

Annual complaints report for Enfield Council's housing services

Reporting period: 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026

1. Introduction

Cabinet is asked to note the 2025/26 complaints performance, recognise the strong response stage performance achieved during the year, and endorse the improvement priorities for 2026/27. These priorities focus on acknowledgement timeliness and complaint quality assurance. Resolution of repairs continues to be the main focus of complaints, Ombudsman and complaint learning and ensuring that this is being translated into better outcomes for residents remains a priority.

2. Summary

This report summarises housing complaints recorded during 2025/26 and sets out the key performance headlines:

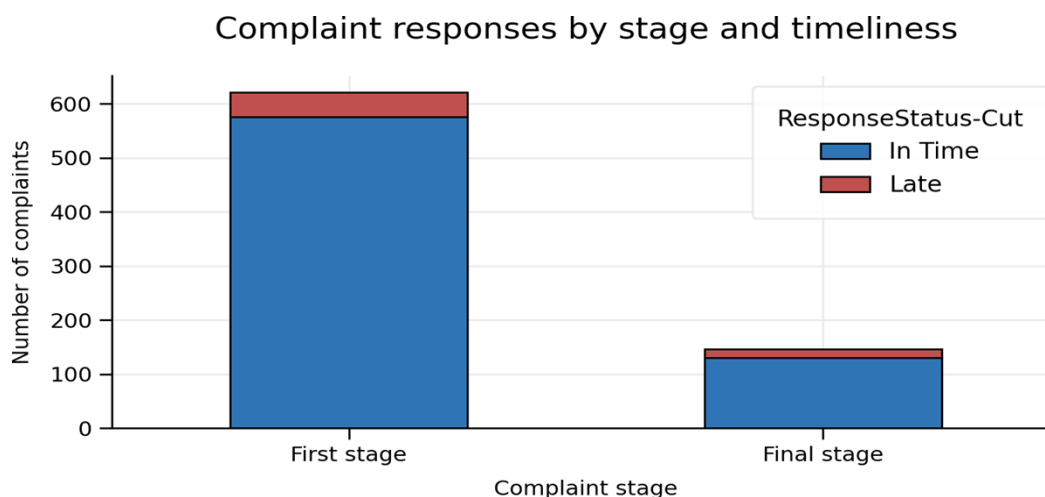
- Enfield received 767 housing complaints in 2025/26, comprising both stage one and final stage complaints. This represents a small increase from 749 complaints recorded in 2024/25.
- The service responded to 706 of 767 complaints within the complaint response timescale (92.0%).
- Only 61 complaints were responded to late (8.0%), demonstrating strong response management despite high case volumes and operational complexity.
- 11 cases remained open at the end of the reporting period, showing that most cases were progressed to conclusion within the year.
- The data confirms that complaints continue to provide valuable insight into the resident experience and support targeted service improvement across Housing Services.

3. Complaint volumes and performance

Housing Services continued to manage a significant volume of complaints during 2025/26. Repairs remained the largest area of complaint activity. The overall performance picture shows a service that is strengthening response-stage management, while acknowledgement timeliness remains the key process control requiring focused improvement.

Measure	2025/26 position	Commentary
Total complaints recorded	767	High complaint volume reflects the size and complexity of the housing service and provides a substantial evidence base for learning.
Overall late cases	211 (27.5%)	Overall lateness includes acknowledgement and response stage performance.
Late acknowledgements	170 (22.2%)	The acknowledgement stage is the clearest improvement opportunity for 2026/27.
Late responses	61 (8.0%)	Response performance was strong, with over 92% of responses issued within timescale.
Deadline extensions	115 (15.0%)	Extensions were used where further investigation was required, supporting more considered responses in complex cases.

Open cases at year end	11 (1.4%)	The low number of open cases demonstrates effective case progression and closure oversight.
Average derived deadline days	13.4	Indicative of the timeframe being managed across cases where deadline days were recorded.



The performance data shows that the main timeliness risk sits earlier in the process, especially at acknowledgement stage, rather than at the point of investigation response. This is important because earlier contact with residents can reassure them that their concern has been received, clarify expectations and reduce the likelihood of unnecessary escalation.

