

North Yorkshire Council

Housing and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee 23 September 2025

Housing Complaints Handling Update Q1 2025/26

Report of the Corporate Director Community Development

1.0 PURPOSE OF

- 1.1 To provide an update to the Housing and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the complaints handling performance within the Housing Service.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 Complaint handling is a critical component of effective service delivery. Complaints provide crucial insights into residents' experiences which can help direct service improvement. As both a landlord and the strategic housing authority, North Yorkshire Council need to be receptive to complaints to help build a greater understanding of residents' priorities and areas of shortfall in our provision. Clear and transparent complaint handling is vital to ensure lessons can be learnt from outcomes.
- 2.2 As a social landlord our responsibilities around complaint handling are set out in legislation and codes of guidance. Effective complaints handling, and the accurate recording of this data are key requirements social housing landlords are required to adhere to under the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 and the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code. This legislation gave the Housing Ombudsman responsibility to monitor compliance with the complaints handling code.
- 2.3 As a social landlord a positive complaint handling culture supports the cultivation of a positive relationship with our tenants who can then trust us to respond to complaints in a timely manner. Being viewed as a proactive landlord who responds to tenant needs works towards North Yorkshire Council's commitment to improving our tenant's overall experience. Elected Members play a crucial part in this by challenging and scrutinising our complaints data.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 requires social landlords to measure tenant satisfaction, complaints handling is included in this metric. This legislation gave the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code statutory power. Therefore, there is a legal obligation for local authorities to comply with, and demonstrate their compliance, with this code.
- 3.3 The Housing Ombudsman provides a skeleton framework to which all social housing providers must adhere to, but it is up to the individual housing provider to decide the operational components of this framework to account for their service capacity.
- 3.4 As a result of NYC's first self-assessment of compliance with that code the Housing Complaints Policy was updated June 2024, utilising the Housing Ombudsman's framework to develop an improved policy.
- 3.5 As obligated by the Housing Ombudsman, North Yorkshire Council has a two stage complaints process. At Stage One, an acknowledgement will be provided within five working days, and a response within 10 working days detailing any resolution that may take place. Should a tenant be unhappy with their outcome, they can request for their complaint to be raised to Stage Two. At this stage, a response must be given within 20 working days.

4.0 COMPLAINTS PERFORMANCE

4.1 A complaint is defined as: ‘an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.’ A tenant does not have to use the word ‘complaint’ for it to be treated as such.

4.2 During Quarter One 2025/26 the Housing Service received a total of 89 new Stage One complaints. Table One below shows that 18 of those complaints were regarding General Fund Housing Services whilst 71 were from our social housing tenants/ leaseholders.

Table 1 Count of new Stage One complaints by acknowledgement date

Type		Stage 1			
Count of Ref	Column Labels	Apr	May	Jun	Grand Total
Row Labels					
Housing - General		8	4	6	18
Housing Delivery				1	1
Housing Management				2	2
Housing Needs		6	2	2	10
Housing Renewal		1	2	1	4
Housing Standards		1			1
Housing - Tenant		21	25	25	71
Housing Delivery		1		1	2
Housing Management		1	6	5	12
Housing Needs				1	1
Housing Standards		19	19	18	56
Grand Total		29	29	31	89

4.3. A further breakdown (Table 2) highlights that 64% of all complaints received were regarding our Housing Standards Service (responsible for council house repairs, stock condition and planned maintenance) and 16% were regarding Housing Management (responsible for tenancy management). Therefore in Quarter 1, 83% of all housing complaints were regarding our landlord services.

4.4 The split between complaints received about our landlord services and general housing complaints remains consistent with the 2024/25 figures where the majority of complaints received were from our tenants and/or leaseholders. Table 3 below details a further breakdown of complaints received about our landlord services.

