

Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2024-2025

Approved by Red Kite Board, September 2025

Board Foreword

Provided by Derek Cash, Board Member Responsible for Complaints

The Board welcomes this annual report which reflects the progress of complaint handling within Red Kite Community Housing during the financial year 2024-25, as confirmed by the scrutiny of the underlying data.

Red Kite again experienced high and further increasing demand for its complaints service during the year, driven by a positive culture to attract a greater level of feedback from customers about what we do well and what remains an issue to resolve. Although this report demonstrates more reported complaints in 2024-25, it is important to place in context that the organisation still receives many more compliments each month than it does complaints – albeit that in no way downplays the serious issues that some residents continue to experience.

Externally, this increase in complaints has been driven by factors including government campaigns such as 'Make things right' which Red Kite continues to support and promote, highlighting to our residents how they can let us know when there is a problem with our service delivery and how we can resolve issues quickly. There has also been much greater influence from both the strengthened Housing Ombudsman Service and the Regulator of Social Housing, who have reintroduced a major focus on consumer regulation.

Internally, also in response to growing customer expectations, Red Kite has placed a much greater focus on both resolving complaints effectively and in a bid to rectify outstanding issues raised as soon as practicably possible. The complaint-handling service has improved significantly through additional capacity being added within a specialist team, who are headed up by a dedicated head of service, and by a much greater emphasis being placed on complaints performance reporting within the leadership of the organisation – both within a refreshed executive team and at board level.

Increased scrutiny of Red Kite's complaints performance has therefore come regularly during 2024-25 from the Housing Ombudsman, the Red Kite Board and management as well as from both our internal Resident Representative Team and Operations Sub-Committee.

Our self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code for 2025-26 shows full compliance and has been verified externally to ensure we are following good practice. Red Kite's feedback and compensation policies have both been strengthened during recent months to include a number of improvement recommendations received from both the Housing Ombudsman Service and the external validation report.

What has been disappointing is that after having reported no Housing Ombudsman determinations against Red Kite and therefore no findings of maladministration during 2023-24, we have received 7 determinations containing a total of 17 maladministration findings in cases issued by the Ombudsman service in 2024-25.

It is important to stress that all those findings relate to cases which occurred before the current internal and external sustained focus on our complaint handling and repairs services (i.e prior to 2024), but nevertheless they were all reflective of past mistakes and poor experiences suffered by a number of customers, which may have been symptomatic of our delivery and culture at that time.

The annual report outlines the common themes and trends that arose in the majority of those findings and what has been done to try and ensure that remedies are in place to prevent similar causes leading to ongoing issues for customers in the future. But one over-riding fact is that of all the services provided by Red Kite, nearly two-thirds of our complaints, and three-quarters of our complaint appeals, received during 2024-25 related to our property services (repairs and maintenance) and their contractors.

Much effort has been placed therefore during 2024-25 on improvement plans to help mitigate such issues in communication, workmanship, record-keeping, and general complaint handling processes in a bid to resolve many of the regularly occurring issues raised by complainants.

Responding to last year's report, I outlined how we had started to develop our learning from complaints across the organisation in a bid to help improve service outcomes in key areas for our current and future residents. But I added that we needed to ensure during 2024-25 that this learning, along with that from other feedback, was further consolidated and integrated across the organisation in order to bring about continuous improvement.

I am pleased to report, that although this is still a work in progress, much has started to be achieved as reflected in the ensuing report, and a process to regularly scrutinise and report back on the effect of those learning points has now been established.

With the greater internal capacity, increased corporate awareness and the required benefits from a current programme of introducing new technology tools within a modernised ICT system, we hope to be able to demonstrate even further progress in this crucial area of the organisation in the next report for 2025-26.

Certainly, strong building foundations have been put in place to achieve that, but we must never become complacent while some residents are still not receiving the service they deserve, particularly when things go wrong.

Introduction

We are committed to providing high-quality services to our residents and stakeholders, and we welcome complaints as a valuable source of feedback and learning. We aim to resolve complaints as quickly and effectively as possible, and to ensure that complainants are treated fairly and respectfully throughout the process. We also seek to identify and address the root causes of complaints and to implement service improvements that benefit all our tenants and reduce reoccurrence.

This report provides an overview of our complaints' performance and service improvement activities for April 2024 to March 2025.

The report is prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman and includes our self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code (the Code), which sets out the expectations and good practice for effective complaint handling by landlords.

