

Annual complaints performance and service improvement report

2024-2025

This report details all complaints received by SLH between April 2024 – March 2025, including low-cost rental accommodation (LCRA), low-cost home ownership (LCHO), homeowners and waiting list applicants. (This differs to our Tenant Satisfaction Measure (TSM) reporting requirements – in line with NROSH guidelines, SLH report on LCRA only)



There has been a 7% increase in the number of formal complaints received compared to last year.

Three cases progressed to the Housing Ombudsman (HO):

- Two remain in the HO's triage system and as yet have not progressed to investigation.
- One was completed without the need for a full investigation and identified a service failure. We were instructed to compensate the customer £100.

We also received the outstanding determination from 2023/24, which identified no maladministration. The HO has published performance reports for landlords with five or more findings between 1 April 2024 and March 2025. Since SLH didn't hit that number, there's no report for us for 2024/25.

[Visit our complaints page for the most recent annual report about SLH's performance from the HO](#)



 93% of stage 1 complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales.

14 complaints were acknowledged outside of timescales and 7 complaints were responded to outside of timescale.

 85% of stage 2 complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales.

Four (of 27) complaints escalated to stage 2 were acknowledged or responded to outside of timescales.

Corrective actions have been taken to improve the process of acknowledging complaints, including:

- System changes
- Issuing reminders to our colleagues on the correct process.
- Improving visibility of deadlines across the Quality and Performance team.
- We have successfully recruited our complaints and performance officer; this is a dedicated resource to manage the complaints process.

In addition, an amendment has been made to the stage 2 process to address the increase in volume and ensure compliance with complaint handling code timescales. If an SLH Board member is unavailable to attend a panel meeting, an independent committee member will be asked to attend. Failing this, two executive directors will make up the panel on the proviso this is agreed with the customer.

Satisfaction with complaint handling



47%

satisfaction with **approach**
to complaints handling
(complaints made in last 12 months)

 TSM measure: We are in the top
quartile for performance, compared to
other housing associations

Complaints refused

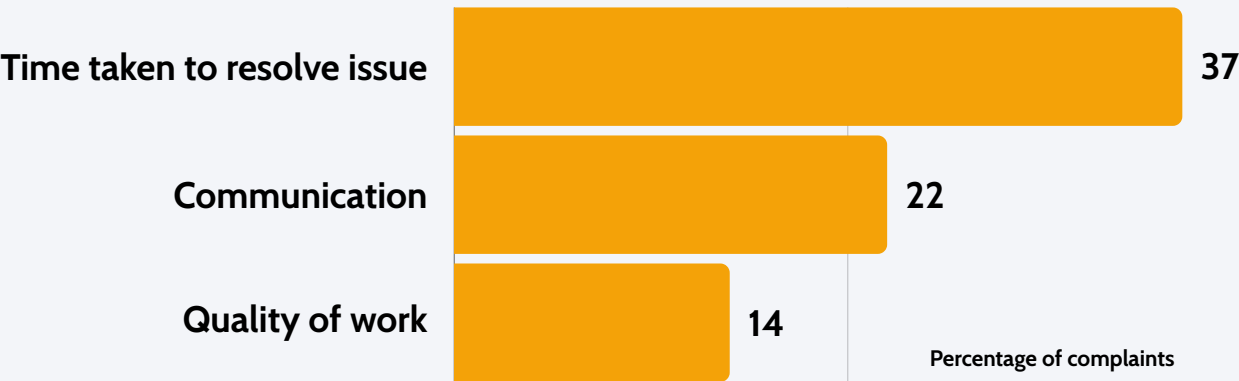
Two complaints have been refused during 2024/25, a reduction from five in the previous year.



- One case where repair related issues raised had already been dealt with previously at stage 2 and so had therefore exhausted SLH's formal process.
- One case was partially refused as numerous issues had already been addressed at a previous stage 2. The customer was advised in the stage 1 acknowledgement letter which issues would be considered and which would not.

In both cases we wrote to the residents to advise them why we were unable to handle the matter in line with policy and their right to approach the Housing Ombudsman about this decision.

Top three key themes for complaints



Number of formal complaints received by service area



200

complaints

65%

of complaints
received

Responsive repairs

Asset management – responsive repairs has received 200 complaints, accounting for 65% of all complaints received.

Of the responsive repair complaints received, 58% relate to outstanding repairs. The most common themes when reviewing the root cause of these complaints are the timescale for repairs to be completed and inadequate communication.

We are committed to learning, for example a complaint was received as a customer had a recurring leak in their kitchen which remained unresolved. The leak originated above their kitchen door whenever we experienced poor weather. The customer was dissatisfied as despite work being completed in their home, the leak persisted, and the root cause of the leak had not been established. It was found after multiple visits that the home above the customer had blocked drainage above the area where the leak was appearing, and there had been numerous failed attempts to gain access to the home.

Following a review of the customer journey, it was found that while a procedure exists for operatives to work with the Neighbourhood team when access is an issue, it was not clear enough. The procedure was reviewed to ensure that all access attempts are recorded, and issues are escalated accordingly to allow SLH to deal with them appropriately.