4. Complaint responses summarised

Breakdown of complaints received for 2025/26

Complaint stage	Leaseholders	Tenants	Total
Stage one	115	506	621
Final stage	31	115	146
Total	146	621	767

The service responded to 706 complaints within the complaint response deadline. This means 92.0% of responses were issued in time, with 61 responses outside the response timescale.

3.1 Stage one complaints

Code compliance	Leaseholders	Tenants	Total
Within Code	108	468	576
Outside Code	7	38	45

3.2 Final stage complaints

Code compliance	Leaseholders	Tenants	Total
Within Code	27	103	130
Outside Code	4	12	16

5. Key positive outcomes and learning from 2025/26

The 2025/26 complaints data demonstrates a service that is continuing to strengthen complaint handling, learn from resident experiences and use complaint intelligence to improve services. The key positive outcomes and learning points are set out below.

4.1 Positive outcomes

- Strong response performance was maintained, with 92.0% of complaints responded to within timescale. This demonstrates improved oversight, better case progression and a clear operational focus on issuing timely responses.
- The service closed most cases during the year, with only 11 cases open at year end. This reflects active case monitoring and a commitment to bringing complaints to a conclusion for residents.
- Housing Services managed high complaint volumes while continuing to maintain effective response performance. This is particularly important in repairs, where volumes are high and issues often require coordination between residents, contractors and operational teams.
- Deadline extensions were applied in 115 cases. When used appropriately, extensions help ensure that complex complaints receive a full and fair investigation rather than a rushed response.
- Complaint handling continues to support a learning culture, with themes from complaints being used to improve communication, strengthen triage and target recurring service issues.

4.2 Learning points

- Acknowledgement timeliness is the most important improvement opportunity. 170 complaints were acknowledged late, which means earlier resident contact should be a priority for workflow improvement and monitoring.
- Communication remains central to resident trust. Many complaints are rooted not only in the service issue itself but in residents feeling that they have not received clear, timely or coordinated updates.
- Early resolution should remain a core service principle. Complaints that are acknowledged quickly, triaged effectively, and owned by the right team are less likely to escalate and more likely to result in a positive resident experience.
- Repairs intelligence should continue to be used proactively. Recurring themes such as repairs, leaks, damp, mould, heating, boilers, lift issues and communal repairs should inform service planning and contract management.
- Variation between service areas should be used constructively. Teams with stronger timeliness performance can help share good practice, while teams with higher lateness rates should receive targeted support, training and workflow review.

6. Complaint themes

The largest proportion of complaints continued to relate to repairs and maintenance. The analysis identified repairs as the dominant service area and highlighted recurring case-title themes including repair, leak, mould, damp, heating, boiler, lift, hot water and communal issues. These themes remain highly relevant to the resident experience and should continue to inform service planning, contractor management and preventative interventions.

The table below outlines the highest-volume service areas. Where a complaint involved more than one service area, all relevant service areas have been included for learning purposes, as this gives a fuller picture of the resident journey and the cross-service nature of some complaints.

5.1 Stage one complaints by service area

Service area	Mentions	Share of stage one service-area mentions
Repairs Team Complaints	369	52.27%
Enfield Repairs Direct Operations	31	4.39%
Leaseholder Services Team	24	3.40%
Major Works	23	3.26%
First Response Team	23	3.26%
Compliance	23	3.26%
Resident Relationship Team North	23	3.26%
Estate Services Operations	19	2.69%
Assessment and Allocations	16	2.27%
Council Housing - Complaints	15	2.12%

5.2 Final stage complaints by service area

Service area	Mentions	Share of final stage service-area mentions
Repairs Team Complaints	85	49.42%
Resident Relationship Team North	16	9.30%
Assessment and Allocations	8	4.65%
Estate Services Operations	8	4.65%
Council Housing - Complaints	6	3.49%
Leaseholder Services Team	5	2.91%
Voids & Lettings	5	2.91%
Compliance	4	2.33%
Damp and Mould	4	2.33%
Major Works	4	2.33%

7. Complaints not accepted

Council Housing remains committed to listening to residents and ensuring that concerns are directed through the correct route. Where an enquiry does not meet the criteria for a formal complaint, residents should receive a clear explanation, be signposted to the appropriate service route and be told how to pursue a complaint if they remain dissatisfied. For 2026/27, recording of complaints not accepted should be strengthened so the Council can evidence the number of cases, the reasons for non acceptance, the signposting provided and any learning about service requests being misdirected as complaints.

