



Assurance Board's response

Northumberland County Council Housing Assurance Board response to The Housing Services Annual Complaints Report for 2023 – 2024.

The board met on 23 January 2025 and reviewed the annual report to understand the approach, as well as scrutinise the data and performance information.

The report provides a clear break down, by service, of the 302 Stage1 & 22 Stage 2 complaints received during 2023/24. It allows us to understand the volume of the complaints received by individual services and their outcomes. The board noted the low numbers of stage 2 complaints, and that it is positive 93% of all complaints received were resolved at Stage 1

It was noted that the report did not contain complaints data per quarter. To allow better analysis and comparison, quarterly data should be included in future reports.

The report provides some assurance of compliance with the Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code in terms of having a dedicated complaint handling service for Housing, response times and well as an understanding of our statutory obligations. It, however, provides limited information of Housing Ombudsman cases and should therefore be more transparent in the Ombudsman's findings and to include learnings together with remedies to redress issues.

We also asked for future reporting to include more analysis on customer demographics, so we can understand if we have any customer groups not accessing the complaint service. Future reports will include this information.

For future reports we will also look to seek assurance on how the commentary and context is evaluated to ensure that it is a fair and reasonable representation of the complaint service.

Although there were figures regarding complaint outcomes by service, future reports should have more transparency around the reasons for these outcomes and details of lessons learned.