Table 2 Number of new Stage One Housing Complaints by Service Area, monthly

Service Area		(All)											
Type		Stage 1											
Column Labels													
Q1 25/26													
Apr													
May													
Jun													
Q1 25/26 % of column total													
Q1 25/26 Numerator													
Total % of column total													
Total Numerator													
Row Labels	% of column total	Numerator	% of column total	Numerator	% of column total	Numerator	% of column total	Numerator					
Housing Delivery	3.45%	1	0.00%	0	6.45%	2	3.37%	3	3.37%	3			
Housing Management	3.45%	1	20.69%	6	22.58%	7	15.73%	14	15.73%	14			
Housing Standards	68.97%	20	65.52%	19	58.06%	18	64.04%	57	64.04%	57			
Housing Needs	20.69%	6	6.90%	2	9.68%	3	12.36%	11	12.36%	11			
Housing Renewal	3.45%	1	6.90%	2	3.23%	1	4.49%	4	4.49%	4			
Grand Total	100.00%	29	100.00%	29	100.00%	31	100.00%	89	100.00%	89			

Table 3 Number of new Stage One Housing Tenant Complaints by Service Area, monthly

Stage One Tenant Complaints by Complaint Classification

Service Area		Housing - Tenant											
Type		Stage 1											
Column Labels													
Q1 25/26													
Apr													
May													
Jun													
Q1 25/26 % of column total													
Q1 25/26 Numerator													
Total % of column total													
Total Numerator													
Row Labels	% of column total	Numerator	% of column total	Numerator	% of column total	Numerator	% of column total	Numerator					
Housing Delivery	4.76%	1	0.00%	0	4.00%	1	2.82%	2	2.82%	2			
Other	4.76%	1	0.00%	0	4.00%	1	2.82%	2	2.82%	2			
Housing Management	4.76%	1	24.00%	6	20.00%	5	16.90%	12	16.90%	12			
Anti-social Behaviour	0.00%	0	12.00%	3	0.00%	0	4.23%	3	4.23%	3			
Communal/ Shared Area	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	4.00%	1	1.41%	1	1.41%	1			
Communications	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	4.00%	1	1.41%	1	1.41%	1			
Housing Allocations Policy/ Decision	0.00%	0	4.00%	1	8.00%	2	4.23%	3	4.23%	3			
Staff/ Contractor Conduct	4.76%	1	8.00%	2	4.00%	1	5.63%	4	5.63%	4			
Housing Standards	90.48%	19	76.00%	19	72.00%	18	78.87%	56	78.87%	56			
Communications	19.05%	4	8.00%	2	0.00%	0	8.45%	6	8.45%	6			
Damp and Mould Concern	4.76%	1	4.00%	1	8.00%	2	5.63%	4	5.63%	4			
Gas Safety Concern	4.76%	1	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	1.41%	1	1.41%	1			
Lift Safety Concern	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	4.00%	1	1.41%	1	1.41%	1			
Other	4.76%	1	4.00%	1	0.00%	0	2.82%	2	2.82%	2			
Repairs - dissatisfaction with quality of work	9.52%	2	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	2.82%	2	2.82%	2			
Repairs - time take to resolve	42.86%	9	56.00%	14	44.00%	11	47.89%	34	47.89%	34			
Staff/ Contractor Conduct	4.76%	1	4.00%	1	4.00%	1	4.23%	3	4.23%	3			
Building Fabric Concern	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	4.00%	1	1.41%	1	1.41%	1			
Water Safety Concern	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	4.00%	1	1.41%	1	1.41%	1			
Fire Safety Concern	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	4.00%	1	1.41%	1	1.41%	1			
Housing Needs	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	4.00%	1	1.41%	1	1.41%	1			
Staff/ Contractor Conduct	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	4.00%	1	1.41%	1	1.41%	1			
Grand Total	100.00%	21	100.00%	25	100.00%	25	100.00%	71	100.00%	71			

5.0 HRA COMPLAINTS

5.1 Further analysis of the complaints received for our landlord services shows that of the 71 received in Quarter 1, 79% (56) were regarding our Housing Standards service and of those 56, 48% (34) were classified as 'Repairs – time taken to resolve'. This is reflective of the high volume of repair requests being received, alongside the increased workload of the repairs time in dealing with repairs raised as a result of the stock condition survey programme.

