaints. Repairs have received 65% of the total complaints in Q4.
- 3.3.2 There was a total of 160 complaints received during Q4 across all business areas of Housing Investment.
- 3.3.3 Adaptations - whilst complaints regarding Adaptations are investigated by non-repairs, the issues often involve KWL. Repairs monitor Adaptation's complaints to ensure full oversight of all complaints involving KWL. There were 4 Stage 1 complaints during this quarter (3 upheld and 1 not upheld). There was 1 that was escalated to Stage 2 and this was partially upheld. The Stage 1s that were upheld were categorised as Service response times/delays and service waiting time. The Stage 2 that was partially upheld was categorised as Service – unhappy with quality.
- 3.3.4 For service improvement/learning purposes we focus on the complaints upheld/partially upheld and the themes and trends within those complaints. 95 Stage 1 complaints were upheld/partially upheld (59%). Of these:
- 63 were attributed to KWL (66%)
 - Quality of service
 - Courtesy and Respect
 - Communication
 - Staff Conduct
 - 9 were attributed to other contractors (9%)
 - Quality of service
 - 23 were attributed to HIS (24%)
 - Quality of service
 - Courtesy and Respect
- 3.3.5 The most common complaint category within cases that have been either upheld or partially upheld at both Stage 1 and Stage 2 is the overarching category of Quality of Service. This shows that customers were dissatisfied with delays, and the quality of the work delivered.
- The general theme showing from customer's feedback and experience is that:
- Repairs are taking too long to complete
 - Standard of work (quality) needs to improve.
- 3.3.6 During Q4 there were 108 Stage 1 complaints attributed to the R&M business. This accounts for 68% of the overall Stage 1 complaints received for the Housing Investment Service.
- 3.3.7 Of the overall total for R&M 69 Stage 1 complaints were attributed to KWL who deliver the repairs service for the Council. Of these 49 (71%) were either upheld or partially upheld.



The joint learning carried out with KWL continues to identify improvements are required in the follow-on process (where KWL have attended but further works are required). This is contributing to delays in work being completed, or where orders are cancelled in error. As this is still being noted in Q4, an escalation report has been submitted to the May R&M Operational Meeting for further action.

Other items being escalated include:

Wetroom work (delays, follow-on errors). Minimal complaints, however, as a wetroom more often indicates there is a vulnerable customer, this is being escalated now to ensure action is taken

Communication theme increasing (not keeping customers updated with changes, no contact at all)

- 3.3.8 A review of the upheld and partially upheld Quality of Service sub-groups identifies the majority of complaints are linked to response 'times/delays' followed by 'unhappy with quality'.
- 3.3.9 Gas – In Q4 there were 13 Stage 1 complaints linked to Gas. 3 complaints were upheld/partially upheld linked to KWL. These were for Quality of Service (response times/delays) and Courtesy and Respect (staff attitude).
- 3.3.10 Joint meetings take place monthly with KWL under the contract governance procedure to consider lessons learned, service improvements and best practice for complaint handling.

3.4 Stage 1 Complaints – Non-Repairs

- 3.4.1 The number of non-repairs Stage 1 complaints received in Q4 is 87. This has increased from Q3 (78).
- 3.4.2 The number of non-repairs Stage 1 complaints has increased by 31% to 336 in 2024/25 compared to 2023/24 when 257 were received.

This increase has been seen in;

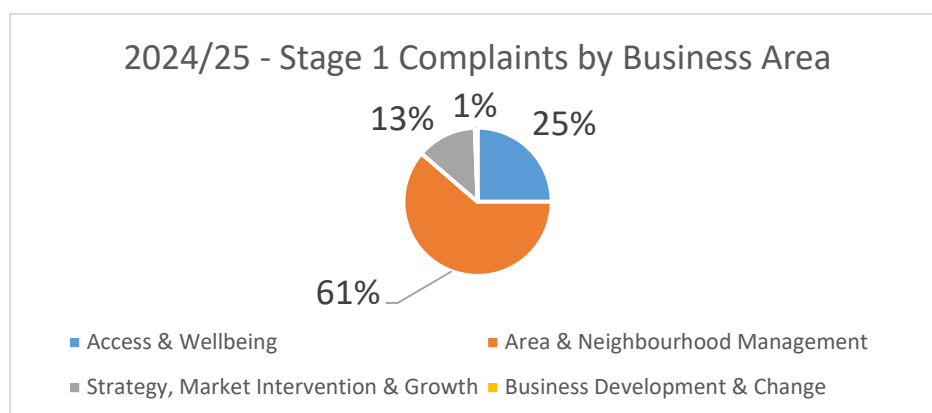
Access & Wellbeing - 40% increase from 2023/24

