

# ONGO CUSTOMER FOCUS COMMITTEE REPORT



|                             |                                           |      |                   |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------|------|-------------------|
| Item No                     | Check agenda                              | Date | 02 September 2026 |
| Title                       | Complaint and Service Improvement Report  |      |                   |
| Report Author               | Becky Johns, Head of Customer Experience  |      |                   |
| Presented by (if different) | Becky Johns, Head of Customer Experience. |      |                   |

## REPORT INFORMATION

|                                         |                                     |                         |                          |                         |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Action Required:<br><b>For Approval</b> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Strategic Objective:    | Governance Journey:      |                         |
|                                         | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Be a great landlord     | Choose an item.          | Add date/forum          |
|                                         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Customer Focus          |                          |                         |
|                                         | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Growth & Sustainability |                          |                         |
| Company Impact:                         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Ongo Homes              | <input type="checkbox"/> | Ongo Heating & Plumbing |
|                                         | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Ongo Developments       | <input type="checkbox"/> | Ongo Roofing            |
|                                         | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Ongo Communities        | <input type="checkbox"/> | Ongo Recruitment        |
|                                         | <input type="checkbox"/>            | TVES                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | Crosby Brokerage        |

## ACRONYMS/GLOSSARY

*Does this report contain any acronyms or terms that require explanation? Please list them here*

## PURPOSE, RECOMMENDATIONS & EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### PURPOSE

*This report provides the regulatory annual Complaints Performance and Service improvement submission, summarising complaint handling performance, annual self-assessment against the Housing ombudsman complaint handling code and learning -led service improvements.*

### RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. Customer Focus Committee is asked to note the annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report and consider whether it provides sufficient assurance on Ongo's complaint handling performance, compliance position, learning activity and service improvement arrangements.
2. Customer Focus Committee is asked to approve the publication of the Committee's formal response to the report, in support of Ongo's annual statutory submission and wider transparency to tenants.
3. Customer Focus Committee is asked to review the annual self-assessment and confirm whether it is assured that Ongo remains compliant with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.
4. Customer Focus Committee is asked to consider the accessibility of Ongo's complaints service, with particular reference to the demographic analysis set out in the report and note the proposed areas for continued monitoring and improvement.
5. Customer Focus Committee is asked to review the Housing Ombudsman determinations and associated learning to seek assurance that findings are being used to strengthen complaint handling, accountability and service improvement.
6. Customer Focus Committee is asked to endorse the ongoing Service Improvement Action Plan and note the arrangements in place to monitor progress, impact and delivery of complaint-led service improvements.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides assurance on Ongo's annual complaint handling performance, compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code, and the service improvements made as a result of complaint learning and tenant feedback. This matters because complaints remain a key source of insight into customer experience, service failure and regulatory compliance, and are central to demonstrating a positive complaint culture and effective accountability.

During 2025/26, Ongo responded to 625 complaints, a 10% increase on the previous year. Complaint volumes remain broadly in line with sector comparators at 50.8 complaints per 1,000 homes, although repairs continue to account for the largest proportion of complaints at 57.6%. The main repair's themes are appointment dissatisfaction, repeat contact where repairs are not resolved first time, and communication throughout the repairs journey. Communication-related repairs complaints have reduced proportionately, suggesting that actions to keep customers better informed are beginning to have a positive impact.

Performance against complaint handling timescales remains strong. Stage one compliance was 97.6% across all complaints and 97.6% for Low-Cost Rental Accommodation complaints, while Stage two compliance improved to 94.8% overall and 96.8% for Low-Cost Rental Accommodation complaints. Stage two escalations increased to 117 complaints, reflecting a wider sector trend and increased customer confidence in escalating concerns. Ongo will continue to focus on strengthening Stage one resolution to reduce avoidable escalation wherever possible.