This report includes:

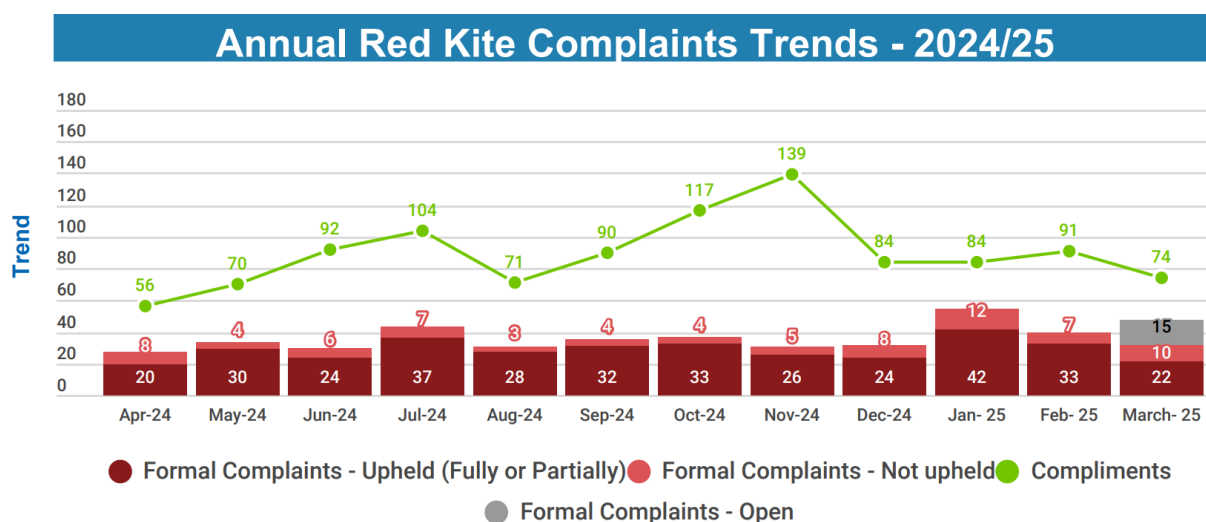
- a self-assessment against the Code
- a qualitative and quantitative analysis of complaint handling performance, including a summary of the types of complaints we have refused to accept
- any findings of non-compliance with the Code by the Ombudsman
- the service improvements made because of the learning from complaints
- actions following any annual report about our performance from the Ombudsman
- actions following any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to our services

Self-Assessment

We fully comply with the Code and a completed self-assessment is attached.

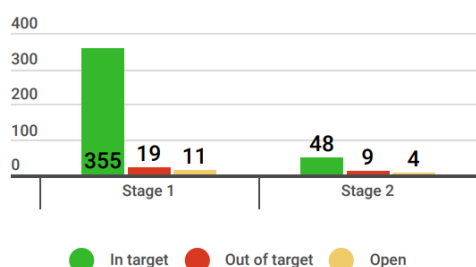
Complaint Handling Performance

Complaint handling performance for complaints raised in April 2024 to March 2025 is shown below.



