

Summary of Complaints and Compliments - Quarter 3
1 October 2024 – 31 December 2024

Complaints received

| | Total | Chief Executive | Deputy Chief Executive | Executive Director | Monitoring Officer | Liberty Leisure Ltd |
|---|-------|-----------------|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Number of Stage One complaints | 123 | 88 | 4 | 31 | 0 | 0 |
| No. of complaints concluded under Stage Two | 22 | 20 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| No. of complaints determined by the Ombudsman | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

The Council has registered a total of 123 stage one complaints in the third quarter. 22 complaints have been concluded under stage two of the complaint procedure and 3 complaints has been determined by the Ombudsman. A further breakdown of departmental complaints by section are shown below.

Breakdown of complaints and compliments by department and section

Chief Executive's department

| Service Areas | Stage 1 Complaints | Stage 2 Complaints | Ombudsman Complaints | Compliments |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------|
| Communities | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Development Control | 12 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Housing and Income | 6 | 2 | 0 | 31 |
| Housing Repairs | 47 | 9 | 2 | 5 |
| Housing Operations | 19 | 8 | 0 | 26 |
| Housing Strategy | 4 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Total | 88 | 20 | 3 | 65 |

Deputy Chief Executive's Department

| Service Areas | Stage 1 Complaints | Stage 2 Complaints | Ombudsman Complaints | Compliments |
|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------|
| Customer Services | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Revenues | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 |

Executive Director's Department

| Service Areas | Stage 1 Complaints | Stage 2 Complaints | Ombudsman Complaints | Compliments |
|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------|
| Communication | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Bereavement Services | 13 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Environment | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Waste and Recycling | 15 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| Total | 31 | 0 | 0 | 9 |

Monitoring Officer's Department

| Service Areas | Stage 1 Complaints | Stage 2 Complaints | Ombudsman Complaints | Compliments |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------|
| Elections | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Legal | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Democratic Services | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |

Liberty Leisure Ltd

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

The Business Director of Liberty Leisure Ltd has confirmed that no formal complaints have been received and that only service requests and minor service issues have been identified that did not require escalation to a complaint.

STAGE 1 - FORMAL COMPLAINTS TO THE SERVICE DEPARTMENT**Time taken to acknowledge receipt of Stage One Complaints:**

| | Total | Chief Executive | Deputy Chief Executive | Executive Director | Monitoring Officer | Liberty Leisure Ltd |
|---|-------|-----------------|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Time taken to acknowledge complaints – 1 to 5 days | 123 | 88 | 4 | 31 | 0 | 0 |
| Time taken to acknowledge complaints - more than 5 days | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Time taken to respond to Stage One Complaints:

The following tables highlight the service areas that failed to respond to complaints within the target time in the first quarter, and the number of complaints where the target date was extended.

| | Total | Chief Executives | Deputy Chief Executive | Executive Director | Monitoring Officer | Liberty Leisure Ltd |
|---------------------------|-------|------------------|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Less than 10 working days | 117 | 82 | 4 | 31 | 0 | 0 |
| Over 10 working days | 6 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

It should be noted that there has been a reduction in complaints being concluded outside of 10 working days. 95% of Housing Repair complaints were dealt with within the 10 working day deadline in the second quarter.

Six complaints fell outside of the 10 working day due to Officer leave over the holiday period.

The Complaints Team continues to monitor the performance of the Housing Repair complaints to ensure that they continue to be dealt with in line with the Complaints Policy.

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 has been 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. 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.

| Directorate / Section | Chief Executive | |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| | Number responded to outside of 10 working days | Number of complaints where an extension was sought |
| Housing Repairs | 6 | 6 |
| TOTAL | 6 | 6 |

Stage 2 - Formal Complaints

22 formal complaints have been responded to in the first quarter; all of which were acknowledged within the 5 working day timescale, and 96% were responded to within the 20 working day timescale. The complainant was notified that the initial 20 working day deadline could not be met. An extension was required to a stage 2 complaint due to the extensive information relating an individual's health issues. Eleven of the complaints were upheld and eleven were not upheld.

