

Complaints Performance and Service Improvement

Annual Report April 2023 – March 2024

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Derby Homes self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman’s Complaint Handling Code

All landlords must carry out an annual self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code to ensure their complaint handling remains in line with its requirements. Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure and/or change in procedures.

Derby Homes’ self-assessment for 2024 was approved at the Operational Board meeting on 7 March 2024 and can be viewed in full here: www.derbyhomes.org/advice-support/complaints

Derby Homes is fully compliant with the Housing Ombudsman’s Complaint Handling Code which applies from 1 April 2024.

Complaint-handling performance

Quantitative analysis of complaints

Related Tenant Satisfaction Measures (Landlord: Derby City Council and Derby Homes)

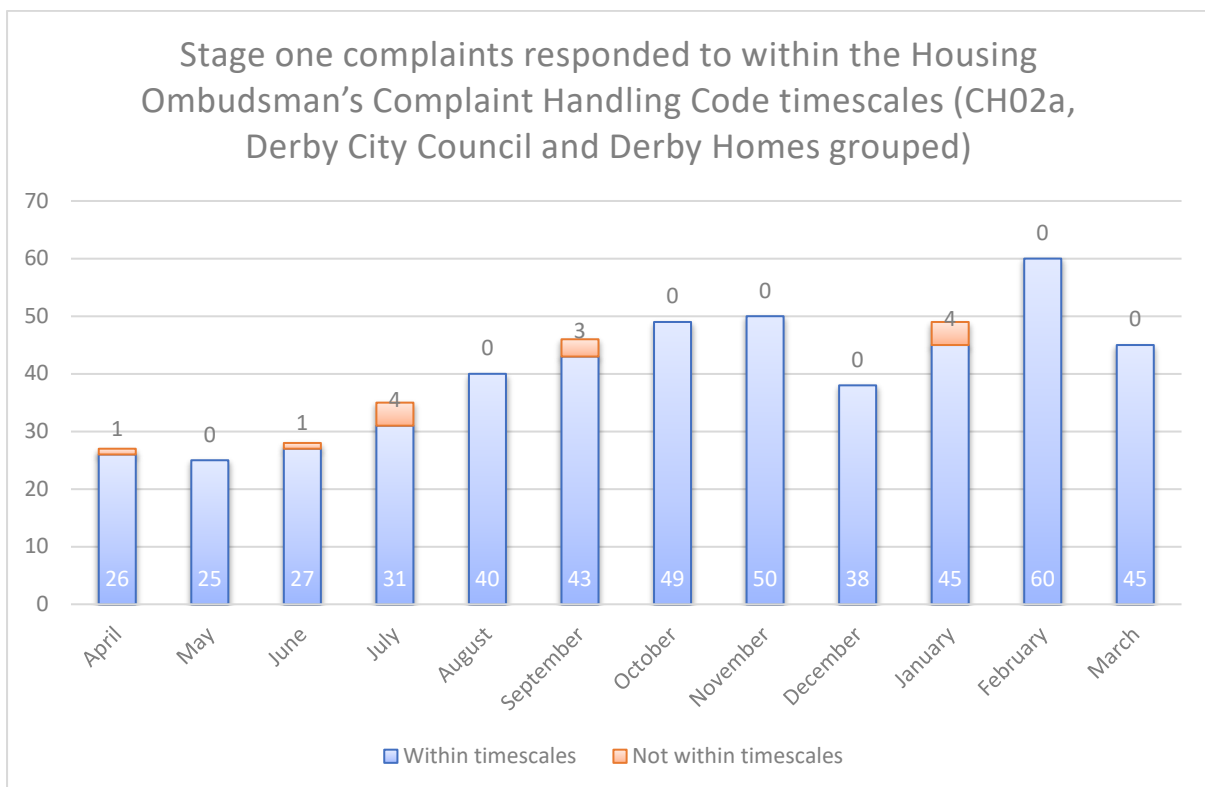
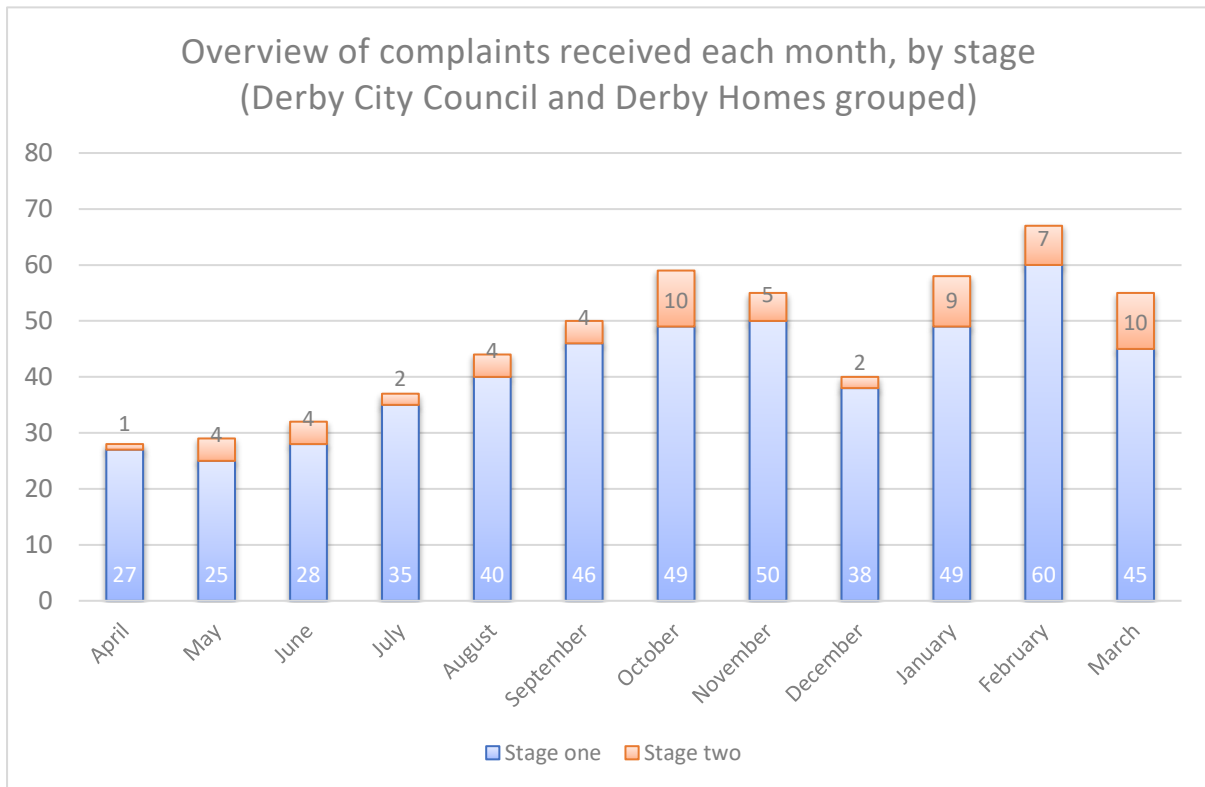
Proportion of respondents who report making a complaint in the last 12 months who are satisfied with their landlord’s approach to complaints handling (TP09)	51.2%
Number of stage one complaints received per 1,000 homes. (CH01a)	39
Number of stage two complaints received per 1,000 homes. (CH01b)	5
Proportion of stage one complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman’s Complaint Handling Code timescales. (CH02a)	97.4%
Proportion of stage two complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman’s Complaint Handling Code timescales. (CH02b)	93.6%