Area & Neighbourhood Management – 39% increase from 2023/24

Strategy, Market Intervention & Growth have seen a decrease in complaints from 2023/24 of 6% and Business Development & Change have received the same number of complaints in 2024/25 as they did last year (2).

- 3.4.3 The number of non-repairs Stage 1 complaints by business area for Q4 shows that the highest number of complaints received were for Area & Neighbourhood Management. This has remained consistent throughout 2024/25 and the previous year.

Q4 Non-Repairs Complaints by Business Area	Total
Access & Wellbeing	18
Area & Neighbourhood Management	58
Strategy, Market Intervention & Growth	11
Business Development & Change	0
	87



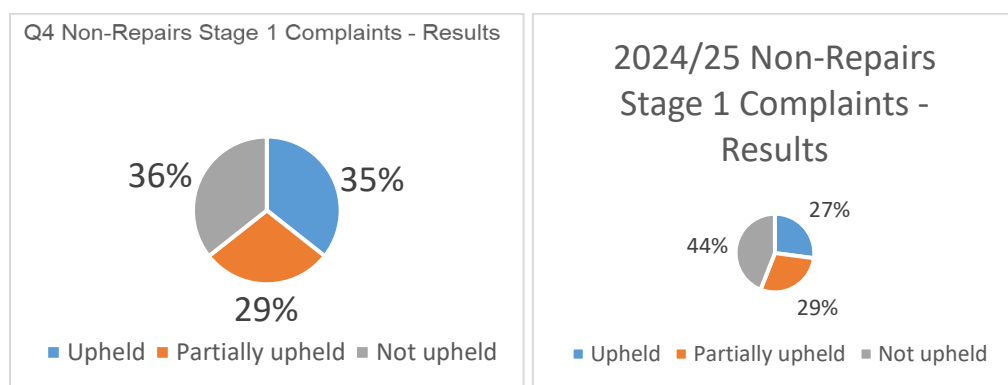
- 3.4.4 We have received more complaints for Access & Wellbeing to date in 2024/25 (84) than we did in 2023/24 (60) and this overall increase in Access & Wellbeing remains to be due to the number of people complaining about their homelessness/housing situation and the difficulties securing a property to live in. This reflects the wider issue an increase in the number of people seeking social housing and the shortage of suitable properties.

There was, however, a significant reduction in Access & Wellbeing complaints between Q2 and Q3 2024/25, which was especially seen in the complaints relating to Housing Options. This reduction has remained consistent in Q4.

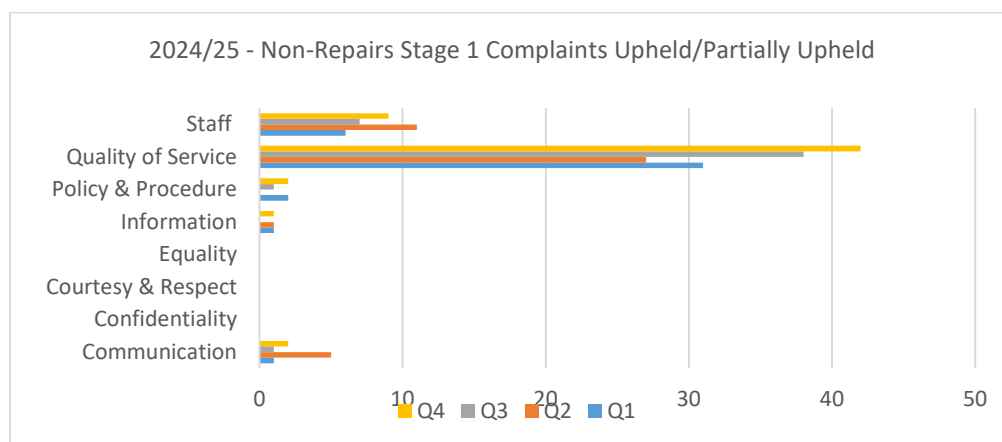
- 3.4.5 We have received 206 complaints in total in 2024/25 for Area & Neighbourhood Management which is a 39% increase from 2023/24. The continued increase of

