

# Complaints Performance and Service Improvement

# REPORT

2025-26

## The Society of St James

125 Albert Road South  
Southampton  
SO14 3FR

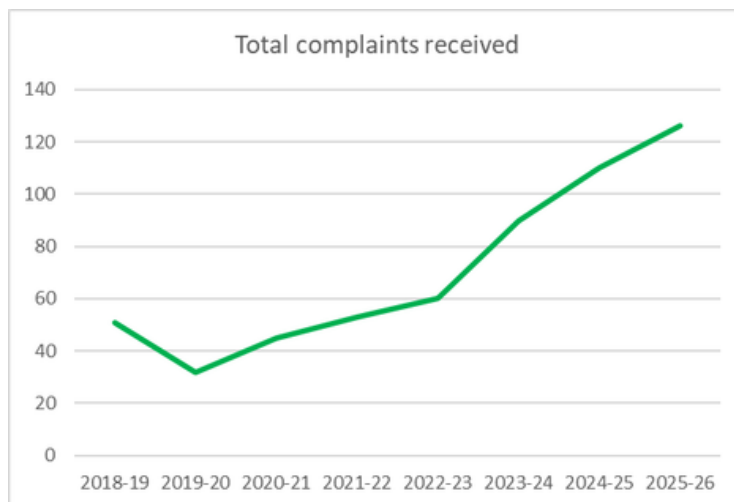
# Complaints Performance & Service Improvement Report 2025-26

Over the last 12 months (April'25 - March'26) we have continued to embed the Complaints Policy and processes into our services. New staff joining SSJ have complaints training as a mandatory part of their induction training. Staff are given guidance on how to spot a complaint and what to do if they receive one. During this training we really emphasise how important it is for people to have an easy way to raise concerns and have their voices heard.

Throughout the year internal Quality Audits look for evidence of visible complaints posters in our services. It's crucial that people know how to make a complaint and any gaps identified are remedied swiftly. Additionally, services with no/low levels of complaints during 2024-25 have been supported to ensure they have visible literature and staff are confident in spotting a complaint.

The introduction of "Contact Cards" has meant staff can take a pro-active approach to managing concerns. The cards have contact information with who to contact (day or night) to ensure callers get a swift response from the appropriate team. Some projects have handed these to neighbours - although these cards are a recent addition, initial feedback from staff has been positive.

## Complaints Received



In 2025-26 we received a total of 126 complaints (118 stage one and 8 stage two). Of the 118 stage one complaints, 2 were not accepted. In these instances, one pertained to a matter where there was no permission to share in place with the complainant and the other was a complaint made to the wrong organisation.

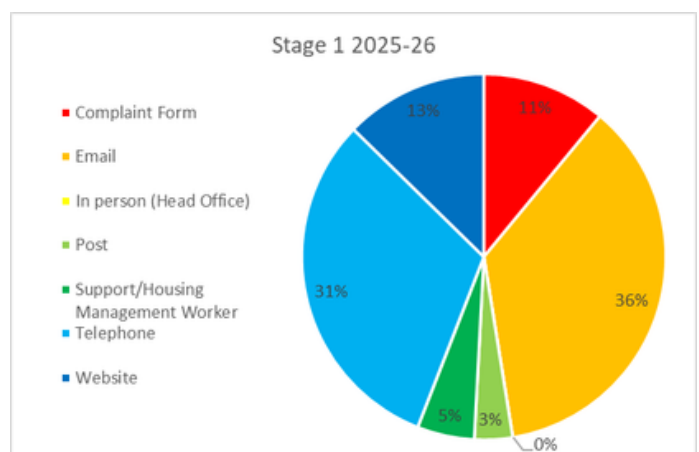
In 2024-25 we received 110 complaints (103 stage one, 6 stage two), meaning we have seen a rise of 14.5% for 2025-26. The addition of a new service (Clayton Court) and continued efforts to increase the visibility and accessibility of our complaints process means a rise in complaints was expected.

This shouldn't necessarily be construed negatively - it demonstrates effective staff training and an effective process for complainants.

We continue to see complainants raise complaints through a variety of mediums. The ability to make a complaint through our website has been popular and seen an increase from 1% of complaints raised via this method last year, to 13% this year.