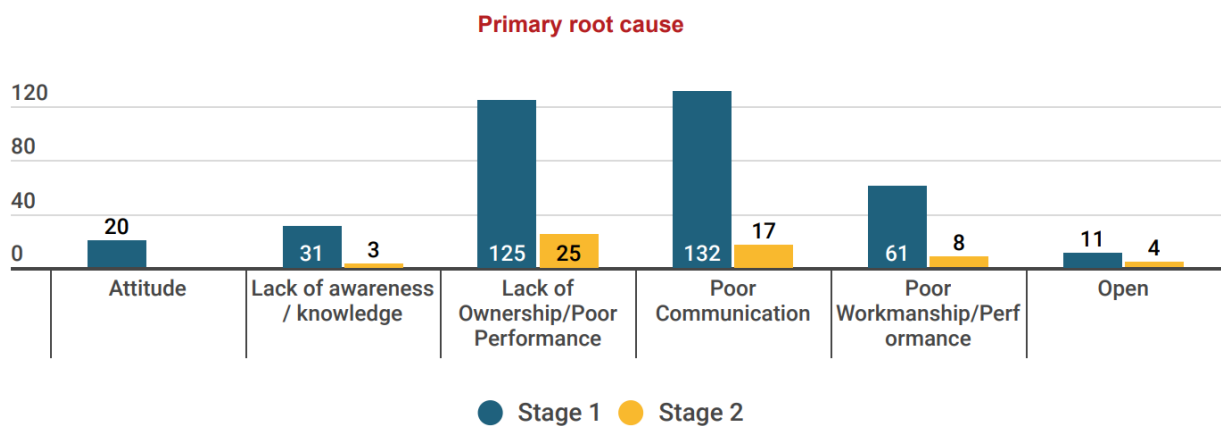
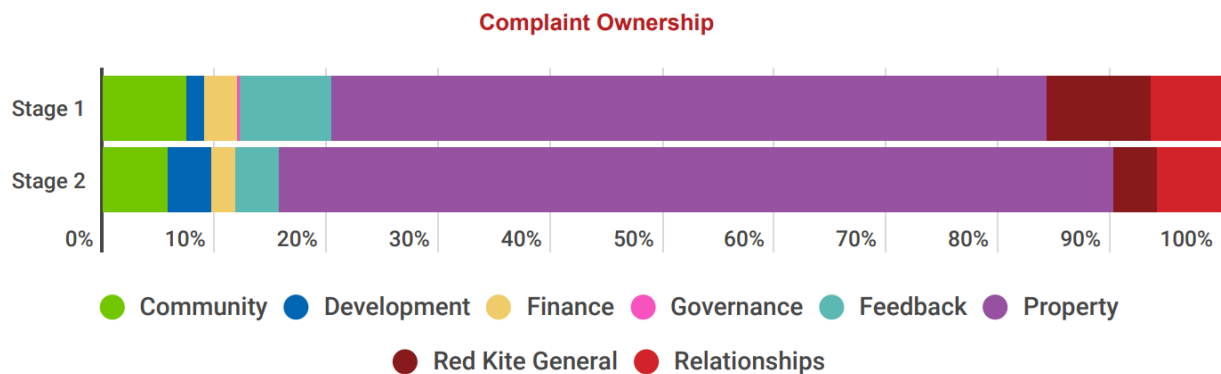
*Sum of Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints

Timeliness of response Within Housing Ombudsman timescales



Learning identified from formal complaints





In 2024-2025 we restructured the Feedback team and increased capacity, with the creation of the Head of Feedback role. This provides more support and supervision for handling complaints, the impact of which is reflected in the improved quality of complaint responses and service delivery.

There were 385 stage 1 complaints in 2024/2025 an increase of 13% compared to the number of stage 1 complaints received in 2023/2024 (340).

There were 61 stage 2 complaints in 2024/2025 a threefold increase compared to the number of stage 2 complaints received in 2023/2024 (15). This increase is due to updating the appeals process in 2024, to meet the expectations of the Code. As such, we no longer require a complainant to provide new/further evidence before accepting an appeal request.

79% of complaints were fully or partially upheld, this means complaint investigations identified a failure to act in accordance with our obligations or policies in most cases. The primary cause of most service failures was either a lack of ownership/poor performance (34%) or poor communication (34%). With Property Services (repairs) continuing to receive the highest number of Stage 1 (64%) and Stage 2 (75%) complaints.

The key reasons for raising a stage 1 complaint were:

- Unhappiness with the amount of time taken to complete a repair
- The workmanship provided when carrying out repairs

- Unhappiness with the communication provided when handling a service request

The key reasons for complainants escalating to stage 2 (Appeal) were:

- Requesting an increase in compensation to better reflect the impact of service failures
- Unhappiness with our failure to complete actions promised within the stage 1 response
- Unhappiness with a decision or reasoning made in line with our policies and procedures

Our main reasons for declining to investigate a complaint were:

- An initial service request
- The issue raised is out of time (more than 12 months old)

Housing Ombudsman non-compliance

This section looks at Housing Ombudsman determinations and any other notifications of non-compliance made during 2024-2025.

We have complied with all orders made by the Ombudsman in 2024-2025.

Following the government's "[Make Things Right](#)" campaign to improve property conditions for social housing tenants, the Ombudsman continues to experience growing demand. In response, the Ombudsman increased its resources to ensure it could meet demand. This increased awareness and output of the Housing Ombudsman has increased the number of decisions provided to landlords across the sector.

In 24/25 the Ombudsman provided 8 determinations, containing 22 findings. This compares to 0 determinations and 0 findings in 23/24. Please note, a determination is a single case decision, and a finding is a complaint point/area within the determination. So one determination can contain multiple findings. Further guidance on Ombudsman findings can be found [here](#).

