

Complaints received

The table below shows the figures for the overall complaints received in 2023/24 and the previous 2022/23 figures are shown in brackets for comparison.

	Total	Chief Executive	Deputy Chief Executive	Executive Director	Monitoring Officer	Liberty Leisure Ltd
Number of stage 1 complaints	407 (302)	287	40	75	2	3
No. of complaints investigated under stage 2	73 (72)	65	4	4	0	0
No. of complaints determined by the Ombudsman	9 (13)	9	0	0	0	0

The Council has registered a total of 407 stage 1 complaints in the year 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, compared to 302 in the year 2022/23. The number of complaints concluded under stage 2 of the complaints procedure is 73, compared to 72 in 2022/23, and nine complaints, compared to 13 in 2022/23 have been determined by the Local Government Ombudsman and the Housing Ombudsman Service.

The Housing Ombudsman created a new Complaint Handling Code that required all social landlords to adopt from 1 April 2024. The Council adopted this Code on 1 April 2024 and all relevant employees have been trained on the purpose of the Code and effective complaint handling.

The Complaints Team continues to monitor the Council's complaint handling and regular meetings with Heads of Service are undertaken. Where issues have been identified, such as Housing Repairs, the Complaints Team works with the Head of Service to implement improvements in areas that are required. This is further reviewed by the Housing Improvement Board (HIB). The role of the HIB is to ensure that the Housing stock and practises are fit for purpose. The Complaints Team reports to the HIB on its findings regarding complaints and the learning outcomes that have been and require implementation.

Time taken to acknowledge receipt of stage 1 complaints (5 working day target)

	Total	Chief Executive	Deputy Chief Executive	Executive Director	Monitoring Officer	Liberty Leisure Ltd
Number of complaints acknowledged within 5 working days	407	287	40	75	2	3
Number of complaints acknowledged over 5 working days	0	0	0	0	0	0

407 stage 1 complaints (100%) were acknowledged within the 5-day deadline.

The Council has seen an improvement in the time taken to acknowledge complaints, through continued use of electronic facilities in order to keep complainants updated as to the progress of their complaint.

Time taken to respond to stage 1 complaints (10 working day target)

	Total	Chief Executive	Deputy Chief Executive	Executive Director	Monitoring Officer	Liberty Leisure Ltd
Less than 10 working days	385	268	38	74	2	3
Over 10 working days	22	19	2	1	0	0

385 stage 1 complaints (94%) were responded to in 10 working days. 22 (6%) took longer than 10 working days to provide a response. In these cases, the Heads of Service are asked to write to complainants to advise that a response will take longer and to provide the complainant with an estimated timescale for completion.

Reasons for delays could include:

- Further information being required from the complainant.
- Complexity of the complaint including in-depth research required.
- Resource issues.

There has been a significant rise in damp and mould complaints being received which coincides with increased media coverage. The Housing Repairs Team reports that this increase in complaints has had a significant impact on the service being able to respond to complaints within the 10 working days. However, these deadlines are currently being met with the exception of those highlighted above

A new Team took over the handling of Housing Repairs complaints in May 2023. This has seen an improvement in the responsiveness of the stage 1 complaints. This new Team’s priority has been to engage and respond to individuals and their complaints.

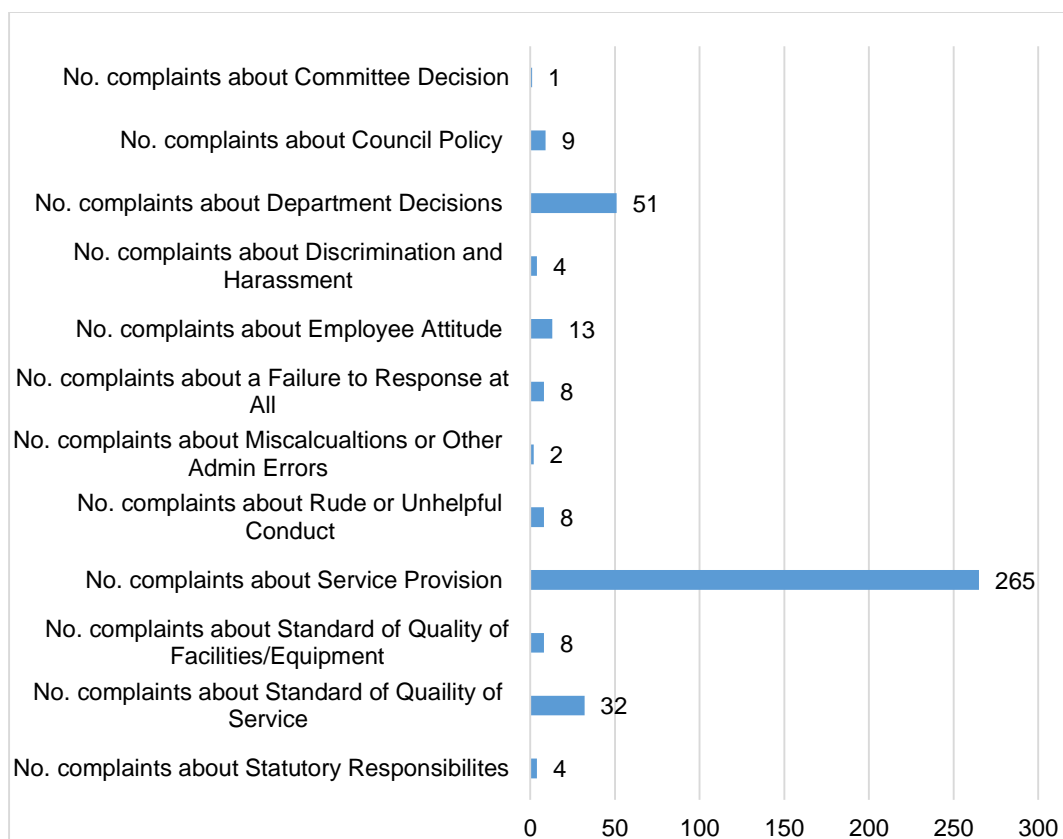
The Housing Repairs Team has been reminded by the Complaints Team of the need to contact complainants where the initial deadlines cannot be met. Furthermore, the Housing Repairs Team is provided a reminder to respond to the complainant with the full response or to agree an extension with the Complaints Team when the 10 working day deadline cannot be met.

It should be noted that the current responsiveness for stage 1 complaints within the Housing Repairs Team has improved for 2023/24 with the additional resources and monitoring undertaken by the Complaints Team.

The Complaints Team pro-actively monitor the Housing Repairs Team stage 1 complaint responsiveness in order ensure that these deadlines are met.

Furthermore, all extensions are now approved by the relevant Head of Service and reported to GMT bi-weekly.

What the complaints were about



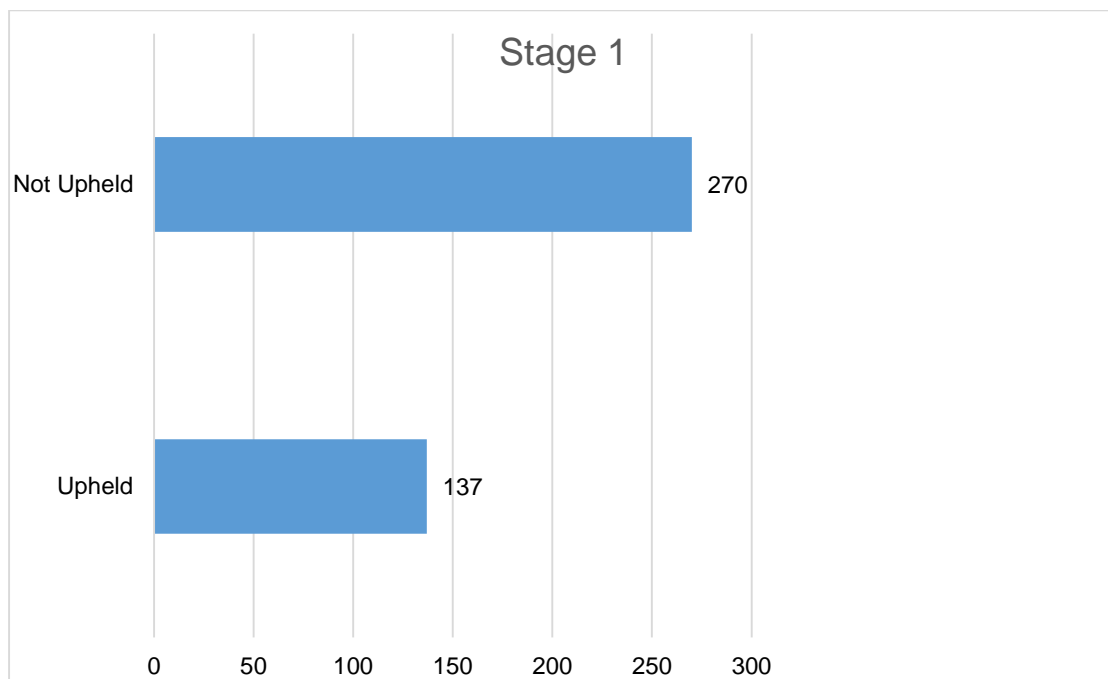
Complaints upheld

Of the 407 complaints received at stage 1, 270 were not upheld and 137 were upheld.

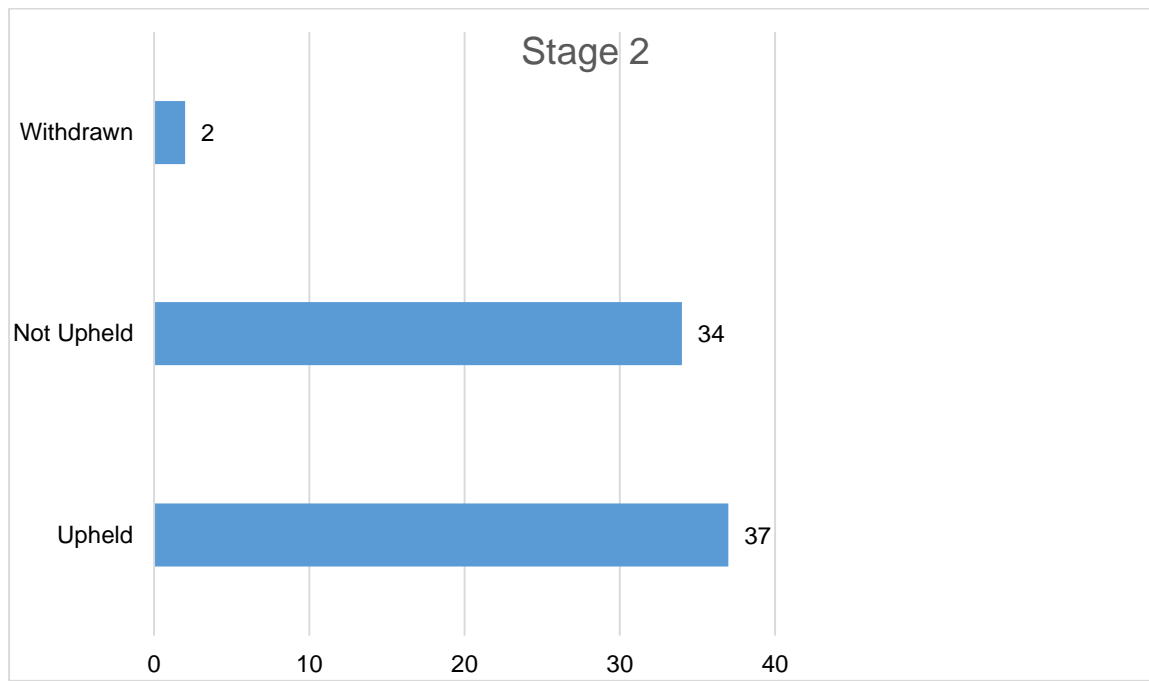
Stage 2 complaints saw 34 complaints being not upheld, 37 upheld and 2 withdrawn during the course of the investigation.