The self-assessment confirms that Ongo remains compliant with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code. Further assurance has been provided through the Ombudsman's review of Ongo's complaints policy, which confirmed that the policy meets Code requirements following completion of recommended improvements. Core control audits show Stage one complaint handling is fully compliant, with minor recommendations being implemented for Stage two and complaint extensions.

Customer satisfaction with complaint handling has improved but remains an area of focus. TP09 satisfaction increased from 28.2% to 33.7%, while transactional complaint surveys show stronger satisfaction at 55%, with higher scores for the complaint officer managing the case and the speed of complaint handling. The Tenant Complaint Panel has provided valuable scrutiny and helped ensure tenant voice is reflected in the self-assessment and service improvement activity.

Complaint learning has led to 124 identified learning outcomes and a range of service improvements, including changes to contact handling, repairs communication, warranty repair arrangements, and the regional neighbourhood operating model. Outstanding work includes completing actions from core control audits, improving the quality of disability data before drawing conclusions about different customer outcomes, reviewing access to complaints for older tenants, and continuing to monitor Stage two escalation, Ombudsman cases and repairs-related complaints.

The key message for the Customer Focus Committee is that Ongo remains compliant with regulatory complaint handling requirements and is using complaint insight to drive service improvement. However, the report also highlights sustained pressure in repairs, increasing escalation volumes, and the need to maintain focus on early resolution, communication, accessibility and learning-led improvement to support better outcomes for customers.

| <b>Risk</b> | <b><i>Risk Appetite</i></b>                                                                                                                                                | <b><i>Strategic Risk Impact</i></b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|             | <b><i>Balanced</i></b>                                                                                                                                                     | <i>This report has a positive impact on the Customer Experience strategic risk by providing assurance that complaint handling arrangements remain compliant with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code and that complaint insight is being used to identify service risk, strengthen controls and drive service improvement. The report does not increase strategic risk; however, it highlights areas requiring continued oversight, including repairs-related dissatisfaction, Stage two escalation, Ombudsman learning, customer accessibility and the quality of demographic data used to understand customer outcomes.</i> |                                                                                                                                                                    |
|             | <b><i>Identified Risks</i></b>                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <b><i>Mitigations</i></b>                                                                                                                                          |
|             | <i>The report identifies regulatory, reputational and operational risks linked to complaint handling performance, repairs-related dissatisfaction, increased Stage two</i> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <i>These risks are mitigated through annual self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code, policy review, core control audits, ongoing</i> |

