

Annual Complaints Report

and Service Improvement Plan

2024/25



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Board Statement

The Board considered the Annual Complaints Report and Service Improvement Plan and self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code 2024 at its meeting on 3 September 2025.

Effective complaints handling that drives service improvement for our customers is a high priority for us. The Board acknowledges that this year has been a difficult one for response times and for customer satisfaction with complaint handling, but that recent improvements in process and management of the service have resulted in noticeable early improvements. These will be monitored over the course of the coming year.

Improving services to deal with the root causes of complaints remains a key focus for us, and we are working hard to fulfil promises to our customers. We recognise that learning from complaints is an integral part of service improvement. We're working to embed this into our culture and bring together managers from across our services to ensure learning is shared and to avoid repeat complaints. We've set out the lessons learnt from handling complaints in our Annual Complaints Report and Service Improvement Plan 2024-2025.

The key points are:

- **Delivery of improvements to our repairs service ensuring repairs are completed within set timescales. Where this is not possible, customers are updated regularly on progress**
- **Improved complaints handling processes now in place to ensure customers are updated throughout the period their complaint is being investigated**
- **Increased presence and visibility by holding regular drop ins and estate walkabouts in communities**
- **Call evaluations and listening back to calls from customers have allowed us to provide targeted training based on where things have gone right or wrong.**

Board Statement cont'd

For the first time, we have also reviewed where our complaints are coming from – and where they aren't – so we can understand if there are barriers for any particular groups of people in accessing our complaints service.

During the year, our Representative Body carried out a scrutiny review of the Complaints Service and this has provided valuable insight from the perspective of customers and colleagues, which will help us improve further.

A comprehensive Service Improvement Plan has been agreed, and implementation will be overseen by our Customer Services Committee and the Board.

Our Customer Services Committee considers the root causes of complaints and the action being taken to address them. The Board takes its role in championing a positive complaint handling culture seriously and is supported in this by the Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC).

There are now strengthened governance arrangements to ensure effective oversight of complaints with feedback from the MRC forming part of the standard agenda for all Board meetings. This allows our Board to discuss and understand what is working in our complaints service and what still needs to be addressed. Our MRC attends our Customer Journey Review meetings, helping to scrutinise performance and compliance with the code. This forms part of the feedback at every Board meeting.

RBH is confident that it is compliant with the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code in all areas. This statement has been agreed by the Member Responsible for Complaints and the Board of Rochdale Boroughwide Housing.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin Brady".

Kevin Brady
Chair of the Board



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Linda Levin".

Linda Levin
Member Responsible for Complaints

Introduction

Your feedback matters to us. Whether that's a complaint, compliment or suggestion, it helps us understand what we're doing well and where we need to do better. This report looks at complaints you've shared with us between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025.

We will show how we've responded to these complaints, the steps we've taken to put things right, and the improvements we've made as a result.

We've included information on the numbers and types of complaints we received over the year and how they have been handled. We will also explain how we are compliant to the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code and share some of the feedback you have given us.



Number of Complaints Received

In 2024-25 we received **710 formal complaints**, of which 147 were escalated to Stage 2 review.



Stage 1
563



Stage 2
147



Refused
9

In line with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code, we declined to investigate nine complaints as they fell outside the Code's criteria. These included cases submitted more than 12 months after the issue occurred, complaints from homeowners about social housing residents, and matters relating to the local council which fall outside our responsibility.

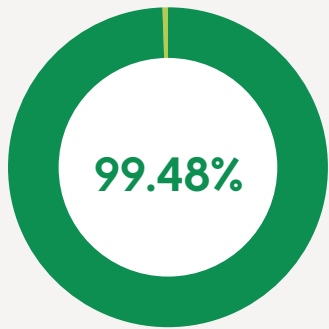
This means we received **39.3 Stage 1 complaints** and **10 Stage 2 complaints** for every 1,000 homes we manage.



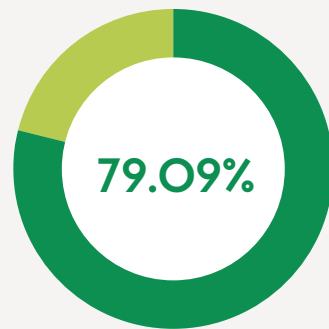
Apart from formal complaints, we also resolved **812 Service Requests** removing the need for our customers to log a formal complaint.

Performance and Outcomes

We have evaluated our performance below against the **Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code 2024**.



Stage 1 acknowledgements within five working days of receipt

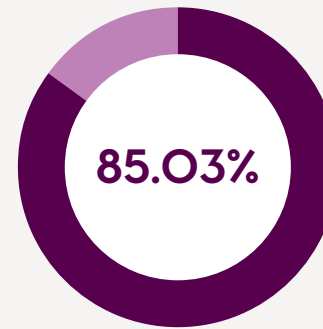


Stage 1 responses within 10 working days of acknowledgement

Stage 1

When you raise a complaint, and we investigate it, sometimes we find that we haven't got things quite right. When that happens, we'll take responsibility – either fully or partially and we'll always let you know what we've learned and what we're doing to stop it from happening again.

- In 2024/25 **62.5% of formal complaints**, we accepted that we were either partly or fully at fault
- **37% were not upheld (we found we acted fairly)**



Stage 2 responses within 20 working days of escalation

Stage 2

When a complaint needs to be reviewed, the Complaints Team assesses whether the investigation was fair and thorough. They may agree or disagree with any outcome from Stage 1.

We know we need to do more to ensure complaints are resolved at Stage 1. This is one of our improvement actions.

- In 2024/25 **73% of complaints** were upheld or partially upheld at Stage 2

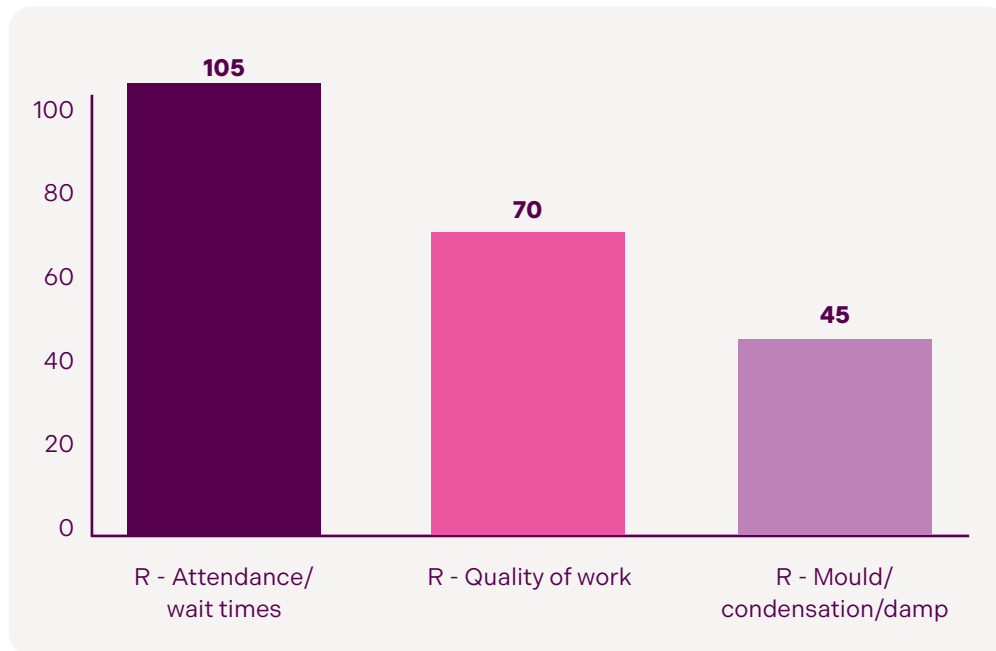
46% of customers who logged a complaint with us were satisfied with the outcome.

