Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2025/26

Covering the period 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026

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BARNET LONDON BOROUGH

Barnet Homes

Welcome to our 2025/26 Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report

This report covers complaints from tenants and leaseholders of Barnet Council about landlord services, which are provided by Barnet Homes as the council's Arms-Length Management Organisation (ALMO). It sets out how we have scrutinised and challenged our compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code by reviewing:

1. Analysis of our complaint-handling performance.
2. The service improvements made because of our learning from complaints.
3. Information about complaints escalated to the Housing Ombudsman Service, including our actions following reports or publications produced by the Housing Ombudsman.
4. Our annual self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code to make sure our complaint handling policy meets the requirements.

Our Complaints and Compliments Policy is available at www.barnethomes.org/complaints. This sets out our approach to complaints handling. Our aims are to put things right quickly for complainants, and to comply with the Complaint Handling Code.

Introduction and context

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.

Barnet Homes welcomes complaints as an opportunity to understand issues, put things right, and continuously improve services. Complaints also influence 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.

It is encouraging to note the improvement in the Tenant Satisfaction Measure on satisfaction with complaints handling, which increased by 6.5% to 32.2% for 2025/26 based on perception surveys completed during the year (the 2024/25 peer group median (average) result for comparison was 26%).

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 2025 and 31 March 2026, Barnet Homes completed 31,175 repairs (up from 27,131 in 2024/25), 1,641 (up from 1,364) damp and mould inspections, 15,843 gas services (LGSRs) and gas repairs, and 516 major works affecting 609 homes including replacements of kitchens, bathrooms, windows, and roofs, and external redecoration. Its Customer Contact Team handled 97,307* calls and assisted with 23,646* emails.

*Call and email volumes are inclusive of Barnet Homes and Opendoor Homes data.

Governance and complaints

Complaints are regularly scrutinised by the Barnet Homes Board, which includes a council-appointed Chair, independent board members, and two local councillors (one appointed by the council's administration, and one by the party in opposition), in addition to the Chair of the Barnet Homes Resident Board to ensure resident representation at the highest level of governance. This annual report on complaints performance and service improvement is presented to the Barnet Homes Board, along with the council's Cabinet.

The Complaint Handling Code requires the landlord, the London Borough of Barnet, to appoint a Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC). Their role is to make sure that complaint handling drives learning and service improvement for residents, and to champion a positive complaint handling culture. They have lead responsibility for making sure the governing body (Cabinet) receives regular updates on complaints and complaint handling performance. The London Borough of Barnet's MRC is Councillor Ross Houston, Cabinet Member for Homes and Regeneration.

Note: It should be noted that system limitations mean we do not have full assurance that timescales for acknowledging complaints have been accurately captured in reporting, as these are unavoidably 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. Barnet Homes previously identified that a technical solution in the current system is not possible, and therefore it is considering options for the introduction of a new case management system. This work advanced during 2025/26, and the financial implications mean that a solution has not yet been implemented and this remains under review.

Overview

We monitor and scrutinise our complaints-handling performance to help us learn and improve how we resolve complaints and put things right for the people who receive our services.

Our aim is to create a positive complaint-handling culture where:

- Customers actively use our complaints process as they feel it is easy to raise what matters to them, they feel safe doing so, and they feel there is value in them complaining;
- We resolve most complaints at Stage 1, and some complaints are escalated to Stage 2 because customers feel it is easy to do this where they feel it is needed, they feel safe doing so, and they feel there is value in them doing so;
- Some complainants escalate their issue to the Housing Ombudsman Service if they are still unhappy, because they are aware they can ask an independent body to review their issue and how we handled it, and they feel safe doing so;
- We work openly, honestly, and transparently, we are not defensive, and we do not blame each other; and
- We work together to get the best resolution for our customers, and we are willing to learn and act on their feedback.

Performance indicators

953
Stage 1 complaints received

78.5%
Stage 1 complaints responded to within target timescales

41%
Stage 1 complaints fully upheld

25%
Stage 1 complaints partially upheld

33%
Stage 1 complaints not upheld

277
Stage 2 complaints received

57%
Stage 2 complaints responded to within target timescales

24%
Stage 2 complaints fully upheld

35%
Stage 2 complaints partially upheld

35%
Stage 2 complaints not upheld

Regulator of Social Housing's Tenant Satisfaction Measures*:

The TSMs apply only to tenants living in 'low-cost rental accommodation' (the council's social housing properties)

86.7
Stage 1 complaints per 1,000 homes (CH01)

24.4
Stage 2 complaints per 1,000 homes (CH01)

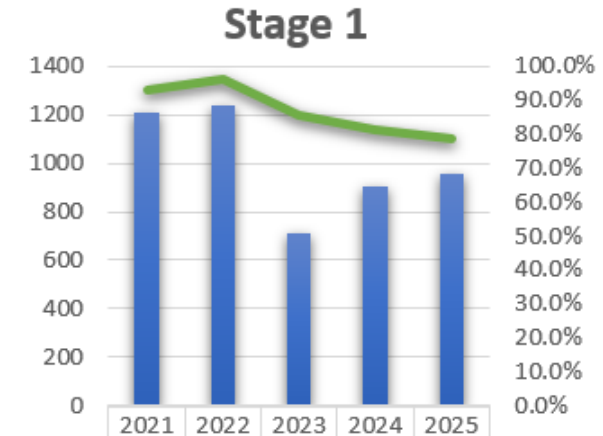
79.2%
Stage 1 complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code Timescales (CH02)

55.9%
Stage 2 complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code Timescales (CH02)

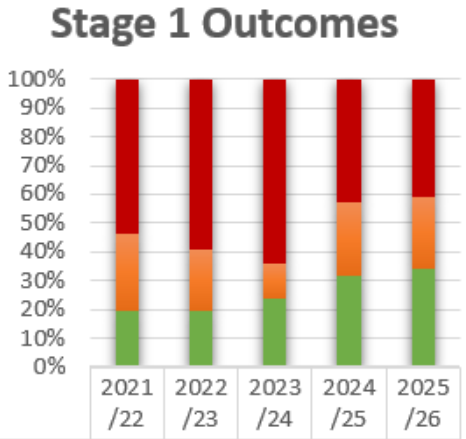
32.2%
satisfied with the landlord's approach to handling complaints (TP09)

*TSM results are being validated at the time of writing this report, and it will be updated with the results once available.

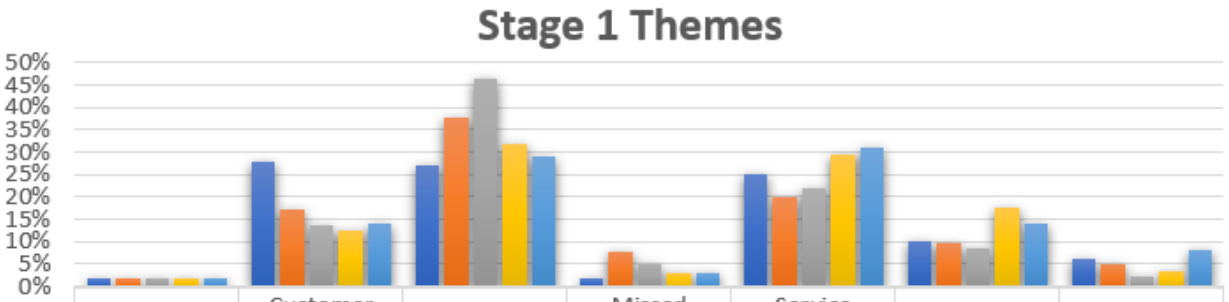
Complaints performance overview – Stage 1



	2021 /22	2022 /23	2023 /24	2024 /25	2025 /26
Number	1206	1,238	714	907	953
In-Time	93.0%	96.0%	85.7%	81.4%	78.5%



	2021 /22	2022 /23	2023 /24	2024 /25	2025 /26
Upheld	54%	60%	58%	43%	41%
Partially upheld	27%	21%	11%	25%	25%
Not upheld	20%	20%	22%	32%	34%



	Cost	Customer Care	Delay	Missed Appointment	Service Failure	Quality	Policy
2021/22	2%	28%	27%	2%	25%	10%	6%
2022/23	2%	17%	38%	8%	20%	10%	5%
2023/24	2%	14%	47%	5%	22%	8%	2%
2024/25	2%	13%	32%	3%	30%	18%	3%
2025/26	2%	14%	29%	3%	31%	14%	8%

The number of complaints received continues to indicate that residents are aware of how to raise concerns, feel confident to do so, and the complaints process is accessible.

After the peak in Stage 1 complaints in 2022/23 and a dip in 2023/24, numbers have increased again in 2024/25 and remain elevated in 2025/26, reflecting continued demand across key service areas including Repairs and Housing Management. Improvements and lessons learned are addressed later in this report.

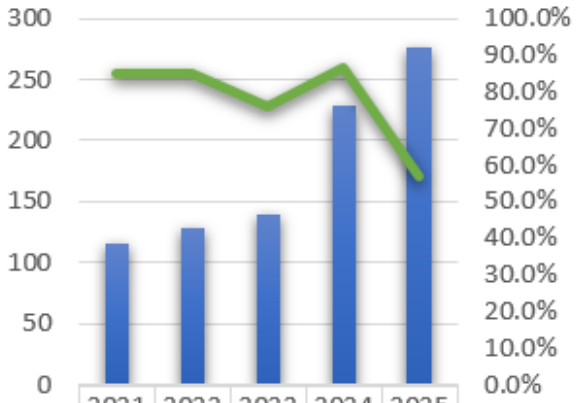
Whilst the number of complaints increased, the proportion that were not upheld also slightly increased, which suggests improving robustness in initial service responses.