The Local Government Ombudsman and Housing Ombudsman determined that one complaint was not upheld, six upheld and two are still pending investigation.

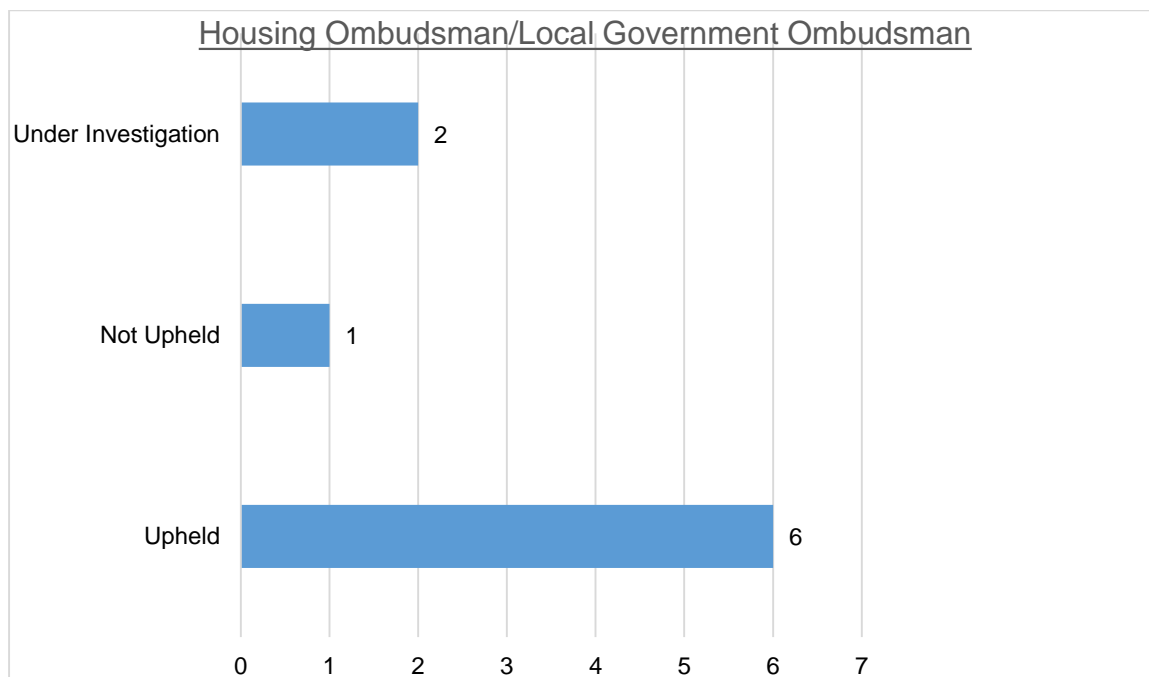
Stage 1



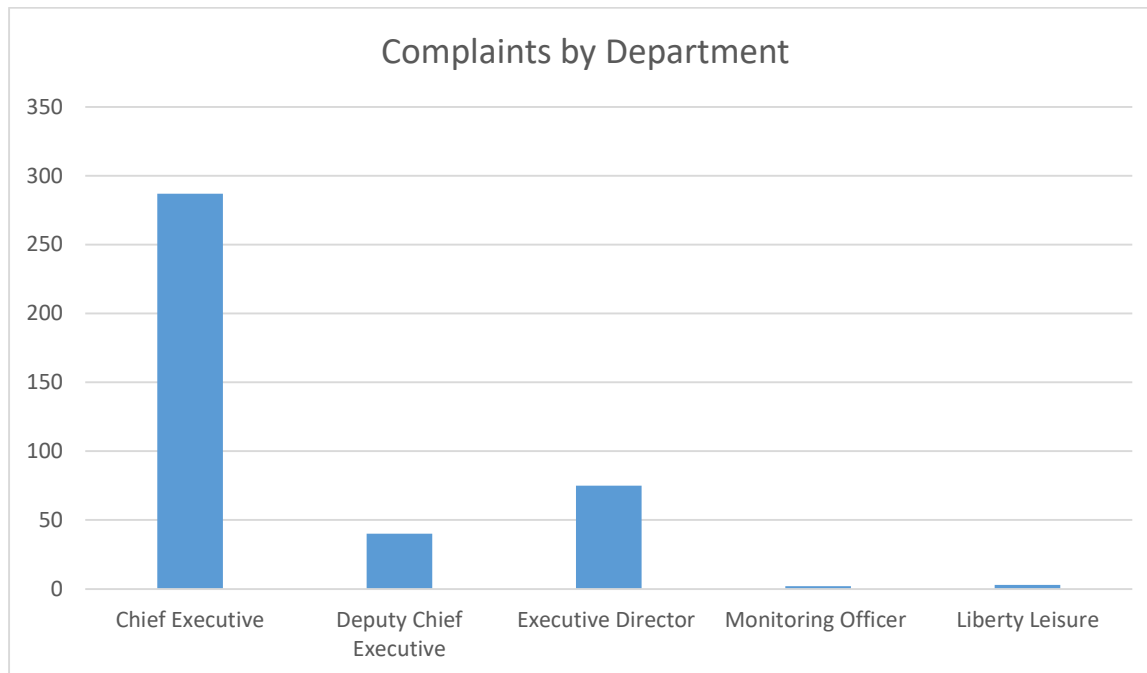
Stage 2



Housing Ombudsman/Local Government Ombudsman



Complaints by Department



Number of stage 2 complaints

	Total	Chief Executive	Deputy Chief Executive	Executive Director	Monitoring Officer	Liberty Leisure
Number of Stage 2 complaints	73 (72)	65	4	4	0	0

Time taken to acknowledge to stage 2 complaints (5 working day target)

	Total	Chief Executive	Deputy Chief Executive	Executive Director	Monitoring Officer	Liberty Leisure
Acknowledged within 5 working days	73	65	4	4	0	0

Time taken to respond to stage 2 complaints (20 working day target)

	Total
Responded in 20 working days	68
Responded in more than 20 working days	5

73 complaints were investigated and responded to under stage 2 of the formal complaint procedure. 100% were acknowledged within five working days and 68 (93%) were responded to within the 20 working day timescale. All the complainants who received their responses after 20 working days were informed that there would be a delay and were informed of the reason.

Reasons for the delays include:

- Further information being required from the complainant.
- Further information being required from the Department complained about.
- Complexity of the complaint including in-depth research required.
- Resource issues.

(This list is not exhaustive)

As with stage 1 extensions being approved by the relevant Head of Service, stage two extensions are now approved by the Head of Democratic Services and reported to GMT bi-weekly.

Equalities Monitoring

Of the 407 stage 1 complaints recorded, 302 were completed with partial completion of the monitoring data.

Gender

Male – 166
Female – 241

Age groups

<17 – 1	45–59 – 87
18–24 – 25	60–64 – 36
25–29 – 34	65+ – 75
30–44 – 102	Not stated – 47

Ethnic Groups

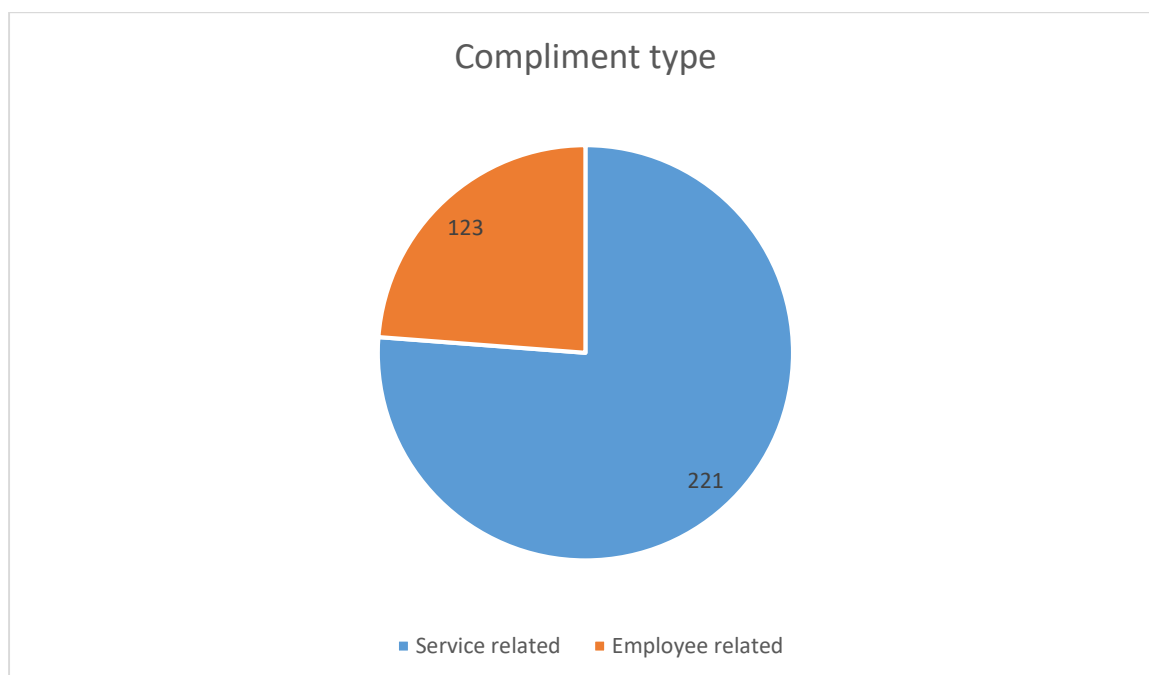
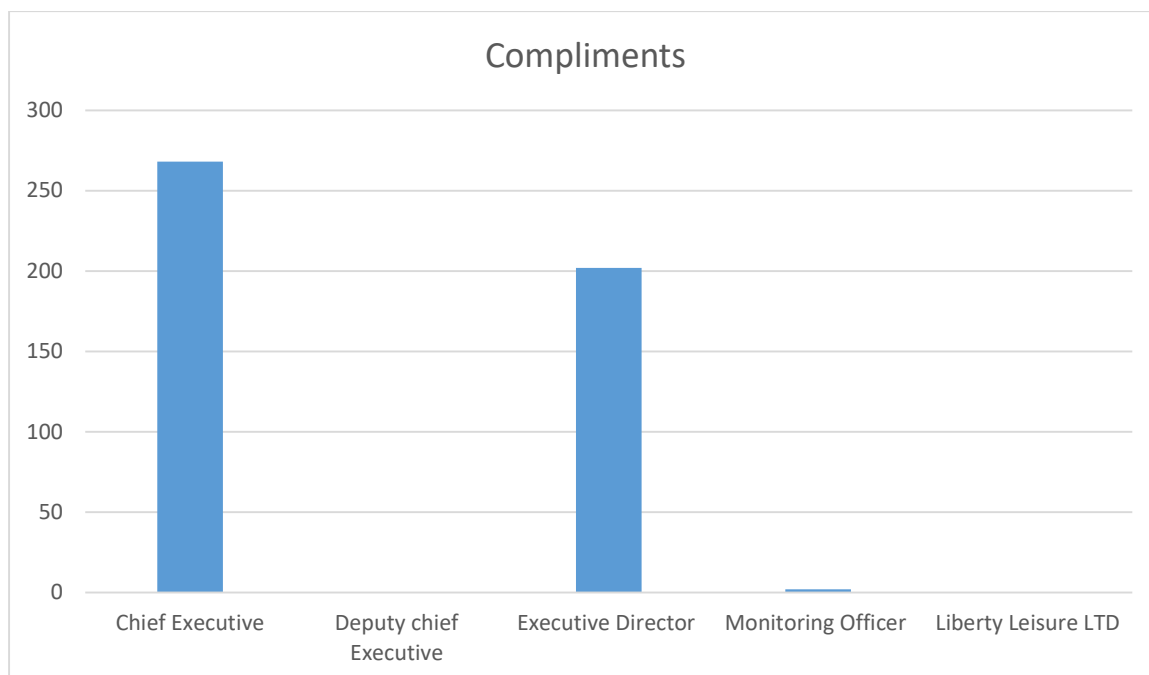
African - 3
British – 342
Caribbean - 1
Chinese - 0
Gypsy or Irish Traveller - 0
Indian – 3
Irish – 4
Other - 3
Not stated – 38
Pakistani - 6

