



Connexus Homes Limited

Complaint Handling & Service Improvement Report 2024/25

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Foreword

Michele Ibbs, Chair of Connexus Homes Ltd

“At Connexus, we recognise that customer feedback, especially through complaints, is a powerful driver of improving the services we deliver. This year’s report reflects on how we’ve responded to that feedback, the progress we’ve made, and the challenges we continue to face.

The Board remains reassured by the organisation’s continued commitment to be compliant with the Housing Ombudsman’s Complaint Handling Code, through the systems in place and the commitment shown by colleagues across the business to deliver fair, transparent, and timely complaint resolutions.

We know that behind every complaint is a customer experience that matters. That’s why we remain focused not only on resolving issues but on learning from them, particularly in areas such as repairs and communication, where we know improvements have the greatest impact.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank our customers for their honesty and engagement. Your voices shape our services and help us do better.”

Nick Batt, Communities & Customer Services Director

“Complaints aren’t just problems – they’re stories about where things haven’t gone well, and opportunities to do better. Over the past year, we’ve listened, learned, and worked to improve as a result of complaints we’ve received. This report shares what’s changed, what could still be better, and how learning from complaints is helping shape our service improvement.

We remain committed to handling complaints efficiently, with transparency and care. While processes continue to improve, there is always more to do. Each complaint helps refine our approach, strengthen trust, and enhance service quality.

This report outlines how we’ve acted on customer feedback, the lessons learned, and the steps taken to improve, particularly in repairs and communication. Our goal is not just to resolve complaints but to proactively reduce them, fostering accountability and continuous improvement.

The year ahead will see a new customer service strategy and key projects to reinforce consistent service delivery. This includes improving complaint handling while working to minimise the need for complaints.

Should you have any queries, please contact us using the details at the end. Thank you for reading about how we are performing at Connexus.”

Introduction

This report aims to share information with our customers about Connexus' complaints procedure and how we have 'performed' against it in the financial year 2024/25. This includes how many complaints were received, how they were handled, and what the outcomes were.

An updated report is published every year, along with a self-assessment against the complaint handling code, which confirms that Connexus is compliant with its legal requirements. It also allows Connexus to check whether policies and procedures are working properly.

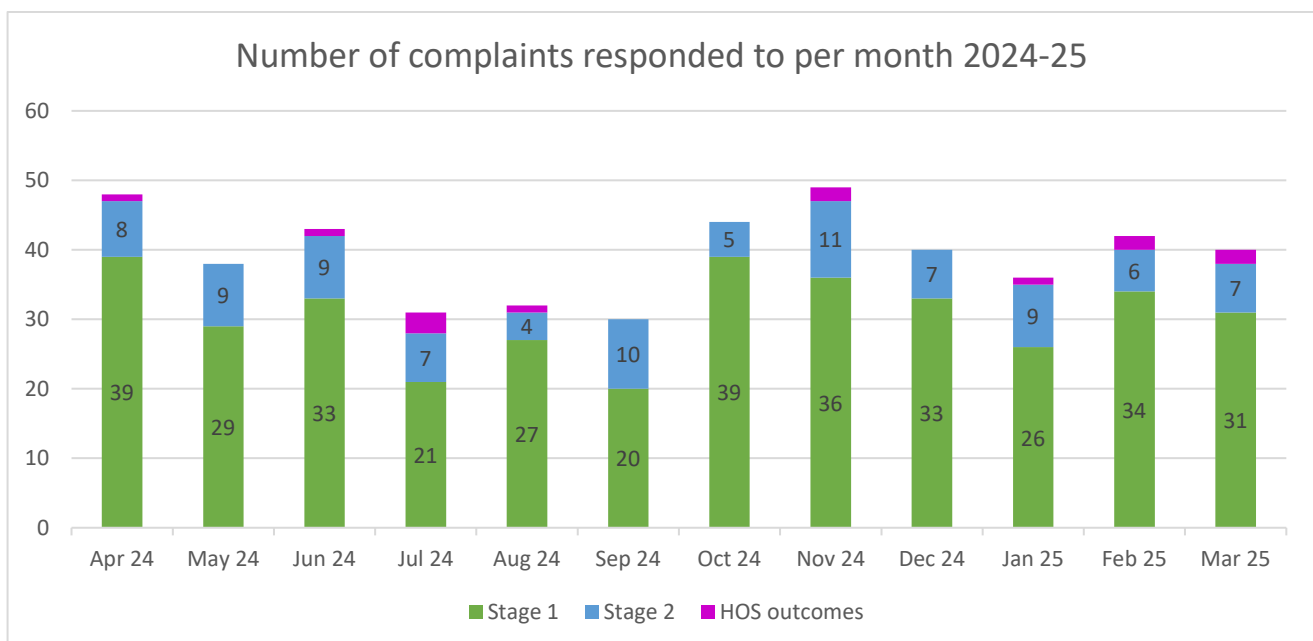
In this document several references are made to stage 1 and 2 complaints. This is because the complaint process can go through two stages: stage 1 is the initial Complaint, and, if this does not resolve the issue, it can then go on to stage 2, which is the Review.

