

Customer Committee MEETING PAPER

Date of meeting: 1 May 2025

Sponsor	Julie Freear
Agenda Item	Quarterly Complaints Report – January-March 2025

PURPOSE (add 'X' to appropriate box(es))	FOR INFORMATION	FOR DISCUSSION	DECISION(S) REQUIRED
	X		

Overview

In the last quarter we received 26 formal complaints (**11 Housing, 9 Care & 6 Independent Living**) down from 33 the previous quarter.

As *part of the national conversation on complaints* launched in Autumn 2024, we have improved the signposting of the 'Compliments & Complaints' website page to improve accessibility for visitors to the website. A new 'We welcome your Feedback' poster was rolled out in our Care homes this quarter, following the successful roll out in Housing last Autumn. A new 'we welcome your feedback' leaflet for our Houses & Homes, is in the early stages of development and will be launched in the summer improving further the accessibility of our feedback routes for residents, their families and visitors.

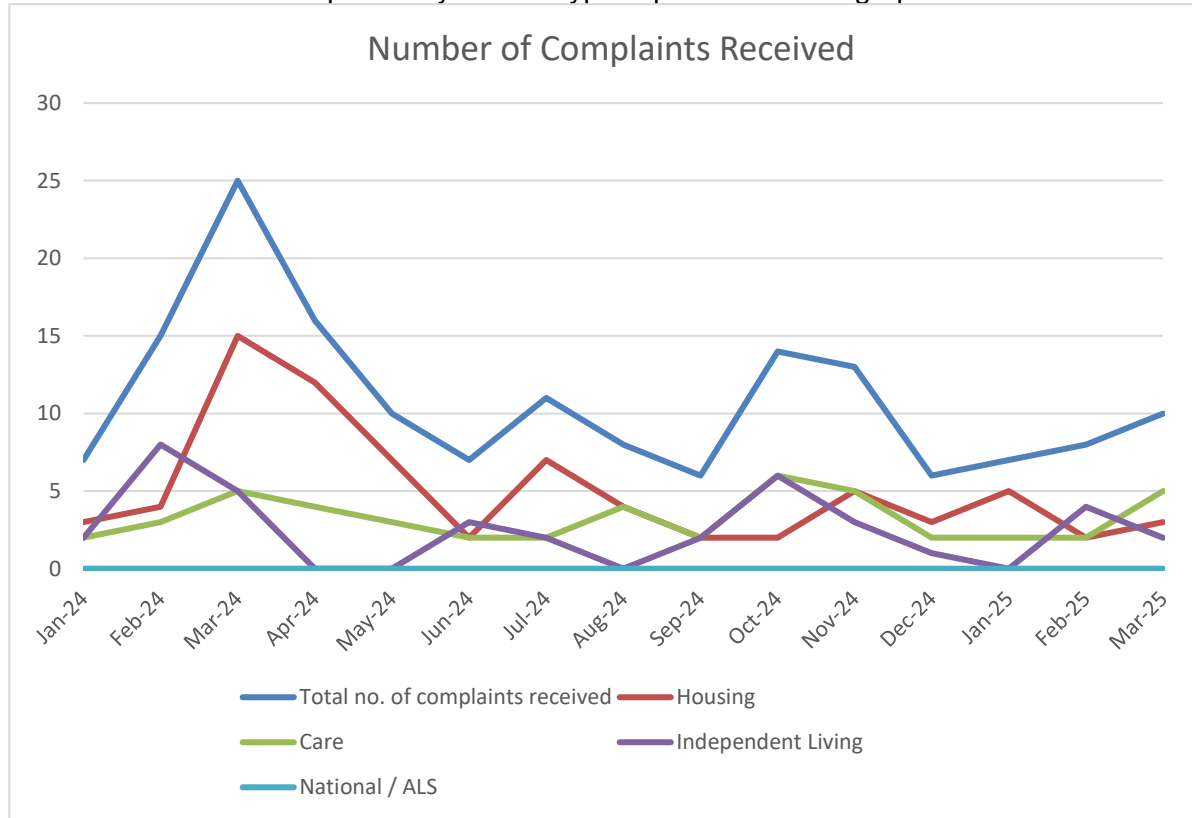
The 'Complaint handling e-learning' course was launched this quarter with a target for all colleagues to complete this by 31 March 2025 and it's positive to report that an 85% compliance record was achieved. Plans for a series of webinars on effective complaint handling are planned throughout 2025 sharing best practice, hints, and tips on complaint handling & the use of feedback to further drive service improvements.

In this quarter, we also participated in the Housing Ombudsman's Business Plan and 5-year Corporate Strategy consultation.

