

Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report

2023/24

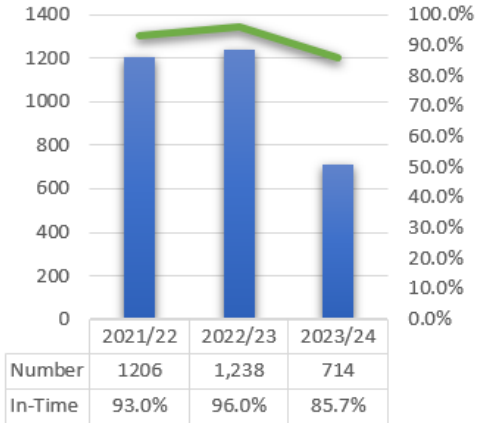
Landlord services complaints
Covering the period 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024

Introduction

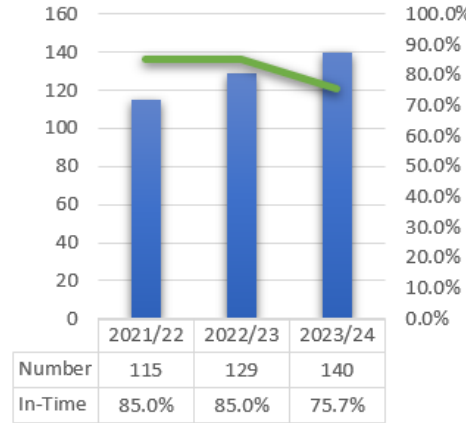
- 1.1 This is the first year that Barnet Homes, the Arms-Length Management Organisation (ALMO) working on the behalf of the London Borough of Barnet, has reported on landlord services complaints in this format under the new regimes of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) and the Housing Ombudsman's latest Complaint Handling Code, which now includes a statutory requirement to submit performance reporting to the Ombudsman. Barnet Homes previously reported combined performance on complaints across all services and tenure types (for example, including complaints about homelessness services and social housing allocations, and complaints from residents living in temporary accommodation not owned by the borough). The focus on landlord services in this report therefore means it is not possible to accurately compare performance to previous years; however, 2023/24 performance will establish a baseline for understanding future trends. Complaints included in numbers for previous years that are not included in the 2023/24 overall performance include those from leaseholders (these are included separately in this report), those about Housing Options services, and those from residents living in temporary accommodation not owned by LBB. We expect that as the TSMs and annual complaints reports will be in the public domain, there will likely be opportunity for comparison with other, similar, landlords in future.
- 1.2 Overall, the three-year trend over time for Stage 1 complaints is a reduction in numbers across most services, and particularly in Gas as service improvements have been implemented, and in Repairs as challenges concerning delays and resourcing started to be addressed. Whilst it is not possible to compare like for like regarding complaints about landlord services under the scope of the Housing Ombudsman Service and complaints under the scope of the TSMs, if we compare the like for like total number of complaints received by Barnet Homes across all its services and tenancy types there was an overall decrease of 24%. Similarly to many housing providers, Barnet Homes has been operating in an environment of increased complaints and in challenging circumstances in repairs delivery, which routinely attracts the highest number of complaints sector wide, and whilst there is more to do to ensure the consistent quality of services and to improve complaint handling performance, the downward turn in the number of Stage 1 complaints is encouraging.
- 1.3 It should be noted that system limitations mean we do not have full assurance that timescales for acknowledging complaints (TSM CH02) have been accurately captured in reporting, as these are based on the date the complaint is created within the system and some complaints received by email could have been received by the organisation before this logging date. We would not, however, expect this to significantly affect the TSM results. A technical solution is being applied.
- 1.4 Complaints are regularly scrutinised by the Barnet Homes Board, which includes council-appointed board members, independent board members, and two local councillors. The Barnet Homes Resident Board also regularly receives and scrutinises reporting on complaints performance. This annual report on complaints performance and service improvement is presented to the Resident Board and the Barnet Homes Board, along with the council's Cabinet.
- 1.5 Barnet Homes welcomes complaints as an opportunity to understand issues, put things right, and continuously improve services. Complaints also feed into Barnet Homes' strategies, policies, and plans to help inform priorities. A high number of landlord services complaints is not unexpected in the current environment. Housing services are responding to increased demand within a challenging environment, and funding for social housing maintenance is constrained, as is capacity across public sector and community partners. London-based social landlords also receive a disproportionate number of complaints, likely due to the condition of London housing stock, the volume and density of homes, and the particular challenges and costs in London associated with property maintenance and the repairs market.
- 1.6 The introduction of the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code and recent changes in legislation concerning social housing regulation have additionally increased access to complaints for tenants, and there have been several national campaigns to encourage social housing residents to access the complaints process of their landlords and the Housing Ombudsman. There is a focus on creating a culture of accountability where tenants' voices are heard and listened to, and a high number of complaints should be welcomed as a sign of tenant engagement.
- 1.7 Barnet Homes recognises that all tenants living in the council properties it manages should have a warm, safe, and secure home, and has encouraged residents to report any concerns to it alongside its proactive programme of stock condition surveying which provides information about a large proportion of council-owned homes. The performance covered in this report is within the context of significant demand on housing services. Between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2023, Barnet Homes completed 26,944 repairs (up from 25,745), 1,947 damp and mould inspections, 9,322 gas services (LGSRs), and 877 major works including replacements of kitchens, bathrooms, and roofs and external redecoration.

Complaints performance overview

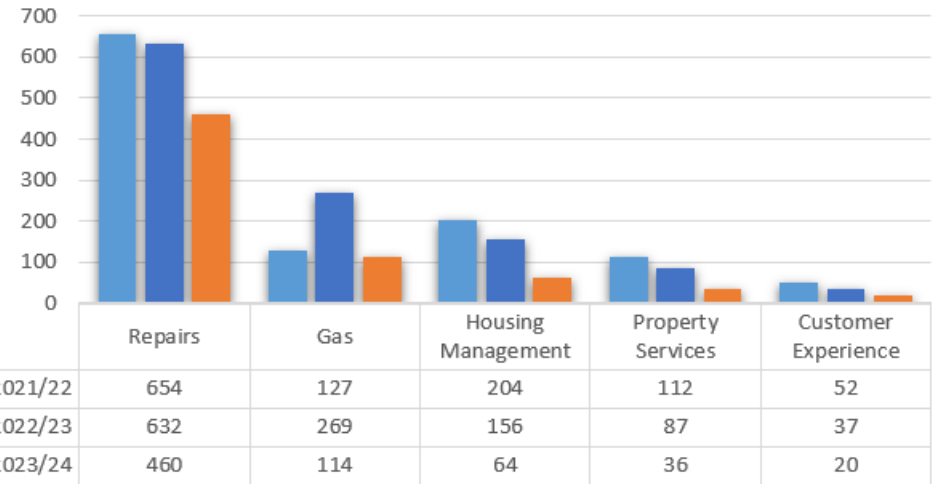
Complaints Received and Answered in Time



