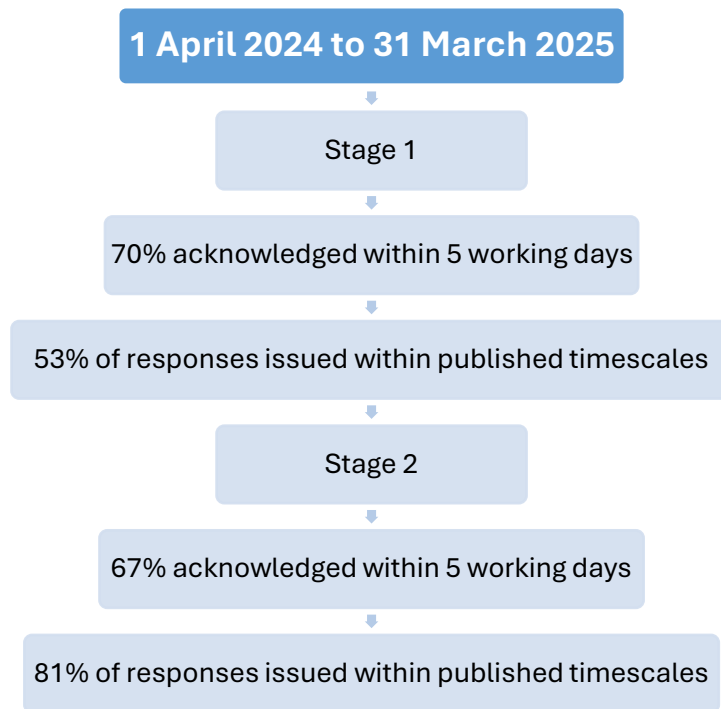


Schedule 2 – Council Wide Complaint Handling Performance

1. The LGSCO's guidance on effective complaint handling provides a best practice framework for how councils should manage complaints and emphasises core principles such as fairness, transparency, accountability and continuous learning.
2. The guidance states that an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge should be produced which should include:
 - a. an annual self-assessment against the LGSCO Code to ensure its complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements.
 - b. a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the organisation's complaint handling performance. This should also include a summary of the types of complaints the organisation has refused to accept;
 - c. any findings of non-compliance with the LGSCO Code;
 - d. the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints;
 - e. the annual letter about the organisation's performance from the Ombudsman; and
 - f. any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the organisation.

Summary Analysis of Council Wide Complaint Handling Performance

3. Housing complaints are reported separately per HOS requirements (see Schedule 1) but are also counted in overall Council complaints figures.
4. It should be appreciated that the LGSCO also considers housing-related complaints, particularly when they involve broader council functions such as housing allocations, homelessness, and housing benefit. As such, housing complaints may fall under the jurisdiction of either the LGSCO or the HOS, depending on the nature of the issue. It is therefore important to review housing-related complaints alongside wider council complaints performance to ensure a comprehensive understanding of service delivery and areas that may require attention.



5. In 2024–2025, 283 complaints were received—a 55% rise from the 183 in 2023–2024—reflecting greater service demand and more customer concerns needing resolution.
6. Table 3 shows the number of complaints received at each stage and the percentage increase compared to 2023-24.

Table 3: Breakdown of complaints 2024/25 and fluctuation since 2023/24

	2023-24	2024-25
Service Request	24	63 - 163% increase
Stage 1	119	177 - 49% increase
Stage 2	40	43 - 8% increase
LGSCO	13	17
HOS	4	14