Data Source - TSM



Top Three Reasons for Complaints

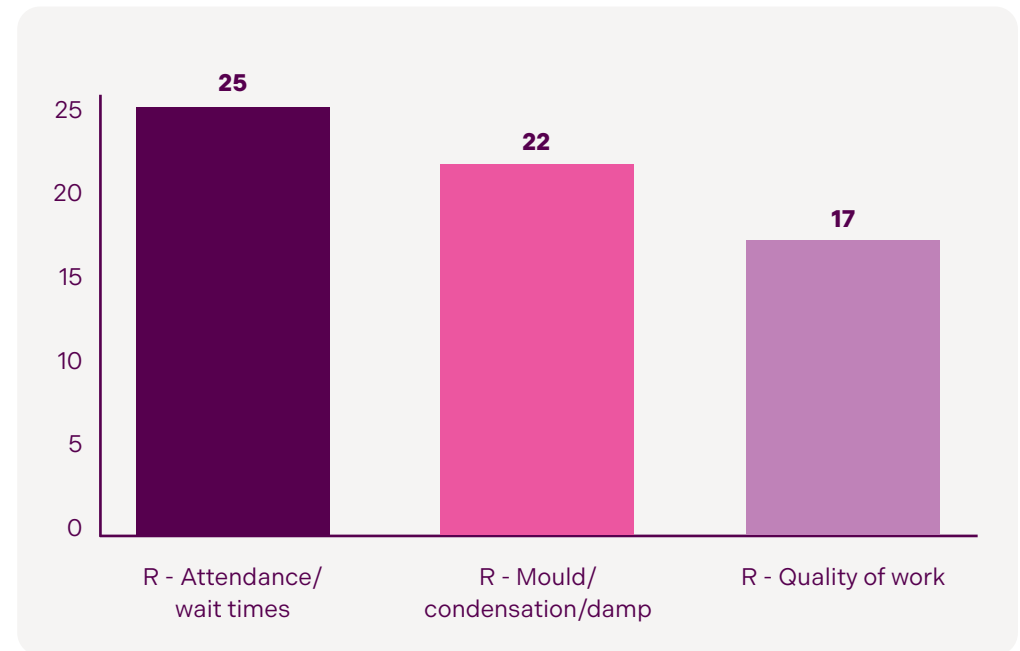
Stage 1



The highest number of complaints were in relation to responsive repairs in these three areas.

We have worked through many overdue repairs to ensure we are visiting our customers within target times as much as possible. Our Responsive Repair team carry out quality checks on work complete to ensure it meets the standard we expect. Over the coming year we are reviewing our target times across all Responsive Repairs and will be redefining our response times.

Stage 2

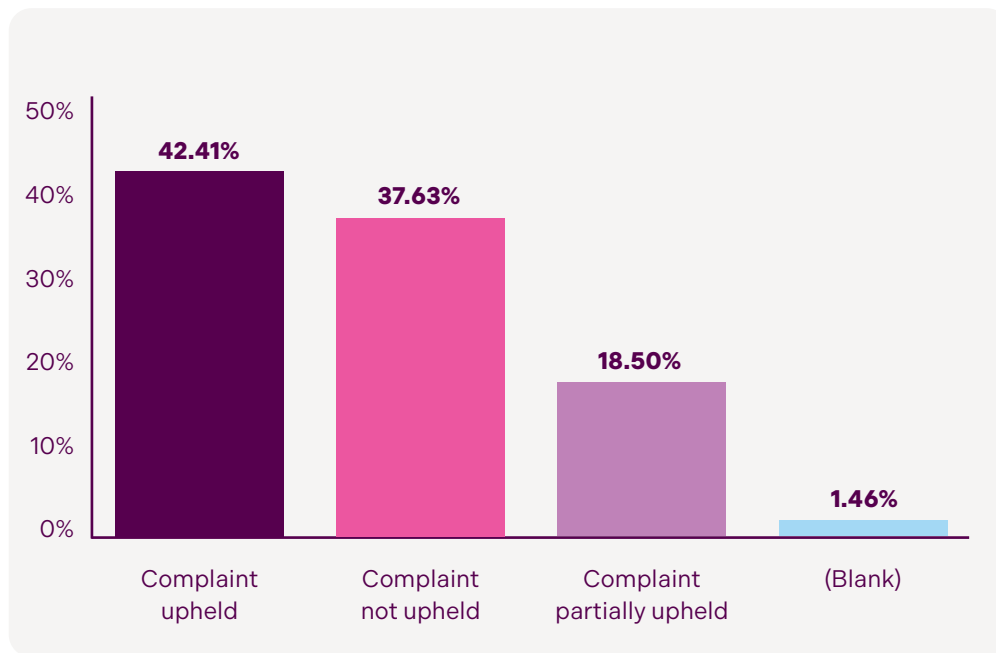


The above chart shows the top three reasons for Stage 2 escalations. Circa **45% of Damp & Mould** related complaints escalated to Stage 2 compared to 25-30% for other reasons.

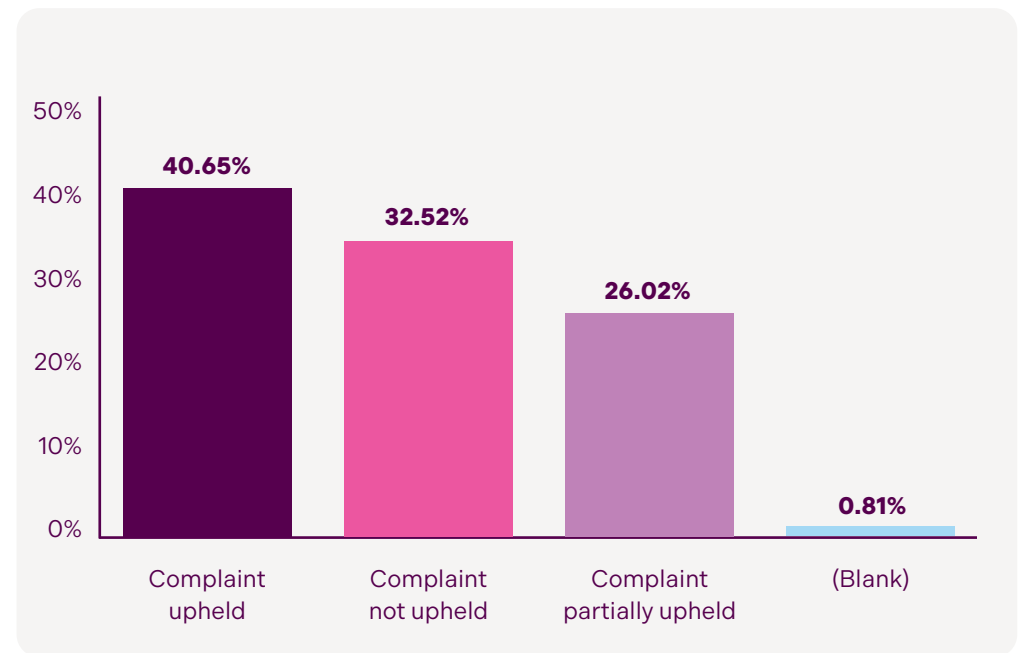
The work we carried out resolved the issue however our customers expected more. We have improved our approach to communicating with our customers and fully explain the work we intend to carry out before work begins.

Resolution outcomes

Stage 1



Stage 2



At stage 1, 42% of complaints were upheld and 37% were not upheld, suggesting a relatively balanced outcome and 1.46% of complaints withdrawn. However, with 73% of Stage 2 complaint being fully or partially upheld, it's clear that we are not always reaching the right resolution at Stage 1. This highlights the need to strengthen our Stage 1 complaint handling to ensure issues are resolved effectively and fairly at the earliest opportunity. 0.81% of complaints at Stage 2 were withdrawn.

Housing Ombudsman

During 2024/25 we received eight Housing Ombudsman determinations. Two of these findings were for maladministration. We paid £1,675.76 to customers following the Housing Ombudsman determinations.

We investigated 100% of the orders made and complied with all determinations. Below is a breakdown of the determinations.

Area	Determination	Outcome
Responsive repair	Maladministration	Redress paid and expanded our contractors to support pest control issues
Responsive repair	Service failure	Compensation paid and we implemented additional measures to reduce the repairs backlog which has had a positive impact on reducing volumes of historic work significantly reduced since the complaint was logged
Grounds maintenance	Maladministration	Redress paid to customer, and we now do regular estate walk abouts with various teams through the organisation to further understand customer issues and challenges
Neighbourhood service	No further action	We reviewed our anti-social behaviour policy to ensure it meets the needs of our customers
Service charge	Service failure	Redress paid and individually meet with customers (where necessary) to explain service charge in depth in relation to environmental services
Responsive repair	No further action	
Rent	No further action	

Learning from Complaints

We know that sometimes we don't get things right first time. When that happens, we take complaints seriously, not just as a way to put things right for the individual customer, but as a real opportunity to listen, learn and improve our services.

In 2024/25, we continued to embed the focus on learning from complaints and using your feedback to make positive, lasting changes. We know that further work is still required to ensure we can demonstrate how services have improved, and this is a key part of our Service Improvement Plan.



Learning from Complaints cont'd

Here's how we are doing this:

Reflecting the customer experience in our services

- We launched our internal 'Customer Journey Review' campaign, with each theme focused on real customer experiences and what we can learn from them. Our first theme, 'Communication', helped our colleagues to understand the impact on customers when we don't communicate clearly. We also shared and celebrated examples of getting it right.
- Every month, we meet with service managers to review complaints, learning points, and performance. We work together to put actions in place and track improvements using a new Learning Tracker.
- We make sure that learning is shared across departments, so that improvements happen everywhere, not just in the service area that was complained about.

Acting on what you tell us

- Our Representative Body facilitated a workshop where customers and colleagues worked together to design improvements to the complaints service. We're pleased that this additional scrutiny has led to a joint action plan that is now being delivered.
- We now involve you, our customers, earlier in defining service standards, particularly around repairs and neighbourhood services. The aim of this is to ensure services are shaped by your experiences and expectations.

