

Appendix 2
Annual Complaints and Service
Improvement report for the Housing
Management service

Reporting requirement

The Social Housing Regulation Act (SHRA) 2023 received Royal Assent in July 2023. On 1 April 2024, the Regulator for Social Housing launched the new consumer regulation regime. This brings with it a focus on an improved and proactive approach towards regulating social housing.

The SHRA 2023 empowered the Housing Ombudsman to issue a Code of Practice about the procedures social housing landlords should have in place for considering complaints. It also placed a duty on the Housing Ombudsman to monitor compliance with a code of practice that it has issued. The council's self-assessment against the Code of Practice is published on the council website so that residents are able to easily access it.

In 2023/24, the Housing Management service received 775 Stage 1 complaints. This is equal to 59 complaints per 1000 homes. This compares with a total of 592 in 2022/23.

Reporting requirement

It is a requirement of the Social Housing Regulation Act 2023 that the annual complaints performance, and service improvement report must be reported to the governing body.

The council must also ensure that information relating to complaints is published on it's website alongside the [Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code: Self-assessment \(brighton-hove.gov.uk\)](https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/housing-ombudsman-complaint-handling-code-self-assessment). The governing body's response to this report must be published alongside this.

The annual complaints performance and service improvement report must include:

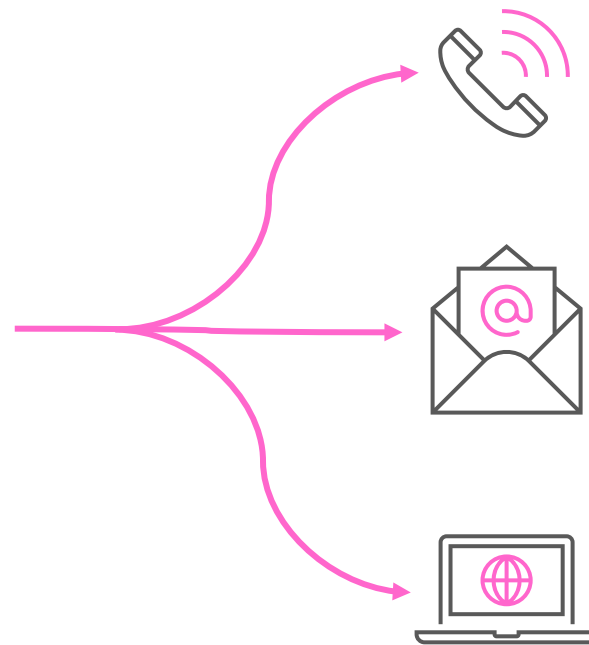
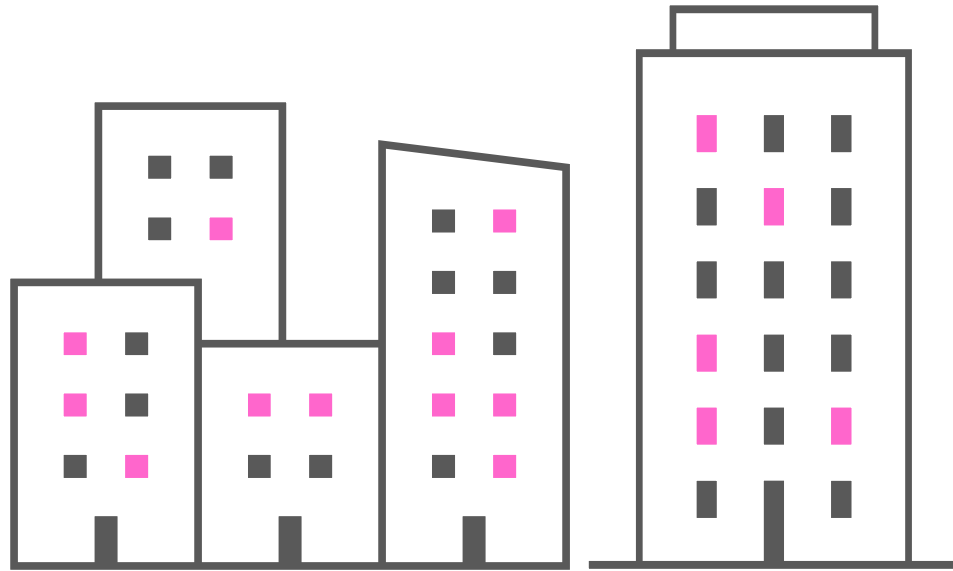
- a) the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements.
- b) a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the landlord's complaint handling performance - this must also include a summary of the types of complaints the landlord has refused to accept.
- c) any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman
- d) the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints.
- e) any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman
- f) any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlords.

