

Listening to you

Complaints Insight Report: April 2025 – September 2025

We are committed to delivering a great customer experience and listening to your feedback to improve our services. We believe in being open, and honest and building trust through a transparent feedback process.

This is the tenth edition of our Complaints Insight Report which is published twice a year and made available for our customers. We highlight any trends, the lessons we have learnt and any changes we have made to our services because of any feedback we receive. We also give you an overview of any complaints which have been escalated to the Housing Ombudsman.

Complaints Data	Oct 2023 – Mar 2024	April 2024 – Sept 2024	Oct 2024 – Mar 2025	April 2025 – Sept 2025
Total no. of complaints	131	78	127	173
% of complaints resolved at stage 1	85%	80%	83%	79%
% of complaints resolved at stage 2	14.5%	20%	17%	21%
No. of complaints escalated from stage 1 to stage 2	19	16	22	37
Main areas for complaints:	1. Outstanding Repairs 2. Poor Communication	1. Outstanding Repairs 2. Poor Communication	1. Outstanding Repairs 2. Poor Communication	1. Outstanding Repairs 2. Poor Communication
No. of complaints escalated to the Housing Ombudsman	4	2	3	6
Responded to within Ombudsman timescales?	100%	100%	100%	100%

Over the past 6 months we have seen:

- ✓ More customers using our stage two appeal process compared to 2024/25. We had 37 complaints reviewed by our Customer Representatives in the past 6 months.
- ✓ Our complaint handling has improved, and our justification rate has decreased from 86.3% to 77.5%.
- ✓ Our overall customer satisfaction has increased from 80.8% to 83.6% over the past 6 months.
- ✓ Following our Big Door Knock where we knocked on over 4900 doors, 87.6% of our customers told us they knew how to escalate a complaint.
- ✓ Our data shows us that 67% of customers were satisfied with External Contractor Repairs which has improved by 7% compared to October 2024 – March 2025.
- ✓ Following a Housing Ombudsman Policy review we have made changes to our Customer Complaints and Feedback Policy to ensure the policy fully aligns with the Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.

The root cause of most dissatisfaction is outstanding repairs and overall poor communication. We continue to manage our repairs and aim to achieve the timescales in our Responsive Repairs Policy and focus on improving communication with our customers. We have increased our workforce and are seeing improvements in our satisfaction with repairs which, has moved from 76.% to 79% during this reporting period.

We have also seen increased satisfaction with the ease of reporting repairs, which has moved from 75% to 80%. Our data also shows us that 74% of customers were satisfied with the time taken to complete their most recent repair after it had been reported which has improved by 5% compared to October 2024 – March 2025.

We acknowledge we cannot always meet our key repair targets and have recorded dissatisfaction due to waiting times. We are working hard to improve our repair services and key service changes are highlighted below.

As a result of the complaints, what are we doing to improve?

Repairs

- ✓ We are in the testing phase of implementing a new repair system that will integrate with our current platforms. The new system will enable us to record, plan and manage a repair job effectively. The system will assist with ease of reporting, first-time fix and customer satisfaction.
- ✓ We are investing in our Repairs Team and on-boarded two plumbing / gas apprentices in September 2025.
- ✓ We want to take a more innovative approach to managing repairs, using historical data to understand the most common causes of repairs and proactively manage our service. By anticipating where

problems are likely to occur, and addressing them before they lead to bigger issues, we'll deliver a better service for customers as well as reducing our repairs workload.

- ✓ We believe in being forward-thinking, so we'll also embrace modern technology where it allows us to deliver a more effective service, such as carrying out drone surveys of guttering on our Croxley View Estate, so that we can target our efforts where there is a greater risk of leaks inside people's homes
- ✓ We have simplified our repair codes and priority timescales, to make it easier to book repairs for customers and staff.
- ✓ We are updating our [repairs website](#) page frequently to reflect our current timescales against each trade.
- ✓ We have changed the way we deliver feedback to our operatives by creating trade talks per trade where we discuss customer feedback and best practices.

Outstanding repairs and timescales

We have an action plan to address ongoing repairs. We have increased our contractor base to utilise resources and keep completion times within target. We are on the right track and have seen an improvement in our response times.

Our average first-time fix rate between April – September has increased from 84% to 84.5% and we have seen positive improvements in gas servicing and plumbing. We are aware our flooring timescales have increased and we are recruiting in this trade to improve timescales.

