



Complaints, Compliments and Concerns Annual Report

1 April 2024 - 31 March 2025



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THE GIFT OF FEEDBACK

Brunelcare is committed to continuously improving the quality of services it provides by understanding the experiences of people accessing those services. The Board of Brunelcare recognises that in order to continue to make improvements, it is essential to encourage, value, engage with and learn from all types of feedback.

The Charity has a learning culture and a strong commitment to putting things right when a need for improvement has been identified. This is done by acknowledging any mistakes and assessing the need for change, whether that be a review of any relevant procedures or addressing training requirements for employees that have been identified as part of the complaints process.

THE GIFT OF FEEDBACK

In September 2021, we established the role of Complaints Officer in order to provide our customers with a neutral contact and to support our customers to voice their opinions - for example helping tenants access advocacy services, helping tenants formulate and submit their complaint and offering communication in different formats and languages.

Our Complaints Officer oversees the complaints process and ensures that complaints and concerns are reviewed, resolved and learnt from. The Board's Performance, Quality and Experience Committee review trends and compliance with the key performance measures set out in our Managing Comments, Concerns, Complaints and Compliments Policy on a quarterly basis.

Brunelcare takes the approach that complaints, concerns and compliments raised are gifts. Without feedback from our customers, we have fewer opportunities to develop as an organisation and as individuals.

To continue to develop Brunelcare's process in line with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, our policy and process for handling complaints was reviewed in the summer of 2024. As a result, an updated Managing Comments, Concerns, Complaints and Compliments Policy was agreed by the Board in September 2024.

Brunelcare's website provides clear and accessible information for our customers on our complaints process, how to raise a complaint, and how to provide feedback. This information can be found at our Contact Us page.

Brunelcare's Complaints Officer provides briefings and training on the updated Complaints Policy and Procedure to colleagues across Brunelcare's services, and new colleagues are provided with an overview of the complaints process on joining the Charity.

OUR POLICY AND PROCEDURE

We created materials like posters and leaflets to highlight that Brunelcare values complaints, and to help raise awareness with tenants on how to complain, where to get help making a complaint and what they can expect from the process.

Complaints, concerns and compliments are reported to the Senior Leadership Team and the Performance, Quality and Experience (PQ&E) Committee on a quarterly basis. The full Board is provided with complaints information through the PQ&E Committee Chair's assurance report to the Board.

Phil Hope, Trustee and Senior Independent Director (SID), is the Trustee Lead for Speaking Up and Complaints.

OUR POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Our Policy states that colleagues will be:

- Empowered and trained to deal with concerns as they arise with the aim of resolving issues immediately. This training will be provided during their induction period;
- Trained to recognise the seriousness of a concern and understand when it should be referred to more senior members of staff;
- Trained and encouraged to provide appropriate information on advice and advocacy support at Stage 1 of the process. However, it is recognised that they may not have (nor could they be expected to) have the breadth of knowledge of all organisations for all types of help available, particularly when operating in a specialist field themselves. Nevertheless, a housing officer, for example, should be sufficiently knowledgeable to advise a complainant with a housing complaint about the services of organisations such as Shelter.

Definitions



Complaints

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction (written or verbal), about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by Brunelcare, its employees, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual customer or group of customers



Compliments

Brunelcare recognises that compliments are also a valuable source of feedback. Positive feedback received regarding services can provide an opportunity to acknowledge improvements and successes, to recognise good practise, and to apply this across other areas.



Service requests

A service request is defined as a request from a customer that requires action to be taken to put something right. It will usually be the first time we have been contacted about an issue and have not previously had the opportunity to investigate the concerns and agree what action we will take to resolve the issue.



Concerns

Concerns are defined as issues which may require further enquiry, advice or information in order to resolve them, usually within 48 hours. These are best dealt with by the service in which the concern originated. When a concern is raised which cannot be satisfactorily resolved without an investigation, then it is to be processed as a complaint.

