

SYHA GROUP BOARD MEETING

11 JUNE 2025

ANNUAL COMPLAINTS PERFORMANCE AND IMPROVEMENT REPORT

1. REPORT OWNER & DATE

Kevin Noone, Customer Contacts Manager, who can be contacted on 0114 290 8351 or k.noone@syha.co.uk if members would like to discuss this item before the meeting.

Date of Report: 28 May 2025

2. STRATEGIC THEME TO WHICH THE REPORT RELATES (check at least one)

Homes		Customers	x
Governance	x	Performance	x

Report status: **For Noting**

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1.

The Board is asked to **APPROVE** the Annual Complaints Performance and Improvement report 2024/25 and the draft ‘easy-read’ customer facing report in Appendix 1.
- 3.2.

The Board is asked to **provide a response** to both this report and the Complaint Handling self-assessment 2025/26 for publishing on our website, as this is required as part of our compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.

4. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 4.1.

This is the third full financial year the current Complaints Policy and process has been in place. For this report complaint performance is presented in line with the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code 2024 which was in place from 1 April 2024.
- 4.2.

Complaints in social housing continue to have a high profile, with prominence in the media through campaigns by the Housing Ombudsman Service, HOS, to raise awareness, and the implementation of Awaab’s Law.

- 4.3. The overall number of stage 1 complaints this year is 329. A 26% increase in complaints on the previous year.
- 4.4. The number of stage 2 reviews is 29, an increase from 19 received in 2023/24.
- 4.5. Property Services (which incorporates repairs and maintenance) continues to be the department with the highest proportion of complaints. As this is the area we see the most customer transactions it is predictable that it is the area we see the highest number of complaints. 77% of complaints were attributed to this department and it is the same proportion of complaints as in 2023/24.
- 4.6. Even with the increase, we are holding our ground and have made some gains in response times performance and customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction measured by a transactional survey shows satisfaction with complaint handling is 81%, exceeding our target of 75%.
- 4.7. Complaint handling satisfaction for TSMs, TP09 is 39.3%, a reduction on the previous year, 45%. We have launched a pilot in maintenance and property services to have additional resources to respond to the increase in complaints.
- 4.8. We have established a complaints working group with attendees from key areas of the business to better understand the challenges, agree actions and track to completion.
- 4.9. Delays in the upgrade to our IT system meant we have been unable to make improvements to how Cx supports complaint handling. As a consequence, we have created separate reporting to ensure the following elements are robustly recorded and tracked:
- exclusions,
 - use of extensions,
 - and tracking actions from a stage 1 complaint, and or stage 2 complaint review
- 4.10. We have made improvements to complaints information on the SYHA website.
- 4.11. There is increased contact with the Housing Ombudsman with 3 determinations received in 2024/25.
- 4.12. An audit of our complaint policy and process was completed by Tpas in April 2025. We are currently working through their report and agreeing the actions.
- 4.13. We have produced a more customer-friendly version of this report to explain our complaints policy, processes and performance in an easier to read format. This is attached in Appendix 1 as a draft that, if approved by board, we will edit with help from the Marketing team. Both reports will be published on our website.

5. MAIN REPORT

- 5.1. An annual complaint performance and service improvement report is a requirement of the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code 2024. It

shares qualitative and quantitative analysis and the improvements SYHA makes following learning and insight gained from complaints received.

Performance

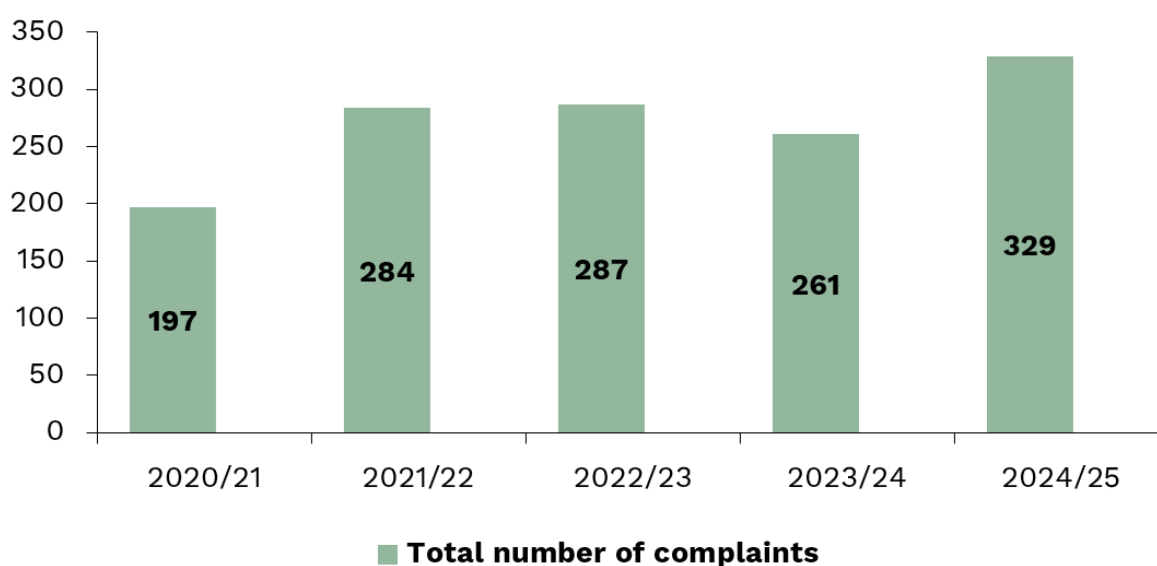
5.2. 2024/25 is the second year of collecting data for the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs). Three of the twenty-two measures relate to complaints. They are:

- CH02. Complaints relative to the size of the landlord
- CH03. Complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales
- TP09. Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to the handling of complaints

5.3. The sections below show complaint volumes, performance and satisfaction data. It should be noted that the TSM data only includes complaints when they come from someone living in a SYHA asset, and some of our complaints come from customers who do not live in our assets but do receive services from us. The difference in numbers is small so comparison with TSM data is still useful.

Complaint – Stage 1 volumes

5.4. The graph below shows the volume of complaints in 2024/25 and comparisons over the past five years.



Volume of complaints – by year

5.5. In 2024/25 there was a 26% increase in the number of complaints. Increased awareness of our complaint policy and process, how to make a complaint and why complaints matter is contributing to this rise.

Raising Awareness - Customers

5.6. 2024 was the first year all landlords were required to publish:

- a self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's complaint handling code,
- an Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report,
- and a response to the report from the governing body, the Board.

5.7. Improvements were made to the information we share on complaints and how it is shared. Learning from a recent Scrutiny Group exercise on the SYHA website helped us to refresh the information we share, making sure it is relevant, accessible and easy to read.

5.8. In 2024/25 the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS), have continued to build on their work in 2023/24*, promoting their service and raising awareness. The quality of housing and how landlords listen to and work with their customers continues to receive media attention. Coupled with this, the phase 2 report on the Grenfell inquiry, published September 2024, and implementation of Awaab's Law keep a spotlight on housing, the delivery of services and customers' right to complain.

