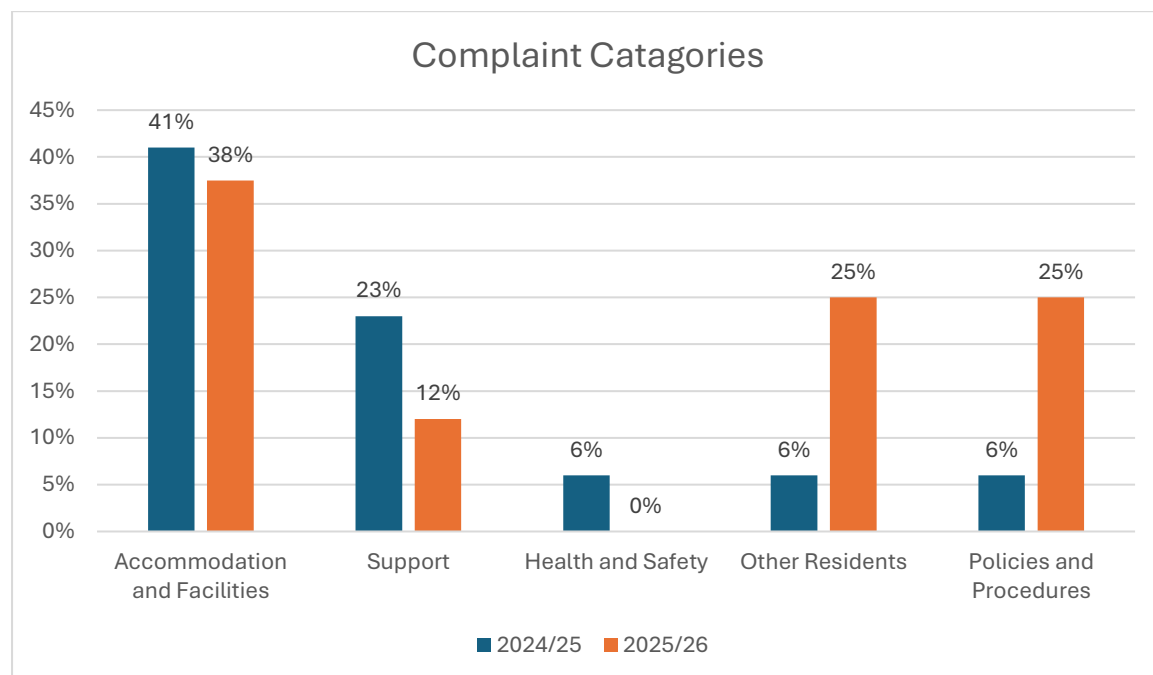


Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2025 - 2026

1. Review of Complaints Received during the period 01/04/25 – 31/03/26

Between April 2025 and March 2026, we received a total of 108 complaints, including 8 complaints from residents living in the 116 units of accommodation owned or leased by Refuge.

The table below provides a breakdown of all concerns raised.



In 100% of cases, the complainant was satisfied with Refuge's response at Stage 1 of the Complaints Policy, including where the complaint was not upheld or was only partially upheld. No complainants asked for their complaint to be escalated to Stage 2.

Three complaints (38%) related to accommodation or facilities.

No complaints from residents in properties where Refuge carries out the landlord function were referred to, or investigated by, the Housing Ombudsman Service in 2025/26.

Learning from complaints to improve services

- **Accommodation and Facilities**

Three (38%) complaints were about accommodation and facilities.

In 2024/25, more than half of the complaints about accommodation and facilities related to Refuge not providing items or services that were not part of the offer within the accommodation, for example food or cooking equipment in bedrooms where

communal kitchens were available. This was not a theme in 2025/26, suggesting that the actions taken to address it have been effective.

Complaints relating to accommodation and facilities primarily concerned equipment and infrastructure failures. These included electrical faults resulting in a power trip and subsequent freezer defrosting, a malfunctioning washing machine causing clothing to become trapped and damaged, and a security camera requiring repair. In all cases where a financial loss was identified, appropriate compensation was offered.

