



Complaints Report
1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025

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INTRODUCTION

Orwell welcomes complaints and compliments from anybody who has received a service from us. We value this feedback because, without it, we would not be able to learn from and correct our mistakes; similarly, it is good to know when we have got the service right.

Orwell treats complaints as an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff or those acting on our behalf, affecting an individual, resident or group of residents. A customer does not have to use the word “complaint” in order for it to be treated as such.

The report details complaints received and closed between 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025 and provides customer insight from the Complaint Satisfaction and Tenant Satisfaction Measures surveys.

KEY FINDINGS

Complaints performance:

- Orwell did not refuse to accept any complaints made by customers.
- The total number of complaints in 2024-25 was 273 which is an increase from 251 in 2023-24.
- The % of complaints that are stage one has decreased (84.5% to 79.1%), whereas the % of complaints that are stage two has increased (13.9% to 19.0%).
- The average number of days taken to respond to complaints has increased in 2024-25. For stage one complaints, it has increased from 7.61 days to 7.73 days and for stage two complaints, it has increased from 15.70 days to 16.89 days.
- Property services & responsive repairs remains the area with the highest proportion of complaints at 71.5% of all complaints received. However, this % has fallen during 2024-25.
- The main themes surrounding the complaints within property services & responsive repairs remains to be outstanding repairs, the length of time waiting for a repair, missed appointments, a lack of communication, damp and mould and disrepair.

Learning from complaints:

- A total of 43 learnings were recorded during 2024-25, involving changes to policy and processes, improved process(es) and training.
- The Repairs Service was most affected by changes followed by the Customer Services Team.

Compensation:

- Compensation has decreased from £40,438.52 in 2023-24 to £25,880.19 in 2024-25.

Housing Ombudsman

- 5 cases were referred to the Housing Ombudsman with 4 of these being determined. The decisions included 2 service failures, 3 maladministrations and 2 reasonable redresses.
- There were 11 learnings¹ which included changes to processes, reporting/monitoring and staff training

Compliments:

- The total number of compliments has decreased from 267 in 2023-24 to 200 in 2024-25.

Satisfaction with complaints:

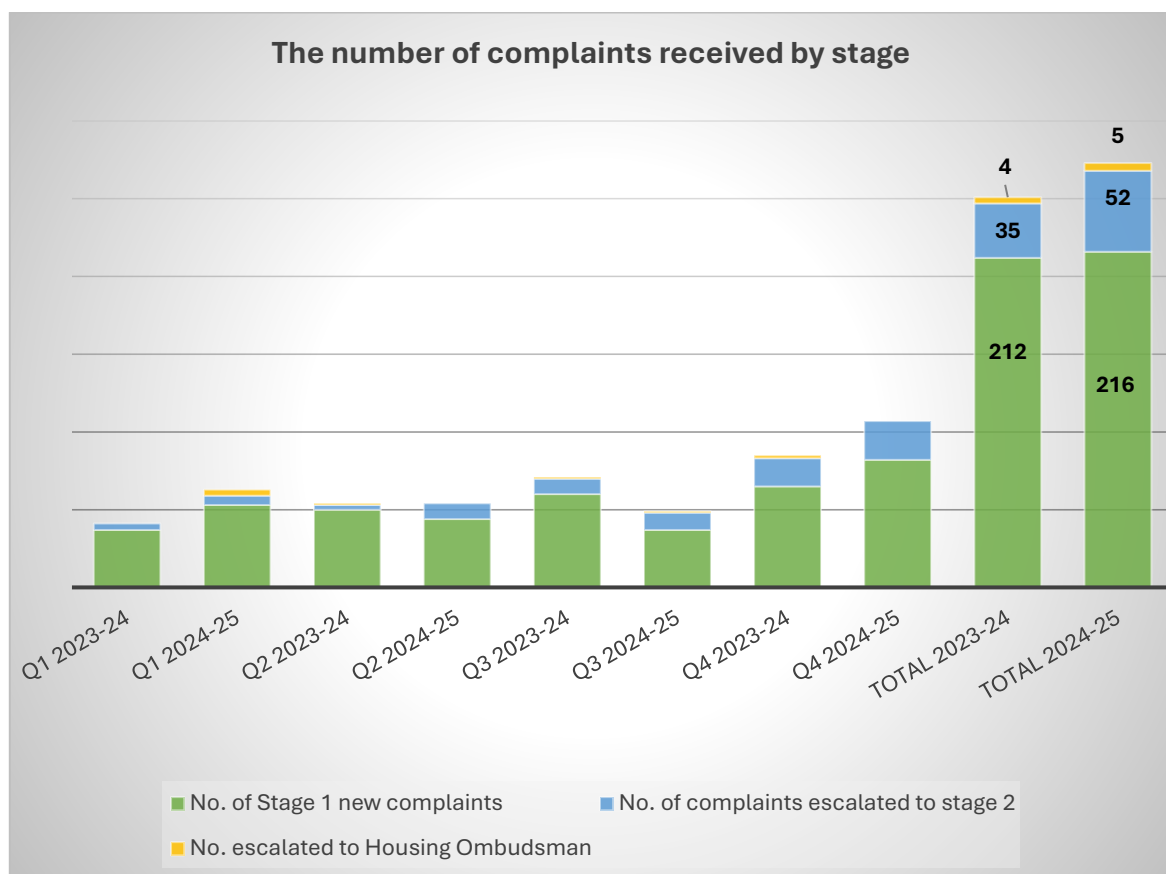
- Satisfaction has improved across all three measures within the Complaints Satisfaction survey.
- The TSM score for complaint handling declined from 39.5% in 2023-24 to 35.3% in 2024-25. Only 15 (10.6%) respondents who we could identify had made a formal complaint.

¹ The learnings were from the 2 completed cases.

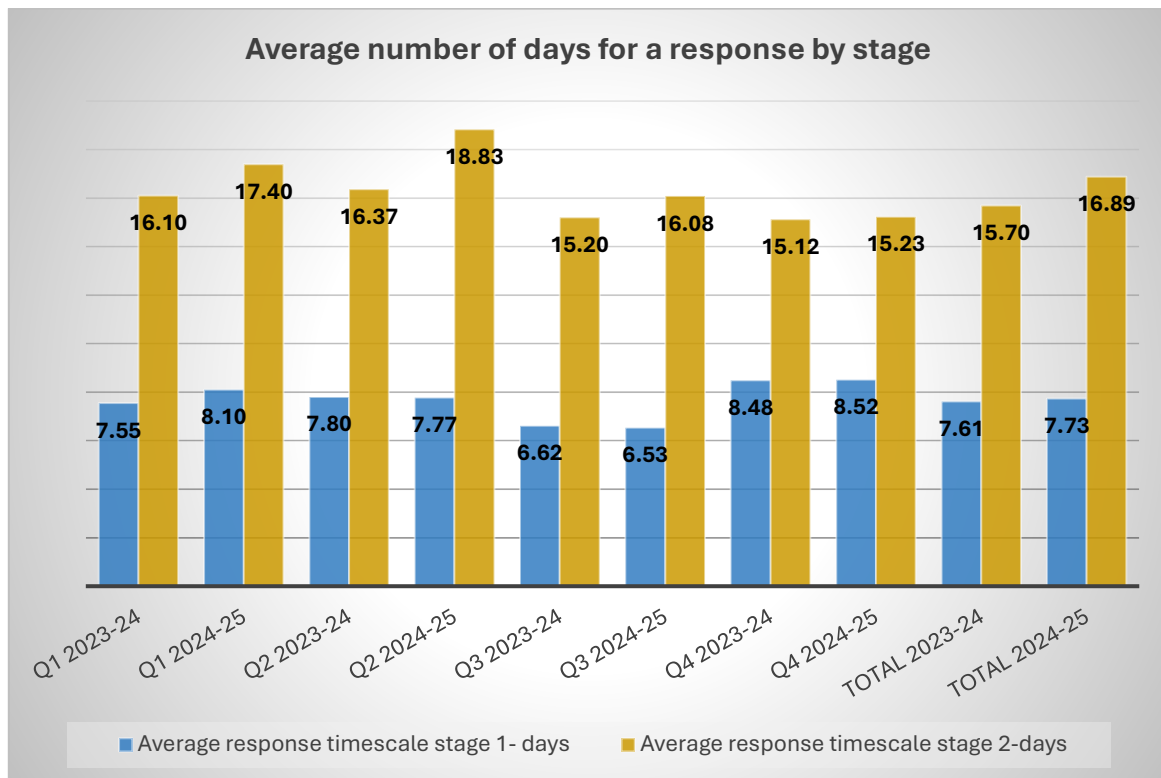
- Complaint satisfaction is lower for LCHO customers at 28.6% in 2024-25.
- Respondents tend to be more satisfied when a complaint was upheld, although it is worth remembering that the numbers are relatively small.
- The majority of negative comments about complaints directly refer to issues with repairs/their original complaint. In terms of the complaints process, respondents referred to issues with communication/lack of empathy, lack of action/communication despite repeated attempts to make contact, not receiving adequate responses to questions, the complaint not being referred to the appropriate person and then not being kept updated with progress, feeling the response was generic with a few tweaks and the complaint not being escalated as per the policy.
- There is a difference between who respondents report complaints to and whether they are then treated as “dissatisfaction” or formal complaints.
- The most popular reasons given for respondents not reporting were because they felt Orwell wouldn’t deal with it or “other” reasons (but didn’t specify).