**2023/24 The Housing Ombudsman Annual Report and Accounts. 51.4 billion total reach in the media for readers and viewers (up from 9.6bn), including TV and radio appearances.*

Raising awareness – employees

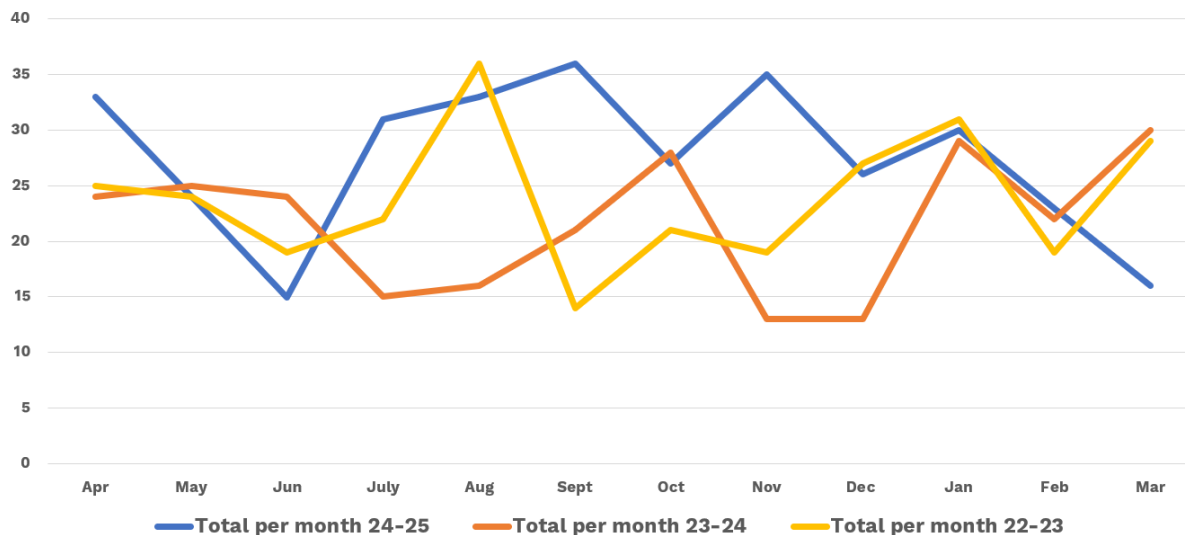
5.9. In 2024/25 we ran a communication campaign aimed at all employees to raise awareness of our complaints policy, process and the role of the HOS. All employees should and must know what to do when they hear dissatisfaction and the actions they must take.

5.10. Greater awareness supports a consistent approach to recording and responding to complaints and minimises the risk for complaints to be hidden and/or under-reported.

5.11. There are two actions to further embed this:

- a LiveWell complaints improvement project,
- and refreshed training for all employees, including setting clear objectives relating to complaints.

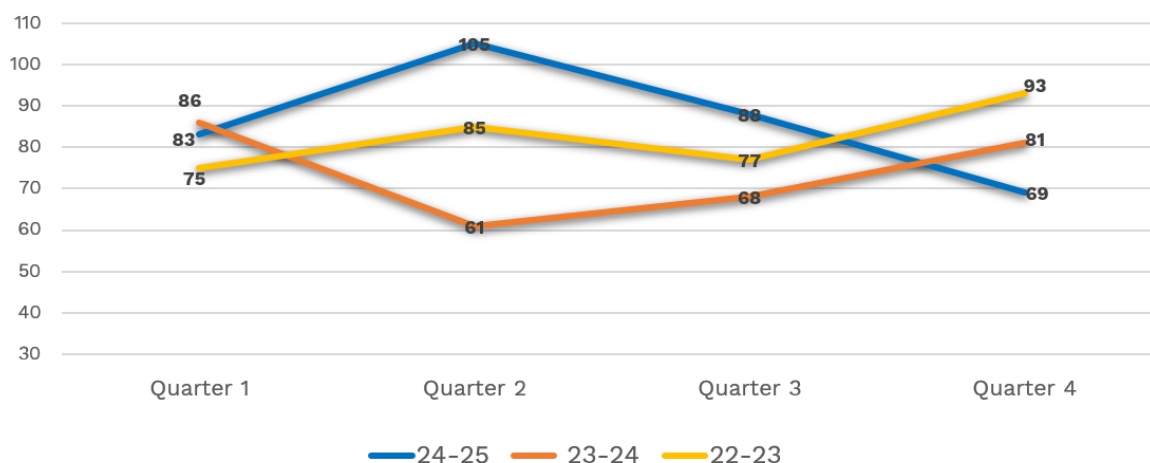
Volume of complaints - by month



5.12. The graph above shows the number of complaints recorded by month compared with the two previous years. Some months show a similar number of complaints received, May, October, January and February, while others show a larger variance, July, September and November. There is no clear reason for this.

Note, in 2022/23 Q2, an increase in complaint volumes was seen in August. This was due to poor performance from our gas contractor.

Volumes of complaints – by quarter



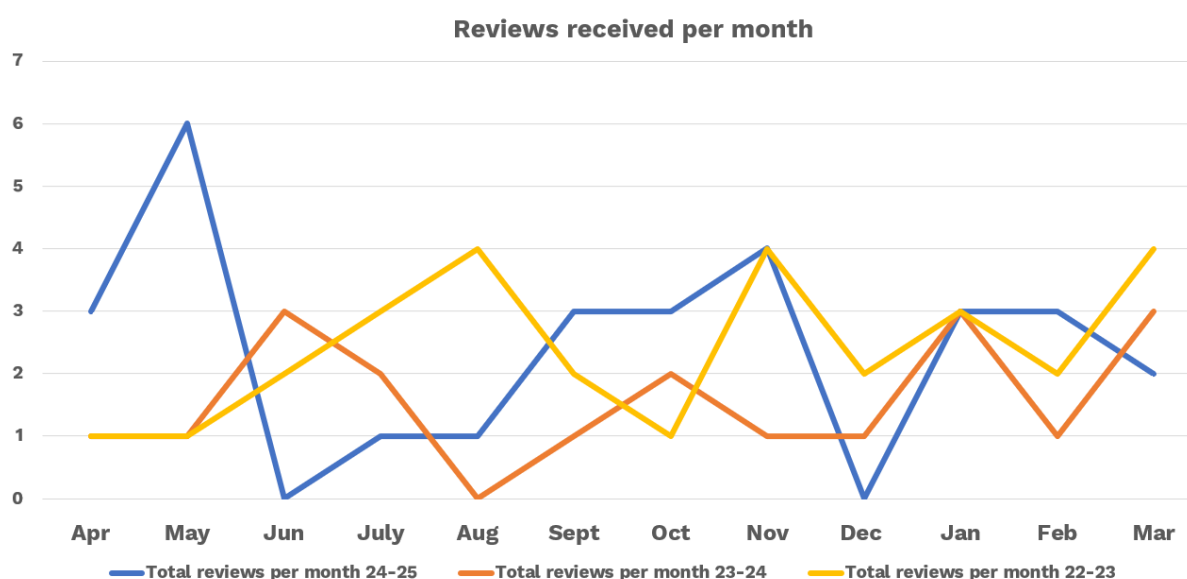
5.13. When tracking complaints by quarter 2024/25 does not follow patterns seen in previous years. In July, August and September, Q2, we tend to see fewer complaints due to better weather and the summer holidays. However, in 2024/25 rather than a reduction in complaints there was a 39% increase when compared to Q1. Analysis of data does not identify any standout themes that explain the increase.

5.14. Conversely, in Quarter 4, fewer complaints were recorded which bucks the trend of previous years when an increase is normally observed. An explanation

for this may be due to an unusually dry and warm spring, resulting in fewer weather-related repairs, i.e. issues of no heating/hot water, and water ingress caused by rain.

Complaint Reviews - Stage 2 Volumes

- 5.15. The Complaints Policy contains two stages. Stage 1, responding to a complaint, and stage 2, reviewing the response if a customer remains dissatisfied.
- 5.16. This year 29 complaints went to a stage 2 review, an increase from 19 recorded in 2023/24 but matches the number recorded in 2022/23.
- 5.17. This means 91% of complaints were resolved at stage 1, 300 complaints.



- 5.18. The mode average of reviews per month is three. The outliers were June and December when there were no reviews and May when 6 reviews were received.
- 5.19. Analysis of the complaints that went to review does not identify any service area themes. However, more generally the reason offered by the customer for requesting the complaint to be reviewed often relates to one or a mix of the following:
- the customer felt not all the issues had been addressed,
 - the customer disagreed with the decision or actions SYHA has agreed to complete or not,
 - the amount of compensation offered didn't match the amount the customer hoped to receive.