Stage 2

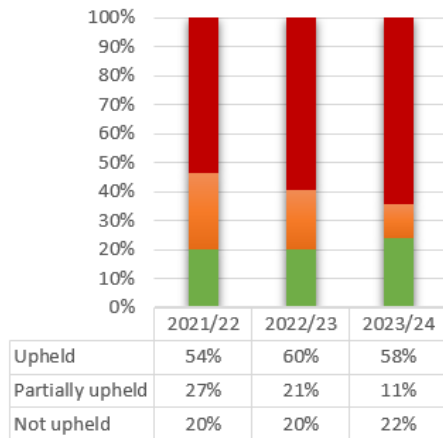


Complaints Received by Service Area (highest areas)

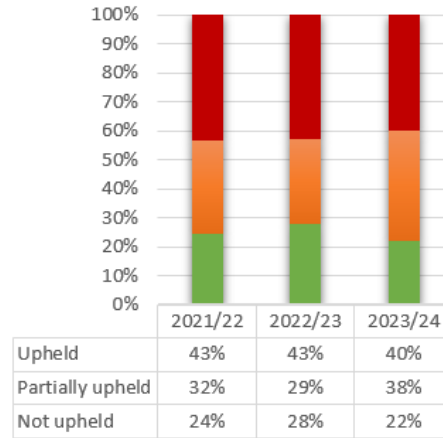


Complaint Outcomes

Stage 1

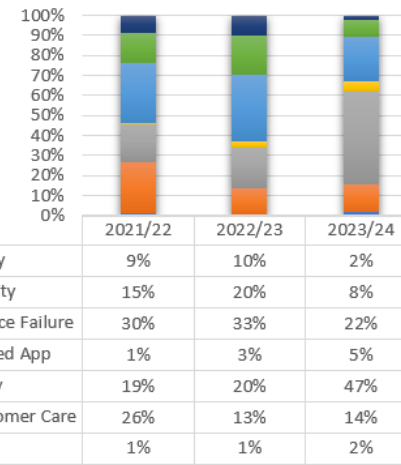


Stage 2

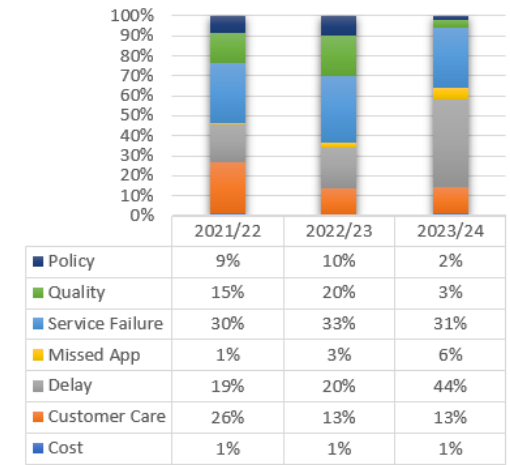


Complaint Themes

Stage 1



Stage 2



Performance Indicators including Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)

*Comparison to previous year should be treated with some caution as per 1.1 of this report. 2022/23 complaints performance includes tenancy types that are not included in 2023/24 data.

Performance Indicator	2023/24	2022/23	Commentary
Number of Stage 1 complaints received	714	1,238*	Number of complaints received provides some assurance that tenants know how to complain, and the complaints process is accessible. Nonetheless, when we look at all complaints received by Barnet Homes across all services, including those not in scope of the Housing Ombudsman Service, there was a 24% decrease in complaints which was largely driven by a reduction in complaints about Gas as service improvements were implemented and Repairs as challenges concerning delays and resourcing started to be addressed. This report includes performance against the Tenant Satisfaction Measures, which do not apply to leaseholders; however, leaseholders have the right to approach the Housing Ombudsman Service. Including leaseholders, Barnet Homes received 825 complaints about landlord services in 2023/24.
CH01 Number of Stage 1 complaints per 1,000 homes (TSM)	78.7	-	For the purposes of the TSMs, 714 complaints were received against a property count of 9,076. This was the first year of calculating the TSMs.
CH02 Stage 1 complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales (TSM)	85.7%	-	Including leaseholder complaints, performance in time at Stage 1 was 86.4%. Performance against the target timescale was below the desired level and was affected by Q4 when there was a higher number of complaints received and performance in time dipped. It is acknowledged that target timescales are not an absolute marker of success nor of quality. The drivers of performance are likely to be a combination of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the number of complaints received in some periods impacting upon capacity; • The nature of the complaints is complex, and a multi-service approach is needed; • High volumes of enquiries to the Customer Contact Team have sometimes resulted in email management delays that affect the timescale for acknowledging complaints; • There has been a continued focus on the quality of response and appropriate resolution, rather than the time taken to complete the response.
% Stage 1 complaints fully upheld	57.8%	60%*	A high proportion of upheld and partially upheld complaints shows that Barnet Homes is willing to accept when things and gone wrong and takes ownership of issues to put things right.
% Stage 1 complaints partially upheld	20.5%	21%*	
% Stage 1 complaints not upheld	21.7%	20%*	
Number of Stage 2 complaints received	140	129*	Including leaseholder complaints, 186 complaints about landlord services were escalated to Stage 2 of Barnet Homes' process.
CH01 Number of Stage 2 complaints per 1,000 homes (TSM)	15.4	-	For the purposes of the TSMs, 140 complaints were received against a property count of 9,076.
CH02 Stage 2 complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales (TSM)	75.7%	-	Including leaseholder complaints about landlord services, 71% of complaints were responded to within the target timescale. Similarly to Stage 1, performance in time was below the desired level and was influenced by an increase in the number of complaints received. Stage 2 is acknowledged as the last opportunity to put things right for the resident, and so a focus on the quality of response and appropriate resolution is likely to be prioritised over target timescales.
% Stage 2 complaints fully upheld	40.1%	43%*	A high proportion of upheld and partially upheld complaints shows that Barnet Homes is willing to accept when things and gone wrong and takes ownership of issues to put things right.
% Stage 2 complaints partially upheld	38%	29%*	
% Stage 2 complaints not upheld	21.8%	28%*	
TP09 Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling complaints (TSM)	29.8%	-	We will continue to monitor this TSM, and we will continue to provide briefings and training on effective complaints handling. This is an emotive subject, and we expect that this area of satisfaction is likely to not be high for a combination of reasons including not being satisfied with the outcome and lingering dissatisfaction about the issue being complained about. Initial benchmarking by HouseMark in 2022/23 indicated that the "top quartile" threshold was 27.3%.

Complaints by service area

Stage 1 - service area trends

Service area trends are focused on the services receiving the highest numbers of complaints. Although comparison to previous year should be treated with some caution as per 1.1 of this report, there has been a positive downward trend in the number of landlord services complaints received over the past three years. The 2023/24 figures shown in this chart reflect complaints that fall under the scope of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures. For additional information about complaints from leaseholders, please see the next section of this report.

The majority of complaints across all services are linked to poor communication, and this theme continues to be addressed in service improvement work.