complaints each quarter in Area & Neighbourhood management complaints is for a range of different reasons e.g. staff, service, policy and procedure.

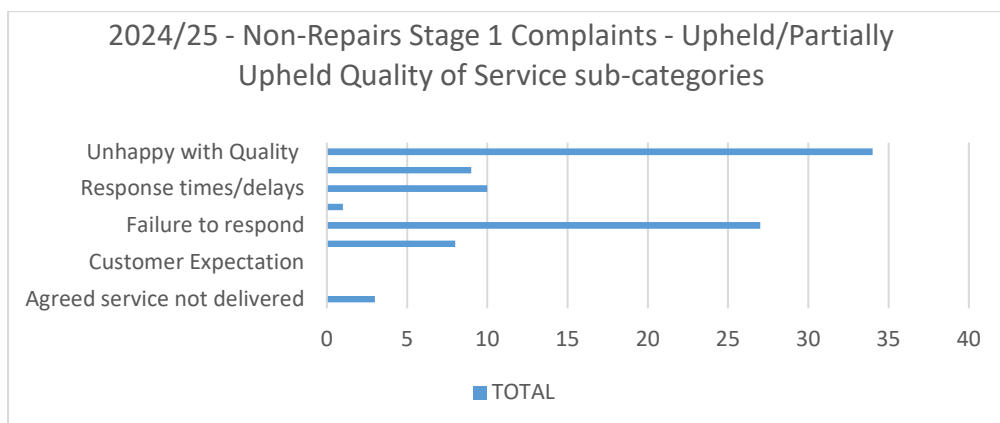
- 3.4.6 Q4 – 56% of Stage 1 complaints either Upheld or Partially Upheld. This is consistent with the rate experienced in previous reporting periods and the year to date.



- 3.4.7 It is more insightful to focus on complaints that are either upheld or partially upheld. These identify service failures and areas where there is the potential to improve the service provided. The graph below shows the category of complaints upheld and partially upheld in 2024/25.



- 3.4.8 Quality of Service remains the most common category of complaint. 75% of upheld/partially upheld complaints fall under this category for Q4 and 71% for 2024/25.



3.4.9 This is broken down further into sub-categories and the highest number of complaints relate to 'Quality of Service' and 'Failure to Respond'.

3.4.10 Some of the other upheld and partially upheld complaints within the other feedback categories and sub-categories for Q4 are below;

Communication

- Lack of communication when dealing with adaptations
- Lack of communication when dealing with property allocations

Information

- Incorrect information provided on homelessness case

Policy & Procedure

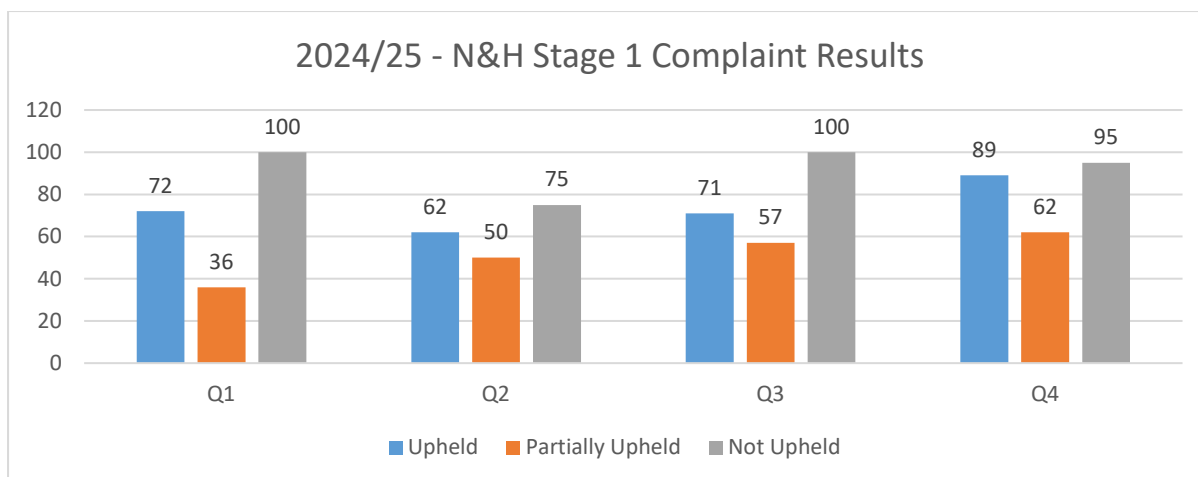
- Policy not followed correctly regarding a succession case

