

Annual Complaints Report 2026

Author: Marc Innes

Sponsor name: Nusheen Hussain

Meeting Date: 11 June 2026

Executive Summary

Context

In accordance with Housing Ombudsman requirements, we produce an annual performance report that provides a comprehensive overview of our complaint's performance over the last financial year 25/26.

This report will be published on our website under the section "Our Complaints by Numbers". By making these figures available, we demonstrate transparency and accountability to our customers, key stakeholders, and regulatory bodies.

The published report will be made available in an accessible format, clearly outlining complaint themes, performance, learning, and improvement activity, so that customers can easily understand how feedback is being used to enhance services. Following Board consideration, a formal response from the governing body will be prepared and published alongside the Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report and the Complaint Handling Code self-assessment on the complaints section of the website. This report should be read alongside the TSM Board Paper. Together, they demonstrate that while complaint response timescale compliance has improved significantly, customer satisfaction with complaint handling remains low. This highlights the need for a stronger focus in 2026/27 on the quality of responses particularly communication, empathy, resolution, action completion and learning, rather than relying on timescale compliance alone

The annual report sets out the improvements made over the past year, reflecting a continued focus on enhancing service delivery, improving efficiency and strengthening customer outcomes. It also highlights the impact of these changes across customers, the organisation and key stakeholders, alongside the further improvements we will continue to ensure we are continuously learning and improving as an organisation.

Strategic Goals

This report provides details of Home Group's annual performance on complaints, which aligns to our internal and external KPI's and our Complaints Policy and links to the following strategic goals of Delivering for our customers and communities and getting the basics right, consistently.

Questions this paper addresses

1. How did we perform in 25/26?
2. What have been the issues for customers that resulted in customer complaints?
3. How have we performed with complaints referred to HOS (Housing Ombudsman Service) and what lessons have we learnt from those determinations in 25/26?
4. What improvements have been made in 25/26, and what does the trajectory for 26/27 look like?

Conclusions

1. Complaints performance has improved year on year, with fewer live cases, faster resolution times and stronger compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code. This has improved responsiveness and reduced waiting times for customers, although further focus is required on response quality and consistent communication improve overall customer experience and prevent escalation
2. Repairs and property condition remain the main drivers of complaint demand and maladministration risk, particularly where delays, repeat visits, incomplete works or poor follow-up impact customer experience. This aligns with the improved position reflected in the TSM paper, but highlights the need to sustain operational progress while addressing the specific failure points that continue to generate complaints.
3. Governance, accountability and insight have strengthened through the regional operating model and Salesforce implementation, enabling earlier intervention, clearer ownership and more consistent outcomes. Stage 2 escalations have increased and require continued focus through stronger root cause analysis, improved Stage 1 resolution.
4. While regulatory assurance has improved, further work is required to embed consistency and prevent avoidable complaint demand, particularly in Stage 1 quality, regional variation, and closing actions linked to repairs and vulnerabilities, which are now key priorities for 2026/27.

Input Sought

Head of Customer Service, Performance team, Executive Director of Customers and Communities, Executive Team.

Board Members are requested to note the Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report, approve the Complaint Handling Code self-assessment, and endorse the publication of the report, self-assessment, and governing body response on the complaints section of the organisation's website.

Input Sought

This report has been reviewed by the Executive Director of Customer and communities, Director of Customer Experience, supported by Head of Customer services and the Performance and Insights Planning Manager led the collation and analysis of complaint performance, themes, and management information

Risk Management

The principal risk is non-compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code. Failure to manage complaints appropriately, fairly, and within required timescales may lead to increased customer detriment, repeat contact, escalation, maladministration findings, and reputational risk. It may also result in complaint handling failure orders or adverse Ombudsman determinations, and negatively impact Tenant Satisfaction Measures, particularly those relating to complaints handling.

Complaint handling performance, Ombudsman findings, and adherence to the Complaint Handling Code have been subject to formal governance review. Any matters deemed material to compliance with consumer standards are escalated in accordance with regulatory requirements.

The Report

1 How did we perform in 25/26?

1.1 Overall, our complaints are significantly lower compared to this time last year. As of April 25, there were 766 open complaints across all stages, compared with 419 open complaints we see today, representing a reduction of over 45%. (Appendix 1 in Reading Room) This improvement has been delivered alongside better control of case age, clearer ownership across stages, and a clearer understanding of Housing Ombudsman cases, demonstrating a much more stable and controlled complaints position than 12 months ago, despite continued seasonal pressure from damp, mould and heating-related complaints. This reflects a more responsive and predictable service for customers, with fewer delays and improved visibility of case progress.