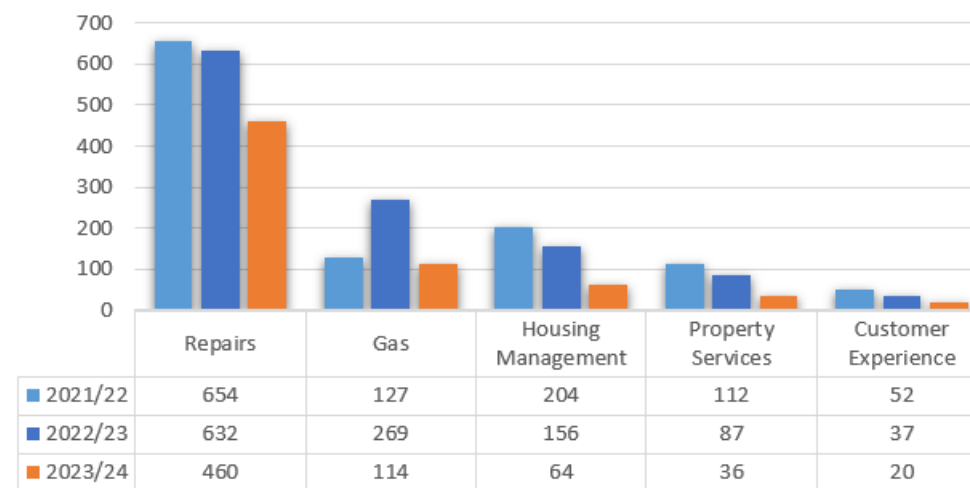
Whilst delay was a significant cause of Repairs complaints, recruitment coupled with the improvements that have been implemented within the service are starting to have a positive impact on complaints. Other common causes of complaints about Repairs included changes to appointments or new appointment dates not being communicated, and works being closed without being completed (known as the “follow-on process”, where additional jobs are raised to put right the issue). Based on 26,944 repairs completed, there was a complaint rate of 1.7%, or 1.7 complaints per 100 completed jobs. For additional context, 361 positive comments were received about repairs operatives when transactional satisfaction surveys were completed, and 122 were received about gas engineers.

In Housing Management, complaints were typically due to lack of communication or confusing correspondence, and customer care and not always taking residents’ needs into account. Improvements in resourcing and a focus on customer care have helped to reduce complaints about these services.

Whilst service improvements had a notable impact on the number of Property Services complaints received, there were some issues with kitchen and bathroom replacements and the Grahame Park heating system not being to the required standard in some circumstances. The service had also previously been receiving repeat complaints about complex cases. Within Property Services, 29 complaints related to major works; based on 877 completed works, there was a complaint rate of 3.3%, or 3.3 complaints per 100 completed works.

In Customer Experience, the main cause of complaints was communication and staff behaviour, including some complaints about newer members of the team not following procedures as they should. In 2023/24, the Customer Contact Team handled 94,392 calls, resulting in a complaint rate of 0.02% or 0.02 complaints per call.

Stage 1



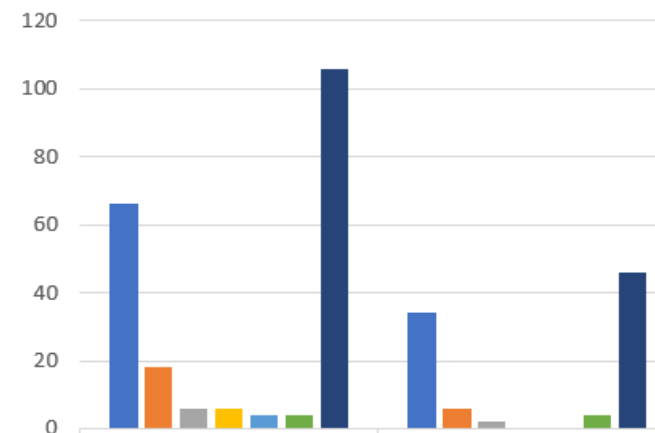
Leaseholder complaints

Leaseholder complaints are highlighted separately as these do not form part of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures that are reported to the regulator; however, leaseholders do have the right to complain to the Housing Ombudsman Service. Most complaints from leaseholders were about Repairs, followed by Housing Management. Nearly half of all leaseholder complaints were escalated to Stage 2; Barnet Homes will keep this under review to identify potential wider learning about complaints from this group of residents.

Of all leaseholder complaints about landlord services, 27.4% were not upheld, 22.6% were partially upheld, and 50% were fully upheld.

Similarly to complaints from tenants, the majority of leaseholder complaints were about Delay (49.1%), followed by Service Failure (18.9%), and Customer Care (11.3%).

Leaseholder complaints

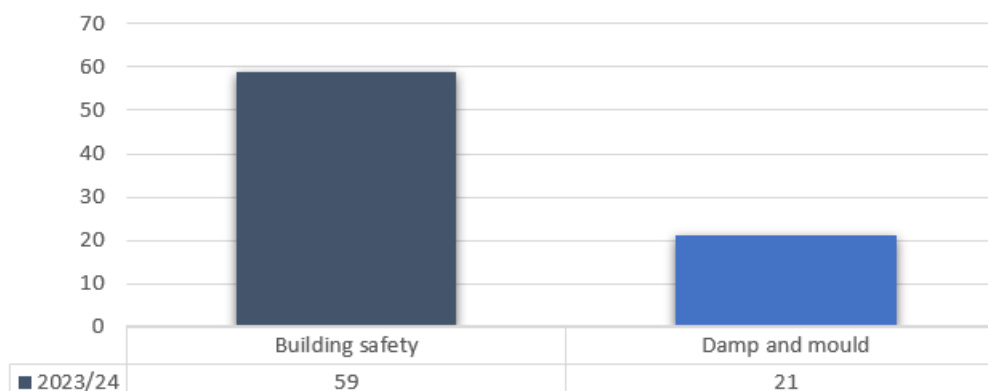


	Stage 1	Stage 2
Repairs	66	34
Housing Management	18	6
Property Services	6	2
Estates	6	
Customer Experience	4	
Growth and Development	4	4
Total	106	46

Special interest complaints

Barnet Homes started identifying complaints that were related to building safety in 2023/24, including the subset of these that related to damp and mould. In addition to the figures reported in the table to the right, a further 12 complaints relating to building safety issues were received from leaseholders, including six about damp and mould, five about repairs, and one about fire safety.

Stage 1 – building safety complaints



The majority of health and safety related complaints were about the Repairs service (51, or 86%), which included 36% that were about a damp and mould issue. The majority of the non-damp and mould Repairs complaints in this category were low level concerns, for example arriving without ID, not wearing overshoes, and operatives not clearing up properly after themselves. Further refinement of and staff briefing on the identification of building safety-related complaints will be undertaken to ensure only those complaints that relate to areas falling under the recent legislation are highlighted.

The most common themes for health and safety related complaints were Delay and Service Failure (35.6%), with 10.2% related to Policy, 8.5% related to Customer Care, and 6.8% related to Quality.

Most of the health and safety-related complaints were either partially upheld (27%) or fully upheld (49%).