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|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <i>escalation, Ombudsman determinations and the need to ensure all customers can access the complaints process.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <i>monitoring of complaint performance, regular reporting to the Service Improvement Forum and Customer Focus Committee, and oversight by the Member Responsible for Complaints. Further controls include the Service Improvement Action Plan, learning from Ombudsman determinations, operational complaint reviews, tenant scrutiny through the Tenant Complaint Panel, targeted accessibility actions and continued work to improve demographic data quality.</i> |
| <b>Asset &amp; Liabilities Register</b>                                                                                                                                                                       | <i>This report does not directly impact the Assets and Liabilities Register, as it does not create any new assets, liabilities, contractual commitments or financial obligations. Any emerging risks identified through complaint learning will continue to be managed through existing governance, risk and assurance arrangements.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT</b>                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <i>Ensure that your comments are specifically related to the report and relevant to its content, as this will determine how the information may affect regulatory compliance. Please complete all fields.</i> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Customer</b>                                                                                                                                                                                               | <i>The report reflects tenant voice through the Tenant Complaint Panel and wider complaint feedback, with customer insight informing the self-assessment and service improvement activity. Demographic and satisfaction analysis is set out in the body of the report and highlights areas for continued monitoring, including accessibility, data quality and customer experience with complaint handling.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Governance</b>                                                                                                                                                                                             | <i>This report forms part of Ongo’s statutory complaints governance journey. It has been informed by tenant scrutiny through the Tenant Complaint Panel and operational oversight through the Service Improvement Forum, with complaint learning and actions monitored through the Service Improvement Action Plan. The report is presented to Customer Focus Committee for assurance, approval of the Committee response and oversight of compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code. Following Committee consideration, the report and formal response will be provided to the Ongo Homes Board, where the Member Responsible for Complaints will provide a statement before publication in line with regulatory requirements.</i> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Data Use &amp; Assurance</b>                                                                                                                                                                               | <i>The report uses a range of assurance sources, including centrally collated complaint performance data, tenant satisfaction measures, transactional survey feedback, management information and external benchmarking through Housemark. Data is reviewed and monitored through established performance and governance arrangements, with oversight from the data and performance team to support accuracy and consistency. Known limitations, particularly in relation to incomplete demographic data, are acknowledged within the report and will continue to be addressed to strengthen future assurance and enable more robust analysis of customer outcomes.</i>                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Health &amp; Safety</b>                                                                                                                                                                                    | <i>The report does not introduce any new direct health and safety implications or changes to health and safety legislation. However, complaint learning, particularly in relation to repairs, heating and hot water, and communication about service delays, supports Ongo’s wider legal and moral duty to identify and respond to issues that could affect customer safety, wellbeing or the condition of homes. Any health and safety risks identified through complaints are managed through existing operational processes, repairs escalation routes, compliance arrangements and governance oversight.</i>                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Financial</b>                                                                                                                                                                                              | <i>The report does not request any additional budget or create a direct financial commitment. However, complaint handling carries indirect financial risk where service failure results in compensation payments, repeat visits, avoidable demand, Ombudsman orders or operational inefficiency, particularly within repairs. These risks are mitigated through complaint learning, service improvement actions, operational performance monitoring,</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

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|                                                  | <i>core control audits and governance oversight, helping to reduce repeat failure and support better use of resources within existing budgets.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Value for Money</b>                           | <i>The report supports value for money by using complaint insight to identify service failure, reduce avoidable demand and target improvement activity where it will have the greatest impact. While the report does not identify direct cashable savings, learning from complaints supports more efficient service delivery by reducing repeat contact, escalation, compensation, Ombudsman orders and operational rework, particularly within repairs and complaint handling. This contributes to better use of existing resources and improved outcomes for customers.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Equality, Diversity &amp; Inclusion (EDI)</b> | <i>The report considers EDI through analysis of complaint access, customer satisfaction and demographic information, including age, disability, ethnicity and regional profile. This helps provide assurance that complaint services remain accessible and that any potential barriers or differences in customer experience are identified and monitored. The report also recognises the need to consider tenant vulnerabilities and reasonable adjustments, particularly where complaints relate to repairs, communication, service delays or access to the complaints process. Known limitations in disability and vulnerability data are acknowledged, and continued improvement in data quality will strengthen future assurance and support more targeted service responses for tenants with diverse needs.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Assurance</b>                                 | <i>Assurance is provided through all four lines. First-line assurance is provided through management information, complaint performance data, operational complaint reviews, the complaints policy, self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code and monitoring of the Service Improvement Action Plan. Second-line assurance is provided through oversight by the Service Improvement Forum, the data and performance team, Customer Focus Committee and the Member Responsible for Complaints. Third-line assurance is provided through core control audits across Stage one, Stage two and complaint extensions, external benchmarking through Housemark, and review by the Housing Ombudsman compliance team, which confirmed that Ongo's complaints policy meets Code requirements. Fourth-line assurance is provided through tenant satisfaction measures, transactional complaint surveys, Tenant Complaint Panel scrutiny and wider tenant feedback, ensuring customer voice is reflected in the assessment of complaint handling and service improvement.</i> |