Complaints by service area (continued)



47

complaints

15%

of complaints
received

Planned works

Asset management – planned works has received 47 complaints, accounting for 15% of all complaints received.

This is a reduction from 2023/24 in which Asset Management – planned works accounted for 25% of complaints. The common themes when reviewing the root cause of these complaints are again the timescale for works to be completed, communication - in keeping the customer updated and quality of workmanship.



17

complaints

5%

of complaints
received

Neighbourhood services

Neighbourhood services have received 17 complaints, accounting for 5% of all complaints received. Most complaints relate to community safety and tenancy management, with our handling of ASB cases the most common theme.



Demographics

We use demographic data, to help us identify if certain groups of people receive a difference in service from us, as a result of a protected characteristic.

Gender

The percentage of complaints received by gender is broadly reflective of SLH's overall customer profile.

Age

The percentage of complaints received for those aged between 25– 59 years old represents a higher proportion compared to SLH's customer profile. In comparison, the percentage of complaints received for those over 60 years old represents a lower proportion compared to SLH's customer profile. However, this is expected, given that satisfaction across all measures is highest for older customers. To understand dissatisfaction of our customers, we held a range of engagement sessions during 2024/25.

Ethnicity

Most complaints received are from tenants who identify their ethnicity as white British, which is reflective of our customer profile. BAME stands for Black, Asian and minority ethnic. The number of complaints we have received from tenants who identify their ethnicity as BAME is reflective of our customer profile.

Disability

We review all complaints to identify if any tenants are receiving a disparity in service, as a result of their disability/medical condition.

Other protected characteristics

From our knowing our customers campaign, we have increased our data capture of protected characteristic information, including sexuality, gender reassignment, and religion. This helps us better understand the diverse needs of our tenants and informs our aim to make our services more inclusive.

Learning from complaints

Where we need to improve



From December 2024, the complaints and performance officer has been reviewing complaints received to identify themes where complaints could arguably have been avoided with:

- Better communication surrounding appointments, particularly if they change or are cancelled.
- Improved ownership and follow-up on repairs to ensure the work fixed the problem, as follow-on repairs often lead to complaints.
- Better responsiveness to ensure reported issues are actioned more promptly.
- Greater ownership of the quality of repairs, resulting in improved standards of workmanship and getting things right the first time.
- Managing customer expectations by keeping them informed of next steps, therefore reducing customer effort in having to chase updates.
- Ensuring appointments are kept.

This analysis is shared in the monthly customer feedback report to highlight these focus areas to our executive leadership team.

The power of feedback

Feedback from customers has resulted in several changes to how we do things, with a focus on better communication and satisfaction with our repairs and maintenance service:

- We're reviewing our process for when we can't access customer's home, to help us get in sooner. This should mean we can get the job done right the first time, instead of making multiple visits.
- We are introducing a new seven-day urgent repair priority to ensure that essential repairs will be completed more quickly.
- We are exploring the possibility of providing a clean-up service following major leaks that may occur in homes. In addition, we are updating our processes to ensure prompt responses from electricians following leaks.
- We have modified our process for repeat leaks in that after the second reported incident, a surveyor will attend to carry out a full inspection.
- We have reviewed how information is sent back from sub-contractors who complete works, which has made information more available and reduced customers chasing updates.
- When disruptive works are taking place, we now post cards in neighbouring homes to advise of works taking place to give you warning that there may be some noise disruption.
- We have amended our door ordering process which has reduced wait times for replacement doors.
- We have amended our process to afford operatives more time complete checks when replacing toilets, to reduce the need for follow-on works.
- We have reviewed and changed our process so that a surveyor is not required to assess the work that needs to be done. The roofing team will now assess the works and arrange for it to be carried out at the same time. This speeds up the process and helps us to get the works done as quickly as possible.

Learning from complaints (continued)



The power of feedback (continued)

- We are monitoring the process when further 'follow on' works are required after the original work has been carried out. In most cases, these should be booked at the door with customers so that it is clear what work is needed and when it will be completed by.
- We have completed a van stock review to ensure operatives are carrying the correct tools to help ensure repairs are completed, where possible, during the first visit.
- We've brought in our own repairs team to carry out bigger jobs, such as voids. This means we don't have to rely on outside contractors as much, so we can get things done faster, to a higher standard, and keep customers better informed.
- We are reviewing the repair process to understand what causes customers frustration and find ways to make it smoother for them.
- We have reviewed the role of our neighbourhood officers, to make sure they have what they need to help customers with all their needs, so there's less need to pass queries on to other teams.

In addition, there has been staff discussions, training and individual feedback provided across the service areas. Toolbox talks with Avela operatives have been held throughout the year focussing on effective communication with customers. Our senior leadership team review lessons learnt from complaints monthly, to ensure that a multi-disciplinary team approach is taken to identify and embed learning across the organisation.

Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code

On an annual basis, we carry out a self-assessment against the Code, to ensure our policies and procedures remain in line with the Code's requirements.

The 2024/25 self-assessment demonstrates that we remain compliant with the Code and is available on our website.