1.2 Complaints Handling Code compliance has improved year on year, supported by stronger governance, consistent KPI reporting, and better performance visibility through Salesforce. This has driven significant improvements in response times in England, with Stage 1 increasing from 66% to 88% and Stage 2 from 53% to 91%, reducing repeat contact and improving customer outcomes, reducing waiting times for customers and enabling more timely and consistent outcomes.

However, challenges remain. Stage 2 volumes in England have risen (633 to 963), and Scotland Stage 2 timeliness has declined. Despite Stage 1 acknowledgements improving, these trends highlight the need for stronger resolution at stage 1 to reduce escalation, prevent repeat contact and improve customer confidence in our service. Salesforce data will also support more detailed analysis in 2026/27, focusing on factors such as case complexity, Stage 1 quality, communication and differences in outcomes.

There is a significant positive shift in compliance in the last year with March 26 showing 94% Complaints responded to in timescale (Appendix 2 in Reading Room)

England	24/25		25/26	
	Volumes	Compliance %	Volumes	Compliance %
Stage 1 acknowledged 5 days	3,247	94	2,802	97
Stage 1 responded 10 days		66		88
Stage 2 acknowledged 5 days	633	91	963	97
Stage 2 responded 20 days		53		91
Scotland	24/25		25/26	
	Volumes	Compliance %	Volumes	Compliance %
Stage 1 acknowledged 2 days	244	94	362	100
Stage 1 responded 5 days		93		93
Stage 2 acknowledged 2 days	70	96	74	72
Stage 2 responded 20 days		91		81

- 1.3 The increase in Stage 2 complaints is being further analysed to understand whether escalation is driven by factors such as case complexity, Stage 1 quality, communication and empathy, or differences in outcomes between stages. Escalation trends are monitored through Power BI reporting, with regular insights shared with stakeholders by category, region and complaint owner to identify hotspots and areas requiring targeted action. Salesforce escalation data will be used in 2026/27 to strengthen root cause analysis regular reporting and support earlier, more effective resolution.

Analysis will be undertaken to examine all factors relating to escalations including:

- Complexity of Stage 1 complaint
 - Customer has previously escalated a complaint
 - General societal trends of escalating complaints
 - Materiality of any resolution offered at Stage 1 versus Stage 2.
 - Explore options for improving communication to prevent escalation
- 1.4 We committed to our Board to reduce the number of open complaints to 450 by the end of August 25, which we achieved. We continued to reduce this throughout 25/26. By March 26, we closed 5504 complaints in 25/26. This averages 460 closed complaints per month for the year compared to 430 in 24/25. Overall, there are now 458 live complaints, however - of these, there are only 269 live open complaints for stage 1 and stage 2. The remainder is across Housing Ombudsman, awaiting adjudication / closure (130) and MP / Executive contacts (59). Whilst overall volume of live complaints continues to reduce it is worth noting that there has been significant change on the average days to close a complaint from 49 days (24/25) to 24 days (25/26). This has improved responsiveness for customers and reduced the time taken to resolve issues, although further progress is required to ensure resolutions are right first time.
- 1.5 The TSM complaints handling measure remains a key focus area; however, we are taking a collective, organisation-wide approach to learn from the results and drive targeted improvements. Satisfaction among rented customers has declined slightly, from 30.3% to 29.4%, and complaints handling continues to be the lowest-scoring perception measure, particularly for shared ownership and across rented and supported customers. This reinforces that improvements in timescale compliance are not yet fully reflected in customer experience, highlighting the need to focus in 2026/27 on response quality, including communication, empathy, resolution, action completion and learning.
- A key area of attention has been the timely completion of actions linked to complaints, identified as a driver of dissatisfaction within TSM results. The introduction of weekly reporting has reduced overdue actions, helping to ensure commitments are followed through, improve consistency of delivery and strengthen customer trust and overall satisfaction.

2 What have been the issues for customers resulting in customer complaints?

- 2.1 The reasons/themes for customer complaints have evolved from 24/25 (Appendix 3). Whilst complaints relating to Heating & Hot Water have reduced, this has been offset by an equivalent increase in Plumbing related complaints suggesting better diagnosis and recording is required.
- Despite the significant increased awareness of Damp and Mould following the introduction of Awaab's Law in October 2025, Damp and Mould related complaint volumes have reduced by 22% year on year. This follows our Damp and Mould team in the CSC using a new risk assessment process, aligned to the requirements of Awaab's Law, ensuring robust job diagnosis, while assessing customer vulnerabilities to determine severity.
- 2.2 Open complaints have reduced, with maintenance cases reducing from 70% to 58%, reflecting better control and earlier resolution. Outstanding repairs, missed or delayed appointments, and poor communication remain the top drivers, with damp and mould still the highest maintenance-related category requiring continued focus.

