# Annual Complaints Summary 2024/2025

# Putting Customers First – Learning, Improving, and Listening

**Why This Report Matters**

Every year, we take a close look at how we handle complaints. This helps us understand what’s working well and where we need to improve. For 2024/25, we’ve focused on being more open, learning from feedback, and making real changes that benefit our residents.

We know that when something goes wrong, our customers expect a quick, fair, and respectful response. That’s why we’ve made it our goal to deliver a complaints service that is not only efficient but also puts people first.

**Hearing from Our Residents**

**Helen Watkinson, Chair of the Scrutiny Panel:**

“I’m pleased to see such an honest assessment of performance reported in the Self-Assessment this year. I am a member of the Housing Ombudsman’s resident panel and this is the kind of reporting needed. Scrutiny Panel have recently signed off a review into complaints communication and witnessed some of the improvements to complaints handling and service requests that will feed through to next year’s report. I was easily able to sign off the self-assessment as Chair of Scrutiny Panel.”

**Gail Puttock, Resident Group Board Member:**

“There has been a real change in approach to complaint handling in recent months and I am delighted that the self-assessment is transparent and honest in its findings. At emh, we don’t always get things right, but what I am now seeing is that we learn from our mistakes and champion the resident in our responses. We have more work to do, but I am confident that next year’s report will show real improvements and I am happy to recommend sign off of the assessment and this report to Group Board.”

**Andrew Murtha, Chair of Resident Influence Committee:**

 **“**At my first meeting as Chair of the Resident Involvement Committee (RIC), I was tasked with recommending the Annual Summary of Complaints for 2024/25 for approval. This summary, which reflects the previous financial year, is detailed and factual, and importantly, it provides clear evidence that residents’ voices are being heard and acted upon.

Five months into the new financial year, the same meeting also highlighted significant improvements to the complaints service—improvements that were recognised by both emh staff and tenants. These developments will be reflected in next year’s report, but it is encouraging to see such progress already taking shape.

In a less formal meeting between RIC members and housing regulators, members were full of praise for the strides made in listening to tenants and the quality of information now being shared with us. This informal feedback reinforces the formal findings and reflects a growing confidence in the complaints process and wider engagement mechanisms.

At the RIC meeting, there was unanimous agreement to recommend the Annual Summary of Complaints for approval by the Group Board.”

**What the Numbers Tell Us**

* **Total complaints** rose from **1,925** in 2023/24 to **2,230** in 2024/25 – a **16% increase**.
* **Repairs** were the most common issue, making up **40%** of all complaints.
* **Gas repair related complaints** dropped to **17%**, thanks to a new contractor, Phoenix Gas.
* **Complaint satisfaction** was **33%**, reflecting delays earlier in the year.
* **Stage 1 complaints** were resolved on time **90.5%** of the time, with an average resolution time of **14.2 working days**.
* **Stage 2 complaints** were resolved on time **84%** of the time, with **18%** of complaints being escalated to this stage.
* The **Housing Ombudsman** reviewed **23 cases**, with an **80% maladministration rate**, higher than the national average of **72%**.

**What We’ve Done to Improve**

We’ve made some big changes this year:

* A new **Director of Customer Experience** was appointed in November 2024 to lead improvements.
* We created a **Service Resolution Team** to deal with issues early, before they become formal complaints. This has already helped reduce complaint volumes.
* We’ve improved how we track and learn from complaints, with updates shared on our **“You Said, We Did”** page:
<https://www.emh.co.uk/housing/for-residents/you-said-we-did/>

**Learning from Mistakes**

We don’t just count complaints – we learn from them. This year, we’ve:

* Reviewed every case where the Ombudsman found severe maladministration.
* Made changes to how we log and respond to complaints, especially around timeliness.
* Set a goal to make **50 service improvements** in 2025/26 based on customer feedback.

**Where We Fell Short**

We met **88%** of the Housing Ombudsman’s Complaint Handling Code. The remaining **12%** included:

* **Delays** in acknowledging and responding to complaints.
* **Gaps in staff training**, especially outside the Customer Services team.
* **Complex systems** for recording support needs and reasonable adjustments.
* **Missing policies** on our website, like the Acceptable Behaviour Policy.
* **Inconsistent accountability** across teams when handling complaints.

We’ve already started fixing these issues and will continue to track progress through our Scrutiny Panel and Group Board.

**Looking Ahead**

We’re committed to:

* **Faster responses** to complaints.
* **Clearer communication** with residents.
* **Better training** for all staff.
* **More transparency** about what we’re doing and why.

We know we’re not perfect, but we’re listening, learning, and improving – and we’re grateful to every resident who takes the time to share their feedback.