Long term health problem that limits daily activity?

Yes – 136
No – 203
Not stated - 68

Compliments

There have been a total of 344 compliments registered in the period, 123 of which were in relation to specific employees and 221 were related to the service received.



Compliments are valuable, welcomed, and important in enabling the Council to understand that the services provided meet customers' satisfaction, provide positive feedback to employees, influence the organisational and service development and inform the Council's quality assurance.

Breakdown of Complaints and Compliments by Department and Section**Chief Executive's Department**

Service Areas	Stage 1 Complaints	Stage 2 Complaints	Ombudsman Complaints	Compliments
Development Control	22	8	0	0
Environmental Health	5	0	0	1
Housing and Income	20	4	0	218
Housing Operations	55	10	4	49
Housing Repairs	181	41	5	4
Housing Strategy	4	1	0	0
Total	287	64	9	272

Deputy Chief Executive's Department

Service Areas	Stage 1 Complaints	Stage 2 Complaints	Ombudsman Complaints	Compliments
Capital Works	14	1	0	0
Customer Services	3	0	0	0
Revenues	23	3	0	0
Total	40	4	0	0

Executive Director's Department

Service Areas	Stage 1 Complaints	Stage 2 Complaints	Ombudsman Complaints	Compliments
Waste and Recycling	62	2	0	13
Arts and Events	0	0	0	1
Environment	6	2	0	5
Elections	0	0	0	1
Administrative Services	5	0	0	0
Data Protection	2	0	0	0
Total	75	4	0	20

Monitoring Officer's Department

Service Areas	Stage 1 Complaints	Stage 2 Complaints	Ombudsman Complaints	Compliments
Democratic Services	1	0	0	2
Legal Services	1	0	0	0
Total	2	0	0	2

Liberty Leisure Ltd

Service Area	Stage 1 Complaints	Stage 2 Complaints	Ombudsman Complaints	Compliments
Bramcote Leisure Centre	1	0	0	0
Chilwell Leisure Centre	2	0	0	0

Service Area	Stage 1 Complaints	Stage 2 Complaints	Ombudsman Complaints	Compliments
Total	3	0	0	0

Financial Settlements

	Total	Chief Execs	Deputy Chief Execs	Executive Director	Monitoring Officer	Liberty Leisure
Stage 1	3	£3,500	0	0	0	0
Stage 2	20	£22,459	0	0	0	0
Ombudsman	5	£6,270	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	28	£32,229	0	0	0	0

Stage 2 – Formal Complaints

The complaints provided below have been summarised in order to prevent identification of individuals.

1. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 30 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that their grandson’s toilet was repeatedly blocked causing sewage to seep onto the floor. Furthermore, there were delays in the Council delivering and collecting a chemical toilet during the periods in which the toilet was blocked.

Council’s response

It was found that while the Council had attended the property to inspect and unblock the toilet, there were delays in the Council undertaking the overall repair at the source of the blockage. Furthermore, the Council had delayed the delivery and collection of the chemical toilet.

An apology and £400 compensation was offered.

Head of Service Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by the delay in the underlying issue of the toilet blocking being resolved. Further it was recognised that further inconvenience was caused by the delay in delivering and collecting the chemical toilet. The appropriate action has been undertaken to remedy this.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

As part of this complaint, the Housing Repairs Team has been reminded of the following:

- The necessity to effectively communicate with tenants.
- To maintain accurate records.
- To book necessary works in a timely manner.
- Ensure that any works booked are followed up in a timely manner.

2. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 30 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that there had been a lack of action to remedy damp and mould in their property.

Council's response

It was found that while the Council had attended the property to inspect the damp issue, there had been significant delays in the Council booking in the relevant works to remedy this. Furthermore, a more proactive approach could have been undertaken to identify the source of the damp. This being the failing of the loft insulation and damp proof course.

An apology and £300 compensation was offered. Works were appropriately booked and undertaken to repair the above issues.

Head of Service Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by the delay in the underlying issue of the damp. The appropriate action has been undertaken to remedy this.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

As part of this complaint, the Housing Repairs Team has been reminded of the following:

- The necessity to effectively communicate with tenants.
- To maintain accurate records.
- To book necessary works in a timely manner.
- Ensure that any works booked are followed up in a timely manner.

3. Complaint against Housing Income

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that a snooker table provided to residents at an Independent Living scheme was damaged and of a poor standard. The complainant stated that the table did not facilitate a serious game of snooker.

Council's response

It was found that the Council had provided the residents of the Independent Living scheme with a snooker table. The snooker table was assembled by the scheme Caretakers and that there was no damage to table at this stage. The snooker table was provided as part of grant scheme and cost £295.99

The complainant contacted the Council to state that the table had become damaged. This was repaired by the scheme Caretakers.

It was noted that the table was fit for purpose and provided the residents with use of the table for recreational purposes. The snooker table was not intended for professional usage.

Head of Service Comments

The Council had correctly provided a snooker table for residents that was appropriate with the money provided as part of the grant award.

4. Complaint against Housing Income

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Council were contacting the complainant to chase rent arrears.

Council's response

It was found that the Council had contacted the complainant when they had accrued rent arrears. The Council is obligated to contact individuals when rent arrears have been accrued. This action was correctly undertaken.

Head of Service Comments

The Council had correctly contacted the individual regarding their rent arrears.

5. Complaint against Capital Works

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that there had been delays in the Council assessing an issue of boundary encroachment.

Council's response

It was found that the complainant was a leaseholder. The Council had installed external wall insulation on the Council owned property next door to the complainant. The complainant stated that the external wall insulation encroached his boundary. The Capital Works Team assessed the boundary and it was determined that external wall insulation was installed in line with the boundary that belonged to the Council.

However, there had been unreasonable delays in the Capital Works Team assessing the boundary when first notified of the issue.

An apology and £100 compensation was offered. This offer was rejected by the complainant. The complainant has since referred the complaint the LGO.

Head of Service Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by unreasonably delaying its investigation into the boundary.

6. Complaint against Planning

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that it had not correctly taken action to enforce a breach of planning conditions. This related to the ground level of a property being built higher than stated in the associated plan.

Council's response

It was found that the Council had visited the site on several occasions to take measurements of the ground level when the alleged breach was reported. Furthermore, the Council commissioned an external surveyor to take measurements of the ground level.

It was determined that the ground level measurements were in line with the associated plans.

Head of Service Comments

The Council correctly investigated the reported breach of planning conditions.

7. Complaint against Environment

Withdrawn

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Council had incorrectly served notice to them in relation to undertaking works to a dangerous tree.

Council's response

This complain was withdrawn, at the request of the complainant, before the investigation could be completed.

Head of Service Comments

Not Applicable

8. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 30 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that there had been delays in the Council undertaking repairs to a leak in the bath.

Council's response

It was found that the Council had undertaken inspections and repairs to the bath in a timely manner.

It was identified that while the leak had been fixed, further works were required by a contractor to repair the water damage caused to the plaster. However, there was a delay in the Council passing the works over to the contractor to repair the plaster.

An apology was provided and the works were undertaken.

Head of Service Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by the delay in issuing the works to the contractor. The appropriate action had been undertaken to remedy this.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

As part of this complaint, the Housing Repairs Team has been reminded of the following:

- The necessity to effectively communicate with tenants.
- To maintain accurate records.
- To book necessary works in a timely manner.
- Ensure that any works booked are followed up in a timely manner.

9. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that there had been delay in the Council undertaking a repair the complainant's floor.

Council's response

It was found that the Council had undertaken inspections and repairs to the floor in timely manner. The repairs initially undertaken were temporary and a permanent repair was required. However, there was a delay in the Council undertaking this repair. This occurred

due to the complainant requesting to reschedule the permanent repair but it was incorrectly closed.

An apology was provided and the works were undertaken.

Head of Service Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by the delay in the works being incorrectly closed. The appropriate action has been undertaken to remedy this.

10. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that there had been delays in the Council resolving an issue of potential property subsidence and cracks appearing in the property.

Council's response

It was found that there had been significant delays in the Council inspecting, booking and undertaking works in relation to the cracks. Whilst the records indicate that the cracks are not a concern, the Council unreasonably delayed the inspections.

Furthermore, the Council did not notify the complainant of the delays involved in inspecting the cracks.

An apology and £200 compensation was offered. Works were appropriately booked and undertaken to repair the above issues.

