

**Karibu**  
Community Homes



# **ANNUAL COMPLAINTS PERFORMANCE & SERVICE IMPROVEMENT REPORT**

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**Q1 TO Q4  
2024-2025**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report provides updated information as we work to provide a focussed approach to complaint management. It is important for us to continue to learn from our complaints so that we can make changes to improve our service offer and reduce the number of similar complaints.
- 1.2 With the new Consumer Regulations effective in this year and whilst Karibu is developing its culture there is a need for us demonstrate a high-quality approach to dispute resolution and service provision.
- 1.3 This report provides an overview of our performance; what our customers are telling us via their complaints (resident voice) and some of the actions we are undertaking as a result to improve our service offer.
- 1.4 There have been a total of six Ombudsman determinations up to the end of March 2025, as shown by the table below, we had one severe maladministration case and three maladministration cases in 2024/25. This is a small improvement on 2023/24 when we received two severe maladministration and three maladministration determinations.

Case no	Date determined	Outcome	Actions
1	October 2024	Maladministration	Apology Compensation Review process Staff training
2	November 2024	Outside Ombudsman Jurisdiction	None
3	November 2024	Severe maladministration	Apology Compensation Review record keeping Review repair handling process
4	November 2024	Maladministration	Apology Compensation Review policy
5	February 2025	maladministration	Apology Compensation Arrange visit from pest control company
6	March 2025	Service Failure	Compensation

## **2. RECOMMENDATION**

### **2.1 Performance**

2.2 During the year 2024/2025 we received:

- 131 new complaints (Stage One)
- 20 escalated to Stage Two

2.3 We had set ourselves an ambitious target of 100% to acknowledge complaints at both stages of the complaints process. At the end of March 2025, we have responded as follows:

- Stage One – 59% (78 out of 131)
- Stage Two – 45% (9 out of 20)

2.4 We have put in place an additional Complaints Co-ordinator Meeting each week to review the complaints received and logged to improve our acknowledgement response times.

2.5 Our response times to complaints are set out by the Housing Ombudsman and the Handling Code, which specify ten working days for a Stage One response and 20 working days for a Stage Two response (unless we write to extend). The response times are calculated on the closure of the complaint. Our response performance for this year is as follows, measured as a percentage:-

- Stage One – 63% (82 out of 131)
- Stage Two – 75% (15 out of 20)

2.6 Although we did set ourselves a challenging target regarding our acknowledgements and response times for our complaints, we would have liked to have got closer to that target, however, we have encountered some challenges over the course of the year, namely some instability in our Customer Services Team regarding staffing. In all, we have had three different Complaints Officers this year. This did cause some disruption regarding training and handovers, which affected our ability to meet our acknowledgement and response targets. There was also a period in January when our Complaints Officer was needed for our call centre due to us being severely short staffed. We now have a settled and capable team who are performing effectively; therefore, we anticipate a significant upturn in our figures over the course of this year.

2.7 Additional training has been provided to our current Complaints Officer which should ensure a better response performance going forward. A new complaints reporting tool using Power BI will also come into effect in June, which will reduce the need for manual intervention and use of separate spreadsheets.