### 3.0 BACKGROUND

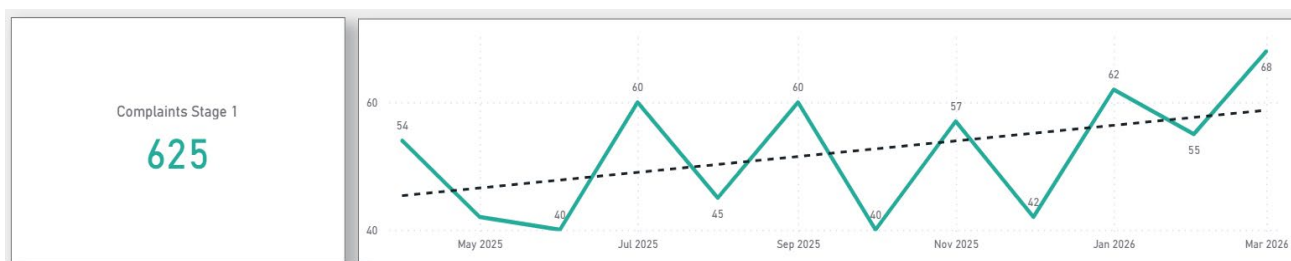
- 3.1 The Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code requires landlords to report annually on complaint handling performance, compliance with the Code, and the learning and service improvements arising from complaints. This report provides the Customer Focus Committee with assurance on Ongo's performance and continued compliance with these regulatory expectations.
- 3.2 The associated papers summarise complaint handling performance for 2025/26, including complaint volumes, response timescales, escalation rates, upheld outcomes, Housing Ombudsman determinations and cases awaiting investigation. They also set out the service improvements made in response to complaint learning and tenant feedback.
- 3.3 The report supports Ongo's Corporate Plan and Customer Focus Strategy by promoting a positive complaint culture, strengthening accountability, and ensuring customers are able to raise concerns and receive timely, fair and effective resolution. It also supports compliance with the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard by demonstrating how complaint performance is monitored, reported and used to improve services.

- 3.4 This work supports Ongo's vision and values by placing customers at the centre of service improvement, using complaints as a source of insight and learning, and ensuring that services are accessible, responsive and focused on achieving better outcomes for tenants.

## 4.0 ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

### 4.1 Complaint Handling Performance

- 4.1.1 During 2025/26, Ongo responded to 625 complaints, representing a 10% increase compared with 2024/25. This reflects the wider sector trend of increasing complaint volumes and demonstrates that customers continue to use the complaints process as a route to raise concerns and seek resolution. Complaint volumes have increased overall during the year, although monthly patterns have fluctuated. Performance equates to 50.8 complaints per 1,000 homes, which is slightly above the Northern benchmark median of 47.3 but remains within the median range for providers across England. This provides assurance that Ongo's complaint volumes are broadly in line with sector comparators. Complaint handling data is provided in Appendix 1 and 1a



- 4.1.2 Of the complaints responded to during 2025/26, 73% were upheld, which is consistent with the previous year. While this demonstrates a stable approach to complaint decision-making, it also indicates that a significant proportion of complaints continue to identify service failure or missed opportunities to resolve issues earlier. The upheld rate is higher than average between the months of October and February which highlights service's potentially struggle in winter months this aligns to a greater demand for repairs over this period. There is an opportunity to consider what we can do to support service delivery during this period to improve service.
- 4.1.3 Stage one timescale compliance was 97.6% across all complaints and 97.6% for Low-Cost Rental Accommodation (LCRA) complaints reported through the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM). This meets the northern housing provider median and is above the England benchmark median. Where compliance dipped, analysis shows this was mainly due to human error and periods of higher demand on the Complaints and Feedback Team. A small number of cases may also have been affected by incorrect target dates generated through the tenant portal; this is being investigated and resolved, with improvement expected imminently. Stage two performance also improved, with 94.8% compliance across all complaints and 96.8% for LCRA complaints, representing a 34.4% improvement on the previous year. This reflects a stronger positive complaint culture and continued focus on delivering excellent resolution services across Ongo.
- 4.1.4 Stage two complaints increased during the year, with 117 complaints escalated, representing an escalation rate of 18.7%. This is consistent with the wider sector trend of increasing Stage two complaint volumes. Ongo recorded 9.5 Stage two complaints per 1,000 homes, which is better than the Northern housing provider sector benchmark. However, there is recognition that this increase is unlikely to be temporary, as complaint services become more accessible and tenants are increasingly ensuring their concerns are escalated to the highest level. We will continue to identify opportunities to improve Stage one complaint handling and reduce the risk of escalation wherever possible.

