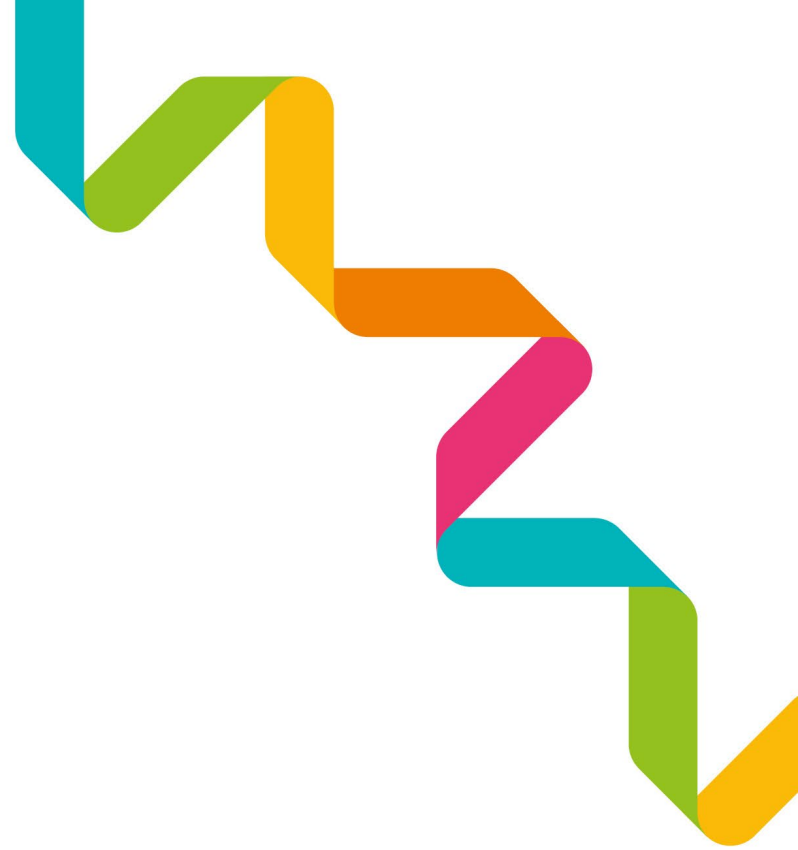


Complaints and Service Improvement

2023-24 annual report

Kazi Hashem, Head of Business Support



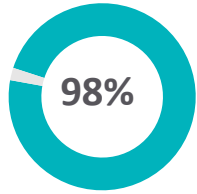
No. of Complaints and Outcomes

Stage 1: Resolve

Resolve

 549

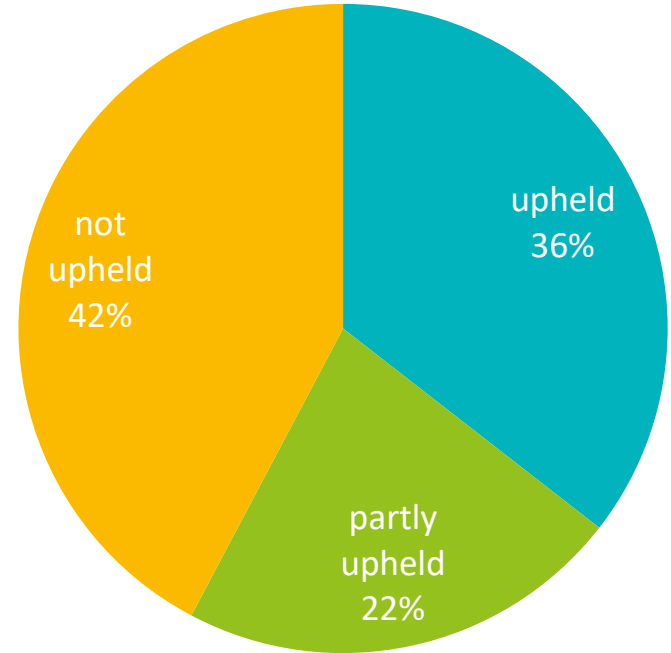
Complaints increased 26% this year, from 437 to 549