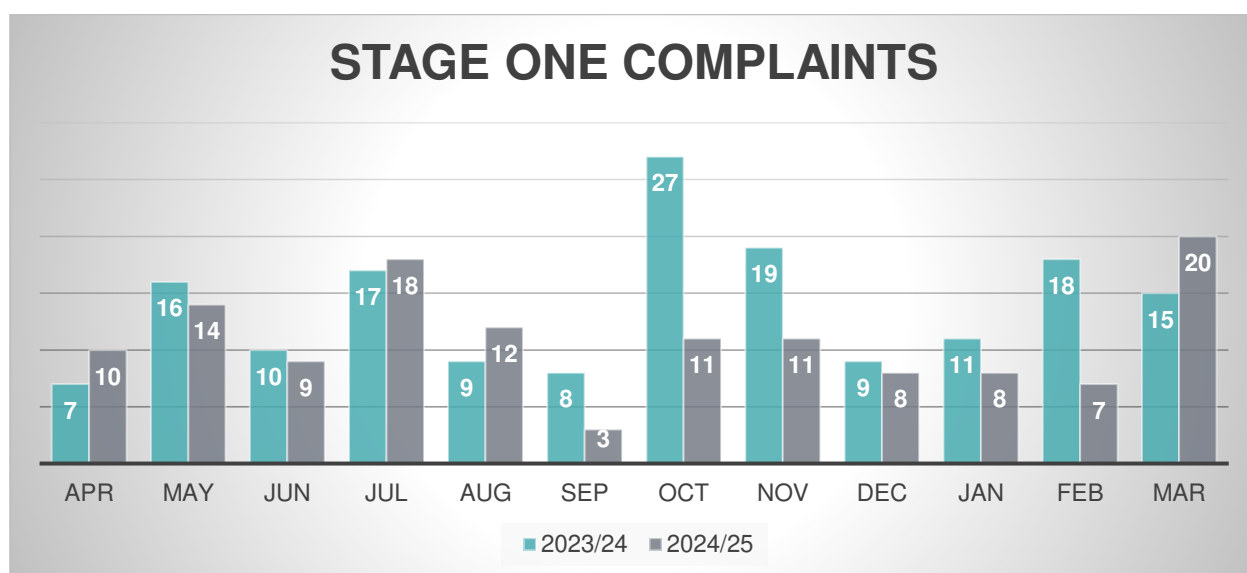
2.8 We had five Stage Two cases that exceeded the response time limit. Four cases were related to repairs and maintenance and one case related to the London Living Rent and charges. Two of those repair and maintenance cases escalated to the Housing Ombudsman, however, this was not due to any delay in the complaints process. In both cases the resident has refused our offers of compensation, despite them being in line with our policy.

### **Further Insight**

2.9 We have compiled some further detailed insights that provide more details. We are developing our capability to report on complaints and ensure equity in our service which will be further enhanced and developed this year.

## Complaints by month

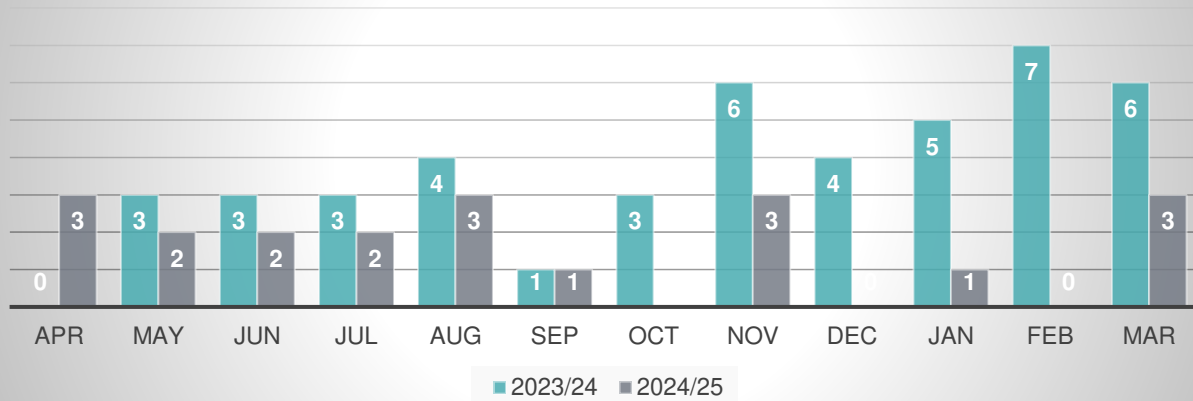
- 2.10 The chart below provides a summary of the complaints received monthly between April 2024 to March 2025. The complaints for Inquilab in 2023/24 have been added as a barometer to reflect the improved performance this year. In 2023/24 a total of 166 complaints were received as opposed to 131 this year as Karibu, which included the uptake of around 550 properties from former Westway.
- 2.11 As is common throughout the sector, most of our complaints were related to repairs and maintenance, in total 76% of the complaints received were from this area. We conducted 5,916 repairs over the last year, resulting in 99 complaints, which is 1.67% of our total repairs. A very small number of complaints have been raised regarding the quality of work carried out by the contractors.
- 2.12 In the main, the lack of timeliness and communication has been the main driver for complaints this year. We have experienced backlogs with quotes being agreed, simply due to the high volume of repairs we have carried out, this has led to some of our repairs being delayed. We have two dedicated admin staff who are working hard to clear the backlog.



