



Annual Housing Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report

2025-26

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This is the Council's third Annual Housing Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report, produced following the introduction of the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, which came into effect on 1 April 2024.
- 1.2 The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 introduced enhanced statutory powers and duties for the Housing Ombudsman. In this strengthened regulatory environment, it is essential that the Council demonstrates full compliance with the Code alongside a clear commitment to transparency, accountability, and continuous service improvement.
- 1.3 The Council also complies with the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards. Our approach is guided by the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard, which requires us to:
 - a) Maintain an effective and accessible complaints process
 - b) Demonstrate learning from complaints
 - c) Deliver service improvements
 - d) Publish performance data to support openness and scrutiny
- 1.4 This report sets out the Council's complaints performance, key achievements, and lessons learned during the reporting period. It is intended for the Housing Ombudsman, elected Members, and, most importantly, our residents. The Council also publishes an annual Complaint Handling Code Self-Assessment in line with Ombudsman requirements.
- 1.5 This report covers the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 and includes all complaints relating to landlord services provided by Oadby & Wigston Borough Council or contractors acting on its behalf. It excludes complaints relating to homelessness, housing benefit, and other local authority functions under the remit of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.
- 1.6 Complaints included in this report were submitted by tenants, leaseholders, or representatives acting on their behalf and were investigated by the relevant Housing Service Managers.

2. Definition of a Complaint

- 2.1 In accordance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, the Council defines a complaint as:

“An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or a group of residents.”

- 2.2 The following are not treated as complaints under this definition:
 - a) Initial service requests
 - b) Reports of anti-social or nuisance behaviour
 - c) Complaints about Councillors or Members
 - d) Freedom of Information or Subject Access Requests
 - e) Appeals against service decisions
 - f) Insurance claims

These are managed under separate procedures.

3. The Complaint Process

3.1 Complaints can be made via telephone, email, the Council's website, post, in person through Customer Services, or social media. Residents are not required to use the term "complaint;" the Council will identify and record any qualifying expression of dissatisfaction.

3.2 The Council operates a two-stage complaints process in line with the Housing Ombudsman's Code.

Stage 1

3.3 Stage 1 complaints are acknowledged within five working days. The acknowledgement will:

- a) Confirm our understanding of the complaint
- b) Clarify the desired outcome
- c) Provide a target response date
- d) Include Housing Ombudsman contact details.

3.4 A full Stage 1 response is issued within ten working days and will:

- a) Outline the investigation undertaken
- b) Provide findings and conclusions
- c) Confirm whether the complaint is upheld
- d) Detail any actions or remedies
- e) Offer compensation where appropriate
- f) Explain escalation rights

3.5 Where required, an extension of up to ten additional working days may be applied. Reasons will be clearly communicated

Stage 2

3.6 Complaints may be escalated to Stage 2 where:

- a) The complainant remains dissatisfied; or
- b) Agreed actions have not been delivered

3.7 Stage 2 complaints are acknowledged within five working days and will:

- a) Confirm the reason for escalation
- b) Define the scope of the review
- c) Identify any issues already resolved

3.8 A final response is issued within twenty working days and will:

- a) Present review findings
- b) Confirm final decisions
- c) Outline any revised actions or remedies
- d) Confirm completion of the internal process

e) Provide Ombudsman escalation details

3.9 Extensions of up to twenty additional working days may be applied where justified and will be clearly explained.

Housing Ombudsman

3.10 The Council is a member of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme and must comply with the Complaint Handling Code, including annual reporting and self-assessment.

3.11 Failure to comply may result in:

- a) Complaint Handling Failure Orders
- b) Regulatory referral
- c) Public reporting of non-compliance

3.12 Complaints must normally complete the Council's internal process before the Ombudsman will investigate, although the Ombudsman may intervene to progress cases where appropriate

3.13 The Ombudsman may request evidence, propose resolutions, or recommend mediation during investigations.

3.14 Following investigation, the Ombudsman may determine:

- a) Service failure
- b) Maladministration
- c) Severe maladministration
- d) No maladministration

3.15 They may require actions including apologies, compensation, service improvements, or policy review.

3.16 The Council must evidence compliance with all Ombudsman orders.

4. Performance

4.1 Between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026, the Council handled 34 Stage 1 complaints, representing a 47.8% increase on the previous year.

4.2 A further 7 complaints were not progressed:

- a) 5 resolved at an early stage
- b) 1 reclassified as a service request
- c) 1 transferred to another service area

4.3 94% (32 of 34) Stage 1 complaints were responded to within required timescales.