Staff

- Unhappy with staff conduct of a Tenancy Officer who swore at the Tenant
- Conduct of a Tenancy Officer during a safeguarding meeting – microphone not muted and made several rude and unprofessional comments about a member of the group
- Tenancy Officer was rude and unhelpful during visit
- Tenancy Officer being uncooperative and not responding to contact
- Caretaker being inconsistent in his attendance

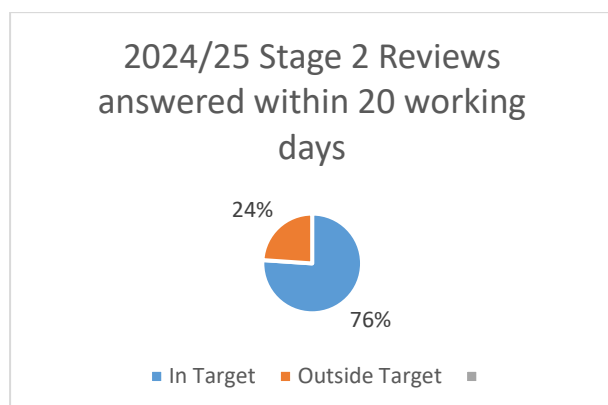
4. Stage 1 Complaints - Results

4.1 57% of all N&H complaints in 2024/25 to date have been Upheld or Partially Upheld. This is consistent with previous years.



5. Stage 2 Reviews

- 5.1 There have been 163 Stage 2 Reviews in 2024/25 in total. As expected, as the number of Stage 1 complaints increases so does the number of Stage 2 Reviews. The number of Stage 2 reviews has just about doubled since 2023/24 but this is expected due to the revised Complaint Handling Codes for HOS and LGSCO coming in to effect on 1 April 2024 which state that all Stage 2 requests must be accepted and investigated.
- 5.2 In Q4, there were 46 Stage 2 Reviews across Repairs and Non-Repairs.
- 5.3 Stage 2 Reviews answered within target
- 5.3.1 In Q4, 80% of Stage 2 Reviews were completed within 20 working days. In 2024/25, 76% of Stage 2 Reviews have been completed within 20 working days. This is similar to the performance data for the same dates experienced in 2023/24 (73%).



Stage 2 Reviews	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Non Repairs within 20 working days	15	12	18	19	64
Non Repairs over 20 working days	0	4	1	0	5
	15	16	19	19	69
Non Repairs completion rate	100%	75%	95%	100%	93%
Repairs within 20 working days	16	13	13	18	60
Repairs over 20 working days	11	5	9	9	34
	27	18	22	27	94
Repairs completion rate	59%	72%	59%	67%	64%

5.3.2 Repairs have a Stage 2 completion rate (within 20 working days) of 64%, compared to 93% for non-repairs in 2024/25. Whilst Stage 2 Reviews tend to be more involved than a Stage 1 investigation, the reasons for Repairs low completion rate have been identified as;

- Negotiating a positive outcome. At Stage 2 we endeavour to reach a positive outcome the customer is happy with. This can take time, involving multiple interactions with both the customer and contractor to establish all the facts and gather information. It is often better to sacrifice the timescale to avoid a complaint escalating.
- Customer led. Refused surveyor inspection for earlier date as wanted only a specific surveyor to attend.
- ***Actioning Officer. Delay in responding (internal)

***As a service improvement from w/c 14/05: Senior Managers in HIS will be provided with details of complaints being investigated by their direct reports to ensure there is additional monitoring, and an escalation for the feedback team.