## Complaint escalation rates by month

- 2.13 Whilst every effort is made to resolve a complaint at Stage 1 and provide an early resolution for our residents, the chart below reflects the monthly breakdowns of escalations. In a high percentage of cases this prevents an escalation to Stage Two, although it is vital that anything that is promised in our Stage One response is then followed up effectively.

## STAGE 2 COMPLAINTS



- 2.14 The number of Stage Two complaints have remained low throughout the year. We try to ensure that a telephone call is made to the resident so that they are satisfied with the resolution offered before the letter is sent. We have improved our performance significantly in this area, in 2023/24 as Inquilab 45 complaints were escalated to Stage 2, as opposed to 2024/25, as Karibu this number was reduced to 20 cases.

### You said we Did

- 2.15 Over the course of the year we have conducted several transactional surveys and have enlisted an external agency to contact a few residents each quarter with the aim of taking on board their comments so that we can look at ways we can improve our services.
- 2.16 Included is a snapshot of what we have been doing to improve in the short and medium term.

### You Said:

- Difficulties in contacting customer service, long wait times, and unreturned calls/emails

### We Did:

- We increased resources on phones and have a dedicated Complaints Officer
- We reviewed the triaging of telephone calls and re-routed a direct connection to our repair's contractors for quicker, more efficient repairs appointments
- We launched a self-service app developing further for all residents to be able to access and self-serve following a trial of testing with some of our engaged residents
- Internally we had an overhaul of resident communication and response management to improve our handling of communication
- We developed clear standards for our services and published them online to make it easier for residents to access these can be found on our website
- We have commenced a comprehensive review and overhaul of the structure of all voice and written communication channels and will be working with engaged residents to help design a better way of responding to calls, emails and messages.

### Repair Services

#### You Said:

- Slow response times for repairs, outstanding repairs, and poor quality of work.

#### We Did:

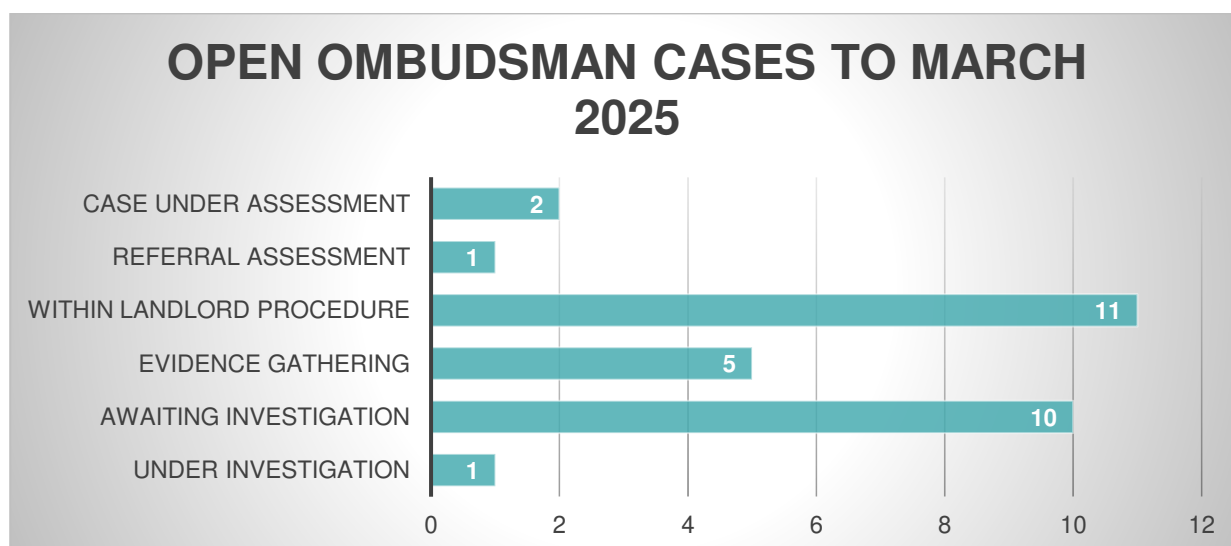
- We retendered a new repairs contractor (live since April 2024). The new contractor worked with us to complete a backlog of repairs and improved response times and triage of calls by handling the repair calls directly giving residents direct contact to the contractor
- We started a trial of moving other contractor repair calls directly to the contractor to provide faster response times and reduce queue times
- We send out transactional surveys to capture feedback from residents on the repair service to pick up areas of concern in a timely manner
- We conducted a review of previously reported historical repairs to prioritise urgent requests
- We held a resident conference day in November 2024 where our contractors met with residents and residents were able to discuss any issues with repairs along with Karibu staff
- We are currently working on a revised Repairs Policy (see agenda item 10) and Repair Service Standards in line with landlord responsibilities which will be launching by summer 2025
- We will be procuring long-term partnering contractors for repairs and cleaning/grounds services through 2025 /2026
- We have Increased resources and manpower to handle the backlog and admin of repairs when further works are required to reduce wait times.