Head of Service Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by the delay in the works to the cracks being undertaken. The appropriate action has been undertaken to remedy this.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

As part of this complaint, the Housing Repairs Team has been reminded of the following:

- The necessity to effectively communicate with tenants.
- To maintain accurate records.
- To book necessary works in a timely manner.
- Ensure that any works booked are followed up in a timely manner.

11. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that there had been delays in the Council resolving an issue of damp and mould.

Council's response

It was found that while the Council had undertaken inspections to the property, there had been significant delays in the works being booked to undertake the associated damp and mould repairs.

Furthermore, when the works were undertaken, it was identified that the level of works booked was not sufficient to complete the task. Additional delays then occurred in the correct works being booked and undertaken.

An apology and £400 compensation was offered. Works were appropriately booked and undertaken to repair the above issues.

Head of Service Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by the delay in the works to the damp and mould being undertaken. The appropriate action has been undertaken to remedy this.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

As part of this complaint, the Housing Repairs Team has been reminded of the following:

- The necessity to effectively communicate with tenants.
- To maintain accurate records.
- To book necessary works in a timely manner.
- Ensure that any works booked are followed up in a timely manner.

12. Complaint against Planning

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that it had not correctly taken action to enforce a breach of planning conditions. This related to a development being built closer to the complainant's property than stated in the associated plans.

Council's response

It was found that the Council had visited the site on several occasions to take measurements of the proximity of the development when the alleged breach was reported.

It was determined that the distance of the properties was in line with the associated plans.

Head of Service Comments

The Council correctly investigated the reported breach of planning conditions.

13. Complaint against Planning

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that it had not correctly placed a site notice near a proposed development.

Council's response

It was found that the Council had placed the site notice opposite the proposed development. Section 15 of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) states that one site notice is required to be placed on or near the land of the development.

By placing the site notice opposite the proposed development, the Council had satisfied its legislative requirements.

Head of Service Comments

The Council correctly erected the site notice in line with legislation.

14. Complaint against Revenues

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that they were being incorrectly charged Council Tax due to no contract between the complainant and the Council being established.

Council's response

It was found that, liability for council tax is determined by the Local Government Finance Act 1992. This statute, and other legal regulations, set out the Council's rights to demand Council Tax to fund services and who is liable to pay.

Liability for Council Tax is not dependent on, and does not require, the complainant's consent or the existence of a contractual relationship with the Council.

Head of Service Comments

The Council correctly issued a summons, due to non-payment of Council Tax, in line with legislation.

15. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that there had been delays in the Council identifying and repairing a leak at the complainant's property.

Council's response

It was found that there were delays in the Council responding, identifying and repairing the leak at the property. Additionally, there were delays in the Council undertaking works to replace the flooring damaged by the leak and delays in the inspection being undertaken to the loft.

The complainant was offered £500 compensation and an apology.

Head of Service Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by the delay in the works to the leak being undertaken.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

As part of this complaint, the Housing Repairs Team has been reminded of the following:

- The necessity to effectively communicate with tenants.
- To maintain accurate records.
- To book necessary works in a timely manner.
- Ensure that any works booked are followed up in a timely manner.

16. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – within 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Council had removed the electrical supply from their outbuilding before the commencement of their tenancy.

Council's response

It was found that the Council is not obligated to provide electricity to outbuildings. Furthermore, these are removed during the voids process for safety reasons.

Head of Service Comments

The Council is not obligated to provide this service.

17. Complaint against Housing Strategy and Housing Repairs

Response – within 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that they had been promised an identification card to indicate that they were a Neighbourhood Champion. Furthermore, there were delays in the Council repairing their tap.

Council's response

It was found that at a meeting of the Residents Involvement Group, the Council and residents were discussing the potential for Neighbourhood Champions to be issued an identification card to signify their position. However, the Council ultimately decided that this would not be appropriate as only official employees of the Council should be issued with identification badges.

In January 2023, a plumber attended the complainant's property to inspect a dripping tap. However, the plumber left employment with the Council and did not record the works required to fix the tap. In June 2023, following the complainant's complaint, the Council repaired the tap in July 2023. An apology was offered to the complainant.

Head of Service Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by the delay in the repairing the tap. The appropriate action had been undertaken to remedy this. The Housing Team has been reminded of the need to keep accurate records.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

As part of this complaint, the Housing Repairs Team has been reminded of the following:

- The necessity to effectively communicate with tenants.
- To maintain accurate records.
- To book necessary works in a timely manner.
- Ensure that any works booked are followed up in a timely manner.

18. Complaint against Housing Operations

Response – within 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that they had been treated unfairly by the Housing Allocations Team.

Council's response

It was found that the complainant had contacted the Housing Allocations Team to request a banding review as they believed they were placed too low at band 2, high priority.

The Housing Allocations Team contacted the complainant to state that in order to review the current banding, up to date medical information was required to demonstrate the increased need. The complainant did not submit this medical information during the banding review or complaint investigation. Therefore, the Council determined that the complainant was correctly banded.

Head of Service Comments

The Council is required to follow the Allocations Policy to ensure that residents are housed in a fair and appropriate manner.

19. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – within 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Housing Repairs Team did not appropriately repair a roof leak or removed a stair lift in a timely manner.

Council's response

It was found that the complainant had not reported any of the above issues prior to raising the complaint. As part of the complaint, inspections were booked but were cancelled by complainant. The Council rearranged the inspections and works were completed to repair the leak.

Head of Service Comments

The Council has made all attempts to assist the complainant. The works required to the property were not reported until the complaint was made and delays occurred when the complainant cancelled the inspection appointment.

20. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – within 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Housing Repairs Team did not appropriately repair plaster works in a timely manner.

Council's response

It was found that while the Council had undertaken inspections to repair the plasterwork, there were delays in the Council progressing the works to the external contractor. The delays further occurred when the Council did not pass an asbestos report to the contractor in a timely manner in order for the works to commence.

All works were completed before the commencement of the complaint investigation.

An apology was provided to the complainant.

Head of Service Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by the delay in undertaking the plaster works. The appropriate action had been undertaken to remedy this. The Housing Team has been reminded of the need to keep accurate records.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

As part of this complaint, the Housing Repairs Team have been reminded of the following:

- The necessity to effectively communicate with tenants.
- To maintain accurate records.
- To book necessary works in a timely manner.
- Ensure that any works booked are followed up in a timely manner.

21. Complaint against Housing Income

Response – within 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that they had been requested to remove a spending pen from their garden by the Housing Team.

Council's response

It was found that the complainant had erected a spending pen for their emotional support dog in their garden. The spending pen was erected without permission, attached to the

outside property wall and standing at 8ft by 4ft. The size and its attachment to the wall are a breach of the complainant's Tenancy Agreement.

The Council was correct in contacting the complainant to request that the spending pen be removed.

However, the Council has offered on multiple occasions to work with the complainant in sourcing a spending pen that meets the complainant's and Council's requirements. The complainant has refused this offer and has not removed the pen.

Head of Service Comments

The Council is required to follow the clause attached to Tenancy Agreement. This ensures fair treatment of all tenants. Due to the tenant's personal circumstance they will be moving from the property and the issue will be resolved.

22. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – within 30 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that their property had a serious damp issue.

Council's response

It was found that before the commencement of the complainant's tenancy, it was identified that before the property was let that it had a damp issue. The Council did not undertake any works before the commencement of the tenancy to identify to the root cause of the damp.

Subsequently, the complainant reported that their belongings had become damaged due to the damp.

Works have been arranged to clear the damp and explore reasons why the property has damp issues.

The complainant was offered an apology. Furthermore, the complainant was offered £1,000 compensation for the distress caused by letting the property in an inappropriate standard and £850 for the items damaged by the damp.

This offer was accepted.

Head of Service Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by letting the property with a damp issue. The appropriate action had been undertaken to remedy this. The Housing Team have been reminded of the need to keep accurate records and book any remedial works when they are identified.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

As part of this complaint, the Housing Repairs Team have been reminded of the following:

- The necessity to effectively communicate with tenants.
- To maintain accurate records.
- To book necessary works in a timely manner.
- Ensure that any works booked are followed up in a timely manner.

23. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – within 30 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Council delayed repairing a boiler leak.

Council's response

It was found that the complainant had reported to the Council's out of hours service that their boiler had begun leaking. The complainant stated that the boiler leak was contained by towels being placed under the boiler.

The Council attended the property the next day and repaired the leak. An apology was offered to the complainant if it was not correctly explained that the out of hours service would not attend on the same day.

Head of Service Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused if the correct explanation was not provided. However, the leak was repaired in a timely manner.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

As part of this complaint, the Housing Repairs Team have been reminded of the following:

- The necessity to effectively communicate with tenants.
- To maintain accurate records.
- To book necessary works in a timely manner.
- Ensure that any works booked are followed up in a timely manner.

24. Complaint against Housing Operations

Response – within 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that they had not been selected for the allocation of a bungalow.

Council's response

It was found that the complainant did not meet the criteria for the allocation of the bungalow. The complainant was notified of this and the property was not allocated to them.

Head of Service Comments

The Council is required to follow process defined by the Allocations Policy. This ensures fair treatment of all tenants.

25. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – within 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Council had not repaired a leak coming the flat above theirs.

Council's response

It was found that the complainant was a leaseholder and that they had reported a leak coming from the Council property above theirs to the out of hours service. The out of hours service attended the property and noted that the leak was coming through a light fitting. The out of hours service isolated and made safe the light fitting.

Work was then undertaken to repair the leak coming from the flat above.

However, the Council incorrectly agreed to undertake work to repair the plasterwork, electrics, bath and tiling at the complainant's property. As a leaseholder, the Council is not responsible for these repairs and the complainant was required to go through the insurance process.

The Council, after agreeing to undertake the works, delayed these for several months.

The Council offered the complainant an apology and £250 of compensation which was accepted. Furthermore, the Council had undertaken £1,500 worth of work to bathroom at no cost to the complainant.

Head of Service Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by agreeing to undertake the works and then delaying them. The Housing Repairs Team has been reminded of their responsibility in booking works surrounding leaseholder properties.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

As part of this complaint, the Housing Repairs Team have been reminded of the following:

- The necessity to effectively communicate with tenants.
- To maintain accurate records.
- To book necessary works in a timely manner.
- Ensure that any works booked are followed up in a timely manner.

26. Complaint against Housing Operations

Response – within 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Council had delayed their sign up to a property.

Council's response

It was found that the Council had signed the property off as ready to let during the voids process. However, during the sign-up process with the complainant, it was found that the correct number of keys to the communal door were missing. The Allocations Team was unable to continue this process until the correct number of keys were received.

The Housing Allocations did not chase up the collection of the additional keys and attempted the sign-up process again without the correct number. This could also not be completed.

The Housing Allocations Team chased up and completed the sign-up process with the correct number of keys. However, this had cause a delay of several months.

An apology was offered to the complainant.

Head of Service Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused attempting to complete the sign-up process without checking the correct number of keys were present. The Housing Repairs and Allocations Team was reminded of the responsibility to check that properties are ready to let.