Exclusions

- 5.20. Our Complaints Policy describes when a complaint will be excluded from our complaints process, point 25.
- 5.21. In 2024/25, 9 potential complaints were excluded. As described in the Complaints policy there are certain reasons why a complaint may be excluded,

most exclusions relate to decisions taken by other organisations which South Yorkshire Housing Association has no control over.

- 5.22. All exclusions are recorded by the Customer Experience Team and the reasons why a complaint has been excluded communicated to the complainant.

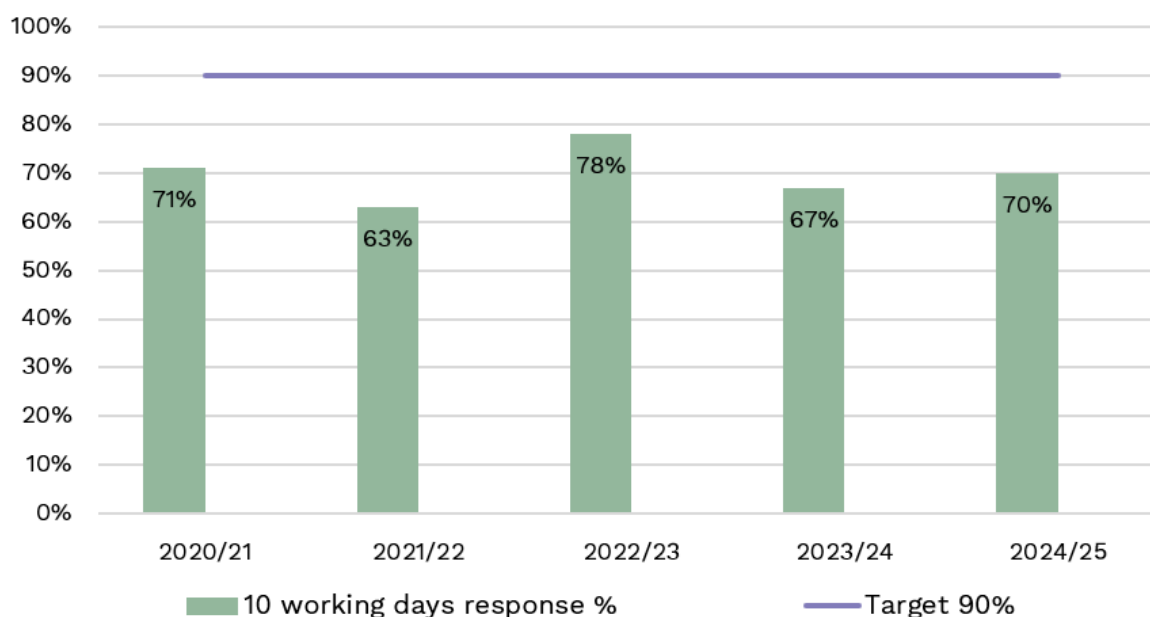
Complaints relative to the size of the landlord

- 5.23. Performance for 2024/25, Low-Cost Rental Accommodation, is 63.6 complaints per 1000 homes (stage 1) and 4.9 reviews per 1000 homes (stage 2). We are waiting for HouseMark and the RSH to share aggregated year-end data to compare with other social landlords.

Response Times

- 5.24. SYHA's target is to respond to 90% of complaints within 10 working days (14 calendar days) or by a mutually agreed extended deadline. If more time is needed to respond to a complaint it is referred to as an extension. In Cx, the system we use to record and manage complaints, this is known as 'hold'. The Complaint Handling Code offers guidance on the use of extensions and valid reasons.
- 5.25. The Customer Experience team has worked closely with complaint owners to make sure good practice is followed to reduce the need for an extension. For example, taking prompt action when a complaint is assigned, talking with the customer at the first opportunity to gain a clearer understanding of the issue/s and agreeing the actions to resolve.
- 5.26. Due to reporting issues, from 1 April 2024, the Customer Experience Team have monitored the use of extensions. Currently extensions are tracked outside of Cx to ensure they comply with the Complaint Handling Code, and we have a robust record. To support compliance, we have introduced the requirement that all extensions must be signed off by a Head of Service or Director.
- 5.27. An area of improvement in 2025/26, is to understand how Cx can better record and track the use of extensions and support the accurate reporting of response times.

Complaints Response stage 1 (excluding extensions)



5.28. This table offers an overview of performance excluding and including extension time. Note, the number of responses is not the same figure as the number of complaints/reviews received in the year. Some responses will be from complaints/review received in 2023/24.

Response Times	Number of responses	% of total
Complaint Response (stage 1)	335	
Completed on time (10 working days)	234	70%
Completed on time inc. extensions	272	81%
Completed late	63	19%
Review (stage 2)	27	
Completed on time (20 working days)	14	52%
Completed on time inc. extensions	27	100%
Completed late	0	0%

Complaint Response – Stage 1

5.29. The graph illustrates the performance of complaints responded to within a 10-working day timeframe. The Complaint Handling Code is prescriptive about how extensions should be used, communicated and recorded, and the table shows response time performance with and without extensions. Including extensions 81% of stage 1 complaints were responded to in time. As described in 5.26 Response Times, all extensions are agreed by a director and recorded by the Customer Experience Team.

- 5.30. During 2024/25 it was not possible to make improvements to how extensions are recorded in Cx therefore removing the need to manually record and track them outside of the system. There is agreement with our IT team and software provider, Civica to complete this work in 2025/26. See section 15.1 which outlines future activity to track and improve performance.
- 5.31. Comparing performance with the previous year, an increase in response time within the 10-working day timeframe is seen. Though the increase is small, 3%, it should be viewed against a 26% increase in complaints. With an increased workload but similar resources we have managed to hold our ground and make a small gain. When we include the 38 complaints which used an extension performance increases from 70% to 81%.
- 5.32. The Customer Experience Team continue to keep a close eye on the use of extensions to ensure they are used correctly and not overused. Performance is reported monthly to key business areas and the member responsible for complaints, and quarterly to the Executive Leadership Team.

Complaint Review – Stage 2

- 5.33. The 27 Complaint Reviews completed in 2024/25 all met the timeframe of the customer receiving a response within 20-working days or with an extension no greater than 20 working days as described in the Complaint Handling Code.