5.2 Table 4 provides a breakdown of Stage One landlord service complaints by locality. The information available shows that overall, the number of complaints is reflective of the size of the housing stock in the localities, with no noticeable peaks. The average number of new stage one complaints received per month in Quarter One was 23.6, this has fallen from an average of 30 per month across 2024/25.

Table 4 Stage One complaints received by month and locality

Service Area	Housing - Tenant	Apr	May	Jun	Grand Total
Type	Stage 1				
Count of Ref	Column Labels				
Row Labels					
Housing Delivery		1	1		2
Harrogate			1		1
Selby		1			1
Housing Management		1	6	5	12
Hambleton			1		1
Harrogate			3	3	6
Richmondshire		1			1
Scarborough			1		1
Selby			3		3
Housing Needs			1		1
Harrogate			1		1
Housing Standards		19	19	18	56
Hambleton		1	2		3
Harrogate		9	10	7	26
Richmondshire		4	1	2	7
Selby		5	8	6	19
(blank)			1		1
Grand Total		21	25	25	71

5.3 Despite high complaint figures not necessarily being indicative of poor provision, in Quarter One 61% of tenant complaints were either upheld (51%) or partly upheld (10%). This is a slight decrease from 2024/25 when 67% were upheld (55%) or partly upheld (12%).

Table 5 Summary of outcomes of those complaints closed in month

Service Area	Housing - Tenant	May	Jun	Total Count	Total %
Type	Stage 1				
Status	Closed				
Labels					
Count	%	Count	%		
Upheld	9 60.00%	13 48.15%	9 47.37%	31	
Partly Upheld	2 13.33%	1 3.70%	3 15.79%	6	
Not Upheld	4 26.67%	10 37.04%	4 21.05%	18	
Not Pursued / Investigated		1 3.70%	3 15.79%	4	
N/A		2 7.41%	0.00%	2	
Grand Total	15 100.00%	27 100.00%	19 100.00%	61	

- 5.4 During 2024/25 the service were actively monitoring the increase in complaints received and increasing our communications with tenants and staff around the complaints process. This, alongside our improved complaint handling process resulted in an increased number of complaints and an increase in complaints being upheld. It is yet to be seen if this decrease in complaints received and decrease in complaints being upheld is part of a longer term trend and should be viewed alongside tenant satisfaction feedback to determine if this signifies an improvement in service provision and complaint handling or apathy with the complaints process.
- 5.5 Regarding our complaint handling performance and compliance with response timescales. Performance during Quarter One averaged at 85% of complaints responded to within timescale. (Table 6) This is an increased on the 2024/25 average where 69% of Stage One complaints were responded to within timescale.

Table 6 Summary of Stage One complaints closed in month within policy timescales

Service Area		Housing - Tenant		Type		Stage 1		Status		Closed	
Column Labels		Apr		May		Jun		Total Count		Total %	
Row Labels	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%					
N	1	6.67%	5	14.75%	3	18.52%	9				
Y	14	85.25%	22	93.33%	16	84.21%	52				
Grand Total	15	100.00%	27	100.00%	19	100.00%	61				

- 5.6 In terms of Stage Two complaints received in Quarter One, 13 new complaints were received for landlord services. 85% (11) of these Stage Two complaints were assigned to Housing Standards. This is equivalent to 15% of Stage One complaints resulting in a Stage Two complaint, demonstrating the effective complaint handling by the Housing Team as tenants feel satisfied with a resolution to their complaint. The low proportion of tenants requiring follow up investigation is indicative of the Housing Service's ability to respond and resolve complaints to a satisfactory level.

6.0 CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

- 6.1 Having an effective complaints policy aligns to two key council priorities:
- Good quality, value for money services that are customer focused and accessible to all.
 - People are free from harm and feel safe and protected.