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.

Time taken to respond to stage two complaints:

| | Total | Chief Executives | Deputy Chief Executive | Executive Director | Monitoring Officer | Liberty Leisure Ltd |
|---------------------------|-------|------------------|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Less than 20 working days | 21 | 19 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Over 20 working days | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

1. Complaint against Housing Operations

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld**Complaint**

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that there had been a lack of action to investigate an issue of noise nuisance.

Council's response

The Housing Tenancy Team has assessed the complaint regarding Anti-Social Behaviour. However, by not responding to the complainant's correspondence in a timely manner and not acknowledging the complainant's complaint of Anti-Social Behaviour correctly, the Council recognises that this had caused additional confusion and distress.

An apology was provided for this and for any additional distress or confusion caused.

The Housing Tenancy Team had determined that issues that had been raised were not considered Anti-Social Behaviour and the noise monitoring confirmed that this is everyday living noise.

The complainant was offered and accepted £250 compensation for the issues highlighted above.

Head of Service Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by not correctly corresponding with the complainant. Officers were reminded of their responsibility to correctly communicate with individuals.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

- The Housing Tenancy Team has been reminded of their responsibility to return correspondence in a timely manner.
- The Housing Tenancy Team has been reminded of their responsibility to appropriately acknowledge and manage complaints of Anti-Social Behaviour when they are received.
- The Housing Tenancy Team has been instructed to provide you with correspondence by 1 November 2024 to discuss any further concerns you have.
- A reminder has been provided to the Council's Customer Services Team to ensure that they correctly direct telephone calls regarding tenant noise nuisance to the Housing Tenancy Team.

2. Complaint against Housing Operations

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the correct advice had not been provided regarding the storage of mobility scooters.

Council's response

It was concluded that the Housing Tenancy Team had failed to respond to the complainant's specific enquires regarding mobility scooters in a timely manner. Furthermore, during the complainant's initial correspondence with the Housing Tenancy Team, they should have been issued with the Council's Mobility Scooters Guidance for Tenants to assist with any enquiries or permissions they were seeking. The Council recognises that this was not done.

A copy of this guidance had been included with the stage 2 letter. The guidance document provides further details on how to apply for the use and storage of a mobility scooter within Council properties.

Head of Service Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by not correctly corresponding with the complainant. Officers were reminded of their responsibility to correctly communicate with individuals.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

- The Housing Tenancy Team has been reminded of their responsibility to return correspondence in a timely manner.
- The Housing Tenancy Team has been reminded of their responsibility to refer individuals to the Mobility Scooters Guidance for Tenants document.

3. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that an issue of decorating an area affected by damp and mould was not undertaken correctly.

Council's response

It was concluded that the complainant had not received an appropriate level of service as the Housing Repairs Team incorrectly informed them that maintenance of the works to the paint in their bathroom was their responsibility.

While the work to repaint the bathroom following the plaster repairs was carried out by the Council's contractor, this was not undertaken correctly as a mist coat was not applied. By not applying a mist coat, this has caused the paint applied to bubble and peel.

Furthermore, the Housing Repairs Team had incorrectly informed the complainant that the painting was their responsibility to rectify despite being undertaken on behalf of the Council.

An apology was offered and works were undertaken to correctly paint the bathroom.

The complainant was offered and accepted £500 compensation for the issues highlighted above.

Head of Service Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by not correctly undertaking the works in the first instance. The Housing Repairs Team were reminded of their responsibility to correct assess and book works undertaken by contractors.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

- The Housing Repairs Team has been reminded of their responsibility to correctly identify repairs in the first instance. This includes inspecting any records of previous repairs undertaken by the Council or on behalf of the Council.
- The Council's contractors have been reminded of their responsibility to undertake works correctly in the first instance.
- The Housing Repairs Team has been instructed to attend your property to remedy the painting works.

4. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 30 working days. An extension was required to a stage 2 complaint due to the extensive information relating an individual's health issues.