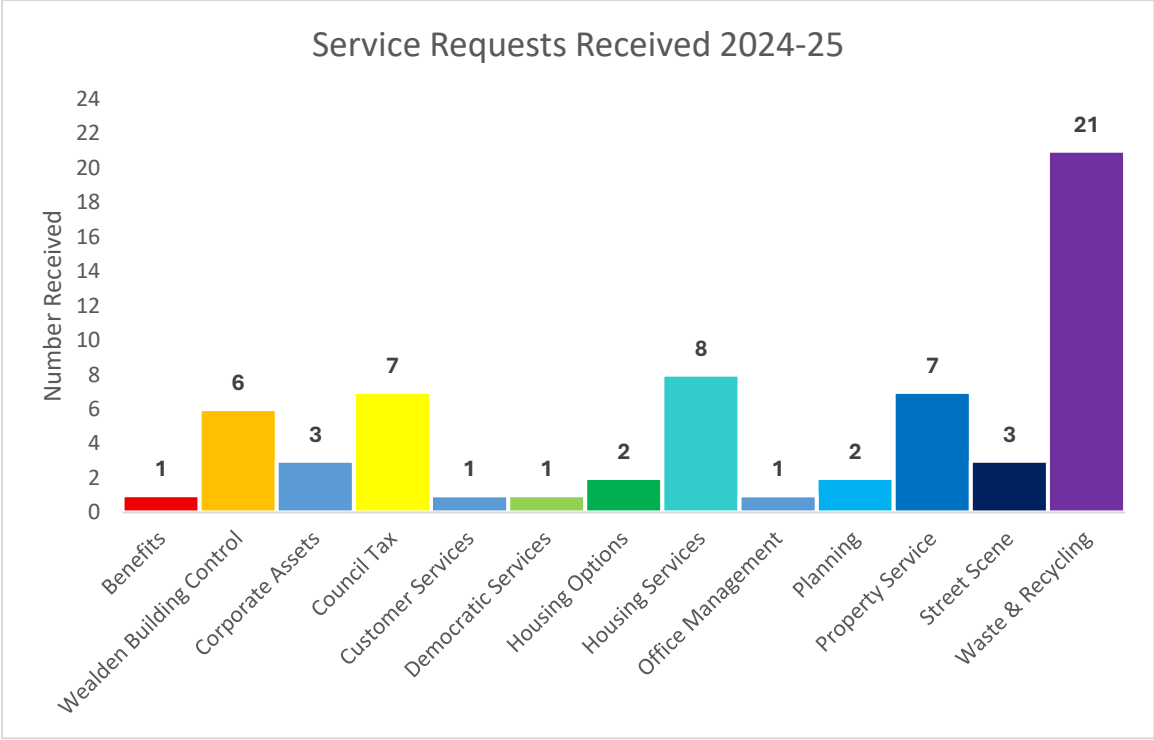
7. A full breakdown of complaints received and performance metrics can be found at Appendix E.

Service Requests

8. Service requests increased from 24 in 2023–2024 to 63 in 2024–2025, as detailed in Table 4. This highlights more customer engagement and the need to clearly distinguish between service requests and complaints for timely resolution. Reviewing

response effectiveness, only one service request was escalated to Stage 1, indicating that 98.5% of issues were resolved informally.

Table 4: Service Requests Received 2024-25



- 9. Service requests are sometimes received directly by individual service areas, which may result in variations in how these requests are recorded, tracked, and addressed.
- 10. To enhance the management of service requests and promote a consistent approach throughout the organisation, a standardised process will be introduced. This includes implementing a centralised logging system, establishing clear guidance and definitions to differentiate between service requests and complaints, and providing staff training to support uniform handling and documentation.

Stage 1

- 11. In 2024–2025, 177 Stage 1 complaints were received, an 11% increase from 159 last year. Reduced staffing levels made it harder to manage this rise and respond quickly and effectively.
- 12. Service Area Breakdown: Table 5 shows complaint numbers per service area and percentage changes from 2023–24. Some complaints involved multiple areas, stressing the need for coordinated responses.