Our Customer Service Team have completed multiple training sessions with our Repairs and Resource Planning teams and external providers to ensure repairs are recorded accurately to assist with first-time fix.

We continue to encourage customers to book their repairs on their online accounts as the first port of call, 24hrs per day. As of December, over 59% of our customers have an online account.

Communication

- ✓ As a Community Gateway Organisation, we provide a range of opportunities for our customers to get involved and ensure their voice is heard. Our annual Big Door Knock saw us knock on just over 4900 doors and we completed 1370 surveys. The survey results told us:
 - ✓ 76% of our customers were overall satisfied with services.
 - ✓ 87.6% of our customers knew how to escalate a complaint.
 - ✓ 29% of our customers were able to report immediate concerns.
- ✓ Complaint investigating managers call every customer to understand their concerns. We are working with our customers to ensure our complaint responses meet any needs such as learning difficulties and offer a customer advocacy service.

- ✓ The Customer Relations and Customer Services Team have participated in internal training to understand the difference between a service request and a complaint in relation to our Customer Complaints and Feedback Policy and the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Code.
- ✓ We are engaging more with our interpretation services to support our customers who don't use English as their first language and have translated documents into the required languages.
- ✓ We have updated our repair call scripts to our out-of-hours provider, to ensure our customers received continuity of service at evenings and weekends.
- ✓ We have sent out regular communications by email and SMS to keep customers up to date on repairs and service issues.
- ✓ We have recently implemented a new telephony platform to improve the customers experience when calling into the Contact Centre. We have made changes to how customer calls are routed into the organisation - this will enable our customers to speak to the right person first time around, increasing first call resolution and improving the overall customer experience.
- ✓ The new platform will give more options available for customers to choose from, such as damp and mould and more staff to take the calls, as our Customer Services, Customer Relations and Resource Plannings teams will be integrated into the new system in 2026. We have also updated our call and email wrap up codes which means we will get better intelligence on our data to help shape the services we provide.
- ✓ 655 post call surveys were completed during this period, with averaging scores of 78% for first call resolution, 94% for happy overall and 96% in our Customer Service Officers being polite and knowledgeable.
- ✓ We have added service messages to our phone system to promote customers to check their heating during the Autumn / Winter months and to acknowledge busy call periods.



Other changes we have made following your feedback

- ✓ Our Gateway Membership Team (GMT) selected and led a customer scrutiny session in July 2025 on parking, including the use of permits, EV chargers and parking management, this aligns with our complaints data where we had recorded 14 complaints in the past 6 months related to parking. The scrutiny generated an action plan to include, staff engaging with current parking providers to identify additional sites where ANPR cameras can be utilised.
- ✓ We successfully launched our Love Your Neighbourhood Campaign to work with our residents to create cleaner, greener neighbourhoods that we can be proud of. Staff and residents recently volunteered to clean and repaint some of our play equipment, making it look as good as new for residents in Gadswell Close, Hillfarm Avenue. and Croxley View.
- ✓ Between April to September our Financial Inclusions Team completed 150 support referrals, resulting in our customers being £647,635 better off receiving support to claim the correct benefits.
- ✓ Our welfare fund panel has approved 43 applications, resulting in a spend of over £22,000 to support our customers with essential items needed to help sustain their tenancies and ease financial pressures.
- ✓ Following feedback from members of the local community, in partnership with Watford Borough Council our Community Hubs Team has introduced a new free weekly strengthen and balance class.
- ✓ We have identified training needs for our Contact Centre around offering a better first-time resolution. From feedback collated from our post call surveys, we recognise the need to make sure our customers can resolve issues when they call first time. This includes more training on damp and mould enquiries, repairs diagnostics, setting clear expectations and using our digital platform.
- ✓ The Contact Centre and Resource Planners has recently completed external training with City and Guilds on damp and mould and Herts Mind on mental health awareness.
- ✓ Our Housing Managers regularly review Housing Ombudsman case determinations with the Housing Team to discuss case learnings and to ensure best practice is followed inline with our Anti-Social Behaviour and Good Neighbourhood Management Policies.
- ✓ We have identified continuous training is required with our complaint investigating managers and will be hosting a “complaints lunch and learn” session to ensure investigating managers are responding to complaints in line with the new Housing Ombudsman code and remedies guidance.
- ✓ We have also completed our Housing Ombudsman self-assessment in line with the code and updated our Customer Complaints and Feedback Policy to reflect the required changes.