All the above will enable us to improve communication with our customers, which has been a clear area in which we need to improve over the next twelve months. A comprehensive 'you said we did' report will be published on our website in June 2025.

### Housing Ombudsman Cases

2.17 The current caseload with the Ombudsman is shown below as of 31 March 2025. There are a total of **30** cases currently registered. Of these cases, **19** were opened this year, however it is to be noted that **11** of these are within the landlord's procedure, so it is likely that these cases did not go through our complaints process. **Four** were opened at the start of May 2024, which indicates that these complaints are from 2023/24 before our repair contractor was changed. The remaining **four** are at the awaiting investigation stage.

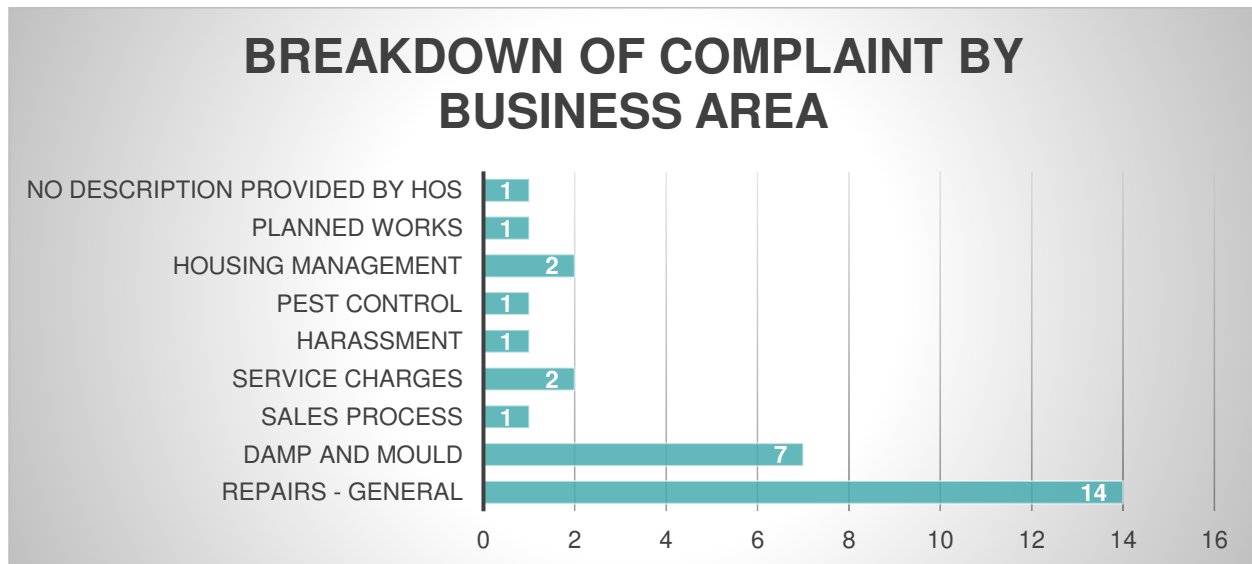
2.18 The following chart outlines the current case load with the HOS and their stages:-



2.19 Increased activity from the Ombudsman has been noted up to the end of March 2025. Some cases have been sitting with the Ombudsman for a significant amount of time.

2.20 As shown by the above graph, several cases are now awaiting to be investigated, this indicates that the Ombudsman are now looking at these cases after an extended period of inactivity on their part.