4.4 Table 1 provides an overview of the Stage 1 complaints by service area and the outcomes following an investigation:

Service area	Total complaints	Number of complaints upheld	Number of complaints partially upheld	Number of complaints not upheld
Repairs & Maintenance	18	6	7	5
Tenancy & Estates	14	1	4	9
Lettings	2	0	0	2
Total	34	7 (21%)	11 (32%)	16 (47%)

Table 1

4.5 A total of 15 Stage 2 complaints were handled, representing a 200% increase from the previous year.

4.6 100% of Stage 2 complaints were responded to within timescales.

4.7 Table 2 provides an overview of the Stage 2 complaints by service area:

Service area	Total complaints	Number of complaints upheld	Number of complaints partially upheld	Number of complaints not upheld
Repairs & Maintenance	5	2	2	1
Tenancy & Estates	10	3	2	5
Total	15	5 (33%)	4 (27%)	6 (40%)

Table 2

5. Compensation

5.1 Total compensation awarded across all stages in 2025/26: £2,425

- a) Stage 1: £600 (5 cases)
- b) Stage 2: £1,225 (6 cases)
- c) Housing Ombudsman: £600 (1 case)

6. Housing Ombudsman

6.1 The Council received one determination during 2025/26. The Ombudsman issued findings of:

- a) Maladministration (disrepair)
- b) Maladministration (failure to provide asbestos information)
- c) Service failure (complaint handling)

- 6.2 Decisions are published by the Ombudsman with anonymised details.
- 6.3 Case Summary – Case 202419658 (Decision: 12 August 2025) The complaint related to a tenancy terminated shortly after commencement due to concerns about property condition, particularly flooring and asbestos information. Orders issued:
- a) Formal apology
 - b) £600 compensation:
 - o £250 – disrepair handling
 - o £300 – asbestos information failure
 - o £50 – expectation management
 - c) Additional support regarding housing application and rehousing options
- 6.4 The Council complied with all orders in full.
- 6.5 As of 31 March 2026, there were no outstanding Ombudsman investigations.

Landlord Performance Report

- 6.6 The Ombudsman continues to promote transparency through published landlord performance reports. Reports are issued for landlords with five or more findings within a reporting period.

7. Trends and Learning

- 7.1 Analysis of complaints has identified recurring themes which are captured in table 3. With each theme actions were applied to help reduce the risk of further complaints.

Theme	Action
Communication	To ensure that regular communication with our tenants is maintained, is clear and proportionate to the issues raised
Advice	To ensure that tenants receive appropriate advice and signpost to relevant services if we are unable to directly assist with queries.
Contractor Performance	To ensure that any performance concerns are appropriately addressed, contactors should be managed through the contract management framework to ensure accountability and compliance.
Processes and Procedures	To ensure processes and procedures are robust and efficient
Repairs	Ensure residents are informed of inspection outcomes, even when inspections relate to communal areas.
	Ensure remedial works are carried out promptly.
	Ensure appointments are booked promptly to complete the damp, mould, and condensation inspection.
	Ensure required works are commissioned promptly and that tenants are informed of the outcomes.

Contractor Service	Ensure the complaint is reviewed with contractor and identify lessons learned, including obtaining assurance.
	Ensure a post-installation quality control check is introduced for all contractor works to confirm compliance with required standards.
	Ensure that contractors are fully aware of the expected Housing Contractors Code of Conduct when visiting OWBC properties and when engaging with tenants and residents.
	Ensure that thorough post-installation inspections are completed and that appropriate care is taken within the resident's home.
	Ensure contractor strengthens communication channels with tenants and the council to support better coordination and service delivery.
	Continue to work closely with contractor to ensure the correct level of service is provided to the tenant and consistently delivered to all tenants going forward.
Support	Ensure the Vulnerable Person Officer contacts tenants, where appropriate, to arrange and carry out a vulnerable person risk assessment.
	Ensure the Housing Options Team engages with the tenant, where appropriate, to develop and implement a support plan.
Information Sharing	Provide clear feedback to complaints investigating officers to support the review of significant learning points.

Table 3

Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)

7.2 Tenant satisfaction with complaint handling increased to 43.6%, up from 23.2%. This exceeds the national median of 35.5%. Further improvement remains a key priority.

8. Improvement Actions for 2026/27

- 8.1 Following Ombudsman feedback, the Council will implement a revised Housing Complaints Policy to ensure full compliance with the Code.
- 8.2 The Council will strengthen its approach to recognising and recording complaints as opportunities for improvement.
- 8.3 Resourcing and systems will be reviewed to manage increased volumes and regulatory expectations.
- 8.4 Learning from complaints will continue to inform service improvements.