THE COMPLAINTS PROCESS

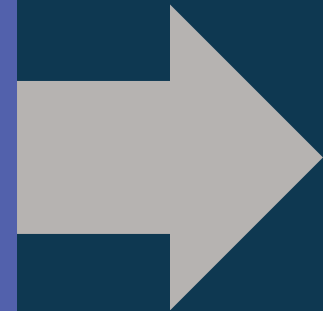
Brunelcare is committed to making its complaints procedure as easily accessible as possible. We recognise that some customers may find it difficult to engage with the complaints process and explain their concerns. We will:

- Offer advice and support to customers to ensure that the complaints process is fully accessible to customers.
- Consider all requests for reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010 and will implement adjustments where it is practicable to do so.
- Share information in a way that meets the customers' individual needs.

The complaints process

Frontline Resolution

We encourage all our staff to deal with issues or concerns at the earliest opportunity to avoid necessary stress for our customers and to ensure the issue is dealt with efficiently and effectively. This is part of frontline service delivery. However, there will be matters that cannot be addressed quickly and will need a full investigation.



Stage 1

'Investigate once, investigate well' is the principle for this stage of the process. An investigation aims to establish all the facts relevant to the points made in the complaint and to give the complainant a full, objective and proportionate response that represents Brunelcare's final position.

All Stage 1 complaints will be:

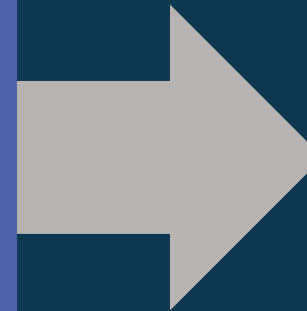
- Formally acknowledged in writing by the Complaints Officer as soon as is possible, within a maximum of five working days, but we always aim for three.
- Responded to within 10 working days of the date of acknowledgement. Where a longer time is needed, the complainant will be advised of the reasons for this.

The complaints process

Stage 2

If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction at stage 1 it will be progressed to stage 2.

Stage 2 complaints will be investigated by a senior independent officer and be responded to within 20 working days.