Housing Ombudsman Complaints

We are committed to providing an open and accurate picture of our complaints performance, including cases that are escalated to the Housing Ombudsman. You can view our landlord annual performance reports or seek independent advice by visiting the Housing Ombudsman website: Home – Housing Ombudsman ([Housing Ombudsman Service](#)).

Our maladministration rate has significantly improved, reducing to **50% in the 2024-25 landlord report**, compared with **91% in 2023-24**. As part of our ongoing service improvements, we are working with the Ombudsman to deliver a complaint-handling webinar in May 2026.

We report Housing Ombudsman determinations on a quarterly basis to both our Customer Experience Committee and Gateway Membership Team. This ensures senior leaders are held accountable and that learning from complaints is embedded across the organisation.

We also share Ombudsman determinations and press releases with our Leadership Team to support a positive complaints culture. In addition, weekly complaints and compliments reports are provided to the Leadership Team to maintain visibility of customer feedback. The table below outlines the reasons why cases were reviewed by the Housing Ombudsman, whether they remain open or closed, and any final determinations issued.

Details of case	Status	Ombudsman's determination
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The complaint is about the landlord's handling of ongoing repairs to the property, including the kitchen, bathroom and porch. The landlord's handling of missed appointments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awaiting Determination 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The complaint is about the landlord's handling of the resident's request to be moved to a property more suitable to their needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case Closed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The complaint is not within the Housing Ombudsman's jurisdiction as the resident is seeking an outcome which is not within the Ombudsman's authority to provide.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The complaint is about the landlord's administration of the residents rent and service charge accounts and the information provided to assist them to understand the charges. The information provided to the resident to assist them to understand their energy accounts, and to access their utility meters. The resident is dissatisfied with the process for auditing service charge accounts. The landlord has refused to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awaiting Determination, the complaint case was managed by the former landlord, West Herts Homes. 	

<p>communicate with the resident's representative, citing unacceptable behaviour and unreasonable levels of contact. The resident disagrees with the landlord's decision.</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The complaint is about the landlord's handling of repairs to the front door. • The response is fire safety concerns. • The response to concerns about the disruption caused by planned communal work and scaffolding. • The decline of a management transfer request. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service failure in the landlord's handling of repairs to the front door. • Service failure in the landlord's response to the resident's concerns about fire safety. • Maladministration in the landlord's response to the resident's concerns about disruption caused by major works and their request to move. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have written to the resident to apologise for our failings. • We have compensated the resident in recognition of the distress and inconvenience they have suffered due to the failings concerning the front door, major works and request to move. • We met with the resident to discuss their concerns regarding building safety and explored additional support. • We confirmed our position regarding a temporary and managed move.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The complaint is about the landlord's handling of a roof leak. • Their request for a management transfer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awaiting Determination 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The complaint is about the landlord's handlings of concerns about heating in the property, including the increased cost of energy bills. • Discolouration to the bathroom ceiling • Damp and mould on the basement level wall in the communal stairway. • Issues with refuse collection and cleaning of the communal areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awaiting Determination 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The complaint is about the landlord's handling on its advice on responsibility for repairing the front door. • Reports concerning the condition of the communal areas (decoration). • Complaint handling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awaiting Determination 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The complaint is about the landlord's response to the resident's concerns about staff conduct. • The landlord's decision to issue a conduct warning letter. • The landlord's handling of the complaint. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awaiting Determination 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The complaint is about the landlord's handling of its response to the resident's anti-social behaviour reports. • The frequency of communication and level of support from a Housing Officer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awaiting Determination 	
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Customer Representatives

We currently have three volunteer Customer Representatives who work alongside our Leadership Team and Director. Together, they have supported the resolution of 37 stage-two complaints. Their role is to bring the customer perspective into the complaints process and help ensure that outcomes are fair and balanced.

All Watford Community Housing customers are welcome to get involved in our complaints-handling process through our Involvement Menu. Anyone interested in becoming a Customer Representative will need to complete the required training, which is delivered by TPAS as part of our ongoing training programme. If you would like to learn more about this role or express your interest, please contact our Customer Relations Team at **Feedback@wcht.org.uk**.