- 4.1.5 During the year, 38 complaints across Stage one and Stage two were extended beyond the standard complaint handling timescales, representing 6% of all complaints. This provides assurance that extensions continue to be used appropriately and only where necessary to support a full and effective response for customers. Ongo declined to accept 30 complaints during the year the reasons are de-escalated to a service request, issues arose over twelve months ago or already exhausted the complaints process.
- 4.1.6 Through remedies and complaint resolution, £110,000 has been paid in compensation directly linked to complaints. This is an increase on the previous year and is in line with the rise in complaint volumes. It is also important to note that the Housing Ombudsman has reviewed its remedies guidance and set out compensation expectations, which are reflected in Ongo's compensation policy.

## **4.2 Complaint Themes**

- 4.2.1 Complaint analysis continues to show that complaint demand is concentrated within the Repairs service, which recorded 360 Stage one complaints during 2025/26, representing 57.6% of all complaints received. Whilst Repairs remains the highest-volume area for complaints, this should be viewed within the context of Repairs being one of Ongo's largest and most frequently used services, generating significantly more customer interactions than other service areas. As a result, repairs-related complaints can be expected to remain proportionately higher than those for most other services. Benchmarking data shows that our complaint levels are within sector norms and the ability to reduce complaint volumes may be limited. However, the scale of complaint volumes highlights the continued importance of maintaining focus on repairs performance, contractor management, communication with customers and the timely resolution of repair requests.
- 4.2.2 The three main drivers of repairs complaints were dissatisfaction with appointment times and availability, repairs not being resolved first time leading to repeat contact and delays, and communication throughout the repairs journey. These themes remain consistent; however, communication-related complaints have reduced proportionately, indicating that actions to keep customers informed are beginning to have a positive impact.
- 4.2.3 Neighbourhoods recorded 66 complaints in 2025/26, compared with 64 in 2024/25, a small increase of two complaints, or 3.1%. This shows that complaint demand across tenancy, neighbourhood and lettings-related services remained stable year on year. Within this, Regional Neighbourhoods complaints increased from 50 to 59, while lettings complaints reduced from 14 to 7, indicating that the increase was mainly linked to tenancy management-related services. The key themes were communication; staff conduct and disagreement with action taken.
- 4.2.4 Customer Experience received 48 complaints during 2025/26, representing a 52.5% reduction from 101 complaints in the previous year. The main themes remained communication, staff conduct and out-of-hours services. Improvements in contact handling during 2025/26, supported by a strengthened management structure and more consistent performance management, are likely to have contributed to the reduction in complaints across this area.

## **4.3 Housing Ombudsman and Self-Assessment**

- 4.3.1 During 2025/26, Ongo received 10 new case investigations from the Housing Ombudsman, representing a decrease compared with the previous year. Ten case determinations were issued during the year. Of these, five resulted in findings of maladministration, one resulted in a finding of service failure, and three resulted in findings of no maladministration. A further nine cases remain awaiting investigation by the Housing Ombudsman. This position highlights the continued importance of using Ombudsman learning

to strengthen complaint handling, improve service resolution, and provide assurance that identified issues are being addressed through service improvement activity. A summary of the Housing Ombudsman determinations is provided in Appendix 2 and full reports in discretionary reading.