COMPLAINTS ANALYSIS

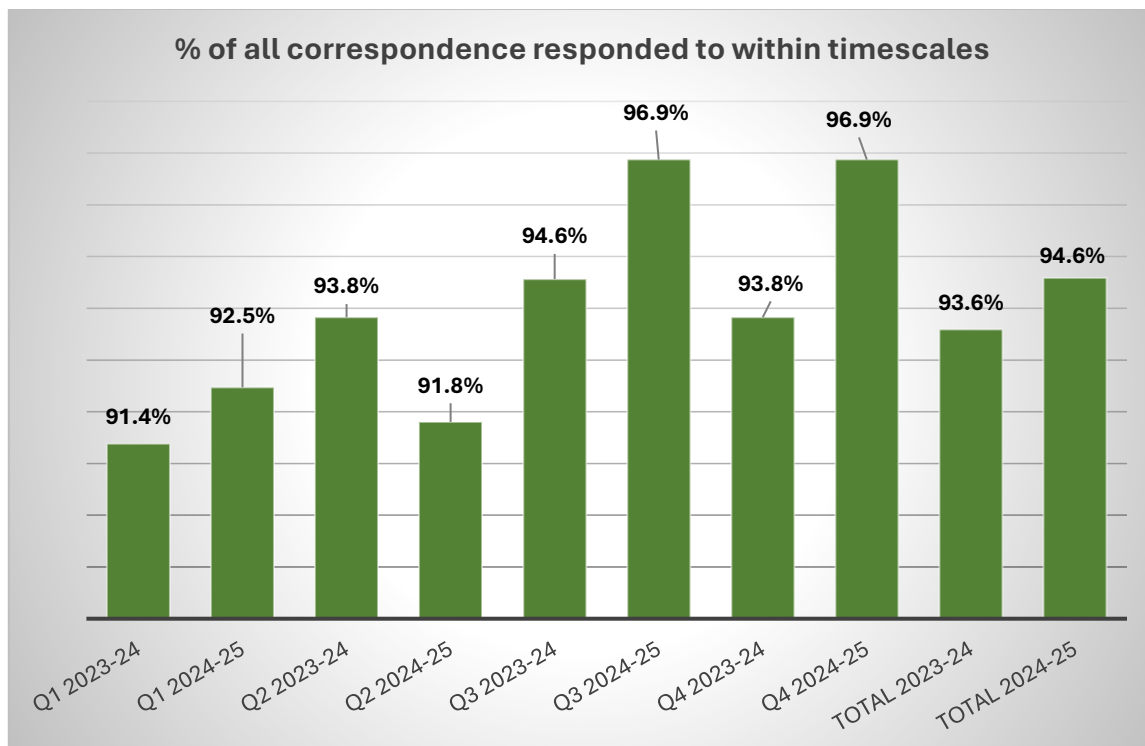
- There were 216 stage one complaints in 2024-25 representing 79.1% of complaints. The number of stage one complaints has increased from 212 in 2023-24 where they represented 84.5% of complaints.
- There were 52 stage two complaints in 2024-25 representing 19.0% of complaints. The number of stage two complaints has increased from 35 in 2023-24 where it represented 13.9% of complaints.
- The reasons for complaints being escalated to stage two are:
 - unhappy with how long it is taking to investigate the complaint at stage one.
 - not being happy with the length of time to complete the repair
 - actions agreed but no progress with works
 - compensation not reflective of the customer's overall experience
 - customer doesn't accept the Stage 1 outcome
- The % of complaints escalated to the Housing Ombudsman has increased from 1.6% (4) in 2023-24 to 1.8% (5) in 2024-25.



- The average number of days taken to respond to stage one complaints has increased from 7.61 days in 2023-24 to 7.73 days in 2024-25.
- The average number of days taken to respond to stage two complaints has increased from 15.70 days in 2023-24 to 16.89 days in 2024-25.



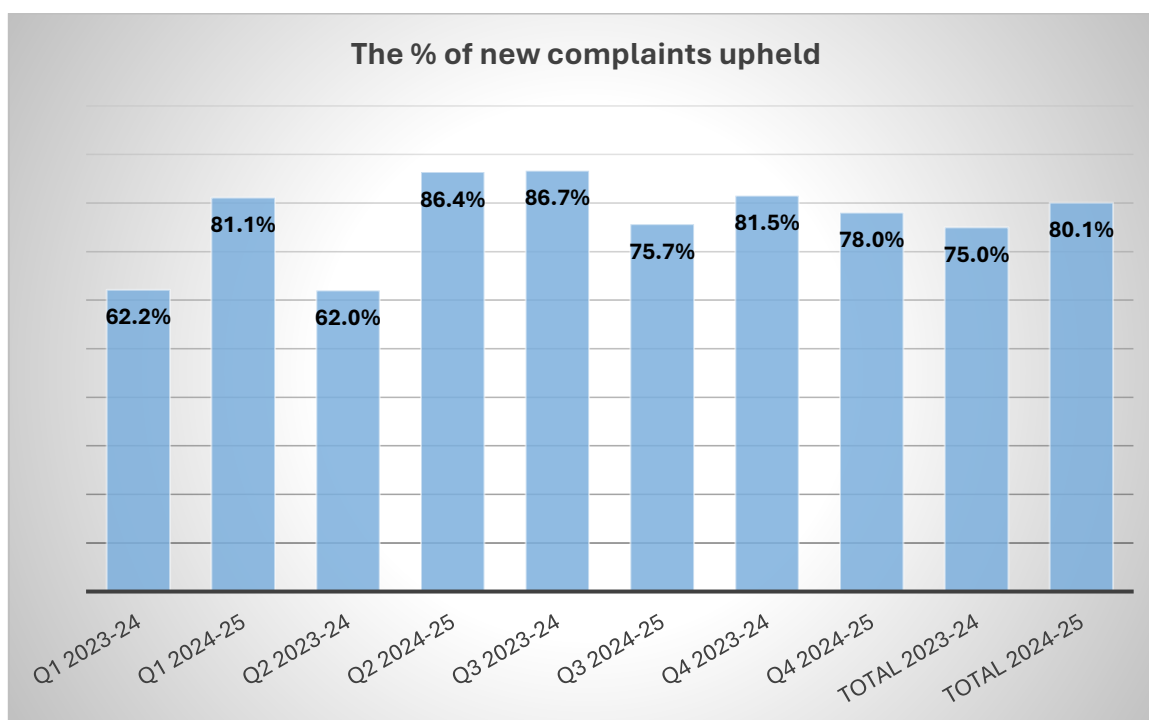
- The % of complaints responded to within timescale has increased from 93.6% in 2023-24 to 94.6% in 2024-25.



- The table below shows the 17 occasions we exceeded the timescales by the number of days:

Month	Total number of complaints	Number of days over
Apr-24	2	1 x 1 day, 1 x 13 days
May-24	4	2 x 1 day, 1 x 6 days and 1 x 10 days
Jun-24	1	1 x 7 days
Jul-24	4	1 x 1 day, 1 x 2 days, 1 x 4 days and 1 x 17 days
Aug-24	0	
Sep-24	1	1 x 3 days
Oct-24	2	1 x 3 days and 1 x 4 days
Nov-24	0	
Dec-24	0	
Jan-25	1	1 x 1 day
Feb-25	1	1 x 1 day
Mar-25	1	1 x 2 days
Total	17	

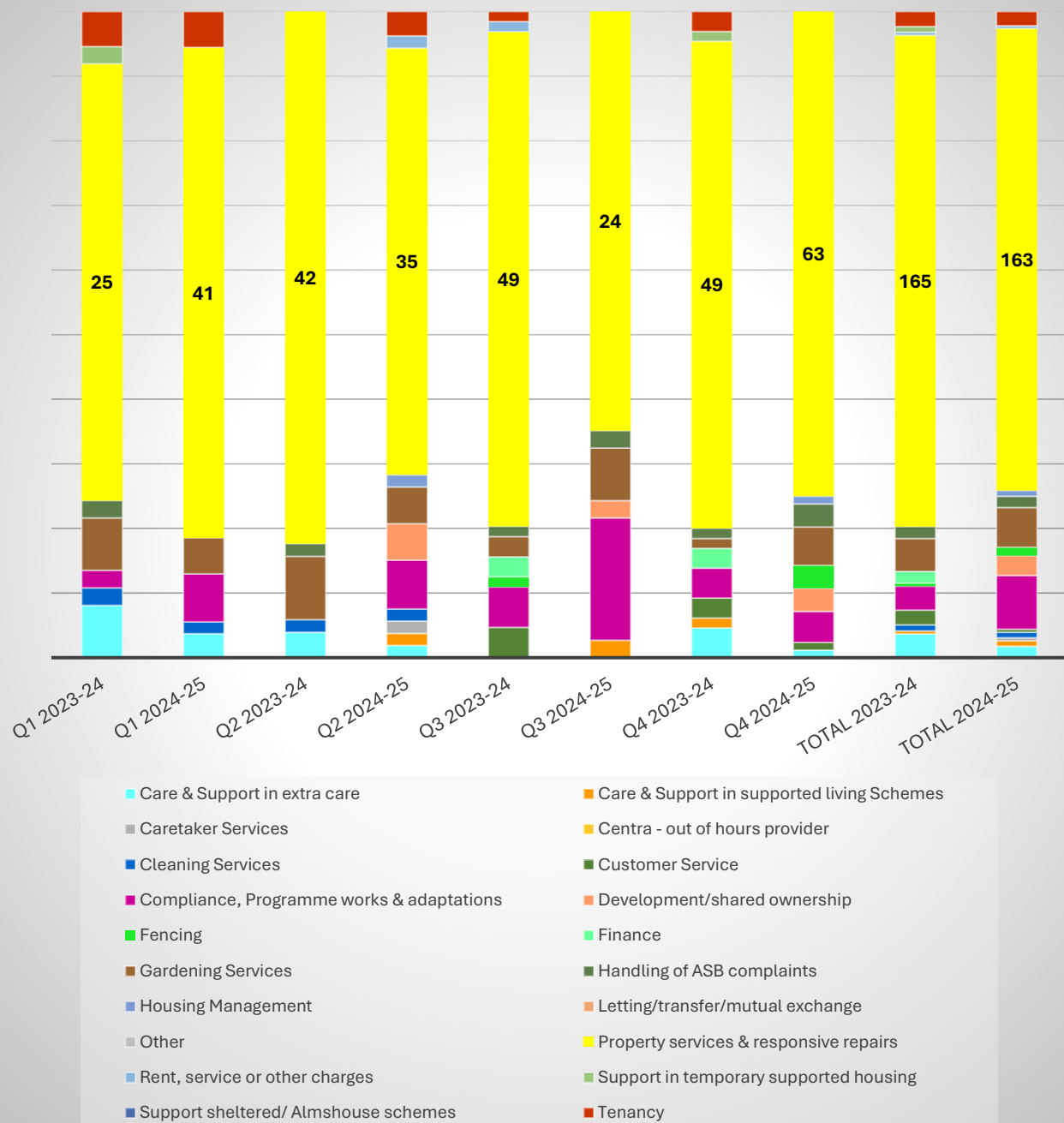
- The % of new complaints upheld has increased from 75.0% in 2023-24 to 80.1% in 2024-25.



