



## Annual Report on Complaints 2024-25

Foreword: Honeycomb group has a group wide policy for complaints handling. This report covers complaints data for Staffs Housing, the housing service within the Group and Honeycomb Charitable Services – Concrete and Glow.

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### Complaints at Honeycomb:

#### Scope of Report:

This report covers complaints and how we have responded to them between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025. Complaints come to us through a variety of channels including face to face interactions, social media and via forms on our website. From a customer perspective, the advantage of logging a complaint online is that social media and our website are available at any time.

#### Complaints vs Service Request:

Honeycomb Group recognises the difference between complaints and service requests, further detail can be found below:

1. **Service Requests:** We must recognise the difference between a service request and a complaint. A service request is a request from a customer to us requiring action to be taken to put something right. Service requests are not complaints, but must be recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly. We regard a complaint 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 its behalf, affecting an individual customer or group of customers.

2. **Stage 1:** When a complaint is made, it will be acknowledged and logged at Stage 1 within 5 working days of receipt. We will set out our understanding of the complaint and

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be clear about which aspects of the complaint we are, and are not, responsible for. We will also acknowledge the outcomes the customer is seeking. We will seek clarification of the customer's views where this is necessary. We will provide a response to the complaint within 10 working days of the complaint being acknowledged. We will respond when the answer to the complaint is known, not when any outstanding actions required to address the issue have been completed

3. **Stage 2:** Once Stage 1 has been completed, if all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the customer's satisfaction it will be progressed to Stage 2, unless an exclusion ground applies. A Stage 2 complaint will not be considered by the same person who considered the complaint at Stage 1. Customers are not required to explain their reasons for requesting a stage 2 consideration. We will make reasonable efforts to understand why a customer remains unhappy as part of the stage 2 response. We must be clear about which aspects of the complaint we are, and are not, responsible for and clarify any areas where this is not clear.
4. **External Review:** If the customer is unhappy with the outcome of their stage 2 investigation, they can refer their complaint and ask for it to be reviewed by the relevant external body:
  - Staffs Housing – The Housing Ombudsman ([www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk)).
  - Revival / Glow / Concrete – The Charity Commission ([The Charity Commission - GOV.UK](http://TheCharityCommission-GOV.UK))

Full details of the complaint handling process can be found in our 2024-25 Complaints Policy:  
<https://www.honeycombgroup.org.uk/media/cxebsbvs/complaints-policy.pdf>

## Honeycomb Group Overview:

Service Area	Refused	Stage 1	Stage 2	External Review
Staffs Housing	0	149	19	6
Concrete & Glow	0	13	0	0

### Background to Complaints in the social housing sector:

Complaints received for Honeycomb Group are subject to our internal Complaints Policy and the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.

The Housing Ombudsman is an independent body that oversees the complaint handling of social landlords. The Housing Ombudsman oversees the Complaint Handling Code which before April 2024 was guidance, from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 the code was made statutory. As part of this code Honeycomb are required to submit an annual self-assessment, of our complaint handling procedures and performance, as part of this submission we need to share this document. On occasions the Housing Ombudsman may also investigate cases referred to them by our customers, when they have been through our full formal complaint process and are not happy with the final outcome.

The Regulator of Social Housing also plays a role in monitoring complaints for Honeycomb. In April 2024 they launched the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard, this new standard empathises the need to give our customers a clear and accessible complaints procedure to ensure their voices are heard. The Tenant Satisfaction Measures (CH01 and CH02) also monitor complaints performance indirectly through a combination of data collection and surveys. Honeycomb report our complaints performance annually with the regulator.

### Complaints Refused:

We have not refused any complaints.

## Number of Formal Complaints:

During 2024-25, we received 162 formal complaints, this compares to 151 in 2023-24, which is a 6.8% increase, we suspect this is due to an increased awareness of the complaints process and the Housing Ombudsman Service internally and by our customers. Of all formal complaints 130 were closed at stage 1, and 19 escalated to stage 2.

## Complaint Themes:

- Repairs and Maintenance: 88%
- Tenancy Services 13%
- Charity 5%
- Customer Services 4%

During 2024-25, 88% of complaints were made about our maintenance and repair service, this is a 47% increase on the complaint data from 2023-24. We have been working hard to address this, and further details can be found in the repairs and maintenance section below.

In 2023-24, our complaint data informed us that staff and customer services were the third highest proportion of complaints. We introduced a new Neighbourhood model in May 2024 and have seen a reduction in the number of complaints in this area and reduced our call wait times from 12 minutes to 3-4 minutes.