The legislation recognises that a positive complaint handling culture is key to effectiveness with which landlords resolve disputes. Landlords are required to use complaints as a way of identifying issues and introduce positive changes in service delivery.

Housing Service dimensions 2023/24

12,039 Council owned
(HRA) dwelling stock

1,208 other low cost rented
accommodation stock



88,178 calls answered

65,985 by Repairs Helpdesk

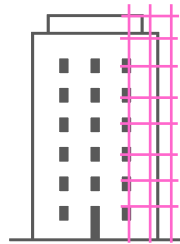
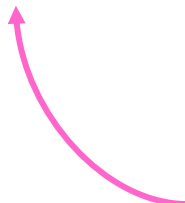
22,193 by Housing Customer Services

43,587 emails received

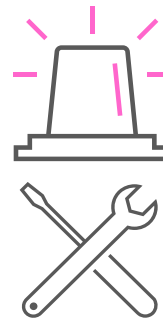
19,987 by Repairs Helpdesk

23,600 by Housing Customer Services

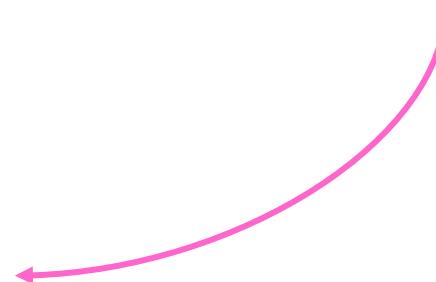
2,433 online forms received by Repairs Helpdesk



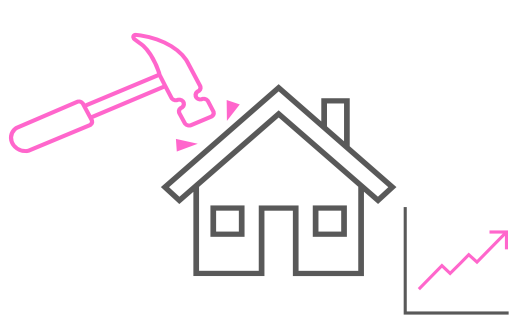
21,664 routine repairs
completed



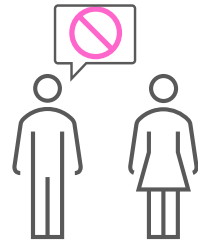
13,751 emergency
repairs completed



Areas of complaint in 2023/24



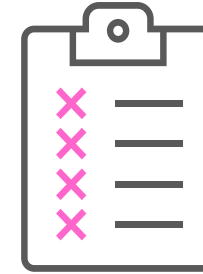
620 complaints on the condition of property (Repairs, maintenance & improvement)



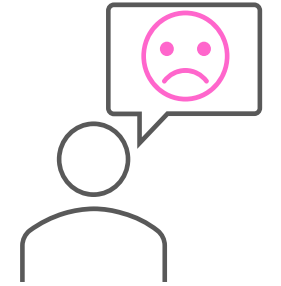
26 complaints about anti-social behaviour



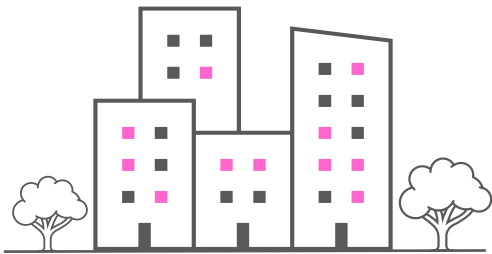
21 complaints about staff conduct



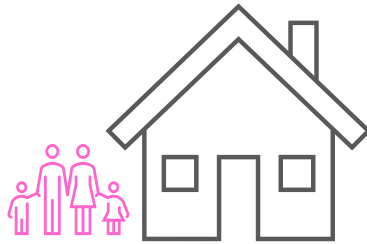
13 complaints due to a failure to take action



12 complaints where customers were unhappy with service delivery



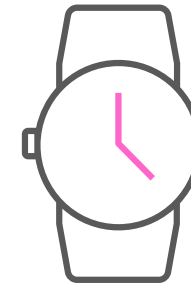
12 complaints relating to estate management services