- Property services & responsive repairs receive the largest number of complaints. However, as a % of all complaints received, the figure has declined from 76.0% in 2023-24 to 71.5% in 2024-25.
- The categories where complaints have increased in 2024-25 are as follows²:
 - Care and support in supported living schemes (0.5% to 0.9%).
 - Caretaker Services (0% to 0.4%).
 - Compliance, Programme works & adaptations (3.7% to 8.3%)
 - Development/shared ownership (0.0% to 3.1%).
 - Fencing (0.5% to 1.3%)
 - Gardening Services (5.1% to 6.1%)
 - Housing Management (0% to 0.9%).

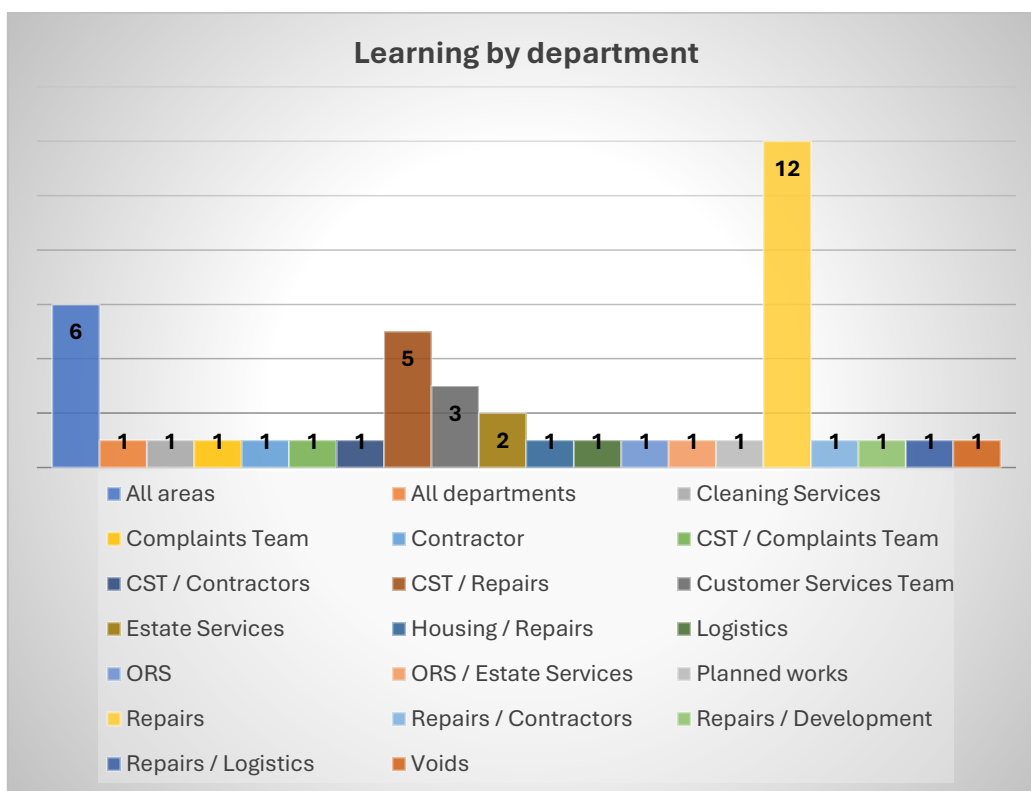
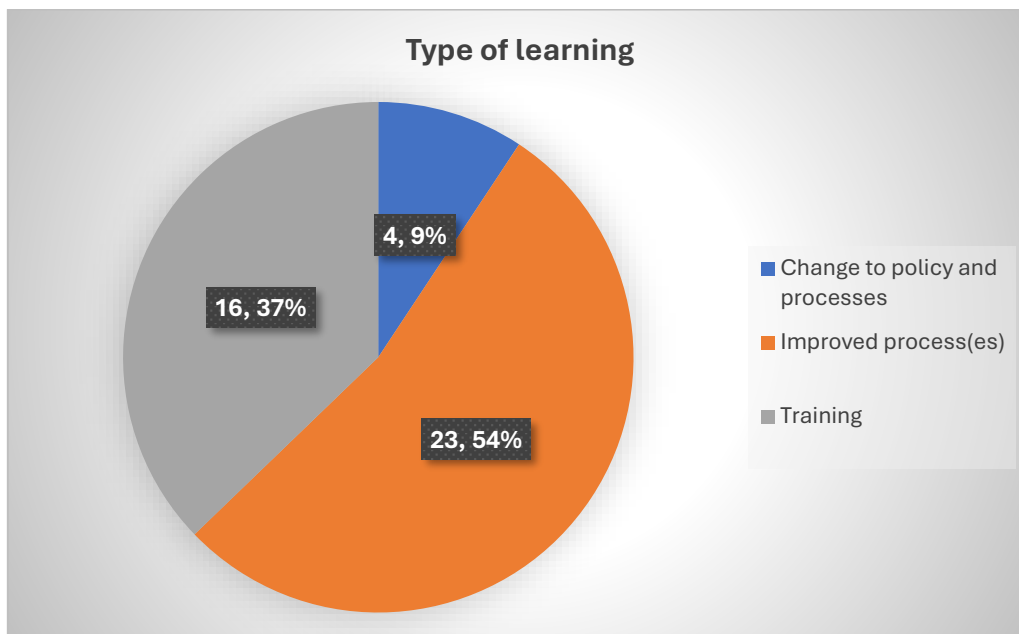
² The number of complaints can be relatively small so caution is needed when interpreting these figures.
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Stage 1 complaints by category



LEARNING FROM COMPLAINTS

- A total of 43 learnings were recorded during 2024-25, involving 4 changes to policy and processes, 23 improved process(es) and 16 staff training.
- The Repairs Service was most affected by changes with 20 learnings followed by the Customer Services Team with 10 learnings. 7 learnings involved all areas/departments.
- Some examples of the types of learnings are shown on the following page.

