



ANNUAL COMPLAINTS PERFORMANCE AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT REPORT

2025

Because Community Matters

PLACES FOR PEOPLE

As one of the UK's leading Social Enterprises, we aim to listen to our Customers so we can learn how best to improve our services and drive positive change.

Transparency and accountability are key to achieving this, which is why we welcome initiatives like the Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report.

This report sets out how we've reviewed our compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code and how we have performed in our handling of complaints for our Customers in England, between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025.

Our Board's response to the report

WHAT'S CHANGED IN 2024-25

The Places for People (PfP) Board has reviewed this annual report and the self-assessment and is satisfied it reflects our current position.

Here is a summary from the Member Responsible for Complaints, and Group Chief Operating Officer, Scott Black:

After an in-depth regulatory assessment, it was recognised by the Regulator of Social Housing that complaints are addressed fairly, promptly and effectively, and we understood the impact it could have on Customers if things went wrong.

PfP is very pleased to have received a top C1 rating under the new Consumer Standards, which means we are effectively *"delivering the outcomes of the standards"* while identifying and addressing issues before they escalate. Our maladministration rate on complaints determined by the Ombudsman reduced from 84% in 2023-24 to 62% in 2024-25.

We aren't complacent, and we aim to continue to listen to Customers, and make positive changes and refinements in what we do so that we can continue to make things better for our Customers.



Scott Black

Group Chief Operating Officer

Our Board's response to the report

Listening to Customer feedback and survey data led us to implement new quality measures to improve services for our Customers. During 2024-2025, we have been working on the formation of our new Service Improvement Group in order to bring together insight from our National Customer Group (NCG), our Complaints team, the Ombudsman, and our own Customer surveys into one place, which we then scrutinise and action.

These actions are then processed via our newly formed Change Forums (as our delivery model for continuous improvement) and are helping us to approach improvement across a wide range of services in a considered and measured way, which ensures the changes we make land effectively and are focused on what matters to our Customers.

This year, the Board supported a major investment and change to our complaints handling process. We have now appointed a dedicated team of Customer Resolution Coordinators, who are responsible for handling all stage 1 and 2 complaints. We will continue to monitor this initiative to ensure we are improving how we manage Customer complaints and perhaps more importantly, that we take the action we need to address the root causes and make earlier interventions to prevent complaints being raised in the first place.

We recognise that because of these changes, some Customers experienced delays in our complaint handling this year. Our move to a central team temporarily impacted on our response times, but as we settle into this new way of working, we are confident that we will continue to improve in this respect.

There is still work to do to improve services for our Customers to where we would ideally like them to be, particularly in the delivery of our repairs service, and complaint handling. That said, we are encouraged by the endorsement from the regulator in our C1 rating, and our improved maladministration rate, and we believe that we are moving in the right direction.



Our self-assessment

This year, we merged with South Devon Rural Housing Association, and this prompted us to complete a new self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code to make sure we were still compliant.

You can access our self-assessment by visiting www.placesforpeople.co.uk/make-a-complaint

To strengthen our compliance with the code, we updated our Complaints Policy, the Group website and Complaints Handling Procedure leaflet, and took the opportunity to highlight how we support our Customers through the complaint process.

ENGAGEMENT WITH CUSTOMERS

Our NCG scrutinises complaint trends, and ensures learning is embedded in service improvement.

They help us to make sure the complaint process is fair, transparent, and responsive to the needs of our Customers.

NCG members can also bring insights from Regional Customer Groups, who may hear more informal or local concerns, providing a broader picture of Customer dissatisfaction and expectations.

The NCG provides assurance to the Board that Customer complaints are being taken seriously, acted upon, and used to improve services.

The NCG was fully supportive of the decision to centralise our complaint handling service.

Jane Morris, Customer at PfP and Chair of the NCG

I fully endorse this report submitted by Places for People as it is a clear and transparent account of the issues raised, and the steps taken in response. The report reflects a strong commitment to accountability, learning, and service improvement, in line with the Ombudsman expectations.

I am confident that this demonstrates the genuine efforts to address concerns fairly and constructively. The NCG look forward to working closely with the Complaints Team to continue building on this progress, and to ensure that Customer experiences remain at the heart of PfP's approach.

Complaint handling performance

Customer survey results

Tenant Satisfaction Measure TP09

How Customers perceive our complaints handling service is of the utmost importance to us. As a result, we ask our Customers to complete a survey after a complaint is logged and closed to help us gain a better understanding of how the complaint was managed, what worked and what could be improved upon.

In 2024-2025, Customers told us they found it fairly easy to make a complaint, and that they prefer to do this by phone so they can talk to an advisor. Complaints are welcome by phone and our Customer Hub advisors will always try to resolve any issues or refer the case to our centralised Complaint Handling Team.

