

Sutton Housing Society

Complaints and concerns

Sutton Housing Society's annual complaints summary report
(April 2025 to March 2026)

Introduction

As the Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC), I am pleased to share this public report relating to the grumbles and groans (service requests and complaints) received by the team at Sutton Housing Society (SHS) between April 2025 and March 2026.

The consumer standard requires all social housing landlords to produce and publish an annual report detailing:

- complaints received
- issues of non-compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's complaints handling code
- service improvements introduced because of lessons learnt from the groans and grumbles received
- a suitable improvement action plan, where necessary

For the period 2025 / 2026, we saw a slight increase in both service requests (21 in total, up from 18) and complaints (13 stage 1 and 2 in total, up from 11).

There is a common theme - this relates, primarily to communications on property and repairs matters. By making some minor, but important, adjustments I am confident that these communications will improve and this is reflected in the improvement plan.

The Complaints Officer role continues to be held by the Operations Director. This is because the Operations Director has good oversight of the services provided to residents, understands consumer regulation and what is required, can influence outcomes and can ensure that the action plan is understood and completed by the wider team.

I have been the Member Responsible for Complaints since February 2024; I know that the team take service requests and complaints seriously and that these are discussed on a monthly basis. The team aim to address any dissatisfaction as efficiently and as quickly as possible, whilst ensuring good relationships with residents. A positive culture relating to managing complaints, together with learning from these, supports our commitment to improving services to all residents.

I hope you find the attached report an interesting read.

Alistair Auty

Board Chair and Member Responsible for Complaints

Executive summary

The Regulator for Social Housing's Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard is clear that the management data, tenant satisfaction measures, relating to handling complaints (CH01 and CH02), must reflect the Housing Ombudsman Service's Complaints Handling Code. The code sets several expectations for managing and addressing complaints and we are confident that we comply with these requirements.

A complaint is defined as: *an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.*

A service request is defined as: *a request from a resident to the landlord requiring action to be taken to put something right.*

Detailed information relating to both service requests and complaints is covered in the following pages of this report.

The main lesson learnt from these complaints and service requests relates, again, to communications. We continue to work with the team to ensure they understand how important pro-active communication with residents is. Providing an update, even if only to say we are awaiting information, reassures the resident that we are "on the case" and have not forgotten about them. This type of proactive contact with residents helps to build trust and understanding. This is particularly important for all aspects of property issues; this is a lesson learnt during 2025 / 2026 and appears as an action point in the subsequent action plan for improvement during 2026 / 2027.

Service requests in 2025 / 2026

In the 2025 / 2026 financial year, there were 21 service requests received and these related to:

- No hot water x 2
- Delayed compensation payment
- Repairs request x 2
- Lift out of service x 3
- Bed bugs
- Washing machine issues
- Property condition
- Development arrangements
- Resident App
- Poor wi-fi x 2
- Car park
- Grounds maintenance
- Sutton Housing Society employee
- Contractor staff member
- Compensation for repairs
- Boiler issues

All service requests have been addressed, with none escalating to stage 1 complaints.

The 21 service requests received are outlined below; time taken to resolve issue is recorded as working days:

No.	Site	Issue	Contact method	Result	Time to resolve
1	Old Brewery House	No hot water	Resident App	Residents updated on issue with communal heating and hot water system, which was resolved	1 day
2	Margaret House	Delayed compensation	Telephone	Payment made	8 days
3	Tull Street	Delay with repair	Email	Bathroom door repair completed	1 day
4	Thomas House	Lift broken down	Via the website	Lift repaired	2 days
5	Nairn Court	Delay with repair	Resident App	Window repair completed	6 days
6	Griffiths Close	Bedbugs	Email	Bedbug infestation treated	10 days
7	Trickett House	Lift broken down	Email	Lift repaired	9 days
8	Trickett House	Lift broken down	Letter	Lift repaired	8 days
9	Norman House	Washing machines not working	Telephone	Washing machines inspected; user error	11 days