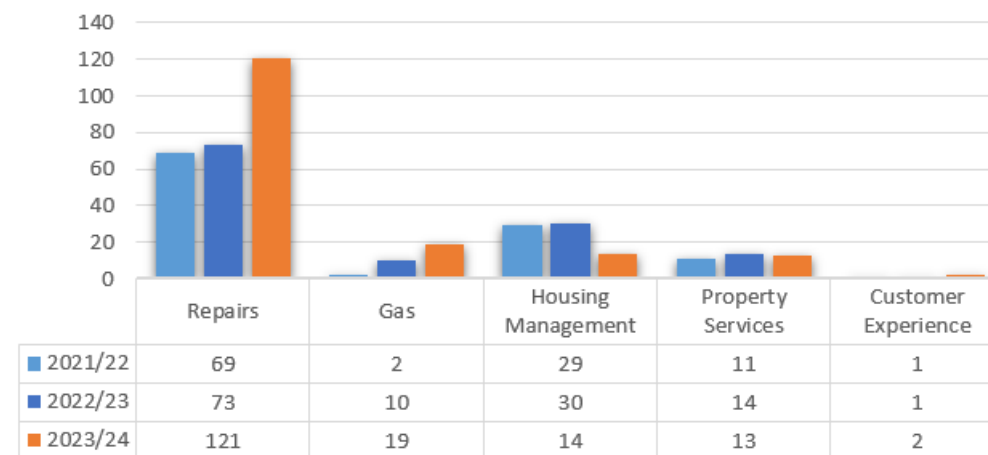
A Healthy Homes Team was established in March 2023 to focus on inspecting, managing, and delivering works to homes identified as having damp and/or mould related issues within the Barnet stock. All of the 131 severe cases identified from stock condition surveys were remediated in 2023/24, and the team is continuing to address emerging cases.

Stage 2 - service area trends

Requests for escalation to Stage 2 are made when a complainant is not happy with the response at Stage 1. Barnet Homes received a higher number of escalations of Repairs complaints, in particular, in 2023/24; this was largely due to promised follow-up actions to put things right at Stage 1 not being delivered, which can be attributed to challenges with resourcing levels and the backlog of repairs which has continued to be experienced in the post-COVID period. We expect to see a reduction in escalation requests as these challenges are addressed.

An additional 46 complaints from leaseholders were escalated to Stage 2, with 34 about Repairs, 6 about Housing Management, 4 about New Build, and 2 about Property Services.

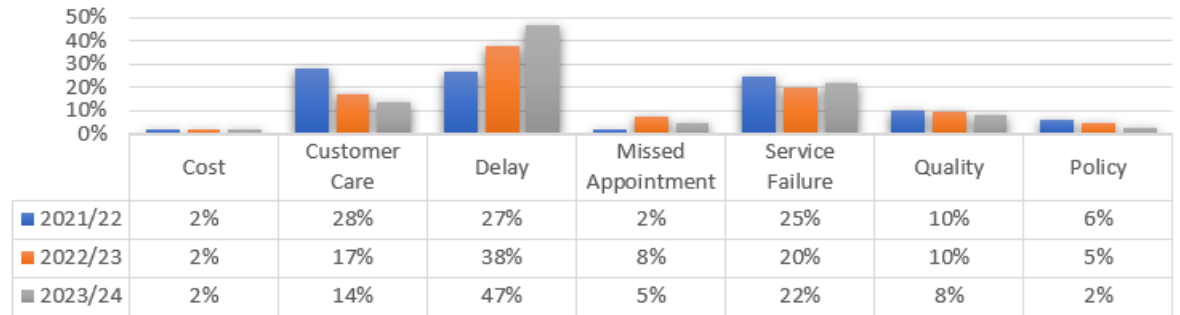
Stage 2



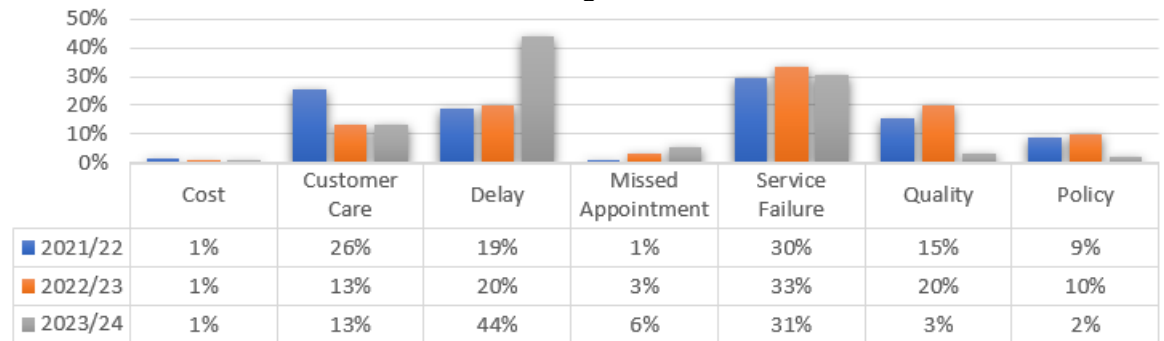
Complaint themes

Positively, Barnet Homes continues to see a decline in the proportion of complaints that are about Customer Care, although it should be acknowledged that customer care is sometimes a secondary or associated concern with other types of complaints. Delay continues to be the biggest driver of complaints due to its prevalence within those about the Repairs service.

Stage 1



Stage 2



Lessons learned and service improvements

This section summarises some of the lessons learned and service improvements implemented in 2023/24 across services with higher numbers of complaints.

Repairs and Gas

Through a combination of business data from stock condition surveys and feedback from complaints, we established a Healthy Homes Team and a new Damp, Mould, and Condensation Policy to strengthen the approach to tackling damp and mould.

A high number of complaints were received regarding changes to appointments or new appointment dates not being communicated; in addition to being a cause of frustration for residents, it resulted in challenges in gaining access to properties to complete repairs. As a result of this, Barnet Homes has changed its practices, including:

- Moving away from unconfirmed appointments; the service will attempt to contact the resident twice, and it will then be referred to another team to pursue confirmed appointments.
- More detailed notes are now captured on making confirmed contact with residents about repairs.
- Preferred appointment slots are being added to job orders.
- Planners are being closely performance managed and checks are completed to ensure the new processes are being followed.

A high number of complaints were received highlighting that the “follow-on” process was sometimes failing, which meant works were being closed without being completed. In response, Barnet Homes has reviewed and made significant changes to the process and to responsibilities and oversight and is embedding these across the repairs service. They should result in fewer works not being completed, and a reduction in the need for residents to chase up outstanding works.

Housing Management

Complaints indicated that some standard correspondence was confusing and residents did not understand the legal process. Letters have been updated to include what can be expected and an explanation of what the legal jargon means.

There was a small number of complaints about the vulnerability of residents not being taken into account when returning keys. The process has been adapted to send earlier communications about keys and to designate an officer to make contact regarding this and take action sooner.

Following some complaints and disputes about utility and service charges, a project team is being deployed to review the service charges process.

Some complaints highlighted a lack of communication to residents regarding tenancy management and anti-social behaviour issues. Some of these were due to resourcing issues, which have been addressed following recruitment to a number of vacancies. Effective communication is also being discussed regularly in team meetings, and case reviews are taking place and officers are being briefed on complaints to ensure they understand the impact of not contacting residents in a timely manner.

Property Services

Steps taken to improve communication about works include now publishing future works schedules on the Barnet Homes website so that residents can access this without delay.