Performance against timeliness has declined and remains an area requiring focused improvement. Further information on complaint handling performance is included later in this report.

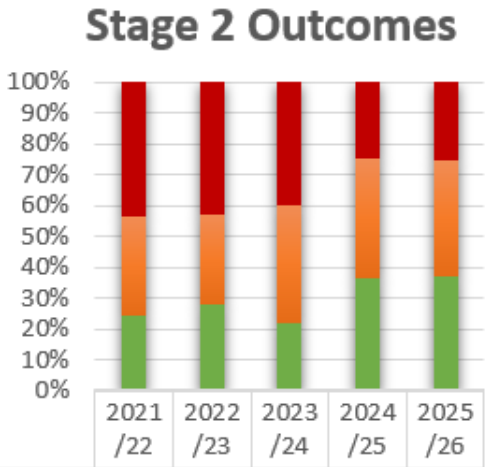
Positively, there has been board consistency with a lower proportion of complaints with a primary theme of customer care in recent years when compared with the position five years ago. The higher numbers of failure and quality-related issues indicate ongoing pressures in operational delivery, and associated issues are being addressed through lessons learned reviews.

Overall, the performance highlights sustained service pressures, with some positive shifts in complaint handling outcomes, alongside continued need to improve timeliness and address underlying causes of service failure and quality issues.

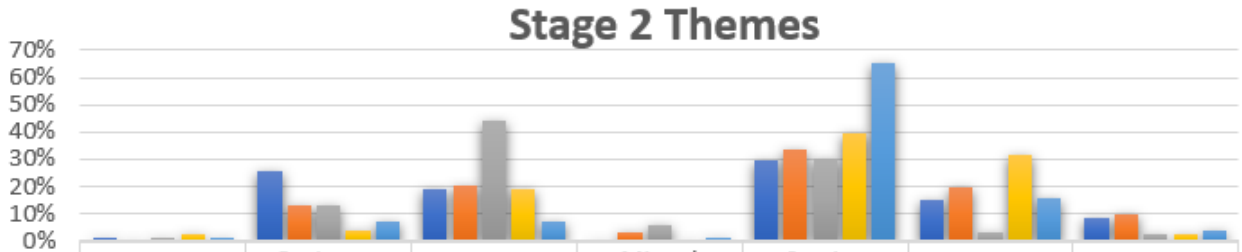
Complaints performance overview – Stage 2



	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Number	115	129	140	229	277
In-Time	85.0%	85.0%	75.7%	86.5%	57%



	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Upheld	43%	43%	40%	25%	24%
Partially upheld	32%	29%	38%	39%	35%
Not upheld	24%	28%	22%	37%	35%



	Cost	Customer Care	Delay	Missed Appointment	Service Failure	Quality	Policy
2021/22	1%	26%	19%	1%	30%	15%	9%
2022/23	1%	13%	20%	3%	33%	20%	10%
2023/24	1%	13%	44%	6%	31%	3%	2%
2024/25	2.8%	3.8%	18.8%	0.5%	39.4%	31.9%	2.8%
2025/26	1%	7%	7%	1%	65%	16%	4%

Requests for escalation to Stage 2 are made when a complainant is not happy with the response at Stage 1. Requests for escalation to Stage 2 have continued to increase year on year, indicating sustained pressure in frontline service delivery and a continued propensity for complainants to seek further review where initial resolution is not achieved. We also continue to see challenges related to the delivery of promised follow-up actions to put things right at Stage 1 not being delivered, as well as complainant dissatisfaction with the outcome at Stage 1, which correlates with the higher rate of complaints not being upheld.

Escalations to Stage 2 continue to be higher in the Repairs and Housing Management services, and improvement actions are identified as part of learning reviews.

The reduction in the proportion of Stage 2 complaints that are not upheld or partially upheld suggests improved robustness in Stage 1 investigations and clearer evidencing of decisions at escalation stage.

Performance against Stage 2 response times has declined and remains a key area for improvement. Performance was higher in the earlier part of the year and has been significantly affected by challenges experienced in Quarter 4, which is being analysed so improvements can be delivered. Further information on complaint handling performance is included later in this report.

Service failure has become the dominant driver of escalations to Stage 2. Overall, the Stage 2 position reflects increasing demand and escalation, driven primarily by operational service issues, alongside improving consistency in complaint outcomes. However, the deterioration in timeliness and the concentration of complaints around service failure highlight the need for continued focus on resolving issues earlier and strengthening service delivery at source, as well as ensuring improved robustness of complaint management at times of increased demand or resourcing pressures.

Complaint handling performance challenges

Performance against the target timescales at both Stage 1 and Stage 2 was below the desired level and declined at both stages. Whilst it is acknowledged that target timescales are neither an absolute marker of success nor of quality, it is important that residents are kept up to date on their complaint. Complaint investigations may require additional time to be thorough, and this should be managed with complainants through effective communication and timeliness to complaint extensions where applied.

It is important to note that Stage 1 performance was lowest in the first quarter of the year and has been higher in quarters 3 (89%) and 4 (83%), indicating a more positive direction of travel that we are working to continue in 2026/27, with Quarter 1 performance provisionally appearing to be similar.

Stage 2 performance was higher in the earlier quarters of the year, and was significantly affected by the following challenges in Quarter 4 which resulted in delays to the handling of complaints:

- Higher than usual demand for complaint escalation in Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 resulting in operational pressures.
- Resourcing instability in both the central, coordinating team and the Repairs complaint investigatory team.
- Instability in established automated system controls that are in place to ensure complaint handler and manager awareness of deadlines and caseloads.

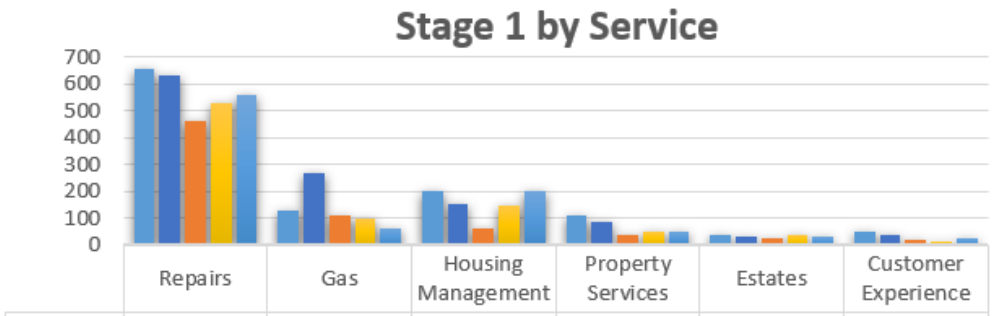
The challenges experienced with Repairs Stage 2 complaints will continue to have an impact on performance timeliness in Quarter 1 of 2026/27, but we expect to deliver sustained improvements over time as this particular demand pressure is addressed.

The drivers of performance are further likely to be a combination of:

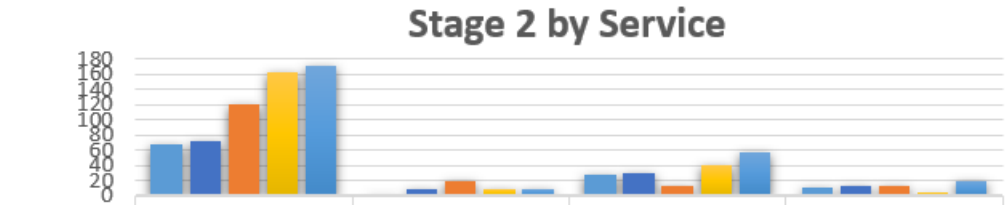
- Increase in the number of complaints received impacting upon capacity;
- The nature of some complaints is complex, particularly where we are seeing growing numbers of complainants using AI tools to create highly complex complaint emails that require significant time and effort to understand and respond to comprehensively;
- Complaint handlers are not always extending the response timescale for complex complaints in instances where it would be sensible to do so to manage complainants' expectations;
- High volumes of enquiries to the Customer Contact Team have sometimes resulted in email management delays that affect the timescale for acknowledging complaints, and in particular there have also been significant resourcing challenges in the central, coordinating Complaints and Information team that have had an impact, as well as resourcing instability in the Repairs investigative team which impacts overall performance due to Repairs being the most commonly complained about service; and
- There has been a continued focus on the quality of response and appropriate resolution, rather than the time taken to complete the response.

Complaints by service area

Six service areas received the majority of complaints and Stage 1, and four service areas at Stage 2.



	Repairs	Gas	Housing Management	Property Services	Estates	Customer Experience
2021/22	654	127	204	112	40	52
2022/23	632	269	156	87	35	37
2023/24	460	114	64	36	25	20
2024/25	531	100	148	50	38	17
2025/26	559	65	201	53	32	24



	Repairs	Gas	Housing Management	Property Services
2021/22	69	2	29	11
2022/23	73	10	30	14
2023/24	121	19	14	13
2024/25	162	10	40	5
2025/26	171	10	58	20

The distribution of complaints continues to be concentrated within a small number of high-volume services. At Stage 1, Repairs remains the largest contributor to complaints, followed by Housing Management, with other services accounting for significantly lower volumes; this distribution is in alignment with operational demand for the services.

The themes driving complaints vary by service but show some consistent patterns. Delays and service failure remain key drivers within Repairs and Housing Management, and in more recent years there has been an increase in complaints relating to quality and completion of works, alongside ongoing issues with managing customer expectations and communication. The key theme of communication across complaints continues to be addressed in service improvement work.