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that an issue of damp and mould was not correctly prioritised despite their disability. Furthermore, the offer of a decant property while the damp works were undertaken was not appropriate for their needs.

Council's response

It was concluded that the complainant had not received an appropriate level of service as the Housing Repairs Team had delayed several repairs to the damp and mould at the property.

While inspections and works were undertaken, there were delays in works being booked and subsequently completed. Furthermore, despite six separate reports of damp and mould at the property from 2021, the Housing Repairs Team failed to identify that the damp proof course had failed until 2024.

The Council recognised that having to report damp and mould on several occasions is not acceptable service delivery. A stock condition survey was being undertaken to review all Council properties for damp and mould, and this programme has been expedited. Any issues of damp and mould are then reported to the Housing Repairs Team and works are booked in to be completed in a timely manner.

Furthermore, the Council's Change Delivery Manager was reviewing the Housing Repairs Team's damp and mould processes to ensure that these are fit for purpose and align with the anticipated "Awaab's Law".

The Housing Repairs Team had correctly followed the decant process to enable the major works to be undertaken at the property, and booked a disabled access room and agreed to pay for any expenses towards the complainant's food cost during the decant. However, the complainant remained unhappy with the quality of the accommodation provided. This resulted in the complainant booking an alternative hotel while the works were undertaken.

The Council considered this aspect of the complaint, particularly the complainant's vulnerabilities and the length of time the Council took to identify the correct repairs to their property, and agreed to reimburse them for reasonable expenses toward the complainant's food, travel costs and the alternative stay at the Travelodge they had booked.

An apology was offered and the complainant was offered, and accepted, £4,776.98 compensation for the issues highlighted above.

Head of Service Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by not correctly identifying the extent of the works in the first instance. Reminders and additional systems have been introduced to mitigate this issue.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

- The Housing Repairs Team has been reminded of the responsibility to correctly and promptly identify and diagnose repairs in the first instance. This includes inspecting any records of previous repairs undertaken by the Council or on behalf of the Council.
- The Housing Repairs Team has been reminded of the responsibility to undertake works correctly and promptly in the first instance.
- The Housing Repairs Team has been reminded of the responsibility to prioritise repairs where an individual has vulnerabilities that are directly affected by the necessary works.
- The Housing Repairs Team has been instructed to include any vulnerabilities in complaint responses that have a direct effect on an individual's complaint during the stage 1 complaint process.
- The Housing Repairs Team has been instructed to continue and expedite stock condition surveys at all Council properties to determine if damp and mould is present.
- The Change Delivery Manager has been instructed to conduct a review the Council's Damp and Mould policies to ensure that they are fit for purpose and align with the anticipated "Awaab's Law".
- The Housing Repairs Team has been reminded of their responsibility to follow the repair timeframes as stated in the Housing Repairs Policy and the Damp and Mould Policy.

5. Complaint against Housing Operations

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that there had been a lack of action to investigate an issue of noise nuisance.

Council's response

It was concluded that the complainant had not received an appropriate level of service as the Tenancy Services Team had not provided communication in a timely manner or proactively investigated the concerns of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB).

While the Council had correctly assessed the ASB issues based on the evidence that had provided, the Tenancy Services Team did not proactively investigate the concerns which resulted in the complainant having to contact the Council on multiple occasion and visit the Council Offices.

An apology was offered and the complainant was offered, and accepted, £500 compensation for the issues highlighted above.

Head of Service Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by not correctly corresponding with the complainant. Officers were reminded of their responsibility to correctly communicate with individuals.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

- The Housing Services Team has been reminded of the responsibility to proactively investigate ASB complaints.
- The Housing Services Team has been reminded of the responsibility to provide correspondence to individuals in a timely manner.

6. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that there had been a lack of action to investigate an issue of property subsidence.

Council's response

It was concluded that the complainant had received an appropriate level of service as the Housing Repairs Teams had correctly attended the property and reviewed the issues of subsidence in a timely manner.

The Council had routinely inspected the property when the issues had been raised with the potential subsidence. A survey was undertaken by a chartered surveyor and it was noted that the subsidence was minimal. As a result, the Council undertook further investigative works through a soil sample and an arboriculture assessment.