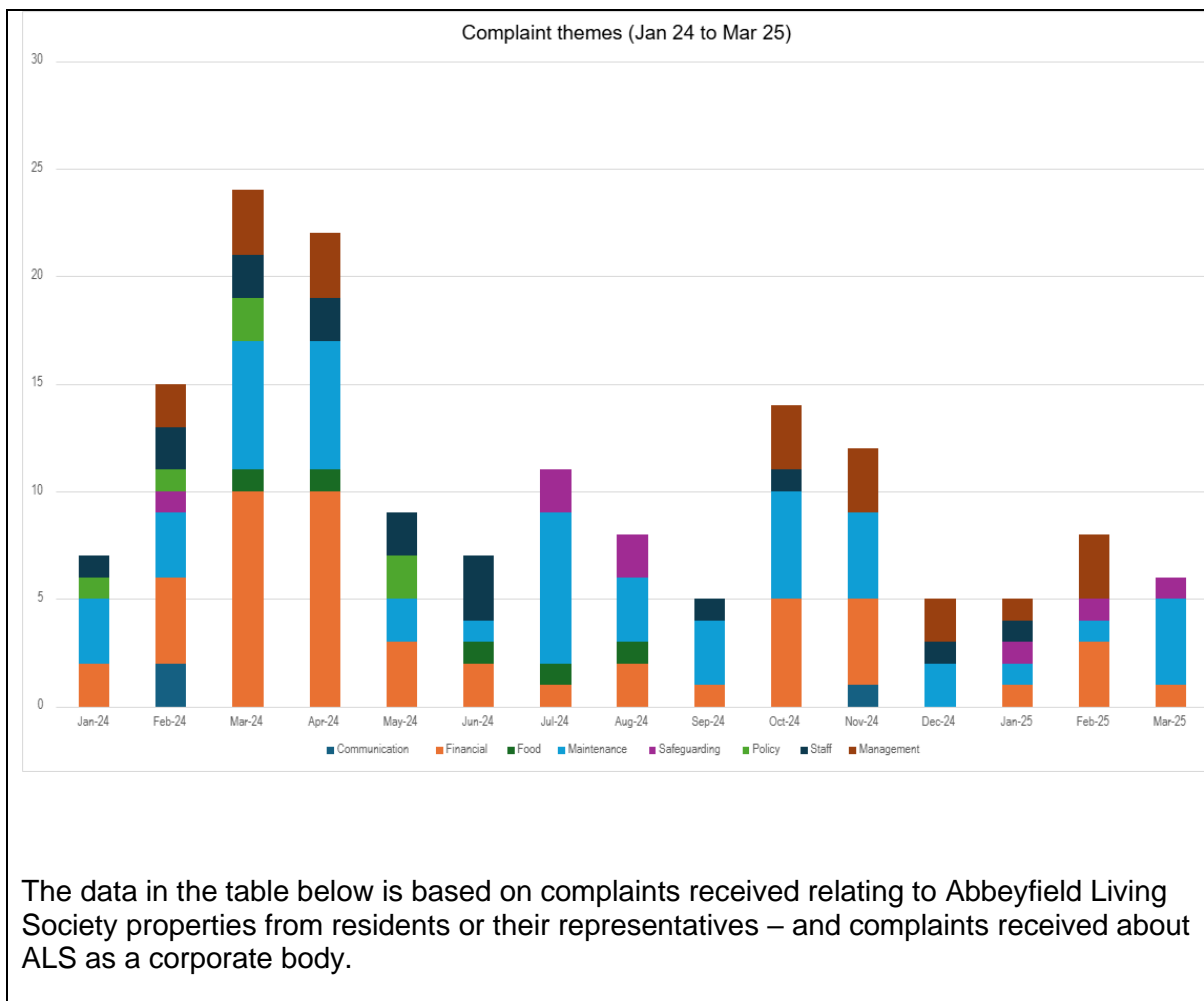
Collaboration with the residents panel continued this quarter with the panel reviewing further redacted complaints to be reassured on our complaint handling performance but to also gather feedback on what works well and where improvements they feel could also be made, this is in addition to sharing complaint performance information and outputs from our complaint's lessons learned approach too. This work will evolve further with the collaborative working when this work moves to a dedicated complaints panel in the spring, comprising of resident panel members, who have expressed an interest to working in partnership with us on effective complaint handling.

Total number of complaints received.

The total number of complaints by service type is provided in the graph below.



The graph below highlights the top themes were identified from complaints received since January 2025. There may be multiple themes from a single complaint due to the complaint being related to a number of items.