27. Complaint against Housing Operations

Response – within 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that they had felt pressured by the Council to accept the allocation of a property to them.

Council's response

It was found that the Council had contacted the complainant to offer them the allocation of a property. The complainant requested additional time to consider the offer as they were currently at the hospital to undergo a procedure. The Council agreed to this extension. The Council contacted the complainant after the time they had specified and the complainant requested the Council work with their Occupational Therapist as they believed the property no longer met their needs following their procedure.

The Council contacted the Occupational Therapist who agreed that the property no longer met their needs. The Council withdrew the offer.

There was no evidence that the Council pressured the complainant to accept the property.

Head of Service Comments

There was no evidence that the Council pressured the complainant to accept the property.

28. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – within 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Housing Repairs Team had incorrectly cut a hedge on the complainant's boundary.

Council's response

It was found that the complainant was a private home owner who had planted a hedge which grew to approximately nine feet on their boundary line which neighboured a Council property.

The Housing Repairs Team requested that a contractor reduced the size of the hedge to a manageable size while the Council property was void and before it was let. The contractor reduced the overall size of the hedge to five feet.

Before the works commenced, the Housing Repairs Team did not undertake an exercise to determine the ownership of the boundary. The Housing Repairs Team should not have reduced the height of the hedge but only maintained width. Furthermore, the Council did not notify the complainant that works were to be undertaken.

An apology was offered to the complainant.

Head of Service Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by undertaking the works to the boundary hedge without prior consultation or determination of the boundary. It was not the intention to cause any distress.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

As part of this complaint, the Housing Repairs and Operations Team have been reminded of the following:

- The responsibility to determine boundary ownership before the commencement of any works.
- The necessity to effectively communicate with individuals.
- To maintain accurate records.

29. Complaint against Planning

Response – within 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Planning Team had granted permission for a housing development that subsequently caused the area to flood.

Council's response

It was found that the Planning Committee had granted outline planning permission to a housing development site in 2021. The developer of the site undertook works to grounds to prepare it for development as per the conditions set at the Planning Committee. The Lead Local Flooding Authority was consulted during the application process and raised no objections to the plans subject to a surface water drainage scheme being made a condition. This condition was approved by the Planning Committee.

During a period of heavy rain fall in 2023, the site and the surrounding area flooded. The Council is currently investigating if there has been a breach of planning conditions and is working with Lead Local Flooding Authority. The complainant was informed that the Lead Local Flooding Authority is the leading authority to investigate and mitigate flooding within.

However, the Council expressed empathy with the complainant due to the extent of the flooding.

Head of Service Comments

The Council empathises that the complainant experienced flooding of their property. The Council is required to rely on the expertise of the Lead Local Flooding Authority in regards to these matters and will continue to work with them during their investigations.

30. Complaint against Housing Operations

Response – 19 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the connecting stairs were very noisy and were causing considerable distress to their disabled son. The complainant wanted the stairs sound proofing.

Council's response

It was found that the Housing Repairs Team had inspected the stairs and that there were no structural issues found. It was recommended that the complainant swap rooms with their son in order to mitigate the disturbance.

Sound proofing is not routinely provided by the Council. However, this can be considered if referred by an Occupational Therapist. The Council requested that the complainant undertake a referral and submit this to the Council so that the request for sound proofing could be considered.

The complainant has not submitted this referral to date.

The Council empathises that this is causing distress and the correct advice has been provided to help mitigate this.

Head of Service Comments

The Council is not obligated to provide this service as there are no structural or repair issues with the stairs. However, consideration can be given if the correct referral is submitted to the Council.

31. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that a major leak had occurred which damaged their carpet and was making their walls wet.

Council's response

It was found that a major leak had occurred under the flooring due to a burst pipe. The leak when reported was promptly repaired by the Housing Repairs Team and dehumidifiers were delivered to the property.

Due to the complainant's health issues, the Council offered use of temporary accommodation to the complainant while the property dried.

Furthermore, the Council paid a compensation payment of £929, including the damage to the carpet, to the complainant.

Head of Service Comments

While the Council could not predict the leak and it was promptly repaired, the appropriate action was undertaken to remedy the issue.

32. Complaint against Planning

Response – 16 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that they were unhappy that a planning enforcement case had been opened against them in relation to number of CCTV cameras at their property.

Council's response

It was found that the Council had received a complaint from a member of the public relating to the number and placement of CCTV cameras at the complainant's property.

The Council is obligated to investigate these issues when they are reported. Furthermore, there was evidence to suggest that complainant's CCTV cameras were in contravention of planning legislation.

Head of Service Comments

The Council is obligated to investigate planning enforcement breaches when they are reported. Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest that this issue required investigating.

33. Complaint against Housing Operations

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Housing Allocations Team had not appropriately considered their Occupational Therapists report when determining their housing allocation banding.

Council's response

It was found that the Council initially placed the complainant in the band 2 of the allocation scheme. However, the correct information was provided by the complainant and their Occupational Therapist which demonstrated that they were in need of the band 1 status. This information was not correctly considered.

The complainant was correctly placed in band 1 and their application was backdated. An apology was offered to complainant.

Head of Service Comments

The Council recognises that the inconvenience was caused by not correctly considering the submitted information in the first instance. The correct action has been undertaken to remedy the fault caused by the Council.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

As part of this complaint, the Housing Operations Team have been reminded of the following:

- The responsibility to appropriately consider information submitted when determining banding statuses.

34. Complaint against Housing Income

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Housing Repairs Team had not correctly turned off a fire alarm system when it was incorrectly sounding.

Council's response

It was found that the fire alarm system was incorrectly sounding at a retirement living complex. The alarm system is managed by a contractor. The contractor's systems had failed which meant they were unable to contact the Council to request that the alarm be turned off. This resulted in the alarm sounding for several hours.

The alarm was turned off when a resident contacted the Council directly through the out of hours service.

An apology was provided to the complainant.

Head of Service Comments

The Council recognises that inconvenience caused by not being alerted to the alarm sounding.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

As part of this complaint, the contractor had been reminded of the following:

- The responsibility to maintain their systems in order to fulfil their contract obligations.

35. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Housing Repairs Team had not adequately repaired an issue of damp and mould. This had also damaged the complainant's carpet.

Council's response

It was found that the Council had attempted to remedy the damp and mould, but this was not sufficient, and the damp and mould returned when cleared.

The Council passed the works to a contractor to undertake damp proof works. However, there was a significant delay in the Council passing this work to the contractor and for the contractor attending the property.

An apology was provided and the Council paid £1,839.99 compensation, including the cost of the carpet, to the complainant.

Head of Service Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by agreeing to undertake the works and then delaying them. The Housing Repairs Team has been reminded of their responsibility in booking works in a timely manner.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

As part of this complaint, the Housing Repairs Team had been reminded of the following:

- The necessity to effectively communicate with tenants.
- To maintain accurate records.
- To book necessary works in a timely manner.
- Ensure that any works booked are followed up in a timely manner.

36. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Housing Repairs Team had not adequately investigated an issue of the water temperature fluctuation when the taps and shower were in use.

Council's response

It was found that the Council had promptly attended and investigated the complainant's boiler on several occasions. It was found that the boiler was correctly working and advice was given that the water temperature can fluctuate when two taps were used simultaneously.

Head of Service Comments

The Council had taken the appropriate action and given the appropriate advice regarding the use of the taps.

37. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheldComplaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Housing Repairs Team had not adequately repaired a leaking roof which had caused significant damp issues at the property.

Council's response

It was found that the Council had attempted to remedy the leak but the works were not sufficient. This leak returned over several years and there were delays in the repairs being undertaken.

During the repairs to the leak, the Council offered the complainant the use of temporary accommodation or a permanent move to a new property. Both of these offers were rejected by the complainant.

The Council has now renewed the roof and re-plastered and decorated the areas affected by the leak.

An apology was provided and the Council offered to paid £2,000 compensation to the complainant. The complainant did not accept this offer.

Head of Service Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by agreeing to undertake the works and then delaying them. The Housing Repairs Team has been reminded of their responsibility in booking works in a timely manner.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

As part of this complaint, the Housing Repairs Team had been reminded of the following:

- The necessity to effectively communicate with tenants.
- To maintain accurate records.
- To book necessary works in a timely manner.

- Ensure that any works booked are followed up in a timely manner.

38. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Housing Repairs Team had not adequately repaired a leaking ceiling which had caused significant damp issues at the property.

Council's response

It was found that the Council had attempted to remedy the leak but the works were not sufficient. This leak returned over several years and there were delays in the repairs being undertaken.

Furthermore, the Council had delayed undertaking works to remove the damp areas affected by the leak.

An apology was provided and the Council offered to paid £2,000 compensation to the complainant. The complainant did not accept this offer.

Head of Service Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by agreeing to undertake the works and then delaying them. The Housing Repairs Team has been reminded of their responsibility in booking works in a timely manner.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

As part of this complaint, the Housing Repairs Team had been reminded of the following:

- The necessity to effectively communicate with tenants.
- To maintain accurate records.
- To book necessary works in a timely manner.
- Ensure that any works booked are followed up in a timely manner.

39. Complaint against Planning

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Planning Team had not responded to e-mails relating to a planning enforcement case in a timely manner.

Council's response

It was found that the Council had received correspondence from the complainant regarding a planning enforcement issue. The complainant had copied in their local Councillor. The Council provided a response to the local Councillor with the anticipation that this would be passed on to the complainant.

However, the Planning Team should have provided a direct response to the complainant.

An apology was provided and the response to the complainant's enquiries were provided.

Head of Service Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by not providing a direct response. The appropriate action has now been undertaken to remedy this.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

As part of this complaint, the Planning Team had been reminded of the following:

- The necessity to effectively communicate with individuals.

40. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Housing Repairs Team did not adequately investigate an issue of noisy pipes at a neighbouring property.

Council's response

It was found that the Council had investigated the noisy pipes on several occasions. While the Housing Repairs Team had undertaken the initial investigations in a timely manner, the follow up appointments were delayed.

The Housing Repairs Team were unable to locate an issue with noisy pipes despite investigating the complainant's and their neighbour's property. There was no evidence to suggest that an issue was occurring with the pipe work.

To assist, the Housing Repairs Team installed a series of water arrestors on the pipes at the neighbouring property to mitigate the issue should it return.

An apology was provided to the complainant.

Head of Service Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by delaying the follow up inspections. The appropriate action has now been undertaken to remedy this.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

As part of this complaint, the Housing Repairs Team had been reminded of the following:

- The necessity to effectively communicate with tenants.
- To maintain accurate records.
- To book necessary works in a timely manner.
- Ensure that any works booked are followed up in a timely manner.

41. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Housing Repairs Team had not repaired their garage despite multiple requests to do so.

Council's response

It was found that the Council had investigated the repairs required to the garage. The garage required a new garage door which had been ordered with the contractor that made these. There was a delay in the repair being undertaken due to a supply issue with the door. However, the Housing Repairs Team had not provided the complainant with this information.