Further assessments were carried out by the Housing Repairs Team using Tell Tales and no further subsidence was reported.

Head of Service Comments

The Housing Repairs Team had correctly investigated the issue of subsidence in a timely manner.

7. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that there had been a lack of action to investigate a leak at their property.

Council's response

It was concluded that the complainant had received an appropriate level of service as the Housing Repairs Team repaired their boiler leak in a timely manner when it was reported.

While the leak had been initially reported, the appointment to review the leak was cancelled by the complainant. This was reorganised and repaired correctly in the follow up appointment.

Head of Service Comments

The Housing Repairs Team had correctly investigated the issue of the boiler leak in a timely manner.

8. Complaint against Housing Income

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that they had been requested to remove their personal items from the communal area of an independent living scheme.

Council's response

It was concluded that the complainant had received an appropriate level of service as the Council had undertaken the correct action to request removal of personal items from the communal areas to ensure that residents are safe in the event of an emergency.

Following receipt of the Fire Safety Matters Notice following an inspection by the Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Service, the Council is obligated to undertake the actions contained within this Notice to ensure that residents are safe.

The Council had correctly informed residents of the need to remove personal items from the communal areas in order to comply with the Fire Safety Matters Notice.

Head of Service Comments

The Housing Repairs Team had correctly requested that the complainant remove their personal items from the communal areas to ensure that all the residents are safe in the event of an emergency.

9. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that there had been a lack of action to stop their gutters becoming blocked.

Council's response

It was concluded that the complainant had received an appropriate level of service as the Housing Repairs Team had attended the property in a timely manner to clear the gutters when these have been reported.

The Housing Repairs Team had undertaken works to mitigate the leaves entering the guttering by maintaining the tree and by altering the gutter height to allow the water to flow freely.

Head of Service Comments

The Housing Repairs Team had correctly investigated the issue of the blocked gutters in a timely manner.

10. Complaint against Housing Operations

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that there had been a lack of action to activate their Homeseach account.

Council's response

It was concluded that the complainant had not received an appropriate level of service as the Housing Operations Team incorrectly did not activate their Homeseach account when they had registered this.

While the complainant had submitted a Homeseach application, due to an administrative error, the Housing Operations Team did not activate the account which meant they were unable to bid on properties for several months.

Furthermore, it was identified that the complainant was not contacted by the Housing Operations Team despite a specific instruction to do so as part of the stage 1 complaint response.

An apology was offered and the complainant was offered but did not accept £150 compensation for the issues highlighted above.

Head of Service Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by not activating the account correctly. Upon being alerted to this, the account was correctly activated.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

- The Housing Operations Team has been reminded of their responsibility to return correspondence in a timely manner.
- The Housing Operations Team has been reminded of their responsibility to undertake actions identified during the complaint process.
- Managers has been reminded of the importance of ensuring that employees undertake actions identified during the complaint process, and that they should be monitoring this.
- The Housing Operations Team has been reminded to correctly process housing allocations in the first instance.

11. Complaint against Housing Operations

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that there had been a lack of action to investigate an issue of noise nuisance.

Council's response

It was concluded that the complainant had received an appropriate level of service as Environmental Health and Housing Tenancy had correctly investigated their complaints of noise nuisance.

The Council had correctly installed noise monitoring equipment at the property, and the complainant's neighbour's property, in order to investigate the alleged issues.

The Council had installed noise monitoring equipment over a period of two years and no evidence of noise nuisance has been recorded during this time.

Head of Service Comments

The Housing Operations Team had correctly investigated the issue of noise nuisance in a timely manner.

12. Complaint against Planning

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that there had been a lack of action to investigate an issue of boundary encroachment and there had been a lack of communication from the Planning Team.

Council's response

It was concluded that the complainant had not received an appropriate level of service due to a delay in correspondence being issued from the Planning Team.

An apology was offered to the complainant.