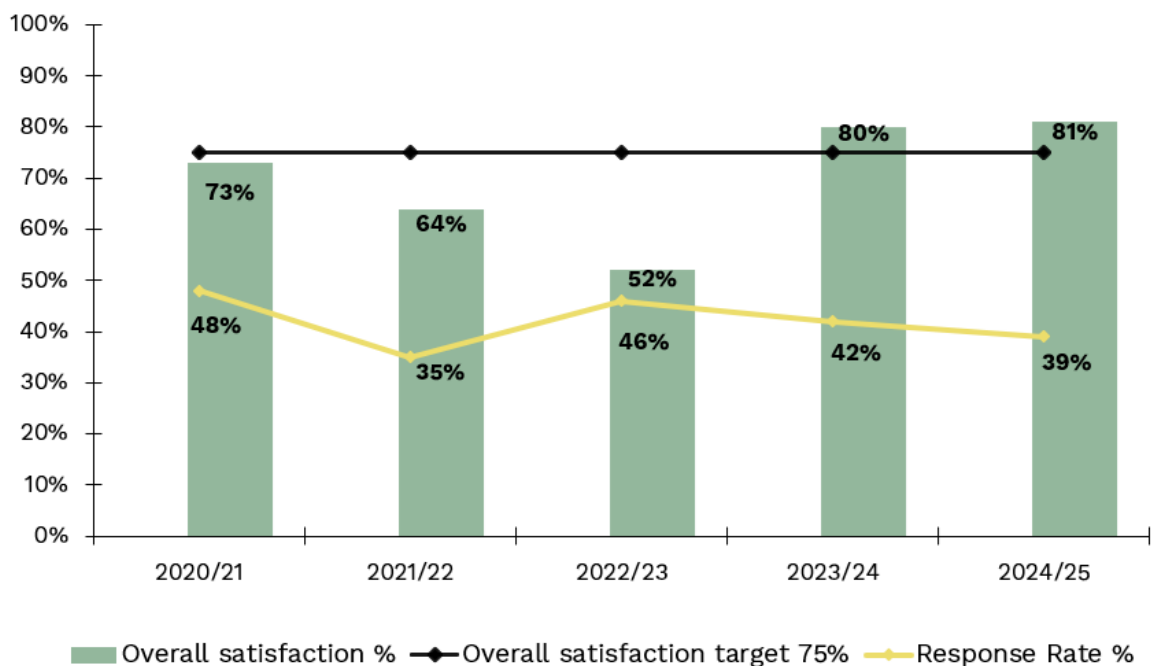
Satisfaction

Tenant Satisfaction Perception Measure

- 5.34. For TP09, satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling of complaints, people are first asked if they have made a complaint in the last 12 months. Of the customers who said they had made a complaint, 39.3% were satisfied which differs from the customer satisfaction collected from customers who made a complaint to SYHA, see 5.37 Transactional complaint handling satisfaction data.
- 5.35. TP09 is the lowest scoring perception measure question, a trend that is seen across the sector. In 2023/24, 45% of SYHA customers said they were satisfied compared with the national average of 34.5% satisfaction, low-cost accommodation. Currently we are unable to benchmark data for 2024/25.
- 5.36. We continue to see a difference in the number of customers who state they have made a complaint compared with our records, suggesting some discrepancy between what customers may view as a complaint. As quarterly data is received it is analysed and indicates some customers have reported ASB to SYHA and may be seeing this as a complaint, and customers who have previously made a complaint, but it was not in the reporting year 2024/25. Contact is made with these customers to gain a better understanding of what may be happening and to remind people of the different ways they can make a complaint.

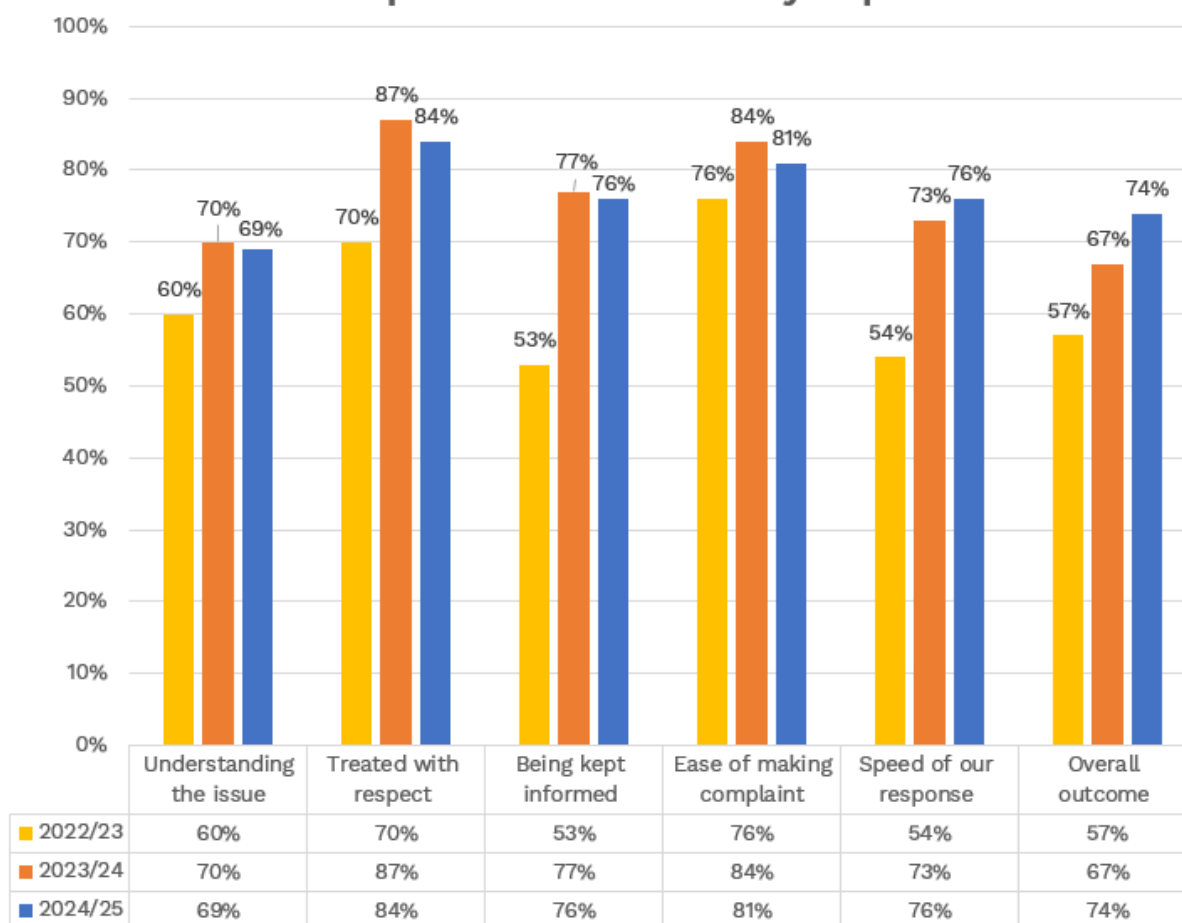
Transactional Complaint Handling Satisfaction Data

- 5.37. Once a complaint has been responded to, we invite the customer to complete a survey and share how satisfied they are with how we handled their complaint. Every complainant is invited to complete the survey by phone or email. The survey was completed by 125 people, 37% of all those who received a response to a complaint in 2024/25.
- 5.38. The first question customers are asked is, 'Overall, how satisfied were you with the way your complaint was handled?' Overall satisfaction with how we handled complaints was 81%. The table below shows satisfaction data over the past five years.



- 5.39. Customer are given the opportunity to share more detail about their experience by answering the following questions:
- did we understand the issue?
 - did we treat the resident with respect throughout the process?
 - did we keep them informed of the progress of their complaint?
 - how easy was it to make a complaint?
 - the speed of our response?
 - satisfaction with the overall outcome?
- 5.40. Performance across the six questions is shown in the graph below.

Complaint satisfaction survey responses



5.41. Customer satisfaction remains high for all questions and holds the gains made in 2023/24. One notable percentage shift is for overall outcome, 7% higher than the previous year. This demonstrates that training and support given to complaint owners is having a positive impact on complaint handling and more customers are satisfied with the overall outcome of their complaint.

5.42. We have also seen a small increase, 3% points, in speed of our response. This is worth noting as despite an increase in complaints and workload the Customer Experience Team have continued to work closely with complaints owners to make sure action is taken swiftly to support a timely response.