- 4.3.2 As Ongo has received five or more determinations from the Housing Ombudsman, an annual landlord report is expected and will be published on the Ombudsman's website. Early data from the Ombudsman indicates that Ongo's maladministration rate improved to 45% in 2025/26, compared with 76% in the previous year. This demonstrates progress in complaint handling and wider service improvement activity, with positive outcomes beginning to be realised. The Ombudsman's report is due to be published in mid-September and will be shared in the next complaint update to provide further assurance to Committee.
- 4.3.3 The annual review of the Complaint Handling Code has been completed in collaboration with the Tenant Complaint Panel, ensuring the tenant voice was reflected in the self-assessment process. The self-assessment confirms that Ongo remains compliant with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code. Further assurance has also been provided through a separate review by the Housing Ombudsman compliance team against Ongo's complaints policy. This review identified several recommendations to strengthen the policy, all of which have now been completed. The Ombudsman has since confirmed that the policy meets the requirements of the Complaint Handling Code. The full self-assessment is provided in appendix 3.
- 4.3.4 To provide assurance that the policy and Complaint Handling Code are embedded in practice, core control audits have been completed across Stage one, Stage two and extended complaints. These audits assessed compliance with the requirements of Ongo's policy and the Code. Stage one complaint handling was assessed as fully compliant, while Stage two and complaint extensions were assessed as partially compliant, with minor recommendations identified and now being implemented.
- 4.3.5 The Member Responsible for Complaints response acknowledges the key findings of the report and provides an open and transparent view of how Ongo continues to learn and improve. The Committee is asked to review and approve the response to support final submission to the Housing Ombudsman. The full response is provided in Appendix 4.

#### **4.4 Customer Voice and accessibility.**

- 4.4.1 Tenant satisfaction with complaint handling, measured through TP09, increased to 33.7% in 2025/26. Although the score remains low, consistent with the wider sector position, this represents a 5.5 percentage point improvement from 28.2% in 2024/25. Transactional complaint handling surveys also show a stronger position, with 55% satisfaction across 101 responses. Satisfaction was higher in relation to the complaint officer managing the case, at 63%, and the speed of complaint handling, at 61%.
- 4.4.2 The Tenant Complaint Panel has remained active throughout the year, scrutinising complaints against the Complaint Handling Code to ensure services continue to meet tenants' needs. The panel played an integral role in the Complaint Handling Code self-assessment and was also consulted on the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard. This ensured that tenant voice and lived experience informed the assessment and tested the accessibility of our complaint services. We remain committed to ensuring tenants and customer can complain through any method of communication that suits their needs and will support people to do so. As a result of the tenant panel work, further information has been incorporated onto our website to improve access and support for tenants with vulnerabilities.
- 4.4.3 Analysis of complaints by age shows that, although Ongo's customer profile is concentrated between the ages of 30 and 69, complaint patterns vary across age groups. Customers aged 20 to 39 are over-

represented in Stage one complaints, while customers aged 70 and over are under-represented compared with their share of the tenant base. This raises two areas for further consideration: whether older and potentially more vulnerable tenants are satisfied with the service they receive, or whether they have sufficient awareness of how to access the complaints process; and whether the expectations of younger tenants are being fully reflected in service delivery. In response, targeted communication will be provided to older tenants, including those living in retirement schemes, to ensure information about making a complaint is clear and accessible. Further engagement will also be explored with younger tenants to better understand their needs and whether their customer journey is fully reflected in current service delivery. Demographic data for complainants and the wider tenant base is provided in Appendices 5 and 5A.