Customers appreciated our Customer Resolution Coordinators taking the time to listen to, understand and show empathy for their issues. They appreciated our professional conduct and being treated with respect.

Communication throughout the complaint process was an area where we recognised improvements were needed. They told us it's frustrating when they need to contact us for updates about their complaint but are unable to speak with the right person.

We put a management plan in place to tackle the delays our Customers were experiencing, and introduced a Customer contact cycle, quality framework, and case review process. We also improved information in our Complaints Handling Procedure leaflet to help Customers understand what to expect when they make a complaint. You can view our Complaints Handling Procedure leaflet by visiting our website www.placesforpeople.co.uk/make-a-complaint. In 2025-2026, we will be focusing on our triage and assessment process, to ensure we are able to accurately identify service requests and offer a quick and early resolution.

In addition to routine surveys, in 2024-25, we worked with In-House Research, to survey 3,063 Customers to collect data for the Tenant Satisfaction Measures. These measures provide a comprehensive set of performance measurements, including satisfaction with our complaint handling.

Our Customers' satisfaction with our approach to complaints handling has improved from **22% in 2023-24 to 27.5% in 2024-25.**

We are pleased to see the investment we have made in our complaints service is starting to be felt positively by our Customers, but we recognise there is much more we need to do. We will continue to listen and take on board Customer feedback to make more improvements.

Complaint handling performance

Complaints by number of properties Tenant Satisfaction Measure CH01

Collecting data for the Tenant Satisfaction Measures helps us to understand how many complaints we have received and gives us the opportunity to benchmark against other housing providers of a similar size, to understand how we are doing.

In 2023-24, we received 1,687 stage 1 and 2 complaints, while in 2024-25, we received 2,160. We're pleased Customers are reaching out to us to feed back. This demonstrates our complaint process is accessible and serving its purpose. The whole sector, including the Ombudsman Service, has seen an increase in complaints being raised. Monitoring complaint volumes helps us get resourcing levels right and make informed decisions on how to provide the best service.

We have responded to the increase in complaints by looking at what we can do better, not only to handle complaints but also to prevent them.

We improved our complaints categorisation, triage process, and introduced more reporting and quality checks. As a result, we have better oversight of our complaints through our new central team.

TSM CH01: Complaints relative to size of landlord (per 1,000 properties)

LOW-COST RENTAL ACCOMMODATION

HOMES	59,125	PER 1,000 PROPERTIES
TOTAL COMPLAINTS	2,160	
STAGE 1	1,729	29.2
STAGE 2	431	7.3

LOW-COST HOME OWNERSHIP

HOMES	3,720	PER 1,000 PROPERTIES
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TOTAL COMPLAINTS MADE

TOTAL COMPLAINTS	375	
STAGE 1	273	73.4
STAGE 2	102	27.4

Complaint handling performance

Complaint handling timescales Tenant Satisfaction Measure CH02

The volume of complaints we are handling has increased, yet our handling times are improving at stages 1 and 2. We're confident we can continue to build on this success with the significant investment we've made in our complaints handling service during 2024-25.



TSM CH02: Complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales

LOW-COST RENTAL ACCOMMODATION

	STAGE 1	STAGE 2
COMPLAINTS CLOSED	1,044	267
VOLUME AND PERCENTAGE CLOSED IN TIMESCALE (NO EXTENSION)	716 68.6%	199 74.5%
VOLUME AND PERCENTAGE CLOSED IN TIMESCALE (WITH EXTENSION)	328 31.4%	68 25.5%

LOW-COST HOME OWNERSHIP

	STAGE 1	STAGE 2
COMPLAINTS CLOSED	198	62
VOLUME AND PERCENTAGE CLOSED IN TIMESCALE (NO EXTENSION)	193 97.5%	59 95.2%
VOLUME AND PERCENTAGE CLOSED IN TIMESCALE (WITH EXTENSION)	5 2.5%	3 4.8%

*Data collected from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025



COMPLAINT TRENDS

Repairs continue to be the main reason our Customers raise complaints.

There were 77% of complaints relating to repairs this year, in comparison with 81.2% last year. Considering we handled 45% more repairs in 2024-25 than the previous year, we are confident things are going in the right direction.

Making sure our Customers' homes are safe and maintained and we communicate well continues to be an important focus for us. We have highlighted some of the improvements we have made to our repairs service within this report. A big focus for 2025-26 is will be on the implementation of processes to handle reports of damp and mould, as we have seen an increase in complaints about this.

Ten per cent of complaints received related to our Communities service, while the remainder were split across various service areas.