Escalation rates for most services have increased in the last three years, increasing to 29.1% overall in 2025/26, with the rates for Repairs (30.6%) and Housing Management (28.9%) being broadly similar.

The increase in complaint volumes and escalations is likely to reflect a combination of factors. These include sustained service pressures in key areas, alongside increased resident awareness of the right to complain and to escalate, driven by the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code and wider sector focus on tenant rights. Whilst improved accessibility is a positive indicator, the rise in escalations also suggests that further work is required to resolve issues effectively at Stage 1 and to improve overall service delivery.

Overall, the position highlights the need to continue focusing improvement activity on high-volume service areas, particularly Repairs and Housing Management, with an emphasis on timeliness, quality of delivery, and effective resolution at the earliest stage.

*Note: it is not possible to isolate Repairs completed only for homes that fall under the scope of the Housing Ombudsman; calculated results are therefore based on all repairs and gas jobs completed..

Complaints by service area

In **Repairs**, 53 of the 559 Stage 1 complaints were for the Healthy Homes Team about damp and mould. Common causes of complaints overall included plumbing and leaks management, communications and quality regarding subcontractors, communication and appointments being change, and management of follow-on works where more work is needed to address an issue. 47.9% of Repairs complaints were upheld, 25.6% were partially upheld, and 26.3% were not upheld. Based on 31,175 repairs completed, there was a complaint rate of 1.8%, or 1.8 complaints per 100 completed jobs; this was a reduction from 2% in 2024/25.

In **Housing Management**, 123 complaints were about the Neighbourhood Management services, 27 were related to ASB, and 51 were about Income Collection. Overall, 17.9% of these complaints were upheld, 22.9% were partially upheld, and 57.2% were not upheld. Complaints were typically due to lack of or delay in communication, incorrect or unclear correspondence or information, and a lack of clarity about what was happening with ASB cases. Further analysis of Housing Management complaints will be undertaken in 2026/27 to identify root causes and service improvements.

In **Gas**, common causes of complaints were related to concerns about appointments including changes to these, and communication especially where there were delays. 49.2% of Gas complaints were upheld, 20% were partially upheld, and 30.8% were not upheld. Based on 15,843 gas services and repairs completed, there was a complaint rate of 0.4%, or 0.4 complaints per 100 completed services or repairs; this was a reduction from 0.6% in 2024/25. Prior to the in-house delivery of the Gas service from 2020 this area received a very high number of complaints, and it is positive to see sustained improvement in complaints volumes as a result of delivered service improvements. For context, at its peak in 2017/18, the Gas service when delivered through subcontractor arrangements received 488 Stage 1 complaints.

Complaints by service area

Property Services complaints were typically about communications and customer service, quality and consistency of service delivery, issues regarding commitments being followed up on, and delays in the adaptations process due to high demand. 47.2% of these complaints were upheld, 24.5% were partially upheld, and 28.3% were not upheld. Within Property Services, 20 complaints related to major works; based on 609 homes affected by completed works, there was a complaint rate of 3.3%, or 3.3 complaints per 100 households affected by completed works; this was a reduction from 4.3% in 2024/25.

In **Customer Experience**, the main cause of complaints was communication and staff behaviour. 41.7% of these complaints were upheld, 25% were partially upheld, and 25% were not upheld. In 2025/26, the Customer Contact Team handled 97,307 calls and 23,646 emails. Basing a complaint rate on calls, this was 0.02% or 0.02 complaints per 100 calls. For additional context, 1,560 positive comments were received about repairs operatives when transactional satisfaction surveys were completed, and 469 were received about gas engineers.

In **Estate Services**, the main cause of complaints was one-off issues, for example related to the completion or standards of caretaking and cleaning, which made up most of the service's complaints. 28.1% were upheld, 31.3% were partially upheld, and 40.6% were not upheld.

Health and safety-related complaints

Barnet Homes tags complaints related to health and safety matters to ensure these are closely monitored. During 2025/26, the majority of health and safety-related complaints that were flagged were related to damp and mould issues. As cases are manually flagged on logging, we continue to work to improve this identification as it provides us with useful monitoring data. Complaints related to the Healthy Homes team, dedicated to dealing with damp and mould, are captured; however, it should be noted that other complaints may include a damp and mould element where complaint issues are complex.

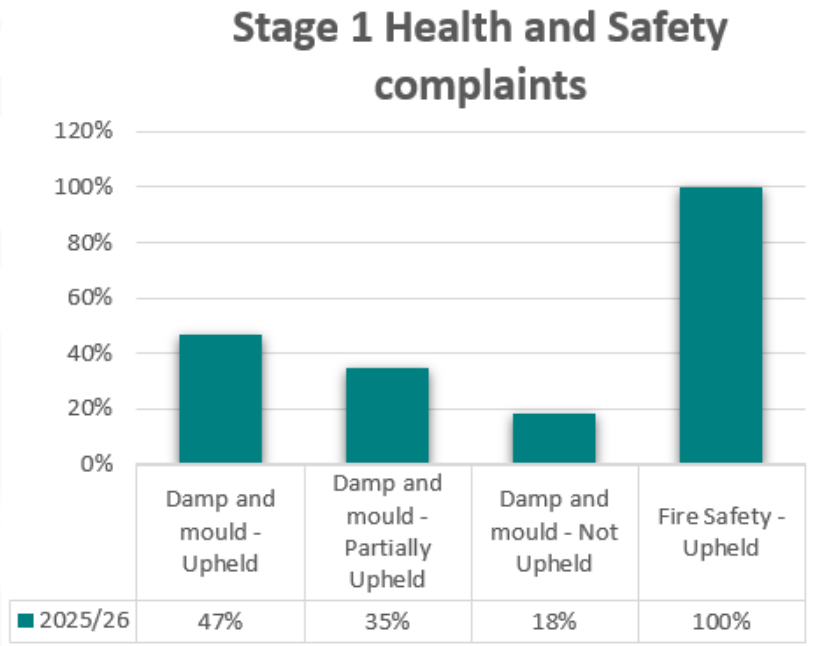
On 27 October 2025, the Hazards in Social Housing (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2025 (commonly known as 'Awaab's Law'), which legally compel social landlords in England to investigate and fix severe health hazards, including damp and mould, within strict, fixed timeframes.

There were 53 complaints assigned to the Healthy Homes Team in 2025/26, with 81% of these upheld or partially upheld. The number of complaints received was relatively low in the first two quarters, and increased in the last two quarters, which coincides with the introduction of Awaab's Law and also with resourcing instability in the Healthy Homes Team. Communication was the strongest theme for the upheld complaints, with concerns raised about not feeling informed. Delay in progressing cases was also raised, alongside the length of time without full resolution. Overall, complaints indicated issues related to the underlying defects in addition to case management and customer care issues.

The Healthy Homes team had a period of improved stabilisation in early 2025/26, however has experienced resourcing shortages and staff turnover during the year that have contributed to delays and inconsistent performance. The team is being stabilised, including the recruitment of additional resource in response to the demand introduced by the legislation, and working practices are being enhanced to improve damp and mould performance, which we would expect to have a positive impact on complaints in this area over time.

5.6% (an increase from 3.9% in 2024/25) of all Stage 1 complaints from tenants and leaseholders were related to damp and mould issues.

For context, the Healthy Homes team which is dedicated to damp and mould issues completed **1,641** inspections and **1,638** damp and mould works / repairs in 2024/25. The complaint rate based on inspections was therefore **3.2 complaints per 100** completed.



Lessons learned and service improvements

This section summarises some of the lessons learned and service improvements implemented in 2025/26 across services with higher numbers of complaints.

Repairs

The Subcontractor Management Framework was implemented to focus on reducing works in progress and overdue works and reinforce practices concerning customer care and appointments. This forms a key part of contractor meetings to oversee performance and delivery, including a review of information from complaints. Subcontractors are being monitored against monthly performance indicators for key areas such as ‘no access’ rates.

The management of both simple and complex leaks has been under review, with changes made to strengthen these approaches. This has included reviewing training documentation, reminding operatives of the follow-on process, setting clear expectations for documenting the approach taken, producing step-by-step guides on minimum standards for leak identification, and running training exercises in empty properties.

Despite improvements being made to the follow-on process for incomplete work and some reduction of complaints about this area, we have continued to receive some complaints about communication. Refresher training has been provided to ensure consistency across the team as there have been staff changes. We have also reviewed Planner availability to reduce the risk of delays to residents receiving additional appointments, and re-inducted Planners to the fundamentals, expectations, and responsibilities of communication and appointment booking.

The Planning Team continues to call residents to confirm appointments if they are “shelved” or if appointments need to be rescheduled or cancelled due to sickness or emergencies. Barnet Homes also implemented additional text message updates in July 2025 to keep residents better informed about their repair. This includes a text update to let residents know when their repair has been allocated to a contractor and what to expect next.

We have made changes to our IT systems so the initial triage process is more accurate, and feedback has been given to staff. We have also reinstated an Error Log process to make sure we manage these proactively rather than customers having to chase up closer appointments if their expectations have not been appropriately managed.

We have reviewed the approach of our Healthy Homes (damp and mould) Team to improve the delivery of the inspection process and the management of contractors. Changes include new planning principles, improved contractor management, closer monitoring of weekly and monthly performance indicators, and a review of roles and responsibilities.

Lessons learned and service improvements

Gas
Complaints about Gas were usually linked to communication and appointments being changed. These issues have been addressed through internal staff briefings and the introduction of the Subcontractor Management Framework.