An apology was provided to the complainant and contractor was contacted to provide a timeframe for the installation of the door.

Head of Service Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by not effectively communicating with the complainant. The appropriate action has now been undertaken to remedy this.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

As part of this complaint, the Housing Repairs Team had been reminded of the following:

- The necessity to effectively communicate with tenants.
- To maintain accurate records.
- To book necessary works in a timely manner.
- Ensure that any works booked are followed up in a timely manner.

42. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Housing Repairs Team had not repaired a leak in their roof.

Council's response

It was found that the Council had investigated the leak and undertaken works to repair it. However, these works were not sufficient. After further inspection, it was noted that additional works were required and this required erecting scaffolding at the property. There were significant delays in the Council ordering and erecting the scaffolding.

The works have now been completed.

The complainant was offered an apology and paid £1,000 compensation.

Head of Service Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by agreeing to undertake the works and then delaying them. The Housing Repairs Team has been reminded of their responsibility in booking works in a timely manner.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

As part of this complaint, the Housing Repairs Team had been reminded of the following:

- The necessity to effectively communicate with tenants.
- To maintain accurate records.
- To book necessary works in a timely manner.
- Ensure that any works booked are followed up in a timely manner.

43. Complaint against Environment

Response – 17 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Waste and Recycling Team had repeatedly fail to collect their bins on their designated day. Furthermore, the Waste and Recycling Team were not returning the bins to correct place despite the complainant being on the assisted bin collection service.

Council's response

It was found that the Council had repeatedly missed the complainant's bin collection and when the bins were collected they were not being placed back in the correct place.

An apology was offered and additional monitoring was placed on the service to audit the effective collection and replacement of the bins.

Head of Service Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by not collecting and returning the bins correctly. Additional monitoring has been put in place to review the collection and no further reports have been received to state the bins have not been dealt with correctly.

44. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 18 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Housing Repairs Team had not undertaken works to repair a noisy staircase.

Council's response

It was found that the Council had inspected the stairs in a timely manner. It was found that there were no issues with the stairs and no further action was required.

Head of Service Comments

The Council had undertaken the appropriate action to inspect the stairs in a timely manner.

45. Complaint against Housing Strategy

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Leasehold Team had been rude to them over the telephone.

Council's response

It was found that there was no evidence to suggest that the Leasehold Team had been rude.

Head of Service Comments

The Council takes customer services seriously and no evidence suggested that the complainant had received poor treatment.

46. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that a leak had not been adequately repaired that was causing damp and mould.

Council's response

It was found that the Council had attempted to remedy the leak but the works were not sufficient. This leak returned over several years and there were delays in the repairs being undertaken.

Furthermore, the Council had delayed undertaking works to remove the damp areas affected by the leak.

An apology was provided and the Council paid £2,000 compensation to the complainant.

Head of Service Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by agreeing to undertake the works and then delaying them. The Housing Repairs Team has been reminded of their responsibility in booking works in a timely manner.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

As part of this complaint, the Housing Repairs Team had been reminded of the following:

- The responsibility to appropriately communicate with tenants.
- To log necessary works in a reasonable period and to prioritise repairs where necessary.
- To monitor all works to ensure that they completed in a reasonable timeframe whether being completed by the Council or referred to Contractors.
- To keep the tenant updated of any issue that would delay the completion of the works.

47. Complaint against Housing Operations

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that they had been asked to leave their family home following the death of their parents. Following their departure from the property the Council had also disposed of their belongings that remained there.

Council's response

It was found that the Council had requested the complainant leave the property as they did not have a right to reside there. The property had already been subject to succession and the complainant could not succeed the property again following the death of their parents.

The Council had undertaken this decision in line with the Allocations Policy and the Housing Act.

During the period in which the complainant was requested to vacate the property, a notice was served stating that any remaining items would be disposed of from the property if they were not collected within the specified time frame. As the complainant did not collect their items, they were disposed of as per the notice served.

Alternative accommodation was provided to the complainant.

Head of Service Comments

The Council had acted appropriately with its own internal policies and Housing Legislation.

48. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Housing Repairs Team had failed to repair guttering that was causing a damp issue at their property.

Council's response

It was found that the Council had delayed the repair to the guttering due to the work not being correctly logged. This resulted in the complainant having to chase the Council to complete the works.

Furthermore, the Council had delayed undertaking works to remove the damp areas affected by the leak at the complainant's property.

An apology was provided and the Council paid £1,000 compensation to the complainant.

Head of Service Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by agreeing to undertake the works and then delaying them. The Housing Repairs Team has been reminded of their responsibility in booking works in a timely manner.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

As part of this complaint, the Housing Repairs Team had been reminded of the following:

- The responsibility to appropriately communicate with tenants.
- To log necessary works in a reasonable period and to prioritise repairs where necessary.
- To monitor all works to ensure that they completed in a reasonable timeframe whether being completed by the Council or referred to Contractors.
- To keep the tenant updated of any issue that would delay the completion of the works.

49. Complaint against Environment

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Waste and Recycling Team had repeatedly failed to collect their bins on their designated day.

Council's response

It was found that the Council had repeatedly missed the complainant's bin collection.

An apology was offered and additional monitoring was placed on the service to audit the effective collection and replacement of the bins.

Head of Service Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by not collecting the bins correctly. Additional monitoring has been put in place to review the collection and no further reports have been received to state the bins have not been dealt with correctly.

50. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that no reason had been provided to explain the delays in a leak being repaired.

Council's response

It was found that the while the Council had repaired the leak no explanation was provided at the repair or stage 1 complaint processes to explain why this had occurred. The complainant was informed that the delay occurred due to the Council not correctly progressing the works or booking the scaffolding required in a timely manner.

An apology was provided and the Council paid £500 compensation to the complainant.

Head of Service Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by agreeing to undertake the works and then delaying them. The Housing Repairs Team has been reminded of their responsibility in booking works in a timely manner.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

As part of this complaint, the Housing Repairs Team had been reminded of the following:

- The responsibility to appropriately communicate with tenants/complainants.
- To accurately log necessary works in a reasonable period and to prioritise repairs where necessary.
- To monitor all works to ensure that they completed in a reasonable timeframe whether being completed by the Council or referred to Contractors.
- To keep the tenant/complainant updated of any issue that would delay the completion of the works.

51. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that no action had been undertaken to resolve and issue of damp and mould at their property.

Council's response

It was found that the while the Council had inspected the complainant's property in a timely manner. It was found that the damp and mould was a minor area of growth on a window frame in the kitchen being caused by atmospheric condensation and there was no repairs issue causing this.

The complainant was advised of the need to ventilate the property correctly and works were undertaken to remove the mould growth. The Council inspected the extractor fans and noted they were in working order. The complainant was advised to use these where necessary.

Head of Service Comments

The Council had taken the appropriate action by inspecting and advising the complainant in a timely manner.

52. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that let a property that required additional works that meant they were unable to move in to it on their designated day.

Council's response

It was found that the while the Council had incorrectly let the property to the complainant with outstanding works that required completion before they could move in.

In recognition of this, the Council allowed the complainant to remain at their previous property with their rent and Council Tax being paid for by the Council until the new property was ready.

The Council paid £953.17 toward the cost of the complainant's rent and Council Tax and an apology was provided.

Head of Service Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by letting the property when it was not ready. The Council appropriately remedied the situation by allowing the complainant to remain at their previous property at the cost of the Council.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

As part of this complaint, the Housing Repairs Team had been reminded of the following:

- To accurately log necessary works in a reasonable period and to prioritise repairs where necessary.
- To monitor all works to ensure that they completed in a reasonable timeframe whether being completed by the Council or referred to Contractors.
- To keep the tenant/complainant updated of any issue that would delay the completion of the works.

53. Complaint against Capital Works

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the contractors employed by the Council were not communicating as per the instructions of the Council regarding the demolition of a garage site.

Council's response

The contractor had been instructed, by the Council, to write to all residents of the area and perform individual visits to the residents to inform them of the works.

While some visits and a letter had been produced, this was not undertaken for all residents of the area. An apology was given and the Council provided the necessary information. The Council further determined that all correspondence will now be handled by the Capital Works/Housing Team.

Head of Service Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by the contractor not fulfilling their obligations. The correct action has been undertaken by bringing the handling of correspondence back with the Council.

54. Complaint against Revenues

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Council Tax Team incorrectly refunded a series of duplicate Council Tax payments to the complainant's landlord and not to the complainant.

Council's response

The complainant had been paying the Council Tax bill on behalf of their landlord to their Council Tax account. When the Council was notified that the property was not a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO), the liability transferred to complainant as the tenant. The refund for the previous payments was processed through the letting agent and the account holder was paid the refund. The account holder was the complainant's landlord and the refund was processed to their account.

While the Council has correctly administered the Council Tax accounts, it is recognised that the Landlord, during the period in which the Council had billed the property as HMO, should have paid this bill and this should not have been undertaken by the complainant. However, this remains an issue between the complainant and landlord.

As a gesture of goodwill, the Council Tax Team wrote off the remaining debt of £869.82.

Head of Service Comments

The Council had undertaken the correct action of transferring the liability of the Council Tax to the complainant. However, to assist the complainant the remaining liability was written off.

55. Complaint against Housing Operations

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Housing Operations Team had incorrectly banded them as a band 3 despite the threat of homelessness.

Council's response

The Council had correctly reviewed the information provided as part of the complainant's housing application. The Council had assessed the information and determined that the complainant had been banded correctly at band 3.

The Allocations Policy states that band 3 would be awarded to individuals where they have been served a Section 21 Notice and where the individual has not or is not willing to approach the Homelessness Team.

Furthermore, the Council further determined this banding based on the Housing Act 1996, which states that, as the complainant's child's time is split between themselves and their ex-partner, they are not considered a priority.

Additionally, the complainant was served with a correct Section 21 Notice but did not engage with the Homelessness Team to assess their need under this scheme.

Head of Service Comments

The Council had undertaken the correct action in determining the complainant's banding. The Council acted upon the information provided and as the complainant would not engage with the Homelessness Team they were correctly banded at band 3.

56. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – **complaint withdrawn**

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Housing Repairs Team had damaged their property by installing faulty gutters which were causing damp.

Council's response

The works undertaken by the Council to upgrade the guttering on its properties was not compatible with the complainant's guttering, who was a private homeowner. This resulted in standing water in the gutter not draining away and when it did drain, the seals on the gutter were not sufficient, resulting in the water pouring on to the walls.

In recognition of this, the Council obtained quotes to replace the guttering to match that of the upgraded ones at the Council properties and quotes to repair the plaster work

damaged by the damp. This work would be undertaken by the Council at no cost to the complainant.

The complainant was offered these works during the course of their stage 2 complaint and were satisfied with the solution. They requested that their complaint be closed.

Head of Service Comments

The Council had undertaken the correct action to proactively offer the complainant a solution to their complaint.

