

# Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report

April 2025 – March 2026

## 1. Introduction

This report provides a comprehensive overview of Life's complaints performance for the period **1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026**.

It has been prepared in accordance with the **Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code (2024)** and is intended to ensure transparency, accountability, and continuous service improvement. The report includes analysis of complaint volumes, outcomes, learning, and how complaints are used to improve services.

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## 2. Complaint Volumes and Performance

During the reporting period:

- **Total complaints received: 22**
- **Total complaints closed: 19**
- **Complaints outstanding at year end: 2**

The organisation resolved the majority of complaints within the reporting period. A small number of cases remained open and have been carried forward into the next reporting year.

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## 3. Complaint Outcomes

Complaint outcomes were as follows:

- **Upheld: 3**
- **Partially upheld: 9**
- **Not upheld: 4**
- **Inconclusive: 2**
- **Withdrawn: 2**
- **Open at year end: 2**

The proportion of **partially upheld complaints (9 cases)** indicates that, while full service failure was not always identified, there were elements of learning and improvement in a significant number of cases.

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#### 4. Complaint Stages and Escalation

- **Stage 1 complaints: 20**
- **Stage 2 complaints: 2**

The low number of escalations to Stage 2 suggests that most complaints were resolved effectively at the initial stage.

- **Complaints refused: 0**
- **Referrals to the Housing Ombudsman: 0**

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#### 5. Complaint Categories and Themes

Complaints were categorised as follows:

- **Anti-social behaviour: 11**
- **Service complaints: 6**
- **Staff conduct: 3**
- **Customer complaint: 1**
- **Living conditions / pest control: 1**

Anti-social behaviour remains the most significant category and continues to be a key area for service focus.

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#### 6. Quarterly Performance Overview

##### Quarter 1 (April – June 2025)

- Received: 7
- Closed: 7
- Open: 0

##### Quarter 2 (July – September 2025)

- Received: 2
- Closed: 2
- Open: 0

##### Quarter 3 (October – December 2025)

- Received: 5
- Closed: 4
- Open: 1

#### **Quarter 4 (January – March 2026)**

- Received: 8
- Closed: 6
- Open: 2

An increase in complaint volumes was observed in Quarter 4, which will be monitored going forward.

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### **7. Learning from Complaints**

Life recognises complaints as a vital source of insight. Key learning themes during the year include:

- **Anti-social behaviour case management:**  
Review of processes to ensure timely and effective responses.
- **Service delivery and communication:**  
Identification of areas where communication with residents can be clearer and more consistent.

This learning has informed service reviews and will continue to shape improvement activity.

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### **8. Service Improvements**

As a result of complaints received, the following actions have been taken or are in progress:

- Strengthened monitoring of complaint trends by service area
- Review of complaint handling processes and access routes
- Reinforcement of staff awareness and training in complaint handling and early resolution
- Ongoing focus on improving responses to anti-social behaviour cases

Progress against these actions will continue to be monitored.

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## 9. Self-Assessment Against the Complaint Handling Code

Life has undertaken a self-assessment against the **Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code**.

Key findings include:

- **Compliance with accessibility requirements:**  
Complaints can be raised through multiple channels.
- **Timeliness of responses:**  
The majority of complaints are handled within expected timeframes, although continued monitoring is required.
- **Stage 1 resolution:**  
High resolution rates at Stage 1 indicate effective early complaint handling.
- **Learning and continuous improvement:**  
Mechanisms are in place to capture and act on learning from complaints.

Areas identified for further improvement:

- Strengthening assurance around complaint intake systems
- Enhancing documentation of learning outcomes and service changes
- Continued monitoring of response times as volumes fluctuate

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## 10. Governance and Board Oversight

Complaints performance is subject to oversight to ensure accountability and continuous improvement.

- Complaint data is reviewed periodically to identify trends and risks
- Learning from complaints is used to inform service development
- This annual report is produced to support transparency and governance

Going forward, Life will continue to strengthen governance arrangements by:

- Enhancing reporting to senior leadership
  - Ensuring learning from complaints is clearly evidenced
  - Monitoring compliance with the Complaint Handling Code
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## **11. Housing Ombudsman Service**

If a client remains dissatisfied after completing Lifecharity's complaints process, they may refer their complaint to the **Housing Ombudsman Service**.

Further information is available at:

<https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk>

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## **12. Conclusion**

Life remains committed to delivering a fair, accessible, and effective complaints service. While complaint volumes increased towards the end of the reporting period, the organisation has used this feedback constructively to identify improvements and strengthen service delivery.

We will continue to build on this learning to improve outcomes for residents and ensure compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's expectations.