Housing Management
The team has been reminded of the importance of clear and timely communication and accuracy, and wherever possible to try to speak to residents to improve clarity. Where there have been case-related delays or concerns about the tone of letters, individual complaints have been reviewed as there have been no consistent issues identified. Where improvements could be made to ensuring regular communications, adhering to processes, or ensuring the right tone is struck in letters, managers have discussed these matters with individual officers. Targeted training has also taken place regarding individual issues raised in complaints, such as on processes for updating information on the housing management system.

Property Services
Complaints continue to have been considered as part of the contract management process, and the complaints lead for the service attended quarterly meetings with contractors and internal monthly team meetings to discuss best practice, encourage joined up working across internal teams, and ensure feedback from complaints is used to drive improvements. The Adaptations team has worked to clarify roles and strengthen its collaboration and coordination with internal teams such as Repairs and Housing and partners including Occupational Therapy, Social Care, and Mental Health teams. Adaptations has also contacted residents affected by delays to the process due to high demand to provide reassurance and keep them informed. Teams have been reminded of the need for timely, empathetic, and accurate communication during projects. Where we have identified rising numbers of complaints linked to issues with subcontractor delivery, we have used this to inform contract renewal decisions.

Estates
Most complaints related to Estates were one-off issues or concerns regarding quality or standard of caretaking. Where complaints were upheld, the issues have been addressed through 1:1s to ensure quality of service, and in some instances regular inspections have been arranged.

Customer Contact Team
Concerns regarding staff behaviour issues and customer care are addressed through individual and team training and 1:1 supervision.

Lessons learned and service improvements

General complaint handling

Steps taken to improve complaint handling in 2025/26:

- Semi-regular reminders issued to all complaints handlers about customer care and policy expectations.
- Comprehensive suite of guidance reinforcing good practice available to complaint handlers.
- Targeted line management support to address areas of complaint handling under-performance.
- Good practice briefing sessions for complaint handlers, managers, and Heads of Service.
- 100% of complaint handlers are up to date with their mandatory effective complaint handling annual training.
- A deep dive review of Customer Care complaints did not identify any concerns emerging from 2024/25 complaints in relation to fairness and respect in the context of equalities impact.

Planned actions to improve complaint handling in 2026/27:

- Further exploring performance timeliness challenges to identify both quick-fix and longer improvement actions.
- Reviewing complaint handling resourcing across the organisation to support capacity and effectiveness.
- Reviewing practical application of the Compensation, Financial Loss, and Remedies Policy to ensure consistent practice and appropriate remedies are provided.
- Continuing to explore financial options regarding a potential new case management system to improve handling.

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 by the complainant. It should also be noted that the totals combine recorded Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints offers; in some instances, an offer of compensation at Stage 1 may have been increased at Stage 2 and, therefore, compensation may be duplicated within the reported numbers. For context, a total of £11,688.57 was offered at Stage 1.

Compensation	Number of Offers	Value of Offers
Repairs	74	£12,578.52
Gas	16	£2,594.00
Housing Management	1	£100
Estates	1	£100
Total	92	£15,373

Complaint refusals

In 2024/25, Barnet Homes refused to consider four complaints (three Stage 1s and one Stage 2) due to them falling under exceptions set out within its Complaints and Compliments Policy. The exemptions applied were:

- The complaint had already been considered under the complaints process (two Stage 1s and one Stage 2)
- Legal action had commenced and had been filed in court (one Stage 1)

Equality analysis

Barnet Homes undertakes equality analysis* of complaints to understand any potential barriers or areas for concern, with a focus on the protected characteristics of race and disability and the performance areas of complaints received, complaint themes, and complaint outcomes. Analysis is currently only completed on complaints from tenants using lead tenant data, as Barnet Homes does not hold sufficient information about the protected characteristics of leaseholders for analysis to be meaningful. It should be noted, nonetheless, that analysis is impacted by high proportions of unknown data for some protected characteristics, albeit this position is improving due to the Knowing Our Tenants Strategy (race not held: 7%, disability not held: 46.3%).

In reviewing the profile of complainants compared to the overall profile of tenants, we observe that:

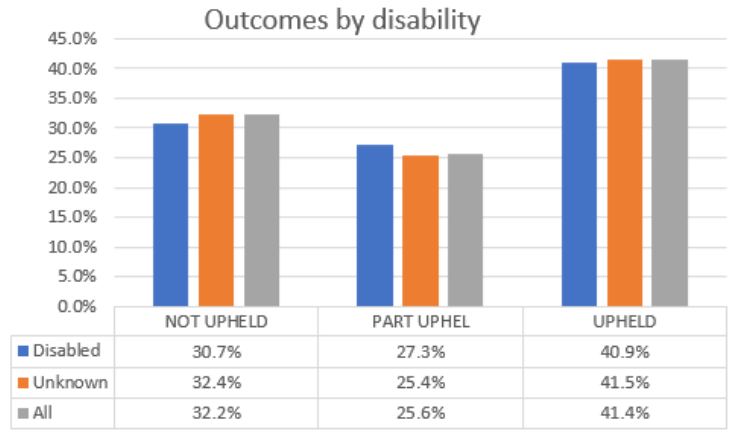
- There is not a significant higher representation of complainants from an ethnic minority background (40.7% of complainants compared to 37.2% tenant profile); in reviewing the disaggregated information, the slight difference is impacted by a slightly lower proportion of complainants being from an Asian / Asian British background.
- There is lower representation of complainants who we know have a disability (11.3% of complainants compared to 21.2% of tenants); however, it should be noted that there has been a large reduction in data not held on this protected characteristic in the overall profile.
- There is higher representation of complainants who are aged 35-44, and lower representation of complainants who are older (aged 65+) compared to the overall tenant profile. This correlates with satisfaction data which generally shows higher levels of satisfaction for older tenants.
- There is comparable representation of complainants based on the protected characteristics of sex, religion or belief, and sexual orientation.

*Note: due to the way reported complaint data is held, equality analysis is based on the held tenant profile information for complaints at the end of the quarter they were received; it does not, therefore, reflect later improvements to held information about diversity. Overall tenant profile statistics are based on the position in March 2026.

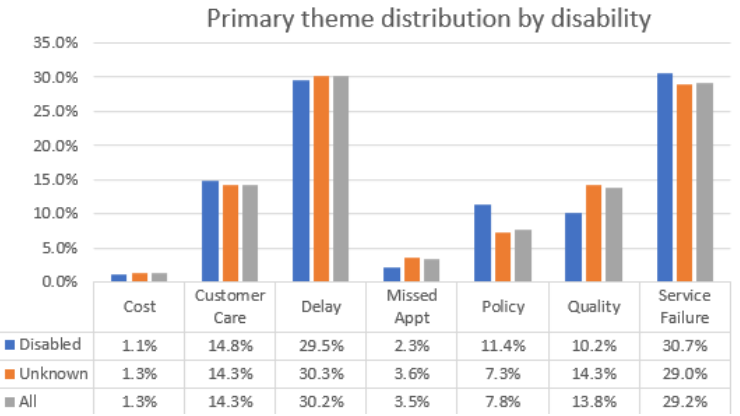
Whilst the results of the analysis do not indicate any significant equalities concerns, Barnet Homes will continue to deliver equalities training to staff, including annual refreshers on Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion and a programme of Unconscious Bias training, in addition to Customer Care and other ad-hoc equalities-related training.

Equality analysis – disability

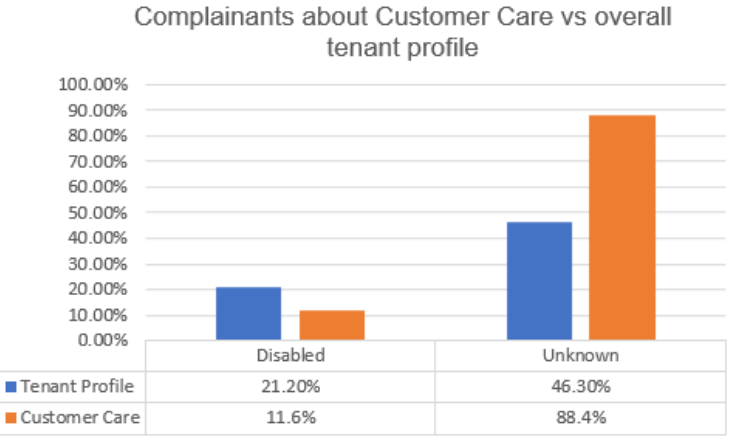
- The disability profile of tenants who complained showed lower representation of those for whom we have recorded disability information. However, it should be noted that held data on this protected characteristic has increased during the year due to the Knowing Our Tenants Strategy, and the diversity data held on individual complaints for earlier quarters will not reflect this. This will therefore be monitored to consider potential barriers to accessing the complaints process.
- The profile of complainants only shows those who have a recorded disability and those where this is not held; this is also likely to be impacted by the improvement in held data. This means limited equality analysis to compare the experience of complainants who have a disability to complainants who do not can be undertaken for this group; however, we have included the available insight in this report.
- Analysis of the outcomes of all complaints show comparable results for tenants who are disabled compared to others.
- Analysis of the themes of complaints shows comparable results for tenants who are disabled compared to others for all themes. There is slightly higher variance in Policy (slightly higher representation for those with a disability), and in Quality (slightly lower representation for those with a disability), but this falls within the +/- 5% range of tolerance.
- Under themes, we focus in particular on Customer Care. Analysis of Customer Care complaints by disability shows a similar proportion of complaints with a primary theme of Customer Care for disabled tenants compared to those whose disability is unknown. Considering the profile of only those who complained about Customer Care, there was lower representation of those with a known disability compared to the overall tenant profile; however, this result was closely aligned with the overall profile for all complaints.
- The results do not highlight any significant equality concerns and will continue to be monitored.