98% responded to within Housing Ombudsman's target of 10 working days

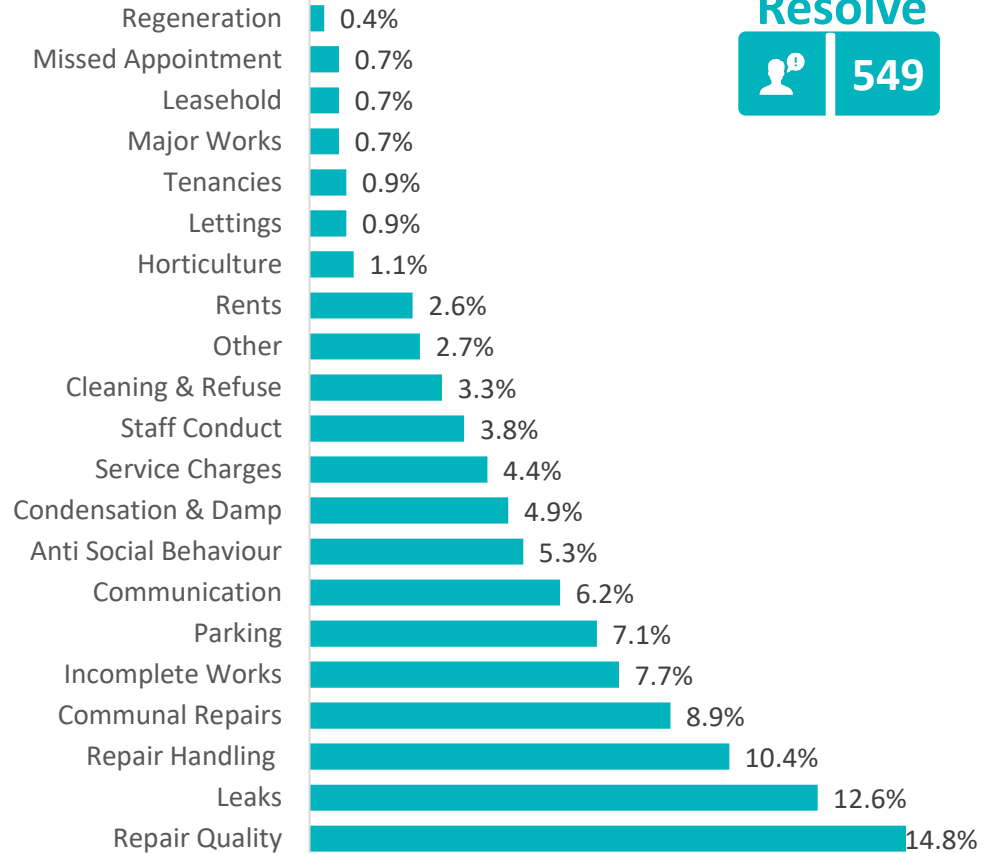
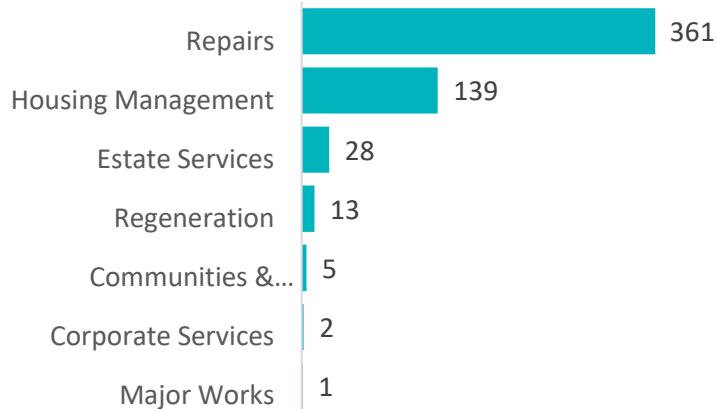
58% (322) were upheld or partly upheld, of these 241 were about repairs and 57 were about housing management

42% (227) were not upheld, of these 121 were about repairs and 82 were about housing management



What complaints were about Stage 1: Resolve

43% of complaints were about repairs
11% were about communications and customer care
6% were about antisocial behaviour
8% were about parking



Resolve



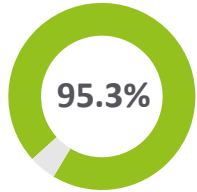
Complaints by volume and outcomes

Stage 2: Review

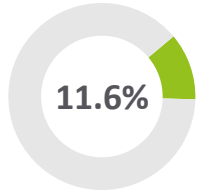
Review



Reviews increased 178% this year, from 23 to 64



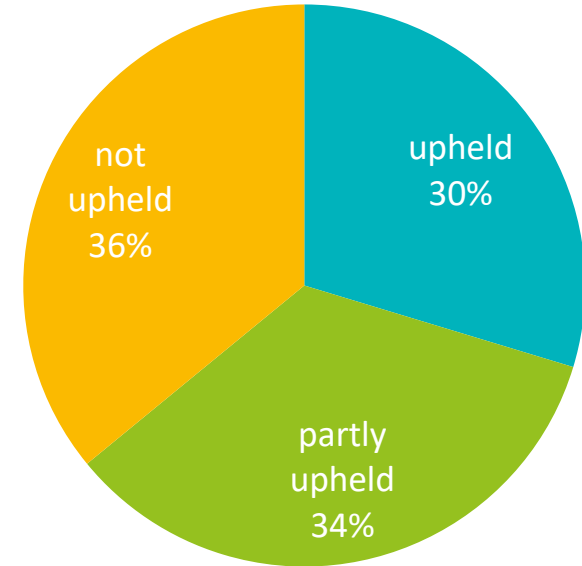
95% responded to within Housing Ombudsman's target of 20 working days