- Call evaluations and listening back to calls from customers has allowed us to provide targeted training based on where things have gone wrong or right.

Making it easier to speak up

- We're improving the way we intervene when things go wrong, aiming to resolve dissatisfaction earlier and before it becomes a formal complaint.
- We've developed better processes to make sure complaints are responded to more quickly, and that customers feel heard throughout the journey.
- Our teams now work more closely together. For example, Neighbourhoods, Tenancy Enforcement and Safeguarding colleagues meet regularly to ensure the right outcomes for customers.

Listening and improving – every day

Our colleagues across the organisation have engaged with more than 1,300 customers this year through surveys, drop-ins and workshops. Thanks to you, we are seeing positive changes, but we know learning never stops. We will continue to listen, learn, and act based on your experiences.

Learning from Complaints cont'd

You said...

You wanted better communication.

You wanted repairs to happen quicker.

You wanted complaints to be handled better and faster.

What we have done...

We launched communication training, new service standards, and improved updates for customers.

We've successfully tackled our repairs backlog, which was at around 9,000 at its peak and has now been cleared. Our new Repairs and Maintenance policy has shortened the length of time permitted to carry out repairs, while we've also increased the number of appointments available to customers. By being more efficient and with ongoing improvements to systems, we aim to increase the number of jobs completed on the first visit.

We introduced better early intervention processes and clearer updates at every stage.



We would like to thank every customer who has taken the time to give feedback or make a complaint. It helps make things better for you, and for everyone who lives in our communities.

Learning from Complaints cont'd

Delivering real changes

Complaints and feedback have already led to real changes, including:

- Shortening our repair target times to give customers a better experience.
- Reviewing our lettings and transfer processes to make them fairer and more consistent.
- Introducing follow-up visits to new customers to catch and fix any issues early.
- Adding clear information about rent payments and refunds to our website based directly on your feedback.
- Redesigning training for our Neighbourhood Services, Tenancy Enforcement and Independent Living teams so everyone understands what great customer service looks like.
- Increased presence and visibility by holding regular drop ins and estate walk about in your local community. This year we have facilitated 1,391 engagement activities, 165 events and activities 54 drop-in sessions and 3 scrutiny reviews. We have built a clear feedback loop and follow-up actions to ensure that what we hear leads to real change and those changes are embedded across the organisation.
- We have worked hard to reduce the volume of historical repairs to improve response times.
- Introduced 'meet the contractor' events for planned works to improve our engagement with you.
- Meet with customers on an individual basis where necessary to explain service charges in relation to Environmental Services.
- Each quarter we will look back on the improvements we have made to check they have successfully embedded across the organisation and report progress to our Member Responsible for Complaints for assurance.



Diversity and Inclusion Implications

We are committed to making sure our complaints process is fair, transparent, and accessible to all.

Where possible, we record demographic information about those who make complaints. This helps us identify any trends or disparities. If we spot anything unexpected, we take a closer look to ensure that all customers are being treated fairly. By thoroughly analysing complaint themes and outcomes, we aim to ensure that all our customers are being treated fairly and consistently. Where the data shows less favourable outcomes for certain groups, we will put into place plans to understand this and ensure any differences are addressed as part of our action plan to ensure we continue to improve the experience for our customers.

We record and analyse the following characteristics in relation to customers making a complaint: age, gender, ethnicity and disability. This is the first year we have reported by these demographics based on the information we hold on our systems. We recognise that in many instances the sample sizes are small and will in those instances, triangulate this with other data sources to understand the issues. We are working hard to ensure we have up-to-date information for all our customers so we will continue to develop this report over the coming year. We will review the data monthly and work with our colleagues across the organisation to target customers who are underrepresented.

On the following pages, complaints are broken down by these characteristics to help us understand the fair and equitable application of our policy and processes.



Diversity and Inclusion Implications cont'd

What the data is telling us



In terms of age, the largest number of complaints came from those customers in the age bracket of **26-45yrs** whilst the lowest came from those aged **over 76**

59% of people with disabilities had their complaints either fully or partially upheld compared to **62%** of those without

A similar proportion of complaints are either fully or partially upheld for male and female complainants



In terms of other ethnicities and the volume of upheld complaints, complaints volumes are low so it's difficult to draw any meaningful data

Those in the age bracket **45-56yrs** are more likely to escalate their complaints to Stage 2

37.6% of Stage 1 complaints from customer of white origin were not upheld (**129 complaints**)


36.4% of customer with black origin (**8 complaints**)

50% customer of Asian origin (**15 complaints**)

29.3% of Stage 2 complaints from customer of white origin were not upheld (**92 complaints**)

33.3% of customer with black origin (**3 complaints**)

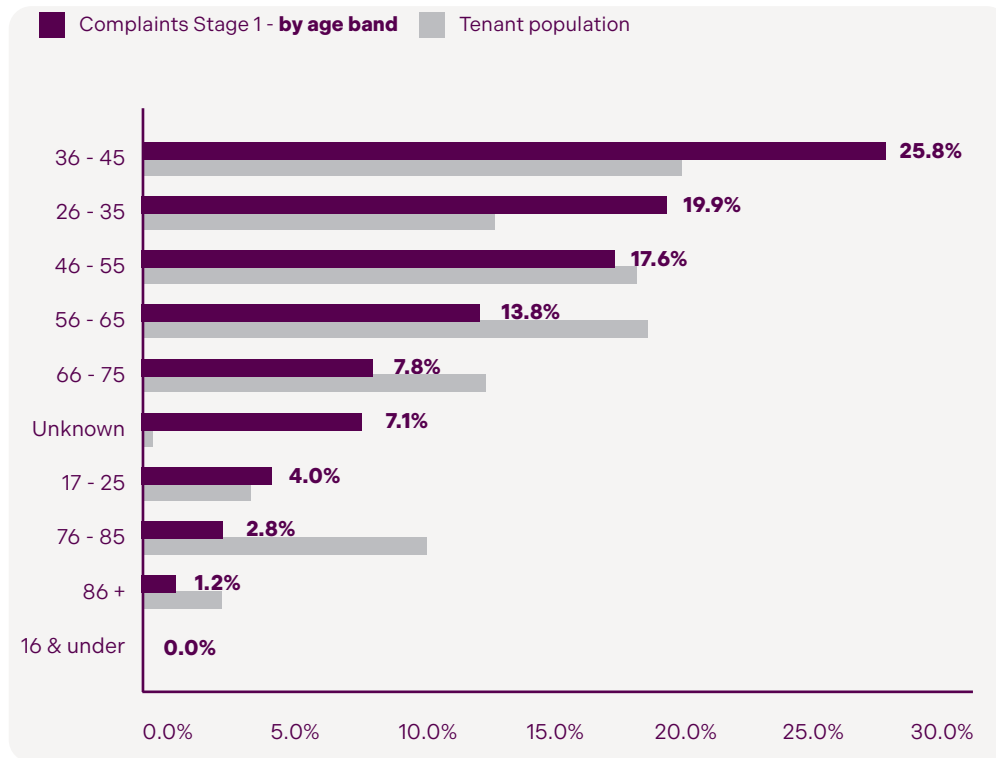
14.3% customer of Asian origin (**7 complaints**)



The highest volume of complaints are from our customers of white origin. This customer base also had the highest volume of upheld complaints

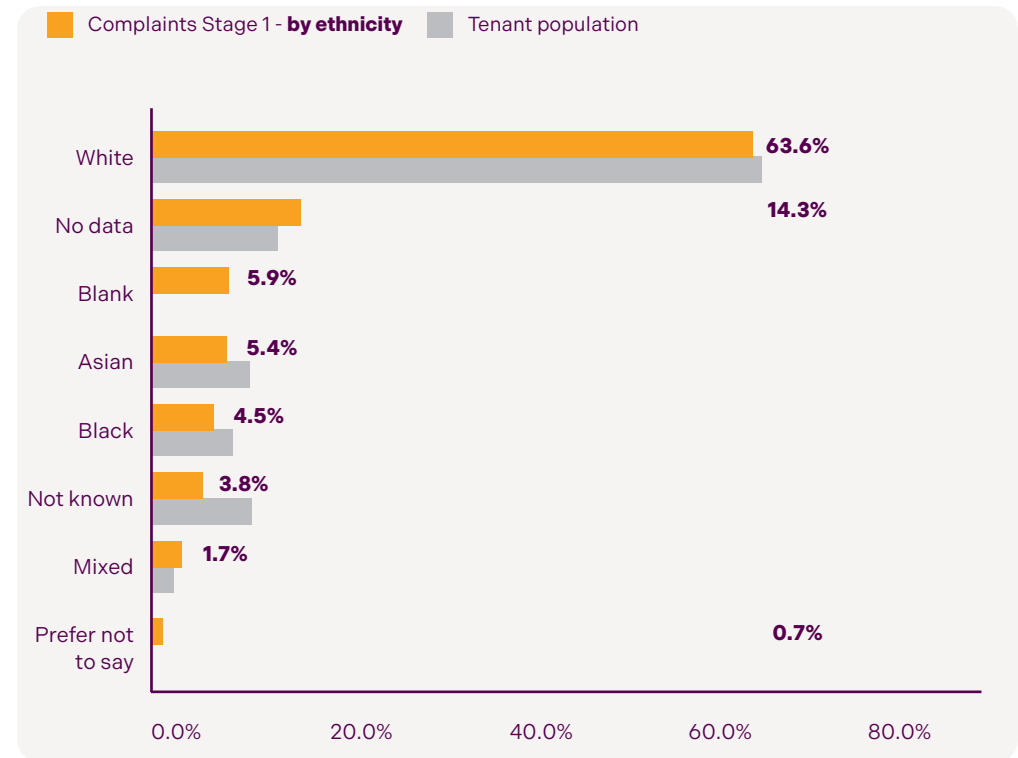
Diversity and Inclusion Implications cont'd

Stage 1 Complaints by age and ethnicity compared to overall customer base



Customers aged 26-45 accounted for 45.7% of Stage 1 complaints (257 cases), making them the largest group by age.