Complaints are now included in project highlight reports to ensure learning is applied as works are progressed.

Property Services has focused on improving responsiveness to enquiries from residents and has implemented a simple calendar-based process to make sure follow-ups to initial enquiries are completed.

Complaints identified that some major works were not always performing to the expected standards. Sessions have been held with contractors on improving performance, and in some cases where a customer feels vulnerable Barnet Homes staff are now also attending appointments to provide support.

Customer Experience

In response to complaints about newer members of the team sometimes not following procedures (e.g. when raising repairs, not checking job histories thoroughly and therefore not following correct procedures to resolve issues, or raising unnecessary additional works), a more rigorous training plan has been put into place for new starters and the quality of their work is being more closely monitored. The implementation of call recording in the Customer Contact Team also allows for issues to be identified and improvements made. All team members have weekly briefings to make sure knowledge is refreshed and to address any new processes.

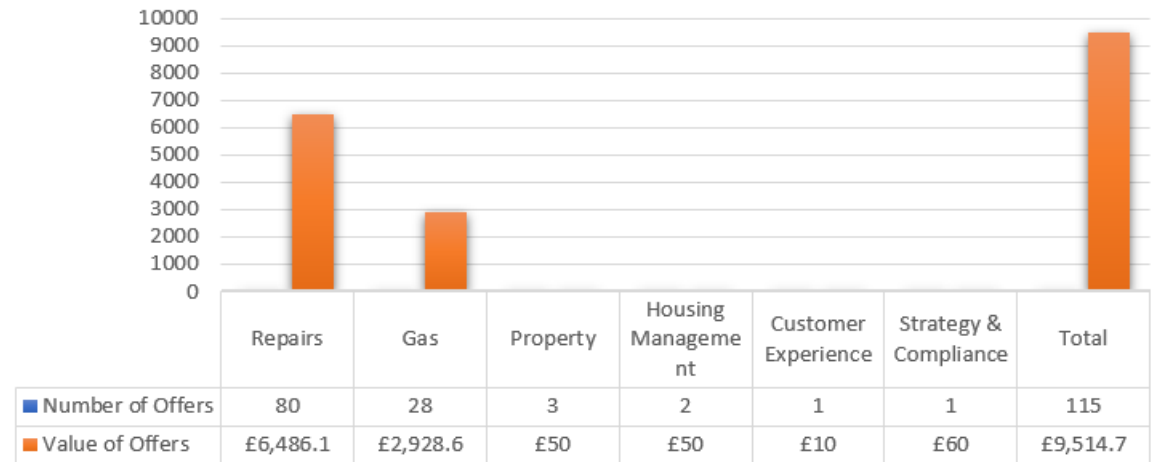
The telephone system has been stabilised, which has led to a decrease in complaints. In response to complaints about this issue, in the event that calls are cut off a Customer Service Officer will call the resident back.

Compensation

Compensation can be offered / awarded for time and trouble, distress, as goodwill, or in the form of a refund, reimbursement, or the offset of arrears. Compensation payments show that Barnet Homes is offering remedies including compensation where it is warranted.

There is no direct correlation between the amount of compensation offered in one year compared to another as each complaint is unique and compensation is offered under different circumstances.

Note: Results show the amount of compensation recorded as offered in response to complaints, however it may not have been accepted. It should also be noted that the totals combine Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints; in some instances, an offer of compensation at Stage 1 may have been increased at Stage 2 and therefore compensation is duplicated within the reported numbers. For context, a total of £7,740.69 was offered at Stage 1.



Complaint refusals

Stage 1

Number of Stage 1 complaints refused: 0

Stage 2

Number of Stage 2 escalation requests refused: 0

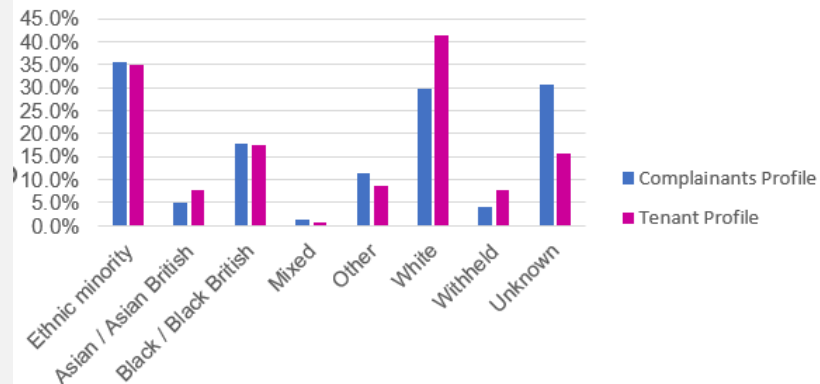
Equality analysis – Stage 1 complaints

Barnet Homes undertakes equality analysis of complaints to understand any potential barriers or areas for concern, with a focus on the protected characteristics of ethnic origin and disability and the performance areas of complaints received, complaint themes, and complaint outcomes.

Ethnic origin

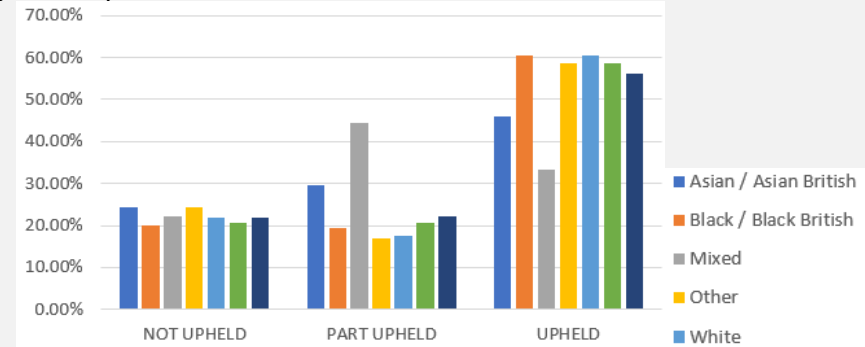
The demographic profile of tenants who complained was broadly comparable to that of the known profile of all tenants, although this information was not held for a large proportion of complainants. This does not suggest any potential barriers to accessing the complaints process; this will continue to be monitored.

Stage 1 complaints received

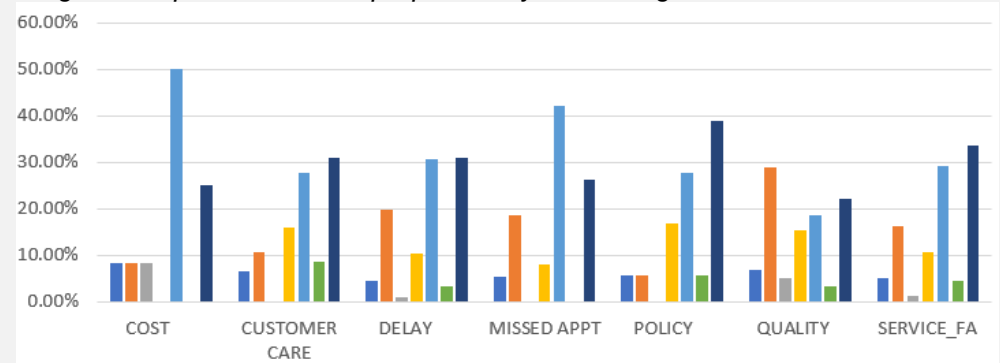


The proportion of complaints that were upheld was broadly comparable across all ethnic origins.

