

Appendix 2 – Housing Ombudsman Investigations Babergh

Case Reference 202430826:

The resident complained about how Babergh District Council handled several issues at his home. These included concerns about a new front door lock which he felt was unsafe for his wife due to her disabilities, a request for a fence in the front garden following an incident with a neighbour's dog, ongoing problems with damp and mould, and delays in carrying out repairs. He also complained about poor communication and delays in the complaints process.

Overall, while the Council eventually resolved the issue with the door lock, there were clear failings in repairs, communication, and complaint handling, which led to compensation and required improvements.

- Link to case: <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/decisions/babergh-district-council-202430826/>

Case Reference 202345261:

The resident complained about how Babergh District Council handled an ongoing rat infestation in her home. She said the problem had been happening for over four years and that rats were entering her property through the loft and walls.

Overall, the Ombudsman found serious failings in how the Council managed the infestation and delays in complaint handling, leading to compensation and required improvements.

- Link to case: <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/decisions/babergh-district-council-202345261/>

Case Reference 202437767:

There is a third case, 202437767, which does not have a public link. A complaint was investigated by the Housing Ombudsman regarding delays in repairing an overflowing drain. The investigation found a service failure due to the excessive time taken to complete the repair. As a result, the Babergh District Council was ordered to pay £100 compensation to the resident.

Case Reference 202513953:

There is a fourth case, 202513953, which has not yet been finalised by the Housing Ombudsman. The Council did receive an initial draft decision however, part of the report has been appealed with the Housing Ombudsman. As this case's findings have not been finalised at this stage, the full details of this have not been included in this annual report as it is subject to change.

Appendix 3 – Housing Ombudsman Investigations Mid Suffolk

Case Reference 202445120:

The resident complained about how Mid Suffolk District Council responded to ongoing damp and mould in her bungalow. She said the problem had existed since she moved in and had damaged her belongings, and that she believed it was due to poor insulation rather than her lifestyle.

Overall, the Ombudsman found significant delays, poor communication, and a failure to follow policy, leading to compensation and required improvements.

- Link to case: <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/decisions/mid-suffolk-district-council-202445120/>

Appendix 4 – Compliance with the Complaints Handling Code

Annual Self-Assessment

Each year, the Council are required to complete a self-assessment against the complaint handling code. The date for submission to the Housing Ombudsman this year is the 30 September 2026.

Landlords are required to submit a self-assessment to the Housing Ombudsman's complaint handling code to ensure accountability, transparency, and continuous improvement in how we are handling complaints.

Following this report being presented to Overview and Scrutiny, the Self-Assessment will be updated to reflect the latest report and statement for 2025/26. The submission to the Housing Ombudsman will then take place.

The latest version can be found on our website here:

- <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/compliments-comments-and-complaints>
- <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/compliments-comments-and-complaints>

Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis

This report provides our analysis of our complaint handling performance across Babergh District Council and Mid Suffolk District Council.

The Councils do not refuse to add or escalate complaints within our complaints process. If a customer, resident, or tenant wishes to raise a complaint, then this will be added to the complaints system on their behalf, or they are provided with information on how to raise the complaint. The Councils will then review the information and close the complaint in the appropriate manner, whether this be: Upheld, Not Upheld, or Not Considered to be a Complaint.

The Council have not refused to escalate complaints about a service that can be complained about. In the Councils' Complaints Policy there are several items that are not considered to be a complaint and when it falls into one of these categories, the customer will be provided with the relevant information prior to raising a complaint.

Any Findings of Non-Compliance with the Code.

Since the new Complaint Handling Code was launched in 2024, the Councils have not received any findings of non-compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's complaint handling code.

Once the Annual Report for 2025/26 has been presented to Overview and Scrutiny and published with the response of our members responsible for complaints, we will be fully compliant with the Code.

Service Improvements

Our service improvements for housing can be found in the main body of the report.

Any report about performance

Babergh District Council were included in the Housing Ombudsman's Annual Landlord Report which is referenced in this report.

Any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman

Neither Babergh District Council nor Mid Suffolk District Council were included in any other reports produced by the Housing Ombudsman.

Appendix 5 – Complaints Policy

Our Complaints Policy can be found on our website here:

- <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/our-compliments-comments-and-complaints-policy>
- <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/our-compliments-comments-and-complaints-policy>

Appendix 6 – User Stories

User Story 1 – Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

A resident experienced ongoing ASB near their home since 2022, shortly after a neighbour moved into the area. The behaviour included loud music, shouting, swearing, aggressive conduct, barking dogs, and disturbances late at night and in the early hours. At times, incidents escalated to threats, reports of dog fighting, fires producing smoke, and confrontations that caused alarm to nearby residents.