	NOT UPHELD	PART UPHEL	UPHELD
Disabled	30.7%	27.3%	40.9%
Unknown	32.4%	25.4%	41.5%
All	32.2%	25.6%	41.4%



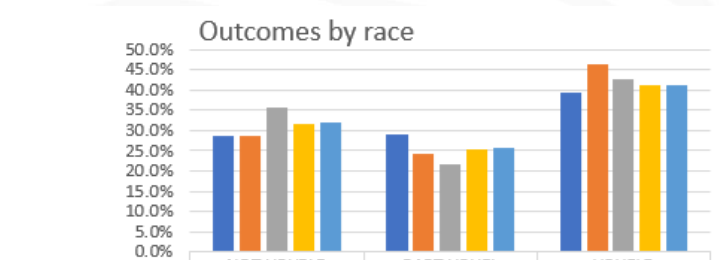
	Cost	Customer Care	Delay	Missed Appt	Policy	Quality	Service Failure
Disabled	1.1%	14.8%	29.5%	2.3%	11.4%	10.2%	30.7%
Unknown	1.3%	14.3%	30.3%	3.6%	7.3%	14.3%	29.0%
All	1.3%	14.3%	30.2%	3.5%	7.8%	13.8%	29.2%



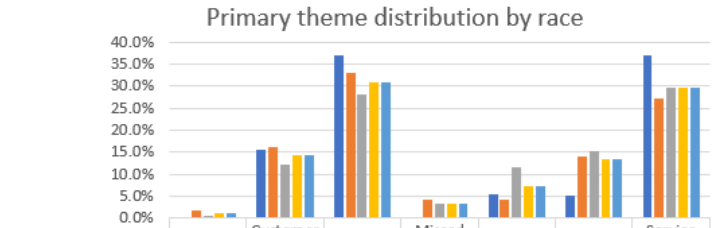
	Disabled	Unknown
Tenant Profile	21.20%	46.30%
Customer Care	11.6%	88.4%

Equality analysis – race

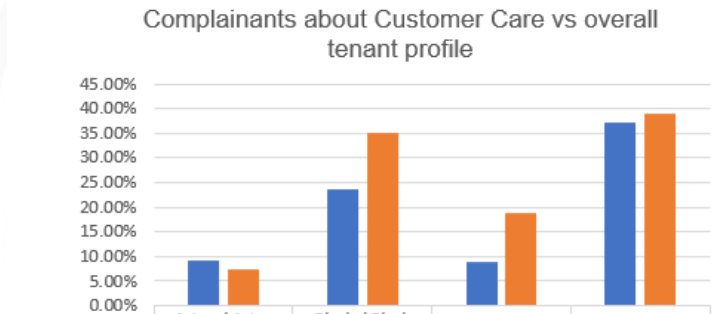
- Equality analysis by race considers data for complainants who are Asian / Asian British, Black / Black British, of an Other race, and White. Data for those who are from a Mixed or Multiple background has not been included due to the low numbers of complainants in this group, which affects reliability of analysis.
- The race of tenants who complained was broadly comparable to the known profile of tenants. Taken in isolation, this does not suggest any potential barriers to accessing the complaints process. This will continue to be monitored.
- Analysis of all complaints by outcome shows broadly comparable results by race.
- Analysis of all complaints by the primary theme shows comparable results by race for Cost, Customer Care, Policy, and Missed Appointment. There was slightly higher representation compared to the overall tenant profile for the following themes: Delay (slightly higher representation of tenants who are Asian / Asian British), Service Failure (slightly higher representation of tenants from an Other background).
- Analysis of Customer Care complaints by race shows a similar proportion of complaints of this theme by each group.
- When comparing the tenant profile for Customer Care complaints to the overall tenant profile, there is higher representation of those from a Black / Black British background (34.9% for Customer Care complaints, and 23.7% for the overall tenant profile) and an Other background (18.7% for Customer Care complaints, and 9% for the overall tenant profile). A review of the complaints received has been completed, and these do not suggest any barriers or issues regarding treating customers with fairness and respect on the grounds of race. This will continue to be monitored.



	NOT UPHELD	PART UPHEL	UPHELD
Asian / Asian British	28.8%	29.0%	39.5%
Black / Black British	28.8%	24.2%	46.4%
Other	35.8%	21.6%	42.6%
White	31.8%	25.5%	41.1%
All	32.2%	25.8%	41.3%



	Cost	Customer Care	Delay	Missed Appt	Policy	Quality	Service Failure
Asian / Asian British	0.0%	15.5%	36.9%	0.0%	5.3%	5.2%	37.0%
Black / Black British	1.7%	16.1%	33.2%	4.0%	4.1%	13.9%	27.1%
Other	0.4%	12.3%	28.1%	3.1%	11.4%	15.2%	29.5%
White	1.1%	14.4%	30.8%	3.4%	7.2%	13.5%	29.6%
All	1.1%	14.4%	30.8%	3.4%	7.2%	13.5%	29.6%



	Asian / Asian British	Black / Black British	Other	White
Tenant Profile	9.20%	23.70%	9%	37.30%
Customer Care	7.4%	34.9%	18.7%	38.9%

Housing Ombudsman cases

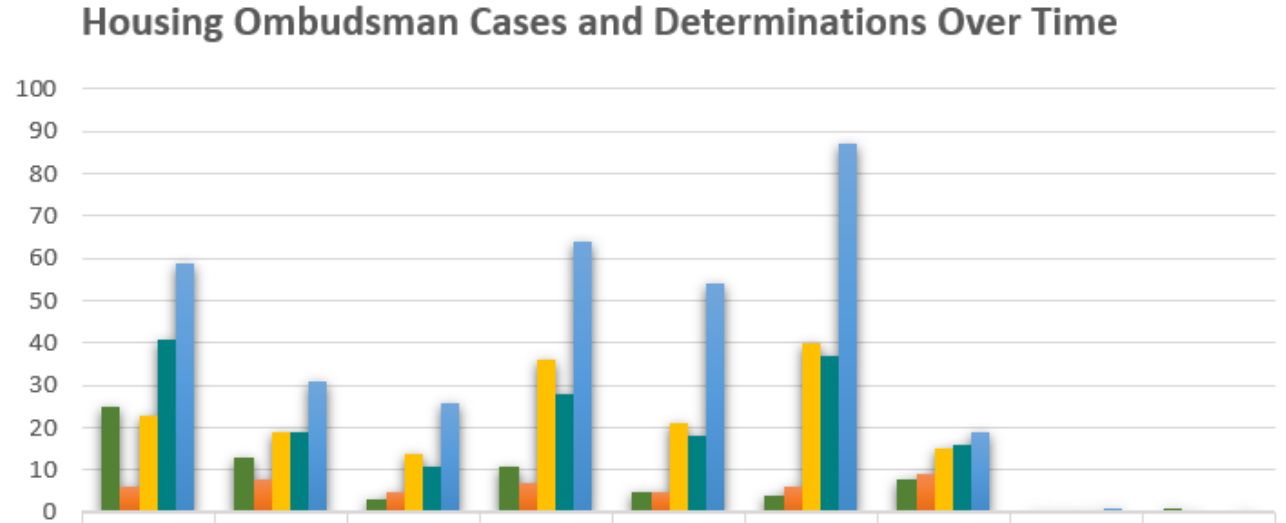
2025/26 Housing Ombudsman cases

The presented figures show the latest year's and previous years' Housing Ombudsman cases based on internal data; results may differ from the Housing Ombudsman's future published landlord performance information, which is also included later in this report for the 2024/25 financial year.

The Housing Ombudsman routinely reports a national increase in the number of complaints made to it, and in April 2026 described an increase in accepted cases for investigation of nearly 500% in 5 years, predicting a further 60% increase in 2026/27.

Barnet Homes experienced an increase in cases opened in 2025/26 that mirror this sector increase, albeit not on the same scale as the national average. In previous years, Barnet Homes did not experience the reported national increase in Ombudsman cases. In 2025/26 we had a particularly high number of new cases in the first two quarters that reduced to more typical numbers in the last two quarters. We also received a higher number of decisions than in previous years.

The Housing Ombudsman will publish its landlord performance reports for 2025/26 later in 2026, and this will enable comparison of Barnet Homes' performance against its London local authority peer group.



	No. cases opened	No. determinations	No. determinations finding fault	No. findings	No. findings of fault	No. orders	No. recommendations	Maladministration rate	No. CHFOs
2021/22	25	13	3	11	5	4	8	45.5%	1
2022/23	6	8	5	7	5	6	9	71.4%	0
2023/24	23	19	14	36	21	40	15	58.3%	0
2024/25	41	19	11	28	18	37	16	64.3%	0
2025/26	59	31	26	64	54	87	19	81.80%	0

The Housing Ombudsman made 54 findings of fault across 64 total findings in 31 case determinations in 2025/26. Based on this internal data, we provisionally expect a maladministration rate of around 81.8%. The rate will be confirmed by the Ombudsman's published performance reports. Whilst it is higher than previous years' internal data, positively it is slightly below last year's sector averages, which are summarised later in this report.