57. Complaint against Planning

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Planning Enforcement had not taken action against their neighbour for a breach of planning conditions.

Council's response

The Council had inspected each alleged planning breach when they were reported and the complainant was informed of the outcome in a timely manner.

The issues had been raised by the complainant date back to 2019, 2020 and 2023. Each case had been investigated when they occurred.

The complainant had been informed that the developments undertaken by their neighbour fall within Permitted Development rights. As these are within permitted development rights, the Council is unable to take enforcement action against these.

Head of Service Comments

The Planning Enforcement had correctly investigated the issues and notified the complainant. While these are not the outcomes the complainant wanted, the correct action had been undertaken.

58. Complaint against Environment

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Environment Team had inappropriately applied an increased internment fee to their father's grave.

Council's response

The Council had correctly applied the increased interment fee as per the Cemeteries Rules and Regulations. The interment fee is a separate fee and service undertaken as part of a funeral. The interment was not linked to the price of the grave purchased by the complainant's father in 2009.

The interment fee was increased to be doubled for internments of individuals outside of the Broxtowe area in 2013 via a decision undertaken by the Bramcote Bereavement Joint Services Committee. As the complainant's father did not live in the area, this charge applied.

This increase applied to all internments irrespective of when the grave was purchased.

While grave owners were not notified in writing of these increased fees, the fees were provided to funeral directors and were published on the Bramcote Bereavement Services website.

Head of Service Comments

The Council had correctly applied the increased interment fee.

59. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Housing Repairs Team had delayed repairs to a garage.

Council's response

While the Council had booked the necessary works in inspecting and repairing the garage, its records not showing the correct address for the complainant meant that these actions were delayed and were not communicated with the complainant correctly.

While the repairs to fill the gaps has been undertaken by using waterproof expanding foam, an area requires topping up.

Additionally, the Council recognises that due to records not being correct, with the complainant's address not being correctly inputted and the Council incorrectly putting the garage address in the contact details for the garage. This resulted in the Council not being able to effectively communicate with the complainant.

The Council's records have since been updated and the correct details are now being displayed. Furthermore, an additional note has been placed on the Council's system to ensure that the details are checked before contact is made.

Head of Service Comments

It is recognised that the poor record keeping had delayed the repairs being undertaken. The correct action has been undertaken to ensure that these have been updated.

60. Complaint against Housing Operations

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Housing Operations Team had not correctly allocated the property next to them correctly.

Council's response

The Council had correctly allocated the neighbouring property in line with its Allocations Policy.

The Council was unable to provide details of another individuals housing application or circumstance. However, it was confirmed that the correct decision to allocate the property was undertaken as the complainant's neighbour met the necessary criteria as defined in the Council's Allocations Policy.

The Council continues to investigate the complainant's reported issues of Anti-Social Behaviour.

Head of Service Comments

The property had been allocated correctly and works to investigate the Anti-Social Behaviour are being monitored.

61. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Housing Repairs Team had not adequately repaired a shower drain that repeatedly blocked.

Council's response

The Council's records indicate that the Housing Repairs Team had attended the complainant's property to repair the blocked drain in a timely manner. The majority of the repairs had been attended to within 1-2 working days.

The blocked drains had been attended to by the Housing Repairs Team and two independent drainage/plumbing contractors that had determined that there was no issue

with the drain. The inspections and repairs have left the drain in working order following its unblocking and cleaning.

Head of Service Comments

The repairs had been investigated and repaired, where necessary, in a timely manner. There is no evidence to suggest an issue with the drain or fault in the service provided.

62. Complaint against Revenues

Response – 19 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Benefits Team did not correctly apply a Council Tax Support request.

Council's response

The Council had correctly administered the complainant's Council Tax Support request. The Benefits Team had attempted to assist with the claim and had attempted to clarify the requests and questions raised by the complainant.

The Council had received information from the Department of Work and Pensions that indicates that the complainant had savings over the threshold allowed for the Council to grant the Council Tax Support. The Council is obligated to act upon the information provided by the Department of Work and Pensions.

Head of Service Comments

The Council is obligated to act upon the information provided by the Department of Work and Pension. This resulted in the Council Tax Support Request not being granted.

63. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Housing Repairs Team did not repair a roof leak in a timely manner.

Council's response

The Council's records indicate that the Housing Repairs had attended the complainant's property, a leasehold property rented to another individual, to repair the leak in a timely manner when reported. The leak identified was not treated as an emergency as it was slow leak. The Council undertook the correct action by repairing this leak within the 40-day timeframe as defined in the Housing Repair Policy.

Furthermore, the Council agreed to undertake internal works as a gesture of goodwill. This included repairing an extractor fan, painting the section of ceiling damaged by the leak and replacing a light fitting. The Council undertook this work at its own expense.

Head of Service Comments

The repairs had been investigated and repaired, where necessary, in a timely manner.

64. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Housing Repairs Team did not repair an issue with damp and mould at their property.

Council's response

The Council and its contractors had attended the property in a timely manner to review the damp and mould. While an issue of condensation had been found the Council is actively working toward remedying this issue.

Several extensive investigations had been undertaken and it has been concluded that the property had an issue with atmospheric condensation caused by the lack of ventilation and by the extractor fans not being used. It had been concluded that the property is appropriately insulated. This had been confirmed by Baggaley and Jenkins, the Council's specialist contractor for damp and mould.

The complainant had been provided with advice on how to reduce this condensation. Furthermore, the Council had offered to provide assistance through its Financial Inclusion Team to help with heating the property.

Head of Service Comments

The repairs had been investigated and repaired, where necessary, in a timely manner.

65. Complaint against Planning

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Planning Team had not been transparent or fully responding to their e-mails.

Council's response

The Council had responded to the complainant's enquiries and follow up enquiries fully.

There was no information to suggest that the Planning Team have not been transparent when responding to the complainant's e-mails.

The communication had been polite, factual and courteous.

Head of Service Comments

The complainant's correspondence had been investigated and responded to in the correct way.

66. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Housing Repairs Team did not repair an issue of damp and mould at their property in a timely manner.

Council's response

It was found that there were unreasonable delays in the works being undertaken to remove damp and mould from the property and works not being correctly scheduled which exacerbated these issues.

These delays have occurred due to the Council not progressing the works in a timely manner due to the Housing Repairs Team not correctly logging the required works.

The outstanding repair works were passed to contractor to complete.

The complaint was offered £4,380 compensation. This was broken down into

- £1,500 for the inconvenience and delays in the repair to the damp and mould at the property.
- £500 compensation is for the inconvenience caused by the poor administration provided by the Housing Repairs Team.
- £2,380 for the cost of items/decorative works damaged by the damp and mould.

Head of Service Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by agreeing to undertake the works and then delaying them. The Housing Repairs Team has been reminded of their responsibility in booking works in a timely manner.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

- The responsibility to appropriately communicate with tenants/complainants.
- To accurately log necessary works in a reasonable period and to prioritise repairs where necessary.
- To monitor all works to ensure that they completed in a reasonable timeframe whether being completed by the Council or referred to Contractors.

- To keep the tenant/complainant updated of any issue that would delay the completion of the works.

67. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Housing Repairs Team did not repair a leaking gutter.

Council's response

It was noted that the complainant was a private homeowner and the property neighbouring was a Council property.

While the complainant had notified the Council to state that there may be an issue with the guttering, they ultimately chose to have a private contractor undertake the works before the Council was given the opportunity to assess the issue.

The Housing Repairs Team had attended the property and the neighbouring property following the works undertaken by the private contractor to inspect the guttering but no issues had been found and no blockages were identified.

Head of Service Comments

The Housing Repairs Team would have undertaken any repairs identified if given the opportunity.

68. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Housing Repairs Team did not repair an issue of damp and mould and decorative works in a timely manner.

Council's response

While the Council had undertaken action to improve the condition of the complainant's property, in particular, by providing a damp proof course, the Council did not provide them with the correct information regarding the use of paint that would allow the walls to dry correctly. The Council was meant to undertake the painting works

The Council did not undertake the follow up work to provide decoration to the walls using the correct paint to the re-plastered walls following the damp proof course.

The plaster and damp proofing required time to dry before the painting would be undertaken. There was no information to suggest that this was explained to the complainant. As a result of this, the complainant undertook the painting.

Furthermore, there was no information to suggest that the complainant was advised regarding the painting or advised by the Council regarding the positioning of their belongings near the walls that were drying that may have resulted in mould growth on them.

The complainant was offered £2,500 compensation. This is broken down into:

- £1,500 for the inconvenience and delays in the decorative work following the damp and mould treatment at the property and for the Council not correctly explaining the process and the use of paint on the walls.
- £1,000 compensation is for the items that were damaged by the mould.

Head of Service Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by agreeing to undertake the works and then delaying them. The Housing Repairs Team has been reminded of their responsibility in booking works and follow through on them in a timely manner.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

- The responsibility to appropriately communicate with tenants/complainants.
- To accurately log necessary works in a reasonable period and to prioritise repairs where necessary.
- To monitor all works to ensure that they completed in a reasonable timeframe whether being completed by the Council or referred to Contractors.
- To keep the tenant/complainant updated of any issue that would delay the completion of the works.

69. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Housing Repairs Team did not repair an issue of damp and mould and decorative works in a timely manner.

Council's response

While the Council has undertaken action to improve the condition of the property by undertaking damp proof works, there were delays in the Council undertaking the follow up damp works.

These delays occurred due to the Council not passing the follow up works to a contractor in a timely manner. This meant that the complaint was left in a position where their property did not have flooring which caused the property to be cold and noisy and caused the damp issue to return.

The complainant was offered £1,000 compensation. This is broken down into:

- £500 for the inconvenience and delays in the additional repairs and mould treatment at the property.
- £500 for the Council leaving the complainant in a place of inconvenience and discomfort by not completing the works in a timely manner which meant the complainant was unable to have flooring laid at the property.

Head of Service Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by agreeing to undertake the works and then delaying them. The Housing Repairs Team has been reminded of their responsibility in booking works and follow through on them in a timely manner.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

- The responsibility to appropriately communicate with tenants/complainants.
- To accurately log necessary works in a reasonable period and to prioritise repairs where necessary.
- To monitor all works to ensure that they completed in a reasonable timeframe whether being completed by the Council or referred to Contractors.
- To keep the tenant/complainant updated of any issue that would delay the completion of the works.

70. Complaint against Housing Operations

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Housing Allocations Team did not allocate a neighbouring property correctly or consider sound proofing a set of noisy stairs correctly.

Council's response

The Housing Repairs Team had inspected the noisy stairs and it has been determined that they are structurally sound and do not require repair.

The Council would be able to consider sound proofing these stairs if the relevant Occupational Therapist report is received. This has not been provided by the complainant.

The Housing Options Team had correctly allocated the neighbouring property in line with the Allocations Policy.