Complaints received

How many complaints were there, and at what stage did they conclude?

Connexus received 490 complaints (stage 1 and 2) from April 2024 to March 2025, mostly from customers (475 from tenants, leaseholders, shared owners and service users), and a further 15 from neighbours and the wider community. In total, resolutions were provided to 460 complaints (from either source) across both stages during this period.

For the purposes of this report, the data is taken from the 460 complaints (stage 1 and 2) that resolutions were provided for during this time, as this allows us to look at the outcome. The chart below shows at which stage these complaints concluded.



Which service area did the complaint relate to?

Out of 368 stage 1 complaints:

Service area	Count	Percent
Repairs	183	50%
Communities	63	17%
Asset management	53	14%
Building safety & compliance	34	9%
Development	18	5%
Support services	12	3%
Finance and procurement	3	1%
Governance	2	1%

What were the response times?

Acknowledgement

- 349/368 (95%) stage 1 Complaints were acknowledged within time. Those missed were due to the complaint not being forwarded between colleagues correctly.
- 87/92 (95%) stage 2 Review requests were acknowledged within time.

Response

- 302/368 (82%) customers were offered a resolution to their stage 1 Complaint within the agreed timeframe.
- 90/92 (98%) customers were offered a resolution at stage 2 Review within the agreed timeframe.

In how many cases did Connexus extend the response deadline?

Sometimes Connexus has to advise the complainant that more time is needed to complete the investigation or review before a response can be given.

In 2024-25 this happened:

- 123/368 (33%) at Complaint (stage 1)
- 26/92 (28%) at Review (stage 2).

Stage 1: out of 123 complaints with extended due dates, 17 were not answered within an additional 10 working days. While there were some exceptional circumstances, there were 10 where the deadline should have been met, and it was not always clear that the customer had been kept informed. These cases were reviewed, and the managers involved were tasked with improving their complaint handling. All complaints did receive a full response, albeit late, and 15 were resolved at this stage.

Stage 2: of the 26 complaints with extended due dates, 25 were answered within the additional 20 working days. All customers were kept informed about the extensions and advised of their option to contact the Housing Ombudsman.

What were the outcomes of the complaints received?

At stage 1, in 82% of the complaints received Connexus had fallen short of expectations. In these cases, a solution was offered to put things right.

