

2024 – 2025

**Complaints Performance and
Service Improvement Report**



Octavia's 2024 – 2025 complaints performance and service improvement

Under the Housing Ombudsman’s Complaint Handling Code, Octavia must produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge. This report includes Octavia’s annual self-assessment against this Code and a qualitative and quantitative analysis of our complaint handling performance.

It also includes a summary of the types of complaints Octavia have refused to accept, any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman, the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints, and any other relevant reports.

Introduction

We’re on a journey of improving satisfaction, and a big part of that is putting things right when we haven’t delivered services to the level and quality our residents expect and deserve.

In December 2024, Abri welcomed Octavia into the group following board approval in October. It was agreed that together, we’ll be a better organisation, with the opportunity to improve services.

Through this partnership, our aim is to build a strong, honest, and collaborative culture that has residents at its heart of what we do. Whilst we hope residents never have to make a complaint, the reality is, sometimes, we get things wrong. We know that complaints are a consequence of service failures, so we’re working to address the root cause and prevent new complaints in the future by introducing operating procedures and accountability, enhancing standards across the business.

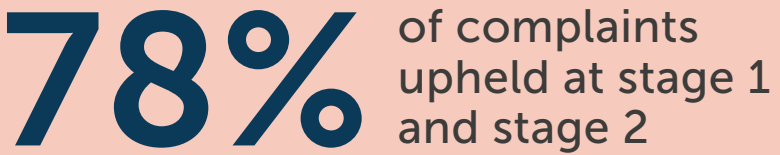
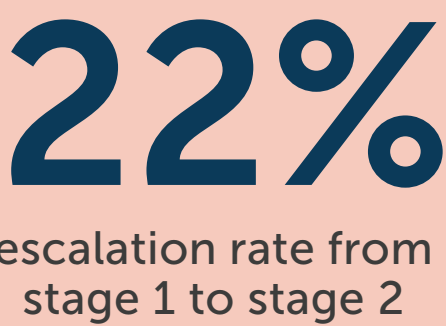
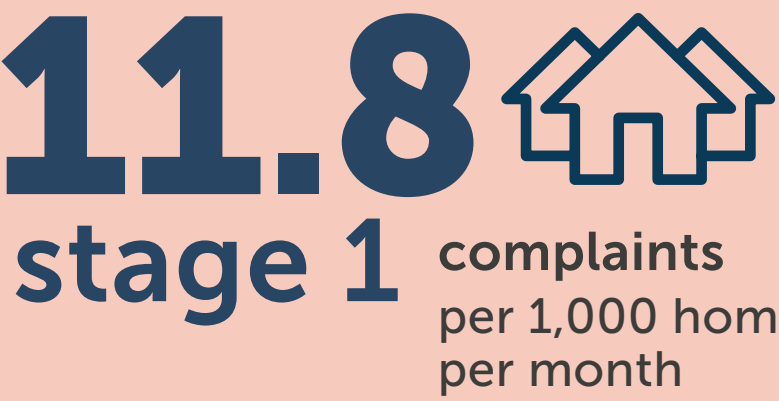
I’m pleased there’s been some good progress made as we go into 2025/26. We’ve recovered our stage 1 complaints position, and our pre-partnership complaints have been cleared.

From 1 April 2025, we also centralised our stage 1 complaint function to align with the Abri group model, bringing with it benefits like providing a consistent service to all our residents, and we’re now planning to do the same with our stage 2 function.

Our priority is to offer effective resolution to any complaint and use the learnings to drive service improvements to deliver lasting benefits for residents and our business, while being compliant with the Housing Ombudsman Statutory Complaint Handling Code.

Ralph Facey
Chief Operating Officer
Abri Group

Average of



Annual self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code

Octavia’s annual self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code can be found [here](#).

Qualitative and quantitative analysis of Octavia’s complaint handling performance for the year 2024 – 2025

- 734 complaints received at stage one
- 126 complaints received at stage two
 - On average, Octavia received 11.8 formal stage one complaints per 1,000 homes, per month

Complaint handling timescales

- % of complaints handled within timescales (standard)
 - Stage one – 11%
 - Stage two – 26%
- % of complaints handled within timescales (extended)
 - Stage one – 11%
 - Stage two – 14%
- % resolved in standard + extended:
 - Stage one – 22%
 - Stage two – 40%

Escalation to stage two

- 583 complaints were closed in year at stage one
- 126 complaints were escalated in year to stage two
- Escalation rate from stage one to stage two was 22%

Complaint outcomes

Stage one

- 78% of complaints upheld
- 12% of complaints partially upheld

Stage two

- 78% of complaints upheld
- 17% of complaints partially upheld

Complaint satisfaction

- How satisfied were customers with approach to complaints handling – 39% (based on 23 completed surveys)