The Planning Team had determined that the boundary encroachment was a civil matter and that action cannot be taken by the Council. It was recommended that the complainant seek independent legal advice which can be obtained from the Citizens Advice Bureau or from a solicitor that specialises in land dispute cases.

Head of Service Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by not correctly corresponding with the complainant. Officers were reminded of their responsibility to correctly communicate with individuals.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

- The Planning Team had been reminded of its responsibility to return correspondence in a timely manner.

13. Complaint against Housing Operations

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that there had been a lack of action to investigate an issue their ceiling collapsing due to a leak.

Council's response

It was concluded that the complainant had received an appropriate level of service as the Housing Repairs Team repaired the roof leak in a timely manner when it was reported.

The Housing Repairs Team was only able to attend to repairs when they are reported. On this occasion, as previous reports of a leak had not been reported before to the Housing Repairs Team, they were unable to attend before the ceiling collapsed.

The Housing Repairs Team undertook the correct action in attending the complainant's property the following day to repair the leak and making their living room safe. The repair could not be undertaken on the same day as this would have required works to the roof during the evening. Due to health and safety, the Housing Repairs Team was unable to perform this work on the same day.

Head of Service Comments

The Housing Repairs Team are only able to attend to repairs when they are reported. As no leak had been reported until the point of the ceiling collapse, the Housing Repairs Team was unable to attend promptly.

14. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that there had been a lack of action to investigate an issue of cracking plaster.

Council's response

It was concluded that the complainant had received an appropriate level of service as the Housing Repairs Team had attended their property in a timely manner to review the cracks in their wall.

The Housing Repairs Team had undertaken two separate investigations and had found that the plaster was sound with no signs of de-bonding. The Council's records indicate that there were no signs of damage to the wall to suggest that this was moving.

Head of Service Comments

The Housing Repairs Team promptly investigated the issues of the cracked plaster and no further works were identified.

15. Complaint against Revenues

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that their Council Tax account had been incorrectly closed which resulted in several missed payments.

Council's response

It was concluded that the complainant had not received an appropriate level of service as the Council Tax Team incorrectly closed their Council Tax account based on the incorrect information provided by the Customer Services Team.

Due to the Customer Services Team providing the incorrect address to the Council Tax Team the account was incorrectly closed and a final bill was issued.

Upon being alerted to this error the Council Tax account was re-opened and a new bill was issued. However, this meant that the complainant was unaware that several payments had been missed due to the account's incorrect closure. These payments totalled £314.

An apology and £314 compensation was offered and accepted.

Head of Service Comments

The Council recognised the inconvenience caused by acting upon the account being incorrectly closed. The compensation amount reflected the payments missed by the complainant and returned them to the position before the account was closed.

16. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that there had been a lack of action to investigate an issue of damaged flooring and that they had been treated in a discriminatory way due to their sexuality.

Council's response

It was concluded that the complainant had received an appropriate level of service as the Housing Repairs Team visited the property promptly when it was reported and that further works were required by Council's contractor.

Upon receiving the report that the flooring required additional works, the Housing Repairs Team visited the property on the same day and confirmed that a decant was required in order for the works to be completed.

There was no evidence to suggest that the complainant was treated in a discriminatory way.

Head of Service Comments

The Housing Repairs Team promptly investigated the issues with the complainant's flooring. The Council takes its responsibilities toward discrimination seriously and

employees were required to complete training to ensure that individuals were treated fairly and with respect.

17. Complaint against Housing Operations

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that there had been a lack of action to investigate an issue of noise nuisance.

Council's response

It was concluded that the complainant had received an appropriate level of service as the Housing Services Team had correctly investigated the complaints of noise nuisance.

The Council had correctly installed noise monitoring equipment at the complainant's property and no evidence of noise nuisance had been recorded during this time. Furthermore, no evidence of noise nuisance was captured while the complainant was using the noise monitoring app.

Head of Service Comments

The Housing Operations Team had correctly investigated the issue of noise nuisance in a timely manner.

18. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that their neighbour had recently had their kitchen and bathroom upgraded but they did not.