12% escalated from stage 1 to stage 2

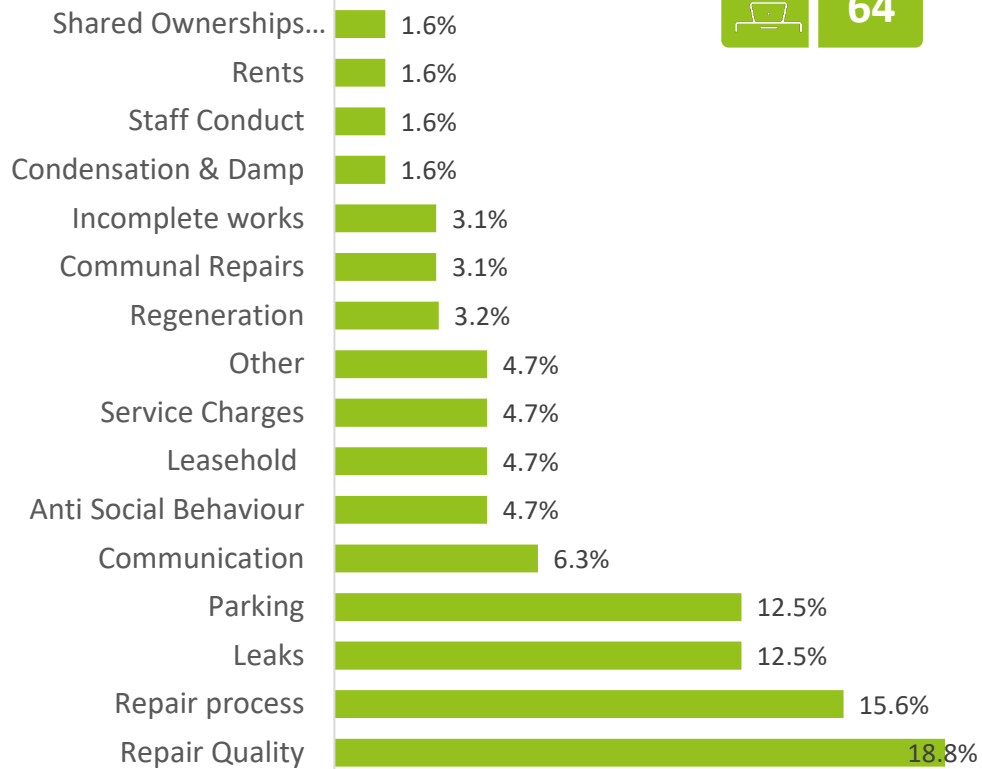
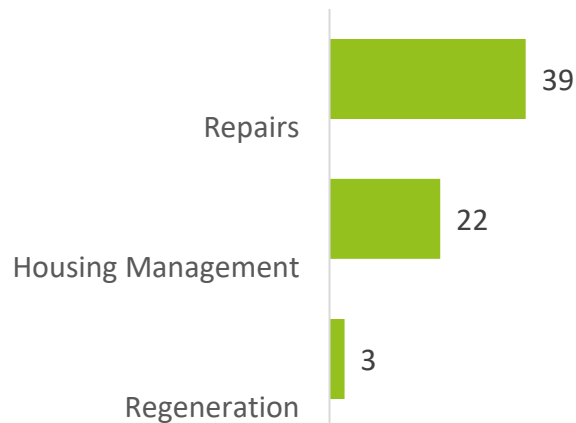
36% of Reviews were not upheld
34% were partly upheld
30% were upheld

74% of repair reviews were upheld/partly upheld
46% of housing management reviews were upheld/partly upheld



What complaints were about Stage 2: Review

88% of complaints were resolved at stage 1
12% of complaints escalated to a review
15.8% of housing-related were reviewed
10.8% of repair-related were reviewed



Review



64

Housing Ombudsman



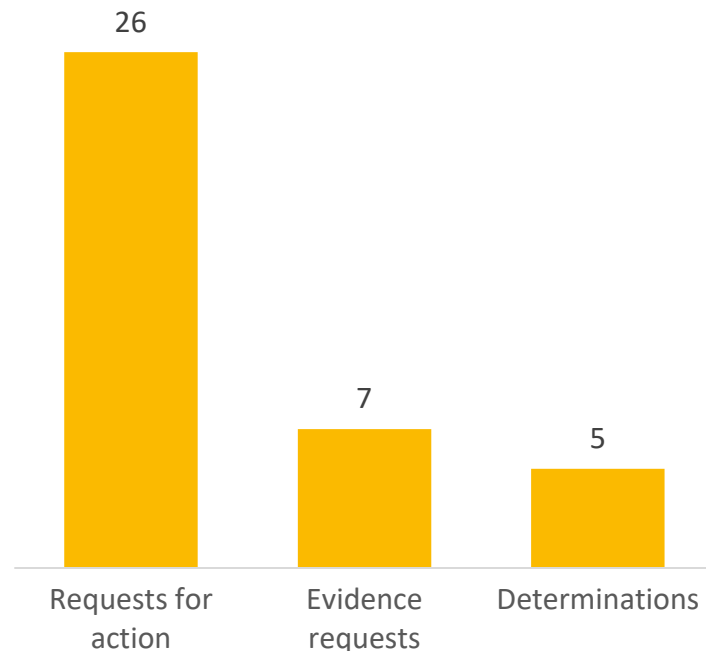
When a resident does not agree with the outcome of a review, they can refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman (HOS). This year we received:

26 Requests for Action: HOS formally asked us to investigate or explain why we will not consider the matter as a complaint

7 Evidence Requests: HOS formally accepted the case and has requested evidence

5 Determinations: HOS findings and decisions

The HOS requires us to conduct and publish an annual self-assessment which is here: <https://www.poplarharca.co.uk/about-us/complaints/housing-ombudsman/>



Ombudsman decisions

5 determinations with 11 findings

7 maladministration (<1% of all complaints)



* calculated as per [HOS guidance on landlord reports](#)

Ombudsman decisions

link to case study	June '23	October '23	December '23	December '23	February '24
about	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> noise and anti-social behaviour complaint handling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> anti-social behaviour rehousing complaint handling 	service charges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> contaminated water boiler, bath, basin complaint handling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> anti-social behaviour rehousing
severe maladministration	-	-	-	-	-
maladministration	2	1	-	2	1
service failure	-	1	-	-	-
partial maladministration	-	-	-	-	-
no maladministration	-	1	-	1	-
outside jurisdiction	-	-	1	-	1

What we learned

complaint was about	lessons	what we did
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • noise • antisocial behaviour • complaint handling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal action should continue unless/until matters are resolved • Complaints must be logged immediately dissatisfaction is raised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case reviews and debriefs • Staff training: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Running a legal case ▪ Equality Impact assessments ▪ Risk assessments ▪ Complaints handling ▪ Target and performance monitoring ▪ Policy refreshers ▪ Complaints investigations ▪ Managing multi-agency relationships • Service charge explanatory leaflet developed • Staff awareness information on intranet
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • antisocial behaviour • rehousing • complaint handling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports must be acknowledged within target • Timely victim risk assessments • Regular progress reports • Complaints must be logged immediately dissatisfaction is raised 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • service charge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better communications about service charges 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contaminated water • boiler, bath, basin • complaint handling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints must be logged immediately dissatisfaction is raised • Representative(s) as well as, not instead of, complainant • Better communications about follow-on works • Repairs targets to be complied with 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • antisocial behaviour • rehousing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular progress reports • Timely victim/household risk assessments • Explore alternative remedies • Robust procedures for multi-agency working 	

Improving

- Policy updates:
 - aligns with HOS complaints handling code
 - compensation guidance
 - strengthens importance of personal contact
 - training and awareness materials
- Customer Care awareness sessions for all staff
- Complaints handling training for investigating officers and panel members
- Self-assessment against Complaints Handling Code
- Greater accessibility to information on website
- Regular article in resident newsletter
- Standing item on meeting agendas for Senior Leadership and Corporate Management Teams
- Complex case reviews introduced
- Increased compliance monitoring

Lessons implemented

	what we did
training	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All staff: recognising dissatisfaction, logging immediately, policy and procedure• Investigating officers: complaints handling code, responding to all issues, monitor actions• Review officers: complaints handling code, responding to all issues• Complaints team: complaints handling code, policy and procedure, triaging, definitions, monitoring
templates	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complaints stage 1 and 2 acknowledgement• Complaint stage 1 and 2 response• Policy exclusions
stage 1	All dissatisfaction logged, including where matter not managed directly e.g. rubbish collection Residents to be spoken with to help understand the issues Investigating Officers must provide chronology
stage 2	Panel led by Director or Assistant Director of service complained about, ensuring seniority, and authority to make changes
compensation	Compensation levels aligned with HOS guidance
resources	Complaints Team fully resourced

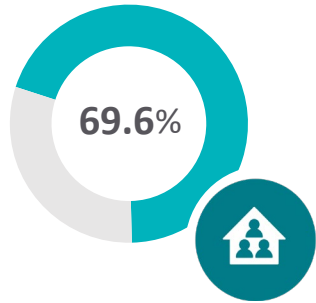
Lessons being worked on

objectivity	Objectivity continues to be a challenge. Ongoing training, monitoring and advice is being provided
Investigating Officers	Investigating Officers thoroughly reviewing conclusions to ensure all issues addressed to reduce volume of escalations
tracking progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Actions must be tracked to completion before being closed down• Case management system being designed, developed, and implemented• Complaints Team implementing quality control testing regime
insights	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of complaint categories to help inform insights - themes, trends, outcomes, and root-cause analysis• Categories to align with HOS themes and Consumer Standards
procedures being reviewed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leaks• Access• Pest control• Information sharing with residents• Risk assessments• Equality Impact Assessments

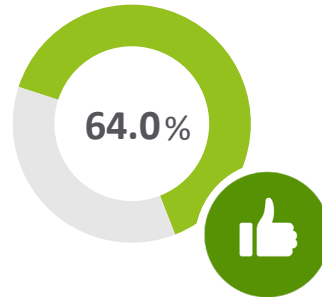
Satisfaction and Scrutiny

899 residents responded to our survey in September 2023, with an overall satisfaction of 86%.