Improving Complaint Handling Performance

5.43. In 2024/25 to facilitate improving complaint handling performance, we have:

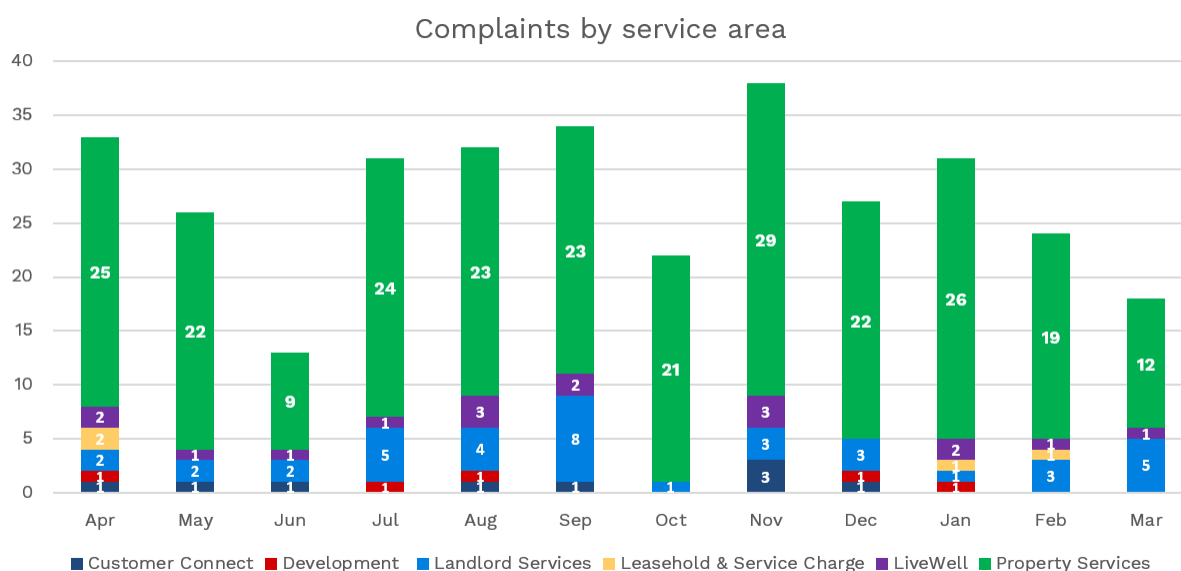
- shared details of live complaints and reviews to ensure complaint volumes and performance is clear,
- made complaint data and performance more visible to managers and complaint owners by sharing a monthly email containing themes, learning and areas for improvement,
- continued to work with and support the Member Responsible for Complaints by having a monthly meeting to review performance data and insight,

- established the Complaints Working Group to draw together key business areas and people to review performance data and themes to drive change,
- introduced monthly audits of complaint acknowledgments and complaint responses to ensure they comply with the Complaint Handling Code and to identify areas of improvement,
- created a new process for signing off extensions,
- designed mechanisms for recording and tracking:
 - exclusions,
 - extensions,
 - and actions from complaints and reviews.
- agreed and launched a 6-month pilot to provide additional resources for handling complaints in Property Services. The pilot is due to end, and we are evaluating its success and considering how best to continue to handle complaint volumes in this service area.
- held complaint workshops with LiveWell managers to raise awareness of the policy, process and support provided by CET.

Complaints Data and Insight

Complaints by Service Area

5.44. The graph below shows the number of complaints received by the service area in 2024/25.



5.45. For Customer Connect, Development and LiveWell the volume of complaints recorded show a small variance year-on-year. Landlord Services and Property Services have seen the greatest percentage increase in complaints. Landlord Services, 50%, and Property Services, 28%. The increase in the total number of complaints is 26%.

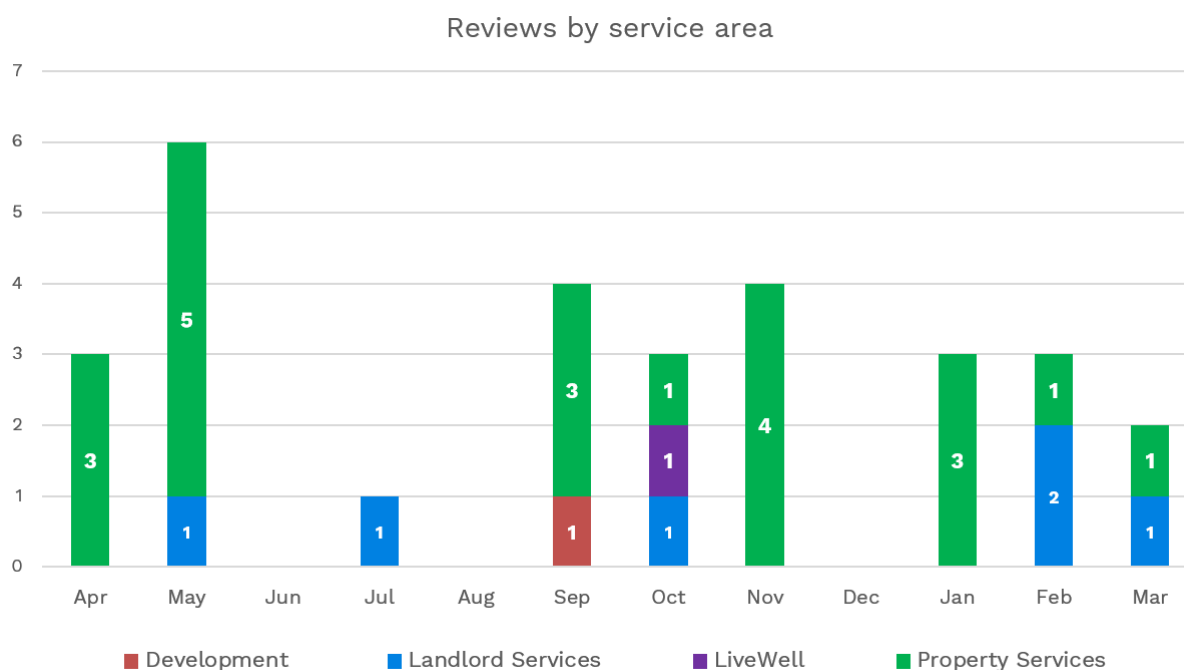
- 5.46. 78% of all complaints relate to Property Services & Maintenance (including HMT and contractors). This service area continues to receive a higher volume of complaints, a pattern reflected in the housing sector. It mirrors 2023/24, when 77% of all complaints received related to Property Services & Maintenance.
- 5.47. Though the numbers of complaints in LiveWell is small, the total has reduced year-on-year. This reduction bucks the trend of an increase seen for Landlord Services and Property Services. In LiveWell a complaints improvement project has been agreed, and the CET will work closely with the project lead to raise awareness and make sure complaints are recorded and dealt with consistently.

Service Area	No. of complaints		
	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Customer Connect	5	7	9
Development	1	7	5
Landlord Services	23	26	39
Leasehold & Service Charge*	-	-	4
LiveWell	23	21	17
Property Services	235	200	255
Total	287	261	329

*Prior to April 2024, part of Landlord Services

Reviews by Service Area

- 5.48. The graph below shows the number of reviews received by the service area in 2024/25.

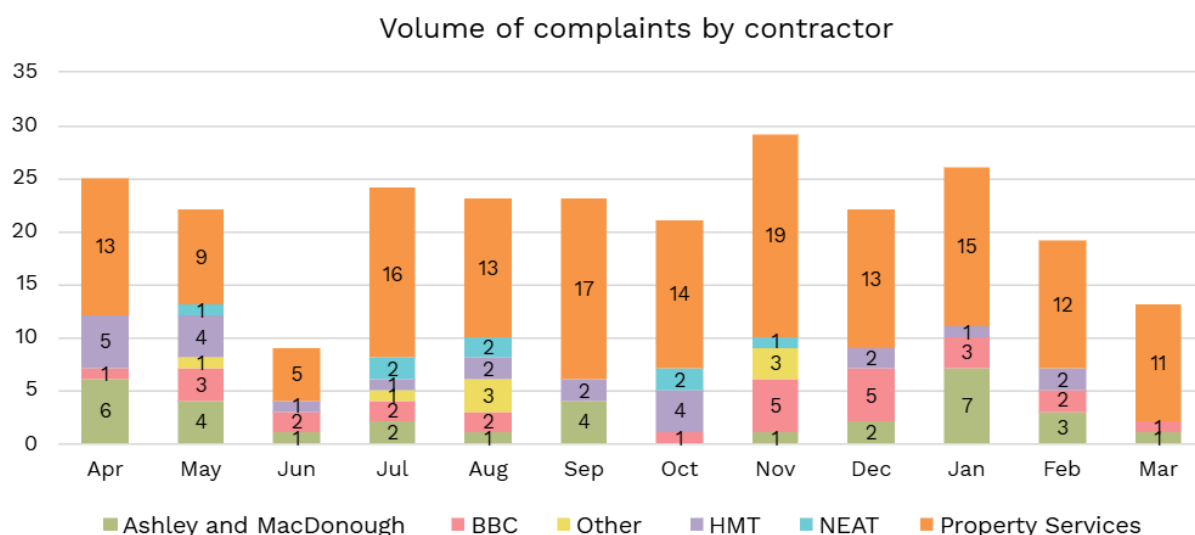


5.49. Of the 29 stage 2 reviews, 21 were Property Services, maintenance and contractor related accounting for 72% of reviews. This is a similar pattern to 2023/24 when the number of Property Services, maintenance and contractor related stage 2 reviews requested was 67%, (12/18), and to the proportion of stage 1 complaints received, 78%.