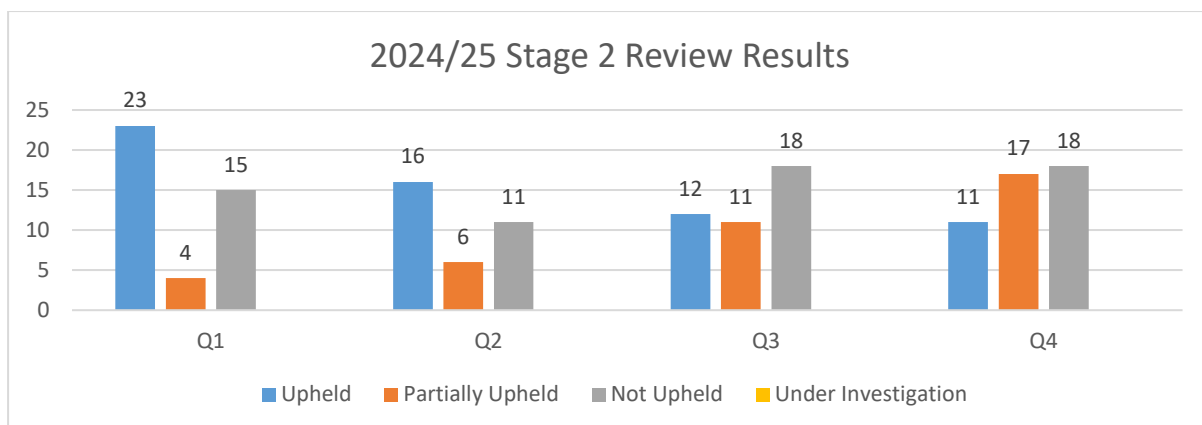
5.3.3 In Q4 – 100% of Stage 2 Reviews for Non-Repairs were completed within 20 working days which has continued the positive increase from previous quarters in the year. 93% of Stage 2 Reviews were completed within target for the whole year. This is an improvement on the completion in target rate of 87% in 2023/24.

5.3.4 All business areas answered the Stage 2 Reviews within 20 working days in Q4.

Access & Wellbeing and Area & Neighbourhood Management have answered all Stage 2 Reviews within target across 2024/25. Strategy, Market Intervention & Growth have answered 56% of theirs within target across the year. This follows the trend seen with the Stage 1 complaints in 5.2.2 and therefore, the continued attention on improving the overall percentage of complaints completed within target should be heavily focussed on within this business area for Stage 2 complaints also.

5.4 Stage 2 Reviews Results

5.4.1 In Q4, 61% of Stage 2 Reviews were Upheld or Partially Upheld. In 2024/25 to date, 62% of Stage 2 Reviews have been Upheld or Partially Upheld.



- 5.4.2 As per Stage 1 complaints, Quality of Service is the predominant category of Stage 2 Reviews that are Upheld or Partially Upheld. Stage 2 Reviews highlight the importance of ensuring remedial action agreed at Stage 1 is completed.