This indicates that customers in this age range are raising concerns more frequently than other age groups, which reflects their service need and likelihood to engagement with us.



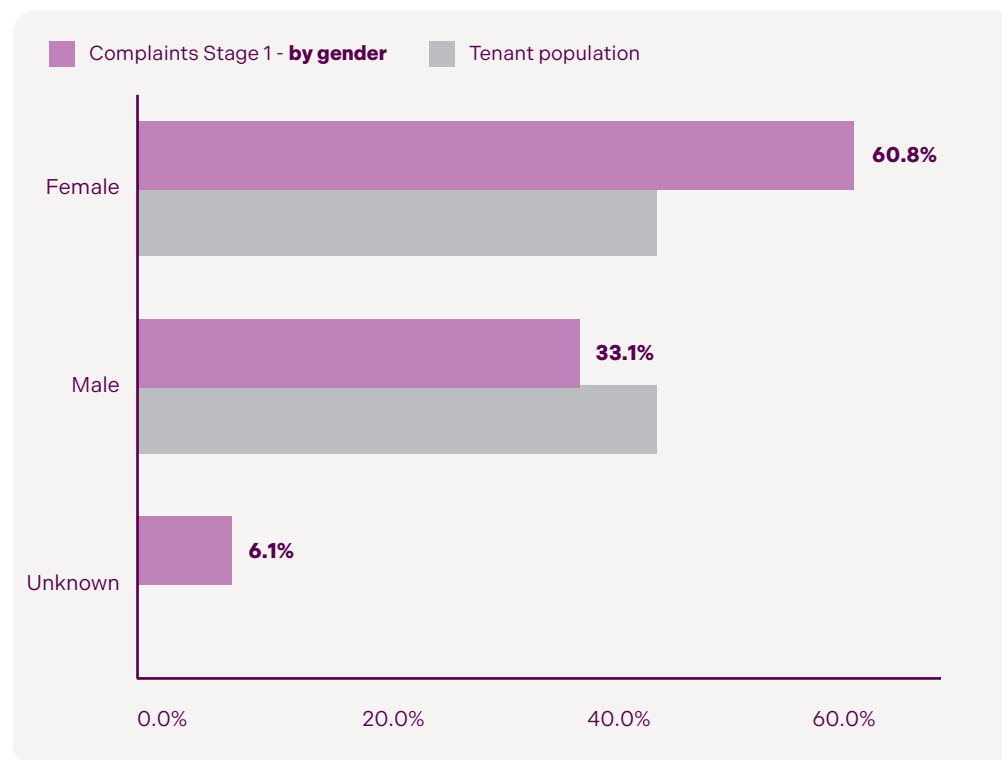
Asian and Black ethnicities are underrepresented in our Stage 1 complaints, making up 5.4% and 4.5% respectively, despite comprising 14.3% and 5.9% of our overall tenant population.

We will take targeted steps to ensure our complaints process is inclusive, accessible and trusted by all customer demographics as outlined in our Improvement plan for 25/26.

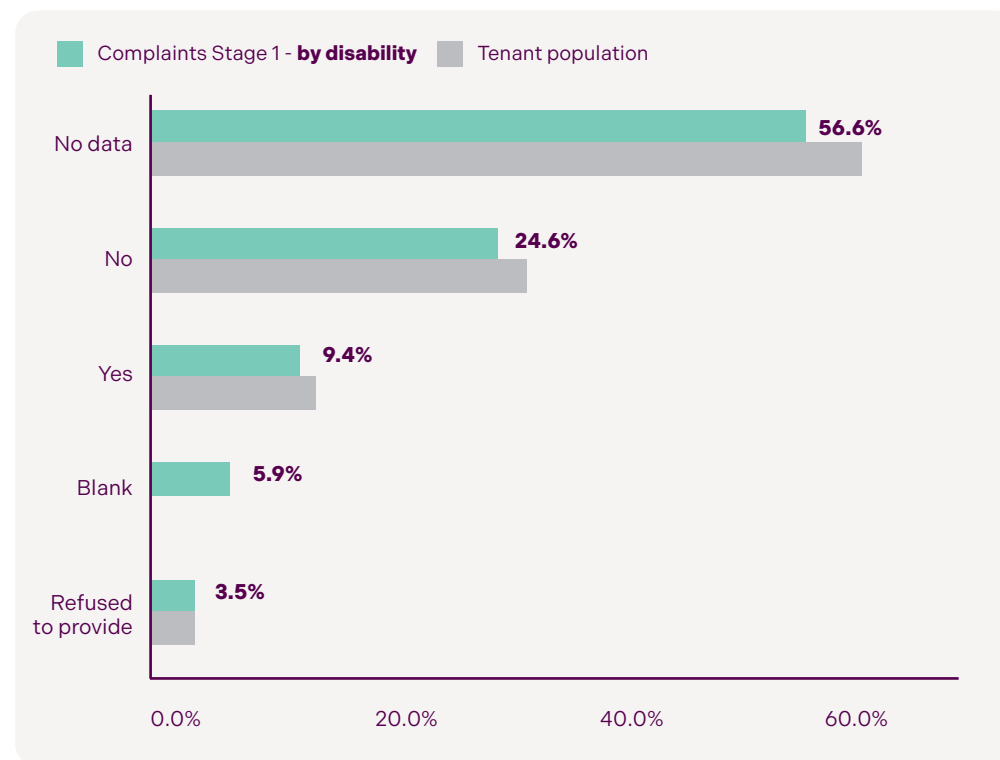
Diversity and Inclusion Implications cont'd

Stage 1

Complaints by gender and disability compared to overall customer base



We received fewer complaints from male customers compared to the percentage of male customers living in RBH Homes.

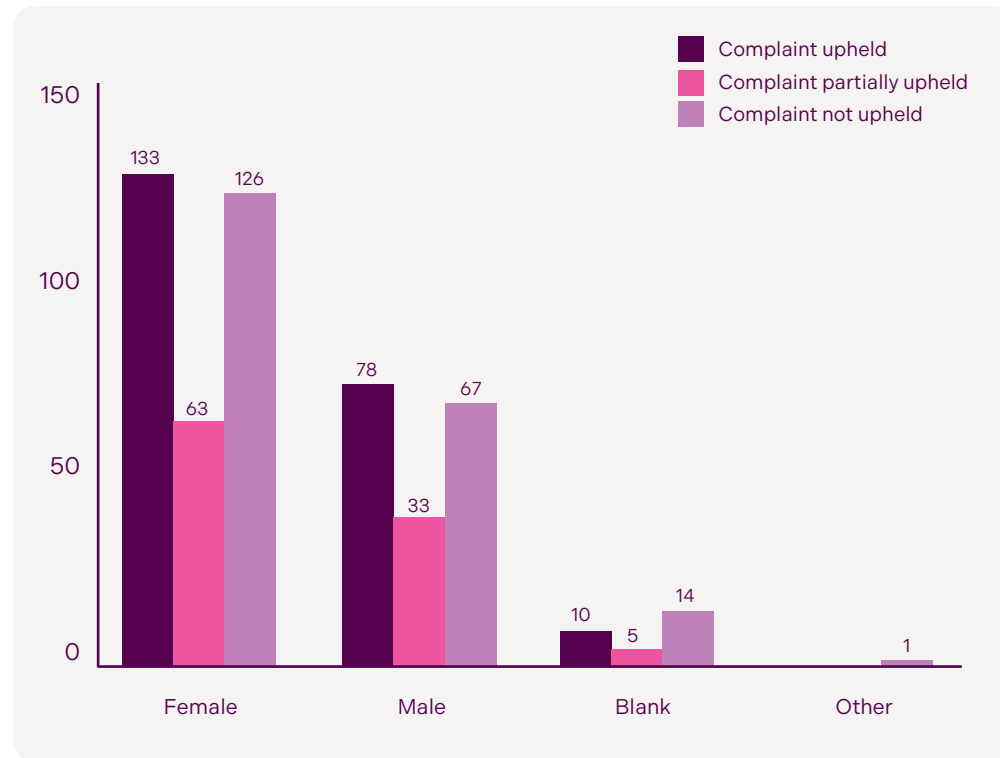


The volume of complaints we received from customers with a known disability closely matches the proportion of disabled customers in our overall customer base.