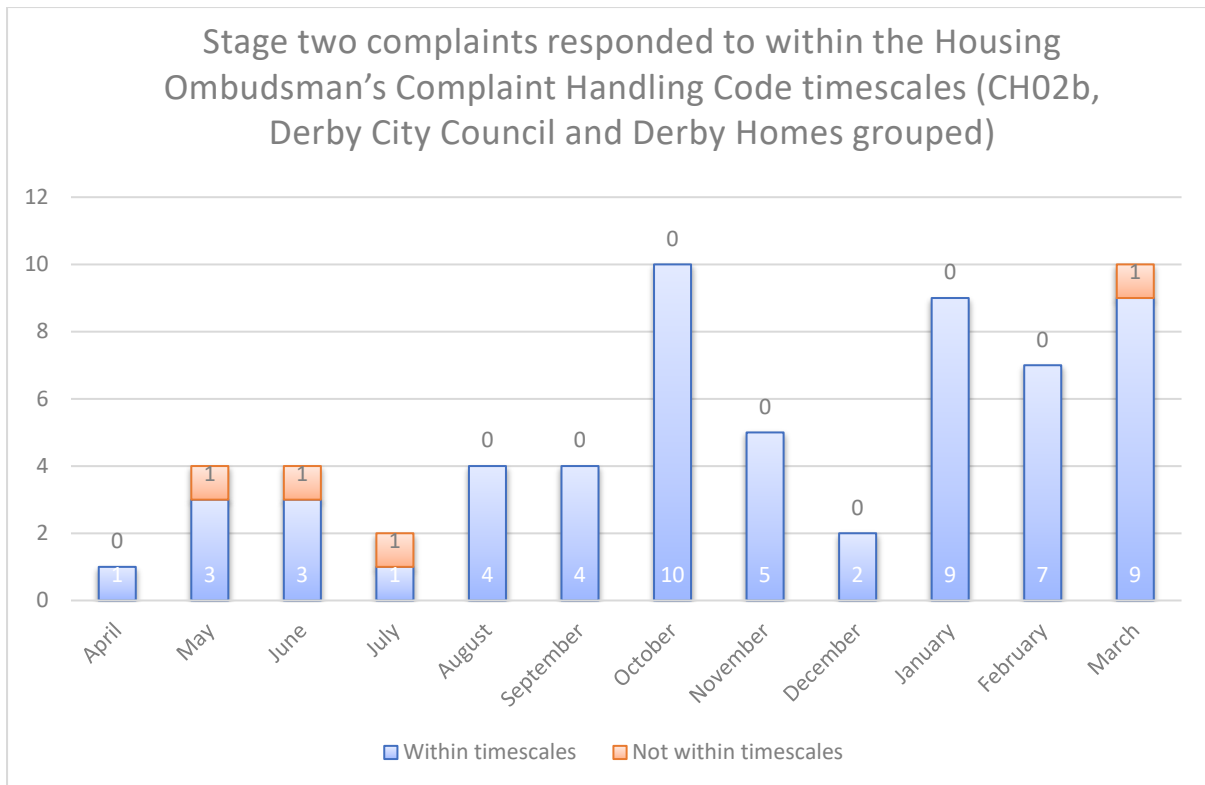
As this is the first year of collecting the figures for the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM), full analysis will not be able to be conducted until the end of year results can be compared with other housing organisations. However, Derby Homes did participate in a 6-month pilot for TSM benchmarking which was undertaken by Housemark. When we compare the results to Housemark 6-month figures, we anticipate to be performing in the upper-median quartile for CH01(a) and CH01(b). We anticipate to be performing in the upper quartile for CH02 (a) and CH02 (b). Based on these early indicators, Derby Homes are pleased with our complaints performance. For TP09, we have also seen that we are upper quartile for performance, as the median from Housemark was 31% against our performance of 51.2%.