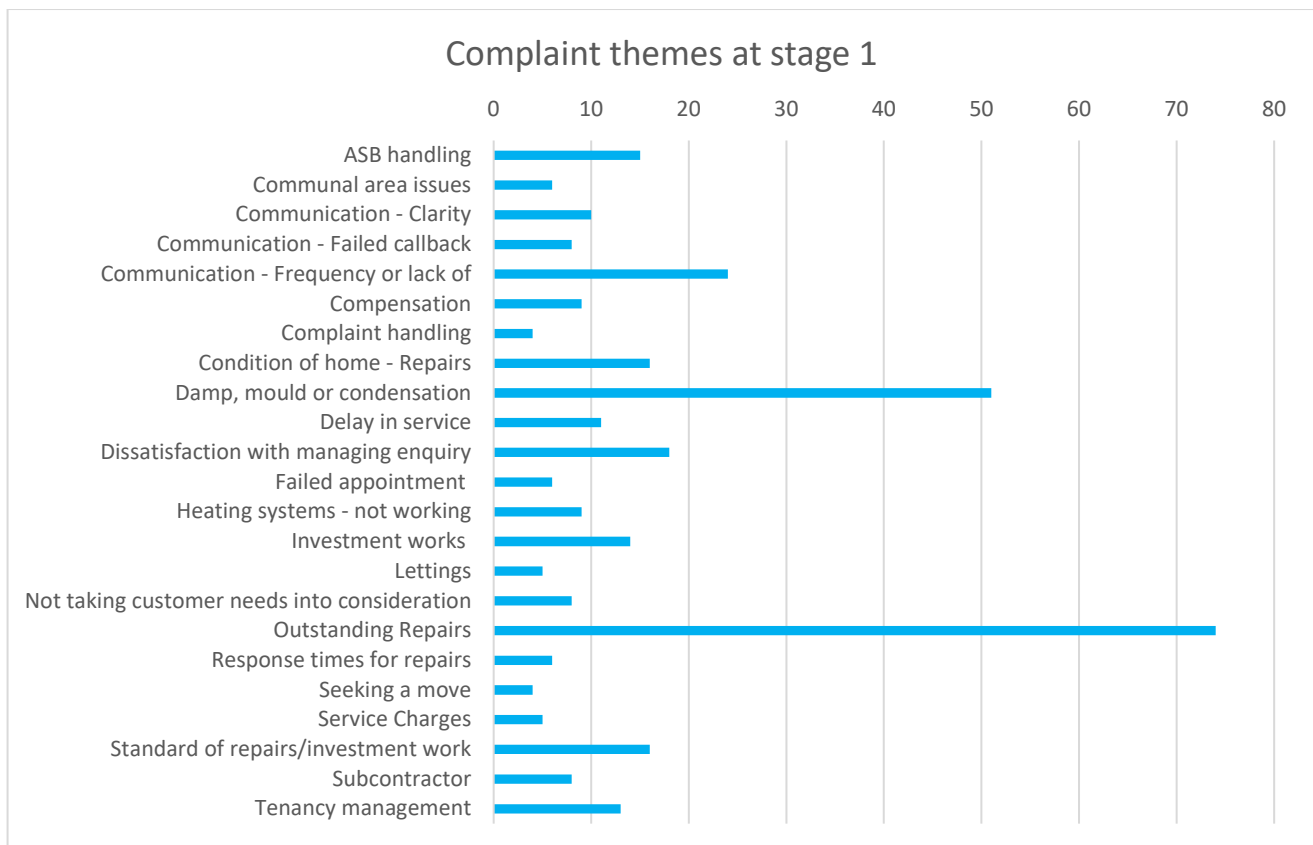
Why did complaints escalate through the process?

The aim is to resolve complaints at the first stage. In line with the Housing Ombudsman code, should the complainant disagree with the findings or proposed resolutions, a second (Review) stage is offered. There are two main reasons a review is requested:

- Stage 1 did not fully answer all the points raised
- The actions offered were not carried out when promised.

In 24% of complaint reviewed, no further action/resolutions were required.

What are the complaints about?



As the graph shows, there are two main themes that stand out:

- Outstanding repairs – where issues were not fixed in a timely way
- Damp, mould and condensation issues.

Although less immediately apparent due to the way the categories are divided, it's clear that communication still needs to be improved, particularly in ensuring customers receive the right information, more consistently.

What complaints have been refused?

Five complaints were refused in the last year. In all cases these issues had already been fully investigated and so, as per the complaints policy, a second response wasn't issued. The customers were advised of their right to contact the Housing Ombudsman for a review of their complaint.

Reviews concluded by the Housing Ombudsman

The Housing Ombudsman has reviewed thirteen complaints during the year.

In three cases, no maladministration was found. For the remaining ten, the Housing Ombudsman issued:

- Seven maladministration for service delivery failures
- Six maladministration for complaint handling failures
- Five service failures
- One severe maladministration for the response to damp and mould.

One customer, from the above thirteen cases, challenged the determination of the Housing Ombudsman. After a review, it was found that the determination was fair based on the information, and so the orders and outcome remained the same. Currently there are five further cases with the Housing Ombudsman.

Examples of what the Housing Ombudsman found are:

Service Failures

- Not advising a customer how they could try to make a claim against Connexus through insurers (x4)
- Delay in carrying out work agreed as a resolution, and not keeping the customer informed of the delay
- Poor communication in updating a customer on how Connexus would respond to a repair reported during or following a storm.