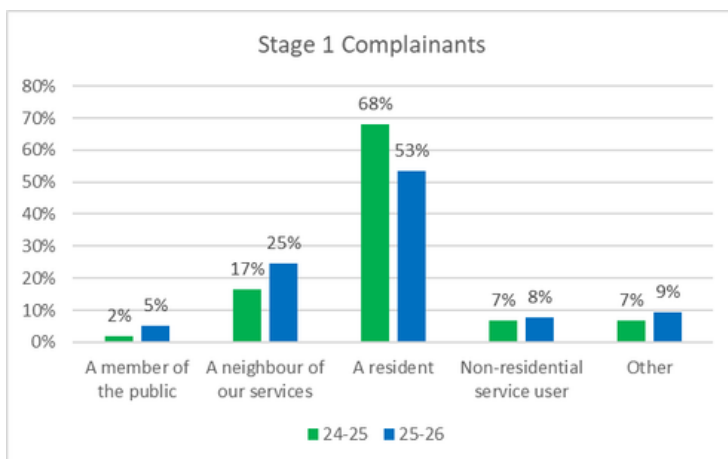
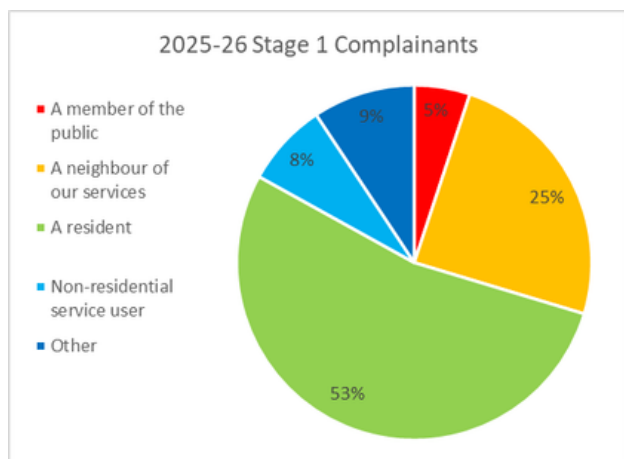
### Stage One Complaints

- Email - 36% (43)
- Telephone - 31% (37)
- Website - 13% (15)
- Complaint Form - 11% (13)
- Support/Housing Management Worker - 5% (6)
- Post - 3% (4)
- In person (Head Office) - 0% (0)



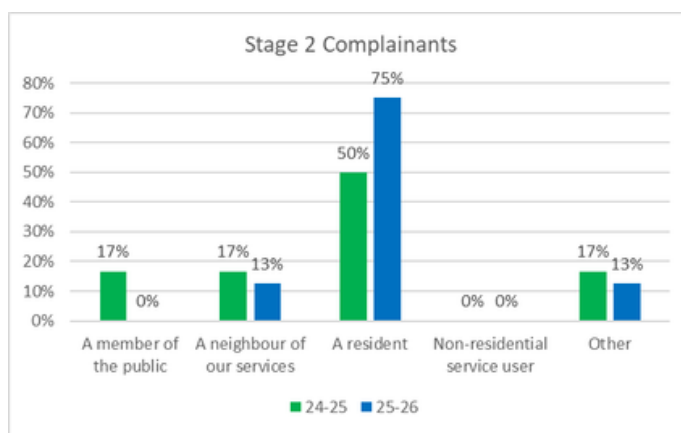
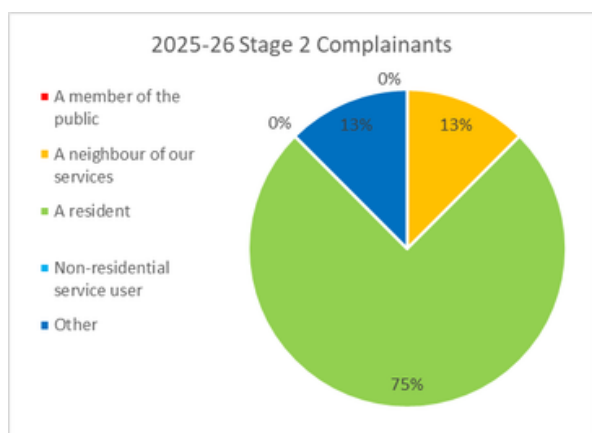
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## Complainants