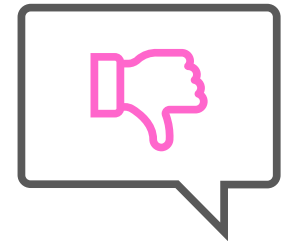
6 complaints relating to rehousing



5 complaints where customers disagree with policy or procedure



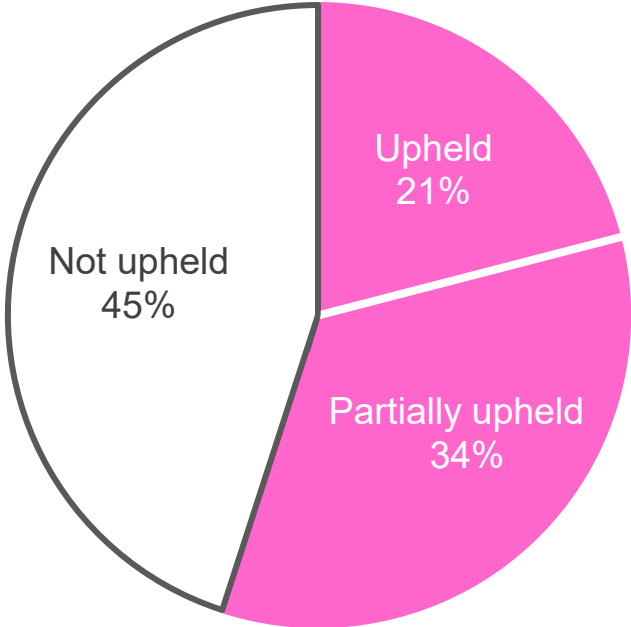
5 complaints due to a delay in providing outcome



55 complaints on other tenancy matters

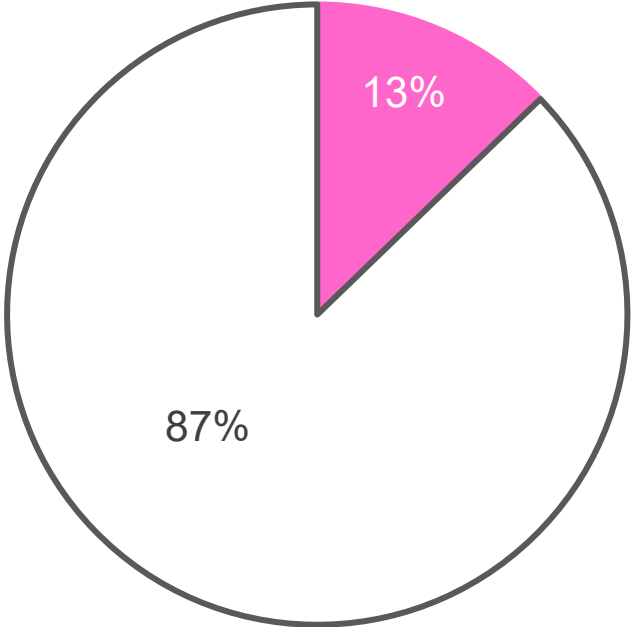
Complaint outcomes in 2023/24

Stage 1



55% of stage 1 complaints were upheld or partially upheld

Stage 2

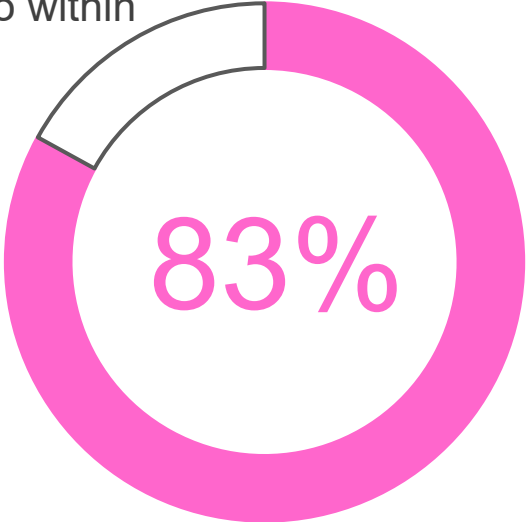


99 complaints were escalated from stage 1 to stage 2

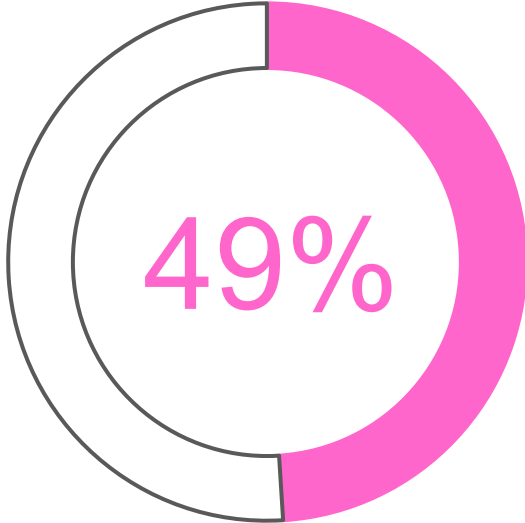
An escalation rate of 13%

228

83% of stage 1 complaints were responded to within 10 working days



49% of stage 2 complaints were responded to within 20 working days



Learning from complaints

We have made a number of service improvements through learning from the complaints we received, including:

- Improving clarity for leaseholders through a review and revision of internal processes relating to formal leaseholder consultation requirements.
- Improving understanding for our residents by providing clearer policies and procedures relating to pet ownership.
- Formalising a more holistic approach to debt management for vulnerable tenants within our reviewed and updated rent arrears policy.
- Ensuring we are prioritising people with known vulnerabilities through changes to our contractor's processes, including a daily review of cases marked as having no heating or hot water.
- Clarifying the anti-social behaviour case review documents and procedures for our residents to ensure a more robust, responsive and accessible service.
- Improving fire safety through a review of mobility scooter storage at all properties with particular focus on seniors housing schemes.
- Improving living conditions for tenants by increasing service capacity to tackle damp and mould

Housing complaints

There have been instances this year where we have not been able to meet compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. These results relate to cases during 2023/24.

- A service failure in our response to a resident's report of structural movement within the property due to a leak and associated repairs. There was also maladministration in regard to our response to the resident's reports about staff conduct.
- Maladministration in respect of our handling of a water leak in a resident's bathroom, as well. There was also a service failure in our handling of a resident's associated complaint about Tenancy Services.
- Service failure in our handling of repairs to a resident's bathroom and their subsequent request for compensation following a leak to the property. There was also a service failure in our handling of the complaint.
- Maladministration in our handling of anti-social behaviour allegations made against a resident and maladministration in our handling of the resident's reports of anti-social behaviour by their neighbours. There was also a service failure in our handling of the complaint.
- Service failure in relation to our response to a resident's reports about repairs and a service failure in our handling of a complaint.
- Maladministration in our handling of a resident's reports of anti-social behaviour. There was also a service failure in our handling of the complaint.

We apologise for all occasions when we've got it wrong and undertake a review of each case to identify what we need to improve.

Housing complaints

There are some types of complaints that we can't accept. This year we have refused to accept complaints for the following reasons:

- Where the same matter had already been considered at all stages of the internal complaint procedure, where the issue was not part of an ongoing situation, no new matters were raised and where no new evidence was provided which may have affected the previous outcome.
- Where the outcome sought by the customer was solely compensation for damages, whether personal injury or unquantifiable financial loss, and no additional matters were raised.
- Where a more appropriate route of appeal or challenge was available (Leaseholder service charge dispute, complaint solely about the conduct of elected members) and where no additional matters were raised.

Housing Ombudsman: Council performance for 2022/23.

Where tenants/leaseholders are dissatisfied with the outcome of the council's internal complaint processes, they can escalate the complaint to the Housing Ombudsman.

The Housing Ombudsman can consider matters where the local authority is the landlord or freeholder, all other types of complaint (including those relating to homelessness or emergency accommodation) can be escalated to the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman.

232

The information provided enables us to benchmark our performance against two different comparators:

1. Comparison to other landlords with a similar number of properties
2. Comparison to other local authorities

The Housing Ombudsman Service produces a combined comparator figure. This is known as the maladministration rate. BHCC's performance showed improvement since this was last reported in 2021/22.

Housing Ombudsman: Council performance for 2022/23.

Breakdown of upheld Housing Ombudsman findings by category. This relates to eight cases in 2022/23.

Outcome category	National (Local Authorities)	National (landlords with +10,000 units)	Brighton & Hove City Council
Severe Maladministration This is the most serious failing	6%	3%	0%
Maladministration This is when there was a failure which has adversely affected the resident	32%	25%	20%
Service failure When there was a minor failing, but action is still needed to put things right.	24%	21%	13%
Mediation Where the resident and landlord agree to enter into mediation and, with the Ombudsman's intervention, reached an agreed outcome.	3%	2%	0%
Redress This finding is made when there is evidence of maladministration but the landlord has identified and acknowledged this prior to the Ombudsman's formal investigation and has, on its own initiative, taken steps and/or made an offer of compensation, that puts things right.	3%	16%	7%
No maladministration We find no maladministration where the landlord acted in accordance with its obligations and policies/procedures. Minor failings may have been found but these caused no detriment to the resident	21%	22%	53%
Outside Jurisdiction The complaint will not or cannot be considered by the Ombudsman	12%	10%	7%
Withdrawn The resident withdrew their complaint, and the Ombudsman was satisfied as to the circumstances.	0%	1%	0%