- 4.4.4 Disabled tenants account for 29.9% of Stage one complaints. While initial analysis suggests varying levels of representation the findings should be treated with caution. We are aware that disability data held on tenant records is being refreshed and we have only recently changed our approach to collecting and reporting this information. As a result, a significant proportion of tenant records remain blank or recorded as 'prefer not to say', limiting the reliability of any comparison. Consequently, it is not currently possible to draw robust conclusions about whether disabled tenants experience disproportionately different outcomes or are overrepresented in complaints. Improving data quality on the disability data will be a priority before full conclusions can be drawn from this data.
- 4.4.5 Ethnicity of Stage one complainants broadly align with the current tenant profile. The clearest area of over-representation is among White British tenants, who account for 80.7% of complaints compared with 75.2% of tenants. Other indicators involve very low volumes and do not currently suggest barriers to accessing the complaints process; however, these will continue to be monitored to ensure fair and equitable access.
- 4.4.6 Complaint volumes across the three regions broadly align with the tenant population. Region one accounts for 40% of complaints, Region Two for 25%, and Region Three for 30%. A further 5% were received from non-tenants. This indicates that access to the complaints process is consistent across regions, with no disproportionate complaint volumes suggesting significant regional service delivery variances.

#### 4.5 **Service Improvements**

- 4.5.1 Complaint analysis identified 124 learning outcomes, grouped into key themes. The most common theme relates to colleague training, particularly communication and the need to keep customers better informed throughout their service journey. This is being addressed through mandatory effective communication training, with a second phase in development focused on understanding tenants' needs.
- 4.5.2 Quarterly operational complaint reports are produced for the four key operational service areas to identify complaint themes and learning. Findings are reported to the Service Improvement Forum and the Member Responsible for Complaints, where actions are agreed and recorded. These actions are monitored through the Service Improvement Action Plan and shared with the Customer Focus Committee each quarter. Customer feedback has led to several significant changes during 2025/26, summarised below.

| Learning identified                                             | Control or improvement implemented                        | Assurance and customer impact                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Complaint learning identified customer frustration with contact | The management structure was strengthened, telephone line | Early indicators show reduced complaint volumes |

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| handling, long wait times and high complaint volumes within the Contact Centre.                                                                                             | coverage was reviewed, and the emergency hour was removed. The Contact Centre training plan has also been refreshed to improve consistency, responsiveness and service standards.                     | and improved transactional satisfaction. Call waiting times continue to be monitored through performance reporting to provide assurance that changes are improving customer access and responsiveness.                              |
| Increased Stage two escalation and Ombudsman findings highlighted the need for stronger quality assurance of complaint responses and earlier resolution at Stage one.       | Enhanced Stage one and Stage two complaint reviews have been introduced to strengthen decision-making, response quality, learning capture and compliance with the Complaint Handling Code.            | Complaint satisfaction has improved across TP09 and transactional surveys. Stage two escalation remains an area of active oversight, with trends monitored through the Service Improvement Forum and reported to Committee.         |
| Repairs complaints continued to identify poor communication during the repairs journey as a recurring cause of dissatisfaction.                                             | A new Repairs Customer Journey has been developed and published for tenants, setting clearer expectations on communication, responsibilities and what customers can expect at each stage of a repair. | This provides assurance that learning has been translated into clearer customer information and improved communication standards. Repairs satisfaction and related complaint themes will continue to be monitored to assess impact. |
| Complaint learning identified delays and duplication in no-heating and hot-water repairs, particularly where works were covered under warranty arrangements.                | A new contractual arrangement with Ideal has been implemented to enable in-house delivery of warranty works and simplify the process for colleagues and customers.                                    | The change is expected to reduce duplicated visits, improve timeliness and support a right-first-time approach for customers. Performance will continue to be monitored through operational oversight and complaint learning.       |
| Feedback from complaints, surveys and targeted engagement highlighted the need to strengthen communication, visibility, accountability and local ownership across services. | The operating model has been redesigned, including implementation of the regional Neighbourhood Model across Maintenance, Housing Management and Customer Experience, supported by changes            | The revised model provides assurance that services are more locally focused, with dedicated Neighbourhood Officers supporting smaller neighbourhoods and improved alignment between teams. Impact will                              |

|  |                                                          |                                                                                                                        |
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|  | to the Contact Centre, Complaints Team and Customer Hub. | continue to be assessed through repairs performance, satisfaction, complaint themes and service improvement reporting. |
|--|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