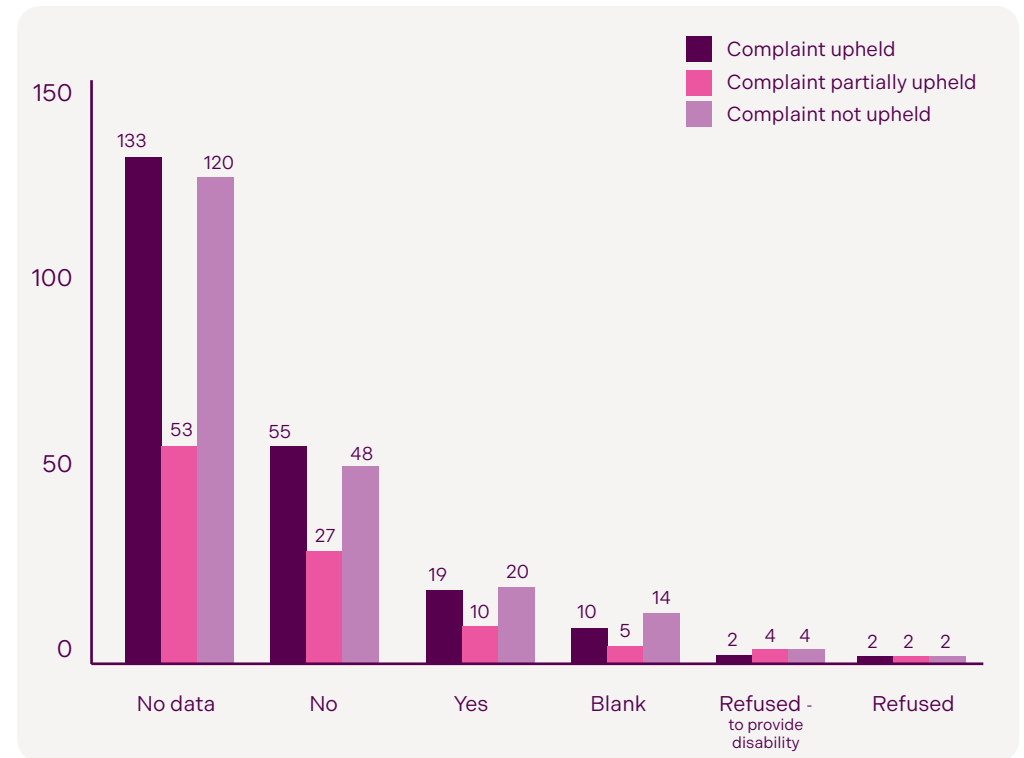
Diversity and Inclusion Implications cont'd

Stage 1

Complaints resolution outcomes by gender and disability

Resolution by **gender**

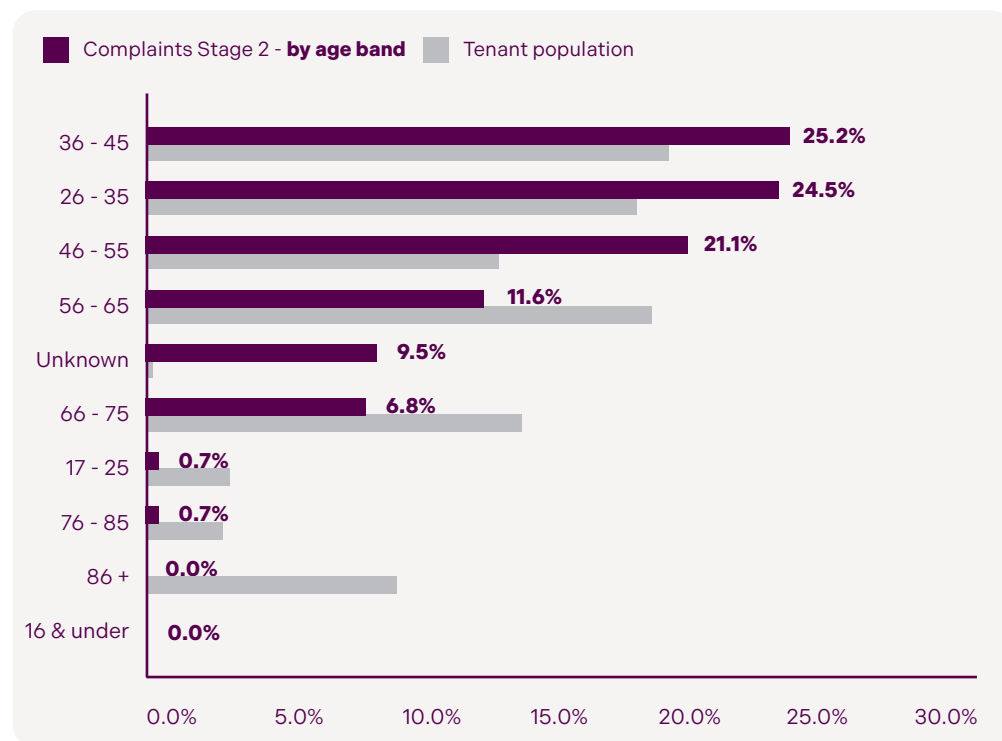
The proportion of complaints that are fully or partially upheld is very similar for both male and female customers, showing a consistent pattern across genders (approximately 62% for males and c. 61% for females).

Resolution by **disability**

59% of people with disabilities had their complaints either fully or partially upheld compared to 62% of those without.

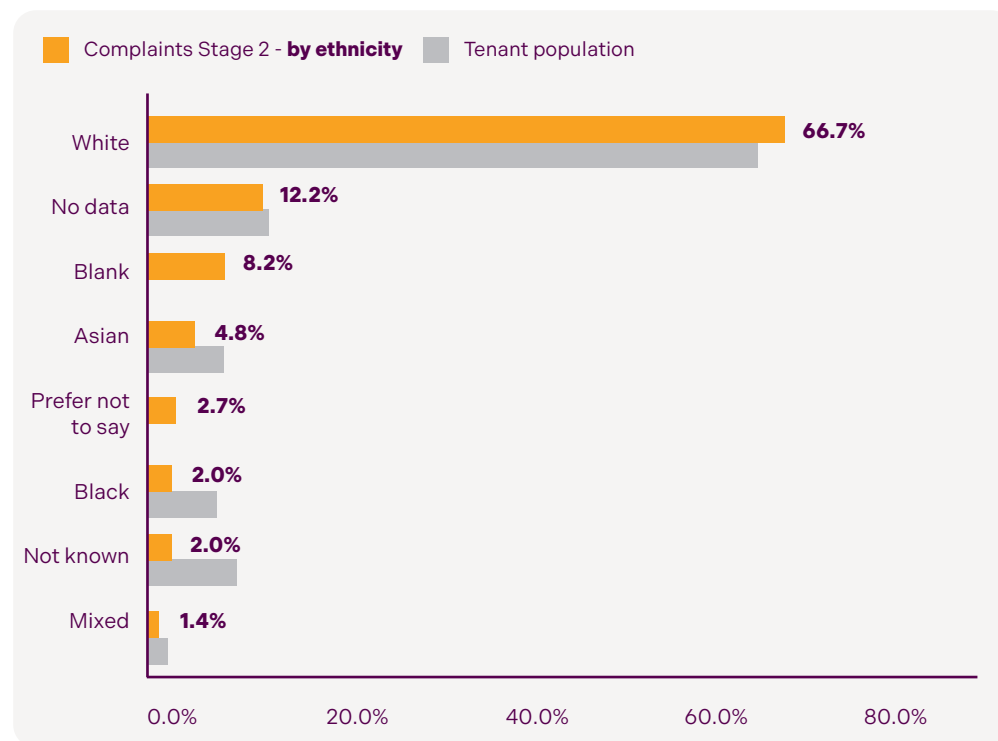
Diversity and inclusion implications cont'd

Stage 2 Complaints by age and ethnicity compared to overall customer base



Customers aged between 26-45 complained more than customers in other age ranges which is a similar view of our Stage 1 age profile.

Customer in the age range of 46 to 55 age group more likely to escalate to Stage 2.