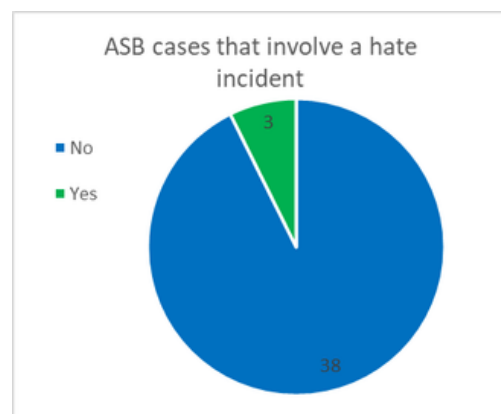
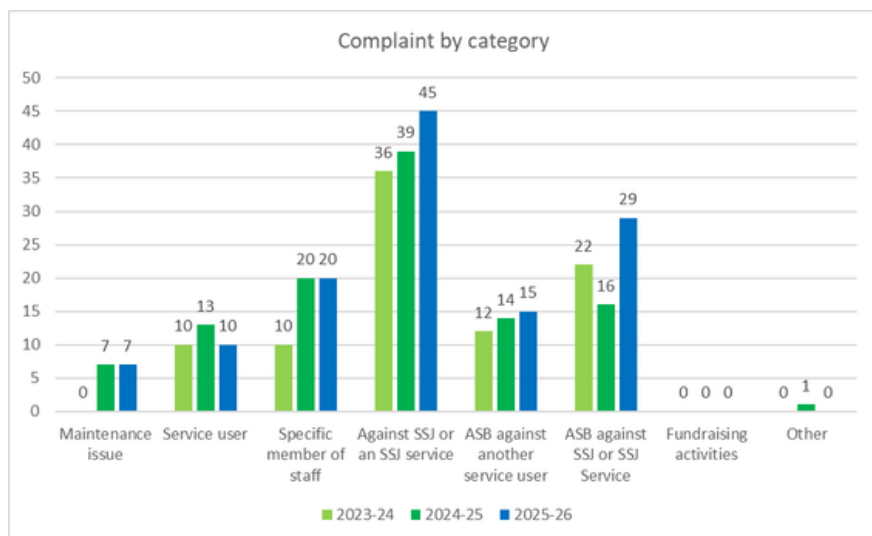


As was the case last year, the majority of complaints were received from residents. At stage one this was 53% and at stage two this was 75%. Complaints from neighbours of our services is the next largest category at stage one (at stage two this is tied with "Other").

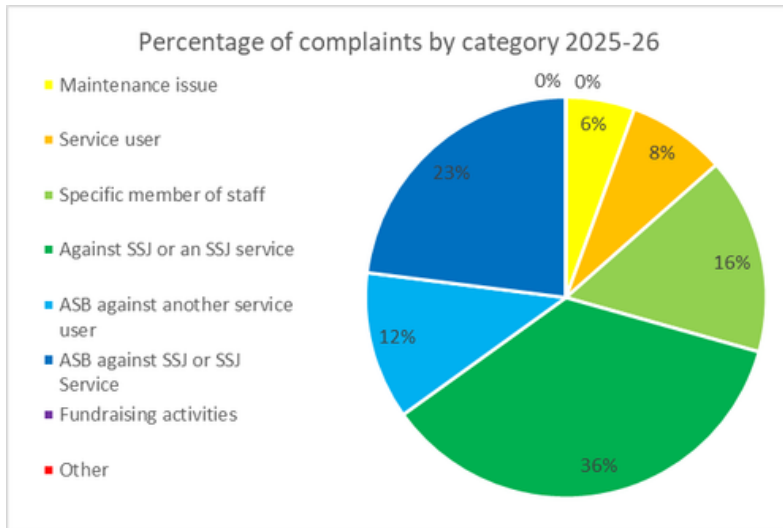
When comparing 2024-25 to 2025-26 the proportion of complaints in each category is broadly similar at stage one. Because there are only 8 stage two complaints, the % breakdown of each category is more easily altered by an individual case. This should be kept in mind when making comparisons.