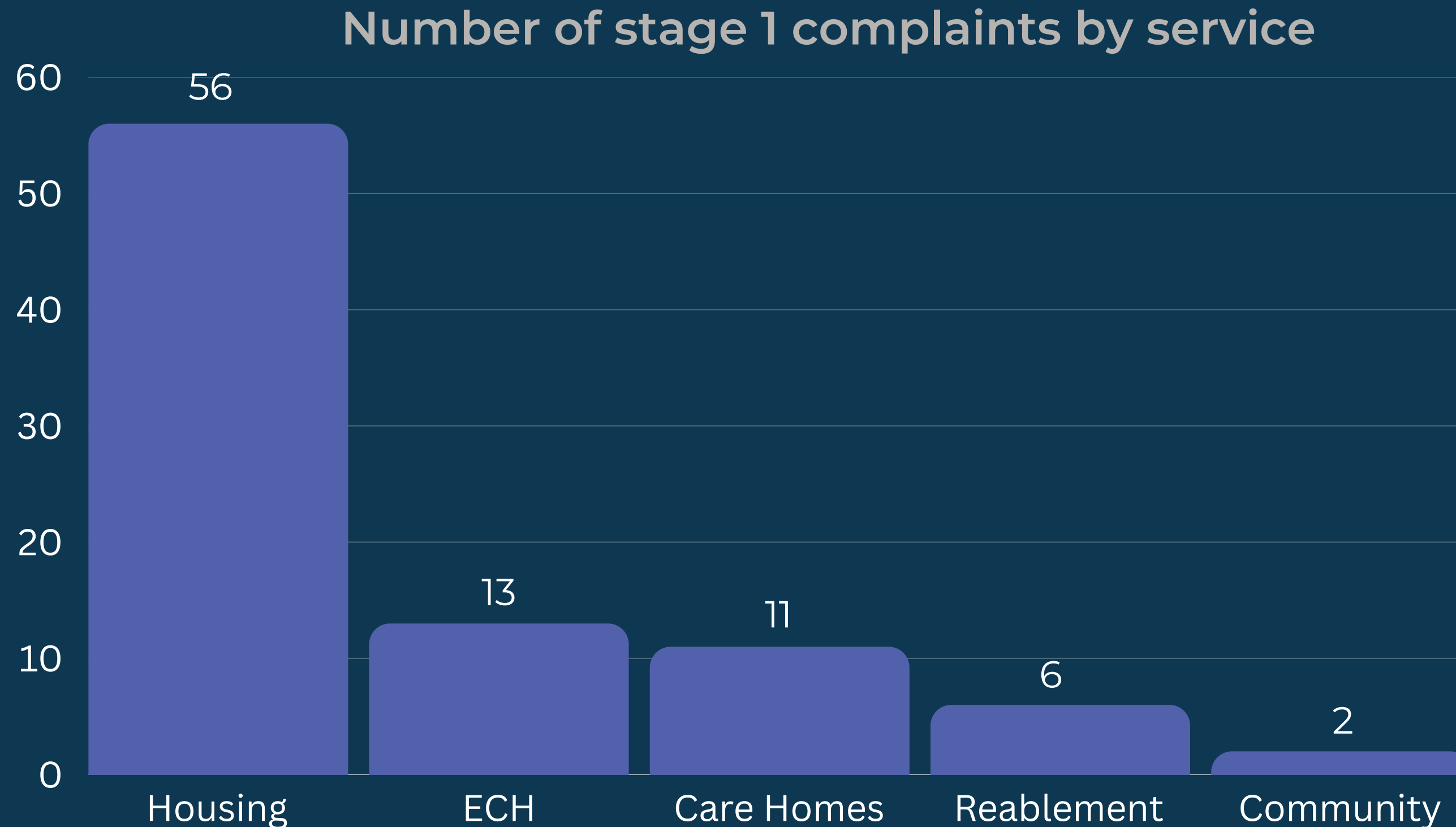


Ombudsman

Complainants have the right to raise concerns with the relevant ombudsman:

- Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
- Housing Ombudsman
- Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman

Number of complaints received

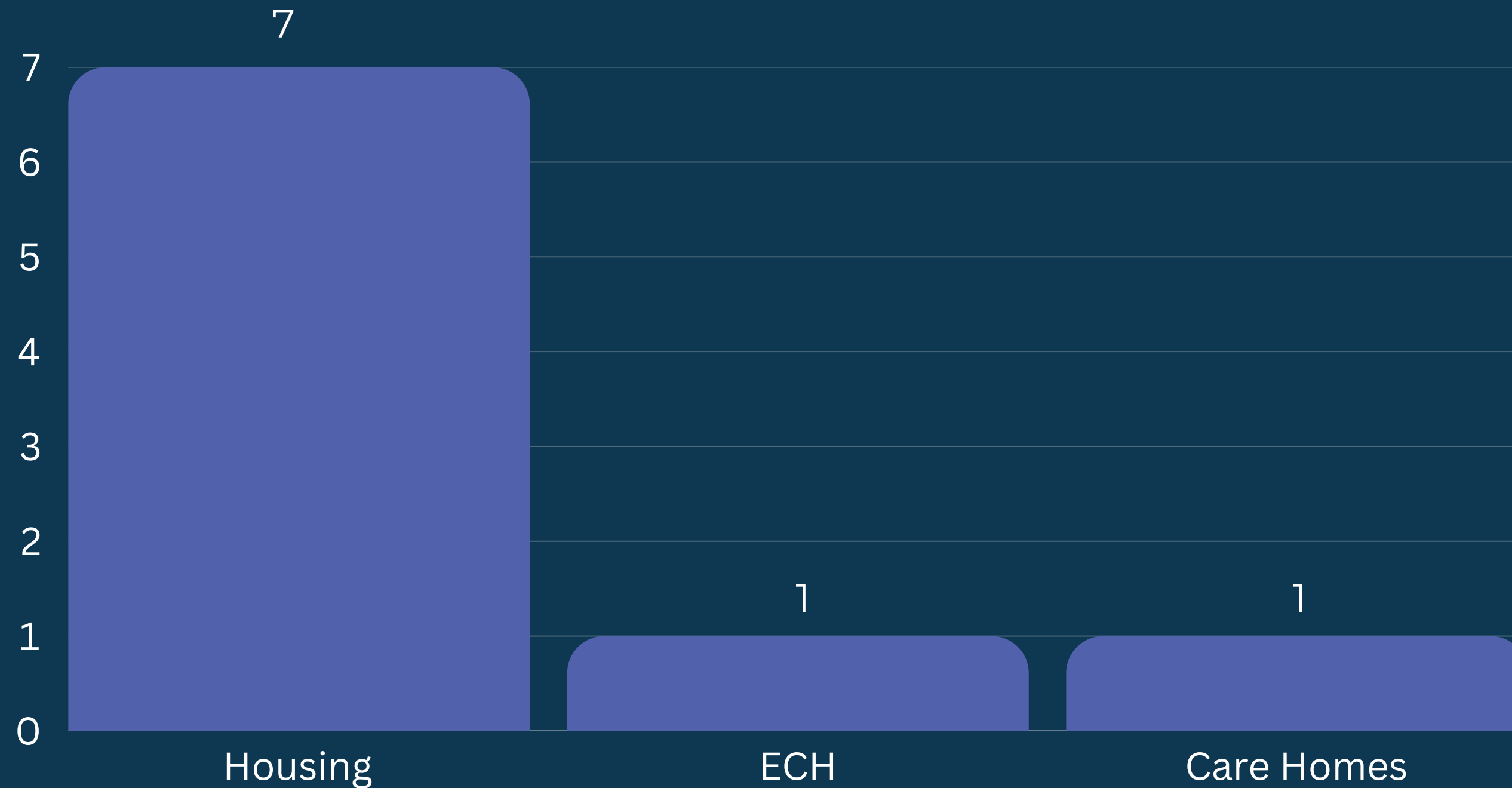


Between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025, 88 Stage 1 complaints were received.

Any issues related to Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) were dealt with by the Housing Team under the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and not reported as a complaint. Only where a complainant was unhappy with Brunelcare's handling of the ASB issue or where they felt the issue had not been dealt with appropriately was it considered as a complaint.

Number of complaints received

Number of stage 2 complaints by service



In the same period, 9 Stage 2 complaints were received.

Brunelcare has 916 housing units (this includes sheltered housing, general needs, shared ownership and leasehold properties), and on average we received:



- ➔ 0.061 stage 1 complaints per household
- ➔ 0.008 stage 2 complaints per household
- ➔ 1 x stage 1 complaint for every 16.4 households
- ➔ 1 x stage 2 complaint for every 130.9 households

Please note this is different from our reported Tenancy Satisfaction Measures for 2024-25 as the above figures include leaseholders, shared ownership and market rent properties.

**Brunelcare has 290 Extra Care Housing units,
and on average we received:**

- ➔ 0.045 Stage 1 complaints per household
- ➔ 0.003 Stage 2 complaints per household
- ➔ 1 x Stage 1 complaint for every 22.31 households
- ➔ 1 x Stage 2 complaint for every 290 households



Please note this is different from our reported Tenancy Satisfaction Measures for 2024-25 as the above figures include leaseholders, shared ownership and market rent properties.

Brunelcare has 320 care home places and on average we received:

- ➔ 0.034 Stage 1 complaints per place
- ➔ 0.003 Stage 2 complaints per place
- ➔ 1 x Stage 1 complaint for every 29 places
- ➔ 1 x Stage 2 complaint for every 320 places



Community Services in South Gloucestershire and Somerset provide a service to approximately 300 people in their own homes. We received:

- ➔ 0.06 Stage 1 complaints per client
- ➔ 1 x Stage 1 complaint for every 150 clients
- ➔ 0 Stage 2 complaints were received relating to community services



Brunelcare has 64 reablement places and on average we received:

- ➔ 0.09 complaints per place
- ➔ 1 x Stage 1 complaint for every 10.7 places
- ➔ 0 Stage 2 complaints were received relating to reablement services



Due to the nature of reablement services there is a high turnover of guests with a stay of up to 6 weeks depending on individual need. The figures above are based on the number of beds and includes 16 places where reablement is delivered in people's homes by South Gloucestershire Community Services.

How we received complaints

So that our customers can raise an issue with us easily and quickly, we have a number of mechanisms in place by which they can contact us to raise a concern or make a complaint.

