

LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN	WARDS: All
REPORT TITLE: Housing Ombudsman recommendations and repairs update	
REPORT OF: Director of Property Management	
FOR SUBMISSION TO: Housing Scrutiny Committee	DATE: 24 February 2026
<p>SUMMARY OF REPORT This report provides an update on the Housing Ombudsman recommendations and repairs service, following the previous report on this matter to the Housing Scrutiny Committee on 15 September 2025.</p> <p>Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information No documents that require listing were used in the production of this report.</p> <p>Contact Officer: Scot Reid Head of Housing and Property Customer Services & Engagement 5 Pancras Square London N1C 4AG</p> <p>020 7974 6303 Scot.reid@camden.gov.uk</p>	
<p>RECOMMENDATIONS</p> <p>The Housing Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the contents of the report</p>	



Signed:
Director of Property Management

Date: 13th February 2026

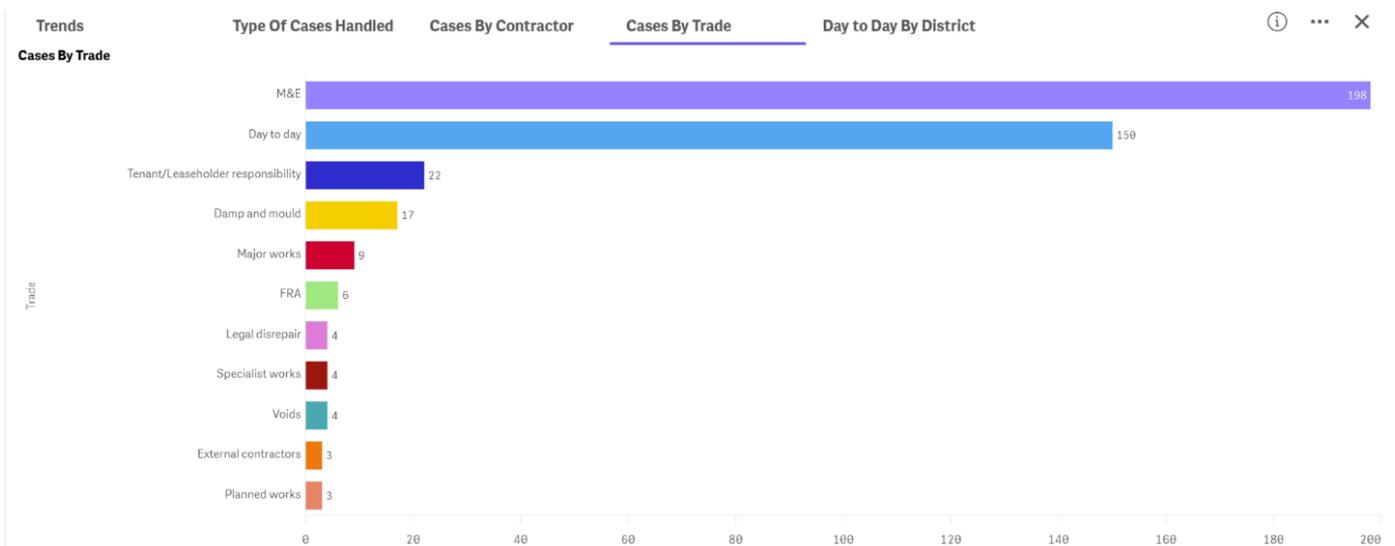
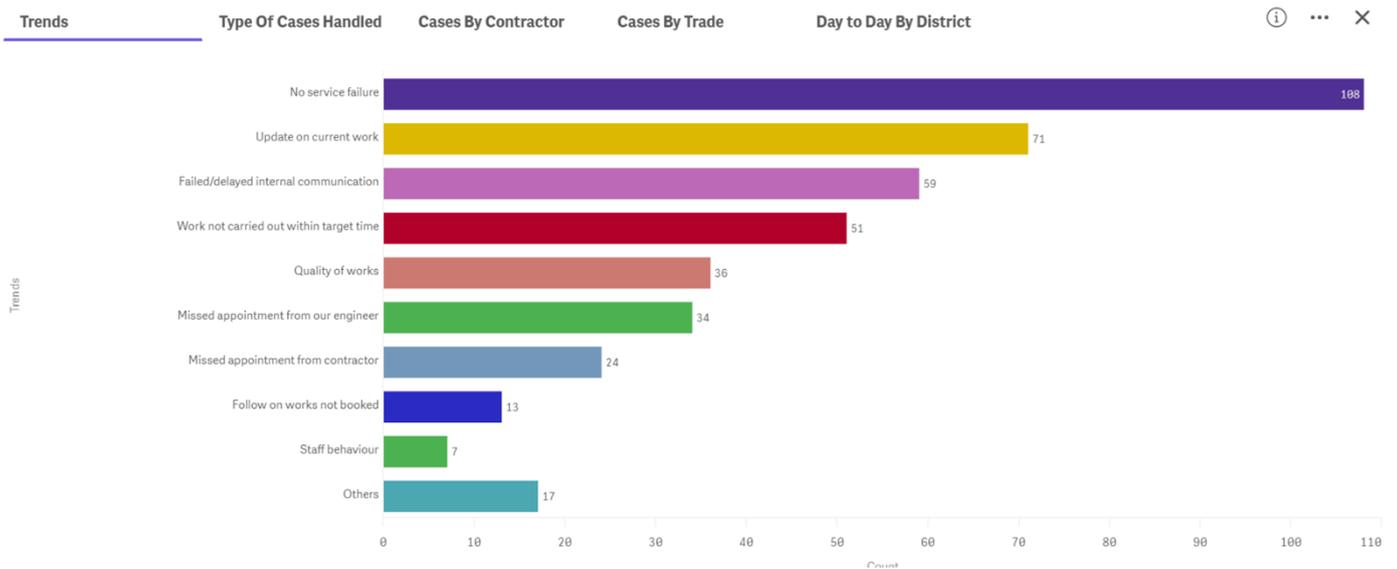
1 Purpose of the report