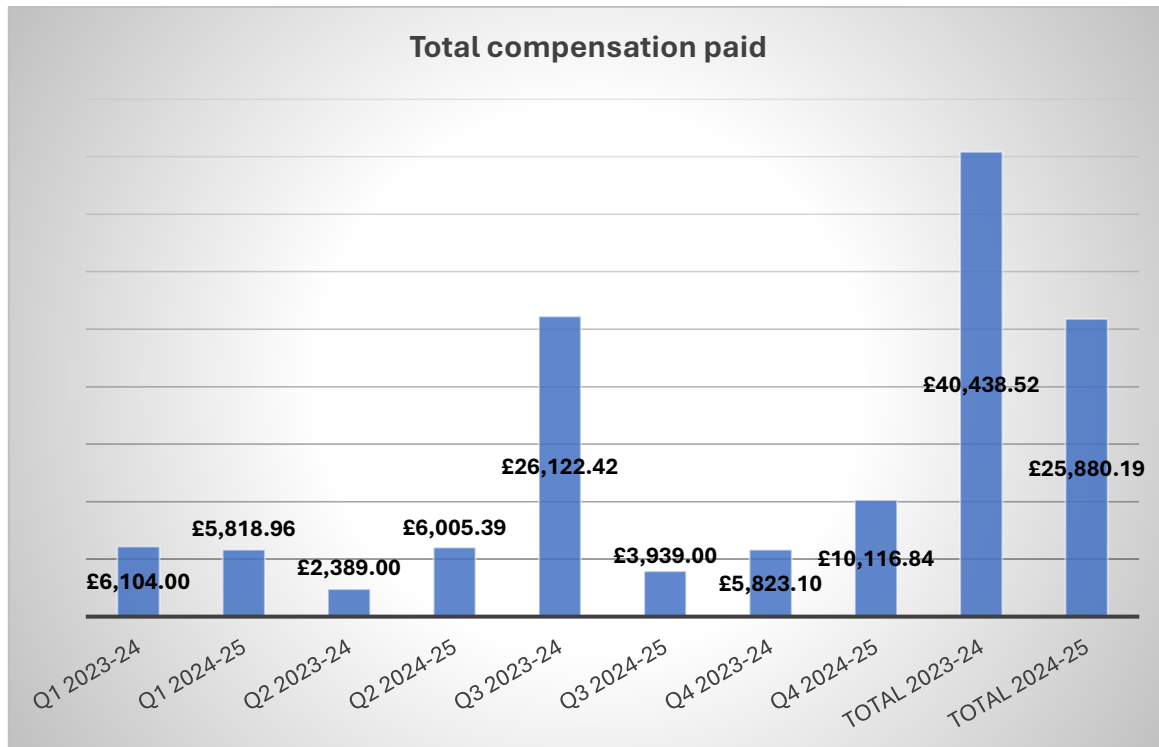


Complaint	What was learnt from the complaint raised	Any changes to our policy/procedures	Type of learning	Area of business
Works not completed due to no access	No access procedure was not followed	Staff to be reminded of the communication procedure	Improved process(es)	All areas
Maladministration in complaint handling from housing ombudsman	Communication with the complainant needs to improve, Also highlighted that we need to demonstrate that we had supported the complainant during the complaint process and understand and identify from the earliest point, what we need to address, i.e. any wellbeing/financial impact	Introduced complaints checklist which is to be completed and returned with complaint response	Change to policy and processes	All areas
Lack of cleaning in communal areas	Certain areas had been missed and cleaning had fallen below standard	Refresher training to be given to all cleaning staff	Training	Cleaning Services
Complaint escalated due to repair appointment being missed or moved In the diary	Repair was not recorded as being required as part of formal complaint	All remedial repairs off the back of complaints to be forwarded to complaints inbox for Zoe/Kat to raise so order states ' FORMAL COMPLAINT – PLEASE DO NOT CANCEL OR RESCHEDULE ANY QUERIES PLEASE REFER TO THE COMPLAINTS DEPARTMENT	Improved process(es)	Complaints Team
Standard gas engineer sent on OOH to resolve issue with ASHP	Sureserve breached emergency time frame as ASHP engineer was not available	Sureserve on recruitment drive to employee more Air source trained engineers	Improved process(es)	Contractor
Complaint raised as dissatisfaction when customer asked for formal complaint to be logged	Complaint process not followed, delays in sending acknowledgement letter	To confirm with customer if they are happy with our initial response or wish to proceed directly to formal complaint	Improved process(es)	CST / Complaints Team
Unnecessary delays to repair wet room shower and flooring caused by CS misdiagnosing the problem	Emphasised importance of asking relevant questions and requesting photographs/ video evidence to establish problem	Training on how to use video calls rolled out to CS, repairs and voids	Improved process(es)	CST / Repairs
Data protection breach whilst taking rent payment	Basic training was not adequate	Undertake full training on processes and procedures including data protection refresher for all staff.	Improved process(es)	Customer Services Team
Communal gardens not being maintained by Orwell Gardening Team	Area of land was not maintained by OHA and left to overgrow	Ensure new staff are familiar with site and understand which areas they maintain	Training	Estate Services

Complaint	What was learnt from the complaint raised	Any changes to our policy/procedures	Type of learning	Area of business
Refused repair to shed as deemed tenant responsibility	Residents not informed of change to tenancy agreement	Letters to be sent to all customers affected, rather than making an announcement via our website	Change to policy and processes	Housing / Repairs
Waited in for ORS to attend, had to call and chase at 2pm only to be informed of op sickness	Lack of communication, no attempt made to contact tenant to advise op sick	Tenants to be contacted at earliest opportunity so they can make alternative arrangements	Training	Logistics
Bathroom still saturated following ORS attendance	Operative mistake, didn't fully investigate the leak	Remind the operative not to just look at the obvious and ensure we check under the bath just in case the issues are more serious than just the sealant.	Training	ORS
Contractor carrying out Net Zero works failing to attend appointments	Poor service received from the contractor	Reinforce importance of monitoring ongoing repairs and tracking to completion	Training	Planned works
Appointments being cancelled at short notice and length of time taken to complete repair	Adjust diary earlier in the day following reports of staff sickness to avoid cancelling appointments at short notice	Currently in process of recruiting more ORS operatives which will help with workload.	Improved process(es)	Repairs
Poor communication of updates and decisions	There were lapses in communication and updates to the resident	Ensure regular and transparent communication with residents about ongoing repair works. Updates should be provided at set intervals, even if there are no new updates.	Improved process(es)	Repairs
The length of time to carry out the remedial works	Handling of the remedial work is inadequate, resulting in delays and dissatisfaction.	Reinforce the importance of monitoring the time taken to carry out a repair and to track actions to completion.	Improved process(es)	Repairs
Ongoing issue with plumbing dating back several years	Issue had been identified and recommendations received but not acted upon	Re-iterate importance of checking repair history and reviewing recommendations from contractors	Training	Repairs
Level of compensation offered	Compensation offer differed to that of other complainant with same issue	Review compensation and pay in line with what has already been offered to another complainant	Improved process(es)	Repairs
Several repairs missed at void - property was uninhabitable in tenant's opinion - tenant had to keep chasing for repairs to be scheduled	Ensure if not all work is completed prior to property being let that works are raised and appointments scheduled to minimise disruption to tenant	Training	Improved process(es)	Voids

COMPENSATION

- Compensation has decreased from £40,438.52 in 2023-24 to £25,880.19 in 2024-25.



HOUSING OMBUDSMAN

During the year, 5 cases were referred to the Housing Ombudsman. Of these, we have received an outcome for 4 cases with the Housing Ombudsman's decisions including:

- 2 service failures
- 3 maladministrations
- 2 reasonable redresses

The learnings from 2 of these cases are now complete and can be shown below:

Case 1

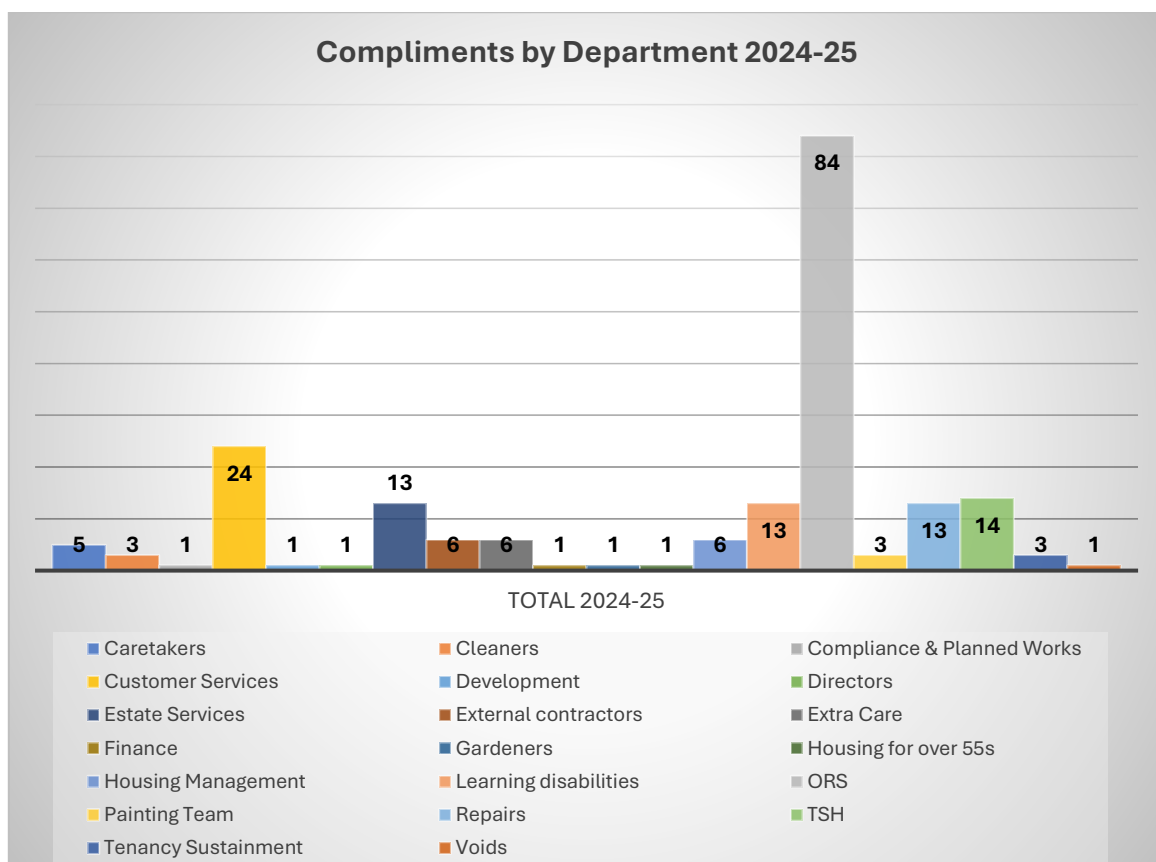
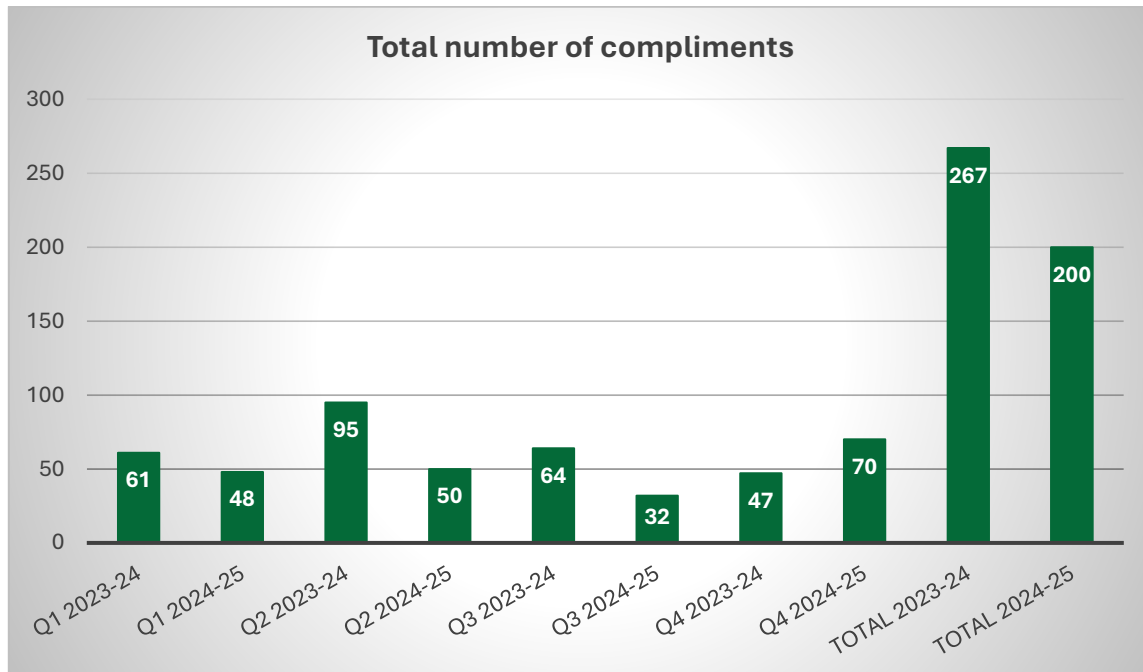
- Better scheduling, planning and communication/monitoring of repairs between the delivery repairs team and the logistics planning department.
- Regular and transparent communication with residents about ongoing repair works. Updates are provided at set intervals, even if there are no new updates.
- A timeline including clear repair status will be issued and details of all orders sent to the HO on any future cases that are being investigated.
- Accurate assessment of the time needed for more complex jobs is shared with the logistics team and the awareness of coordinating such work around team training sessions.
- Provided staff training on actions that come out of the handling of cases and senior reviews to assess any actions that need to be considered for staff training.