There were 7 determinations with a finding of maladministration (severe maladministration / maladministration / service failure) and 1 with no maladministration.

The Ombudsman also made 1 jurisdiction decision, when it declined to investigate a data breach complaint because it fell outside of its jurisdiction. In this case, the tenant was informed of the remit of the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) to consider our handling of a data breach.

The total 22 findings contained 11 findings of maladministration, 6 findings of service failure (lowest level of maladministration), 4 findings of no maladministration, 1 finding of reasonable redress and 0 findings of severe maladministration.

The key cause of maladministration findings were:

- Poor repairs handling due to unreasonable delays or failing to appropriately respond to our contractor's findings
- Poor complaint handling by failing to award appropriate compensation, considering the impact of service failures, or unreasonably rejecting appeal requests
- Poor communication with tenants, by failing to respond to emails or provide updates for ongoing issues

- Poor record keeping, such as being unable to provide sufficient detail on the actions taken during each repair visit

The key actions taken to prevent a reoccurrence of the failures identified are:

- An increase in resources for Property Services (repairs), to improve service capacity
- Close management of our repair contractors to ensure consistent and sustained improvements of our repairs service
- Implemented IT/process changes to improve the ability to track repairs, act on overdue repairs and monitor record keeping quality. This will ensure repairs are completed within a reasonable time and provides the tools to proactively update tenants when there are unavoidable delays
- Updating compensation awards to meet the Ombudsman's expectations and handling complaint appeal requests according to the Code
- A Head of Service checks every compensation award to ensure proportionate compensation is awarded at the earliest possible stage

Please note that the impact of these improvement actions will take time to be reflected in future Ombudsman decisions, due to the time taken by the Ombudsman to complete an investigation. As of 30 April 2025 there are currently 15 open cases on the Housing Ombudsman portal, at all stages of the Ombudsman process, considering our actions as far back as 2021. This consists of 9 cases at the pre-investigation or Ombudsman triage stage and 6 at formal investigation stage. Please note that not all cases at the pre-investigation stage will necessarily progress to formal investigation.

Overall, there has been a substantial increase in the number of Ombudsman maladministration findings. Reflecting a clear need to improve services, in particular repairs and complaints handling.

Service Improvements and Learning

We are committed to learning from complaints and have dedicated resource to review findings and work across the business to implement improvements. This year we have worked to increase the robustness of our improvements by ensuring all improvements are evidenced and tested for success. Whereby we identify that success hasn't been realised we take further action, working closely with relevant teams across the business.

This year we have completed actions on 251 pieces of learning, focussing on high priority learnings and any trends we identify amongst complaints.

This section details some examples of our improvement work, to demonstrate how we are upholding our values as a tenant-led organisation. The steps taken will improve the services provided to our tenants, reduce the need to raise or escalate complaints and reduce repetition of the same service failures.

