

North Yorkshire Council

Housing and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee

3 March 2026

Housing Complaints Handling Update Q3 2025/26

Report of the Corporate Director Community Development

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 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 demonstrates North Yorkshire Council's commitment to improving our tenant's overall experience. Elected Members and Tenants 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 compliance, with the code.
- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 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 Three 2025/26 the Housing Service received a total of 144 new Stage One complaints. Table One below shows that 19 of those complaints were regarding General Fund Housing Services whilst 125 were from our social housing tenants/ leaseholders, up from 102 in Quarter Two.

Table 1 Count of new Stage One complaints by acknowledgement date

Count of Quarter	Column Labels									
Row Labels	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Grand Total
Housing - General	7	4	8	8	11	3	7	4	8	60
Housing Delivery			1		1					2
Housing Management			2							2
Housing Needs	6	2	4	3	4	1	3	2	4	29
Housing Renewal	1	2	1	5	6	2	4	2	4	27
Housing - Tenant	22	26	24	37	30	35	46	47	32	299
Housing Delivery	1		1		2	1		3		8
Housing Management	1	7	5	8	4	10	8	6	3	52
Housing Standards	20	19	18	29	24	24	38	38	29	239
Grand Total	29	30	32	45	41	38	53	51	40	359

- 4.3. Further breakdown (Table 2) highlights that 84% (105) of all HRA complaints received were regarding our Housing Standards Service (responsible for council house repairs, stock condition and planned maintenance), 13.6% (17) were regarding Housing Management (responsible for tenancy management) and 2.4% were regarding our Housing Delivery Service.
- 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 details a further breakdown of complaints received about our landlord services.

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

Column Labels		Q1 25/26		Q2 25/26		Q3 25/26		Total Count of Quarter	Total Count of Quarter2
Row Labels	Count of Quarter	Count of Quarter2	Count of Quarter	Count of Quarter2	Count of Quarter	Count of Quarter2			
Housing Delivery	2	2.78%	3	2.94%	3	2.40%	8	2.68%	
Housing Management	13	18.06%	22	21.57%	17	13.60%	52	17.39%	
Housing Standards	57	79.17%	77	75.49%	105	84.00%	239	79.93%	
Grand Total	72	100.00%	102	100.00%	125	100.00%	299	100.00%	

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

Column Labels		Q1 25/26		Q2 25/26		Q3 25/26		Total Count	Total %
Row Labels	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%			
Housing Delivery	2	2.78%	3	2.94%	3	2.40%	8	2.68%	
Building Fabric Concern		0.00%	1	0.98%		0.00%	1	0.33%	
Communications		0.00%	2	1.96%	1	0.80%	3	1.00%	
Other	2	2.78%		0.00%	2	1.60%	4	1.34%	
Housing Management	13	18.06%	22	21.57%	17	13.60%	52	17.39%	
Anti-social Behaviour	3	4.17%	4	3.92%	4	3.20%	11	3.68%	
Building Fabric Concern		0.00%	1	0.98%		0.00%	1	0.33%	
Communal/ Shared Area	1	1.39%		0.00%		0.00%	1	0.33%	
Communications	2	2.78%	4	3.92%	3	2.40%	9	3.01%	
Housing Allocations Policy/ Decision	2	2.78%	3	2.94%		0.00%	5	1.67%	
Other		0.00%	5	4.90%	2	1.60%	7	2.34%	
Repairs - time take to resolve	1	1.39%	1	0.98%		0.00%	2	0.67%	
Staff/ Contractor Conduct	4	5.56%	4	3.92%	6	4.80%	14	4.68%	
(blank)		0.00%		0.00%	2	1.60%	2	0.67%	
Housing Standards	57	79.17%	77	75.49%	105	84.00%	239	79.93%	
Adaptations	1	1.39%		0.00%		0.00%	1	0.33%	
Anti-social Behaviour		0.00%	1	0.98%		0.00%	1	0.33%	
Asbestos Concern		0.00%		0.00%	1	0.80%	1	0.33%	
Building Fabric Concern	1	1.39%	3	2.94%	5	4.00%	9	3.01%	
Communications	6	8.33%	12	11.76%	9	7.20%	27	9.03%	
Damp and Mould Concern	4	5.56%	2	1.96%	2	1.60%	8	2.68%	
Fire Safety Concern	1	1.39%		0.00%		0.00%	1	0.33%	
Gas Safety Concern	1	1.39%		0.00%	3	2.40%	4	1.34%	
Housing Allocations Policy/ Decision		0.00%		0.00%	2	1.60%	2	0.67%	
Lift Safety Concern	1	1.39%		0.00%		0.00%	1	0.33%	
Other	2	2.78%	2	1.96%	4	3.20%	8	2.68%	
Repairs - dissatisfaction with quality of work	2	2.78%	9	8.82%	15	12.00%	26	8.70%	
Repairs - time take to resolve	34	47.22%	46	45.10%	60	48.00%	140	46.82%	
Staff/ Contractor Conduct	3	4.17%	2	1.96%	3	2.40%	8	2.68%	
Water Safety Concern	1	1.39%		0.00%		0.00%	1	0.33%	
(blank)		0.00%		0.00%	1	0.80%	1	0.33%	
Grand Total	72	100.00%	102	100.00%	125	100.00%	299	100.00%	