For the next financial year, we would want to understand the TSM analysis of complaints performance for CH01 to understand what is an expected figure for ‘complaints received per 1,000 properties’ and whether more complaints are a good indicator (as we are listening to customers and learning more) or a negative indicator (as we receive a high volume of complaints). The team are working towards centralising how complaints are being handled in line with the Housing Ombudsman’s new handling guidance, which will also be interesting to see how these results are affected.

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The table below is focused on the Tenant Satisfaction definition of Derby City Council and Derby Homes stock only.





Complaint outcomes 2023/ 2024

This section gives an overview of all the complaints received by Derby Homes, which includes ‘other’ complaints not included in the Tenant Satisfaction Measures such as complaints from Leaseholders of neighboring properties that are not Derby City Council or Derby Homes housing stock. Therefore, the numbers of complaints will be higher than what is reported as part of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures. An overview is:

- TSM- Derby City Council and Derby Homes stage one complaints received 23/24: **492**
- TSM- Derby City Council and Derby Homes stage two complaints received 23/24: **62**
- Total stage one complaints received for all complaints 23/24: **584**
- Total stage two complaints received for all complaints 23/24: **75**

A complaint outcome is captured as either not upheld, upheld or partially upheld. The definition for these are:

Complaint not upheld

Our investigation finds that Derby Homes was not at fault.