Table 5: No. of Complaints by Stage per Department including % increase on previous year

Department	Service Request	Stage 1	Stage 2	LGSCO	HOS
Benefits	1	3 (40% decrease)	2	-	-
Wealden Building Control	6	5 (25% increase)	0	-	-
Corporate Assets	3	1 (No change)	0	-	-
Council Tax *	7	38 (100% increase)	6 (20% increase)	1	-
Democratic Services	1	1	1	-	-
Electoral Services	-	1	1	-	-
Environmental Health	-	5 (25% increase)	2 (50% increase)	4	-
Housing Options	2	21 (No change)	4 (50% decrease)	2	1
Human Resources	-	2		-	-
Tenancy & Estates Service	8	51 (76% increase)	16 (129% increase)	-	10
ICT/Digital	-	2	-	-	-
Information Governance	-	2 (50% increase)	2	-	-
Planning	2	22 (8% increase)	8 (11% decrease)	10	-
PR & Communication	-	2	-	-	-
Property Services	7	26 (21% decrease)	8 (50% increase)	-	3
Street Scene	3	1	-	-	-
Waste & Recycling	21	4 (No change)	0	-	-
Customer Services	1	-	-	-	-

Note:

* The rise in Council Tax complaints were attributable to the Direct Debit issue over the holiday period, all of which were resolved at stage 1.

Several complaints involved multiple service areas (such as housing and customer services), indicating the need for coordinated resolution.

13. During the Review Period, there was a significant increase in both service requests and formal complaints received across various service areas. This trend indicates greater customer engagement with the complaints process, which may be attributed to higher expectations, increased demand on services, or improved awareness of the right to submit complaints.
14. While complaint volumes have remained stable or decreased in certain service areas, increases were observed in Council Tax, Tenancy & Estates Service, and Planning. Despite the associated pressures and capacity challenges, many complaints continued to be addressed at Stage 1, and several departments demonstrated enhanced rates of early resolution.
15. Chart 5 in Appendix E details the types of service issues raised by our customers.
16. A total of 233 service-related complaints were documented across all departments. These were classified into five principal categories, with Poor Standard of Service and Lack of Action being the most common (See Table 6).

Table 6: Category of complaint and percentage breakdown.

Complaint Type	Total Complaints	Percentage of Total
Action	16	7.2%
Lack of Action	70	31.4%
Lack of Communication	17	7.6%
Poor Standard of Service	125	56.1%
Staff Manner / Attitude	5	2.2%

17. Complaints often overlap, as individual complaints can involve multiple service areas or issues. Therefore, one complaint may be listed under several categories to accurately represent all concerns.
18. Chart 6 in Appendix E shows how complaints were resolved by service area, with outcomes categorised.

Table 7: Complaint findings and analysis of categories.

Finding	Number	% of Total
Not Upheld	153	69.6%
Partially Upheld	22	10%
Upheld	45	20.4%
Gesture of Goodwill	8	

19. The majority of complaints (69.6%) were not upheld.
20. In a third of complaints there was a finding of upheld/ partially upheld which resulted in an acknowledgment and action for service improvement—demonstrating a commitment to learning, as discussed in Section D.
21. Gestures of goodwill were extended in 3.6% of cases often where the complaint did not meet the threshold for being upheld, but the customer experience warranted a conciliatory response.
22. Most resolved complaints focused on Tenancy & Estates Service, Council Tax, and Property Services, which aligns with previous assessments and highlights areas of ongoing attention.
23. The Council welcomes all feedback and ensures only a small number of complaints are declined - 17 in total. 11 of these related to housing complaints (see Schedule 1). The remaining 6 did not meet the criteria in the Complaints Procedure. In all cases, clear explanations and supportive guidance was provided, reinforcing transparency and a customer-focused approach.

Stage 2

24. All 43 requests for escalation to Stage 2 were reviewed as per policy. 1 Stage 1 investigation was changed from not upheld to partially upheld.
25. Complaints increased by 11% in 2024/25, yet 75.7% were resolved at Stage 1. Only 24% advanced to Stage 2, down from 25% the previous year. This suggests more effective Stage 1 resolution despite higher complaint numbers.