Housing Ombudsman cases

Key learning / improvements

Findings	Severe Maladministration	Maladministration	Service Failure	Reasonable Redress	No Maladministration
ASB		1			1
Damp and Mould (incl. leaks)	1	17			
Compensation					
Repairs		5	1		3
Complaint Handling		8	10		3
Fire Safety Alarm Installation			1		
Record Keeping		1			
Noise Transfer					1
Warmth Improvement Works / Insulation		2			
Pest Control		1			
Boiler		1	1		
Fire Safety		1			
Temporary Move				1	
Consent to Access Home			1		
Ventilation			1		
Water Pressure			1		
Sound Insulation					1
Adaptations Request			1		

Most 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.

The Housing Ombudsman may also make recommendations concerning a decision. These are not mandatory; however, Barnet Homes endeavours to follow the recommendations as a point of good practice.

Examples of improvements connected to or arising from Housing Ombudsman determinations included:

- Refresher briefings provided to relevant staff about good practice in complaint handling and the requirements under our policy and the Housing Ombudsman's Code, to supplement the annual mandatory training for complaint handlers.
- Follow-on works (where additional repairs are needed to resolve an issue) process reviewed and redesigned to include strengthened controls and auditing.
- Improving communication between Repairs staff and residents through improved records management regarding contacts and attempted contacts.
- Resident Liaison Officers recruited for Gas, Responsive Repairs, and Healthy Homes (damp and mould) to assist with updates for residents, supporting residents with complex repair issues, and access challenges.

Housing Ombudsman cases

Severe maladministration decision

The Housing Ombudsman issued a severe maladministration finding in July 2025 on a case concerning a damp and mould complaint.

The Housing Ombudsman's orders were case-specific; however, a range of learning was identified from this case. This complaint concerned an historic case of damp and mould which began before the establishment of Barnet Homes' Healthy Homes Team in May 2023 to improve the management of damp and mould repairs for residents.

Key identified failings in the case

- Raising three separate inspections which all identified the same follow-on repairs required and failing to complete the follow-on repairs already identified.
- Lack of information about the resident's vulnerabilities recorded on the repairs system and no action taken to verify them during the internal complaints process.
- Failure to proactively keep the resident updated on the progress of the repairs and any delays.
- Failure to closely monitor the performance and quality of works completed by the contractors including ensuring that the works were completed in a timely manner and address the issues.
- Failure to adhere to the promised actions included in complaint responses.
- Failure to follow the organisation's own damp and mould policy and explore different ways of addressing the issues or discover the root cause of the damp and mould.

Housing Ombudsman cases

Severe maladministration decision

Key learning arising from the case:

- A more proactive approach needed to follow-on works being raised that reduces the number of inspections and long wait times.
- A need to improve the information about resident vulnerabilities or reasonable adjustments on the repairs system.
- Any complex works or cases should be referred to a Resident Liaison Officer to manage and support the resident.
- Closer monitoring needed of works being completed by Subcontractors to ensure that they are completed on time and to a high quality.
- Closer tracking of complaint remedy actions needed to ensure ownership and timely delivery.
- All staff need to be aware of the Damp, Mould, and Condensation Policy, understand responsibilities their service holds, and what actions should be taken to fully address damp and mould.

Improvements to service that had been delivered at point of decision:

- **Healthy Homes Team**, dedicated to dealing with damp and mould, created and specialist subcontractors to deliver repair works to address damp and mould procured.
- **Dedicated Resident Liaison Officer** for Healthy Homes recruited to keep residents updated and informed and support residents with complex works.
- New set of **vulnerability alerts** implemented in the repairs IT system to enable identification of needs when raising repairs and communicating with Planners.
- **Knowing Our Tenants** Strategy and action plan developed with the aim of strengthening the information held on residents and households.
- Regular meetings implemented between Repairs complain investigators and Repairs managers to provide more **oversight on promised actions to remedy complaints**.
- '**Awaab's Law' readiness action plan** in place to ensure readiness for the new legislation from October 2025. This was informed by working groups with tenants who had experience of damp and mould in their homes. Included actions such as strengthened scripting to understand vulnerabilities, additional resourcing for the Healthy Homes Team, development of a Subcontractor Management Framework, and staff training.

Housing Ombudsman cases

Complaints about leaks

In 2025/26, Barnet Homes received a number of maladministration decisions regarding complaints about the management of leaks.

We know from Housing Ombudsman data that nationally, complaints about property condition, including damp and mould, are one of the largest and fastest-growing categories.

Learning from complaints about leaks:

- Improve the initial diagnosis of leaks to identify the root cause.
- Ensure tailoring of delivery of the Repairs service when residents report vulnerabilities to us.
- Improve communication with residents who have ongoing leaks and proactively update them on any delays.
- Improve Operatives' and Planners' adherence to the follow-on works process when a repair is not completed at the first appointment e.g. raise works in a timely manner and ensure detailed notes are left on the repair system.

Actions to improve handling of leaks:

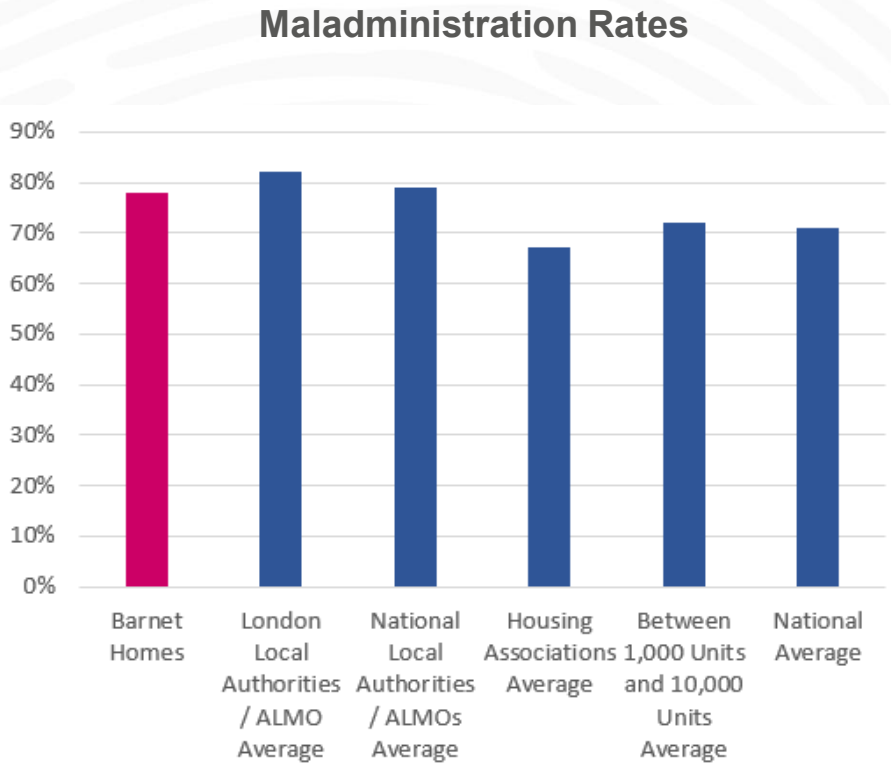
- Review of approach to managing simple leaks completed and included reviewing training documentation, reminding operatives of the follow-on process, setting clear expectations for documenting the approach taken, producing step-by-step guides on minimum standards for leak identification, and running training exercises in empty properties. It included improving the expertise of Plumbers so they better diagnose and manage leaks.
- The approach to managing complex leaks forms the second phase of service improvement plans and has also included a focus on processes that support more proactive updates and better communication for residents.
- Refreshed Responsive Repairs Policy from June 2025 has a greater focus on tailoring the delivery of repairs for residents who disclose vulnerabilities.

Housing Ombudsman

Annual performance report 2024/25

The Housing Ombudsman published its landlord performance reports for 2024/25 in November 2025. Barnet Homes' performance was comparable to similar landlords by size and type. It had a maladministration rate of 78%. This was relatively low in comparison with London local authority peers.

(Average) Maladministration Rate	Barnet Homes	London Local Authorities / ALMO Average	National Local Authorities / ALMOs Average	Housing Associations Average	Between 1,000 Units and 10,000 Units Average	National Average
2024/25	**78%**	82%	79%	67%	72%	71%