Between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025 we received:



61 complaints by email either direct to a colleague or via our complaints or feedback email boxes



9 complaints by telephone



6 complaints by letter



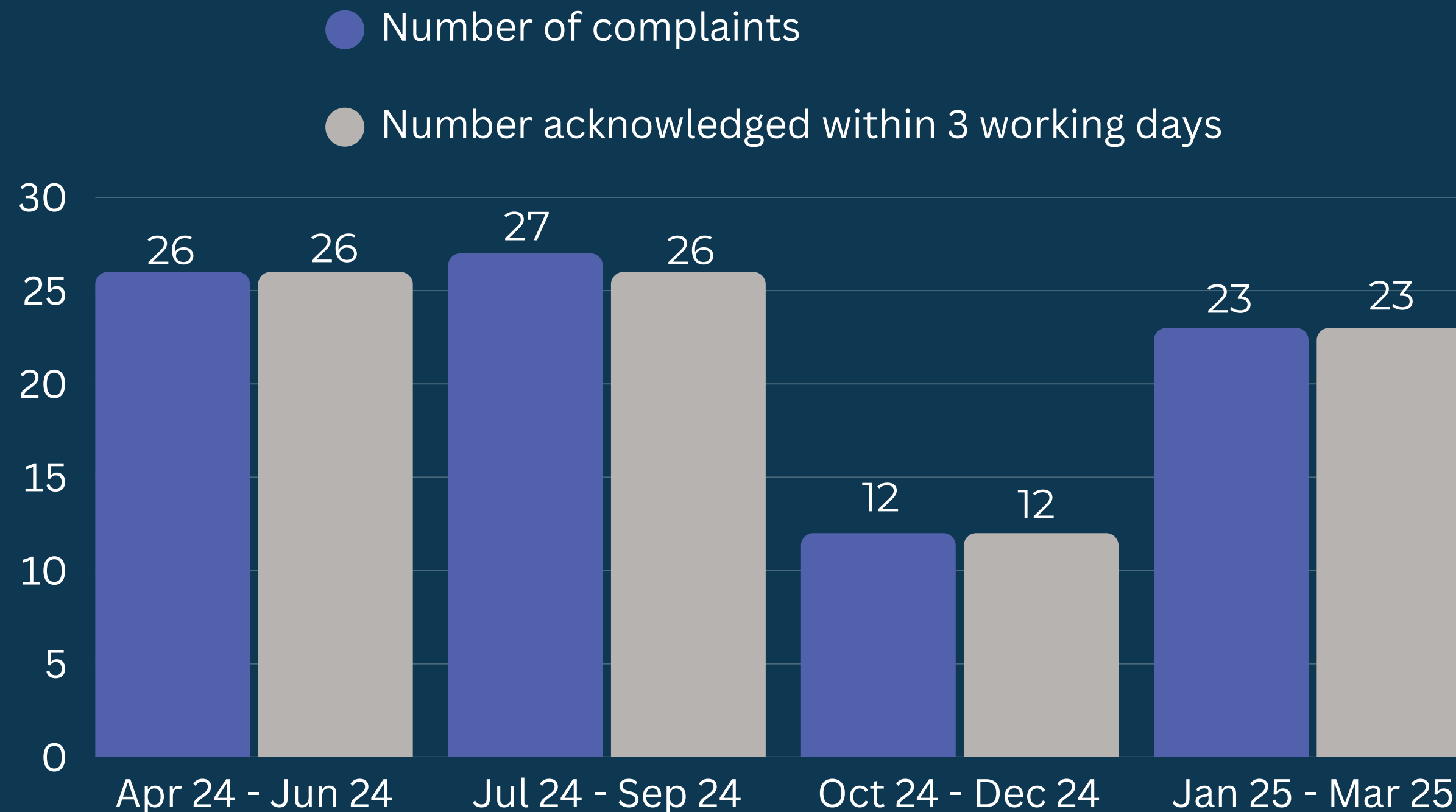
12 complaints were raised in person



0 complaints were made via social media

How quickly do we acknowledge complaints?