5.50. Though Property Services is the area with the most reviews, of the 255 complaints recorded for Property Services, only 21 of these went to review. 92% were resolved at stage 1, 234 complaints.

Complaints by Contractor

5.51. The graph below shows the breakdown of complaints for Property Services and maintenance services by team or contractor and month by month.



5.52. The following table gives a brief description of the works carried out by the above contractors.

Ashley and McDonough	Day-to-day repairs and out-of-hours repairs (for heating and hot water) Gas servicing Planned works (SIP)
Burngreave Building Company (BBC)	Day-to-day repairs and out-of-hours repairs (for properties outside of the SCR). Void works
Home Maintenance Team (HMT)	Day-to-day repairs Void works Planned works (SIP) Cyclical maintenance
NEAT	Estate Maintenance e.g. gardening and cleaning works Void Works

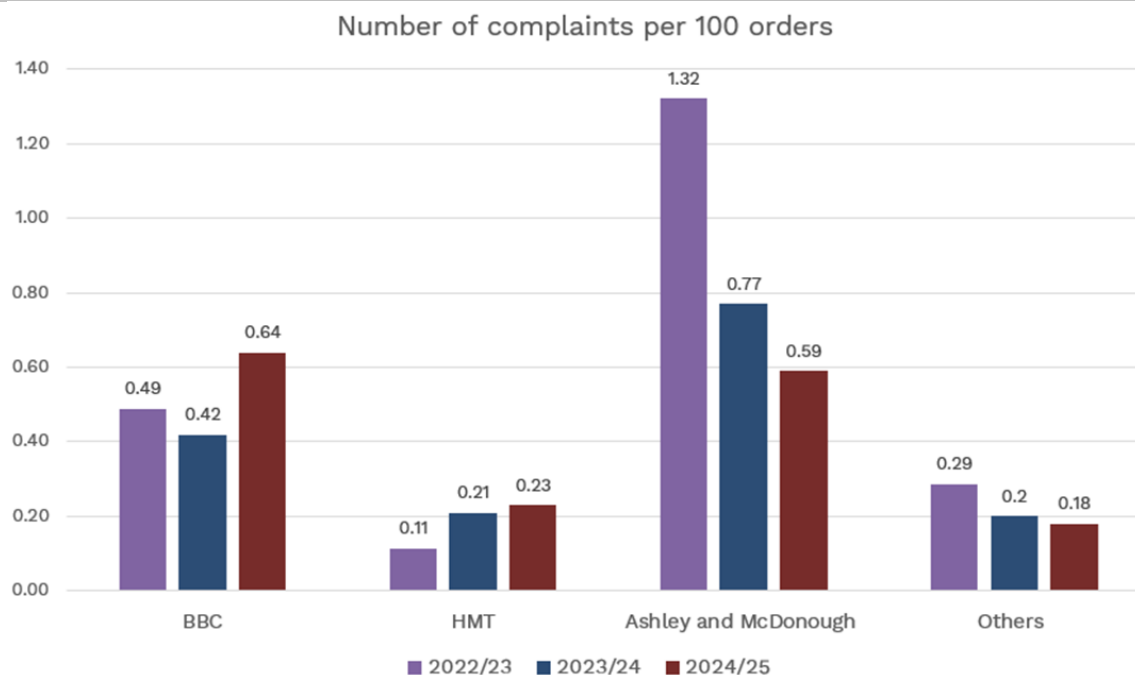
Others (any other 3rd party contractor used by SYHA)	Examples of work completed are: Asbestos surveys Fixed electrical tests Painting and decorating on DMC cases Damp works Legionella testing Fire works (alarms, emergency lighting)
Property Services	Day-to day Inspections and ordering works Disrepair DMC cases Void inspections and ordering Asset Management work Stock condition surveys Planned works Fire Risk Assessments

Property Services

- 5.53. Property Services and Maintenance receive the highest volume of complaints, see 5.44 complaints by service area. It is an area where most customers receive a service from SYHA and matches previous years' data. In 2024/25, 78% of all complaints received were in this business area, in 2023/24 the figure was 77%.
- 5.54. Property Services and Maintenance have seen a 28% increase in complaints. The total increase year-on-year for all business areas is 26%, see 5.5 Volume of complaint – by year. There is no one factor unique to this area that explains the increase. As mentioned in 5.6 Raising Awareness, housing remains in the spotlight. Greater awareness of our Complaints Policy may be encouraging more customers to let us know when we get something wrong.

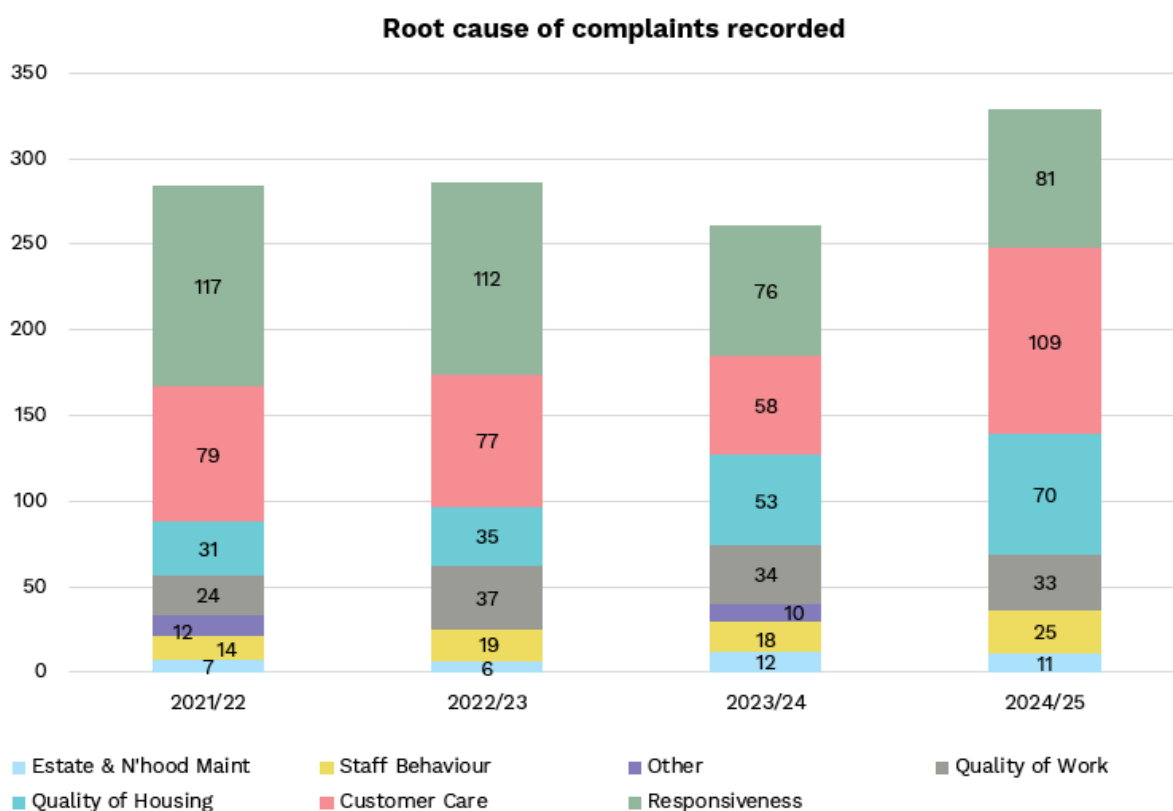
Contractors

- 5.55. As some of our contractors carry out more work than others for SYHA, it is important to look at the number of complaints per 100 orders raised. The graph below shows the comparison to the last three years.