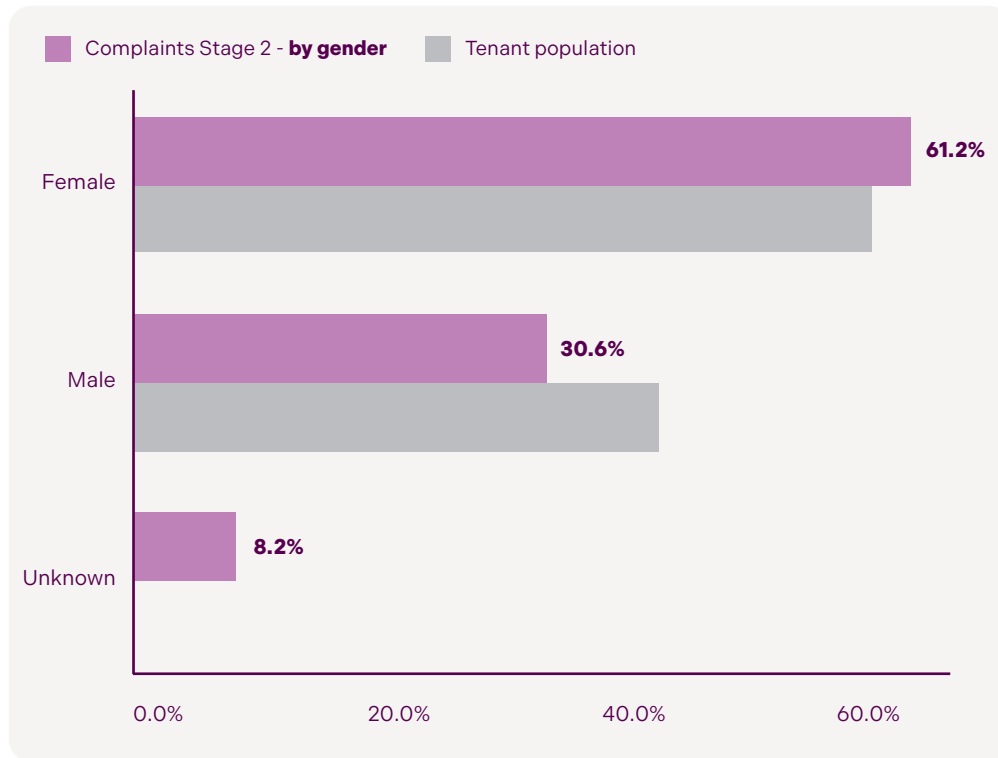
Asian and Black ethnicities are underrepresented in our stage 1 complaints, making up 4.8% and 2% respectively, despite comprising 14.3% and 5.9% of our overall tenant population.

We will take targeting steps to ensure our complaints process is inclusive, accessible and trusted by all customer demographics as outlined in our Improvement plan for 25/26.

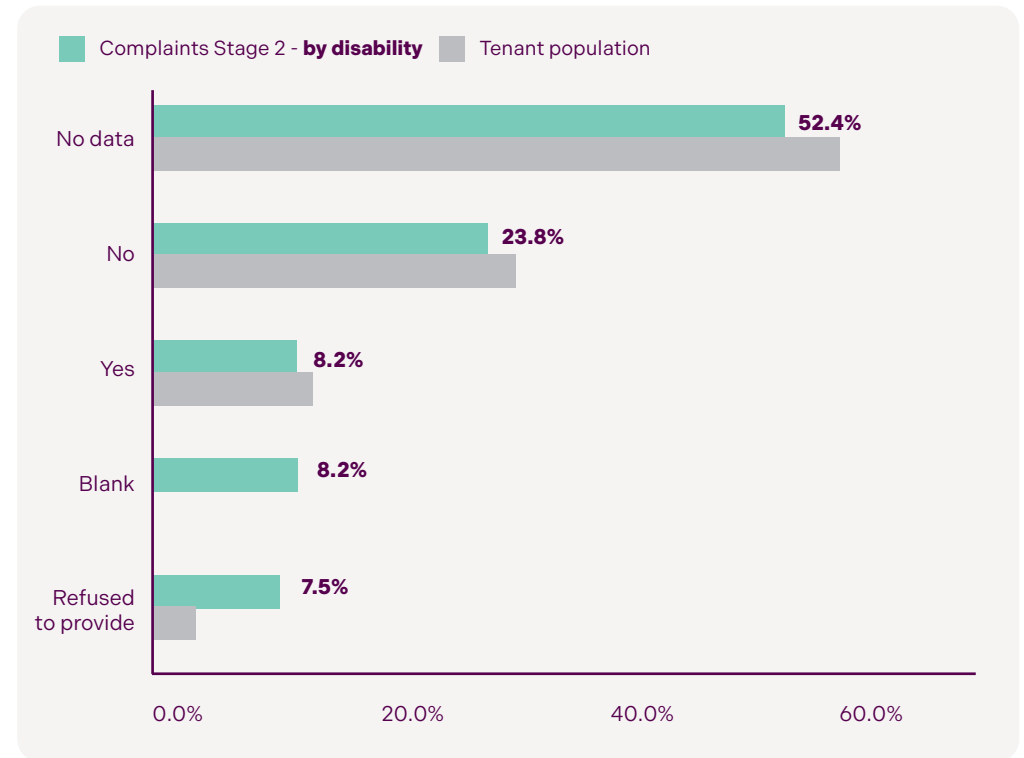
Diversity and Inclusion Implications cont'd

Stage 2

Complaints by gender and disability compared to overall customer base



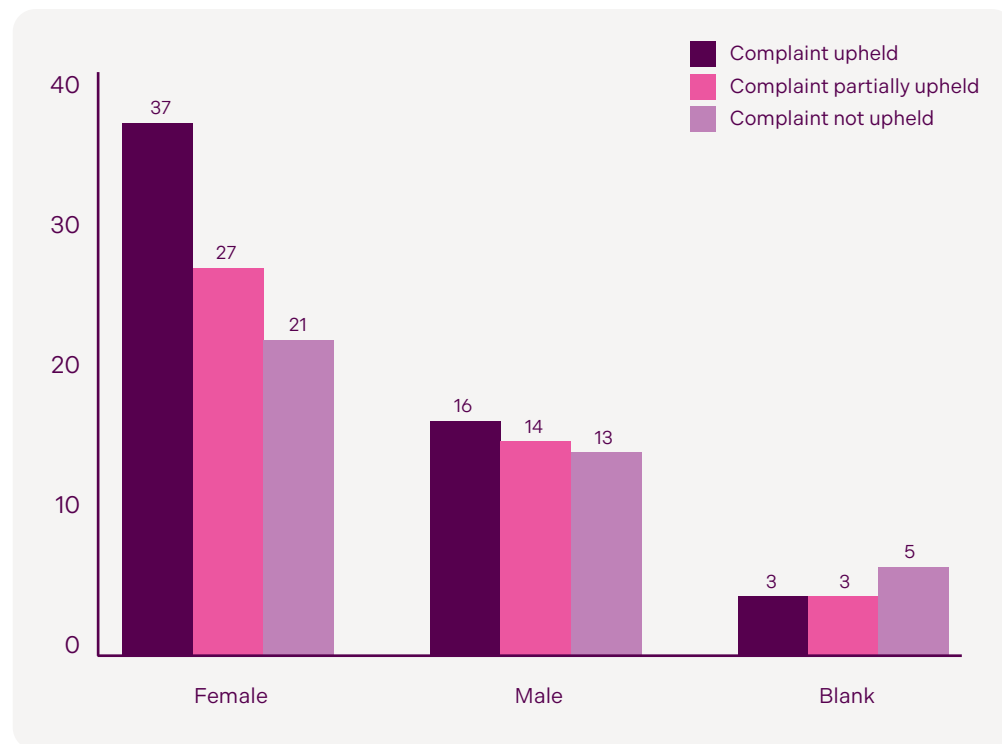
Fewer males have escalated complaints to Stage 2 compared to the male customer population and female population.