## Complaint Types



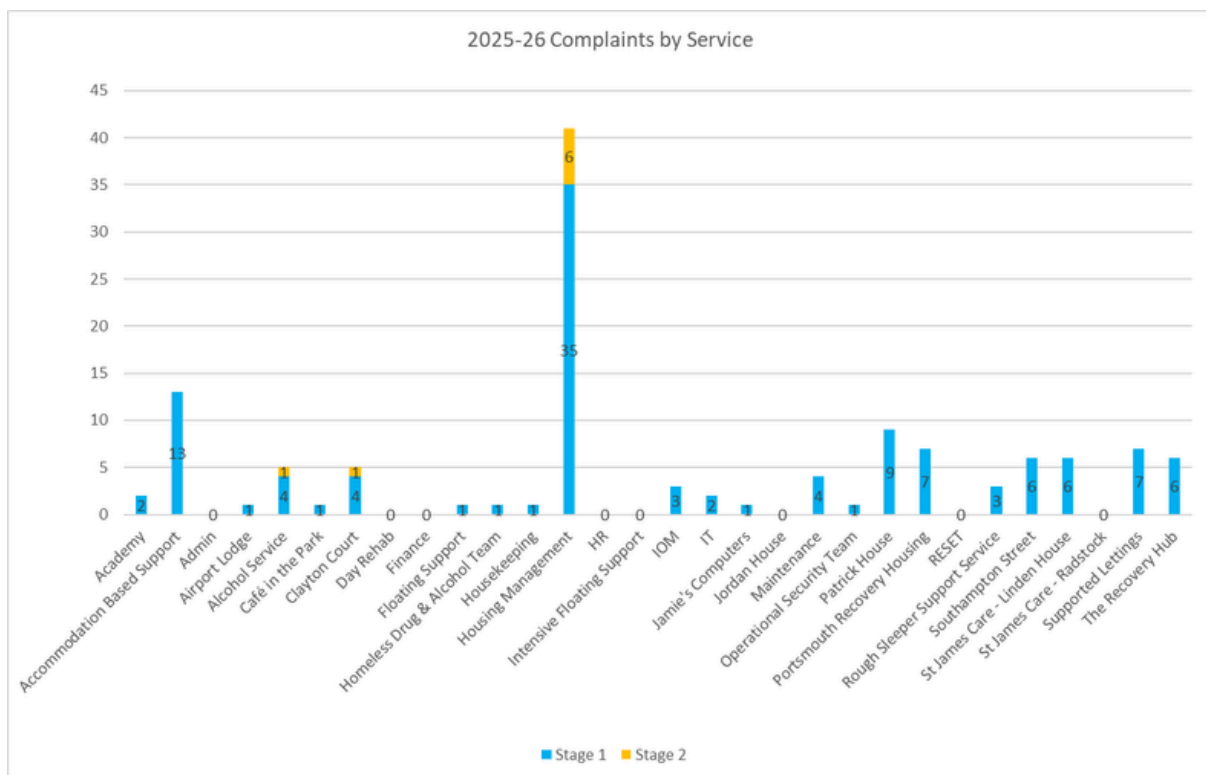
# Complaints Performance & Service Improvement Report 2025-26



Complaints against SSJ or an SSJ service continue to be the largest category of complaint, and levels are broadly similar to those in 2024-25. The most notable change is the increase in complaints of ASB against SSJ or an SSJ Service. This has increased from 15% in 2024-25 to 23% in 2025-26. Maintenance issue complaints have remained at the same level (6%) as last year.

As was the case last year, we received no complaints relating to our fundraising activities.

In 2025-26 35% of complaints related to Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB). Data shows that 63% of complaints relating to ASB were made by neighbours of our services. The remaining 37% were made by residents. Of these ASB complaints, 7% involved a hate incident.



When looking at the complaints received by each SSJ service, Housing Management continues to receive the highest number of complaints (41). This is followed by Accommodation Based Support (13) and Patrick House (9). These are all residential services and guidance of how to make a complaint is displayed at each property. All bar two of our residential projects have received complaints. This again demonstrates that the complaints procedure is available and accessible to residents and people are able to raise concerns should they wish to.

For the services that received no complaints, we will continue to ensure they have visible complaints posters and that staff are confident in how to spot a complaint. Additionally, we will ensure managers are trained in how to investigate them. Training will remain available on an ongoing basis for all members of staff to ensure a positive complaints handling culture remains embedded within SSJ.