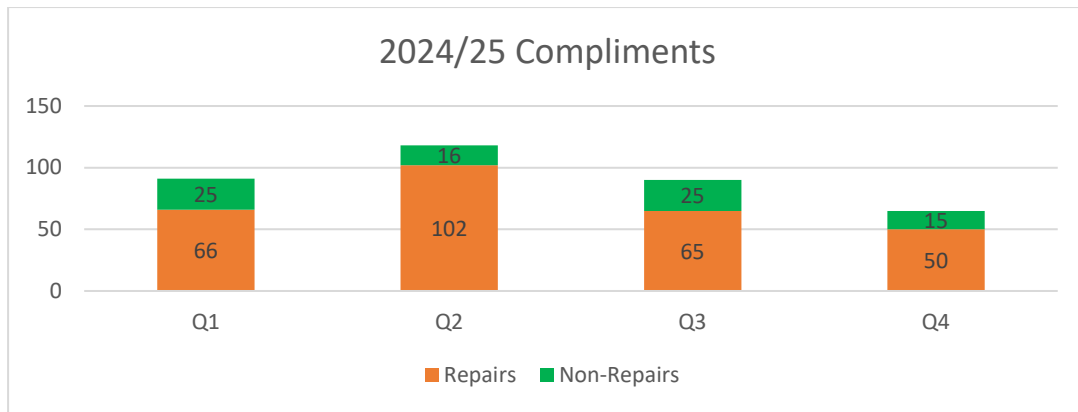
Repairs continue to work with KWL to embed a process to ensure actions agreed at Stage 1 are monitored to completion.

6. Learning from complaints

- 6.1 Key areas of learning from the complaints show that quality of service continues to need improvements – this can be done by focussing on keeping tenants updated and providing full, clear explanations, responding and completing any specific actions or service requests in a timely manner, ensuring that correct information is being provided and/or recorded.
- 6.2 Another key area of learning is that a lot more work can be done in terms of dealing with vulnerabilities. There are meetings taking place between Customer Feedback and Practice Management as well as work being done within the Transparency, Influence & Accountability workstream in relation to vulnerabilities and this will involve looking further into learnings from complaints as well as learnings from complaint cases that have been with the Ombudsman.

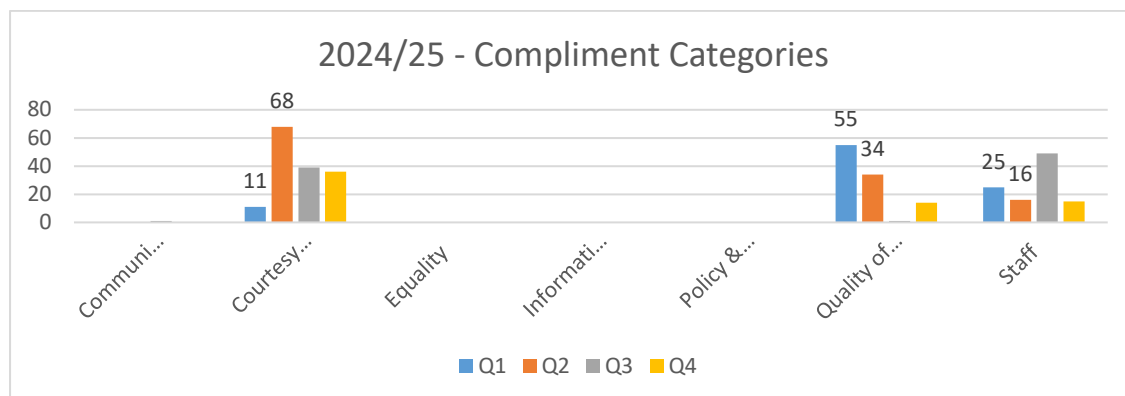
7. Compliments

- 7.1 The number received in Q4 (65) is lower than what was received in Q3 (90), however, we have received 364 in 2024/25, which is higher than the total of 262 received for the full year of 2023/24 and is extremely positive.



7.2 Compliment Categories

- Repairs – The Council was directly notified about 50 compliments, all logged to KWL as follows:
Courtesy & Respect (36)
Quality of Service (14)
- Non-repairs – 15 compliments were received in Q4. All of these are categorised as compliments to members of staff. These were received across all Service Areas and the comments show how much help and support has been offered and how much of a difference this can make to people's lives.