Complaint upheld

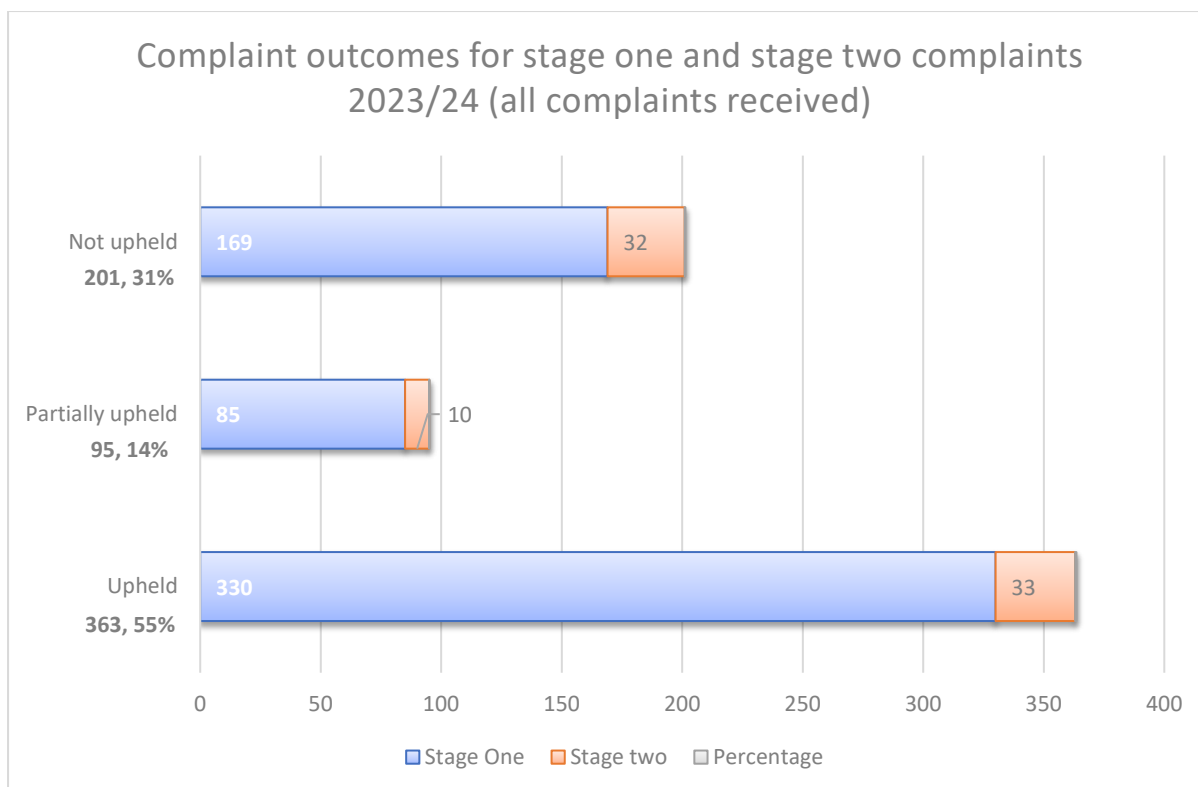
Our investigation finds that Derby Homes was at fault.

Complaint partially upheld

Our investigation finds that Derby Homes was at fault for some elements in a complaint.

The below outlines all complaints received and whether the complaints were not upheld, partially upheld or upheld.