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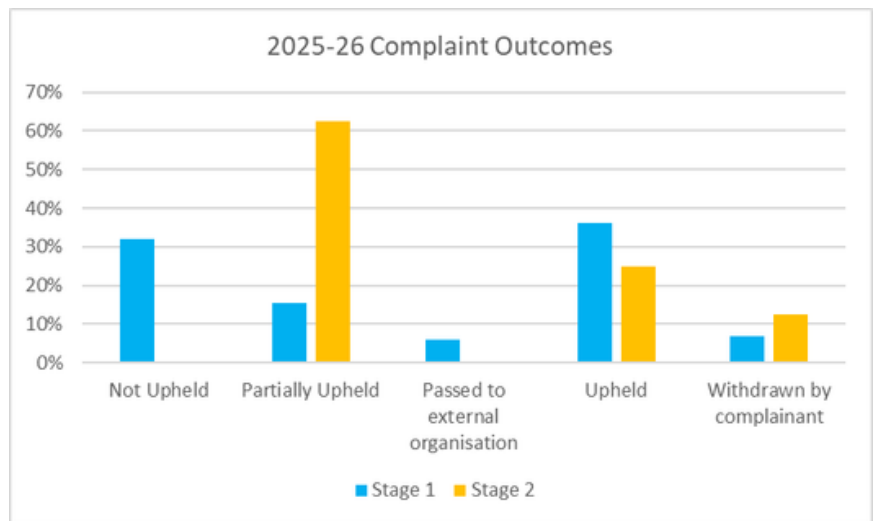
## Complaint Outcomes

### Stage One

Not upheld: 34% (40)  
Partially upheld: 16% (18)  
Passed to external organisation: 6% (7)  
Upheld: 37% (43)  
Withdrawn: 7% (8)

### Stage Two

Not upheld: 0% (0)  
Partially upheld: 63% (5)  
Passed to external organisation: 0% (0)  
Upheld: 25% (2)  
Withdrawn: 13% (1)



*These figures exclude any complaints that were not accepted*

## Complaint Timescales

- On average, stage one and stage two complaints were acknowledged within 2 days of receipt.
- In 2 cases the stage one acknowledgements took over 5 working days. In one instance this was because the complainant requested support through the process and there was a delay in getting confirmation of the member of staff who would be providing this support. In the other instance there was a delay in confirming the investigating manager.
- For 1 stage two complaint the acknowledgement took over 5 working days.
- The average time to conclude a stage one complaint was 15 days. For stage two complaints this was 25 days.
- 69% of stage one complaints were concluded within 10 working days.
- 71% of stage two complaints were concluded within 20 working days.
- Stage one complaints ranged in duration from 0 days to 78 days.
- Stage two complaints ranged in duration from 13 days to 34 days.
- 36% of stage one complaints requiring an extension had one put in place.
- 50% of stage two complaints requiring an extension had one put in place.

*These figures exclude any complaints that were not accepted, or were withdrawn by the complainant.*

The stage one complaint with the longest duration was in part due to difficulties in getting in contact with the complainant.

When looking at why complaints were ongoing beyond the stipulated limits of 10 working days for stage one and 20 working days for stage two, a number of these are because we've been unable to get in contact with the complainant. Other complaints which were over 10 working days in duration were delayed because they fed into other internal processes that needed to be completed before an outcome letter could be sent. Whilst we will always strive to meet the Ombudsman's timescales, operational pressures can sometimes mean that it's not always possible, particularly if there are other matters taking precedence.

We aim to meet the Ombudsman's timescales in all cases and acknowledge this is an area where we need to continue to improve. Staff training will continue and the importance of meeting deadlines is a key element of this training. Additionally, the Complaints Officer and Admin team will continue to monitor progress of live complaints and escalate cases where appropriate.

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## Housing Ombudsman

SSJ has no findings of non-compliance with the Complaints Handling Code by the Housing Ombudsman. The Ombudsman has not published any reports in relation to the work of SSJ.

We have completed the self-assessment form and it is considered we remain compliant with all elements of the Code, subject to the comments made above regarding timescales.

## Learnings

Complaints are a valuable source of information and insight and we will continue to use them as a tool for improvement and learning. Given the proportion of our complaints that relate to Anti-Social Behaviour, we will be looking to review areas where this is occurring, paying particular attention any persistent ASB and ensuring our response to this is robust.

We act on complaints throughout the year and will endeavour to make improvements to our services whenever feedback is received.