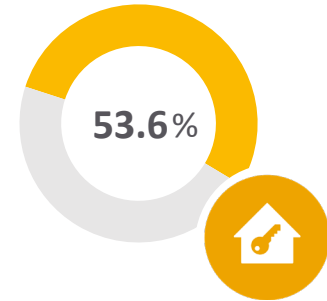
462 answered the question “How satisfied are you with Poplar HARCA’s approach to complaints handling?”



Tenants satisfied with complaints handling



combined satisfaction with approach to complaints handling



Leaseholders and shared owners satisfied with complaints handling

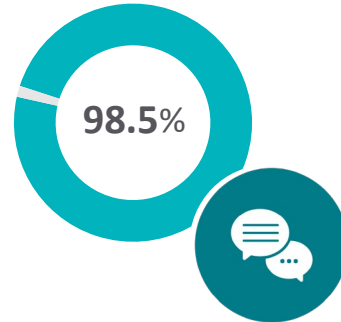
Satisfaction and Scrutiny

Our Services Committee scrutinises complaints and performance each quarter.

The Committee also monitors our Tenant Satisfaction Measure performance, as defined by the Regulator of Social Housing



Stage 1 complaints
relative to size
(per 1,000 homes social tenants only)



Stage 1 complaints
responded to within
timescale
(social tenants only)

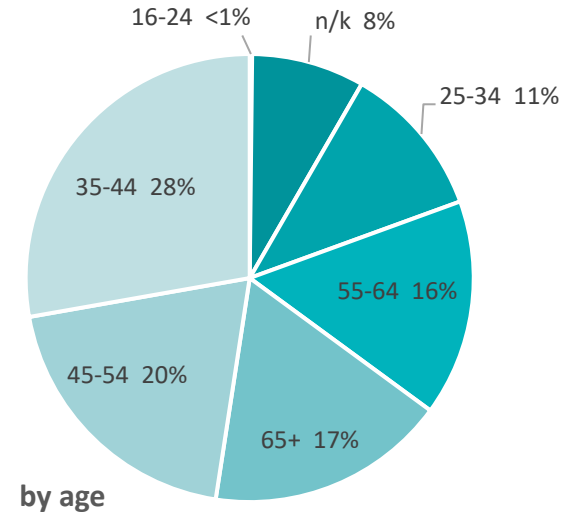
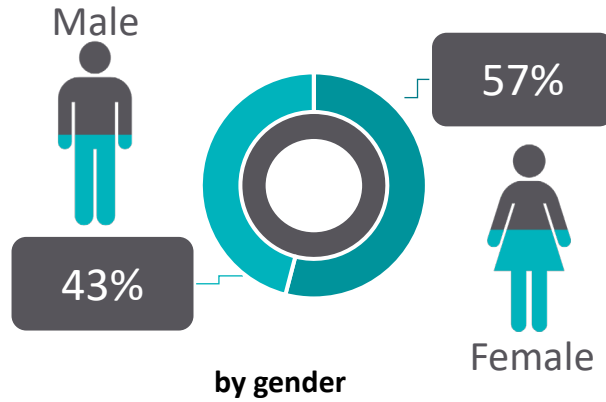
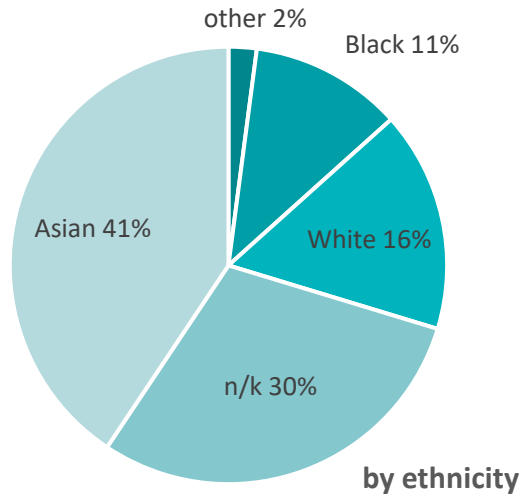


Stage 2 complaints
relative to size
(per 1,000 homes social tenants only)