8. Complaints policy

Enfield Council's Corporate Complaints Policy sets out how complaints are handled and supports compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code. The continued focus for 2026/27 should be on ensuring that policy requirements are consistently reflected in day to day practice, particularly around acknowledgement, communication, extensions, learning from outcomes and publication of the annual complaints performance and service improvement report with the governing body response.

A copy of Enfield Council's Corporate Complaints Policy can be found on the Council website: [Corporate complaints policy | Enfield Council](#)

9. Housing Ombudsman

Headline position. The 2025/26 Housing Ombudsman data provides a clear evidence base for strengthening housing services, improving resident experience and targeting assurance where it will have the greatest impact. The year covered 34 cases, with a maladministration rate of 76.4%. This represents a positive improvement from 94% in 2024/25 and 89% in 2023/24.

Key causes and impact. The dataset included 16 maladministration cases, 1 severe maladministration case, 13 service failure cases, 5 outside-jurisdiction cases and 2 withdrawn cases. Total compensation was £17,538.17, with compensation recorded in 27 cases and an average of £515.83 across all cases. The highest financial exposure was linked to delay and missed timescales, while the most frequent service theme was complaint handling, appearing in 20 cases, or 59% of the dataset. Repairs, damp and mould, leaks and water ingress remain the strongest operational issues.

Learning and assurance response. Ombudsman findings are rarely caused by a single isolated failure. They usually reflect a chain of missed opportunities: the original issue was not diagnosed early enough, ownership was unclear, repairs drifted, residents were not kept properly informed, records were incomplete, or the complaint process did not recover the position. The three highest causes of complaint were complaint handling weakness, delay or missed timescales, and insufficient inspection or diagnosis. Together these accounted for 30 of the 34 cases and £16,370.67 of the total compensation. Remedial activity was also significant, with 23 cases containing orders, 19 apology orders, 8 inspection orders and 21 cases with recommendations. This confirms that Ombudsman outcomes should be treated as live service intelligence, not simply case closure activity.

Direction of travel. There are important positive aspects to build on. The reduction in maladministration rate shows movement in the right direction, while reasonable redress, no maladministration, outside-jurisdiction and withdrawn cases provide useful learning on where the Council resolved matters, signposted residents appropriately, or prevented further escalation. The specialist Damp and Mould Team, preparation for Awaab's Law, introduction of video triage and wider review of complaint handling all demonstrate a more proactive, resident-first approach. The priority for 2026/27 is to embed this learning through a single Ombudsman tracker, a high-risk repairs register and a stronger assurance dashboard. Used consistently, these actions should reduce repeat failures, compensation exposure and Ombudsman criticism, while giving residents greater confidence that Enfield Council listens, learns and acts.

The Housing Ombudsman will publish the Landlord Performance Report for 2025/26 in

September 2026. When published, the 2025/26 'Landlord Performance Report' will be shared on the council website. Decisions from the Ombudsman can also be found here [Decisions Archive - Housing Ombudsman](#) - please ensure you add 'London Borough of Enfield' to assist in filtering the search.

10. Lessons learned

A key feature of the Council's approach is the use of complaints as a direct source of learning and service improvement. The 2025/26 data reinforces several important lessons:

- Early engagement with residents remains essential. Prompt acknowledgement and early contact can reduce uncertainty, clarify expectations and improve confidence in the complaints process.
- Complaints about damp, mould, leaks and heating continue to provide important insight into areas where residents experience the greatest disruption and where early intervention can prevent escalation.
- Communication and ownership remain recurring themes. Residents need to know who is responsible for progressing their issue, what action is being taken and when they can expect an update.
- Complaint data should be used alongside repairs, asset, tenancy and resident insight data to identify repeat themes and prevent recurring service failure.
- Learning should be shared across teams, not held within individual service areas. This will help build consistency and ensure that residents receive a better experience regardless of which team is responsible for the issue.

11. Service Improvement Plan and complaints improvement

The 2025/26 complaints data provides a clear and practical basis for strengthening service improvement during 2026/27. Complaints should not be viewed simply as individual expressions of dissatisfaction or as process-based casework to be closed. They are a valuable source of resident insight, early warning and service assurance. When used well, complaints help the Council understand where residents are experiencing delay, poor communication, unresolved repairs, unclear ownership, inconsistent follow through or avoidable escalation and where services need to intervene earlier.