5.0 HRA COMPLAINTS

- 5.1 Further analysis of the complaints received for our landlord services shows that of the 125 received in Quarter Three, 84% (105) were regarding our Housing Standards service and of those 105, 48% (60) 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 through the stock condition survey programme. The team is currently experiencing a backlog of repairs which is reflected in the increased number of complaints coming through.
- 5.2 Table 4 provides a breakdown of Stage One landlord service complaints by locality. The information available shows that overall, the level of complaint is 4.9 per 1000 homes (up from 3.9 in Q2) and that Q3 complaint levels in Selby reflect this almost precisely however, the number of complaints per 1000 homes is higher in Harrogate (5.6) and lower in Richmondshire (2.1). The average number of new stage one complaints received per month in Quarter Three was 41.6, this has increased from an average of 33.3 per month in Quarter Two.
- 5.3 Broken down by locality and calculated as a figure per 1000 homes the following is found:

Locality	Q1 Average PCM	Q1 Complaints per 1000 homes	Q2 Average PCM	Q2 Complaints per 1000 homes	Q3 Average PCM	Q3 Complaints per 1000 homes
Harrogate	12	3.2	19	5	21.6	5.6
Richmondshire	4	2.5	2	1.25	3.3	2.1
Selby	8	2.3	13	3.8	16.3	4.8
Combined	23.3	2.7	33.3	3.9	41.6	4.9

Table 4 Stage One complaints received by month and locality

Count of Quarter	Column Labels			Grand Total
Row Labels	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Q3 25/26	Grand Total
Housing - Tenant	72	102	125	299
Craven		1		1
Housing Delivery		1		1
Harrogate	36	58	65	159
Housing Delivery	1	2	1	4
Housing Management	8	12	8	28
Housing Standards	27	44	56	127
Richmondshire	12	5	10	27
Housing Delivery			1	1
Housing Management	2		3	5
Housing Standards	10	5	6	21
Scarborough			1	1
Housing Management			1	1
Selby	24	38	49	111
Housing Delivery	1		1	2
Housing Management	3	10	5	18
Housing Standards	20	28	43	91
Grand Total	72	102	125	299

- 5.4 Despite high complaint figures not necessarily being indicative of poor provision, in Quarter Three 85% of tenant complaints were either upheld (62%) or partly upheld (23%), this is the highest level since performance monitoring began.

Table 5 Summary of outcomes of those complaints closed in month

Count of Quarter	Column Labels						Q3 25/26 Total	Grand Total
	Q1 25/26		Q2 25/26		Q3 25/26			
	October	November	December					
Housing - Tenant	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	
Not Pursued / Investigated	8.82%	9.90%	6.67%	4.44%	6.45%	5.79%	7.93%	
Not Upheld	27.94%	8.91%	13.33%	11.11%	0.00%	9.09%	13.45%	
Partly Upheld	16.18%	19.80%	22.22%	31.11%	12.90%	23.14%	20.34%	
Upheld	47.06%	61.39%	57.78%	53.33%	80.65%	61.98%	58.28%	
Grand Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	

5.5 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 was speculated that a peak had been reached and that a fall in complaints numbers in Quarter One saw levels coming back down however, as complaint numbers have risen again and, noticeably so in Harrogate particularly, we continue to see the result of increased pressure on the repairs service.