Case 2

- Provided additional staff training on handling of cases involving residents with mental health and additional needs.
- Implemented a system for thorough identification and correct diagnosis of the defect and follow ups after repairs to ensure effectiveness and continued monitoring. Undertaken a thorough investigation on the history of properties to identify prompt solutions.
- Re-enforced to staff the importance of providing an update in accordance with the committed timescales even when no specific change or a delay has occurred to keep the customer updated and to enable us to consider any change in circumstances or support that may be required.
- Provide additional staff training in how to respond appropriately to residents' expressions of distress.
- Established regular property inspections for properties with a history of defects and developed a risk assessment protocol for potential hazards in such properties with more frequent inspection reviews and prioritised and addressed urgently repairs, especially those affecting habitability.
- Provided additional staff training on handling of cases and the assessment of appropriate levels of compensation in accordance with Complaints Policy and Procedures. Implemented regular reviews of complex cases to ensure learns are developed and recorded.

COMPLIMENTS

- The total number of compliments has decreased from 267 in 2023-24 to 200 in 2024-25.
- During 2024-25, ORS received the highest number of compliments at 84, followed by Customer Services (24) and Temporary Supported Housing (14).

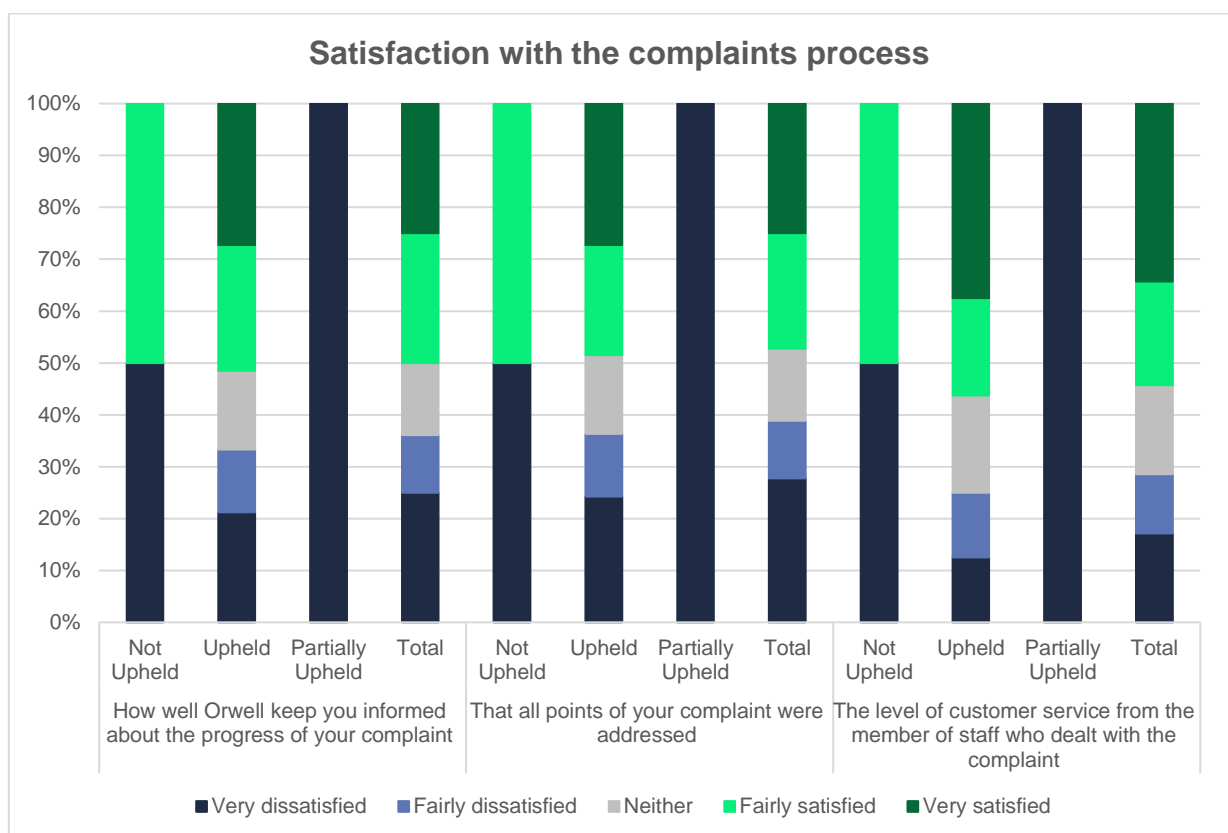


COMPLAINTS SATISFACTION (TRANSACTIONAL SURVEYS)

Satisfaction with Orwell's response to complaints.

Between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025 satisfaction was as follows:

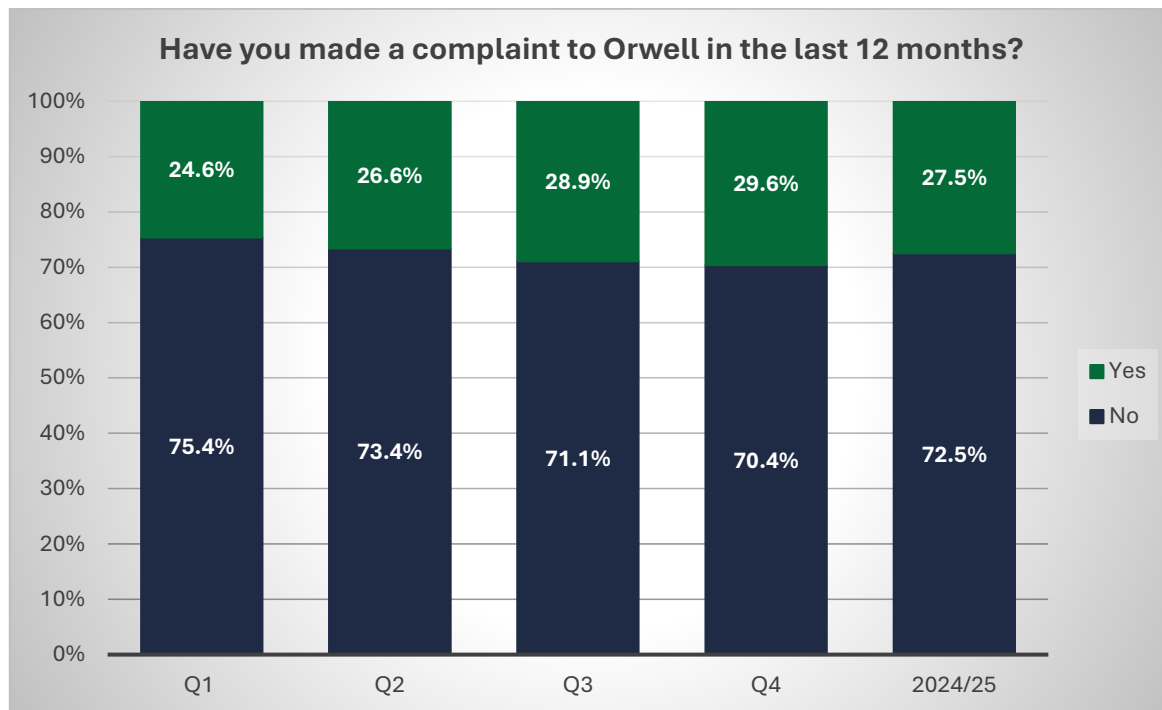
- 50.0% (18) were satisfied with how well Orwell kept them informed about the progress of their complaint.
- 47.2% (17) were satisfied that all points of their complaint were addressed.
- 54.3% (19) of respondents were satisfied with the level of customer service from the member of staff who dealt with their complaint.
- The vast majority of complainants had had their complaints upheld (33). Satisfaction levels were similar for those whose complaints were upheld and not upheld (2). The one respondent whose complaint were partially upheld was very dissatisfied with all aspects.