The improvement plan should therefore focus on turning complaint learning into measurable service change. The strongest opportunities are in complaint handling, repairs progression, damp and mould, leaks and water ingress, technical diagnosis, resident communication, vulnerability awareness, record keeping and follow-through on agreed actions. These are the areas where better controls will have the greatest impact on resident experience, avoidable dissatisfaction, compensation exposure and future escalation.

The complaints improvement approach should be built around a simple principle, every complaint should help put something right. This means responses should not only answer the points raised but also test whether the underlying issue has been resolved, whether the resident has been kept informed, whether a fair remedy has been offered, and whether learning has been captured to prevent the same issue happening again. Complaint handling must therefore operate as a recovery and prevention mechanism, not just a correspondence function.

For 2026/27, the service improvement plan should prioritise the following actions:

The four priority themes for 2026/27 are: acknowledgement, triage and ownership; repairs, damp and mould and high risk case management; quality assurance, remedies and learning; and reporting, dashboards and senior oversight.

- **Strengthen complaint acknowledgement, triage and allocation controls**, so that new complaints are acknowledged promptly, allocated to the right owner, and risk assessed.
 - **Improve CaseTracker discipline**, ensuring that ownership, deadlines, tasks, resident updates, service area responses, escalation points and remedies are visible, current and actively managed.
 - **Introduce stronger complaint quality assurance**, with particular focus on whether responses address all issues, explain the evidence, recognise resident impact, apply fair redress, consider vulnerability and confirm what action will be taken to resolve the underlying problem.
 - **Use complaint intelligence to improve repairs performance**, especially where cases involve repeat repairs, damp and mould, leaks, water ingress, heating, hot water, follow-on works, missed appointments or unresolved defects.
- **Create a clearer escalation route for high-risk cases**, including complaints involving vulnerable residents, repeat property condition issues, significant delay, high compensation risk, disrepair risk, or continued resident dissatisfaction.
- **Strengthen resident communication standards**, including clear update points, realistic timescales, named owner, and confirmation of actions.
- **Use team performance data constructively**, identifying where lateness, repeat complaints, poor quality responses or unresolved tasks require targeted support, training or management intervention.
- **Introduce regular learning reviews**, so that upheld complaints, recurring themes, compensation trends, withdrawn cases, early resolution examples and resident feedback are translated into staff briefings, service changes and practical improvements for residents.
- **Improve oversight of agreed actions and remedies**, using a single tracker with named owners, due dates, evidence requirements, RAG status and escalation.
- **Use ward and asset data to target improvement**, particularly where complaint themes, compensation, repeat repairs or recurring dissatisfaction indicate hotspots.
- **Report progress through a quarterly assurance dashboard**, showing complaint performance, late cases, agreed actions completed, recurring themes, compensation trends, high risk repairs, learning actions and evidence of impact.

The intended outcome is a more disciplined, resident focused and learning-led complaints system. Success should be measured not only by improved response times, but by fewer repeat complaints, better quality responses, stronger repair follow through, clearer resident communication, reduced compensation exposure and fewer avoidable escalations. Most importantly, residents should be able to see that when they raise concerns, the Council listens, acts, learns and improves.

12. Regulator of Social Housing

The Regulator of Social Housing has recognised the importance of complaints being addressed fairly, promptly and effectively. The 2025/26 complaints data shows that Housing Services can demonstrate strong response performance, improving complaint oversight and a

clear commitment to learning from complaints. The continued priority is to maintain this progress and ensure that improvements translate into better outcomes for residents.

13. Conclusion

The 2025/26 complaints data shows a housing service that is strengthening its approach to timely resolution, learning and continuous improvement. Response performance was strong, most cases were closed within the year and complaints continue to provide valuable insight into the resident experience. The clearest challenge for 2026/27 is to convert stronger complaint handling into visible service improvement, so residents experience clearer communication, quicker resolution and fewer repeat failures.

By building on the progress made during 2025/26 and focusing on early contact, clearer ownership, stronger triage, quality assurance and thematic learning, Housing Services can further strengthen resident trust and confidence during 2026/27.