Maladministration

- Not completing repairs that were Connexus' responsibility
- Failing to reimburse a customer
- Not responding to a customer's concern about the standard of a repair
- Failing to fulfil commitments and complete work within a reasonable amount of time; failure to recognise the impact this had on customers (x3)
- Failures in equality impact assessments and the tone of a stage 1 response.

Severe Maladministration

- Poor response to a report of damp and mould, and a failure to complete effective repairs; for poor communication and record keeping; and the failure to take account of the customer's circumstances.

Complaint Handling

- Failure to respond by the required deadline (waiting until the actions proposed were already complete)
- Failure to acknowledge and respond to complaints in time at both stages 1 and 2
- Failure to fully respond to issues in a stage 1 (complaint), leading to the first response to some issues only being sent at stage 2 (review), leading to follow-up letters being sent after the stage 2 response (x2)
- Raising a complaint to stage 2 (review), when the stage 1 was not issued, causing further delays in the response
- Responding to a third complaint relating to the same issue rather than referring the customer to the Housing Ombudsman.
- Failure to provide a full and lasting resolution in a response, and the lack of mechanisms in place to ensure work was delivered.

In all of these cases, Connexus complied with the orders given by the Housing Ombudsman. In addition to the findings highlighted above, the Housing Ombudsman also instructed that in some cases more compensation should be paid than had originally been offered.

If you want to find out more information about these complaints and any other complaints the Housing Ombudsman has reviewed, you can find them on their website at: [Decisions Archive - Housing Ombudsman \(housing-ombudsman.org.uk\)](https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/decisions).

The Housing Ombudsman's report about Connexus' performance on the complaints reviewed in 2023/24 is also on their website - [Landlords Archive - Housing Ombudsman \(housing-ombudsman.org.uk\)](https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/landlords) (type in **Connexus Homes Limited**).

The Housing Ombudsman compiles a report each year listing all landlords who have had five or more reviews conducted by them. In the 2023/24 report, the average maladministration rate for landlords of a similar size to Connexus was 73%; Connexus' maladministration rate matched the average.

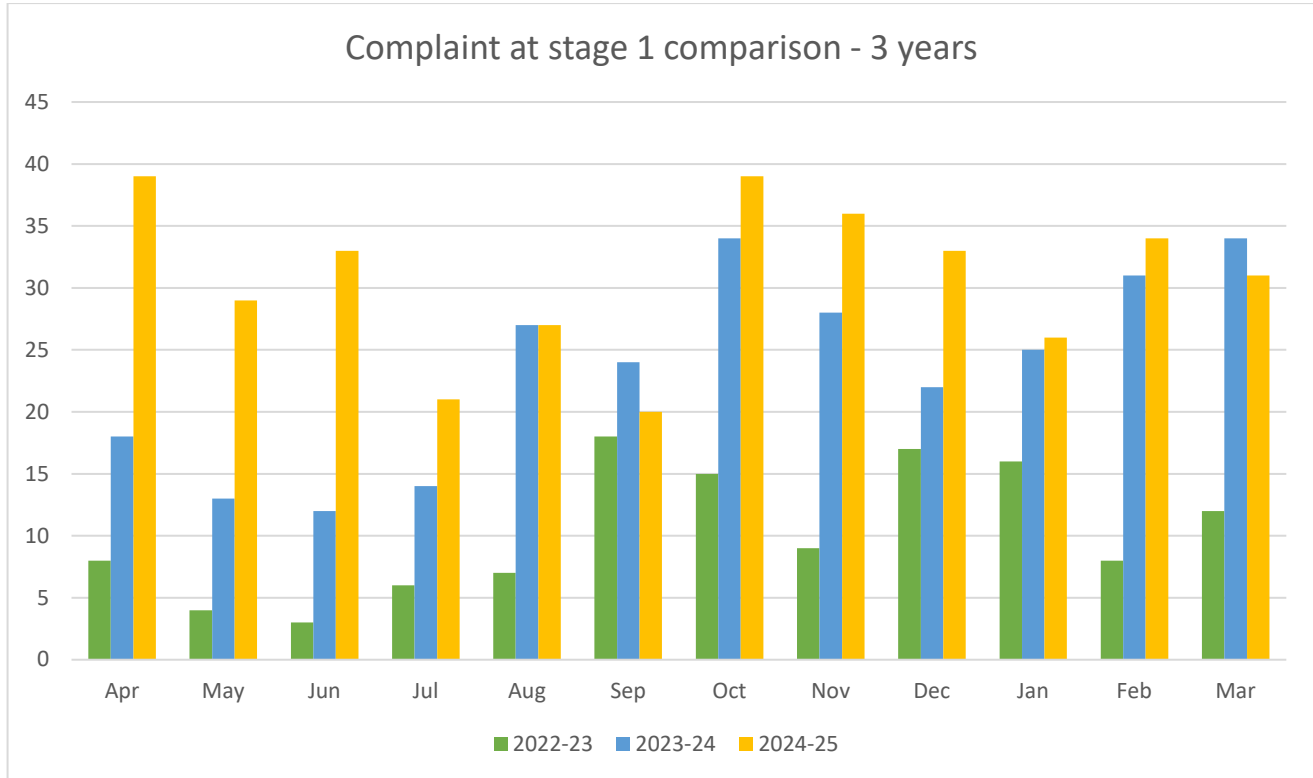
Self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code