7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Complaints which are not resolved to a satisfactory standard for the tenant can be progressed to the Housing Ombudsman. This can have financial implications for the Council the Ombudsman can direct compensation. It is within the Council's interest to action and resolve complaints quickly.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The implementation of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 and the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code has placed a legal requirement on all social housing providers to have an accessible and comprehensive complaints policy. As part of this, providers of social housing must be able to evidence effective complaints handling.
- 8.2 Our responsibilities as a Local Authority housing provider means we are also bound to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman which covers all housing provision other than

social housing.

8.3 Failure to comply with this legal obligation leads to maladministration claims.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Currently, our complaints procedure does not and is not developed to collect equalities data. Therefore, we cannot comment on any correlations between our complaints and tenant characteristics. This is a key area of improvement our system needs to be able to collect more extensive data about our tenants.

9.2 A new corporate complaints system has been developed which will collect equalities data, this is planned to be launched Quarter Three 2025/26.

10.0 PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Housemark is a national database of performance related data for social housing providers. It provides a comparison between other housing providers based on HRA related complaints, allowing us to benchmark our performance.

10.2 Using Housemark data, NYC is improving its performance, becoming more in line with the median number of complaints housing providers receive each month however, the length of time taken to respond to complaints has slipped in comparison to others in the benchmarking group.

KPI	Year	Month	NYC	Quartile	Quartile 3	Median	Quartile 1
Formal Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints received per 1,000 properties	2025	April	2.52	4	3.25	4.99	7.535
Formal Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints received per 1,000 properties	2025	May	3.96	3	2.9	4.86	6.68
Formal Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints received per 1,000 properties	2025	June	4.08	3	3.38	5.09	7.75
Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints resolved within timescale (%)	2025	April	90.48	3	76	94	100
Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints resolved within timescale (%)	2025	May	86.84	3	80	94.44	100
Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints resolved within timescale (%)	2025	June	75	4	80.14	97	100

Table 7 Housemark Benchmarking Q1 2025/26

11.0 CONCLUSIONS

11.1 Since the introduction of an improved complaints policy in response to the revised Housing Ombudsman Code, our complaints handling has improved. We now have more assurance that complaints regarding our landlord services are reaching the right officers and are being more accurately tracked, responded to and learnt from.

11.2 In terms of our tenancy services, the number of complaints and the percentage of complaints being upheld has decreased in Quarter One. Though the number of complaints received is beginning to mirror the average number of complaints received per 1,000 across peer housing providers, continued improvement is needed to understand the number of complaints, in particular those upheld and meet our ambition to becoming an 'exemplar social landlord'.

- 11.3 The continued low percentage (15%) of complaints that progress onto Stage Two (see para 5.6) can be viewed two ways; either a low number progress to Stage Two due to the effectiveness of our complaints handling, or a low number progress as tenants feel unable / unsupported to progress complaints to Stage Two after completing the Stage One process – this could be linked to the length of time taken to resolve complaints. It is only by surveying tenants once their complaint has been closed that we would start to get any feedback on this.
- 11.4 Compared to other housing providers, we fell within the lowest quartile in relation to complaints handling in June 2025. Of particular concern is the percentage of complaints not resolved to timescales; we need to ensure our complaints handling meet expectations and follow guidelines. When comparing data across Quarter One, our performance is improving. However, more work is needed to ensure we provide a more consistent service for our tenants.

12.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 12.1 As part of our commitment to being a tenant focused landlord, it is good practice to report on our complaints data to help build a better picture of commonly reported complaints to establish patterns within the data to target service improvement. It is important to provide the Tenant Forum and the Housing and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee with regular updates regarding this data and our complaints handling procedures to help guide this work.

13.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 13.1 The Committee is asked to consider the contents of the report and comment on the progress made along with the issues raised in this report with regards to possible improvements.

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10 September 2025

Report Author & Presenter – Vicky Young, Service Improvement Manager

APPENDICES:

Appendix A – Housing Complaints Dashboard

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

[Social Housing \(Regulation\) Act 2023](#)

[North Yorkshire Council Housing Complaints Policy](#)

Note: Members are invited to contact the author in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or questions.