Number of complaints acknowledged within 3 working days

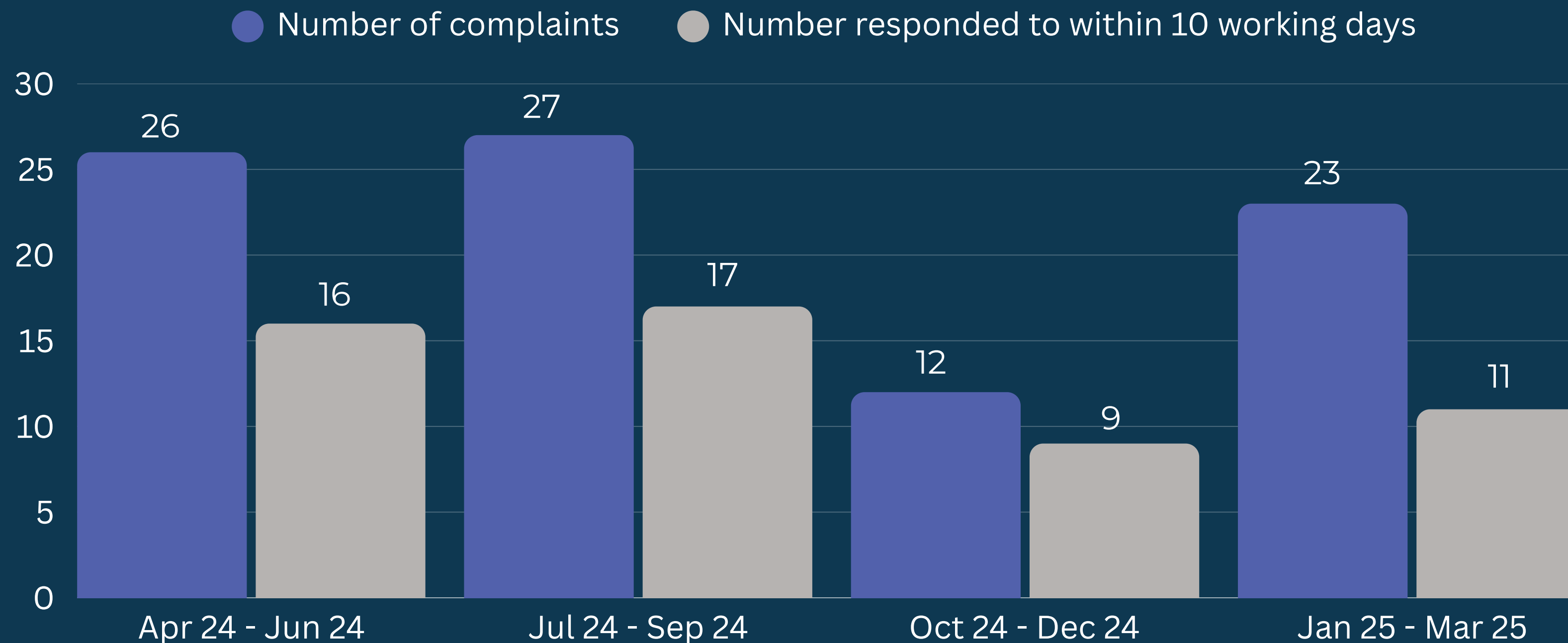


Brunelcare's policy states that complaints will be acknowledged within 3 working days of receipt.

Of the 88 Stage 1 complaints received, 87 (99%) were acknowledged within 3 working days. One complaint was acknowledged within 4 working days.

How quickly do we resolve complaints?

Number of complaints responded to within 10 working days



Of the 88 Stage 1 complaints received, 53 (60%) were responded to within 10 working days.

This is a deadline that colleagues found difficult to meet due to a range of issues, including:

- The complexities of the complaint required more time to fully investigate
- Extension for a meeting or other relevant event to take place
- Annual leave/bank holiday required an extension to complete the complaint

Brunelcare's Complaints Officer will continue to work with colleagues to support improved compliance with response deadlines. Where we are unable to meet deadlines, the Complaints Officer will ensure that the complainant is kept up to date with progress and an extension is agreed with the complainant, where possible.

What were the outcomes of complaints?