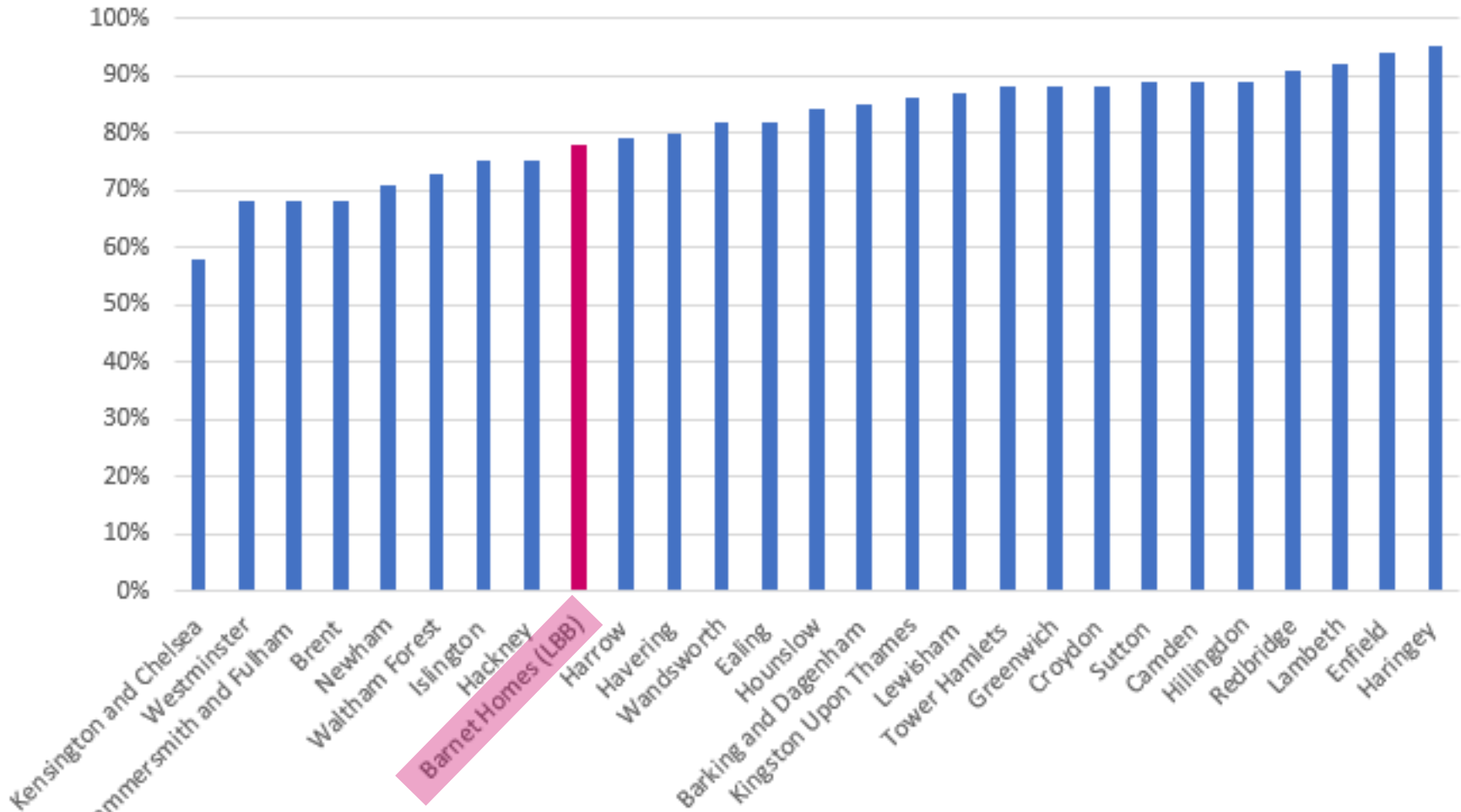
Barnet Homes also compared favourably in the proportion of findings by the Housing Ombudsman:

Barnet Homes Performance Compared to London Councils Averages	Severe Maladministration	Maladministration	Service Failure	Reasonable Redress	No Maladministration	Determinations Per 1,000 Properties	Maladministration Per 1,000 Properties
Barnet Homes	0%	42%	33%	9%	12%	1.52	1.90
London Average	7%	47%	22%	8%	8%	2.18	4.09