However, the property was incorrectly advertised as not having a garden. While this was incorrectly advertised, the new tenant was advised that a garden was attached to the property.

Head of Service Comments

The property had been allocated correctly. While no repairs are required to the stairs, sound proofing can be considered if the correct Occupational Therapist report is received.

71. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Housing Repairs Team did not repair an issue with damp and mould at their property.

Council's response

The Council and its contractors had attended the complainant's property in a timely manner to review the damp and mould. While an issue of condensation had been found the Council are actively working toward remedying this issue.

Several extensive investigations had been undertaken and it had been concluded that the property has an issue with atmospheric condensation caused by the lack of ventilation and by the extractor fans not working correctly. It has been concluded that the property is appropriately insulated. This has been confirmed by Baggaley and Jenkins, the Council's specialist contractor for damp and mould.

The complainant had been provided advice on how to reduce this condensation. Follow up works to repair the extractor fans had been scheduled.

Head of Service Comments

The repairs had been investigated and repaired, where necessary, in a timely manner.

72. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Housing Repairs Team did not correctly repair a damaged fence.

Council's response

The Council has acted upon the reports of the fencing blowing over in a timely manner.

As per the Tenancy Agreement, the Council was only required to establish the boundary between the complainant's property and their neighbour's. Therefore, the Council acted correctly when installing a chain link fence to replace the panel that had blown over.

Furthermore, the Council is actively working toward re-establishing the boundary fence panels that have blown over near the public footpath. This had been passed to a contractor to re-install this fence.

Head of Service Comments

The repairs had been investigated and repaired, where necessary, in a timely manner.

73. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Housing Repairs Team did not repair an outhouse roof in a timely manner.

Council's response

There have been unreasonable delays in the Housing Repairs Team logging and completing the necessary works and updating the complainant with these delays.

The delays had occurred due to the Council not passing the works to a contractor to complete the repairs in a timely manner. This was further exacerbated by the Housing Repairs Team not following up on the completion of these repairs despite them being registered as part of the stage 1 complaint. While the Housing Repairs Team had acknowledged and logged the repairs, these were not monitored to ensure their completion.

The complainant was offered £1,000 compensation. This is broken down into:

- £500 for the inconvenience, delays, distress and/or hardship caused in the works being undertaken despite being investigated as an official complaint.
- £500 for the inconvenience, distress and/or hardship caused by the poor communication provided by the Housing Repairs Team.

Head of Service Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by agreeing to undertake the works and then delaying them. The Housing Repairs Team has been reminded of their responsibility in booking works and follow through on them in a timely manner.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

- The responsibility to appropriately communicate with tenants/complainants.
- To accurately log necessary works in a reasonable period and to prioritise repairs where necessary.
- To monitor all works to ensure that they completed in a reasonable timeframe whether being completed by the Council or referred to Contractors.

- To keep the tenant/complainant updated of any issue that would delay the completion of the works.
- To action and monitor complaints, within agreed timeframes until they are satisfactorily concluded.
- Additional training has been provided to the Housing Department in March 2024 regarding record keeping, complaint handling and monitoring the outcome of complaints. The Housing Repairs Team is required to actively monitor any repairs scheduled as part of complaints to ensure their completion following this training.
- The Housing Department has undertaken a self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Record Keeping Guidance. The Council has implement actions to ensure that records are regularly monitored and updated.

Stage 3 - Ombudsman Complaint

1. Complaint against Housing Repairs (complaint concluded in 2022/23)

Complaint Upheld.

Complaint

The concern raised was that the Council had not adequately investigated an issue of a utility meter cupboard being locked by a suited lock.

Ombudsman's conclusion

The Housing Ombudsman determined that the Council had delayed the confirmation of the suited lock with the complainant. The Council's delays in responding to the resident's concerns were unreasonable. These delays caused the resident to expend unnecessary time and trouble to access her meters.

The Housing Ombudsman ordered the Council to issue £350 compensation which was undertaken.

2. Complaint against Housing Operations (complaint concluded in 2022/23)

This complaint is under investigation.

Complaint

The concern raised was that the Council had not adequately investigated an issue of signs at a car park not being correctly erected at a block of flats stating that it was for residents only.

Ombudsman's conclusion

This complaint is under investigation.

3. Complaint against Housing Repairs (complaint concluded in 2022/23)

Complaint Upheld.

Complaint

The concern raised was that the Council had not adequately investigated an issue of damp and mould at a property.

Ombudsman's conclusion

The Housing Ombudsman found that the Council had not adequately repaired the complainant's damp and mould.

The Council failed to undertake the necessary inspections at the complainant's property to determine the cause of the damp at the property.

The Council's delay to establish a cause of the damp and mould, along with its poor record keeping meant the damp and mould in the complainant's property was not dealt with in a timely manner.

The Council was ordered to apologise to the complainant, pay £2,430 in compensation, review its record keeping and review the Housing Repairs service.

The apology and compensation payment has been completed.

Further to this complaint, in October 2022 the decision was made to restructure the Housing Repairs team. This resulted in the team moving from the Council's Asset Management department to the Housing department, a full review of roles and responsibilities in the team, an increase in capacity within the team, and new employees being recruited.

A new senior manager, the Housing Repairs and Compliance Manager, was recruited to lead on improvements to the service. The new role of Repairs Customer Services Manager was also created to improve the customer experience and to give the team a dedicated person to investigate and resolve complaints. A new Repairs Contact Centre was established which solely deals with receiving reports of repairs and booking works. This was previously completed by a centralised team dealing with many Council functions. Previously the structure of the repairs service was based around four senior maintenance officers, who were all responsible for completing inspections and managing a team of operatives within a defined patch area. Repairs were reported via a centralised contact centre. The review of the repairs restructure completed at the end of 2022 identified that this structure meant that there was not always ownership or pro-active work to resolve ongoing issues.

The Housing Repairs Service was restructured in March 2023. As part of the restructure a new Housing Repairs Contact Centre was created, and five new officers were recruited. These officers are responsible for taking repairs calls from tenants and the accurate diagnosis and recording of repairs jobs. The new team have undergone a full training programme.

As part of the restructure the old role of Senior Maintenance Officer, that was responsible for both completing inspections and management of a team of operatives, was deleted from the establishment. New roles of Repairs Inspector and Repairs Team Leader were created. New expectations were set as part of the restructure, particularly in regards to communication with tenants and full training was provided. Following receipt of the outcome of this complaint, officers have been reminded of the importance of providing tenants with regular updates.

4. Complaint against Housing Repairs (complaint concluded in 2022/23)

This complaint is under investigation.

Complaint

The concern raised was that the Council had not adequately investigated an issue of damp and mould at a property.

Ombudsman's conclusion

This complaint is under investigation.

5. Complaint against Housing Operations (complaint concluded in 2022/23)

This complaint was not upheld.

Complaint

The concern raised was that the Council had not adequately investigated an issue of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) at a block of flats.

Ombudsman's conclusion

It was concluded that the Council had correctly investigated and progressed the complainant's complaint. The Housing Ombudsman noted that the issue being raised related to drug activity and that the Council had been correctly working with Nottinghamshire Police to resolve the issue.

6. Complaint against Housing Repairs (complaint concluded in 2022/23)

Complaint Upheld.

Complaint

The concern raised was that the Council had not adequately investigated an issue of a utility meter cupboard being locked by a suited lock.

Ombudsman's conclusion

The Housing Ombudsman determined that the Council had delayed the confirmation of the suited lock with the complainant. The Council's delays in responding to the resident's concerns were unreasonable. These delays caused the resident to expend unnecessary time and trouble to access her meters.

The Housing Ombudsman ordered the Council to issue £350 compensation which was undertaken.

7. Complaint against Housing Repairs (complaint concluded in 2022/23)**Complaint Upheld.**Complaint

The concern raised was that the Council had not adequately investigated an issue of damp and mould at a property.

Ombudsman's conclusion

The Housing Ombudsman found that the Council had not adequately repaired the complainant's damp and mould.

The Council failed to establish the root cause of the damp and mould. It reported completing four damp inspections at the complainant's property. However, despite requests from the complainant for updates, the outcome for each inspection was not logged or communicated to the complainant.

The Council's failure to establish a cause of the damp and mould, along with its poor record keeping meant it was unclear what repairs were required to tackle the damp and mould in the complainant's property.

The Council was ordered to apologise to the complainant, pay £2,590 in compensation, review its record keeping and review the Housing Repairs service.

The apology, compensation and review of record keeping have been completed.

Further to this complaint, in October 2022 the decision was made to restructure the Housing Repairs team. This resulted in the team moving from the Council's Asset Management department to the Housing department, a full review of roles and responsibilities in the team, an increase in capacity within the team, and new employees being recruited.

A new senior manager, the Housing Repairs and Compliance Manager, was recruited to lead on improvements to the service. The new role of Repairs Customer Services Manager was also created to improve the customer experience and to give the team a dedicated person to investigate and resolve complaints. A new Repairs Contact Centre was established which solely deals with receiving reports of repairs and booking works. This was previously completed by a centralised team dealing with many Council functions. Previously the structure of the repairs service was based around four senior maintenance officers, who were all responsible for completing inspections and managing a team of operatives within a defined patch area. Repairs were reported via a centralised contact centre. The review of the repairs restructure completed at the end of 2022 identified that this structure meant that there was not always ownership or pro-active work to resolve ongoing issues.

The Housing Repairs Service was restructured in March 2023. As part of the restructure a new Housing Repairs Contact Centre was created, and five new officers were recruited. These officers are responsible for taking repairs calls from tenants and the accurate diagnosis and recording of repairs jobs. The new team have undergone a full training programme.

As part of the restructure the old role of Senior Maintenance Officer, that was responsible for both completing inspections and management of a team of operatives, was deleted from the establishment. New roles of Repairs Inspector and Repairs Team Leader were created. New expectations were set as part of the restructure, particularly in regards to communication with tenants and full training was provided. Following receipt of the outcome of this complaint, officers have been reminded of the importance of providing tenants with regular updates.

8. Complaint against Housing Operations (complaint concluded in 2022/23)

Complaint Upheld.

Complaint

The concern raised was that the Council had not adequately considered their banding on the housing allocations system.

Ombudsman's conclusion

The LGO found that the Council was at fault for failing to consider all the information available when it reviewed the complainant's housing priority and for asking them to provide an occupational therapy report rather than arranging for an assessment of their needs. These faults caused complainant injustice and the Council reviewed its housing priority as part of this complaint, and made a payment of £750 to remedy this.

9. Complaint against Housing Operations (complaint concluded in 2022/23)

Complaint Upheld.

Complaint

The concern raised was regarding the Council's handling of the complainant's homelessness application.

Ombudsman's conclusion

The LGO found that there was fault in the way the Council carried out its homelessness duties to the complainant and how it informed her about offers of accommodation. This caused them some uncertainty and frustration.

The Council reviewed the complainant's housing priority as part of this complaint, and made a payment of £150 to remedy this.