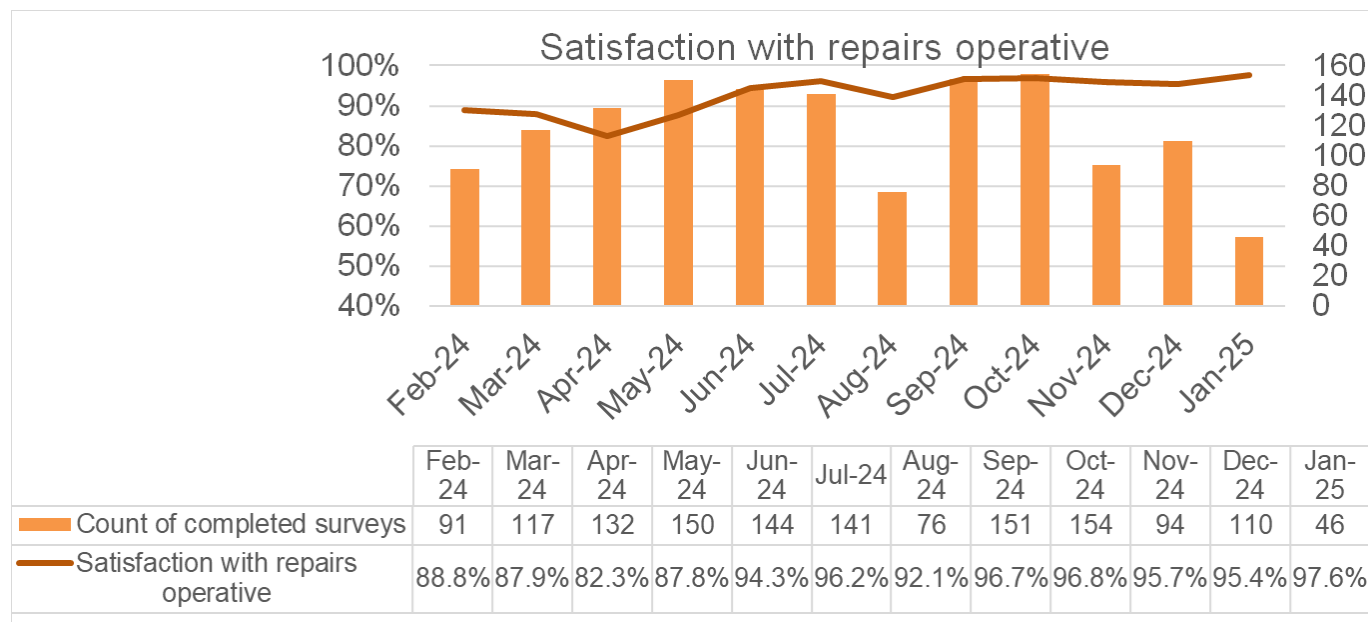
Poor Communication

What we got wrong

Several complaints were raised regarding lack of communication, or poor tone in communications or repair operatives failing to be respectful when working in our homes.

What we did about it

We reissued our code of conduct to all operatives, and in 2024 reintroduced monthly training workshops using May, June and July to focus on expectations of the contract. Additionally, we reminded staff of the importance of good and responsive communication, to ensure we keep our tenants adequately updated. We success tested in January 2025 and were pleased to see a sustained increase in tenant satisfaction with repairs operative, as shown in the below graph.



Poor repairs handling

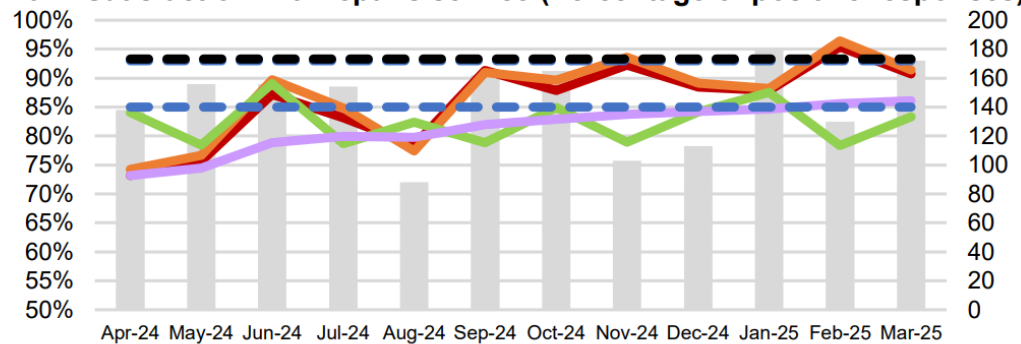
What we got wrong

Several tenants raised complaints regarding repair delays, poor ownership/oversight and their level of frustration with constantly chasing to progress repairs. Based on this feedback, we identified that several of our repair failures were happening due to poor oversight or contract management of follow-on works.

What we did about it

To address this, we instructed our repairs contractor to add all remedial works under the same job number, preventing works being closed down prematurely and leaving tenants inconvenienced for longer than necessary. Our variations process to approve works was also adapted to allow for instant approvals for works under £500 and Gilmartins approval limited upped from £80 to £200. Following this change we have seen an increase with repairs satisfaction as shown in the below graph:

01 - Satisfaction with repairs service (Percentage of positive responses)