Stage 1 complaint outcomes

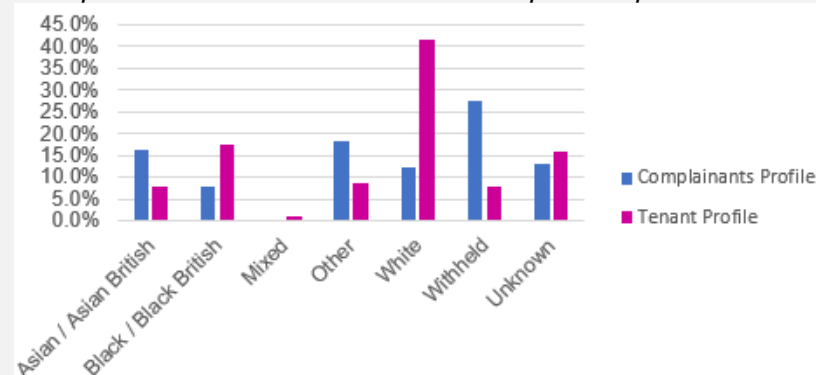


Stage 1 complaint themes – proportion by ethnic origin



Analysis of Customer Care complaints by ethnic origin does not raise any particular concerns. A smaller proportion of complaints from tenants from an ethnic minority background were about Customer Care compared to tenants from a White background. There was higher representation of tenants from an Asian/Asian British and an Other background within the profile of those who complained about Customer Care than there is in the overall tenant population, and Barnet Homes will continue to monitor this.

Stage 1 complaints – Customer Care theme complainant profile



Disability

There is insufficient data to draw any firm conclusions regarding disability. Twelve complainants were known to have a disability, however information about this protected characteristic is not known for the other 98.3% of complainants. Of the overall tenant profile, 18.4% are known to have a disability and this information is not held for 49.7% of tenants.

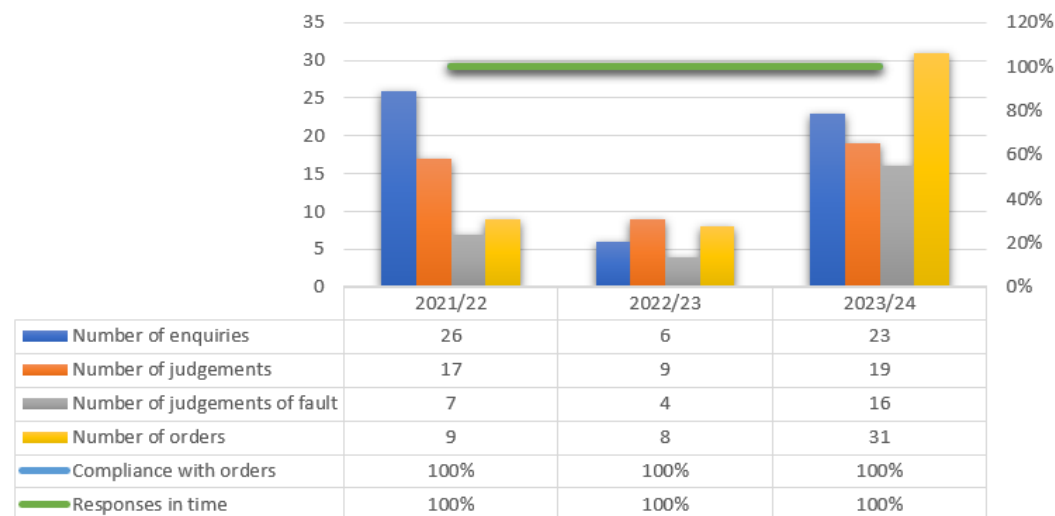
Housing Ombudsman

2023/24 Housing Ombudsman cases

The table to the right summarises Housing Ombudsman cases based on internal data for 2023/24, in the absence of the Housing Ombudsman's landlord performance reports for this period.

The Housing Ombudsman routinely reports a national increase in the number of complaints being made to it; Barnet Homes experienced an increase in 2023/24, however it followed a year of a reduction in cases that bucked the national trend, and numbers were comparable to 2021/22.

We expect to see the landlord performance reports later in the year that will give an indication of how Barnet Homes' performance compares to its peer group.



Key learning / improvements

In 2023/24, maladministration findings included:

- Provision of information about asbestos in a property, and in the response to reports about issues with polystyrene ceiling tiles in a property.
- A response to the resident's inclusion on the verbally abusive resident list.
- Complaint handling (2).
- The handling of reports of anti-social behaviour (4) and harassment from a neighbour.
- The handling of the ending of a tenancy.
- The handling of a request to move to an alternative property.
- The handling of reports of damp and mould.

Service failure findings included:

- Complaint handling (2)
- The handling of repairs to a stair lift.
- The handling of repairs to a front door, and in the response to a request to renew a bathroom.
- The handling of concerns about staff conduct during a gas safety check.

Some Ombudsman orders are unique to the individual complaint, including compensation orders, orders to provide information to a resident, orders to undertake works, and orders to apologise for service failures. Examples of improvements arising from Housing Ombudsman determinations included:

- A review of the verbally abusive resident list management process and the standard letter provided to residents regarding this, and briefings for key staff on this process.
- A briefing of contractors to ensure residents are kept updated regarding disabled adaptations where repairs are reported.
- Training provided to relevant staff and guidance issued to improve record keeping regarding the return of keys.
- Training provided to staff involved in the management of anti-social behaviour on records keeping and contact including a focus on vulnerability.
- Refresher training provided to complaint handlers on complaint handling responsibilities and good practice.

The Housing Ombudsman may also make recommendations concerning a determination. These are not mandatory, however Barnet Homes endeavours to follow the recommendations as a point of good practice. Actions undertaken in 2023/24 in line with Housing Ombudsman recommendations included:

- Training was provided to relevant staff to ensure correct information about property condition is provided during sign-up.
- Record keeping practices within the Neighbourhood team were reviewed in line with the Housing Ombudsman's spotlight report on Knowledge and Information Management and guidance was produced for staff.

Severe maladministration cases

The Housing Ombudsman made two findings of severe maladministration on Barnet Homes cases in 2023/24.

Handling of reports of noise nuisance against a neighbour and the neighbour's counter allegations.

The Housing Ombudsman found that noise nuisance had been reported as early as 2013. These issues escalated and incidents of anti-social behaviour were also reported. It found that Barnet Homes failed to manage the noise concerns properly and could have done more to resolve them. It found that internal communication between teams on major works to address the issues were poor, which impacted upon the handling of the matter. When a further specialist survey identified that no major works were required, this information was not shared with the resident in a timely manner. The resident had needed to chase up the works over a period of several years, and issues reported about creaking floorboards were not addressed. The Housing Ombudsman found that minor structural repairs and repairs to loose floorboards and doors remained outstanding, and concluded that the resident's enjoyment of their property was severely reduced.