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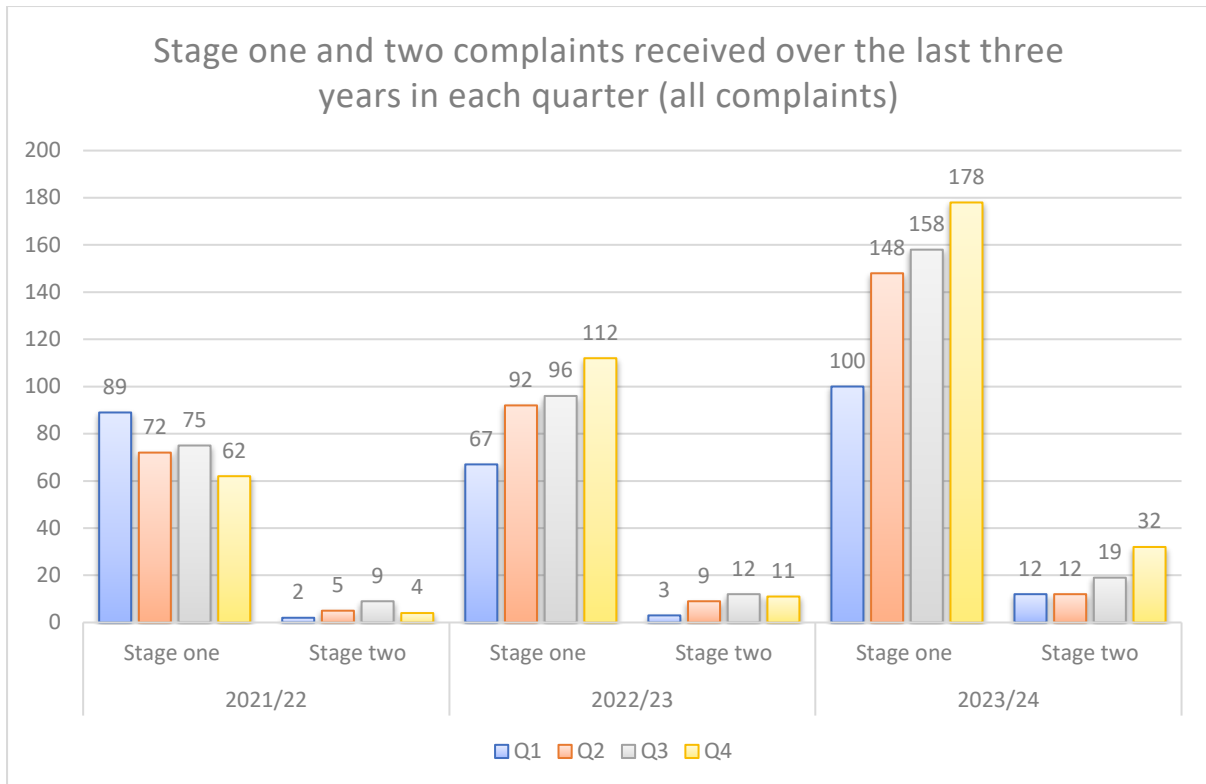


The below table gives a breakdown of the above complaints by service area.

Service Area	Closed/ Received	Upheld	Partial	Not upheld
Day to Day	262	180	20	62
Housing Management	54	20	8	26
Gas	24	15	1	8
Planned Maintenance	35	23	7	5
Staff	158	72	40	46
Customer Service Team	14	11	0	3
Housing Options	34	13	2	19
Rent / HB	3	0	2	1
Voids	13	9	2	2
Kitchens & Bathrooms	3	1	0	2
Allocations	4	0	0	4
ASB	18	3	1	14
New Build	1	1	0	0
Electrical	6	2	1	3
Rechargeable repairs	19	7	8	4
Homelessness	11	6	3	2
Total	659	363	95	201

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The chart below outlines the amount of Derby Homes complaints increasing over the last three years. We believe the increase of complaints is due to the increased advertising to customers for how to make a complaint to Derby Homes, in addition to an increased awareness in the media of complaints with landlords.



Qualitative analysis of complaints

During 2023/24 the top 3 departments receiving the most complaints were:

- Day to Day (responsive repairs) = 238
- Staff complaints = 147
- Housing Management = 18

Overview of the top three departments which received the highest number of complaints

Day to Day (responsive repairs)

During quarter 4, 73 complaints have been received which is a slight increase from the 71 received in quarter 3. To put this into context, this team completed 8,316 repairs in this quarter.

During quarter, there was an increase in complaints relating to damp & mould (total of 16) whereas there were less complaints of this in quarter 3 (9 complaints). This could be attributed to seasonal weather conditions and that there are more awareness campaigns pertaining to damp & mould, coupled with rising price of fuel costs.

In quarter 4 we received 7 complaints about financial redress for damage to property or tenants' belongings, compared to 2 complaints in quarter three. There are no apparent trends identified from this as all the reasons for the complaints are varied.

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In Q4 we received 36 complaints relating to responsive repairs not completed or out of target. This is an increase of 11 complaints in Q3. We are aware of ongoing supply chain issues, obtaining materials in a timely manner. There have also been issues with repair appointments having to be moved to accommodate the team's workload and availability of staff resources.

Other complaints received for the day to day team include:

- 2 complaints made about work not being followed on.
- 5 complaints about leaks and flooding and leaks (which is fewer than the 15 received in quarter three)
- 3 complaints about the poor quality of work (which was fewer than the 5 received in quarter three)
- 2 complaints about poor / no communication (which was fewer than the 7 made in quarter three)

Staff complaints

During quarter 4 there were 37 complaints about staff that were received. This is a slight reduction against the 41 staff complaints received in quarter three.

On each staff complaint the relevant Head of Service is made aware, and they instruct an appropriate Senior Officer / manager to investigate the complaint.

Housing Management-

During the quarter there were 18 complaints received that were about housing management, which increased from 8 complaints received in quarter three.