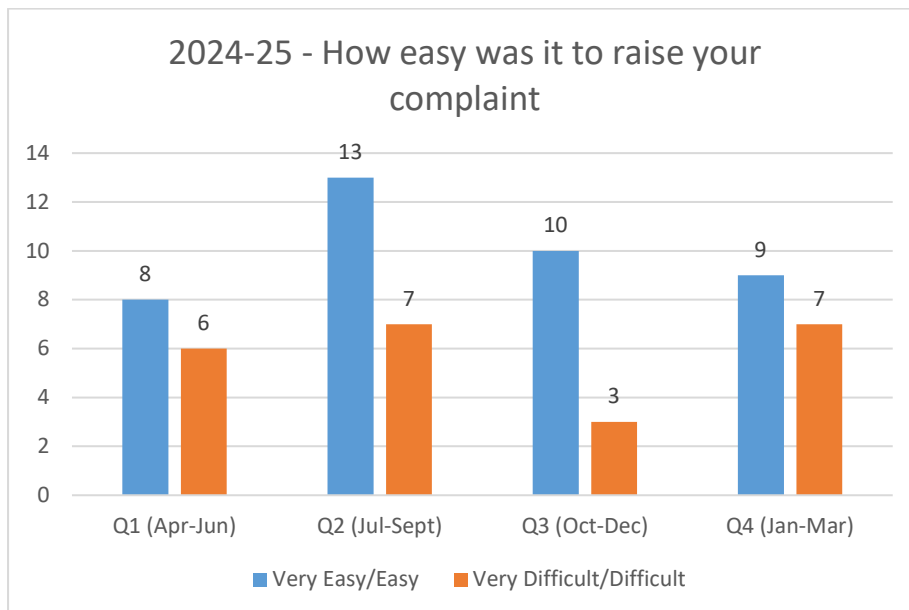
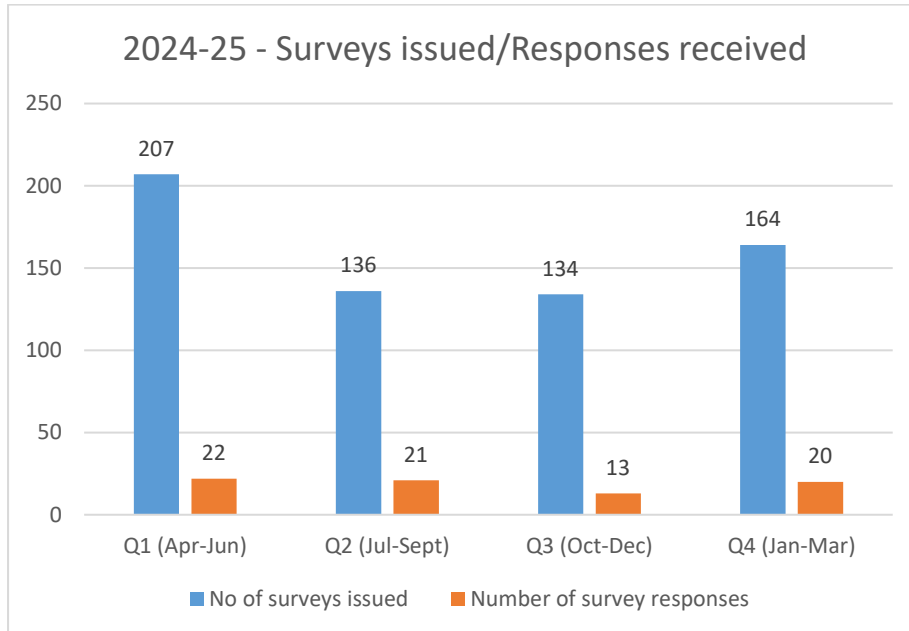
- 7.3 All compliments have been passed on to the specific members of staff and their managers.
- 7.4 Compliments received ranged from acknowledgements or expressions of gratitude and supports the fact that there is a good quality of service being provided.
- 7.5 The fact that the most significant category for complaints is poor quality of service, continues to demonstrate the importance to residents of the quality of service.