- 2.21 There have been six cases determined since April 2024. A key objective is to communicate effectively with the residents who have ongoing Ombudsman cases, with the aim of resolving as many as possible before any determinations are made. This work is ongoing; we have reached out to a number of these residents where there is an opportunity to resolve and are actively looking to conclude the complaints satisfactorily.
- 2.22 Below is a chart breaking down the areas of our business upon which the Ombudsman has received complaints. Overall, 76% of the complaints received relate to repairs, 23% of which relate to damp and mould. We have contacted all residents who have reported damp and mould cases via Housing Ombudsman and our internal procedures to ensure that these issues have been resolved.



#### Complaint themes

- 2.23 From our analysis, we can breakdown each area of complaint, the main driver is residents feel there is a lack of timely communication from us, and it is clear from the complaints being raised by our residents, improvements can still be made to “Getting the Basics Right” to improve our services.

The main reasons for complaints are as follows:

- Lack of Communication concerning follow up works
- Length of time taken to complete communal works to lifts and main door
- Lack of information provided in Rent and Service Charge increase letters for 2024/25
- General communication getting back to residents

- 2.24 Other complaint topics

- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Chasing information
- Delays in moves or letting property
- Account Direct Debit or rent increases
- Harassment/Graffiti

#### Learning from complaints

- 2.25 Throughout the year we have been able to identify areas where complaints have spiked. Most noteworthy is May 2024, where we received **14** complaints, in the main due to a lack of information to residents in relation to our rent and service charge increase letters for 2024/25.

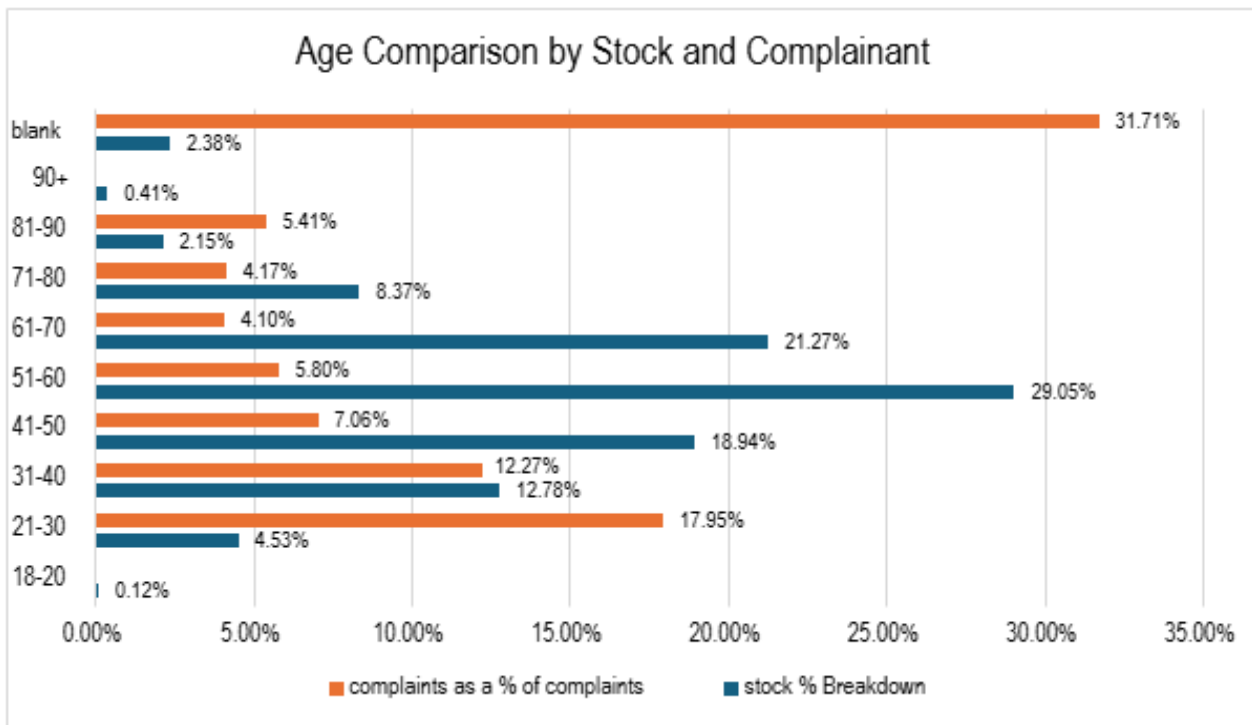
- 2.26 For the coming financial year, we will be making a conscious effort to supply the residents with a more comprehensive breakdown of their rent and service charges plus other helpful information. Work is already underway to ensure we meet this requirement.
- 2.27 During July 2024 we received **18** complaints, this coincided with new customer service advisers being employed, it is noted that a significant portion of these complaints should have been treated as service requests and has skewed the figures.
- 2.28 During March 2025 we received a higher-than-normal number of complaints, this was in part due to a minor data breach which caused a small number of residents to make a formal complaint, in addition some residents from one of our schemes reported an accumulation of rubbish outside their bin store. These complaints were resolved at Stage 1.