10	Trickett House	Unhappy with development arrangements	Letter	Discussed with resident and alternative solution offered	0 days
11	McCrae Lane	Unhappy with response to repairs request	Email	With help from the support worker, resident understands his repairing responsibilities	9 days
12	Norman House	Lack of response following contact via Resident App	Email	Resident App is being investigated for errors; alternative contact method agreed	1 day
13	Lancelot House	SHS wi-fi	Email	Wi-Fi to be upgraded; resident advised	7 days
14	Cloverdale Court	Damage to car in carpark	Email	Discussed with resident; reviewed CCTV; new parking signs installed	4 days
15	Norman House	Grounds maintenance	In person	Agreed actions following contact with contractor	21 days
16	Old Brewery House	SHS employee not informing resident of a meeting	Email	This was an error – meeting referred to was not for the resident to attend	1 day
17	Norman House	SHS wi-fi	In person	Change made to access point in the flat	5 days
18	Griffiths Close	Hot water supply	Phone	Shower system explained to resident, then to her son; issue with a vent resolved	3 days
19	Griffiths Close	Behaviour of contractor	Phone	Contractor spoken to their staff member regarding speaking & treating residents with respect	10 days
20	Norman House	Tepid water; request for compensation	Email	Sum agreed	6 days

21	Peppermint Court	No heating	Email	Temporary heating offered whilst new boiler is ordered and installed	4 days
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Of the 21 service requests, 19 were dealt with within the 10 working days timescale for responses. Of the two that were overdue:

- One was 1 day late this was due to the contractor visiting late
- One was 11 days late; this was due to the service request not being received as a result of IT issues with a new laptop set up. We visited the resident when this was discovered to discuss the issue, apologise and explain what had happened.

Complaints in 2025 / 2026

In the 2025 / 2026 financial year, ten stage 1 and three stage 2 complaints were received.

The ten stage 1 complaints related to:

- Squeaky floorboards at Old Brewery House
- Service contract (x 2) at Old Brewery House
- Lift issues at Thomas House
- Scheme issues at Thomas House
- Rent arrears letter at Ronald House
- Repairs at Trickett House
- No hot water / tepid water at Norman House
- Grounds maintenance concerns at Tull Street
- Health and safety concern in the lift at Kent Court

The three stage 2 complaints related to:

- Property issues at Old Brewery House (was a stage 1 complaint at the end of the previous financial year)
- Service contracts at Old Brewery House
- Tepid water at Norman House

All 13 complaints have been investigated and all but two were closed by the end of the 2025 / 2026 financial year.

Information relating to the stage 2 complaints is outlined further in this report.

Stage 1 complaints

The ten stage 1 complaints received are outlined below, with a summary of their resolution. From these complaints, six were upheld and 4 were not upheld:

Site	Issue	Contact method	Complaint outcome	Time to resolve
Old Brewery House	Squeaky floorboards from flat above	Email	Upheld	10 days
Thomas House	Lift constantly out of service	Email	Upheld	10 days
Old Brewery House	Gardening and window cleaning concerns	Email	Upheld	9 days
Old Brewery House	Dissatisfied with grounds maintenance and cleaning contractor	Email	Upheld	13 days (by agreement with resident)
Ronald House	Rent arrears letter	Telephone	Not upheld	9 days
Thomas House	Scheme issues – various	Letter	Upheld	10 days
Norman House	No hot water / tepid water	Letter	Upheld	7 days
Trickett House	Time taken for repair	In person	Upheld	11 days (resident was aware)

				within 10 days)
Tull Street	Grounds maintenance contractors	Email	Upheld	7 days
Kent Court	Health and safety concern in the lift	In person	Upheld	2 days

Nine of the ten stage 1 complaints were upheld; these were all property related, albeit three involved the grounds maintenance contractor. Some of the issues are due to new SHS colleagues being in post and not fully understanding expectations / service standards or the relevant specification e.g. internal communal cleaning.

Stage 2 complaints

The three stage 2 complaints received are outlined below. The Old Brewery House complaints were escalated from stage 1 because the resident was unhappy with the responses from the investigating manager and felt the issues were not taken seriously.

The Norman House issue involved a resident without proper hot water; once regular updates were in place, and contact maintained, the resident worked with SHS until the situation was resolved.