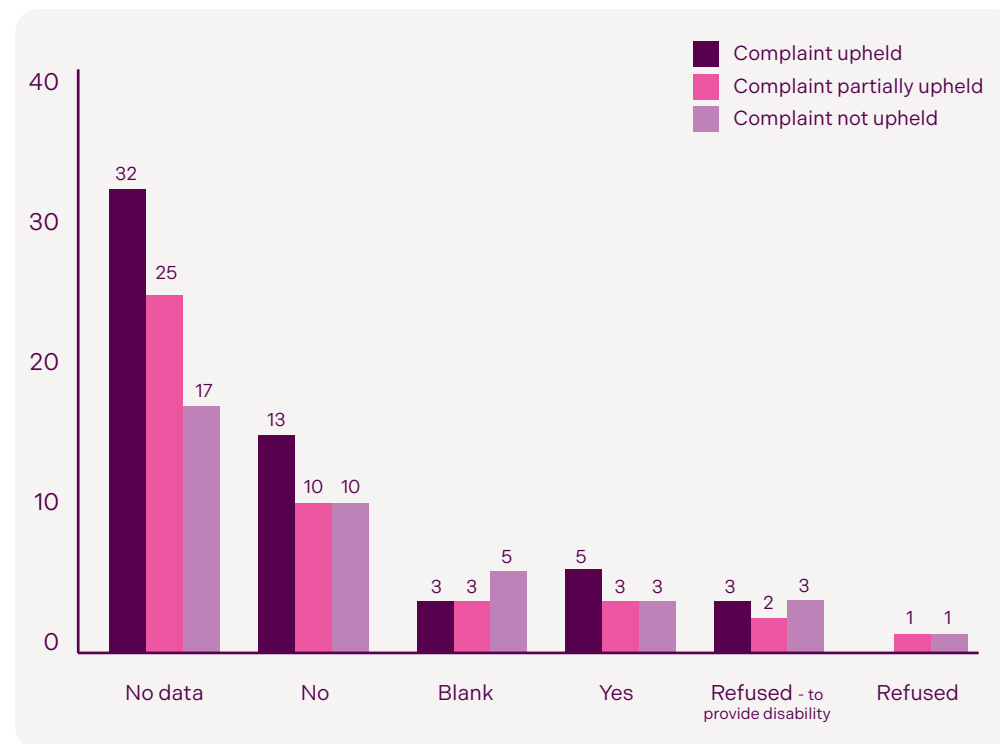
There is a high proportion for customers for whom we have no data in respect of disability of who have refused to answer this question.

Diversity and Inclusion Implications cont'd

Stage 2 Complaints resolution outcomes by gender and disability

Resolution by **gender**

c. 75% of complaints are either fully or partially upheld for female complainants compared to c 70% for male.

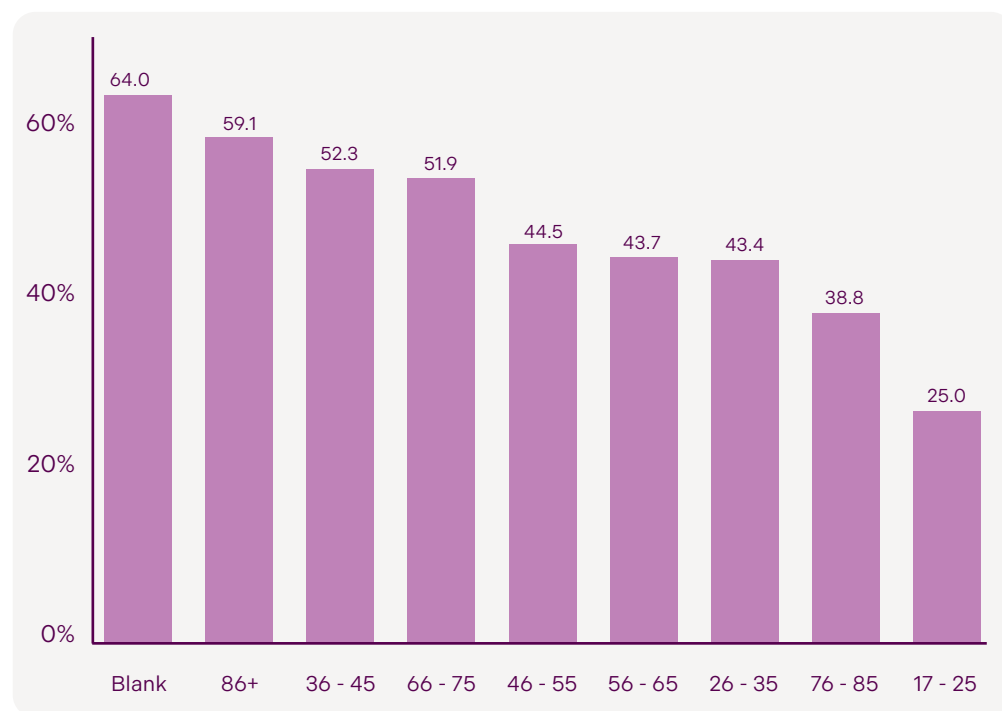
Resolution by **disability**

70% of customers without a disability had their complaints either upheld fully or partially compared to 73% of customers with a disability.

Diversity and Inclusion Implications cont'd

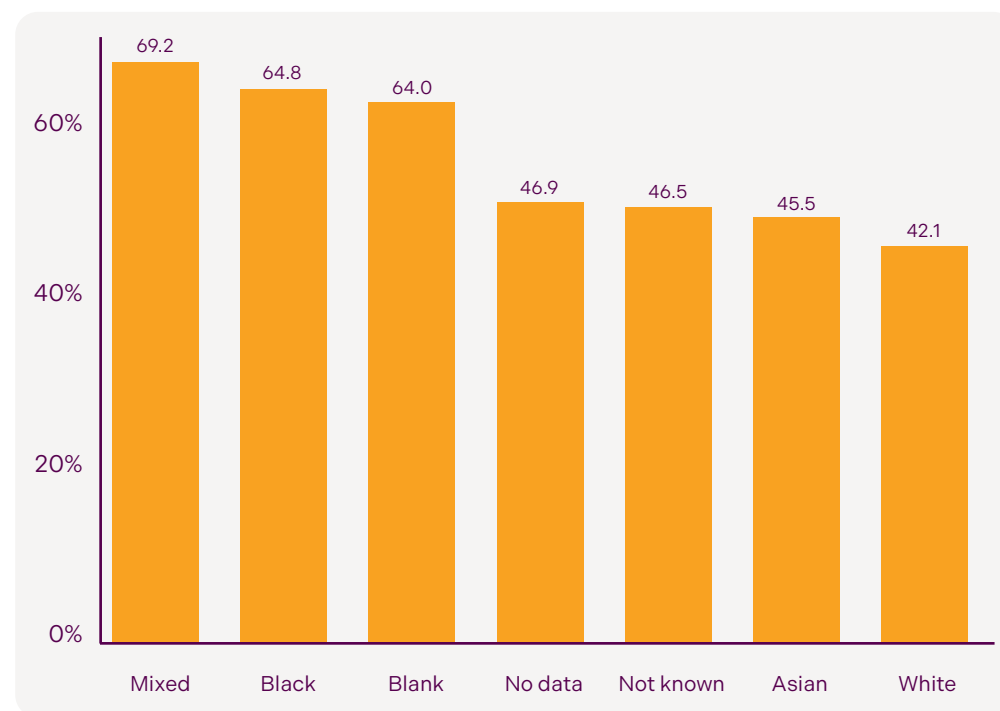
All Complaints

Satisfaction with complaints handling by age and ethnicity

Complaints satisfaction by **age band**

Customers aged over 86 and those aged 36 to 45 reported higher levels of satisfaction with how their complaints were handled. In contrast, customers aged 26 to 35, 76 to 85, and 66 to 75 were less satisfied compared to other age groups, and we need to understand why as part of our improvement actions.

Our largest customer age group is 36 to 45, which is also one of the more satisfied groups.

Complaints satisfaction by **ethnicity**

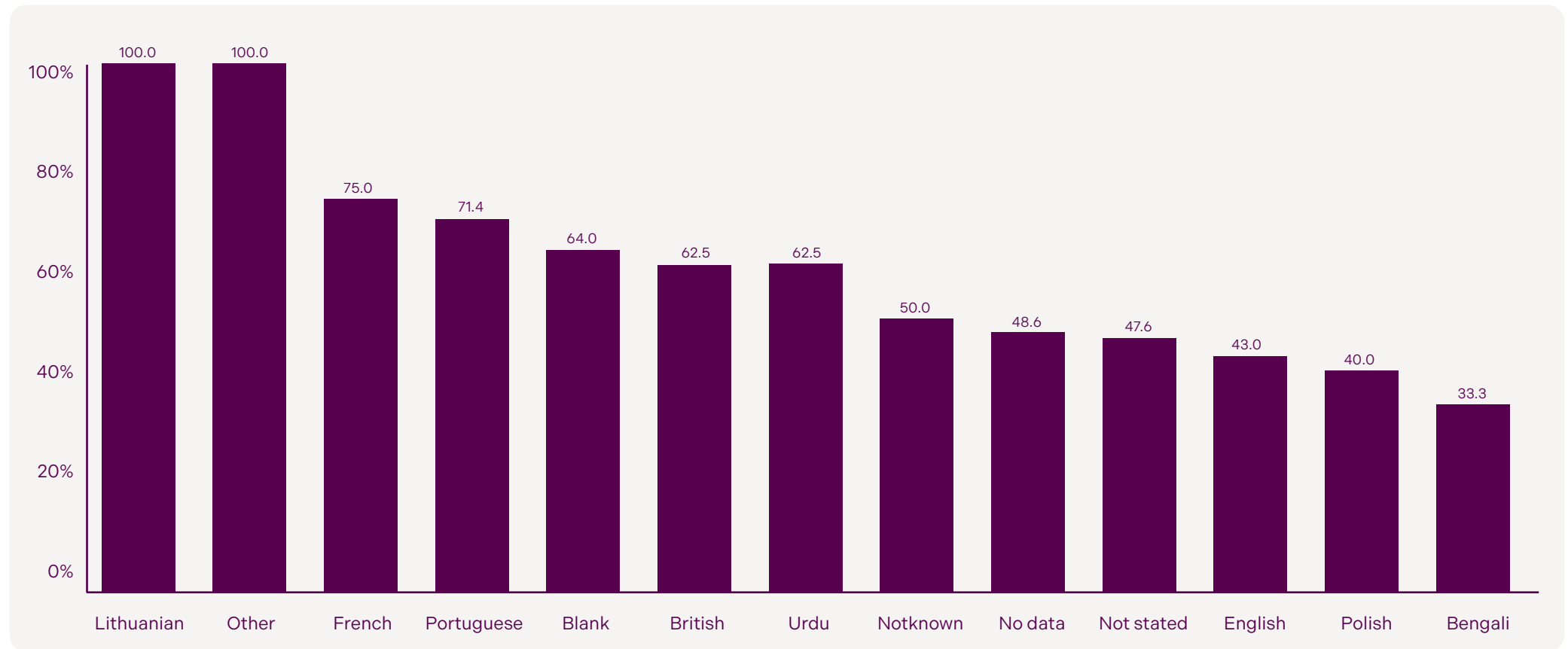
Customers from mixed ethnic origin and black ethnic origin showed higher satisfaction, though the number of complaints from these groups is relatively small.