- 2.29 Overall, our biggest challenge has come from our two-tier repairs service, which was in place for most of the year. The overall service provided to legacy Inquilab and Westway residents differed in that our former Inquilab residents could contact the main contractor directly without having to go through our contact centre, this enabled them to speak to the contractor quickly, without having to wait in a queue or need to call back. This was not the case for our former Westway residents, who had to go through our contact centre to report a repair or be provided with an update on an existing one – this proved to be an untimely and frustrating process for the resident. This created a high volume of queues which stretched our resources to the limit.
- 2.30 We have reviewed how we can improve the service for our former Westway residents. In February 2025 we decided for the responsive repair calls to go directly to MNM (the repairs provider) and we have seen an upturn in our satisfaction results in quarter four as a result. We have also been able to respond to App messages and emails extremely quickly as our CSA's now have more time to do their admin tasks, as our call volumes have dropped significantly because of outsourcing the repair calls.
- 2.31 A general challenge we have faced is meeting the expectations of our residents when they contact us. We have numerous channels of contact as well as many individual staff contact options and generic email accounts presents some difficulties monitoring and managing our ability to respond in a timely and effective fashion. This is a priority for us, and we are working on as this is a key area of improvement following feedback from tenants. We have engaged consultants to advise us how we can better use our existing systems more effectively to improve the customer experience in the short to medium term.
- 2.32 The longer-term solution will involve a new way of capturing calls and written contact centrally aligned to our core systems which will ensure all communication is captured, monitored and measured for timely and high-quality responses. Better utilising self-service, automation, communication dashboards, AI and reducing the number of email channels will provide a more positive customer experience and support quicker responses.
- 2.33 We shall form a resident engagement group to work with us to make significant improvements in this area
- 2.34 To support two organisations coming together, a six-month Corporate Culture Training Plan commenced in January 2025, with a focus to align our cultures with Karibu by fostering a shared understanding of our mission and values. The aim is for us to work together towards our strategic goals, and provide a consistency in service delivery to continually improve our resident satisfaction