This behaviour had a significant impact on the resident's daily life. They described ongoing sleep disruption, emotional distress, and concerns for their safety, as well as the effect on other neighbours, including children and more vulnerable residents who felt frightened and unsettled.

The resident and others regularly reported incidents and provided detailed evidence logs over a number of years. While there were periods where the situation appeared to improve, these often coincided with the neighbour being absent from the property, rather than a lasting change in behaviour. When the neighbour returned, the issues resumed, sometimes at a heightened level.

During this time, the Council took action such as issuing tenancy warnings, requesting log sheets, and monitoring reports. However, the resident's experience was that communication was not always clear and that the response did not feel consistent. There were occasions where cases were closed due to limited evidence, despite continued concerns being raised by multiple households. This led to frustration and a lack of confidence in the process.

The Council recognised that although action had been taken, a more proactive and preventative approach could have been applied earlier. In particular, there were missed opportunities to increase engagement with residents, carry out regular visits, and maintain closer monitoring during quieter periods to prevent the behaviour from returning. A more visible presence and earlier coordination with partner agencies may also have helped to reduce the impact on residents.

As a result, the resident met with their Housing Officer to agree a clear plan moving forward. This included regular updates every two weeks, increased visits to the area to provide a visible presence, improved monitoring of incident logs, and stronger coordination with other agencies such as Police and Environmental Health. Wider engagement with other residents in the area also took place to better understand the full impact of the issues.

Residents were supported to continue reporting incidents, provide statements where needed, and consider options such as mediation, while recognising that more formal enforcement action depended on evidence meeting legal thresholds.

Alongside this, the Council used the experience to make wider service improvements. These included introducing an updated ASB policy, strengthening communication with residents, increasing staffing and resources within Housing Management and Safer Communities teams, and placing greater emphasis on early intervention and proactive engagement, such as local visits and gathering community feedback.

User Story 2- Boiler

A resident experienced ongoing problems with their heating system shortly after moving into their home. The boiler frequently lost pressure, requiring repeated attention, and at times the resident was left without reliable hot water. This created ongoing inconvenience for the household, as they had to repeatedly top up the system to maintain basic use.

Over a period of time, multiple repair visits were arranged by the Council's gas contractor. However, the issue was not resolved, and appointments were frequently disrupted. There were occasions where contractors attended without the correct parts, cancelled at short notice, or failed to attend without clear communication. This led to frustration and a loss of confidence in the repair process.

The underlying issue was identified as a faulty pressure release valve, but delays occurred due to incorrect parts being ordered, misdiagnosis of the problem, and wider contractor coordination issues. Although interim works were attempted, including replacing other components, these did not resolve the fault.

The resident continued to report the issue and remained without a permanent fix for several months, despite repeated contact and follow-up. During this time, they experienced inconvenience, uncertainty, and disruption to daily life due to the lack of a consistent heating and hot water system.

Following a review of the case, the Council recognised that the delays and poor communication had not met expected standards. While efforts had been made to resolve the issue, the overall service had been impacted by repeated missed appointments, lack of clear updates, and failure to complete repairs within a reasonable timeframe.

In response, the Council escalated the issue internally, involving senior staff, contract managers, and compliance teams to ensure that the repair was prioritised. A further appointment was arranged with additional oversight to ensure that the issue would be fully assessed and resolved.

This experience led the Council to identify the need for improved contractor management, better communication with residents, and stronger oversight of ongoing repairs, particularly where issues remain unresolved over multiple visits. The aim of these improvements was to ensure that repairs are completed more efficiently, that residents are kept fully informed, and that similar issues are resolved more quickly in the future.

Due to the impact on the resident and their household, the Council also recognised that the delays had caused significant inconvenience and distress, and this was acknowledged through a compensation payment.

Appendix 7 – Sample of Compliments Received

- “Over the last 5 years I have been in and out of homelessness. Through every step of the way my Housing Solutions Officer has been there to guide and support [me]. It is with thanks to my Housing Solutions Officer that this time I feel I am in the right place to make this work.”
- “I asked BDC if we could have a fan installed in our bathroom to try and stop the massive amount of condensation over the winter, BDC agreed and installed this. I thought that I would let you know that this fan is amazing and it has solved all the damp and condensation problems we had. I can’t believe how well this actually works. Thank you for installing this.”
- “Your repairs officer visited my property today to fix my broken door. He was very polite. Took his shoes off before entering the house, and he took the time to fix a fence panel that had fallen off, when it wasn't his original job to do so. Very happy he attended.”
- “I reported a defect with a socket on Tuesday afternoon. This was acknowledged by MSDC. On Wednesday the electrical contractor contacted me to arrange a suitable time to repair the defect. The smart workman duly arrived, showed his identity without being asked, completed the repair, cleaned up a small amount of dust/debris he had made and all this within 24 hours. you could not ask for better service. Well done and thank you to all concerned at MSDC and the contractors.”
- “After my bin was not emptied and logged with yourselves it was collected the following morning. My 3 yr old son always loves to wave as they go by on the collections and the staff always wave back if they notice him. The bin men / women are often unrecognised for all the work they do to keep households running. So a big thank you to all the staff! “
- I would like to inform you, and thank you, for the quick repair I requested recently, I was having trouble with the central Heating on 26/11/2025 and reported it on line at 12.19, early afternoon I had a phone call from the council asking if we was in, and with in a couple of ours some one was sent out to repair the the heating, it was nothing but a few adjustments to the valves, and it seem to have done the trick., so this is just to thank the staff involved.
- “Thank you to all of your Customer Services team who are always so polite and helpful”