The highest number of complaints in quarter four were concerned about Pest Control (four complaints), which is the same number as quarter 3.

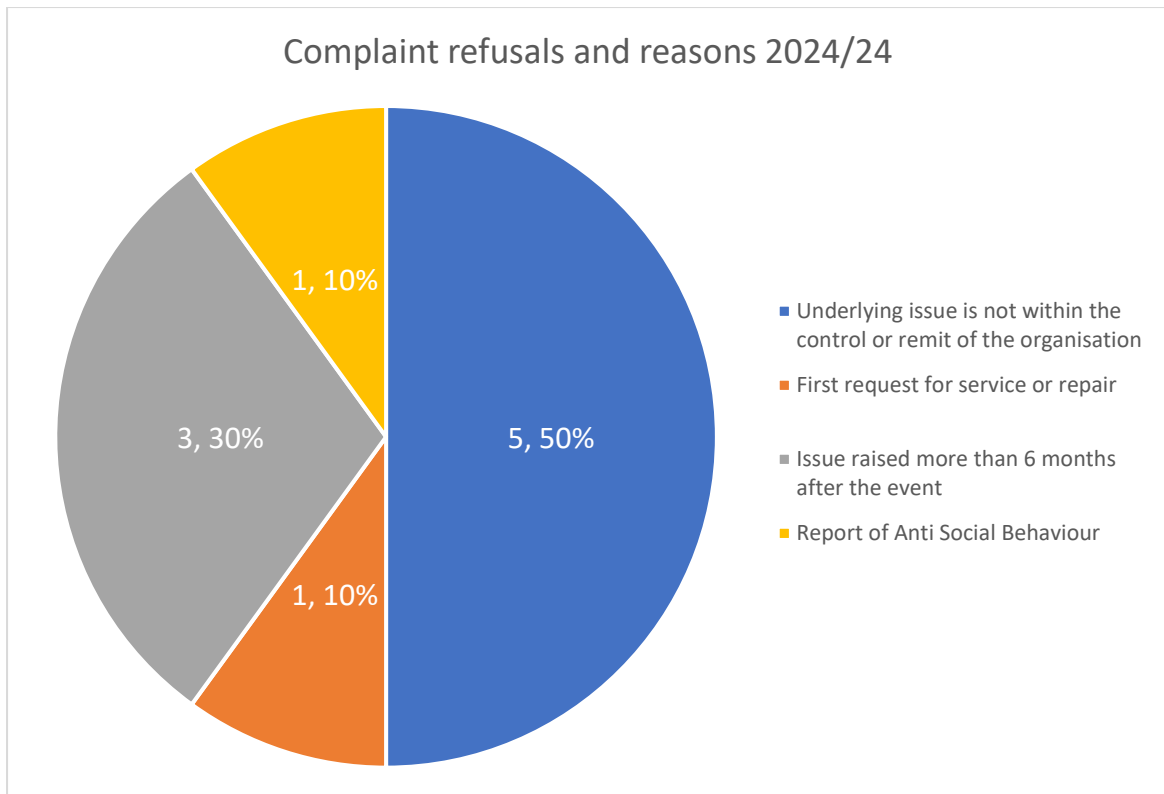
Other complaints received during the quarter included:

- 2 complaints made that related to Improvements carried out by tenants.
- 2 complaints were also made concerning payment for damage to property or tenants belongings.

Complaints not accepted (refusals)

Our complaints policy sets out the circumstances in which a matter will not be considered a complaint. For 2023/24, Derby Homes refused 10 complaints. The reasons for refusals are shown in the chart below.

Note: From 2024, the Complaint Handling Code's acceptable exclusion relating to the period in which a complaint can be raised after the issue giving rise to it, has increased to twelve months.



A total of 10 complaints were refused during the reporting year 2023 /2024. The table below gives an overview of the complaints refused.

Quarter	Amount of complaints refused	Reason
Quarter 1	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 was not under the remit of Derby Homes or Derby City Council as it concerned trees on land not managed by either parties. 1 was a report of ASB so passed to the team.
Quarter 2	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 related to issues raised more than 6 months after the event (of which 2 referred to ASB and 1 was a repair service request). 1 was refused as it was not under the remit of Derby Homes and referred to Derby City Council for Occupational Therapy.
Quarter 3	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 was a service request. 1 was raised more than 6 months after the event. This was about alleged damage to property during repair work. 1 was outside the remit of Derby Homes and related to parking tickets.
Quarter 4	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 was not under the remit of Derby Homes and the customer was referred to her insurer, following a tile falling off the roof and damaging her car.