Site	Issue	Contact method	Complaint outcome	Time to resolve
Old Brewery House	Property and building issues	Email	Upheld	5 days
Old Brewery House	Gardening & window cleaning	Email	Upheld	19 days, with resident's agreement
Norman House	No hot water	In person	Upheld	10 days

The three stage 2 complaints were all upheld.

The stage 2 complaints relating to Old Brewery House remained open at the beginning of April 2026. One was closed on 13 April 2026 as all issues had been addressed. The other complaint, whilst being upheld, was not closed as work was still to be completed to the communal gardens.

Compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code

We last reviewed our self-assessment for compliance against the complaints handling code in October 2025. An at least annual assessment is a regulatory requirement and part of the consumer standards with the Regulator for Social Housing.

There were no issues of concern within the self-assessment. However, a further assessment will be carried out and presented to the July Board for review and approval, as the complaints handling code was updated from April 2026.

Sutton Housing Society shows compliance in 2025 / 2026 across all areas of the complaints handling code. The code covers:

- Definition of a complaint
- Exclusions
- Accessibility and awareness
- Complaint handling staff
- Complaint handling process
- Complaint stages (1 and 2)
- Putting things right
- Self-assessment, reporting and compliance

The self-assessment and a copy of this report will be issued to the Housing Ombudsman by the end of September 2026, following approval from the Board. We are required to submit the report within six months of our financial year end.

Tenant satisfaction measures

There are three key measures relating to complaints that we monitor and report on:

- TSM09: Proportion of respondents who report making a complaint in the last 12 months who are satisfied with their landlord's approach to complaints handling
- CH01: Number of stage 1 complaints per 1,000 homes, and
Number of stage 2 complaints per 1,000 homes
- CH02: Stage 1 complaints response time (as per complaints handling code) and
Stage 2 complaints response time (as per complaints handling code).

The 2025 TSM survey was managed by an external company, Acuity Research & Practise. The measures were calculated against all homes (509).

Our TSM results relating to complaints are below. There has been a significant drop in the TSM09 score, although our performance remains in the top quartile for all social landlords.

By way of explanation, the stage 1 complaints received (10), which equates to 1.96% of our homes. However, the TSM calculation requires a multiplication factor of 1,000 (homes) and this provides a disproportionate result of 19.64%. The per 1,000 (homes) calculation also applies to the stage 2 complaints (0.58% of homes / 5.89% x 1,000).

	Result
TSM09: Proportion of respondents who report making a complaint in the last 12 months who are satisfied with their landlord's approach to complaints handling	55%
CH01: No of stage 1 complaints per 1000 homes	19.64%
CH01: No stage 2 complaints per 1000 homes	5.89%
CH02: Proportion of: 1) stage one complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales	100%
CH02: Proportion of: 2) stage two complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales	100%

An issue that impacts the TSM09 score relates to interpretation of what is a complaint. Some residents reporting repairs, refer to these as complaints and this does influence the results. However, this is likely the same for all social housing landlords; we will therefore continue to work with residents regarding this.

Lessons learned

The key lesson learnt relates to communications. All the property related complaints and most of the service requests could have been avoided, or managed more pro-actively and positively, with more thought and consideration given to appropriate and timely communication. It is a positive that colleagues wish to find resolution for the repair / property issue raised, but this cannot be their only focus – communication with residents must be improved.

Continuing to ensure that the wider team understands the importance of consumer standards and how their work can influence and impact our results and outcomes is essential.

‘Grumbles and groans’ improvement / action plan 2026 / 2027

Issue	Improvement required	Timescale	Lead
Review our day-to-day repairs and maintenance issues for common themes and / or areas of concern	Carry out this exercise at least annually, in October, to pick up any repair issues for inclusion in the following year’s budgets	31.10.26	Operations Director supported by property colleagues
Ensure timely communications with residents relating to property issues	It is essential that residents are kept updated and informed about property matters, included issues within communal spaces	On-going	Operations Director
	There should not be an over-reliance on digital methods of communications	On-going	Management team
Share ‘grumble and groans’ report with the wider SHS team	Improves understanding of the regulatory environment and expectations	30.09.26	Operations Director