Improvements implemented:

- Barnet Homes reviewed the Housing Ombudsman's spotlight report on Noise Nuisance and identified improvements in line with the report's recommendations.
- The housing management system was updated to include a noise nuisance triage and action code, similar to the functionality that covers anti-social behaviour reports, to ensure all reports of noise nuisance are logged and investigated without delay.
- Manager monitoring of noise nuisance caseloads and their effective management was implemented through the update to the housing management system.
- The Neighbourhood Management Policy was updated to cover the handling of noise nuisance reports.
- Barnet Homes' website was updated to make it clear for residents the support that will be provided regarding reports of noise nuisance.
- Housing Officers undertook training on how to tackle noise nuisance and understanding their ASB obligations, with yearly refreshers planned.

Handling of reports of issues with a boiler repair and request for a decant

The Housing Ombudsman found that although the capping of the boiler when it was found to be unsafe was appropriate and necessary, it was not clear why a subsequent survey took four months to complete. Whilst the Housing Ombudsman acknowledged that it may not have been feasible to complete the repair within the policy timescale due to access issues or the complexity and scale of the works, it expected Barnet Homes to demonstrate that it had made reasonable attempts to complete works within the timeframe, to maintain effective communication with the resident, and to assist the resident with heating provision while without a boiler. It found that non-legal options to gain access were not explored prior to taking more stringent action, and that records kept did not make clear how often attempts at contact were made. When it was not possible to access the property to replace the boiler, the planned replacement was cancelled and there was no record of attempts to contact the resident to progress the installation until they complained eight months later.

The Housing Ombudsman felt that additional steps should have been taken to engage with the resident in view of their vulnerability, and arrangements that they may have found easier to accept should have been explored. It found that there was no evidence of a more tailored and personal approach was not taken, and opportunities were missed to offer support, signpost the resident to relevant agencies, or enquire with partner agencies to see if they were working with the household. A single point of contact was assigned to the resident in 2022, but the resident was not advised when they left the organisation. The Housing Ombudsman also found that Barnet Homes departed from OT recommendations regarding a decant without explanation or evidence of alternative medical assessment. The Housing Ombudsman found that the failings were serious and prolonged, with a six-year delay in completing the heating repairs.

Improvements implemented:

- This determination was received at the end of March 2024. Barnet Homes is currently undertaking a review of the case to identify learning and prevent a reoccurrence of the failings identified. It includes consideration of the Responsive Repairs Policy in relation to how missed appointments are handled where residents are known to be vulnerable.

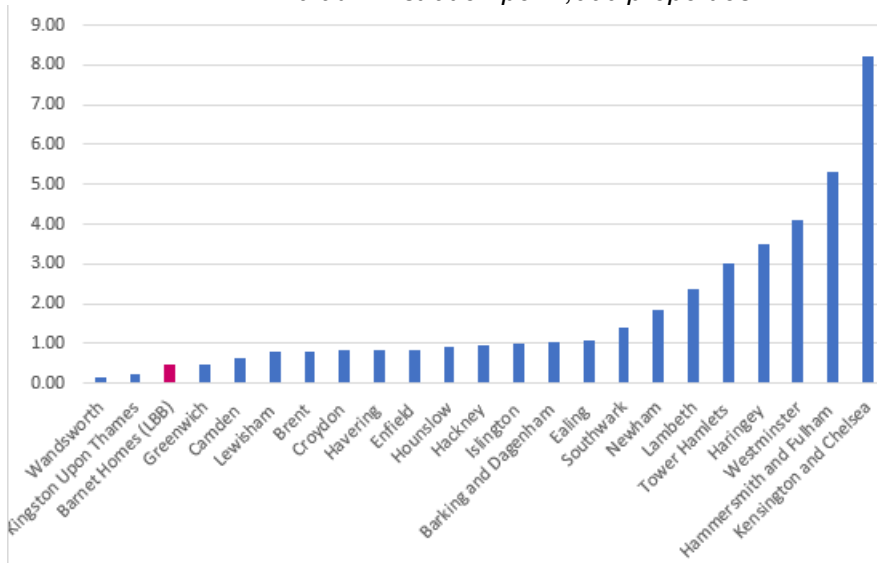
Housing Ombudsman annual performance report 2022/23

The Housing Ombudsman’s landlord performance reports for 2023/24 are not available at the time of writing this report. This section of the report therefore covers the year 2022/23 (1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023). This information is taken from the Housing Ombudsman’s landlord performance reports (www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/landlords).

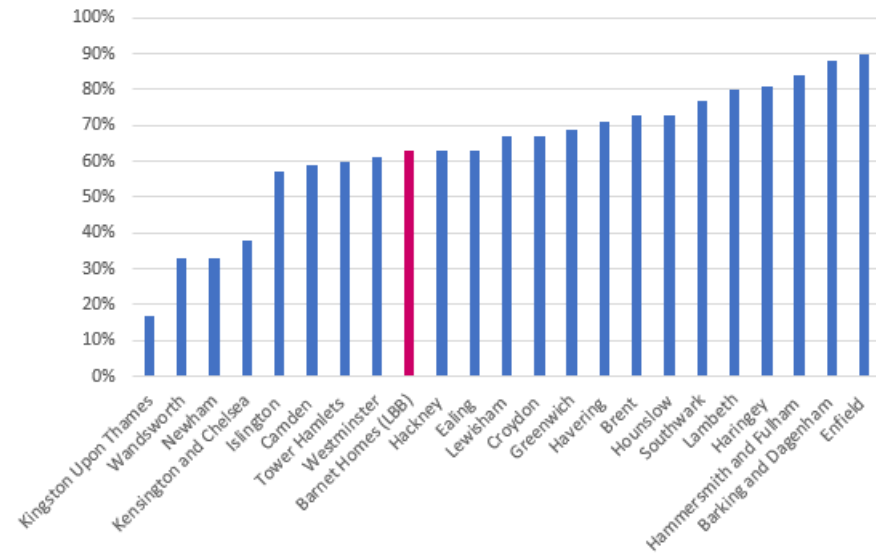
Barnet Homes’ (Barnet Council’s) landlord report set out that the Housing Ombudsman made eight determinations about Barnet Homes complaints, from which there were nine findings, five of which were maladministration. Six orders and nine recommendations were made, including compensation of £1,700. Barnet Homes had no Complaint Handling Failure Orders issued by the Housing Ombudsman.

