

Appendix 3 - Housing Support Services

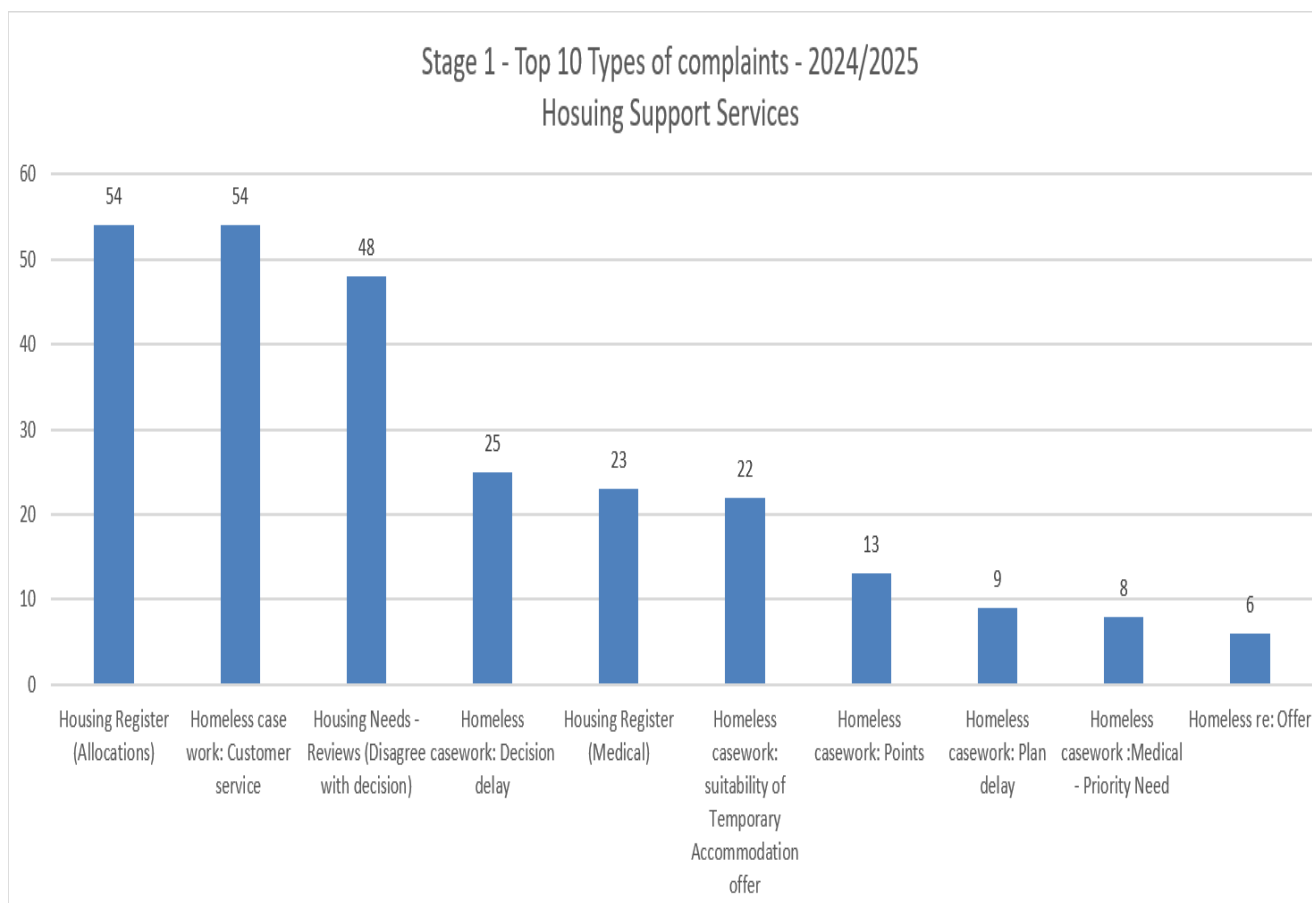
(Housing solutions, allocations and temporary accommodation)

[2023/2024 figures in brackets]

Service Area	Number of complaints	percentage upheld/partly upheld	percentage responded to within 10 working days	percentage responded to outside 10 working days	Average w/days
Housing Solutions	135 (186)	43% (26%)	51% (37%)	48% (69%)	35 (40)
Homelessness Prevention	148	27%	36.5%	63.5%	20
Private Sector Housing	27 (8)	40% (25%)	67% (50%)	33% (63%)	30 (26)
Temporary Accommodation	23 (8)	22% (38%)	17% (13%)	83% (25%)	29 (40)

The upheld/partly upheld rate is relatively low, indicating that in a quarter of cases the service agreed that at least one element had failed and needed to be put right, and in another quarter that there was no service failure. The service is committed to critically examining how they consider complaints and, through what lens they assess them, to adopt a more customer-centred focus.

Types of Complaint



Reviewing complaints received across the service, we have identified the following areas and trends:

1. Complaints regarding location & type of accommodation, short placement and need to move frequently.

The Council has continued to see a rise in homelessness applications, leading to an increase in demand for temporary accommodation of almost 40% in the last year. As a result, the service had been over-reliant on commercial hotels across London when placing households facing homelessness. We are actively expanding the supply of more suitable self-contained accommodation whilst continuing to work with current hotel providers to agree longer-term placement agreements, thus minimising the disruption caused by frequent moves.

The service has reduced to zero the number of homeless families in commercial hotels, while we have also increased the supply of self-contained temporary accommodation. The service has avoided placing households in temporary accommodation outside London; however, there is a reliance on affordable, suitable accommodation outside the borough.

2. Complaints regarding delays to housing assessments and lack of information.

A major restructuring of the Housing service was undertaken in 2024/25, which saw a newly transformed, resident-centric service implemented in quarter four of the year. The Homelessness Prevention service has seen an increase in officer resources to respond to the rise in demand, which will deliver improved and faster assessment times whilst tackling and reducing backlogs.

The recent restructure has streamlined the delivery of the Housing Allocations and Lettings Service. Following a successful recruitment campaign, the team now has a full staffing complement to deliver a more efficient and responsive lettings service for residents. Transformation work, developed in collaboration with residents, has led to a review and improvement of key elements of the lettings process. The service has recently enhanced the information available on our webpages and other public platforms, and has also improved the clarity and quality of written decision letters issued to applicants.

3. Complaints relating to delays in response, insufficient information, and a lack of clarity around the process have featured in feedback about the service.

As part of the housing restructure, a new Reviews and Improvement Service has been established to manage all review and complaint responses. The service is also responsible for driving improvements based on insights gained from monitoring complaints. The team is expected to be fully resourced by Quarter 3 of 2025, which will help reduce response times and ensure that learning from complaints is effectively implemented.