White customers reported the lowest satisfaction with how their complaints were handled.

Diversity and Inclusion Implications cont'd

All Complaints

Satisfaction with complaints handling by recorded language

Complaints satisfaction by **language**

There is limited data available in respect of language, with nearly half of complainants' language data missing, but those with a primary language of English, Polish or Bengali are less satisfied with complaints handling than customers who speak other languages. We provide translation services and need to do more to understand the preferred language of our customers.

Compliments

We received 128 compliments for colleagues during 24/25 and we really value your feedback. Some of your comments included:

"It is great that someone responds to feedback provided in surveys and tries to get requests actioned."

Community Engagement

"I have just spoken to a very professional, patient, understanding young lady, and I would like you to acknowledge the fact that she is amazing."

Contact Centre

"I just want to thank my new housing officer for making my experience with RBH a great one."

I have recently signed up to a property and the process was so easy. The housing officer was so informative and helpful. The information she told me was so easy to follow and things were done so fast. What an amazing experience."

Neighbourhood Services

"Central heating engineer well mannered, patient and helpful and showed consideration of her visual impairment in helping to explain the thermostat and heating system instructions"

Repairs – Plumbing

"I wanted to say thank you to a RBH employee in income for helping fill forms out and sorting my rent out. I didn't know I had arrears as I was in hospital. The income team and all RBH are welcome at my home there will always be a cup of tea and a chocolate bar waiting."

Income Services

Service Improvement Plan

Our Focus for 2025/26

While we're proud of the progress we've made, we know there's more we can do. In the year ahead, we will continue working hard to improve how we handle complaints and how we learn from them.

We are committed to creating a culture where learning from complaints is at the heart of everything, we do so that we deliver services that you can trust, every time.

Here's what we're focusing on next:

1. Customer Experience Strategy

We have developed a new Customer Experience Strategy, shaped directly by your feedback. It sets out clear promises about how we will listen, learn, and deliver great service every time.



Service Improvement Plan – Our Focus for 2025/26 cont'd

2. Improving complaint handling even further

We will continue to strengthen how we manage complaints by:

- Launching additional colleague training based on the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code to focus on getting Stage 1 complaints right.
- Ensuring we provide clearer updates and final outcomes to customers.
- Improving how we gather and act on learning from every upheld complaint.
- Relaunch our Customer Complaints Panel to redefine roles and responsibilities to ensure that the panel better represents those customers who have greater dissatisfaction. We will ensure our customer are scrutinising our approach to complaint handling and holding us to account.
- Regularly review our complaint performance data to check our approach to complaints handling is aligned to our values.
- Review our complaints section of our website so include info graphics so all customers are aware of our complaint handling process.
- Engage with our customers who we know are underrepresented from our ethnicity data to understand the barriers of engagement and share our complaint handling process.
- Include complaint handling and customer case studies in our colleague induction process to promote a positive complaint handling culture.
- Implementation of new technology to enable us to manage complaints more robustly.



Service Improvement Plan – Our Focus for 2025/26 cont'd

3. A stronger focus on early resolution

We want to solve problems faster, with less stress for customers. That's why we're introducing new early resolution steps meaning we'll aim to put things right before they ever need to become formal complaints and if they do work to get it right first time.

4. Listening at every stage

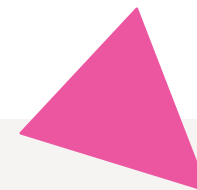
We're investing in better tools to capture real-time feedback from customers after key services, such as repairs, lettings and tenancy visits. Your voice will help us spot trends quickly and act faster.



5. Improving our DIB (Disability, Inclusion and Belonging) data

We know there are gaps in the data we hold about our customers. We will:

- Use the data we collect as part of our Tenancy Audit programme to help us to better understand the experiences of the different demographic groups that make up our customer bases
- Improving how we respond to what our customer data is telling us and take action to ensure our complaints service is accessible
- Triangulate the data from the analysis of the demographics of complainants to ensure the delivery for fair and equitable service delivery
- Actively engage with our customers who are underrepresented through community engagement to ensure their voice is heard and acted on.



Service Improvement Plan – Our Focus for 2025/26 cont'd

6. Working even more closely with customers

We'll be expanding opportunities for customers to shape services, including:

- Customer Insight Panels for complaints and service improvement.
- More customer-led reviews of how we respond to complaints.
- Strengthening our 'You Said, We Did' feedback loops so you can clearly see how your views make a difference.
- Develop more channels for customers to provide feedback so allow customers to decide on how they want to communicate with us
- Use our customer insight data from our census to We will use he insight from our Customer Census to really understand our customers' needs who are under presented.



Complaints Customer Journey Review

Supporting a customer after a house fire

What happened:

After a fire caused significant damage to her home, one of our customers and her family had to move out while extensive repairs were carried out. While temporary accommodation was found, the customer faced challenges including longer school commutes for her children and additional travel costs. She raised concerns about a lack of communication regarding the progress of the repairs.

What we did:

Our Complaints Resolution Officer worked closely with our Neighbourhood Housing Officer, Fire Risk Manager, and Insurance Officer to fully understand the situation. We referred the customer to our Money Matters team for financial support and clarified that delays were due to external contractors managed by our insurance company. We improved communication by setting up regular progress updates and monitored the case to ensure repairs were completed.

What we've changed:

Internally when major repairs are identified we form a working group to work collaboratively to ensure we are aligned in our approach across departments and customers are kept up to date in a timely manner. The customer felt reassured by the regular updates and the additional support we put in place. She provided very positive feedback in the complaints survey, highlighting how improved communication helped reduce her stress during a very difficult time.

Complaints Customer Journey Review

Supporting a customer after a collapsed ceiling

What happened:

Our repairs team visited a customer to add loft insulation as during the installation part of the bedroom ceiling collapsed, leaving debris on the bedroom furniture. Our customer was concerned with the effect the debris would have on her family who already had health issues. The customer felt communication was poor regarding the progress of the repair and the replacement of items affected by the debris.

What we did:

Our Complaints Resolution Officer contacted the customer to gather more information and liaised with various internal teams to understand what had gone wrong. Our repairs team visited the customer and boarded the loft and cleared the debris. We arranged for the repairs to be resolved as a priority. We communicated regularly with the customer and provided redress to replace the broken personal belongings. The customer was happy with the outcome.

What we've changed:

Our contractors have changed how they work and now undertake a thorough review of loft space prior to entering the loft and document any signs of damage and risk to prevent this incident from reoccurring. The customer was very happy with how her complaint was handled and the resolution of her complaint. She was particularly pleased that we have learnt from this complaint and take action to try and prevent this ever happening again.

Find Out More



If you'd like more information on how we handle complaints, you can visit our RBH website or:



Send us a message via our
online **Help Centre**



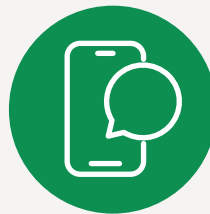
For complaints, email us at
customer.complaints@rbh.org.uk



For compliments, email us at
customer.feedback@rbh.org.uk



Call us on
0800 027 7769



Send us a message on our
social media channels
*(please make sure that your privacy settings
allow us to view your message and respond)*



Write to us
**Unique Enterprise Centre
Belfield Road, Rochdale, OL16 2U**
(postal address only.)