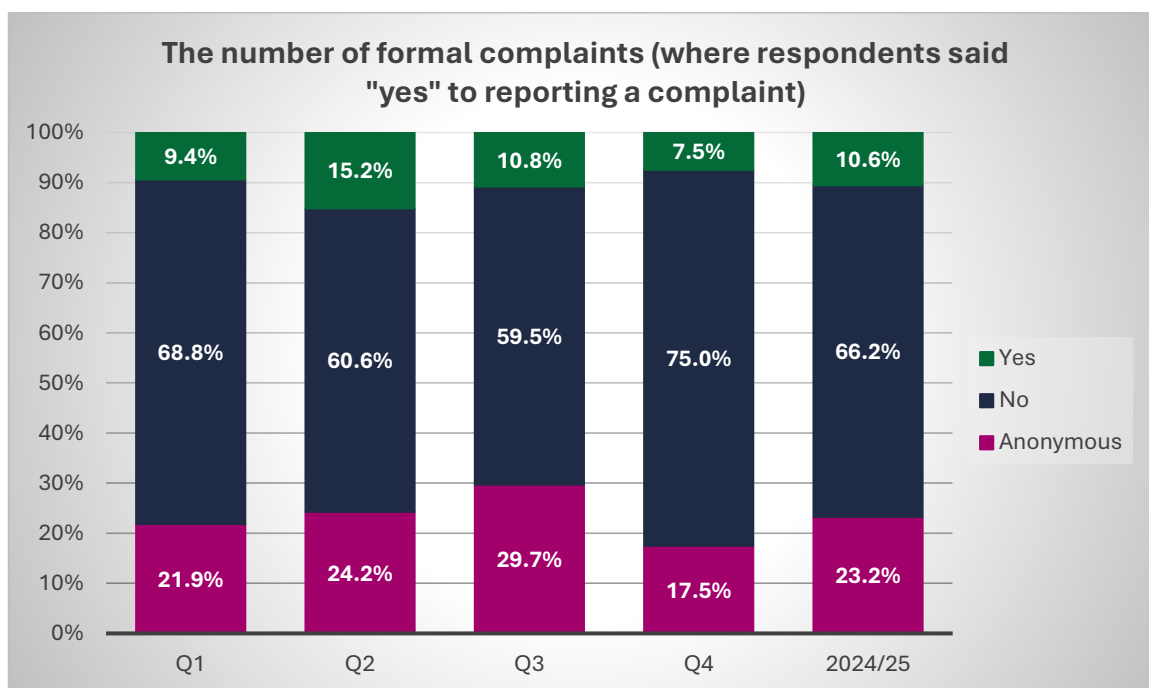
- The positive comments included the speed with which the complaint was handled and failures being acknowledged and rectified.
- The negative comments included issues with communication/lack of empathy, lack of action/communication despite repeated attempts to make contact, not receiving adequate responses to questions, the complaint not being referred to the appropriate person and then not being kept updated with progress, feeling the response was generic with a few tweaks and the complaint not being escalated as per the policy.
- Suggestions for improvement included updating customers on progress, using verbal communication and resolving problems faster.

COMPLAINTS SATISFACTION (TSMs) - LCRA

Just over a quarter (142, 27.5%) of the 517 LCRA respondents said they had made a complaint to Orwell in the last 12 months (26.7% in 2023-4).

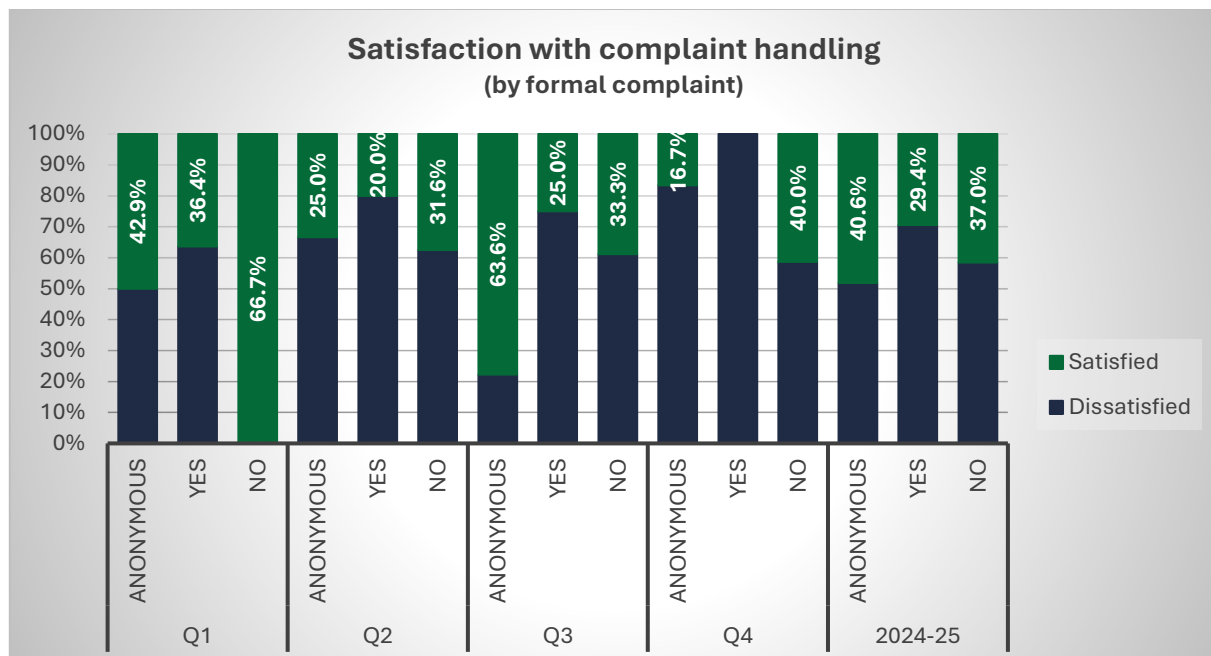


Of the 142 respondents who said they had made a complaint, 33 responded anonymously and therefore we are unable to determine whether they had made a formal complaint. Our records showed that only 15 (10.6%) of those we could identify had made a formal complaint (10.4% in 2023-4).

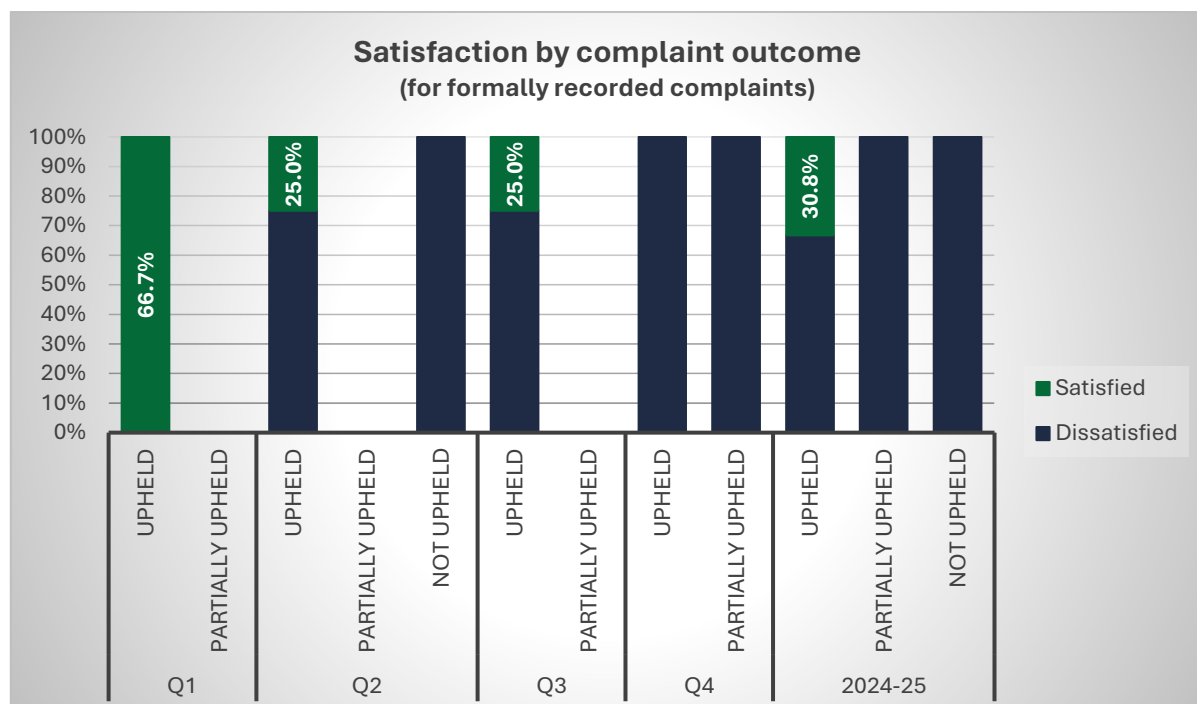


35.3% (48) respondents were satisfied with the way their complaint was handled (39.5% in 2023-4).

Satisfaction with complaints handling varied when a respondent had made a formal complaint. 29.4% (10) of the respondents who we had recorded as making a formal complaint were satisfied, compared with 40.6% (13) of anonymous respondents and 37.0% (27) of respondents who hadn't made a formal complaint.