	01/04/24 to 30/06/24	01/07/24 to 30/09/24	01/10/24 to 31/12/24	01/01/25 to 31/03/25	Trend)	Target
No. of complaints received (average per month)	33 (11)	25 (8.3)	33 (11)	26 (8.6)	↓	N/A
No. which relate to damp/mould or risk of damp/mould	0	6	2	0	↓	0
Acknowledgement						
% acknowledged within target (2 working days)	95%	100%	90%	100%	↑	100%
Stage 1						
% responded within target (10 working days)	100%	100%	100%	100%	↑	100%
% responded within target (10 working days) or with agreed extension	100%	100%	100%	100%	↑	100%
% of response letters which included details of how to escalate	100%	100%	100%	100%	↑	100%
% of complaints fully upheld at Stage 1	49%	40%	24%	34%	↑	0%
% of complaints partially upheld at Stage 1	25%	24%	45%	38%	↓	0%
Stage 2						
% of complaints escalated to Stage 2	10%	8%	9%	3%	↓	0%
% responded within target (15 working days)	100%	100%	100%	100%	↑	100%
% responded within target or with agreed extension	100%	100%	100%	100%	↑	100%
% of complaints fully upheld at Stage 2	25%	0%	0%	0%	↓	0%
% of complaints partially upheld at Stage 2	50%	50%	33%	100%	↑	0%
Ombudsman						
No. of complaints escalated to Housing Ombudsman or Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman	4	1	1	1	↓	0

Ombudsman Update

At the time of writing this report, we have received three Housing Ombudsman determinations from the four outstanding Housing Ombudsman cases where evidence was submitted.

The three determinations are:

1. **(former resident of Proctor House)** - a **service failure** was found with the landlord's handling of the resident's concerns about the lack of options and the quality of meals provided by the landlord and the resident's request to have a cooker installed in her flat.
2. **(former resident of Abbeyfield White Lodge)** – **no maladministration** was found in relation to the landlord's handling of the resident's request for reimbursement of costs relating to relocation, due to the closure of the home.
3. **(Burnham Court)** - a finding of **maladministration** has been confirmed in terms of the response to the residents' reports of repairs to the shower, and a lack of hot water. There was **no maladministration** in our response to the resident's query about the removal of the previous tenant's furniture. There was **no maladministration** in our response to the resident's query about council tax. The residents concern about our response to the handling of matters at the start of his tenancy in May 2020 is **outside of their jurisdiction**.

(This case is subject to a review by a senior case handler at the Housing Ombudsman service as we've been able to clarify a specific point to the service on what happened when the resident reported a shower issue in December 2022, which wasn't referenced in the original determination)

A review call with the key stakeholders from each of the cases has taken place and any actions for follow up captured as part of the lessons learnt process.

We are not aware of any referrals at the time of writing this report, that have submitted to the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman.

Complaint Review

Main complaint reasons across the quarter (from the 26 complaints)

- **Maintenance – 6 (23% of complaints)** (2 relate to window replacement's & 2 regarding loss of heating and hot water)
- **Financial – 5 (19.23% of complaints)** (service charge increases, care fee increase & unhappy at overage policy)
- **Management – 4 (15.38% of complaints)** (local management concerns, lack of communication)

From our latest resident count (as at the time of this writing this report) of **1,181** residents (Care 396, Independent living 374 & Housing 411 – this quarter we have received complaints from 2.20% of our residents)

Compensation/Goodwill Gestures

We have awarded a financial gesture in 4 complaint cases this quarter, totalling £1341.25 primarily for the impacts of loss of heating & hot water.

Complaint Extensions

Our complaints policy has a built-in mechanism where if additional time is required, this can be utilised, fully informing the complainant of the reason why and when a response can be expected. In this quarter, we applied extensions to 7 complaint cases (due to scheduled annual leave or allowing additional time to complete the complaint investigation – H1-1, H3 – 1, H4–2, C1-1, C2 -2)

Complaint Lessons Learnt

Since August 2024, we have held 41 complaint lesson learnt sessions with complaint owners and key stakeholder colleagues from complaints which are fully upheld or partially upheld complaints.

The sessions take place with ROMs, SHMs, CHMs & team members from support teams including property services to support ownership and accountability with actions captured, assigned, tracked, and followed up for progress updates.

We have already identified several learnings which have been captured and owners assigned to resolve – these include exploring if *mandatory haircare & footcare for care staff is possible*, *policy review of setting care fees at Lee House in the next finance review*, *the property services team feeding back to the project team on future resident preferences on lock replacement's at our locations following feedback*, and *reminding colleagues of the procedure to raise emergency repair jobs out of hours and delays to responding and actioning repairs alongside identifying a need for improved communication between Property services and operations*.

In addition, with an increase in contact from residents and family members at The Firs complex in Nottingham & concerns regarding a number of outstanding repair issues at Hampton House, call to action calls have or are being held to identify outstanding property related issues driving dissatisfaction which are reviewed monthly by key stakeholder colleagues to discuss and review progress on the outstanding issues.

Complaint Handling satisfaction

Whilst surveys have been issued for complaints received in this quarter, the response rate is very disappointing– despite recent changes to the survey approach, we are currently exploring ways in which we can encourage a greater response with further details hoping to be provided in the next report.