Root Causes

5.56. Complaints are categorised by a root cause which helps analysis and learning. As some complaints have multiple elements the root cause for the main issue is selected.



5.57. In 2024/25 the top three root causes are:

- Customer Care & Customer Service, 109 complaints, 33%
- Responsiveness, 81 complaints, 25%

- Quality of Housing, 70 complaints 21%

- 5.58. With a 26% increase in complaints the volume tracks in a similar pattern, however Customer Care has seen a greater percentage of complaints when compared to 2023/24. Poor or no communication is a repeat issue for customers. This crosscuts all business areas. For example, contractors not turning up, arriving late, or cancelling appointments at short notice, how ASB has been handled, unclear service charge information and or communication around rent arrears.
- 5.59. Since April 2025 improvements have been made to text messaging linked to our repairs services. Customers now receive text message reminders of appointments, when an order is raised, the week before, the day before, on the day and when an operative is en route. We will be monitoring the impact on complaint volumes and root causes.
- 5.60. Further work is required to understand where improvements can be made.

Diversity and Complaints

- 5.61. Our housing management system allows reporting of age, gender, race, faith and belief, sexual orientation and disability. We use this data to compare the diversity characteristics of people who made a complaint in 2024/25 with all our current tenancy holders.
- 5.62. There are data set gaps, for example a large percentage of 'unknown' customer disabilities. This makes it harder to meaningfully analyse this data. To improve this, we are launching a data collection campaign in 2025 that will contact all SYHA tenants to request that they update their household information. We hope this will significantly improve our diversity data.

Race and ethnicity

- 5.63. The table below shows data on the race and ethnicity. The complainant profile for 2024/25 is reasonably aligned with the proportion of customers. Most of our customers are categorised as White British, and they form the largest proportion of complaints. While percentage changes are more pronounced in other categories, the low volume of complaints limits the significance of these variations.

Race	No. of customers who complained	% of Customers who complained	% of all SYHA tenants
Any other Ethnic Group	2	0.61%	0.40%
Asian / Asian British : Chinese			0.10%
Asian/Asian British: Any Other Asian Backgroud	2	0.61%	1.30%
Asian/Asian British: Bangladeshi	5	1.52%	0.70%
Asian/Asian British: Indian			0.20%
Asian/Asian British: Pakistani	9	2.74%	2.30%
Black: Any Other Black / African / Caribbean background			0.60%
Black: African	9	2.74%	3.10%
Black: Caribbean	6	1.82%	1.20%
Did not answer the question	5	1.52%	0.90%
Mixed: White & Asian			0.10%
Mixed: White & Black Caribbean			0.00%
Other Ethnic Group: Arab			0.40%
Other Ethnic Group: Other	3	0.91%	1.70%
Other White: Any other	3	0.91%	0.20%
Other White: Mixed / Multiple			1.00%
Other White: White and Asian			0.30%
Other White: White and Black African			0.30%
Other White: White and Black Carribbean	7	2.13%	0.90%
Prefer not to say			0.30%
Refused			0.00%
Unknown	35	10.6%	15.60%
White: British	240	72.9%	66.10%
White: Gypsy/ Irish Traveller	1	0.3%	0.10%
White: Irish			0.30%
White: other	2	0.61%	1.90%

Disability

- 5.64. Data shows that 21.9% of complaints come from customers who have a disability recorded. This is higher than all SYHA tenants, but this may be explained by better conversations and better records when someone makes a complaint. Whenever someone makes a complaint, we use this as an opportunity to talk to them about any disabilities and vulnerabilities they may have and update our records. The data collection exercise will help to reduce the number of Unknowns.

Disability	No. of customers who complained	% of customers who complained	% of all SYHA tenants
Disabled	72	21.9%	8.9%
Not Disabled	7	2.1%	2.0%
Unknown	250	76.0%	89.1%

Age

- 5.65. When looking at the age data, there are a greater number of complaints from the groups 25-34 and 35-44, and fewer complaints from the groups 45-54 and >=65, then when compared with all SYHA tenants. This is a trend seen across many sectors where older customers are more satisfied and younger dissatisfied. Changing expectations of customers is an area to watch to make sure there is not a growing disconnect between the services delivered and the standards customers expect.

Age Band	No. of customers who complained	% of customers who complained	% of all SYHA tenants
<=24	1	0.3%	1.50%
25-34	57	17.3%	12.70%
35-44	80	24.3%	19.10%
45-54	46	14.0%	17.80%
55-64	62	18.8%	18.90%
>=65	65	19.8%	24.60%
Unknown	18	5.5%	5.30%

Gender

- 5.66. When looking at Gender Data we can see that female customers are reporting complaints proportional to their known customer population size. Male customers are currently reporting lower which we will monitor.

Gender	No. of customers who complained	% of Customers who complained	% of all SYHA tenants
Unknown	125	38.0%	28.1%
Male	52	15.8%	27.3%
Female	151	45.9%	44.6%
In another way	1	0.30%	not known*

*not known with current reporting

Sexual Orientation

- 5.67. The data on sexual orientation shows a similar correlation between the number of customers and complaints in most categories. Both

Heterosexual/Straight and Gay/Lesbian groups report more complaints than the customer base. Again, improved customer data will support better analysis and insight.

Sexual Orientation	No. of customers who complained	% of Customers who complained	% of all SYHA tenants
Bisexual	2	0.61%	0.40%
Did not answer the question	1	0.30%	0.30%
Gay/ Lesbian	5	1.52%	0.80%
Heterosexual/ Straight	225	68.39%	61.90%
In other way			0.10%
Prefer not to say	10	3.04%	6.50%
Prefer to self-describe			0.00%
Unknown	86	26.14%	30.00%
Unsure / Don't know			0.10%

Faith and Belief

- 5.68. Data on Faith or Belief shows a similar correlation between the number of customers and complaints in all categories. We will continue to monitor these groups as better data is collected to see if there are any emerging trends.

Faith and Belief	No. of customers who	% of Customers who complained	% of all SYHA tenants
Buddhism			0.10%
Catholic	4	1.22%	0.80%
Christianity (all denominations)	72	21.88%	22.60%
Church of England	4	1.22%	2.60%
Did not answer the question	1	0.30%	0.30%
Hinduism			0.10%
Islam	26	7.90%	6.50%
No Faith or Belief	117	35.56%	29.50%
Other Faith or Belief	3	0.91%	1.20%
Prefer not to Say	10	3.04%	4.60%
Rastafarianism			0.00%
Sikhism			0.00%
Unknown	92	27.96%	31.80%

Housing Ombudsman and SYHA

Compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code

- 5.69. The Complaint Handling Code became statutory from 1 April 2024, and all social landlords must meet all the provisions set out in the code. The code sets out best practice, standards and aims to promote a positive tenant landlord relationship.
- 5.70. We have reported to our Board in May 2025 that we are compliant with the Code, although there are areas of additional work that will strengthen our compliance or our evidence of compliance. These areas of improvement are

included within this report, for example, refreshed complaints training for all staff.

- 5.71. For further reassurance we have commissioned Tpas - the tenant engagement experts, to conduct an audit of our complaints handling processes and policy. We have recently received their report and will now evaluate their findings, but early feedback does not show any areas of significant concern.

Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code Self-Assessment

- 5.72. We are required to carry out an annual self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code. Our completed self-assessment was shared with the Board in May 2025, where we reported full compliance with the code. Areas of improvement to strengthen compliance was shared which included reviewing internal communications and training, making improvements to IT systems and reviewing the complaints policy with customer involvement.