### **Summary of Complaint Demographics**

- 2.35 Our quarterly analysis of complaints reveals key demographic insights, including ethnicity, age, and borough distribution. By examining complaints as a percentage of our stock, we can identify potential outliers and areas for further investigation.
- 2.36 This data-driven approach allows us to gain deeper insights into specific demographic groups and address any underlying issues more effectively.



2.37 The chart provides a comparison between the age demographics of residents and the percentage of complaints from each age group. Generally, the data suggests that the percentage of complaints aligns with the percentage of residents in each age band.



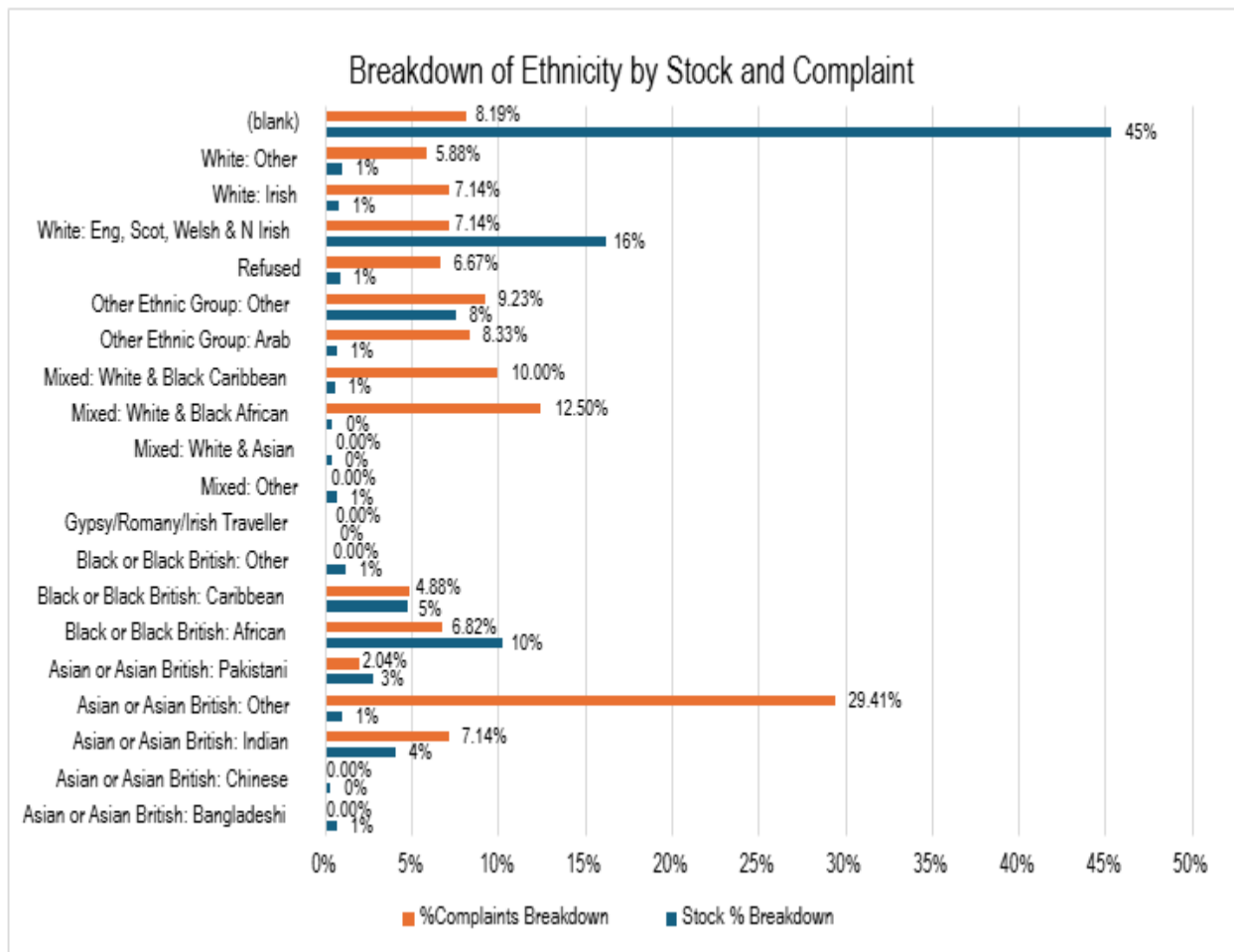
2.38 **21-30 Age Band:** This group represents 17.95% (14 from 78) of the residents in our stock, but they have a disproportionately high level of dissatisfaction. This indicates that residents aged 20-29 are more likely to file complaints compared to other age groups and may have a different expectation of speed of service responses.

2.39 Reviewing the complaints within this age band they follow the overall theme of complaints and lack of action, and the complaints fall across housing, tenancy and repairs.

2.40 No age recorded on system highlights where there are gaps in data of ages on the account which is being addressed with a consensus survey to collect missing resident data which should be completed within the next month or so.

2.41 **81-90 Age Band:** This relates to one resident who made two complaints during the year, regarding her lack of hot water for an extended period and an automated arrears letter that she received in error, both complaints were resolved quickly at Stage One.