Housing Ombudsman cases

Annual performance report 2024/25

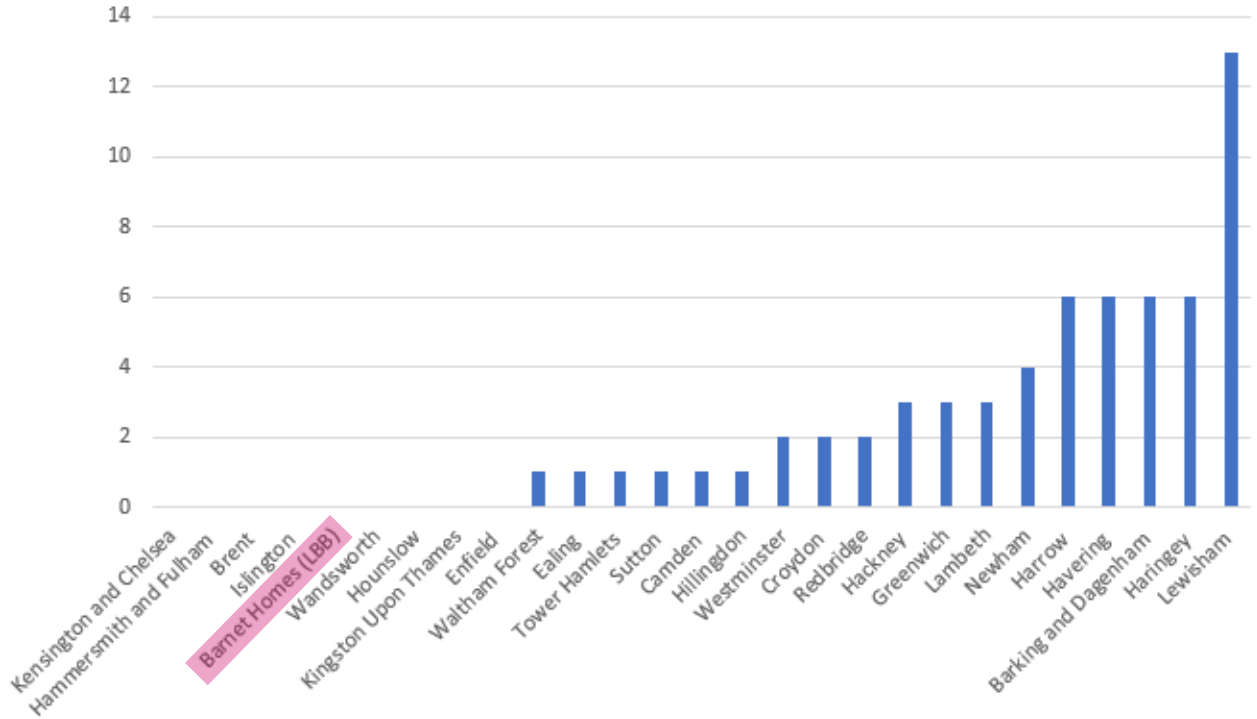
Maladministration rate



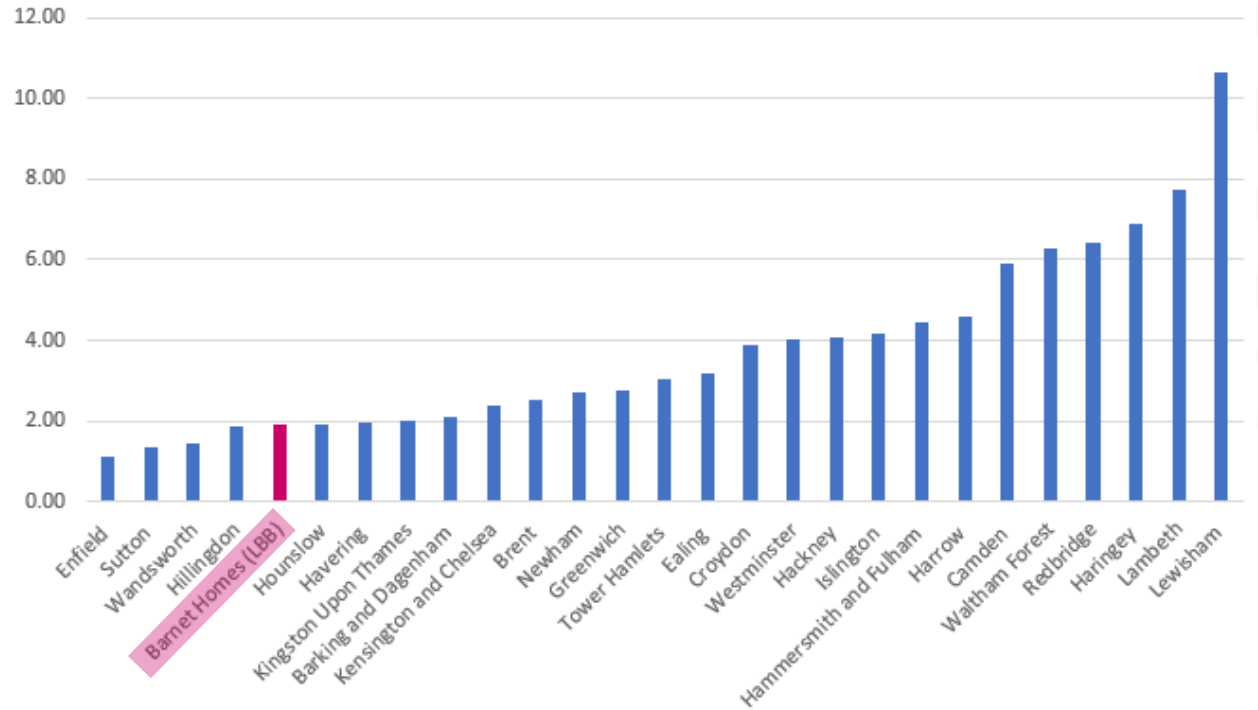
Housing Ombudsman cases

Annual performance report 2024/25

Complaint Handling Failure Orders

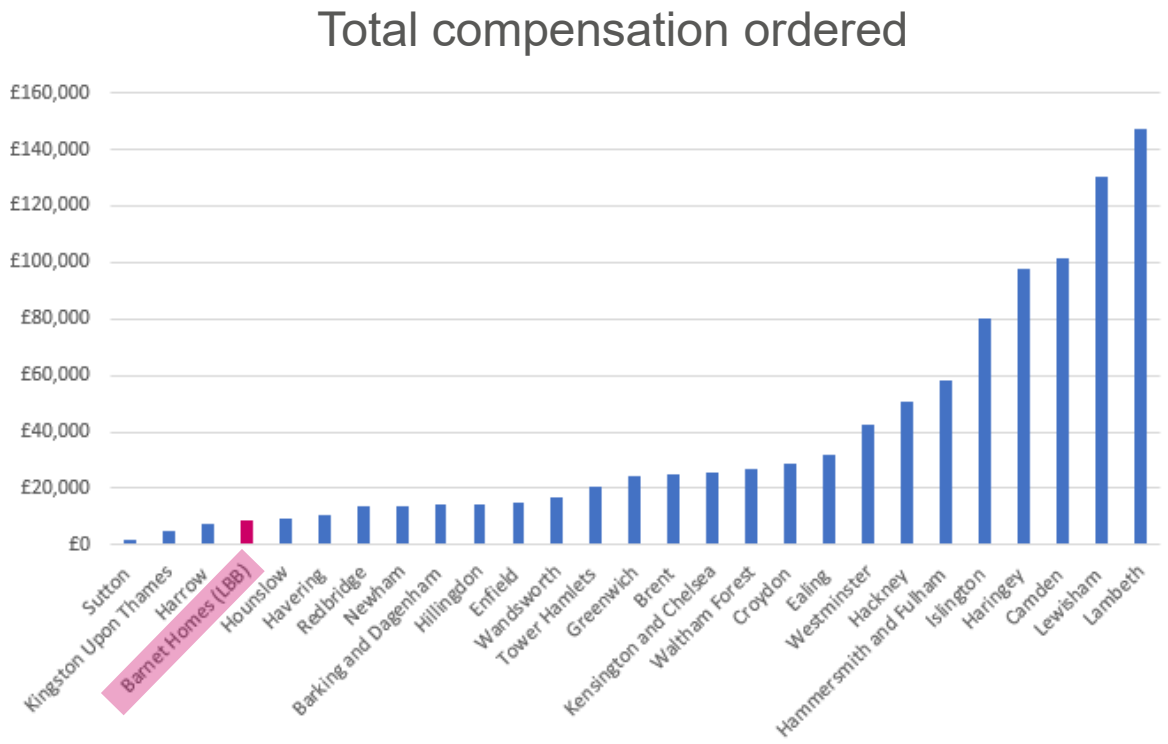


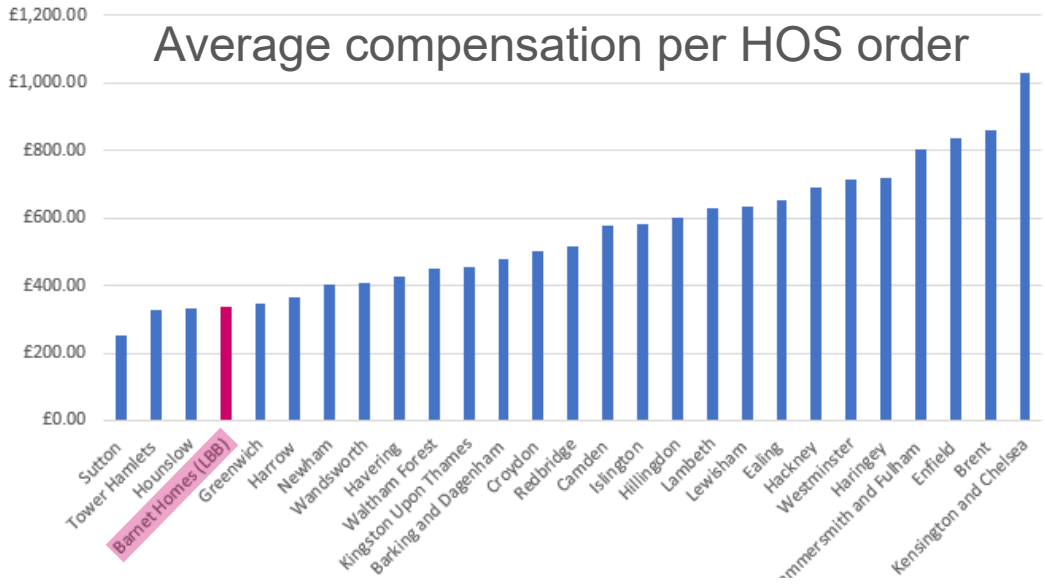
Maladministration determinations per 1,000 properties

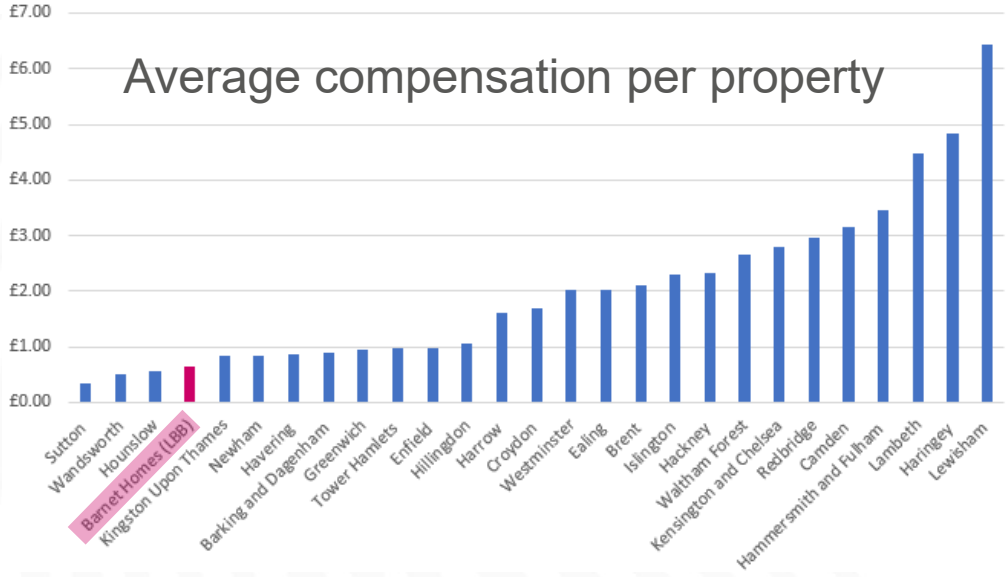


Housing Ombudsman cases

Annual performance report 2024/25







Housing Ombudsman

Other relevant Housing Ombudsman reports

The Housing Ombudsman included Barnet Homes / the London Borough of Barnet in the October edition of its Learning from Severe Maladministration report. A summary of the issues in the case that was set out earlier in this annual report was included in the Ombudsman's report.

In addition to its periodic 'spotlight reports', the Housing Ombudsman also releases other general reports during the year, including a regular Learning from Severe Maladministration report.

In 2025/26, the Housing Ombudsman published the following reports:

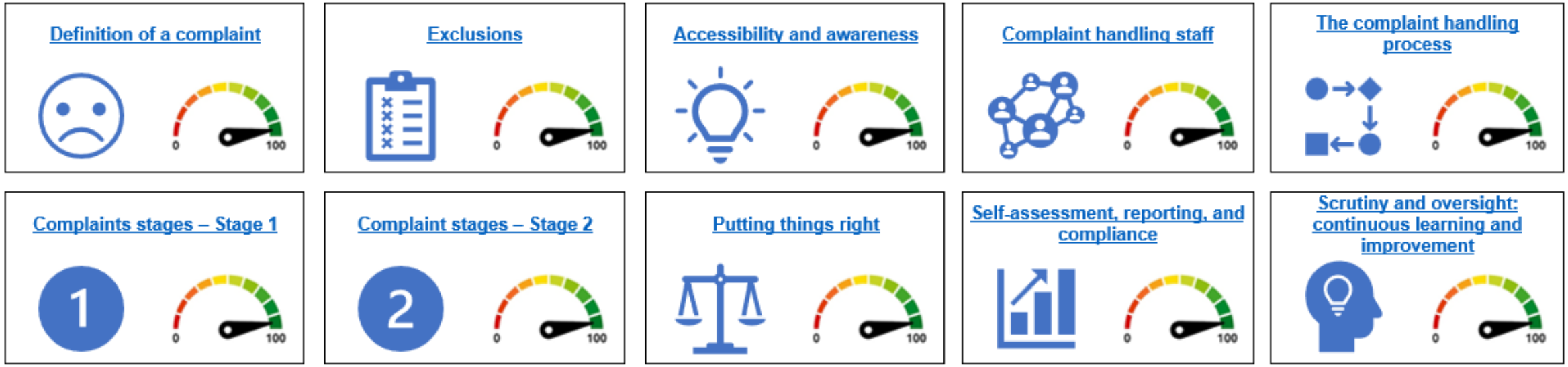
- A spotlight report on repairs and maintenance.
- Regular Severe Maladministration Reports covering a wide range of issues, including damp and mould, apologies, repairs, leaks, adaptations, subsidence, rent accounts, windows, ASB, communication, and leaseholder complaints.
- Two Further Investigation reports, both looking into areas of concern at two London boroughs and sharing recommendations.

We complete self-assessments against the Housing Ombudsman's spotlight reports and severe maladministration reports and keep these under review. Any gaps or good practice examples are taken into account when reviewing key policies and undertaking service improvement reviews.

Housing Ombudsman

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 Board and Barnet Council's Cabinet. The Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC), Councillor Ross Houston, Barnet Council's Cabinet Member for Homes and Regeneration, has received regular performance reports on complaints during 2024/25, along with Barnet Homes' Board. The Complaints and Compliments Policy was updated in May 2026 to ensure additional robustness.

No areas of non-compliance in policy with the Complaint Handling Code have been identified.

The self-assessment is published on Barnet Homes' website, and this is updated annually following Cabinet's review of this Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report: www.barnethomes.org/complaints