The highest complaint volumes remain in the South, where we experience poor contractor performance, and are focusing on stronger contract management, clear accountability and targeted action in high-risk areas, consistent with themes identified in the TSM board paper.

- 2.3 The regional operating model has strengthened governance, accountability and decision-making, helping improve complaints performance. Consolidation of Stage 1, Stage 2 and Housing Ombudsman discussions into unified regional forums has reduced duplication, improved focus and supported more timely, informed decisions on complex cases.

This has enhanced local ownership, enabling regional leaders to resolve issues, agree remedies and embed learning more effectively, supported by improved visibility and reporting. This together with clearer compliance reporting oversight, has resulted in stronger compliance with complaints timescales, alongside reduced escalation and maladministration risk, and more consistent customer outcomes.

Our focus now is on further improvements in customer communication particularly between stage 2 and HOS escalations, as well as applying the lessons learned holistically to prevent escalations or repeat complaints and ensuring all complaints actions are completed within our SLAs.

Our Member Responsible for Complaints (Miriam Landy) retains oversight of performance, themes, Ombudsman outcomes and improvement activity, and will continue to receive regular assurance against the priorities set out in this report. Miriam added:

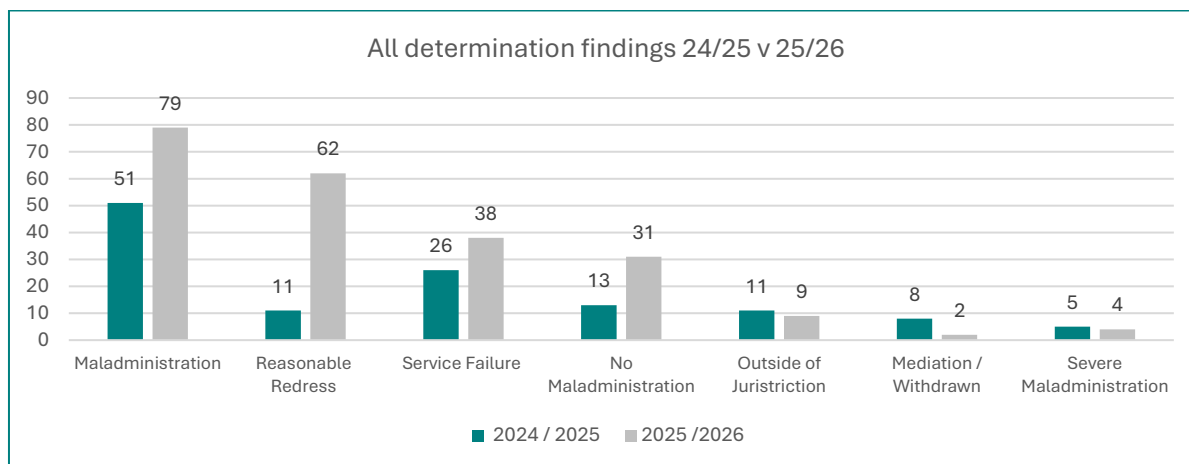
"The Board has noted a continued reduction in the number of complaints received, alongside improvements in the speed with which complaints are being resolved. While some challenges remain - particularly in relation to repairs, customer communication and record keeping - positive progress is being made across these areas.

The Board also noted the successful introduction of the new Salesforce system, which is already proving beneficial in improving processes and supporting better service delivery for customers.

In addition, the newly formed Customer Committee further strengthens Home Group's ability to hear and reflect the customer voice at all levels of the organisation. The Board welcomes the increased focus on recognising and supporting vulnerable customers, and will continue to monitor progress closely to ensure services continue to improve for all customers."

3 How have we performed with complaints referred to HOS (Housing Ombudsman Service) and what lessons have we learnt from those determinations in 25/26?

- 3.1 The absolute number of maladministration findings has increased, primarily driven by property condition, our overall maladministration rate has reduced. Repairs-related determinations are driven by delays, incomplete works, repeat visits and weak follow-through, with damp and mould cases presenting the highest risk and impact on customers. The overall rate of maladministration findings as a proportion of total Housing Ombudsman determinations is forecast to reduce from 73% in 2024/25 to below 65% in 2025/26, with a growing proportion of cases being assessed as "no maladministration" or "resolved through reasonable redress". This indicates a strengthening performance and more effective resolution of complaints.