Performance for Octavia across the year

The table below outlines complaints numbers received month by month over the year:

	Stage 1	Stage 2
Apr 24	52	4
May 24	49	5
Jun 24	31	5
Jul 24	44	7
Aug 24	25	7
Sept 24	59	8
Oct 24	59	8
Nov 24	92	9
Dec 24	75	7
Jan 25	86	14
Feb 25	79	26
Mar 25	83	27



Refused to accept reasons

In line with Octavia's policy, which can be found on its website, the only complaints Octavia would refuse to accept are:

- It concerns matters that are, or have been, the subject of legal proceedings and where the customer has, or had the opportunity to, raise the subject matter of the complaint as part of those proceedings.
- The complaint is about a repair, service, or action, where the timeframe for delivering that repair or action has not yet passed. Octavia wants to have the opportunity to resolve the issue first and will give the customer feedback and keep them updated.
- The complaint is not about Octavia, or one of its contractors, but about another organisation.
- The complaint is subject to an insurance claim (unless the customer is unhappy about how Octavia or the insurance company is handling a claim).
- The complaint is about anti-social behaviour (ASB) or a neighbour relationships issue; this is dealt with under Octavia's ASB and Neighbour Relationships Policy (unless the customer is unhappy about how Octavia is responding to an ASB or neighbour dispute issue)
- If the customer contacts Octavia about an increase in service charges, or the amount they are being charged for services, the case will be dealt with as an enquiry and responded to by the relevant person. A complaint about the standard of service or lack of service is dealt with as a complaint.
- Where the contact from the customer is deemed unreasonable, Octavia will refer to its Unacceptable Customer Actions Policy.
- Octavia has already responded to the matter under our complaint process and stated that the process has been exhausted.
- The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago. Octavia will, at its discretion, consider complaints outside of this time limit where there are reasons to do so. These include exceptional personal circumstances, vulnerabilities, where the customer has not been aware of the issue and could not reasonably be expected to have brought the complaint forward sooner.

Octavia will consider each complaint on its own merits and make sure our decision is reasonable, and let customers know why the matter isn't suitable for the complaints process and how we'll respond to the feedback differently. We'll advise the customer of an alternative course of action, including the right to take our decision not to accept the complaint, to the Housing Ombudsman.

Findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman

Octavia received three Type 2b Complaint Handling Failure Orders (CHFO's) in January 2025 for failure to evidence compliance with a determination order and failure to evidence that a customer had received a response to their complaint.

At the time the CHFOs were received, Octavia was in the early stages of a new partnership arrangement with Abri. In response, Abri implemented enhanced controls and immediately integrated escalated complaint handling processes into Abri's ways of working, to mitigate associated risks.

To address and reduce the risk of non-compliance with future Orders, responsibilities were reassigned to Abri's established Dispute Resolution Team. This team employed existing, robust processes for tracking casework, monitoring determinations, and managing resulting Orders and Recommendations. They also work closely with Octavia's operational teams to ensure prioritisation and compliance.

Additionally, to mitigate the risk of non-compliance related to the failure to provide evidence, all Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) correspondence was redirected to the centralised Dispute Resolution Team within Abri. This correspondence is now tracked systematically. A dedicated resource oversees these enquiries and coordinates with relevant operational teams to ensure timely and accurate submission of required information.



Service improvements made as a result of learning from complaints

In December 2024, Octavia joined the Abri Group, and as part of this completed extensive work, alongside colleagues at Abri, to recover the complaints service and make improvements to the customer experience. This has been the main focus of complaints learning and improvement during this financial year.

Key highlights of this work relating to specifically to how we operate our complaints service include:

- Recovering the backlog of complaints to ensure complaints are responded to within the service level agreements as outlined within the Housing Ombudsman Code. From the 1 April 2025, all stage one complaints logged were responded to within these timescales, with recovery of the existing backlog happening early in the 25/26 financial year.
- Review of complaints policy, procedures and processes, including compensation guidance, mirroring Abri's.
- Centralising the complaints service so all complaints are handled within one team to ensure quality and consistency of service.
- To enable the centralisation of complaints to be successful, increased headcount through extensive recruitment of Complaint Officers as well as support from Abri colleagues.
- Improvement of data capture, system enhancements, complaints tracking and reporting to ensure greater accuracy and intelligence around complaints themes and insights to better inform the business of where improvements in both complaints handling and services are needed.
- Quality assurance practices introduced to ensure responses and the customer journey through a complaint is quality checked with the ability to provide feedback to colleagues, embedding a Quality Assurance Framework.
- Full training programme completed for all colleagues in the business, including contractors, to ensure purpose and importance of complaints is understood and consistency of service is provided.
- Development of 'escalated cases' forum with senior managers to ensure tracking of complex cases and responsibility of actions.
- Mitigation of maladministration and Complaint Handling Failure Orders via better logging and tracking of information requests, utilising the centralised Dispute Resolution Team at Abri to lead on this work.
- Performance reporting in relation to Octavia HOS casework is being integrated into Abri's reporting, shared with the relevant performance committees and the Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC) monthly.
- A point of contact within the Housing Ombudsman Service was established to enable productive discussions around controls in place and how both organisations can work together.