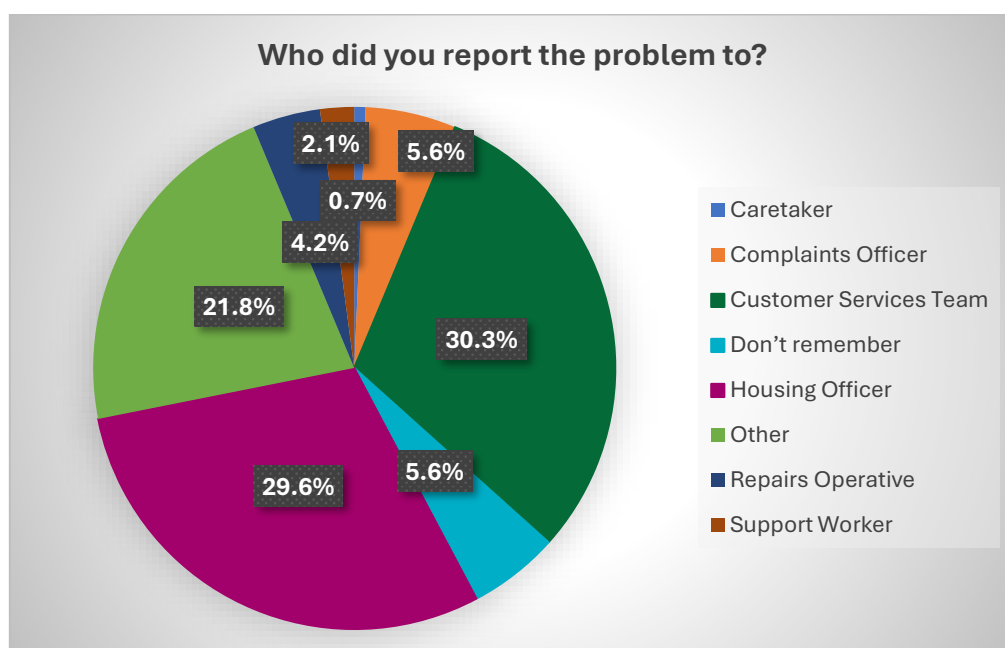
13 of the respondents who had made a formal complaint had had their complaint upheld, 1 had their complaint partially upheld and 1 was not upheld. Satisfaction was higher for those whose complaint was upheld (30.8% compared with 0% for partially upheld and not upheld).



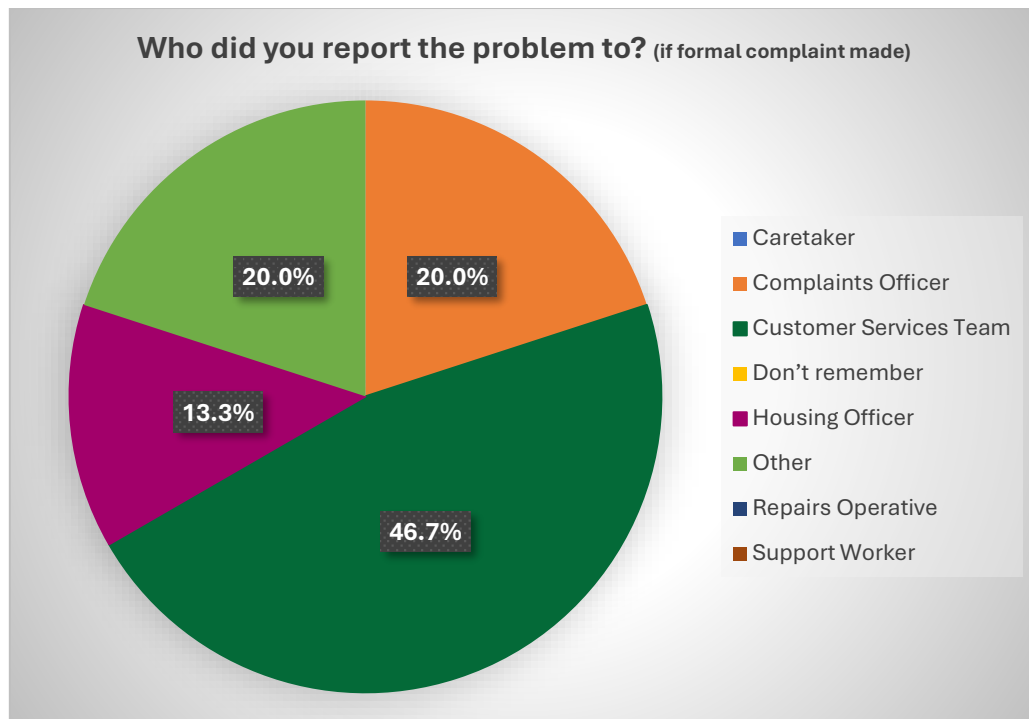
Suggestions for how we could improve the way the complaint was handled included better communication between departments and the customer; reducing confusion between departments; increased listening and empathy; face to face resolution and keeping to response timescales.

Customer Services Team (43) was the most popular choice for customers reporting problems, closely followed by Housing Officer (42). Those who ticked “other” (31) stated the following additional options:

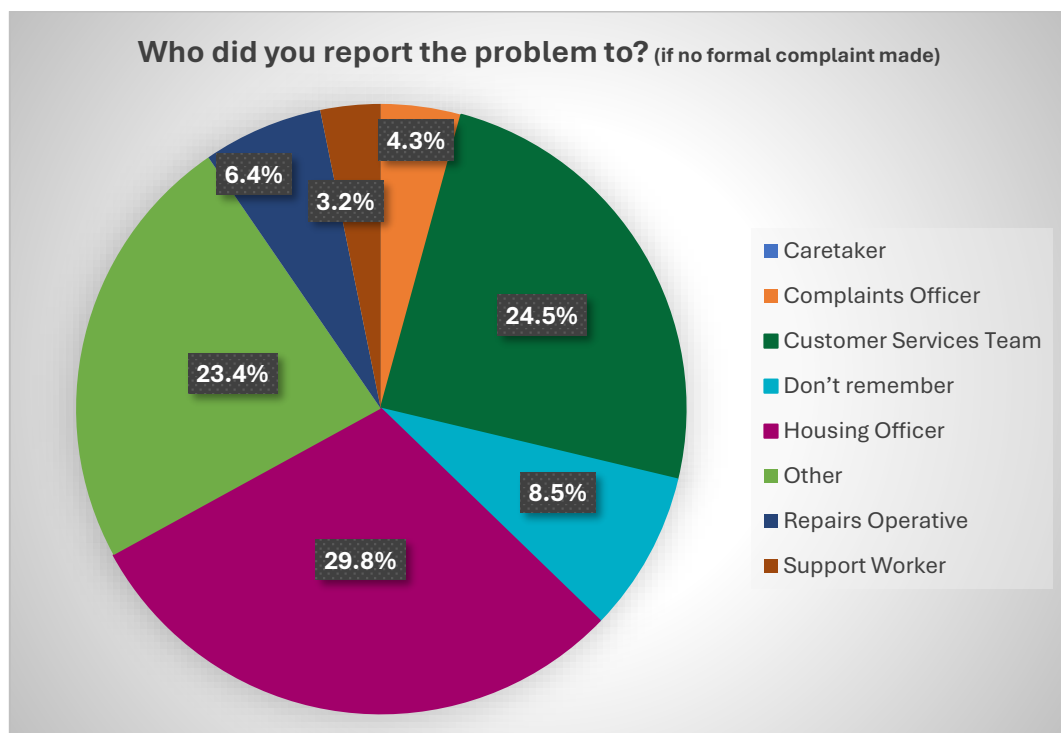
- Customer service team and the manager
- Head office
- Scheme Manager
- Housing Manager
- Repairs department/office/team
- Estates department
- Individual named staff
- External organisation - the police, Council



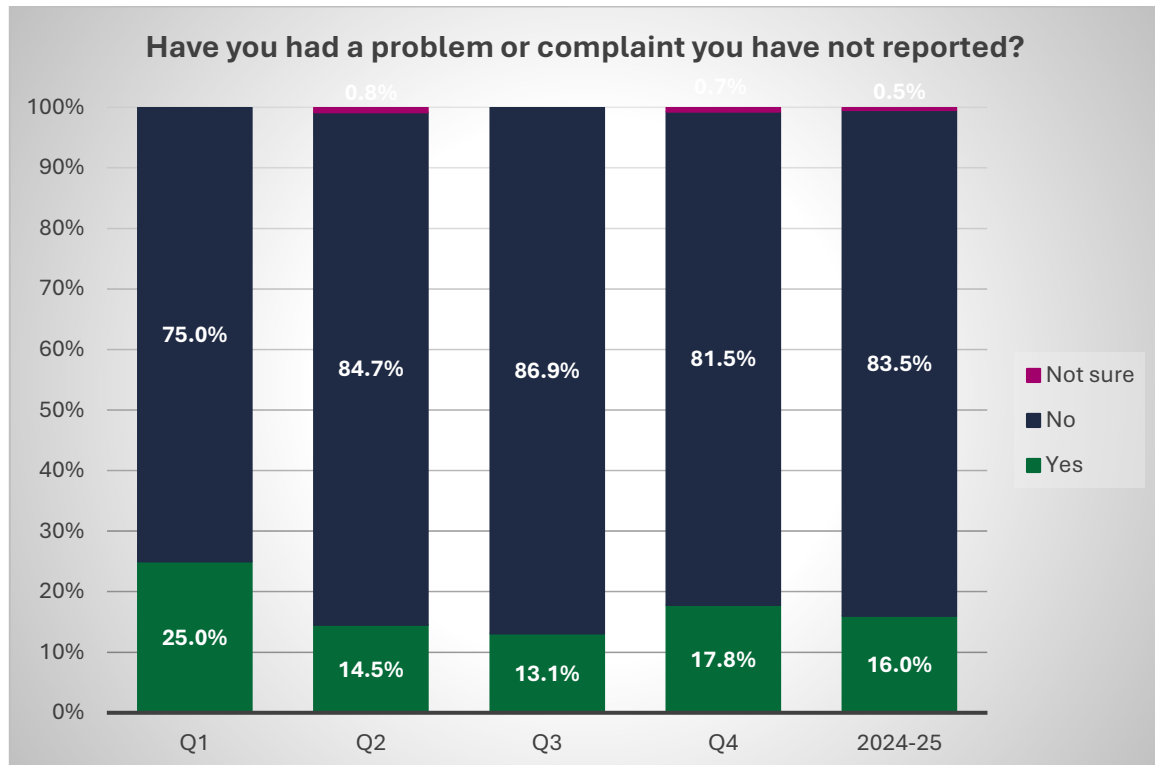
Almost half of the 15 respondents we had recorded as making a formal complaint, had reported their complaint to the Customers Services Team (7). This was followed by the Complaints Officer (3), other (3) and their Housing Officer (1).