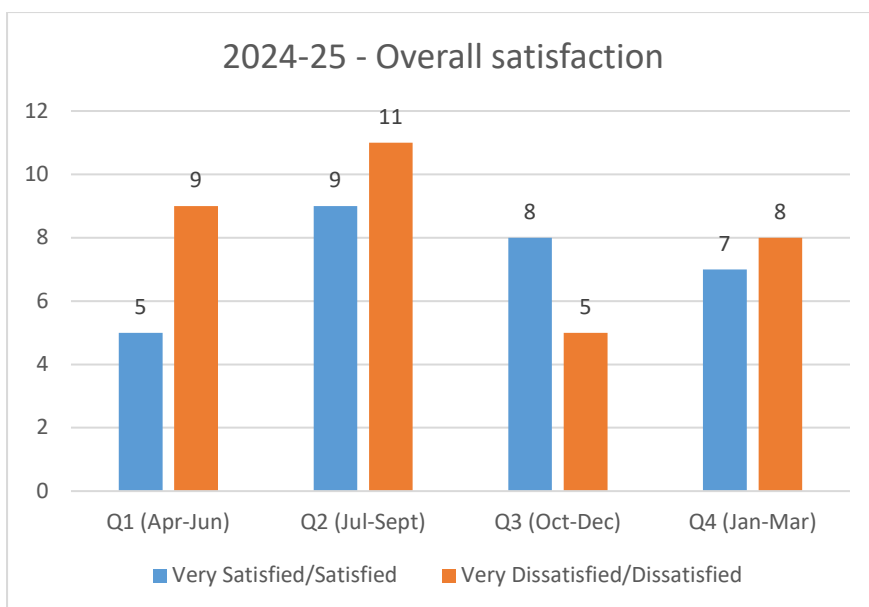
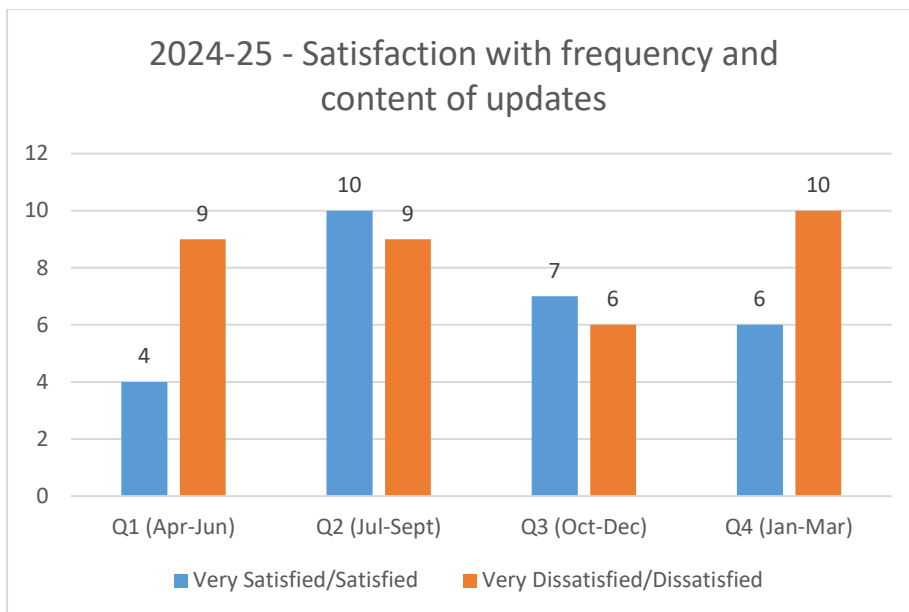
8. Customer Satisfaction with the feedback process

- 8.1 Efforts are made to check customer satisfaction with the complaints process. The Customer Feedback officer sends complainants a Customer Satisfaction Survey (Csat) 4 weeks after a complaint is closed. This is intended to give more timely data and additional information to that provided by the STAR survey.

8.2 Unfortunately return rates are low (12%). Consequently, results are reported on an annual basis.

8.3 The data is shown below:





- 8.4 The Csat also acts as a useful opportunity to 'check-in' with complainants. Following the sending of the Csat survey complainants will sometimes respond stating they have not received their Stage 1 response letter, or they are unhappy with the Stage 1 response. This then provides the opportunity for service recovery by re-sending the Stage 1 letter or enhancing our service delivery by opening a Stage 2 Review.

9. **Conclusions**

- 9.1 Feedback received by N&H continues to be well-managed and regularly reviewed to promote learning and meet the requirements of the RSH and Housing Ombudsman. SMT should continue to monitor complaint handling and completion times to ensure proper focus and prioritisation of complaint investigation and response.

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