Housing Ombudsman investigations

- 5.73. In 2024/25, we have had more contact with the Housing Ombudsman than in the previous five years. This should be viewed positively that our complaints process is working well, and customers are aware of the Housing Ombudsman and how to escalate a complaint if they remain unhappy at the end of our complaints process.
- 5.74. During 2024/25, five investigations were started by the Housing Ombudsman and three decisions were received. The Housing Ombudsman found maladministration in all three investigations and made a series of orders and recommendations. All of the orders were completed and recommendations shared with the specific business area so that learning can be acted upon.
- 5.75. Findings from the Housing Ombudsman are also shared with the Complaints Working Group so any actions can be agreed and tracked.
- 5.76. Our newly emerging Customer Committee will also receive regular updates about our contact with the Housing Ombudsman. We will talk with the committee to understand and agree what information they would find most helpful to receive.

Service Improvements

- 5.77. Using learning from complaints is central to improve services for customers. Here are some examples of how learning has been used in 2024/25 and some of our plans for 2025/26:

5.78. **Anti-social Behaviour**

- Launched an updated policy and process
- Mandatory risk assessments to understand the impact of ASB and identify customer vulnerabilities
- Clarity on the support and advice given by our Neighbourhoods team

- Reviewing and improving the information we share on our website
- Improved record keeping

5.79. Neighbourhoods and Estates

- Improving information for customers on our website
- We will be launching a new Neighbourhood & Estate Management policy and process
- Providing clear information to customers on the estate services that SYHA provide, including communal cleaning and grounds maintenance, trees management and fly tipping.
- The new policy will also provide guidance and clarity to customers around the use of domestic CCTV.

5.80. Customer Data & record keeping

- Focused training for Customer Advisors to promote good record keeping.
- Making sure Customer Advisors record the right level of details on repairs works order to support more first-time fixes.
- We will be launching a data collection campaign and a vulnerability policy to improve customer data and the services that can be provided with this knowledge.

5.81. Other areas of improvement for 2025/26

- Following feedback from complaints we plan to review our Compensation Policy to make sure that it is following best practice, is a fair offer for all customers and is offered proactively when appropriate.
- We want to ensure our training and support offer is of high quality and staff and contractors feel supported and able to deliver good quality responses to complaints.
- We will be working to understand the new Heat Network Regulations and how these might affect our complaints policies and processes.

5.82. This report has been summarised in a draft customer-friendly version, that we propose to publish alongside this report on our website. The aim is to make the key points of this report more easily accessible to customers and be part of our plans to improve engagement with customers in the area of complaints. The 'easy-read' version is currently in a draft format, as an example of what can be produced. If approved, we will work to produce the report in a professional format with the assistance of the Marketing Team, and we will approve all photos, quotes and graphics as necessary. Please see Appendix 1 to read the draft report.

5.83. In conclusion, we are encouraged to have this wealth of data in place and to be fully compliant, but we are not standing still. We will be reviewing the recommendations from Tpas and, together with our own service improvement plans, we have an ambitious programme of improvements for 2025/26. These improvements will help us deliver a better experience for our customers and make even better use of our data.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk Level

High

- 6.1. An increase in complaint volumes builds pressure on resources and could result in poorer complaint handling performance. In 2024/25 we have maintained performance levels but should be mindful that further increases in complaint volumes and or attrition rates would result in resources becoming further stretched.
- 6.2. Any reduction in performance would have a negative on customers and impact on SYHAs reputation. Poor complaint handling could lead to an increase in investigations by HOS and compensation payments.
- 6.3. To make improvements in performance in 2025/26 additional resources are needed to both handle complaints and develop the tools for handling them. For example, Cx our housing management system.
- 6.4. Additional resources were approved to pilot how complaint handling could be improved in Property Services, the business area with the most complaints. As this pilot has ended, we are considering how best to continue as without a dedicated resource there is a risk we may see a rise in response times and a decrease in consistency and quality.
- 6.5. A Complaints Working Group has been set up to draw together key people from across SYHA to support a culture of learning from complaints and tackling areas of poor performance.
- 6.6. A close working relationship with the Member Responsible for Complaints ensures complaint handling is regularly monitored and performance shared with the Board.

7. BUDGETARY, FINANCIAL AND VFM IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. A sustained increase in complaint volumes creates additional work. To ensure we maintain high standards of complaint handling performance and customers receive quality service more resources may be needed.
- 7.2. Poor complaint handling and failure to learn from complaints can lead to more escalations, higher compensation costs, and pressure on resources—highlighting the need to ensure we continue to perform well and act on our improvement plans, including a review of our Compensation Policy.

8. ASSURANCE STATEMENT

- 8.1. The wealth of data provided in this report provides assurance that we understand our performance and improvement needs.
- 8.2. The recent audit carried out by Tpas provides assurance of compliance as well as practical improvements that can reduce risk and improve compliance, and customer experience.

9. HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 9.1. There are no health and safety implications of this report.

10. CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

- 10.1. Complaint performance data including themes and trends is shared with the Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC), who is also a tenant.
- 10.2. The Customer Experience Lead holds a monthly meeting with the MRC to review data and performance. In 2024/25 the structure of these meetings has been reviewed to understand and improve how we can best support the MRC.
- 10.3. We intend to increase our focus of customer engagement in 2025/26, including regular reporting to our new customer committee and providing an easier to read version of the report to accompany this detailed report on our website.
- 10.4. The complaints audit from Tpas, has recommended we explore opportunities to commission any relevant scrutiny based on complaints discussions.

11. IMPACT ON OUR CUSTOMERS

- 11.1. Maintaining high levels of complaint handling performance:
- provides customers with reassurance that when something goes wrong our complaints policy and process is robust and followed,
 - demonstrates our complaints process is accessible and fair for customers,
 - gives customers confidence the SYHA are listening and keen to rebuild and strengthen relationships,
 - drives learning from complaints, improving services for our customers.

12. IMPACT ON OUR PEOPLE

- 12.1. This report will continue to help promote and support our positive complaints culture present in SYHA and noted by the Tpas audit.
- 12.2. Our commitment to robustly analyse and review the data and identify areas of development will help to continue our aim to continuously improve and ensure continued compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.

12.3. Plans to support employees with complaints through good quality communications, training and supporting resources will ensure our improvement plans are effective.

13. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

13.1. Information about complaints and diversity is referenced in section 5.60. Further work will be carried out to improve customer data and how this is recorded through our data collection campaign.

13.2. Quarterly data regarding complaints and customer diversity is shared with the Diversity and Belonging Steering Group.

13.3. Our new Vulnerability Policy is due to be launched in Summer 2025 and will support all customer experience by allowing us to gather useful information about customer needs and offer reasonable adjustments and tailored services as required. This will support a positive complaints culture and process.

14. ENVIRONMENTAL / SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT

Impact Level

Neutral

14.1. There are no environmental or sustainability impacts related to this report.

15. NEXT STEPS / ACTION REQUIRED

15.1. Section 5.43 details actions to improve complaint handling performance. Work has started and there is more work to do in the following areas:

- Complaint and maintenance pilot – considering the learning so far and agree how the pilot is restarted
- Agree the actions following complaints audit including:
 - Review our Complaints Policy
 - Review our compensation guidance
- Improvements to how complaints are handled in Cx
- Improvements to reporting
- Learning more about our customers – improving our customer data
- Communications campaign, to keep all employees focused on the importance of recording all feedback, complaints and compliments
- Refresher training for complaint owners and reviewers
- Developing and introducing mandatory complaint training for all staff, to raise awareness of our policy and process
- How we capture and use learning from complaints to drive action
- Learning from service requests
- Complaints and LiveWell improvement project
- Establishing the Customer Committee and understanding the role they play in scrutinising complaint performance
- Utilise data gathered from the ‘Tell us more’ exercise to bridge the knowledge gaps within our diversity data.

16. APPENDICES

Appendix 1	Easy-Read Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report
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