Our performance for 2023/24 reported 42% of customers were satisfied with the way we handled complaints, placing us in the top quartile for satisfaction. However, this figure fell throughout 2024 to 27.6% at its lowest in quarter 3 but increased again to 37.5% in quarter 4.

Of the 162 complaints received in 2024-25, 90% of complaints were closed at stage 1 and 10% of complaints were escalated to a stage 2 review, 6 complaints were referred to the Housing Ombudsman for external review and 2 judgements of maladministration.

## Repairs and Maintenance

### Complaint Numbers year on year:

The increase in the number of repairs and maintenance complaints is in line with the increase we have seen across the social housing sector.

Repairs & Maintenance Complaints	2023-24	2024-25
Percentage of Overall Group Complaints:	81%	88%

We have identified three key themes in our repairs and maintenance complaints:

1. Handling of repairs
2. Property condition
3. Void standard

We have been working with our involved customers to procure and appoint a new repairs and maintenance contractor to address the concerns with our current service offer (this went live in August 2025). We are expecting that this will see an improvement in service delivery and a reduction in complaints, with close monitoring of performance.

We have introduced a new CRM system, which will enable us to access key information on repairs progress to keep our customers informed and updated (this went live in June 2025).

## Observations and Learnings:

### Observations:

There are some important positives to take from the complaints review:

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- A slight increase in complaint numbers supports the theory that our customers find it easier to complain when they need to. Customers are making more complaints and although they may be dissatisfied at the point of recording the complaint, they also have an expectation that the Honeycomb will respond and deal with their concerns.
- The proportion of complaints resolved at the first stage in the process remains high at 84%. This evidences that Complaint Handlers can resolve complaints effectively without the need for a customer to request a review via a stage 2 escalation.

#### Learnings:

Honeycomb Group is committed to improving our services and aim to embed all our customer feedback into our business decisions moving forward.

Complaint Satisfaction	
23/24	42.4%
Q1	40.4%
Q2	30.2%
Q3	27.6%
Q4	37.5%

In 24/25 our complaint satisfaction dropped, and we had a surge of complaints in Q3, with a large number of these about repairs and specifically regarding leaks.

A “bottle neck” arose and we knew customers were dissatisfied about response times and overall satisfaction.

What have we done to put this right:

- Started with the basics:
- Reviewed our complaints policy
- Expanded training across the group and included a video
- Created a complaints dashboard
- Expanded the complaints team
- Deep Dive into complaints and the way they are handled
- We’ve investigated complaints to identify themes
- Enhanced training in our customer hub about customer experience
- Addressed call wait times and introduced a call back facility
- Launched how to guides for our telephone staff
- Introduced an acknowledgement leaflet to summarise the next steps
- Changed our website to improve the customer journey
- Introduced weekly Complaints meetings with Heads of Service and Complaint Handlers

In 2024 we had an audit on our complaints service and the report, the complaint handling code and expectations in the Consumer Standards have been reviewed against the feedback from our TSM’s. This has enabled us to group the feedback into themes and identify gaps where we are able to strengthen.

We have already seen an improvement in satisfaction in Q4 and will continue to work to improve our performance through 25/26.

### Next Steps for 2025-26

**New repairs contractor - August 25:** We have worked with our involved customers to review our current repairs offer and how this can be improved. Our involved customers have been included in the tender process and shaping the new contractor. Our Repairs Focus Group will continue to work with us to monitor the new repairs contract performance.

**Voids process:** work on the a new Voids process started in December 24 and many improvements have already been implemented

- ✓ Void standard inspection form in place to improve record keeping and property knowledge.
- ✓ Immediate process changes in place to introduce “quick fixes” alongside the larger review
- ✓ How to guide for customer services team for terminations
- ✓ Void inspection customer group formed, and inspections have taken place with a follow-on session to collate customer feedback.

The project group will continue alongside day-to-day operations to produce an end-to-end process for voids in 25/26.

**Continue to monitor Complaints training:** We have included complaints training as a mandatory section for all staff. We will continue to monitor and report on completion and review and report quarterly performance to our Customer Services Committee.

**New CRM system:** we have introduced the first phase of a new CRM system, including a complaints dashboard. This will provide an improved service for our customers and greater insights and reporting functionality to continually improve our complaint handling.

**Customer Hub Training:** we will continue to deliver training for our Customer Hub staff to provide them with the skills and knowledge to continue improving our customer service.