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Service requests

A service request has been defined as “a request from a resident, to the landlord, requiring action to be taken to put something right.”

Over the year, Derby Homes have received 918 service requests. The chart below outlines the service request by service area. The top 3 areas were Housing Management, Housing Options and Day to Day (responsive repairs).



All service requests are logged and passed to the relevant teams.

Learning and service improvements

The Housing Ombudsman complaint handling code focusses on learning from complaints. We record learning from complaints and share this with the relevant Head of Service and service managers.

Each quarter in the Complaints report, we provide a summary of a couple of cases where there was clear learning from complaints. Below are some of the key examples of changes made based on customer feedback.

Example 1- A complaint was made about a boiler that had repeatedly broken down. The customer kept having to take time off work for appointment dates which Derby Homes kept cancelling and rearranging. The customer was frustrated as they just wanted the boiler repairing.

Lesson Learnt – There have been issues with staffing across both the planning and gas teams. Planning staff have been reminded of the importance of telephoning customers if their appointment cannot be attended. When contacting customers, they will rearrange the appointment and also make note if the telephone number held on file isn't in service. We are aiming for the same level of customer service and effective communication across all planning services.

Example 2- A complaint was made when an appointment was missed by Derby Homes to carry out a boiler repair. The customer then contacted Derby Homes and made a request for the repair to be booked for a specific date that they would have to take off work. The Customer Service Advisor requested this was booked in, but the appointment was not attended.

Lesson Learnt- The Customer Advisor team tried to call the gas planners to book in the repair appointment but could not make contact. Consequently, they put a note on the repair for the planners to see when the work was booked in. It was at short notice, and the note was missed. In cases like this, Customer Service Advisors have been advised they cannot advise customers of short notice appointment dates without having this confirmed by Gas Planners. They must contact the gas team by email or if it is urgent, visit the gas office in person to confirm the booking with a gas planner. This is an internal communication issue we are monitoring moving forwards.

Example 3- A complaint was made by a customer who suffered an intermittent leak in their kitchen during periods of heavy rain fall. This meant the customer was having to do a lot of mopping up to prevent flooding into their home.

Lesson Learnt- Derby Homes had attended with a wet vac to clear the water. We had also investigated the leak, removing bricks to check for any cavities and checking all pipework was in good order. No cause of the leak could be found. As this is intermittent and ongoing it has been referred to a Technical Officer who monitors the situation and liaising with the customer to identify and resolve the cause of the leak

Example 4- A complaint was made regarding an exceptionally long wait for a plastering repair to be carried out. The work was scheduled over three consecutive days. On the first day, when the work was due to be carried out, the customer contacted Derby Homes to check the work was still going ahead. They were advised the operative would be with them shortly. The customer received a text message 10 minutes later advising the repair would now be attended on the final day. The customer then contacted Derby Homes again, who then advised that the whole 3 days were cancelled.

Lesson Learned – The process was changed around major repair work being either cancelled or rescheduled. It has been decided that customers will be contacted by both telephone and text message the day before, and on the day of the original repair. This will be to ensure the customer

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knows what is happening, to apologise for and explain the reason for the delay and make them aware that it may mean several months before the work can be carried out.

Example 5- A complaint was made about a broken soffit that was at risk of collapse, this was after scaffolding had been erected at the property. The customer had been advised that although the repair was an emergency priority, it would not be attended for 3 weeks. The customer was concerned about asbestos fiber release in the meantime.

Lesson Learned- Feedback was given to the customer services team who should have found out more information about the initial repair. The repair could have then been made safe in the meantime and taped up to prevent any potential fiber release. The scaffolders have been advised to make Derby Homes aware of any damage. This was referred to the technical officer who coordinated with the scaffolders and has contacted them to find out what their procedure is regarding suspected asbestos and how they would deal with this.

Example 6- A complaint was made by a customer who needed damp work to be completed at her property. Due to ill health, she could not clear the room and did not have anywhere to put the furniture and had no family or friend who could help.

Lesson's learned- Derby Homes have agreed to remove items and put them into storage and the customer will be staying at a hotel while the work takes place. This opened up discussions regarding the removal of furniture for work to be completed and raised with the team as an example.