COMPLAINT ROOT CAUSES

The three primary reasons Customers raise concerns about the repairs service haven't changed since last year.

These are:

- issues with appointments
- a lack of updates on their reported issues
- unresolved repairs, and the need for additional repair work following an initial visit.

For our Communities team, key themes relate to a lack of updates, the problem not being resolved, and callbacks not being made.

Communication is the key to resolving a lot of the dissatisfaction we see. As a result, we have been working to understand how different Customers prefer to interact with us and receive information, and to improve our systems to help us communicate more effectively.

SUMMARY OF COMPLAINTS NOT ACCEPTED INTO THE COMPLAINT PROCESS

In 2024-25, we refused to accept one complaint into the process. The complaint related to a consultation about a proposed service change for some retirement living Customers. As no service change had gone ahead, there were no grounds for complaint until the consultation was complete, and the outcome known.



Non-compliance with the Code

FINDINGS OF MALADMINISTRATION

When the Ombudsman investigates a complaint that has exhausted our internal process, there are several possible findings, ranging from ‘no maladministration’ through to ‘severe maladministration’. There is one finding for each element of the complaint.

In last year’s report, we reported an overall maladministration rate of 92%. The Ombudsman later published our maladministration rate as 84%, within our annual Landlord Report. We contacted the Ombudsman for more information, to enable us to align our reporting methodology.

The Ombudsman has recently published our Landlord Report for 2024-25. Of the 52 complaints the Ombudsman determined, there were 162 findings, of which maladministration was found in 62%. This is a 22% improvement on 2023-24.

A reducing maladministration rate is an indicator that our services, and handling of complaints, is improving for our Customers. Regardless, we are not complacent and recognise that complaint handling and property condition are two key areas for improvement, with several findings of maladministration or service failure. We hope that the changes we’ve made this year will continue to have a positive impact, which we are monitoring.

The Ombudsman found severe maladministration in two cases - in our handling of reports of damp and mould associated with leaks from a Customer’s roof and windows, and in the second case, in our handling of reports of outstanding repairs.

One case featured in the Ombudsman’s October 2024 publication ‘Learning from Severe Maladministration’. We reviewed these cases internally, complied with all orders and made recommendations to the business for improvement.

2023-24	
Number of determinations:	50
Maladministration findings:	96
Maladministration rate:	84%
2024-25	
Number of determinations:	52
Maladministration findings:	89
Maladministration rate:	62%

COMPLIANCE WORK WITH THE OMBUDSMAN

In March 2025, we worked with the Ombudsman Compliance Team to submit our Annual Complaints Submission for Rosewood Ltd, for the period 2023-24. Rosewood Ltd is a subsidiary landlord of PfP and joined the Group in March 2024.

The Ombudsman prompted the submission, and we have put steps in place to ensure we complete submissions as required, for any new landlords joining the PpP Group.

In July 2025, we received the outcome of the Ombudsman's compliance review of our complaints policy and self-assessment. Our self-assessment at the time had recognised some areas where we were not compliant with the code in practice. The Ombudsman found our self-assessment demonstrated transparency and accountability and was informative about actions being taken to make improvements. A recommendation was made to consider a clear and timebound action plan to further demonstrate this.

The review made 11 recommendations to make minor amends to our policy, and we will be taking all these recommendations forward for completion by the end of October 2025, alongside a new self-assessment.

COMPLAINT HANDLING FAILURE ORDERS (CHFO)

We received a Type 2 CHFO in November 2024 for non-compliance with a Determination Order and a Type 1 CHFO in March 2025 for delays in responding to a Customer's complaint. We fully complied with the Ombudsman to resolve this and completed an internal 'lessons learnt' exercise.



Improvements to our services

NEW SERVICE IMPROVEMENT GROUP

During 2024-25 we have been working on the formation of our new Service Improvement Group: Feedback in Action. The group, consisting of directors and service leads, brings together insight from our NCG, complaints, Ombudsman, and surveys, into one place.

Our service improvement group enables us to see exactly where the journeys for our Customers are not effortless, through identifying the key themes and root causes of dissatisfaction. We look at what is already being done to improve the service and identify any further opportunities for improvement. We consider Customer typology because we recognise that every Customer has different needs and abilities.

Our Member Responsible for Complaints oversees this group, and we are currently working on 'communication' as our first theme.

We introduced a new Change Forum to improve how we manage and deliver change and improvements. This has helped us to be focused on what really matters: creating and supporting thriving Communities. We do this by collaborating on, aligning and prioritising change projects to deliver improvements in an effective and sustainable way.



In addition to developing this new way of working, we have logged and tracked the following service improvements.