Appendix 8 – TSM Complaints Data

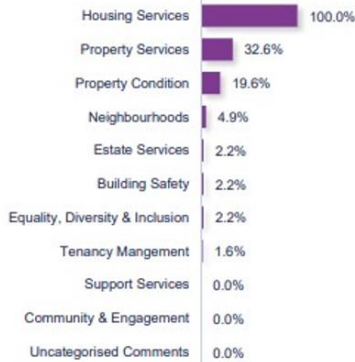
Complaints

Please explain why you feel that about the way Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Council's approach to handling complaints?

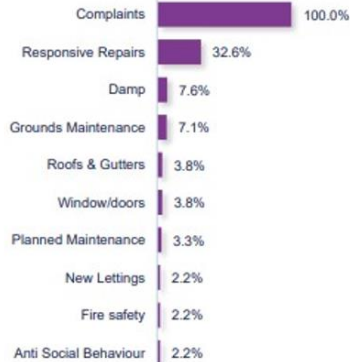
Base Size: 184



Categories



Top 10 Subcategories



Attribute	Count	%	Sentiment Score
Timeliness / Responsiveness	69	37.5%	-4.07
Subcategory, no attribute (yet)	56	30.4%	-2.91
Communication / Transparency	46	25.0%	-4.24
Resolution	37	20.1%	-4.14
Listening / Acting	35	19.0%	-4.54
Quality of Work / Service	11	6.0%	-4.18
Effort	9	4.9%	-4.56
Safety	7	3.8%	-3.00
Trust	4	2.2%	-5.00
Accountability	3	1.6%	-2.33
No Comments	3	1.6%	-1.67
Satisfaction	2	1.1%	-2.50
Appointments / Convenience	1	0.5%	-5.00
Empathy	1	0.5%	-5.00
Fairness	1	0.5%	0.00
Staff Conduct	1	0.5%	-5.00
Accessibility			-
Consistency			-
Worker Conduct			-



Dissatisfied or neutral tenants were asked to explain why they feel the way they do about the approach to handling complaints. The main themes are slow or no response, lack of follow-up, and poor communication. Many tenants describe repeated contacts with little or no acknowledgement, long delays, promises unkept, and being passed between staff. Repairs are often incomplete or temporary, requiring repeated visits or legal escalation; common issues include mould, damp, heating/boiler failures, roofing, windows, bathrooms, and accessibility adaptations.

Tenants feel ignored, not taken seriously, or dismissed; some report unsafe living conditions (collapsed ceilings, sewage smells, rodent problems, structural hazards) and unmet urgent needs. Contractors and handovers are criticised for poor workmanship and high repeat visits. There are accounts of inconsistent treatment between tenants, alleged lost records, and inadequate escalation routes. Some tenants have only seen action after formal complaints, solicitors, or politicians get involved. Vulnerable tenants report particular hardship (health impacts, unsafe environments, lack of reasonable adjustments).

Overall sentiment describes frustration, mistrust, and a perception that Babergh and Mid Suffolk meet minimum requirements but fail to resolve underlying problems.

■ Positive ■ Neutral ■ Negative

15

Appendix 9 – Repeat Complainant Data

Team	Repeat complainants	Total complaints
Housing – Repairs and Maintenance	16	33
Housing – Gas and Electrical Compliance	8	26
Housing – Tenancy Services	7	18
Housing - Gateway to Homechoice, Allocations & Homelessness	6	13
Housing - Planned Maintenance	3	7
SRP - Council Tax	2	5
Housing – Damp & Mould	2	4
A Complaint About Any Other Service Area	1	3
Planning – Enforcement & Heritage	1	3
Freedom of Information Complaint	1	2
Car Parks (excluding appeals against parking fines)	1	2
Planning – Babergh District	1	2
Planning – Mid Suffolk District	1	2