The latest Housing Ombudsman landlord performance information has been considered as part of this report. The 2025/26 report, due for publication in June, will be reviewed on release, with any resulting learning, risks or actions incorporated into complaints governance and, where material, reported to the Board.

Relevant Housing Ombudsman reports and publications for 2025/26 have also informed the learning and improvement activity reflected in this report. Where comparisons are drawn to Tenant Satisfaction Measures. It is recognised that differences in methodology, calculation and tenure scope may limit direct comparability, and this has been taken into account when considering performance and customer experience outcomes.

- 3.2 All our severe maladministration case in 25/26 have been reported previously to Board, with no further severe maladministration since December 2025. However, there remains a significant backlog within the Housing Ombudsman, and we are awaiting decisions on 90 HOS cases, including cases dating back to January 2024. A risk-based tracking framework is in place to monitor these cases. Aged cases and those assessed as presenting a higher risk of severe maladministration are reviewed regularly to identify any further intervention that can be taken, to improve things for the customer ahead of final determination by the Housing Ombudsman.
- 3.3 The Complaint Handling Code self-assessment is provided at Appendix 4 (in Reading Room) for Board review and approval alongside this Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report. Subject to approval, the report, self-assessment and governing body response will be published on the complaints section of the organisation's website.
- 3.4 There have been clear lessons learned, with robust action plans implemented to address, monitor and prevent further cases of severe maladministration. This includes strengthened approaches in key areas such as ASB, with improved management of action plans, enhanced customer communication and more timely resolutions. There is now a stronger focus on scaling learning across the organisation, adopting a "prevention over just cure" approach and embedding lessons learned across all customer touchpoints to drive down complaint demand and ensure greater consistency.

4 What other improvements have been made in 25/26 and what does the trajectory for 26/27 look like?

- 4.1 Since January 2025, a programme of complaint improvements has strengthened governance, clarified accountability, and improved consistency, supported by better reporting, alignment to the Complaint Handling Code, and the implementation of Salesforce. These changes have enhanced visibility, enabled earlier intervention, and improved outcomes for customers. As a result, complaint volumes have reduced by around 45%, compliance with acknowledgement timescales has increased to c.95% (from 52%), compensation has reduced, and maladministration findings have declined. While further work is needed to embed learning and reduce demand in key

areas, this demonstrates clear progress in improving resolution, customer experience, and regulatory assurance.

- 4.2 The complaints audit shows improving compliance with the Complaint Handling Code, but highlights ongoing issues with inconsistent Stage 1 responses, record quality, and delays linked to repairs. Inconsistent application across regions continues to increase escalation risk.

In response, actions are strengthening governance, accountability, quality assurance, and insight, with a greater focus on root cause analysis to improve early resolution, drive consistency, and reduce avoidable complaints and risk.

- 4.3 Learning from Housing Ombudsman determinations has improved complaint handling, governance and early resolution, driving timeliness to c.95% (from 52%). This has also reduced maladministration risk, with stronger oversight and insight contributing to a forecast reduction to below 65% (from 73%), demonstrating improved outcomes and reduced regulatory risk

- 4.5 In previous Board papers we referenced Salesforce, our new CRM system which allows better management and monitoring of complaints. This is now live for the majority of cases held within Salesforce. Housing Ombudsman cases still remain to be migrated into Salesforce and this due to go live in June 26.

- 4.6 Complaint handling continues to evolve through a focused improvement programme, strengthening access, consistency, quality, and insight. Targeted regional improvements and Salesforce enhancements are supporting better governance, increased centralisation of complex cases, and more consistent, high-quality outcomes, improved insight reporting, updated complaint drivers, and a refreshed complaints procedure, alongside work on HOS functionality, high-risk case management, Heat Network complaints, and Building Safety (RPEEPS) changes. The Complaints Team will continue to increase visibility and governance by centralising a wider range of complex complaints.

- 4.7 Improvements have strengthened the identification, recording and application of vulnerabilities in complaint handling, supported by clearer guidance, enhanced use of Salesforce and improved oversight. This will remain a priority in 2026/27 to ensure vulnerabilities and diverse needs are consistently reflected in complaint urgency, communication, reasonable adjustments, safeguarding and case prioritisation, with continued embedding through Salesforce, quality assurance and learning from Housing Ombudsman determinations. Overall, this is improving prioritisation, consistency and outcomes for vulnerable customer

Recommendation

The Board are requested to APPROVE this report.