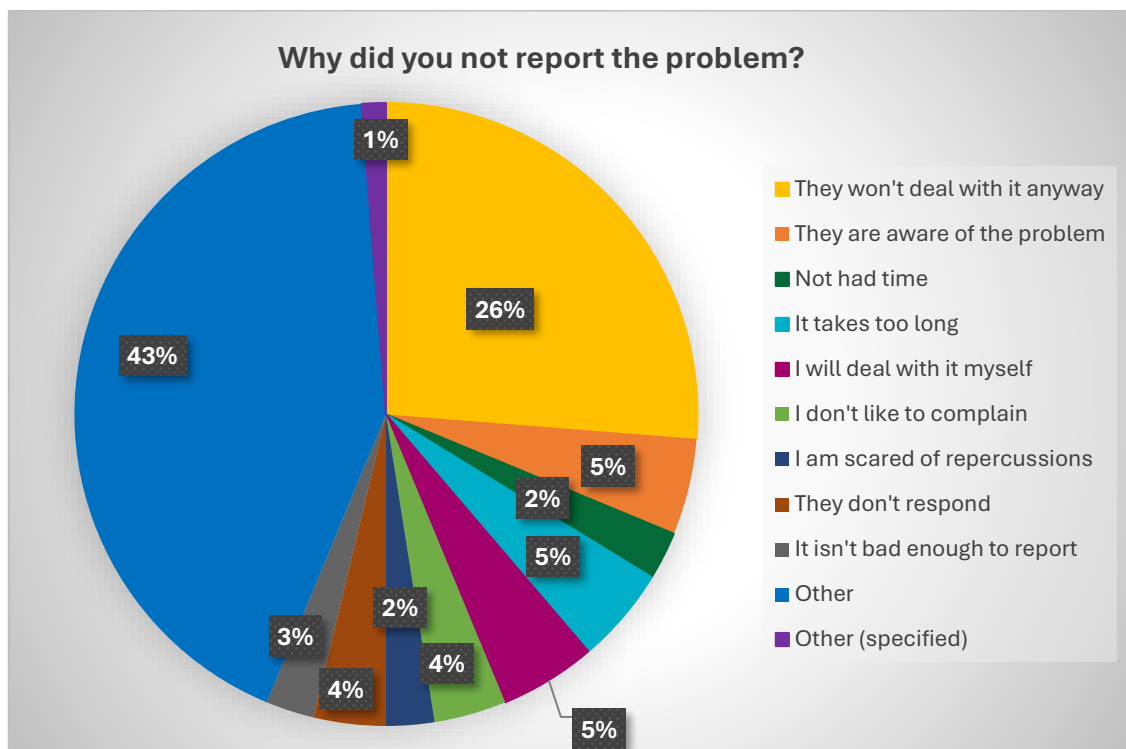
If no formal complaint had been made, nearly a third of respondents had reported their complaint to their Housing Officer (28). This was followed by the Customer Services Team (23) and other (22). This could indicate that staff are dealing with “complaints” as dissatisfaction and resolving issues or that they don’t recognise “complaints” as formal.



66 respondents said they had a complaint or problem they didn't report.

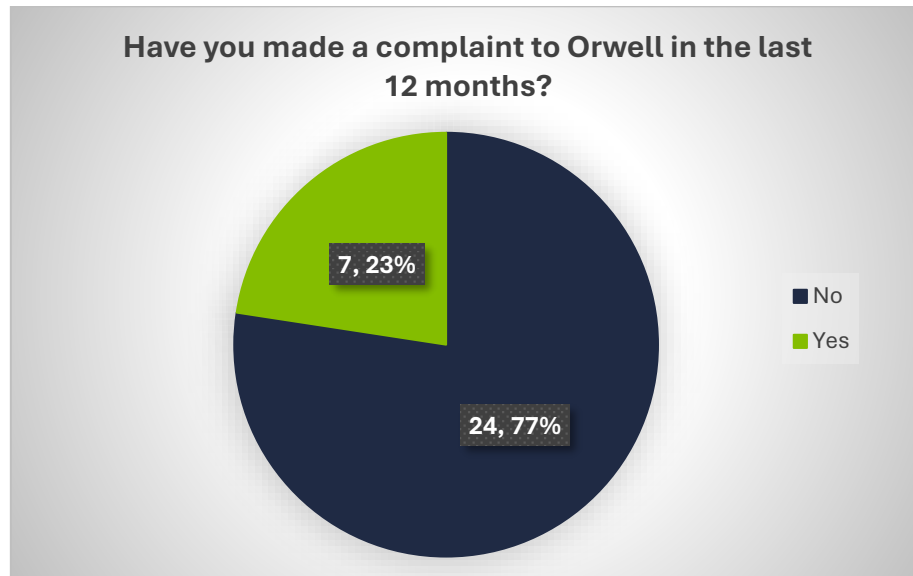


The most popular reasons given for respondents not reporting problems were because they felt Orwell wouldn't deal with it or "other" reasons (but didn't specify).



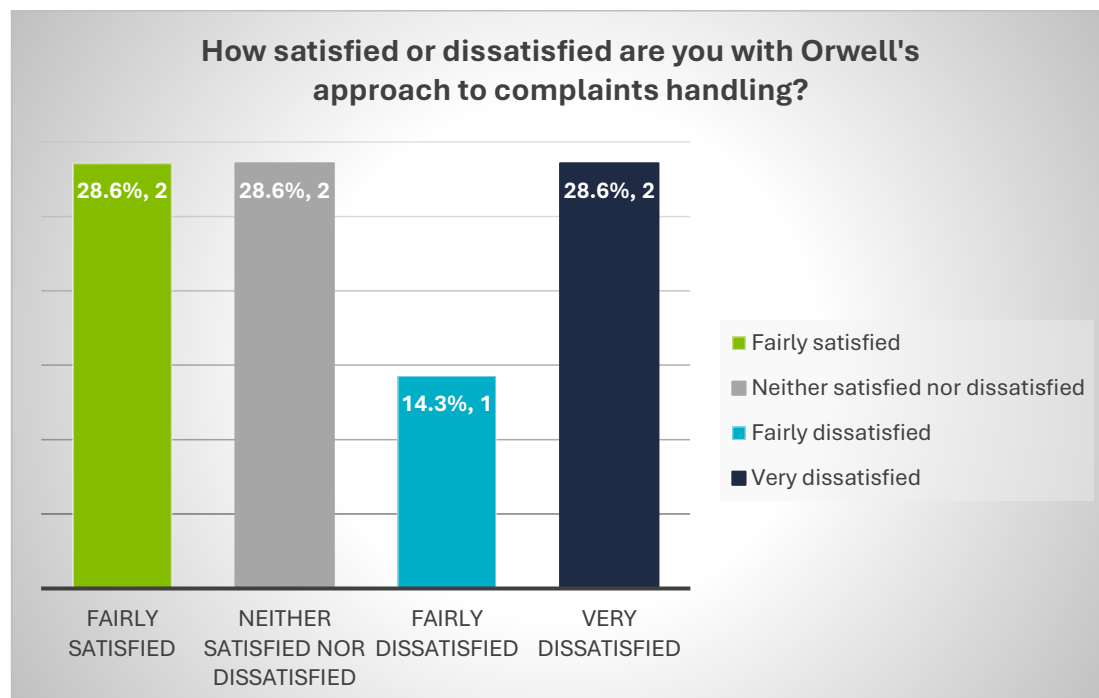
COMPLAINTS SATISFACTION (TSMs) - LCHO

Just under a quarter (7, 23%) of the 31 respondents said they had made a complaint to Orwell in the last 12 months (30% of LCRA respondents had made a complaint in 2024-25).



Of the 7 respondents who said they had made a complaint, 1 responded anonymously and therefore we are unable to determine whether they had made a formal complaint. Our records showed that none of those we could identify had made a formal complaint.

28.6% (2) respondents were satisfied with the way their complaint was handled.



Suggestions for how we could improve the way the complaint was handled included better communication; increased listening, acknowledgment and action; face to face assessment of situation.

Those who said they complained reported the problem to the following:

- Customer Service Team
- Assistant director property services and copying in the CEO.
- I am not sure.
- Rang the Ipswich office. They said to ring repairs. I also spoke to the housing officer.
- The development project officer.
- To customer services and the sales representative.
- To the site men who we're working for Orwell

4 respondents said they had a complaint or problem they didn't report.



The reasons given for respondents not reporting problems were split equally between they felt Orwell wouldn't deal with it, not had time, Orwell doesn't respond or "other" reasons (but didn't specify).

COMPLAINTS HANDLING ASSESSMENT TEAM (CHAT)

The CHAT group met 4 times during 2024-25 to review complaints (13th April, 3rd August, 4th November 2024 and 8th March 2025). The results have been shared internally with colleagues and will be shared online in a “You said we listened” format as we have with all the other sessions.

10% of complaints from the previous quarter are reviewed at each session, the complaints are scrutinised to ensure we are following our procedures, providing empathy and to get feedback from our customers about whether we could have done anything differently.

Should anyone else like to attend one of these sessions please do contact the Customer Experience Manager or the Head of Customers and Communities. The below link is where our outcomes from the sessions are published online.

[Complaints Handling Assessment Team \(CHAT\) | Orwell Housing](#)