Other service improvements have been made across other service areas, therefore improving service to customers with an aim of reducing complaints. These include:

- As complaint trends continue to show the majority of complaints are with Repairs and Asset Compliance, weekly meetings are held at a senior leadership level to provide insight and themes of complaints. This action supports service improvement by enabling senior leadership to regularly review complaint trends related to Repairs and Asset Compliance, identify recurring issues, and address root causes. By analysing insights and themes weekly, we drive targeted improvements, enhance service quality, and respond more effectively to customer concerns.
- The London Regional Managing Director and Abri Executive Board continue to actively build key relationships with MPs and stakeholders in the region. Through direct engagement such as scheme walkarounds and resident meetings, leadership gains firsthand insight into local issues, helping to inform decisions and tailor services to better meet community needs.
- Octavia's data compliance system now enables all certificates to be loaded providing a single source of compliance reporting. This enhances oversight, improves reporting efficiency, and supports timely, informed decision-making to maintain safe and compliant housing services.
- Plans are in place to set up a London Regional Customer Panel to ensure we're hearing the customer voice in this region, reflecting Abri's regional approach in other areas.
- Monthly operational meetings are being held with Octavia's key contractors, Mears, to track performance and address any challenges, with monthly performance reporting now part of a monthly process to update Executive Board.
- Mears are now located in the regional London office to assist in the relationship with them and Octavia colleagues and improve the customer experience. Resources within Mears are being built up to accommodate the demand in areas such as damp and mould and planned works.
- Customer Satisfaction programme is going to be put in place to understand customer perception specific to repairs.
- New senior managers have been recruited into Octavia's repairs teams, all with extensive experience in the property services field. This includes a new Head of Repairs. Abri's Associate Director of its repairs and maintenance function has been seconded to lead this function, as well as support from other Abri colleagues. Head of Repairs and senior team around them.
- Extensive work has been done to ensure repairs contracts are well managed, as well as rebuilding culture and relationships with key contractors. These efforts help ensure higher performance standards, more reliable service delivery, and a collaborative culture focused on consistently meeting residents' needs.
- In the last quarter of this year, the damp and mould team was restructured bringing in a new Contract Manager and the process changed to mirror that of Abri to bring consistency across the group. Mears were engaged in this process with extra resource being recruited. Abri's specialist ventilation partner, Envirovent was also bought into this process.
- A five-year stock investment programme has been developed to support ongoing delivery of planned improvements to Octavia properties. This action supports service improvement by providing a long-term, structured approach to maintaining and upgrading Octavia properties. The five-year stock investment programme ensures consistent, planned improvements that enhance the quality, safety, and sustainability of homes for residents.
- During 2025/26, as part of integration with Abri, full Root Cause Analysis (RCA) and service improvement processes will be implemented, utilising the dedicated teams already set up for this purpose at Abri.

Annual reports about Octavia’s performance from the Ombudsman

There have been no performance reports published for Octavia for the financial year 2024/25.

Octavia’s Ombudsman investigations and outcomes 2024/25	
Determinations	Number
No of outcomes received	8
No of determinations received	15
Withdrawn/OOJ	3
No of CFHOs	3
No of severe maladministration	0
No of maladministration	4
No of service failures	7
No of offer of ‘reasonable redress’	1
No of NO maladministration	0
Maladministration rate	92%

Other relevant reports or publications produced by the Housing Ombudsman in relation to Octavia

We’re committed to working with the Ombudsman to ensure any requests for information and determination orders, and recommendations are acted upon promptly. Below is a summary from 2024/25 of the investigations Octavia has received back from the Housing Ombudsman, along with the outcome types as published on the Ombudsman’s website.

Octavia received three complaint handling failure orders in 2024/2025

These publications can be found on the Housing Ombudsman’s website:

[Octavia Housing \(202223509\) - Housing Ombudsman](#)

[Octavia Housing \(202306380\) - Housing Ombudsman](#)

To access annual performance reports added since the publication of this report, individual landlords can be searched using the link below on the Housing Ombudsman’s website:

[Landlords Archive - Housing Ombudsman](#)