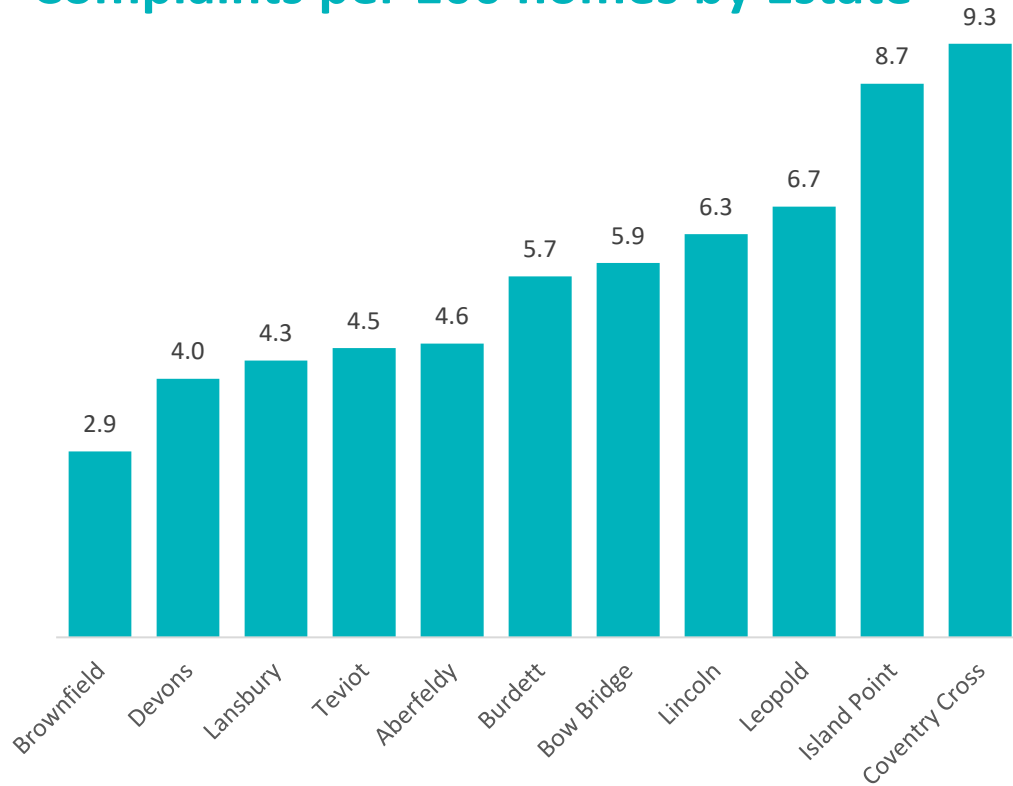


Stage 2 complaints
responded to within
timescales
(social tenants only)

Who complaints were from



Complaints per 100 homes by Estate



- The top 3 themes from Coventry Cross were regarding communication, cleaning and quality of repairs.
- 40% of Island Point's complaints were related to communal repairs, 20% to communication.
- The top 3 themes out of Leopold were communal repairs, quality / standard of repairs and service charges.

Compensation

2022-23

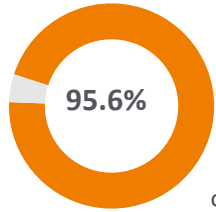


2023-24

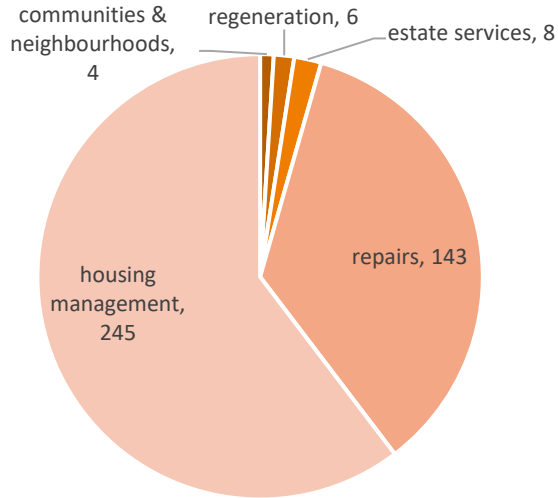


Enquiries from Councillors

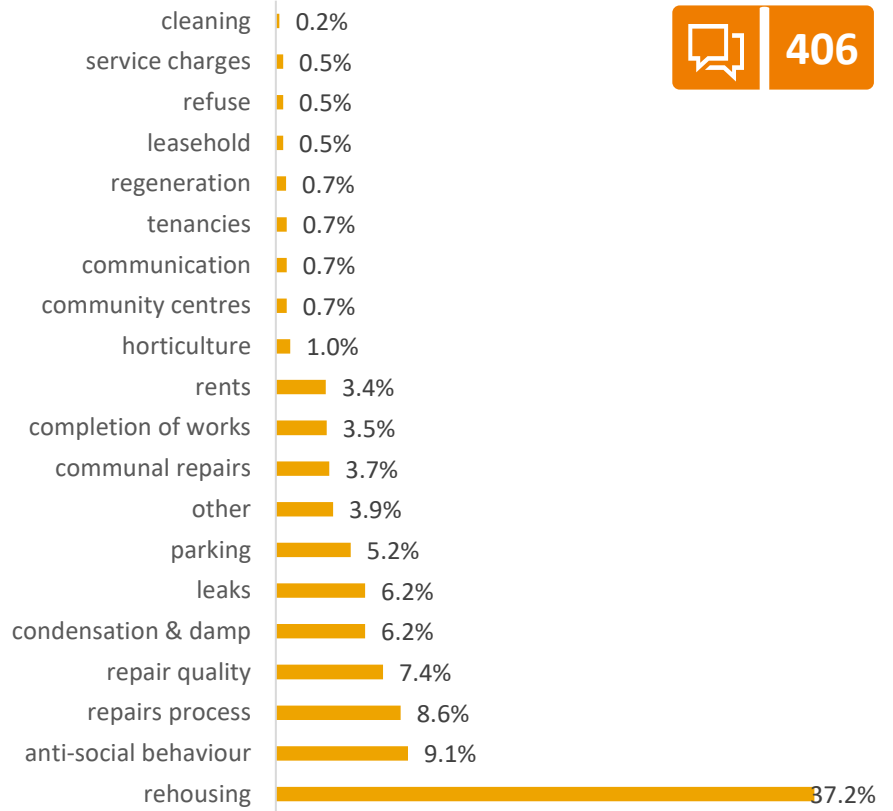
24% decrease in members' enquiries, from 534 to 406