For comparison, determinations per 1,000 properties and maladministration findings per 1,000 properties have been calculated for Barnet Homes (Barnet Council) and other local authorities in London for which the Housing Ombudsman had published performance reports for 2022/23. Barnet Homes compares favourably within this peer group:

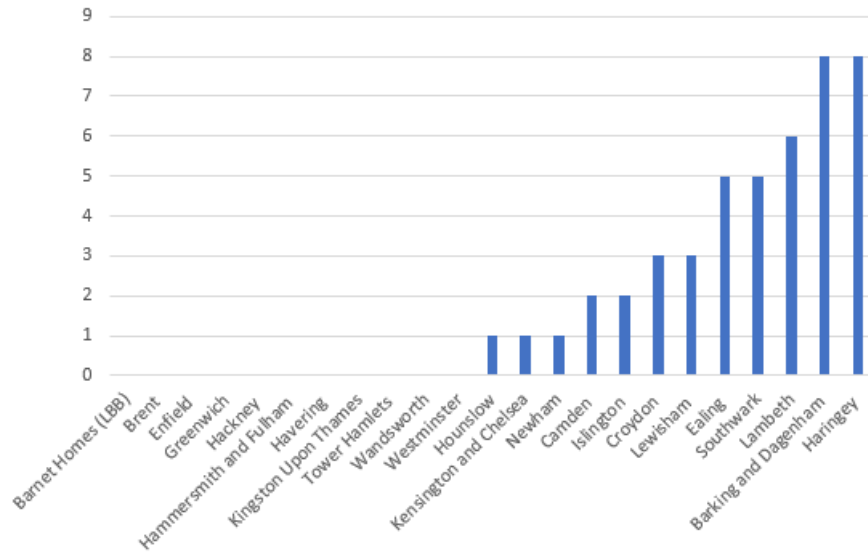
Maladministration per 1,000 properties



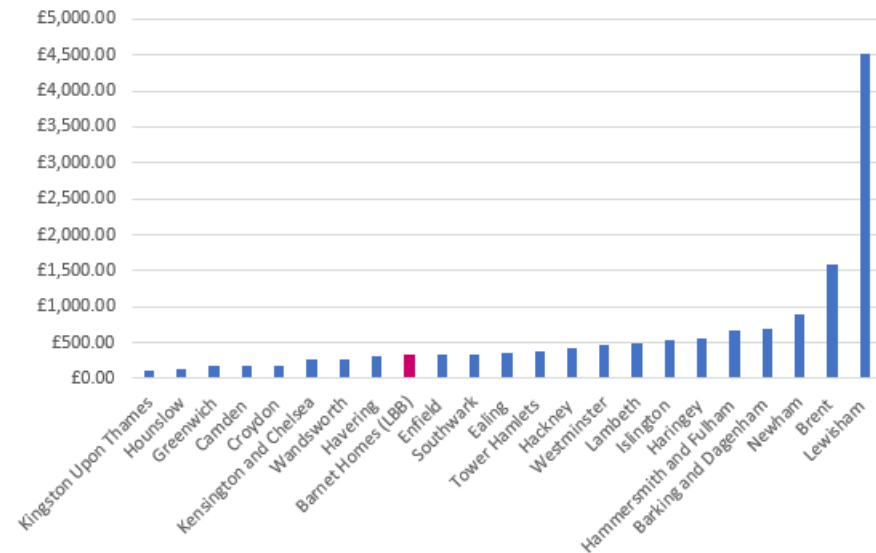
Maladministration rate



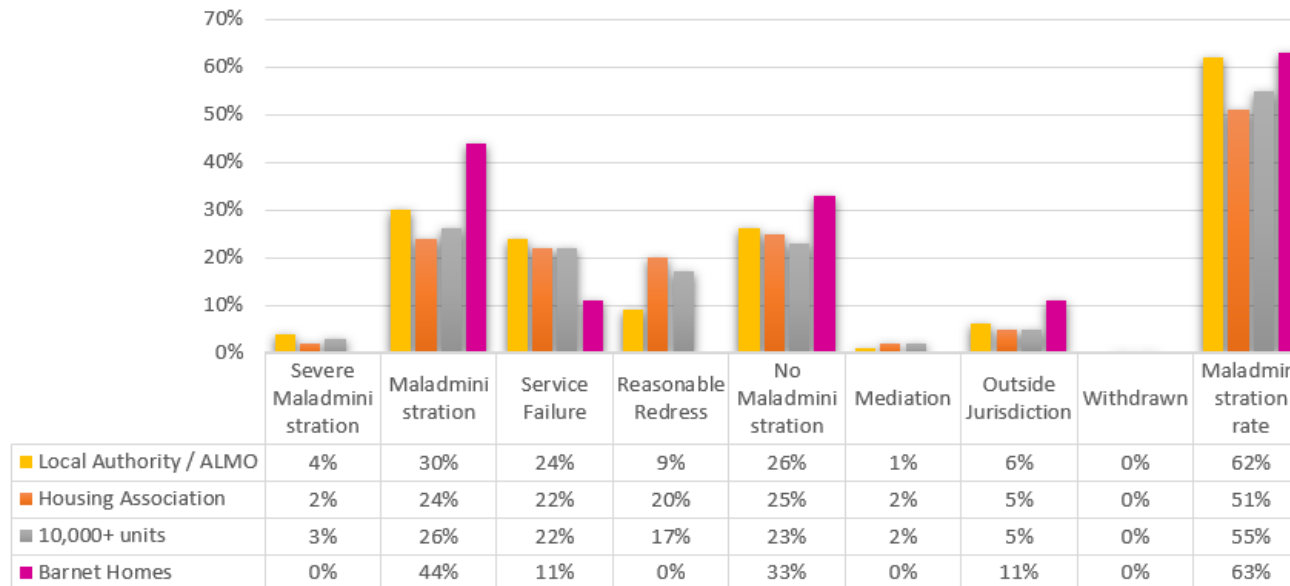
Number of Complaint Handling Failure Orders



Average Compensation per Order



The chart below compares Barnet Homes (Barnet Council) findings and overall maladministration rate. Barnet Homes' maladministration rate in 2022/23 was 63%, which is similar to that of other local authorities or ALMOs.



Other relevant Housing Ombudsman reports

In May 2023, the Housing Ombudsman published a spotlight report on Knowledge and Information Management. It made 21 recommendations in the following areas:

- Governance and culture
- Devising key recording standards
- Ensuring appropriate systems are in place
- Mergers and other structural changes
- Repairs

Barnet Homes has completed an initial gap assessment against the recommendations. Whilst it has found it compared favourably against a number of recommendations, it will do further work in 2024/25 to follow up on areas where improvements could be made. Areas that it continues to review include: recording resident information, personal characteristics, and vulnerabilities; recording and wastage analysis of missed appointments; and strengthening of a knowledge and information strategy. Some areas have been addressed in response to learning from Housing Ombudsman complaints, as outlined below in the section of this report that concerns 2023/24 cases.

In January 2024, the Housing Ombudsman published a spotlight report on Attitudes, Respect, and Rights – Relationship of Equals. It made a number of recommendations for government and policy makers, in addition to landlord recommendations in the following areas:

- Culture, vision, and values
- What does the resident need?
- Look to the future
- Complaint handling
- Case handlers

Barnet Homes has completed an initial gap assessment against the recommendations. It has found it compared favourably against several of the recommendations, and further follow up work will take place in 2024/25 to identify and take forward improvements. Areas where the approach could be strengthened include reviewing how it could strengthen its approach including in additional training for staff including complaints handlers, consideration of how regular opportunities for interaction could be used to undertake welfare checks, and consideration of existing related policies and how they are being implemented.

Complaint Handling Code

Barnet Homes has completed its annual self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. It is reviewed by the Barnet Homes Resident Board, the Barnet Homes Board, Barnet Council's Cabinet.

The self-assessment is included at Appendix 2. No areas of non-compliance have been identified.