Council's response

It was concluded that the complainant had received an appropriate level of service as the Housing Repairs Team had attended their property and determined that the kitchen and bathroom were in a serviceable and good condition. The Housing Repairs Team had confirmed that these do not require replacement at this time.

Head of Service Comments

The Housing Repairs Team had correctly assessed that the kitchen and bathroom did not require replacement and informed the complainant of this.

19. Complaint against Housing Operations

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council to complain about a number of issues, including anti-social behaviour from a neighbour, the behaviour of a Housing Officer, that their mental health was suffering because of the Council's lack of action, and that the accommodation they have been offered was inappropriate and had no heating.

Council's response

The complainant received an appropriate level of service as the Housing Services Team had correctly assessed their complaints of anti-social behaviour.

There was no evidence to support the accusations the complainant made against the neighbour. A visit from the Housing Officer resulted in the complainant's arrest and there was no independent evidence to corroborate the allegations made against the Housing Officer.

Further to this, there was no evidence that the repairs to the heating had not been actioned. The Housing Repairs Team attended the property the day after a report of the heating not working and this was repaired on the same day.

Head of Service Comments

The Housing Operations Team correctly investigated the concerns raised by the complainant. No evidence was gathered to support their allegations and their own actions caused the Council to take action against them.

20. Complaint against Customer Services

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

A caller made a number of accusations against the Council, including that the Customer Services Team were rude to them during a telephone call, that the Council had stolen their number and breached their GDPR, that the Business Support Team had blocked their number when they were enquiring about jobs and that there should be a financial resolution with regards to the stealing of their telephone number and creating a profile on them.

Council's response

It was established that the complainant had not received an appropriate level of service as the Customer Services Team did not correctly handle a telephone call in which they told the complainant to “get a life.” It was noted this was after numerous telephone calls in which the caller had repeatedly sworn at and provoked the employee.

Although it was recognised that the Customer Services Team response was not appropriate, there was no evidence to suggest that the employee had shouted or sworn.

Further to this, there was no evidence to suggest that the Council stole or otherwise misappropriated the caller’s telephone number, created a profile or blocked their telephone number. A telephone number was retrieved from the Council’s systems, following the calls in order to assist the caller with their complaint.

An apology for the response provided by the Customer Services Officer was issued.

Head of Service Comments

The Customer Services Team were reminded of their responsibility to behave in a professional manner despite the conduct of individuals.

21. Complaint against Housing Operations

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

A tenant reported a communal door key as lost in July 2024 and ordered a new key which never arrived. A second key was ordered in October 2024, but it was incorrect. Another key was ordered and did not arrive. Being unable to access the property caused significant disruption to the tenant and their neighbours, who had to continually let them in.

Council’s response

It was concluded that the tenant did not received an appropriate level of service as the Tenancy Services Team did not promptly obtain the key to the communal door in a timely manner.

Reports regarding the key were made on 12 July 2024 and again on 8 October 2024. Due to a delay in the supplier providing the key and the Tenancy Services Team not proactively chasing the manufacture, the tenant was left without a key to the communal area for over a month.

An apology and an offer of £250 compensation was made in acknowledgement of the distress and hardship caused by the poor communication and the delays in obtaining the communal door key by the Tenancy Services Team.

Head of Service Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience of not proactively chasing the completion of the key order and not communicating correctly with the complainant. Reminders have been issued to the Housing Operations Team of the importance of this.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

- The Tenancy Services Team have been reminded of their responsibility to ensure that external suppliers promptly undertake actions requested.
- The Tenancy Services Team have been reminded of their responsibility to provide correspondence to individuals to ensure that delays are communicated correctly.
- The Tenancy Services Team have been reminded of their responsibility to keep accurate records.

22. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council to report that a lamp post was not working. The repair took more than eight weeks to expedite and there was a lack of response from the Repairs Team.

Council's response

It was concluded that the tenant did not receive an appropriate level of service as the Housing Repairs Team unreasonably delayed the repairing of the lamp post.

While the Housing Repairs Team correctly received the reports of the lamp post requiring repairing, delays occurred due to several of the appointments being missed by the Housing Repairs Team and the subsequent electrical contractor.