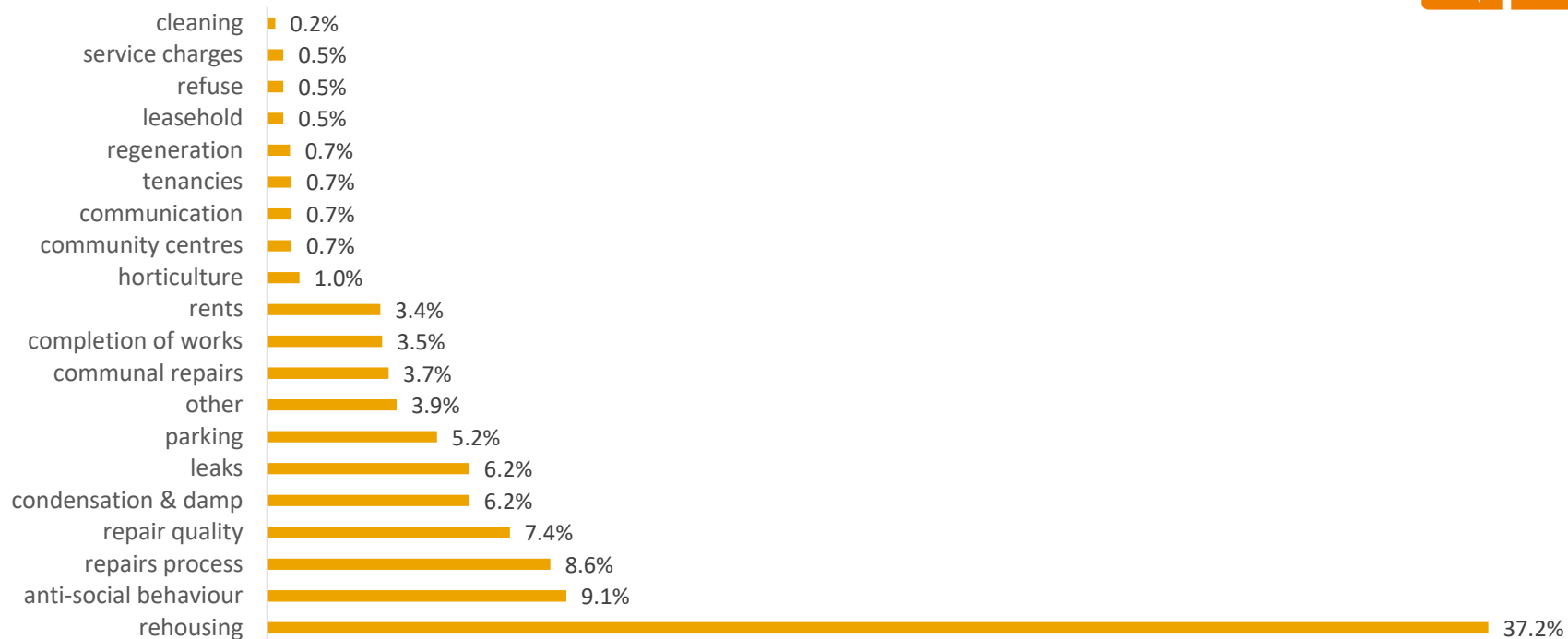
96% responded to within target



Members enquiries

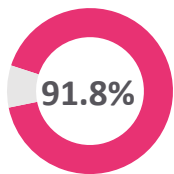


Enquiries from Councillors



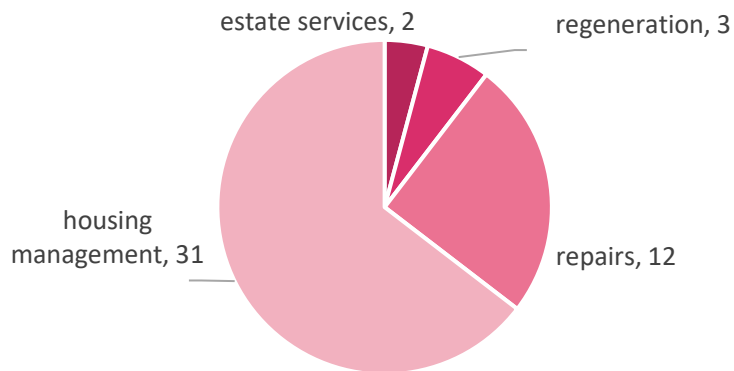
Enquiries from MPs

23% decrease in MP enquiries, from 59 to 48

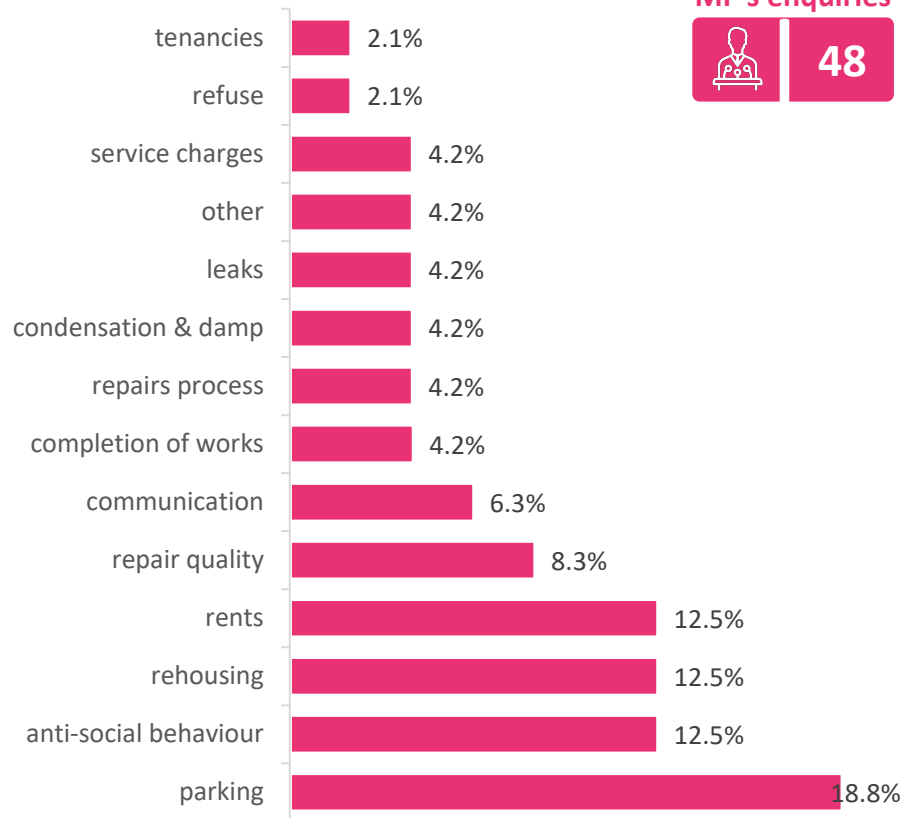


92% responded to within target

most MP enquiries are about parking, ASB, rehousing and rents



MP's enquiries



Other contacts



compliments

subject access &
data requests



petitions



disrepair claims



environmental
health



(some of our) Compliments

“ Jamiuel was very helpful when assigning our parking bay. Kept in contact throughout to let us know what was happening. Very happy to help where he could and always responded to emails (not very often that happens) but Jamiuel always responded. Thank you for a great experience.”

“ I just want to let you know how much Jasmine has helped me and my mum, she has taken the stress out of moving. Her professionalism is super, to be truthful her professionalism is what I wish my colleagues had. Her phone manner is super as well.

This is the first time I have ever emailed a manager to tell him how much their employee has had an effect on me, normally I would not give feedback but it would be wrong for me not to after how she has helped me so much.”

“ I wanted to say how helpful and clear Gloria was today on the Poplar HARCA main phone enquiries line. She spoke clearly and respectfully and was extremely careful about directing my enquiry to the right person.”

“ I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you and your Team, for putting together this Meeting. Please pass on these thanks and comments to the Contractor, and staff.
For my small part, I thought that the Meeting was a great success. The information passed over to us I felt, was tremendously valuable and - importantly - reassuring. Answers provided to all questions put forward by the residents attending were answered fully and honestly by the team.”