Connexus publishes a self-assessment against the complaint handling code (Code) along with this report on its website, confirming compliance with the requirements of the Code. The self-assessment allows for a review and reflection on whether policy and procedure meet the Code. As a social housing landlord, this is now a statutory requirement.

Connexus is confident that the correct policy and procedures are in place. This means that the Code is being followed, and this is stated as part of the self-assessment. However, this report reflects on whether actual performance matches what the company says it will do. There are still have areas to improve on, and service improvement plan actions are listed each time an area for improvement is noted in this report.

Accessibility and awareness

The complaints process has been made as easy to access as possible, which has allowed more customers to say when they are not happy. The graph below clearly demonstrates an increase in the volumes of complaints received at stage 1 over the last 3 years.



Complaint handling staff

Managers who respond to complaints are properly trained to do so. Where the highest volume of complaints are received (in repairs) a dedicated complaints manager directly supports other managers.

While Connexus' procedure provides guidance on how to fully investigate each complaint and include specific information about the complaints process in the response, last year it was recognised that more could be done to do better and be more consistent.

As a result, a service improvement plan included compulsory annual training for complaints handling and promoted the Housing Ombudsman training resources. All operational managers undertook training on complaint handling – not just on meeting deadlines, but on other skills such as letter writing.

In addition, resources available to all colleagues were promoted through internal news pages so that colleagues can attend webinars or complete relevant eLearning to boost their skills as needed for their roles. The Voice of the Customer group, made up of colleagues and involved customers, reviewed the spotlight on attitudes, rights and respect, and some colleagues completed the available training and follow-up webinars to discuss best practice. The complaints team share any training available, regularly providing feedback from meetings to colleagues to ensure the key points and learnings are shared.

Connexus believes that training and support for colleagues is important, therefore the annual training is designed to:

- Provide refresher training on the complaints policy and procedure – particularly on meeting timescales
- Continue to promote resources from the Housing Ombudsman.

In addition to complaint training, Connexus wants to be proactive:

- Training will be developed and delivered on the importance of good customer service from all colleagues, including expectations of colleagues so that a better service is provided, which will reduce complaints.

The complaint handling process

Acknowledgement of complaint

Connexus aims to acknowledge complaints at stage 1 and 2 within five working days and, as mentioned above, this was achieved 95% of the time for both complaints and review requests acknowledged in time.

This is an improvement across both stages; however, the reason why the deadline was missed is mainly due to a complaint or review not being passed through to the complaints team when it is first received. Last year all colleagues were reminded of the proper process, so specific action is now proposed to stop any further failures due to process issues.

All cases will be reviewed where the deadline was missed due to an incorrect internal transfer of information, to establish the root cause and then address it.

Response letters

As mentioned previously, 82% of complaint responses were sent on time, and this rises to 98% at the review stage. While this marks an improvement from last year, Connexus recognises that some customers were still let down, and at a time when they were already dissatisfied

Connexus has worked on the quality of responses, as not all customers received a response to every issue raised, resulting in the need for them to request a review to get answers.