Example 7- During a customer survey a customer advised they had been waiting since March 2022 for a full window renewal, having been told the lintels needed to be replaced. The customer then heard nothing else and chased this up. They were then advised that this work would be carried out by January 2023, but it was not done. Nationwide (contractor) attended again in February 2023, but the customer was not communicated with as to what was happening.

Lesson Learned- Upon investigation it became apparent that the windows contract was running behind. In addition to this, customers were being generally misadvised on timescales for renewals to be completed, which should have been stated as within the financial year, rather than by a specific date from the surveys being carried out by Nationwide. We have attended the Customer Service team meeting and issued advice and guidance about the timescales for doors and windows.

Example 9- A customer had been waiting an exceptionally long time for fencing to be renewed by Derby Homes. The customer had been given appointment dates which were not attended.

Lesson Learned – The customer had been kept waiting an exceptionally long time, it should have been explained to the customer the reasons for the delay were relating to resource issues. The Planning Team have been made aware that delays must be communicated to customers. The customer should also have been advised that as this was an external repair, they did not need to be in for the work to take place. This was fed back to the Customer Service Team Leader to make sure this message was passed to customers and that all the call handlers made sure to advise customers correctly.

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New learning framework

The new regulatory requirements place more emphasis on landlords listening to, learning from, and acting upon their customers' feedback, particularly following complaints.

From 1 April, 2024, we have adopted a new framework and process to identify and capture lessons learnt from complaints and to record, implement, and monitor any service improvements as a result.

We are working with Heads of Service and their managers to identify and record lessons learnt against the Consumer Standards, and the required actions and timeframes for completion. These will be monitored and reviewed regularly to ensure there are no repeated complaints trends.



A quarterly update report will be presented to Operational Board as part of our performance monitoring and scrutiny, and so we can understand whether customer satisfaction has increased, and complaints have reduced as a result.

We will be feeding back to customers on how we have made improvements based on their feedback through the Annual Report, Let's Talk Derby Homes and Derby Homes News.

Ombudsman determinations and annual reports

Derby Homes received a Landlord Performance report from 2022/23 from the Housing Ombudsman. This report was circulated to the Operational Board on the 7 September 2023 and to the Main Board on the 23 November 2023. The link can be found here:

 [B4 Complaints Report](#) (153Kb)

1.  [B4 Complaints Appendix 1](#) (811Kb)
2.  [B4 Complaints Appendix 2](#) (720Kb)

All recommendations from the Housing Ombudsman were actioned as part of the outcome of this report.

The table below gives an overview of the Ombudsman determination received in 2023/2024 and the actions taken from the determinations.

Complaint category	Number	Outcome	Action completed
Homeless application	1	1 x Maladministration	Compensation of £1,400 paid to remedy the injustice caused and provide staff training.
Rehousing, ASB and reasonable adjustments. Joint investigation by Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) and Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS)	1	LGSCO 1 x Fault causing personal Injustice HOS 1 x Service Failure relating to reasonable adjustments. 1 x Maladministration relating to handling of ASB.	Paid £600 compensation to the customer with an apology. Guidance was provided to relevant staff on the importance of considering an ASB case review.
Pests infestation and compensation	1	1 x Maladministration by landlord in its record keeping	Paid £110 compensation and apologised to the customer.
Pests infestation	1	1 x No Maladministration	No action required

Non-compliance findings

There have not been any determinations of non-compliance made from the Housing Ombudsman

Other relevant Ombudsman reports or publications

Responses to spotlight reports

- **Spotlight on Knowledge and Information Management**- We are working towards developing our own Knowledge and Information Management Strategy. This is being coordinated through the Quality and Consumer Regulation Service area and anticipated to be approved at Operational Board during 2024-25.
- **Relationship of Equals Report** - We are working on an Inclusion Strategy based on the Relationship of Equals report. The Inclusion Strategy s being coordinated through the Quality and Consumer Regulation Service area and anticipated to be approved at Operational Board during 2024-25.
- **Spotlight on damp and mould** – We have implemented a Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy based on this report which was approved at Operational Board in March 2023. Based on this policy, Derby Homes have employed a dedicated Damp Mould and Condensation technical assistant to review these specific concerns. Customers were made aware of these changes in the Derby Homes Newsletter on page 6 which can be found at : <https://www.derbyhomes.org/media/derbyhomes/content/documents/news/DHN-Summer-AR-2023-.pdf> and advice is on a static page on the website which can be found at : <https://www.derbyhomes.org/advice-support/energyadvice/damp-mould/#page-1>