“ Just wanted to drop you quick message to say it was really helpful speaking with you, Paul.
You have clearly understood that communication is the key.”

Governing body's response to Annual Complaints and Service Improvement Report

Poplar HARCA understands that things can, and do, go wrong. Resident complaints give us an invaluable opportunity to hear concerns, understand experiences, and effectively address issues. This feedback is crucial—it helps us learn, adapt, and improve.

We pride ourselves in ensuring residents are represented on our Board and Committees. The focus of Poplar HARCA's Services Committee and Board is to provide the best services to residents and service users. Members rigorously scrutinise the quality of services, analyse trends, and challenge performance to ensure we are working to the highest standards.

As the Board Lead for Complaints and Chair of the Services Committee, I am deeply committed to making it easier for residents to raise concerns and ensuring issues are promptly resolved. I recognise the importance of the work of the Housing Ombudsman and the Regulator of Social Housing increasingly holding the sector accountable for the quality of services provided. Poplar HARCA's Annual Complaints and Service Improvement Report shows an increase in the number of complaints—a trend that mirrors the reported experience of housing providers across the country.

While we are compliant with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code, there is always room for improvement. With fellow Board and Committee Members, my role is to ensure that Poplar HARCA is never complacent. We are committed to working closely with residents to understand their concerns and continually improve the quality of our services. Resident feedback is essential in helping achieve this, and we are dedicated to making meaningful improvements based on residents' insights.

Shabana Yousaf, Lead Board Member for Complaints and Chair of the Services Committee