	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Jan-25	Feb-25	Mar-25
Count of completed surveys	138	156	156	154	88	162	165	103	113	181	130	172
All contractors	73.2%	75.6%	87.2%	83.1%	78.4%	91.4%	87.9%	92.2%	88.5%	87.8%	95.4%	90.7%
Gilmartins	74.2%	76.7%	89.7%	84.8%	77.4%	91.0%	89.6%	93.6%	89.1%	88.2%	96.4%	91.4%
Previous	84.1%	78.4%	89.1%	78.7%	82.4%	78.9%	84.9%	78.9%	84.1%	87.5%	78.4%	83.3%
YTD	73.2%	74.5%	78.9%	80.0%	79.8%	82.0%	82.9%	83.8%	84.2%	84.7%	85.6%	86.1%
Upper	93.0%	93.0%	93.0%	93.0%	93.0%	93.0%	93.0%	93.0%	93.0%	93.0%	93.0%	93.0%
Lower	85.0%	85.0%	85.0%	85.0%	85.0%	85.0%	85.0%	85.0%	85.0%	85.0%	85.0%	85.0%
Housemark 2023/24	93.3%	93.3%	93.3%	93.3%	93.3%	93.3%	93.3%	93.3%	93.3%	93.3%	93.3%	93.3%

Handling of leak repairs

What we got wrong

When a repair issue is reported we usually make three attempts to visit the tenant in order to inspect the report and take subsequent actions. If we cannot gain access after three attempts our process was to close the job down and reallocate resources to other jobs. From various complaints related to leaks it was identified that this actually could be extremely damaging to the home and pose health and safety risks to tenants. Leaving a reported leak unresolved could also lead us to spending more time dealing with extensive damp and mould later on, increasing costs and inconveniencing our tenants further.

What we did about it

We altered our 'no access' process when the reported repair specifically relates to a leak. We no longer simply close the job down; an internal escalation now takes place after three missed appointments, to make further attempts to contact the tenant and gain an understanding of the status of the leak. Since making this change we have seen a downward trend in complaints due to leaks.

Handling of repairs involving asbestos

What we got wrong

The nature and age of some of our housing stock means that we often encounter repair jobs which involve possibly disturbing asbestos in order to complete the work. Asbestos was commonly used as a building material when many of our homes were built, and if left alone and in good condition, the risk to health from it is very low. However, once disturbed it can be very harmful so we treat the risk of disturbance very seriously. Our process where there could be a risk involved getting a survey of the area completed by an external company and then having to contract specialists in handling the material to complete the works. This process could often be lengthy and meant some repair jobs went unresolved for longer than we would like.

What we did about it

Operatives from our repairs contractor Gilmartins completed accredited training to be permitted to work with low impact asbestos materials. This included many different tradespeople who could come into contact with asbestos as part of their work. They were upskilled on how to complete works safely where asbestos may be present, decontamination techniques, how to dispose of waste, and how to effectively risk assess each job. A written assessment had to be passed in order to gain the qualification and we are pleased that we now have seven operatives fully qualified to work on non-licensed asbestos-related works. This addition to the contract has already seen the wait for some repair jobs reduce - we have recorded an 87% decrease in calls related to asbestos survey delays since October 2024.

Poor communication on internal transfers/ending a tenancy

What we got wrong

During the process of ending a tenancy and transferring to a new home we encountered some delays with our tenant returning their keys. We made multiple attempts to contact the tenant in order to regain access to the home and informed them that failure to do so 'within a timeframe' would result in lock changes and disposal of items. This particular end of tenancy procedure was extended multiple times and lasted well over six months with very little sight of a resolution leading to items being removed.

On an eventual conclusion of the matter, and after discussions both internally and with the tenant, it was felt we could have been much clearer from the start around our expected timescales and the repercussions if these were not met, in order to support managing expectations and avoid a lengthy and time-consuming tenancy management case.

What we did about it

We reviewed and updated our termination procedure to have very clear expectations and resultant processes to follow if deadlines are not met by our tenants, in order to ensure clarity and consistency. We have a clear Torts process map to ensure staff are aware of the actions needed when a tenant fails to return keys. Additionally, our Notice to Quit (NTQ) internal transfer letters, were updated to clearly inform the tenant on the process for returning keys/key fobs and the actions we may take if they fail to fulfil their obligations. We also updated our website with this end of tenancy information in order to ensure all our tenants are fully aware of what to do when moving to a new home.

Housing Ombudsman Annual Landlord Report

As of 30 April 2025, the most recent year for which Housing Ombudsman Landlord Performance Reports are available is 2023-2024. The Housing Ombudsman reports for 2024-2025 are yet to be published.

Due to receiving less than 5 findings in 2023-2024, the Ombudsman did not publish an individual landlord performance report for Red Kite covering 2023-2024.

Other relevant reports/publications

The Ombudsman regularly publishes several [reports](#) to improve standards across the industry.

In 24/25 these reports were relied on when developing response templates, policies, action plans and IT specification requirements.