

Sanctuary's complaint performance 2024/25

Foreword by Arvinda Gohil, Vice Chair – Sanctuary Group Board and member of the Board responsible for complaints



Financial Year 2024/25 has seen continued progress in how Sanctuary manages and responds to customer complaints.

This year, we've built on the strong foundations laid previously, with a clear focus on delivering a more responsive, transparent and customer-centred complaint service. Key drivers of this improvement include:

- A continued shift towards a more resident-focused regulatory environment, reinforcing the importance of accountability and fairness.
- Greater customer awareness of their rights and the standards of service they should expect – and how to raise concerns when those expectations aren't met.
- A sustained increase in complaint volumes, which has further highlighted the need for robust systems and consistent service delivery.
- A renewed focus on tracking and delivering on complaint outcomes, ensuring that commitments made to residents are followed through to completion.
- A shared commitment across the organisation to do the right thing for our residents and provide the best possible service.

At Sanctuary, we remain committed to learning from complaints and using that insight to drive service improvement. We continue to see the positive impact of our efforts – not just in how we handle complaints, but in how we listen, respond and improve.

We know there is more to do, and our work doesn't stop here. Our complaint service will continue to evolve throughout 2025 and beyond, ensuring we remain focused on what matters most: delivering a fair, timely, and high-quality experience for every customer.

2024/25 Complaint Overview

Sanctuary wants to provide a safe, well-maintained home for all our customers but sometimes we get things wrong. When we are wrong, we learn from those mistakes. Analysis of complaints and understanding the root cause of complaints, helps us learn.

The number of complaints increased during 2024/25. The most significant increase was in England, in line with the rest of the sector. The Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) reported a 474% increase in cases across the sector between 2019/20 to 2024/25; we have seen a 187% increase during the same period. We also saw a relative increase in complaints from our residents in Scotland and from those living in our Supported Living homes.

- 18 cases with findings of severe maladministration
- 67 cases with findings of maladministration
- 49 cases with findings of service failure
- 67 cases with findings of reasonable redress
- 28 cases with findings of no maladministration

In line with the Housing Ombudsman's requirements, Sanctuary publishes an annual report detailing our complaint performance. This edition covers the period 2024/25. Each year, we also present our complaint performance and service improvements to Sanctuary's Group Board, and publish this information, alongside our self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code on our website.

Annual self-assessment

Our Group Board approved our self-assessment against the HOS Complaint Handling Code at its meeting on 25 June 2025. Prior to this, our self-assessment was reviewed by our Resident Scrutiny Panel. [Read our self-assessment.](#)

The five main reasons we receive complaints are:

- Responsive Repairs
- Damp and Mould
- Gas Repairs and Servicing
- Housing Management
- Estate Services

We have introduced a new Root Cause Analysis framework and methodology to help us find process failures that contribute to a complaint. We use customer and colleague insight to find the problem, then take steps to stop the issue repeating. Corrective action is widely communicated so this learning is useful to our colleagues and customers.

Our 2024/25 complaint performance

As was the case across the wider social housing sector, we received significantly more complaints in England during 2024/25, recording a total of 9,118 stage one complaints and 1,943 complaints escalating to stage two.

'Stage one' is where we have investigated a complaint and given our first response to the resident who complained.

'Stage two' is our final response, when the customer is unhappy with the outcome at stage one.

2024/25	Renters	Owners	Renter and owner combined
Number of stage one complaints received per 1,000 homes	114.0	57.7	110.9
Number of stage two complaints received per 1,000 homes	23.3	18.5	23.0

You'll see from the table above that most of the complaints we receive are resolved at stage one. Around one in every six housing complaints in England progresses to stage two.

2024/25	Renters	Owners	Renter and owner combined
Percentage of stage one complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales	92.5	84.7	92.3
Percentage of stage two complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales	79.6	86.0	79.8

We're committed to delivering a fair and responsive complaint service that reaches the correct outcome for our customers, with an aim to improve further, increasing our compliance further in 2025/26. While performance improved during the year it is recognised that there is further to go to deliver the service customers expect. We are already seeing improvements in 2025/26 and are confident this positive trend will continue.

Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) complaints

Customers can take their complaint to HOS when they are unhappy with our response at stage one and stage two. In 2024/25 we learned the outcome of 128 HOS investigations.

The 128 investigations sparked 323 determination findings:

- 20 severe maladministration findings
- 106 maladministration findings
- 59 service failure findings
- 89 reasonable redress findings
- 39 no maladministration findings
- 10 outside of jurisdiction

Sanctuary received 18 cases where the Housing Ombudsman found severe maladministration. Across those cases there were 20 findings of severe maladministration. Every case is individually analysed to make sure lessons are learnt.

By 31 March 2025, the Ombudsman had 182 open investigations into the complaints of Sanctuary residents. At that time, the Housing Ombudsman Service had requested information from us on another 12 cases before deciding whether to open an investigation.

An increase in customers taking their complaints to the HOS has been seen across the sector. However, 2024/25 saw a positive improvement on the severity of determinations being received. This improvement is driven by how we've changed our housing operating model to put our customers at the heart of local service delivery and design. This has enabled our teams to continue to improve, to ensure the right outcome is achieved for our customers, and to acknowledge customers and provide redress for them when we get things wrong.

Some of the key improvements we have seen are:

➤ **Improved Governance and Service Delivery**

The overall maladministration rate has decreased by 7%, now standing 12% below the national average. This reflects the changes to how the complaint team handles and manages complaints, meaning more correct outcomes are being achieved for our customers.

➤ **Reduction in Severity of Findings**

There has been a measurable decline in both maladministration and severe maladministration findings compared to 2023/24. While there is a marginal increase in service failure, it remains below the national average. This trend reflects the positive impact of our North Star transformation programme, which is contributing to a reduction in the severity of findings issued by the Housing Ombudsman.

➤ **Enhanced Redress Outcomes**

Redress determinations increased by 11%, now 14% above the national average. This highlights the effectiveness of the complaint handling teams in ensuring timely completion of remedial actions and alignment with the Housing Ombudsman's remedies guidance in offers of compensation, meaning when our customers let us know we've got something wrong, we are now more than ever doing our best to set it right for customers through the complaint handling process.

➤ **Significant Improvement in Complaint Handling**

The maladministration rate for complaint handling dropped to 48%, a 20% improvement from 2023/24. This demonstrates the positive impact of structural and procedural changes within the complaints team, ensuring our complaint handlers are continuing to work hard to achieve the best outcome for our customers.

2024/25 complaint handling improvements

In 2024/25, we delivered significant, measurable improvements in how we handle complaints – building on the transformation initiated in 2023/24. Our restructured approach has led to a 20% year-on-year improvement in complaint handling performance, with Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) up by 15%. These gains are reflected in the latest Housing Ombudsman Service annual report, which highlights our progress and praises our commitment to learning and accountability.

We have:

- Put new processes in place to give our teams a much more detailed understanding of our open complaints, enabling us to resolve customer issues more effectively. As part of this, colleagues across the business have received complaints training, helping to embed a consistent and customer-focused approach. In addition, those working within the complaints department have completed deep-dive training tailored to their specific areas, ensuring they have the expertise needed to continue to deliver accurate and fair outcomes.
- Evolved our Works Co-ordination team, who manage repairs raised through a complaint until they're resolved and we know the customer is satisfied. This team now sits within our local team, improving local knowledge and providing a clear oversight of works.
- Started a new approach to root cause analysis, ensuring meaningful learning and insight is gained from complaints, enabling us to continue to learn from our customers, and aim to prevent complaints rather than just respond to them effectively when they occur.
- Published complaint handling information every three months – available on our website.

We are excited to build on this progress during 2025/26.

We have launched a new Quality Assurance (QA) team, focused on ensuring that complaint outcomes are accurate, fair, and consistent. This team is already making an impact in early 2025, and we expect even greater benefits in the year ahead.

A key part of our QA process is resident involvement. A number of residents have been accredited to complete second-line monitoring on the QA process. This gives us valuable feedback from a customer perspective and helps us ensure our service is truly resident-focused.

These changes mark an exciting new chapter in our complaints journey – one that's rooted in accountability, transparency and continuous improvement.