As already mentioned, there is now a dedicated complaints manager who supports repairs managers in responding to complaints. Whether this support is being used is now tracked, as is whether it leads to better outcomes. Encouragingly, the data suggests this approach is effective. To reinforce this the complaints manager meets monthly with the repairs managers to reiterate the support available and ensure it is being used.

Last year a commitment was made to enable senior managers to monitor their teams' performance on complaints and take action where necessary. In response, a dashboard featuring key data was developed, which has been available to senior managers since March 2025. Poor performance is now subject to disciplinary action, and managers can use the dashboard to track progress and address issues directly in colleague meetings.

As part of the service improvement plan this year, these targets have been added:

- No complaints should escalate to stage 2 due to actions not being completed as promised
- 100% of complaints should be closed within the proper timescales.

Notes and records

Last year record keeping was identified as an area needing improvement. Since then, progress has been made by switching to a single system to log customer contact. This has helped colleagues across the business stay informed about who has spoken to a customer and what has been agreed. However, there is still work to do to ensure every interaction is consistently recorded. As part of this effort customer requests are now logged in a dedicated system, making it easier to see when a customer has had to follow up for a response.

While several different systems are in use across teams, a key step forward has been taken by selecting a new provider for the customer system, as committed in last year's action plan. This means that the main systems used (for example to record repairs, or information about homes and tenancies) will all be from one provider. Centralising customer data will allow colleagues to view relevant information – such as booked appointments, rent account discussions, or servicing attempts – in one place. As a result, they will be better equipped to assist customers directly, without needing to rely on callbacks from other teams.

A specific action in place for this year is:

- to reinforce the message that colleagues must update the system following a contact or visit, documenting any action that has been agreed, by who, and when by.

Restricting a customer's access

Connexus has an Unacceptable User Actions and Behaviour Policy in place. Last year a pledge was made to review this, which has now been completed with a further renewal date set for 2027. An equality impact assessment was completed as part of the review, which ensures that it has taken into account if it would impact unfairly on a customer who has a protected characteristic. For example, due to ethnicity or disability.

This policy is only applied in exceptional circumstances, and the decision will be explained fully when necessary. The key reasons are:

- Aggressive or abusive behaviour
- Unreasonable demands
- Unreasonable persistence
- Harassment, including sexual harassment.

Self-assessment, reporting and compliance

Important information about how Connexus responds to complaints will be provided through reports like this one, as well as on the website and via the magazine.

This year, members of the involved customer group reviewed the self-assessment, and sense checked this report to ensure that it gives the information customers may want to know. There's

always room for improvement so if you want to give feedback, please contact Connexus in the way that best suits you.

Scrutiny and oversight

The next audit is due in July 2025, when an independent company will review Connexus' process and determine whether controls (policy and process) and operation of controls (how Connexus performs) are satisfactory. If they find failings, they will make recommendations and give actions to complete.

Connexus has an 'involved customer' who is part of the stage 2 process, and they will help ensure that the proposed resolution is proportionate and fair to the customer complaining, and all other customers.

Improvements that have been made due to feedback

Meeting Individual Needs

In 2023/24, Connexus received 25 complaints from customers who felt their individual needs hadn't been considered. While this number is relatively small, it raised concerns about instances where the service didn't align with customer requirements. In response, the Reasonable Adjustments Policy was introduced in October 2023, followed by a supporting procedure in early 2024. Since then, complaints on this theme have dropped to just eight in 2024/25.

Reasonable adjustments are tailored to each customer's circumstances, and all customers are encouraged to let Connexus know what can be done to ensure that they can access and benefit from services. Connexus don't claim to be experts in vulnerabilities or disabilities but are committed to adapting approaches based on customer input, so long as the requests are reasonable. These adjustments relate to service delivery, not to physical changes to a home.

Addressing Damp, Mould, and Condensation

Last year there was a rise in complaints about damp, mould, and condensation, with 70 complaints in 2023–24. To improve the response to these cases, responsibility for this issue was moved to the Building Safety and Compliance team, and a dedicated team was created to handle mould-related reports, moving away from relying solely on contractors.

This year, complaints in this area have decreased slightly to 51, indicating progress. However, there's still more to do. In April 2025, Connexus' approach was reviewed again, and further changes were made to improve response speed, flexibility, and consistency. These updates are in place, and their impact will be assessed in next year's report.