The low number of complaints about accommodation and facilities is reflected across all accommodation, including services where Refuge does not carry out the landlord function. This may indicate a positive impact from wider regulatory changes within the housing sector. However, additional focus will be given to ensuring that all residents are aware of Refuge's Complaints Policy in order to support a positive complaints culture and encourage feedback.

- **Support Service**

One complaint (12%) related to staff support. The number of complaints is low, making analysis and the identification of patterns difficult.

Themes identified in 2024/25 relating to reduced staff availability due to training, sickness, or changes in caseworker were not repeated in 2025/26, as no complaints were received about staff availability.

Although complaint numbers are low, we will continue to carry out thorough investigations where residents express dissatisfaction, using these as opportunities for learning for both local colleagues and the wider organisation.

- **Health and Safety**

There were no concerns raised about health and safety. This is an improvement from 2024/25, when a query was raised about whether a routine health and safety check had been completed.

- **Other Residents**

Two complaints were received from residents regarding disputes with other residents, representing a slight increase compared with 2024/25, when one complaint was recorded. These disputes were reported exclusively in shared accommodation where facilities are communal.

This trend highlights the potential challenges associated with shared living environments and suggests an opportunity to strengthen preventative measures. Consideration could be given to reinforcing house rules, improving communication of behavioural expectations at the start of occupancy, and exploring early intervention approaches, such as mediation, to resolve issues before they escalate to formal complaints.

- **Policies and Procedures**

Two complaints related to non-adherence to policies and procedures, representing a slight increase from 2024/25, when one complaint was recorded. Both complaints concerned alleged breaches of confidentiality; one complaint was upheld and corrective action was recorded as having been taken.

This highlights the continued importance of maintaining robust confidentiality practices and reinforcing staff understanding and application of relevant policies, particularly in relation to information handling and data protection. This may include targeted refresher training, increased supervision or spot checks, and ensuring that clear guidance is consistently followed in practice to mitigate the risk of future breaches.

Conclusions

Complaint handling remains effective and complaint volumes are low

The report indicates that Refuge's complaint handling arrangements are operating effectively. In 100% of cases, complainants were satisfied with the response provided at Stage 1, including where complaints were not upheld or only partially upheld, and no complaints were escalated to Stage 2. No complaints relating to properties where Refuge carries out the landlord function were referred to, or investigated by, the Housing Ombudsman Service in 2025/26.

Although complaint numbers are low and should therefore be interpreted with caution, there is evidence that learning from previous years has had a positive impact. Themes seen in 2024/25 relating to unmet expectations about items or services provided in accommodation, and concerns about staff availability, were not repeated in 2025/26. Accommodation and facilities remained the largest category of complaint, but the issues raised related mainly to equipment and infrastructure failures rather than service offer or communication gaps, suggesting that earlier actions have been effective.

The report also highlights areas for continued focus. Complaints involving disputes between residents in shared accommodation and concerns about confidentiality and adherence to policies and procedures suggest a need to maintain attention on behaviour expectations in communal settings, early informal resolution, and robust information handling practices. While the overall picture is positive, Refuge should continue to encourage a positive complaints culture by ensuring residents are aware of the Complaints Policy and feel confident raising concerns and feedback.

We welcome feedback from residents as an important source of learning and will continue to use complaints and concerns to inform service improvement across our safe accommodation services.

Governance Response

The Board of Trustees has reviewed and approved this year's Annual Complaints Report and remains assured that Refuge's complaints arrangements are operating effectively. This assurance is supported by the fact that all complaints were resolved at Stage 1, with no requests for escalation to Stage 2, and that no complaints relating to properties where Refuge carries out the landlord function were referred to, or investigated by, the Housing Ombudsman Service in 2025/26. The Board, supported by its Trustee Responsible for Complaints and the Services and Safeguarding Committee, will continue to oversee complaint handling performance and the organisation's compliance with the Complaint Handling Code. In doing so,

it will monitor how learning from complaints is translated into service improvement, including maintaining attention on accommodation and facilities issues, disputes in shared living environments, confidentiality practice, and actions to ensure residents are aware of the Complaints Policy and feel confident raising concerns and feedback.