Of the 88 stage 1 complaints received:

79

were resolved at stage 1

9

were escalated to Stage 2

3

were further escalated to the Housing or Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

During the year, 9 complaints were escalated to stage 2:

- **7 housing complaints**
- **1 ECH complaint**
- **1 care home complaint**

Housing Stage 2 complaints included 3 complaints about communication between residents and Brunelcare, 1 related to repairs and maintenance, 1 regarding Brunelcare's grounds maintenance service, 1 related to a resident's contract terms and 1 concerning Brunelcare's eviction process. 1 Stage 2 housing complaint was upheld and 1 partially upheld.

1 ECH Stage 2 complaint related to the care provided to a resident and the cost of this service. This complaint was partially upheld.

1 care home Stage 2 complaint concerned employee behaviour. This was not upheld.

All Stage 2 complaints were fully investigated by an investigating officer independent of the original complaint.

Of the 3 complaints raised with the Ombudsman:

1 involved quality of care for a relative with complex needs, this was not investigated by the Ombudsman.

1 involved a group of residents who believed that Brunelcare had miscalculated fuel costs which meant they had been overcharged for the amount of energy they used. Information was provided to the Ombudsman on in September 2024 and the Ombudsman's investigation is awaited.

1 involved damp and mould, leaks and pest control within a resident's property. Information was sent to the Ombudsman in August 2024, with further updates provided. This awaits Ombudsman investigation.

Issues raised in complaints, learning and improvement

	2023 - 24	Percent	2024 - 25	Percent	Difference
Quality of Service	36	46%	47	54%	+11
Quality of Care	7	9%	16	20%	+9
Financial	13	16%	5	6%	-8
Communication	7	9%	10	11%	+3
Staff Behaviour	16	20%	10	11%	-6
Total	79		88		+9

Quality of service is the largest category and covers a wide range of issues across all services such as gardening and repairs.

Brunelcare recognises that whilst steps should be taken to ensure customers do not need to complain, an increase in the overall number of complaints can be seen a positive, and may mean that more people are aware of Brunelcare’s complaints process, how to complain, and feel comfortable to complain.

Brunelcare uses any comments, concerns, complaints and compliments received to:

- Identify what is working well through compliment trends and share good practice.
- Help identify potential service problems through trends in concerns raised, acting as an early warning system.
- Highlight potential system failure and or human error to identify need for improvement.
- Provide the information required to review services and procedures effectively, responding to requests for customer experience data for service reviews/evaluations.

Case Study 1: Housing

Situation

A resident's family member complained that the emergency pull cord in her mother's property had not been working for at least 4 months.

Outcome

It was confirmed that pull cords at the service were not working, however all residents had been informed and were given a pendant in replacement whilst a replacement pull cord system was found.

By 2027 the government has committed to a digital switchover, following which older analogue systems will no longer be available. Considering this Brunelcare undertook a review of pull cord systems across its housing sites and agreed to install a digital tablet called Alert-a-call. This roll-out was completed in April 2025. This new system will improve resident safety by allowing two-way engagement with customers, a call-back service and a button which allows customers to confirm they are 'OK each day'.

Case study 2: Housing

Situation

Residents expressed their concern about the frequency of unwanted fire alarms triggered on their site, which can be disruptive, especially at night, and take several hours before they can be reset. Alongside this, the smoke vents open automatically when an alarm goes off but are not closed afterwards, allowing heat to leave the building.

Outcome

Residents were informed of Brunelcare's system to monitor unwanted alarms and offer support to any resident who sets the alarms off regularly. It was discovered that smoke vents were not always being closed following an alarm due to a limited number of employees having been trained in closing the vents. A programme of training was arranged so that sufficient employees had the skills to close the vents during each shift.

Case study 3: ECH

Situation

A relative complained that when the lift was not working their family member was unable to leave their flat without the help of a carer and that this had affected their quality of life.

Outcome

An apology was provided. A meeting was held to discuss issues raised due to the lift not working and meals were provided to residents of flats who were affected. A stair lift was installed at the site as a backup. A full refurbishment of the lift has now been implemented.

Case study 4: Care Homes

Situation

A relative was not happy that small items like dentures and hearing aids were going missing from time to time. Even though a tracking chart had been introduced, this had not prevented the losses. It was becoming expensive for the family to replace them each time.