Connexus will:

- Review the action plan from the severe maladministration case to ensure that all learning actions have been completed and that they have improved service
- Undertake a review by January 2026 on whether the restructure of the damp, mould and condensation team and the new damp, mould and condensation procedure has reduced the number of complaints and act as necessary

- Agree and implement an approach to issues as set out in the requirements of the upcoming Awaab's Law.

Feedback through complaints, and determinations by the Housing Ombudsman, have led to several policy and procedure reviews and updates to information available, including:

- Compensation procedure – to align better with the Remedies Guidance from the Housing Ombudsman and following Housing Ombudsman determinations, and clearly advise Connexus colleagues how claims for damages or personal injury should be handled
- Website update on repair responsibilities.

This year there have been several complaints where an existing policy contradicted a tenancy agreement. Policies can change over time, but a tenancy agreement does not. So, colleagues have been reminded that they should check an agreement if there is any doubt about whether a service is included for an individual customer.

A new repairs system was implemented in November 2024 and has resulted in the ability to track a repair from start to finish. This will allow better tracking of how well the repairs service operates, and whether Connexus delivers an effective and efficient service to customers.

However, a computer system is only as good as the information that is put in, and it cannot replace the human contact required to ensure good communication. Last year steps were put in place to improve contact with customers about repairs, but the level of complaints have shown that not all of those steps were successfully implemented, with high numbers of complaints about lack of communication.

As a result, two of the actions from last year are being repeated and reinforced:

- Connexus will contact the customer first when booking an appointment for a repair. A date will be agreed, and if anything then changes due to unforeseen circumstances, another contact will be made.
- Even if the job is outside and the customer is not home on the day, Connexus will contact the customer to say when work will happen and confirm when it has been completed.

The challenges faced when delivering services to customers

Since last year's report, Connexus has launched a new corporate plan for 2025-30, called 'homes you can build a life in'. The plan has been developed with the input of a wide group of internal and external stakeholders, including customers, to address the challenges that both the company and its customers face in the delivery of services.

The plan builds on key themes from the previous plan, reaffirming a commitment to provide good-quality, safe, and affordable homes – fundamental principles that will always guide Connexus. Where change is needed is in our service delivery, with a focus on building trust in the services provided, as well as ensuring efficiently and effectively operation.

The priorities to improving services to customers include:

- Getting the basics right first time, every time
- Offering convenient evening and weekend appointments
- Aiming for top quartile customer satisfaction and experience
- Making it easier to do business with Connexus
- Reshaping customer engagement
- Learning from complaints and feedback
- Managing contracts, colleagues and stakeholders in the most effective and appropriate manner.

The Housing Ombudsman continues to report a rise in complaints, although (as with the figures at the start of this report) the rate of increase has begun to slow. As part of an ongoing commitment to improving services, Connexus is aiming for complaint numbers to stabilise and eventually decline. This will take time, but in the meantime, when things do go wrong, Connexus remain committed to acknowledging mistakes, apologising, and putting things right.

The job market remains highly competitive, but Connexus has invested in colleague training to ensure that they have the skills needed to meet evolving service demands. For example, training for repairs team on the servicing and maintenance of renewable energy systems will help ensure Connexus is prepared for the future.

Conclusion

Positive strides have been made in ensuring that when things go wrong, they are put right – and within the timescales set out in the complaints policy. However, the current approach is still largely reactive rather than proactive. The number of complaints upheld shows that although mistakes are being recognised, it doesn't always mean that those mistakes are being eliminated. The challenge now is to truly learn from these experiences and prevent any recurrences.

One way Connexus is working to get ahead is through the Voice of the Customer forum. This platform helps identify trends and emerging issues early, enabling action to be taken before problems escalate. The senior management team receives quarterly updates on performance, trends, learning, and insights from this forum to help drive continuous improvement.

In addition, actions listed in this report will form our service improvement plan, providing the details of how else complaints will be learnt from to improve service.

Customers will be encouraged to get in touch when Connexus gets it wrong, and the complaints process will be promoted widely. If you are a customer reading this, and have not told us about something you feel we did wrong in the last 12 months, please do contact us on 03332 31 32 33 or email complaints@connexus-group.co.uk

Connexus is always keen to hear from anyone who would like to get involved in helping shape and influence our approach to services. If you want to know more, please just get in touch through our customer services team using the contact details above – we would be delighted to hear from you!