4.5.3 Lesson learnt reviews have been held for the five cases where maladministration was identified. Most of these cases relate to complaints raised in 2024, and services have since progressed and improved. However, it remains important to reflect on these findings and identify any further learning where appropriate. The key learning is summarised below.

| Learning identified                                                                                                                                             | Improvement and assurance for Committee                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
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| Ombudsman findings identified that some complaint response letters did not fully address all issues raised or clearly evidence the basis for decisions.         | A minimum data standard has been introduced to strengthen the quality and consistency of responses at both stages. An AI pilot is also being tested to support real-time gap analysis for Complaint Officers, with outcomes to be reported to Customer Focus Committee.   |
| Learning identified the need for stronger oversight before a complaint is refused or excluded from the complaints process.                                      | A management review stage has been introduced before any complaint is rejected, providing additional assurance that decisions are appropriate, consistent with the Complaint Handling Code and clearly documented.                                                        |
| Complex structural repairs experienced delays, with learning highlighting the need for clearer tracking, ownership and documentation of survey recommendations. | Post-let repair tracking and a complex case management workflow have been implemented to improve oversight and completion. Survey recommendations are now required to be documented and monitored to support accountability and timely resolution.                        |
| Decant-related cases identified the need for earlier decision-making, clearer communication and stronger consideration of tenant choice and vulnerability.      | Internal communication on decant decisions has been strengthened and decision points will be clarified to ensure tenant choice is considered. Vulnerability information will be built into the decision-making process to support fair, safe and person-centred outcomes. |
| Learning identified the need to strengthen how vulnerability is assessed when considering restrictions linked to unacceptable behaviour.                        | A full risk assessment will be completed where restricted contact is being considered. This provides assurance that vulnerability, reasonable adjustments and proportionality are considered before decisions are made.                                                   |

Learning identified that the contractor did not respond to new-build warranty work in line with Ongo's repair priorities.

This learning relates to an individual contractor operating within the warranty period at the time of the complaint. It also highlights the need for wider contractor monitoring arrangements for new-build properties, to ensure tenants receive the service they require.

| ADDITIONAL READING                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                       |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Associated background papers</b> | <i>Appendix 1&amp;1a - Complaint Handling data 25/26</i><br><i>Appendix 2 - Housing Ombudsman Self-Assessment 25/26</i><br><i>Appendix 3 - Housing Ombudsman Case summary table 25/26</i><br><i>Appendix 4 -Member Responsible for complaints response</i><br><i>Appendix 5&amp;5a - Complaint and tenant Demographic data</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                       |
| <b>Discretionary Reading</b>        | <i>HO report - AC 202327435</i><br><i>HO report -CA 202325287</i><br><i>HO report - PR 202314370</i><br><i>HO report - GA 202329815</i><br><i>HO report - TL 202310015</i><br><i>HO report - GA 202424044</i><br><i>HO report Appeal - GA 202422044</i><br><i>HO report - PW 202327453</i><br><i>HO report - QW 202308120</i><br><i>HO report - CC 202514838</i><br><i>HO report - DG 202339800</i><br><i>Core Control Complaint Audit - Stage one</i><br><i>Core Control Complaint Audit - Stage two</i><br><i>Core Control Complaint Audit - Extensions</i><br><i>Housing Ombudsman Third Review Outcome Letter</i><br><i>Service improvement Action Plan</i> |                       |
| GOV TEAM USE ONLY                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                       |
| <i>Check list</i>                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <i>Comments/notes</i> |
| Over 3 pages long? Exec Summary     | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                       |
| All fields completed                | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                       |
| Appendices? Additional Reading?     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                       |
| Proof read                          | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                       |
| Convene ready (margins/format)      | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                       |
| ELT approved                        | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                       |