### You said, we did:

- “residents are being noisy”: house meetings held, rules reinforced, contact details provided for a fast response out of hours
- “CCTV cameras are not working properly”: new cameras installed
- “staff aren’t always easily identifiable”: staff wear their lanyard and ID badge visibly

## On-going improvements

We will continue to publicise the variety of methods that complaints can be made, but we are pleased to note the good spread of avenues being utilised.

To ensure we are accurately capturing all complaints, we will be ensuring that for the services where no complaints were received, there are visible posters and staff have a sound understanding of complaints training.

## Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC)

### Introduction

The Complaint Handling Code 2024 (‘the Code’) advises (at paragraph 9.7) that the Member Responsible for Complaints (‘MRC’) and the governing body (or equivalent) must receive regular updates on the volume, categories and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance and regular reviews of trends arising from complaint handling.

Accordingly, the MRC has liaised with the Complaints Officer on a regular basis (with catch up meetings in May, August and October 2025 and April 2026) and been provided updates on each of those aspects which has allowed him to monitor SSJ’s complaint handling performance. This has been done having regard to section 9 in particular of the Code, Scrutiny & Oversight. The governing body has therefore had regard to the need to identify any potential systemic issues, serious risks or policies and procedures that require revision in accordance with paragraph 9.4 of the Code.

Further, the MRC and the governing body must receive the annual complaints performance and service improvement report (‘the Annual Report’). That must include (as per paragraph 8.1 of the Code):

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## Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC), continued

- (a) The annual self-assessment against the Code to ensure that the complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements.
- (b) A qualitative and quantitative analysis of the landlord's complaint handling performance – this must also include a summary of the types of complaints the landlord has refused to accept.
- (c) The service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints.

This document constitutes the Board's response which is required by the Code (paragraph 8.2) to be published alongside the Annual Report. Regard has also been had to the Self-Assessment Form 2026 to scrutinise how far SSJ complies with the Code in policy and in practice.

## Assessment of Complaint Handling Performance

The MRC has discussed the Annual Report with the manager responsible for its compilation and sought clarification of some of the items, having regard to the requirements of the Code.

The MRC is satisfied that regular (every 6 months) training of all staff in identifying and handling complaints has been carried out as well as it being ensured that service users and neighbours are informed of the way to complain, including the introduction of contact cards to facilitate complaints from the latter.

The Annual Report helpfully breaks down and analyses the number of complainants by the service complained about and by category, as well as the mode used for making the complaints (under 'Complaints Received'). It also provides numbers as well as percentages. This will assist in taking lessons from the complaints, especially where upheld (53% fully or partially upheld at Stage 1 and 88% for Stage 2), and putting that learning into practice.

It is clear from the Report (under 'Complaints Received') that there has been an increase of about 15% of complaints from the previous year (1 April 2024 - 31 March 2025). However, the number of Stage 2 complaints (8) was still relatively low, although it is noted that all of those were upheld or partially upheld (save for 1 which was withdrawn).

There are a large number of complaints relating to anti-social behaviour, including a large number from neighbours to SSJ's services in relation to this. However, only one stage 2 complaint was from a neighbour, which provides some reassurance in this respect.

On the face of it, it appears that there is room to improve the timescales for dealing with the complaints at both stages and this aspect will be further carefully monitored. However, it should be noted that 69% of stage 1 and 71% of stage 2 complaints were handled within the time limits set out in the Code. Furthermore, those outside those limits included cases where the officers had been unable to get in contact with the complainant and also cases where other internal processes had to be completed before an outcome letter could be sent.

The relatively high number of complaints with respect to Housing Management is not surprising given the nature of those services and is consistent with the previous year. Six of the eight stage 2 complaints related to this service.

## Conclusions

The Board is satisfied that this data does not appear to evidence any decrease in the quality of, or systemic issue in, the services being provided by the Society. Nonetheless, it is important that lessons are drawn given the increase in the percentage of complaints upheld or partially upheld at both stages.

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## Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC), continued

Further, the MRC and the Board are satisfied that there is compliance with the Code in Policy terms. That is clear from the Self-Assessment Form and cross-checking this with the Complaints and Compliments Policy (September 2024). It is also clear when the reason for the exceedance of the time limits for handling some complaints is understood, although this aspect needs to be carefully monitored to understand whether improvement in this respect could be implemented.

The other aspect that needs careful consideration is the high proportion of anti-social behaviour complaints and the MRC intends to investigate what further steps can be taken with regard to that issue.

5 May 2026