5.6 Regarding our complaint handling performance and compliance with response timescales. Performance during Quarter One averaged at 85% of complaints responded to within timescale, performance in Quarter Two this dropped to 61% (Table 6) and performance in Quarter 3 has dropped further to 58%.

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

Service Area	Housing - Tenant									
Type	(All)									
Status	Closed									
Count of Sent Ontime	Column Labels									Grand Total
	2025	Q1		Q2			Q3			
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
N	12.50%	17.86%	15.79%	42.86%	15.00%	48.72%	43.24%	39.02%	42.50%	34.70%
Y	87.50%	82.14%	84.21%	57.14%	85.00%	51.28%	56.76%	60.98%	57.50%	65.30%
Grand Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

5.7 In order to address this drop in performance additional resource has been secured, an additional Complaint Officer will be appointed, dedicated to Landlord Services and our approach to complaint handling will be refined to adopt a 'phone first' approach, improving tenant communication and resolution outcomes.

5.8 In terms of Stage Two complaints received in Quarter Three, 13 new complaints were received for landlord services. 85% (11) of these Stage Two complaints were assigned to Housing Standards. This is equivalent to 10.4% of Stage One complaints resulting in a Stage Two complaint, reduced from 15% in Quarter One, 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 and reflective of most of the complaints being upheld.

5.9 A critical element of complaint handling is the process around learning from complaints and using that learning to inform service improvement. Throughout Quarter Three there have been numerous examples of the housing service learning from complaints received.

Right to Buy process – after receiving several complaints regarding Right to Buy applications, the back-office process was improved to ensure that critical factors in the calculation of cost floor / discounts are moved to the start of the process and communicated to applicants, ensuring that customer expectations regarding discount amount are managed much earlier on.

Post-Stock Condition Survey Communication – after receiving a number of complaints regarding repairs not being carried out post- stock condition survey, the process was improved to include written communication to tenants on completion of the stock condition survey which outlines the repair works to be completed and the priority it has been assigned.

Damp and Mould – complaints data shows that we are receiving fewer complaints about damp and mould. This provides us with some assurance that the improved damp and mould reporting mechanisms are working and that tenants are able to raise these service requests more easily, leading to less dissatisfaction.

Complaints Resource – as our improved monitoring of complaints handling embeds, we are able to identify increased demand for complaint handling in a timelier manner. Monthly reporting to the Extended Management Team has twice highlighted drops in policy compliance and has triggered a Deep Dive Review to the Housing Improvement Board, resulting in improved processes and approval for resource dedicated to housing complaints.

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 Performance implications in terms of volume of complaints received and responses given compliant with policy timescales are detailed within the body of the report.

10.2 Complaint handling performance continues to be reported to the Extended Management Board on a monthly basis and to Housing Improvement Board by exception.

10.3 The introduction of a new corporate complaint handling system and implementation of the reporting module should improve our ability to report on performance, learning from complaints and any resulting actions.

11.0 TENANT VOICE

11.1 The North Yorkshire Council Tenant Scrutiny Panel has recently concluded its first scrutiny review; it's chosen topic being Complaints Handling. The panel have analysed the complaints policy, complaints performance data and examples of complaint responses as well as carrying out their own independent research into sector standards and good practice.

11.2 The findings and recommendations of the tenants' work will be brought forward for the attention of this committee to assist this committee in their task seeking assurance that the complaints policy is working effectively.

11.3 In response to the Panel's findings, several improvements have already been made; the complaints policy has been reviewed in line with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code and the complaint's resource is being increased. Further progress in implementing tenant recommendations will be reported back to the Scrutiny Panel quarterly.

12.0 CONCLUSIONS

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

11.2 In terms of our landlord services, the number of complaints and the percentage of complaints being upheld has increased again in Quarter Three. The distribution of complaints received continues the previous trend, with an increased number of complaints per 1000 homes in Harrogate and a lesser amount in Richmondshire.

11.3 The continued low percentage (10.4%) of complaints that progress onto Stage Two (see para 5.8) 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 When comparing data across quarters, our performance in terms of volumes and compliance with response timescales fell to the lowest since reporting began. However, interventions have been made which will hopefully see performance increase.

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 To consider the contents of the report and comment on the progress made along with the issues raised in this report and the interventions being made.

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19 February 2026

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

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

[North Yorkshire Council Housing Complaints Policy](#)

APPENDICES: None

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