Outcome

Small items are easily mislaid and the chart was put in place to spot that something was missing at the earliest opportunity so that a search could have greater success. Carers were also given more awareness training and asked to check the bins before they were emptied and check plates/trays/tables before they were cleared after a meal. When a complaint is made, the manager meets with the family to ensure the proposed solution meets the needs of the individual resident. Care plans are updated.

Compliments received



275

Compliments about the services provided by Brunelcare are received every week, some verbally, some in cards and letters, some by email or via surveys and feedback on other websites. In 2024-25, 275 compliments were shared centrally so that Brunelcare can celebrate the things we do well. This number has increased by 76 compared to the year before.

Compliment examples

Reablement

‘I love all the staff including morning and night staff. Really love the food in here and I love talking with guests. I am glad that my family brought me here and I could freely listen to music using Alexa. I feel 3 weeks is not enough. It could have been better if I could have spent more time with the physio.’ (August 2024)

Extra Care Housing

‘Every mutual client we have is treated with immense care and respect. Danielle and her team are very proactive and curious about every person. Sometimes discharged from hospitals come with broken promises of ongoing care and support and they often have to pick up the pieces. Cherish the amazing team you have at ABC.’ from Bristol City Council Homelessness Team (May 2024)

Compliment examples

Community Services

'I have now stopped having care with Brunelcare as I am now well enough to care for myself. I would just like to say a huge thank you to all of the teams for Highbridge and Burnham areas. You have all been amazing, you have not only cared for me in the sense of doing your job; you have given me support, encouragement and kindness every day. I have loved the little chats we have, and your cheerful attitudes have been a delight. I will miss you all so much, you really do feel like friends calling in - not strangers in my home. I am sure the cats will miss you all too! Thank you for getting me through the most difficult part of my life.' (Feb 2025)

Housing

'I wish to compliment the kitchen renovation this week. The staff were always polite and professional and considerate of my needs. They respected my personal space and made sure I was safe. Mike went the extra mile and worked all day not even stopping for breaks to get it finished in one and a half days!' (Feb 2025)

Compliments received

Care Homes

‘May I say what an outstanding job the care home staff at Little Heath did in taking care of my Dad during the 3 years he was there. It's clearly more than just a job to them and they genuinely care about the residents in their care so we are so grateful for what they did for my Dad, especially in his last few months. All the staff are fantastic and Jess deserves a special mention for the way she looked after my Dad and communicated with the family.’ (Oct 2024)

‘Mum has lived at the home for over 4 years. Her needs have changed considerably, and she now needs nursing care. The staff are amazing and the care and compassion both to mum and myself have made such a difference to our lives. We were lucky to find you. Thank you so much.’ (Nov 2024)

**RAISING
AWARENESS &
SUPPORTING
THE
CUSTOMER**

Continued learning and improvement is reviewed and implemented by the Corporate Governance Team. A self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code was undertaken between July and August 2025. The outcome of this assessment has informed a full review of the Charity's Managing Comments, Concerns, Complaints and Compliments policy. Both documents are available on our website.


During 2025-26 we will continue to refine and enhance our complaints handling process. During this time we will:

- Continue to review our complaints policy to ensure it continues to meet the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code.
- Review the contents of our website to ensure this provides useful information to our customers regarding Brunelcare's complaints process.
- Review our template complaints letters to ensure they are clear, strike the right tone with customers and address issues in a sensitive manner; engaging with customers to improve the process.
- Look at different ways to make the complaints procedure more accessible, for example developing an easy read guide.
- Provide ongoing training and support for customer interfacing employees and investigators
- Centralise information on concerns across all sites
- Improve triaging of complaints and reduce Stage 2 complaints
- Promote further monitoring and evaluation of complaints by directors/senior managers.

More information

Anyone who receives, requests, or is affected by our services can make a complaint. This includes our customers, but also members of the public who could have access to or be affected by our services, including anti-social behaviour/neighbour nuisance.

You can raise a complaint:

-  In person at any of our offices or developments by phoning us on 0117 914 4214
-  By emailing us at complaints@brunelcare.org.uk
-  In writing to Feedback and Complaints, Brunelcare Head Office, Saffron Gardens, Prospect Place, Bristol, BS5 9FF
-  By completing and submitting the form on our website.