The Housing Repairs Team did not inform the tenant of these delays, nor did they inform them of rearranged appointments.

An apology for this was issued along with compensation of £250.

Head of Service Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by not correctly undertaking the works in the first instance. The Housing Repairs Team were reminded of their responsibility to correct assess and book works undertaken by contractors.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

- The Housing Repairs Team has been reminded of their responsibility to ensure that external contractors promptly undertake actions requested.
- The Housing Repairs Team has been reminded of their responsibility to return correspondence in a timely manner.

- The Housing Repairs Team has been reminded of their responsibility to undertake actions identified during the complaint process.
- Managers have been reminded of the importance of ensuring that employees undertake actions identified during the complaint process, and that they should be monitoring this.
- The Housing Repairs Team has been reminded to provide correspondence to individuals where delays in works arise.

STAGE 3 – Complaints to The Local Government Ombudsman/Housing Ombudsman

Stage 3 - Ombudsman Complaint

1. Complaint against Housing Repairs (complaint concluded in 2023/24)

Complaint Upheld.

Complaint

The concern raised was that the Council had not adequately dealt an issue of damp and mould.

Ombudsman's conclusion

The Housing Ombudsman (HO) concluded that the resident experienced damp and mould in the property for a significant period (since November 2019) and spent considerable time and trouble pursuing a resolution. Within the Council's responses, the HO acknowledged that the Council had not disputed that the Council failed to identify and resolve the damp within the property over several years, and that the Council had not communicated effectively, meaning that the resident needed to continue to report the damp. It was recognised that the Council also acknowledged that it had not scheduled or logged the required works correctly which exacerbated the issues and led to further delay and distress.

The HO acknowledged that the Council had taken steps to put things right for the resident by acknowledging the delay and disruption caused, and offering a total of £4,380 compensation within its complaint responses. This offer is significant and is within a range the Ombudsman considers proportionate in instances of severe maladministration where there has been a serious impact on a resident and the redress required to put things right is considerable.

The HO order the Council to pay an additional £250 in recognition of the distress caused to the complainant.

2. Complaint against Planning (complaint concluded in Q1)

Complaint not Upheld.

Complaint

The concern raised was that the Council had not adequately dealt with a planning application. The complainant also raised concerns that information was removed from the Council's website and the Council prepared misleading and incorrect reports.

Ombudsman's conclusion

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGO) noted that the complainant had raised many concerns about how the Council had dealt with a planning application for a development in the area where they live. The Council refused planning permission for the development. However, the developer used their right to appeal to the Planning Inspector. The complainant had complained about incorrect information included within the planning report and raised concerns about misleading information being provided to the Planning Inspector.

However, the acceptability of the development would now be determined by the Planning Inspector. The LGO cannot investigate decisions made by the Inspector. It was noted that the complainant also had the opportunity to comment on the appeal and raise their concerns about the application.

The LGO cannot investigate decisions made by the Planning Inspector and there was no evidence of fault by the Council.

3. Complaint against Housing Repairs (complaint concluded in 2023/24)

Complaint Upheld.

Complaint

The concern raised was that the Council had not adequately dealt with an issue of a leak at the complainant's property.

Ombudsman's conclusion

The Housing Ombudsman (HO) concluded that the first leak of February 2021 was attended within the landlord's emergency timescale of 3 working days, which was reasonable, and the hole in the kitchen ceiling was repaired within 20 working days, which was also reasonable.

However, there remained outstanding remedial work to the kitchen ceiling between February 2021 and June 2023. This was an unreasonable period of approximately 18 months beyond the Council's Repair Policy timescale of 20 working days for routine repairs.

The HO recognised that the Council had not disputed its repairing responsibilities in this case. The Council acknowledged delays in its repair services and explained that this was due to the works not being passed on to its operatives after being logged by the resident and inspectors. The Council apologised and acknowledged that it had not provided a reasonable repair service.

The HO ordered the Council to pay £900 in recognition of the distress caused to the complainant.