

## News | June 2026

### Public service complaints

#### Demand remains high

This month we engaged with Ombudsman organisations across the UK at the Ombudsman Association conference. One of the key topics discussed was the accelerating demand for complaints handling services across the UK and beyond.

Since April, we have already responded to 68% more enquiries from people seeking our help than the year before.

This is leading to longer wait times for people seeking our help as we work to manage significantly increased workloads without additional investigative resource.

We know that waiting longer for a decision on a complaint is frustrating and continue to prioritise people who are vulnerable, complaints that are urgent or where there is a significant public interest.

#### Tenant impacted by pre-existing damp and mould issues in Edinburgh

This month we made, 612 decisions on complaints and published 12 investigations, ten of which were upheld.

[In one case](#), we found that The City of Edinburgh Council failed to ensure a property was in a reasonable condition before a disabled tenant moved in.

After the tenant reported widespread damp, a survey identified extensive remedial works and recommended they be temporarily rehoused. However, the works were not completed until almost a year after the complaint was made. Our investigation also found evidence of longstanding damp issues, including an earlier survey recommending repairs that had not been carried out before the tenancy began.

The damp significantly affected the tenant's chronic health conditions and the delay in moving them to alternative accommodation worsened the situation. We also found that the council was slow in responding to the complaint and the content of the response was dismissive.

As a result of our investigation, we made recommendations to improve how the council responds to repair requests and ensure repairs are completed within a reasonable timeframe. We also asked the council to apologise and to make our decision available to the council's insurers to support any claim the tenant may pursue in connection with their losses.

### **Mould cases continue to rise**

This case reflects a growing number of complaints we are receiving about damp and mould in social housing, as highlighted in our [recently published statistics](#). Many of these complaints relate to delays or a lack of action in addressing mould issues.

Two complaints progressed to full investigation were upheld, requiring the relevant local authorities to develop action plans to complete remedial works.

In other cases, we were able to resolve complaints at the preliminary investigation stage by securing commitments from housing associations or local authorities to carry out further damp investigations. In one instance, this resulted in the complainant being decanted to allow for intrusive inspection after significant issues were identified.

Complaints more generally about housing have more than doubled since 2021-22, with significant increases in the last year suggesting a sector under growing strain. Our investigations help identify these emerging pressures and drive improvements that can prevent similar harm happening to other tenants.

[Read case 202505687](#)

[Read our latest findings](#)

### **Resolving issues for complainants**

Many of the cases we deal with are resolved without the need for a full investigation.

Over the past month, we have supported multiple applicants to achieve ex gratia payments on incorrect business water bills totalling £10's of thousands.

Elsewhere, we have helped speed up actions already committed to by a local authority, supported a complainant to resolve a complaint with their dentist, and our work has led to multiple policy changes within different health boards.

This work is carried out in private and helps achieve positive outcomes for both the complainant and the organisation, by reducing the need to carry out long investigations.

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## **Scottish Welfare Fund**

### **Growing Demand for Welfare Fund Reviews**

Over the last three months, demand has increased significantly. We have made 220 decisions over the three month period – a 69% rise on the same time last year. April saw the biggest increase, when we responded to 108 enquiries and made 92 decisions, almost double the work recorded the previous year.

This increase has largely been driven by crisis grant cases, reflecting the ongoing financial pressures facing applicants and a growing need for immediate support.

### **Accessing support remains a problem**

A recurring theme from enquiries to our team is accessibility.

Many applicants told us they were unable to contact their local council due to difficulties getting through by phone, lack of freephone numbers, or challenges using online systems. This meant people in crisis were struggling to access support at the point they needed it.

In several cases, we found that applicants had been refused essential items because their circumstances had not been fully considered.

### **Applications for flooring continue to appear in our casework**

Flooring is often viewed as a lower priority, but our reviews show it can be critical to safety and wellbeing. We have seen cases where a lack of appropriate flooring increased risks for people with epilepsy, mobility issues and neurodevelopmental

conditions, leading to injury, falls and unsafe living conditions. In these situations, we asked councils to make awards, highlighting the essential role suitable flooring plays in allowing people to live safely in their homes.

### **Engaging with Local Authorities**

Alongside casework, we held our annual local authority sounding board and engaged with local authorities involved in our Learning Through Data project. This project aims to improve reporting, learning, and continuous improvement in line with the [Scottish Government's SWF Review Action Plan](#).

[Read our latest findings](#)

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## **Independent National Whistleblowing Officer**

A reminder that this year's Speak Up Week will run from **Monday 28 September to Friday 2 October 2026**.

The theme, "**Five Years of the Whistleblowing Standards – What's Changed? What's Next?**" marks an important milestone since their publication.

Keep an eye out for further updates in the coming weeks and months. In the meantime, we hope you are already thinking about and planning your local events!

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## **Training**

### **Complaints Investigation Skills**

Our trainer-led course will equip participants with the knowledge to conduct robust investigations, ask the right questions, assess evidence, and make informed decisions.

Book your spot now:

- [Tuesday 1 September](#)
- [Wednesday 2 September](#)
- [Monday 30 November](#)

- [Tuesday 1 December](#)

### **Good Complaints Handling**

Our Good Complaints Handling online training self-guided course is aimed at staff handling complaints at stage 1 of the [Model Complaints Handling Procedure \(MCHP\)](#) but would be useful for anyone involved in complaints handling looking to develop their knowledge.

The course takes around 45 minutes to complete and costs £50 per person.

[Book now](#)

### **Child Friendly Complaints**

Our Child Friendly Complaints online training is tailored for complaints handlers and frontline staff. The course shows how organisations can put children and young people's rights at the heart of the complaints process.

The course takes around 45 minutes to complete and costs £50 per person.

[Book now](#)

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