COMPLAINTS

- A centralised complaint handling service to upgrade the Customer experience.
- Structured process improvements such as the Customer contact cycle.
- A full review of our policy and procedures.
- Better repairs tracking through a new Service Watch Team.
- Clearer communication about how we support Customers with vulnerabilities.
- An enhanced Customer Relationship Management system to improve reporting capabilities.

CUSTOMER VULNERABILITY

- We developed a new Group Customer Vulnerability Policy.
- Our new digital Customer vulnerability training for Colleagues, 'Customer Vulnerability: Improving Compassionate & Inclusive Support', launched in April 2025 and includes a practical toolkit to help us support our Customers better.

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR (ASB)

- Over 100 Colleagues have received ASB 'best practice' training, and 23 Community Safety Managers have enrolled on the Level 3 BTEC in Community Safety.
- Introducing a vulnerability assessment for all victims or witnesses of ASB.
- Customers now receive an ASB action plan template for continuous updating.
- Reduced the number of homes each Community Housing Manager looks after to better support our Customers.
- Membership of 'Resolve ASB' is opening up a range of resources for Colleagues.

REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

- A new repairs system for Field Service Operatives to drive operative efficiency and performance.
- Repairs policy review provides transparency around who is responsible for repairs.
- Alternative Dispute Resolution facilitates a swift resolution to any 'Homes Fit for Human Habitation Act' claims.
- Better triaging and fulfilment of urgent repairs, including a new Priority 2 category with a 5 working day repair target.

REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

- Capturing Customers' additional needs/ information during repair requests so operatives can then tailor their service(s) appropriately.
- Improving the visibility of warning and service alerts to operatives.
- Customers now receive automatic SMS/email notifications for Priority 1 (emergency) jobs.
- A new contractor portal is underway to provide better control and governance.
- A new Customer portal will allow Customers to conveniently raise repairs and complaints.
- VAR technology is now used to inspect Customers' homes, especially reports of damp and mould.
- Up to three attempts are now made to auto-reschedule 'no access' repairs.

What happens next?

OUR LANDLORD REPORT

The insight from the Ombudsman's landlord report helps us to sense check our own insight. To help us further identify the root cause of dissatisfaction, throughout 2024-25, we significantly improved our complaint reporting capabilities through specialist data analysts. They help us understand where our service delivery is failing Customers, resulting in determinations of maladministration. We will continue to use this insight to make positive changes.

REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE SERVICE

Enabling our repairs operation to deliver effortless experiences remains a top priority that sits right at the core of our Because Community Matters strategy. We are working to create homes that address the needs of our Customers now, and in the years ahead. A major focus this year has been on our repairs workforce systems and management information so we can drive improvements into the right areas, and there are a number of change projects underway which will help transform the service.

COMMUNITIES

In our Communities teams, we significantly reduced the number of homes our Community Housing Managers look after and recruited to over 30 new roles with a focus on supporting our Communities to thrive, through building on local connections and best practice. A large focus of our work was on ASB, with a complete review of policy and associated processes.

COMPLAINT HANDLING

We centralised and expanded our Complaint Handling Team, reviewed our policy, procedures, website and Customer leaflet, introduced a quality framework, contact cycle and case reviews.

CONCLUSION

In 2024-25, it was recognised by the regulator that complaints are addressed fairly, promptly and effectively, and — crucially — we understand the impact on Customers if things go wrong. Our C1 rating under the new Consumer Standards means we are effectively “**delivering the outcomes of the standards**”.

Continuous investment in our complaints service is starting to have the desired effect, with our Customer satisfaction rate increasing from 22% in 2023-2024 to 27.5% in 2024-25. An increase in complaints over the period points to the improved accessibility of our complaints service and particularly pleasing is that our handling times have improved alongside this increase. Our maladministration rate also shows a 22% improvement on last year.

That being said, the main reasons Customers raise concerns about the repairs service remain unchanged, so many of the improvements we have put in place are concentrated on these key areas. They include a new repairs system to drive operative efficiency, better triaging and fulfilment of urgent repairs, more transparency concerning the needs of Customers with vulnerabilities, enhanced communication and a new Customer portal making it easier to raise both repairs and complaints.

By listening to our Customers and absorbing insights from the Ombudsman, we are making strides in shaping an effortless complaints service while putting measures in place to address the root cause of complaints. We will continue to strive to deliver a repairs and maintenance service that aligns with the expectations of our valued Customers and be transparent about the journey we are on to help us continue to create thriving Communities.



If you need information about your home, such as how to report a repair, money advice or wellbeing support — please get in touch with us and we will help you. Visit our website

[**www.placesforpeople.co.uk**](http://www.placesforpeople.co.uk)

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