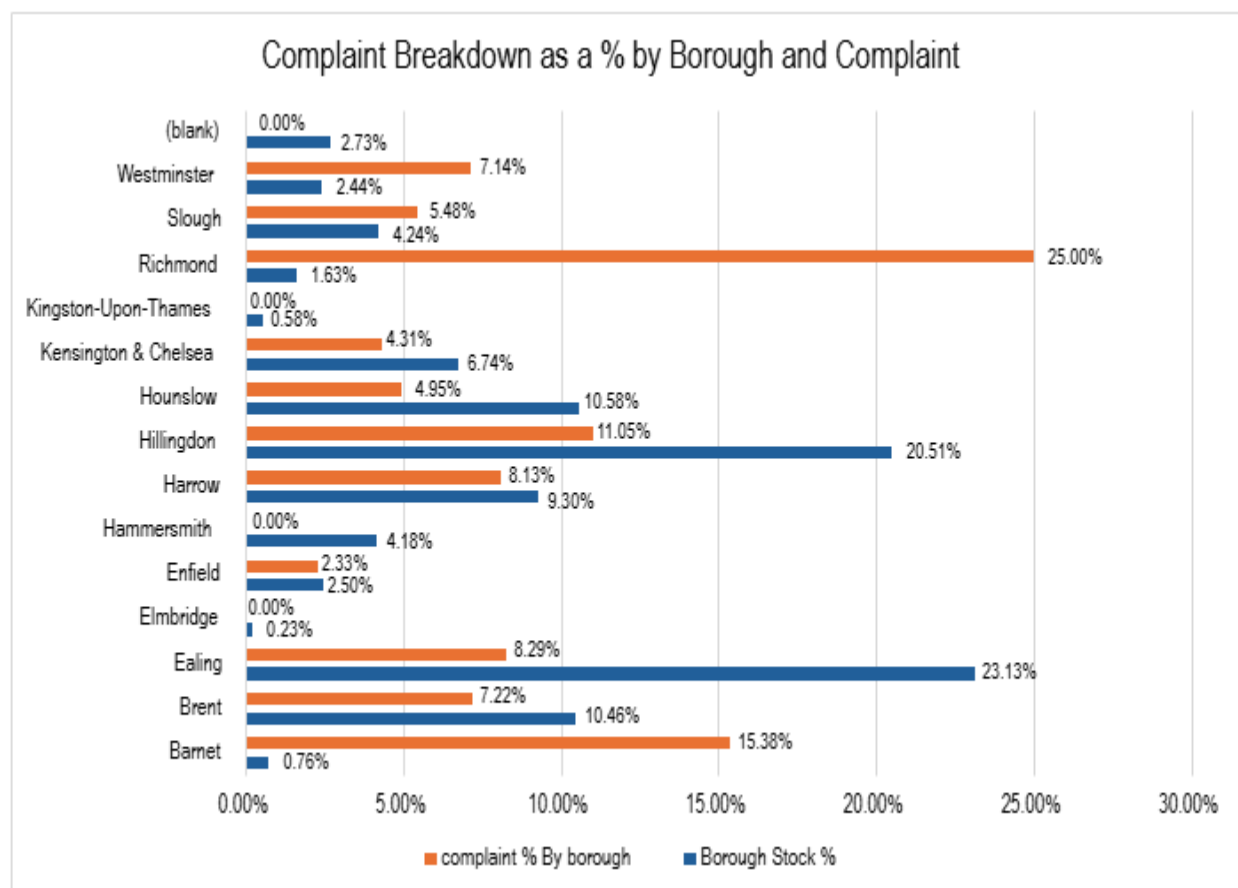
## Ethnicity



2.42 The Ethnicity Chart reflects a breakdown against our stock for residents who have agreed to provide us with their ethnicity and through tenancy audits and contact with residents we are continuing to try and reduce this gap in our data as we collect data.

- The "Asian or Asian British: Other" and "Mixed: White & Black African" and "White Irish" categories have higher complaint percentages compared to their representation in the stock.
- It is worth noting that due to the lower ethnicity in our stock "White Black African and White Irish" accounted for one complaint from each group and "Asian or Asian British Other" accounted for four.
- This is significant in % terms however not in volume but will be looked at to see if there are any trends or learning points from these complaint cases.
- Most other ethnic groups have complaint percentages that are relatively proportional to their stock percentages.

## Borough Demographics



- 2.43 The chart above reflects our stock breakdown and the breakdown of our complaints by Borough. One outlier is Richmond where there were four complaints out of stock of 30. The complaints were regarding delays with repairs in three cases, and an unannounced visit by a housing officer.
- 2.44 We received two complaints from our customers in Barnet where we have a small amount of stock (13) and Westminster, where we received three complaints from a total of 43 properties, all these complaints related to a lack of action and communication with repair issues, these were all resolved at Stage 1 of our complaints process.
- 2.45 This a dynamic action plan which captures the actions and changes identified through the complaints which we monitor via the operational teams. We will use our website to publish periodical reports about the positive difference complaints have made to the way that we operate.