- 1.1 At the meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Committee 15 September 2025, members were given a comprehensive overview of the progress made to address the findings of the Housing Ombudsman Paragraph 49 investigation.
- 1.2 The report noted that due to the Council's positive engagement with the Ombudsman, it had addressed the Paragraph 49 recommendations and had an action plan in place that had been agreed with the Ombudsman.
- 1.3 To maintain a continued focus, members of the Housing Scrutiny Committee requested an update on the Council's complaints handling efforts to date. Additionally, they asked for an update on the implementation of Awaab's Law, the rapid response team, and the integration of our back-office applications, Madetech and ROCC, and other planned improvements such as 'multi-visit' management.
- 1.4 This report provides an update on the above topics.

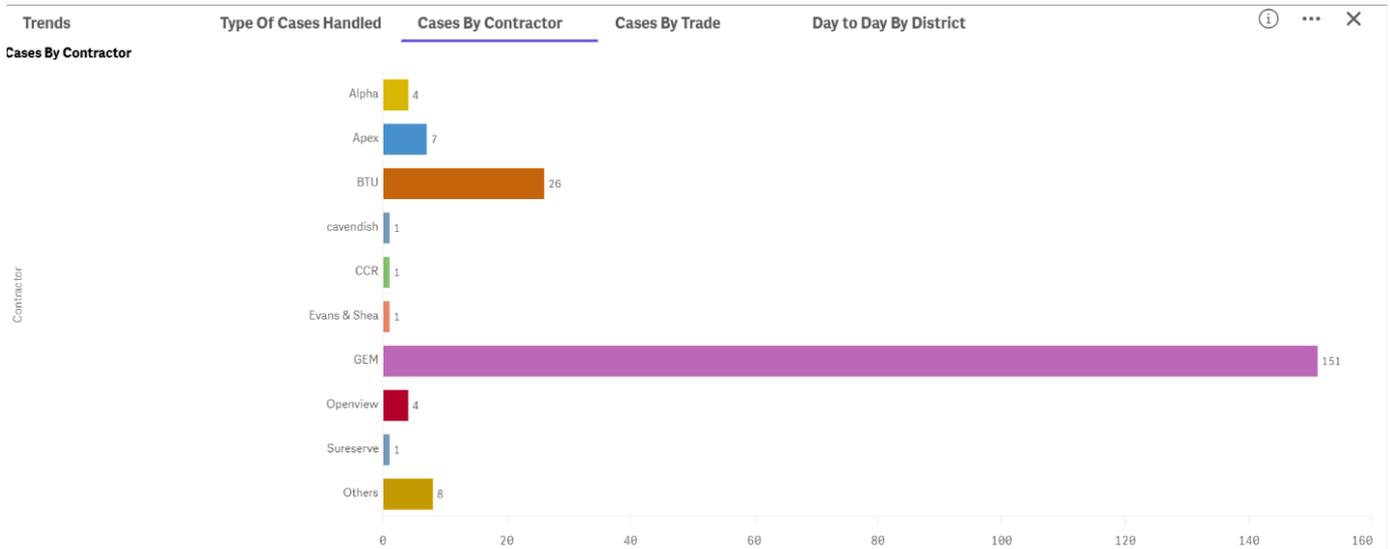
2 Improvements made to complaints handling

- 2.1 The number of Stage 1 complaints regarding Property Management continues to rise, which is typical during the winter months. This trend was anticipated and is consistent with similar reports from other local authorities across London. A significant factor in the increase in complaints has been a loss of heating and hot water in some of our estates during a recent cold snap. It is important to note that the vast majority of the Council's communal heating systems, which serve over 14,000 homes, functioned as expected; however, a few large estates experienced issues that were not resolved as quickly as we would have liked. We recognise the impact this had on residents, and we have already initiated an internal review to learn from how we handled the loss of heating and hot water at the Brunswick estate. The Housing Scrutiny Committee will recall that in January 2025, the Council approved significant additional investment in its homes through the £670m Housing Investment Strategy. The programme of works includes the installation of new boiler plant and in some cases whole system renewal. This investment will address a number of the sites which have seen issues with performance this winter. The larger schemes will take time to deliver therefore the Council will also be focussed on targeted immediate measures to improve reliability and performance.
- 2.2 Awaab's Law was implemented 27 October 2025, and this legislation is expected to empower tenants by giving them better tools to express their concerns and see action taken within legally enforceable timescales. The Council's existing approach to tackling reports of damp and mould helped it to implement Awaab's Law, and it has also led to improvements in working practices and how we track cases. This is covered later in the report.
- 2.3 Members may be aware that the Property Case Management team handles not only Stage 1 complaints for Property Management but also Stage 1 complaints for Housing Neighbourhoods, as well as enquiries from Members and cases involving MPs. Despite increased contact across all areas, the team has successfully addressed 90% of cases within 10 days or less.

2.4 The latest figures available at the time of reporting are for December 2025 and show that for Property Management, the team responded to 420 formal stage 1 complaints. The first chart shows that the main category for stage 1 complaints in December 2025 was 'no service failure' where the investigation found no significant issues with the service provided, often this is when the repairs requested relate to the tenant's responsibilities. This is an ongoing focus of our communication work. The second chart shows a high percentage of stage 1 complaints in December 2025 related to the Mechanical and Electrical (M&E) contractors who cover services such as heating.



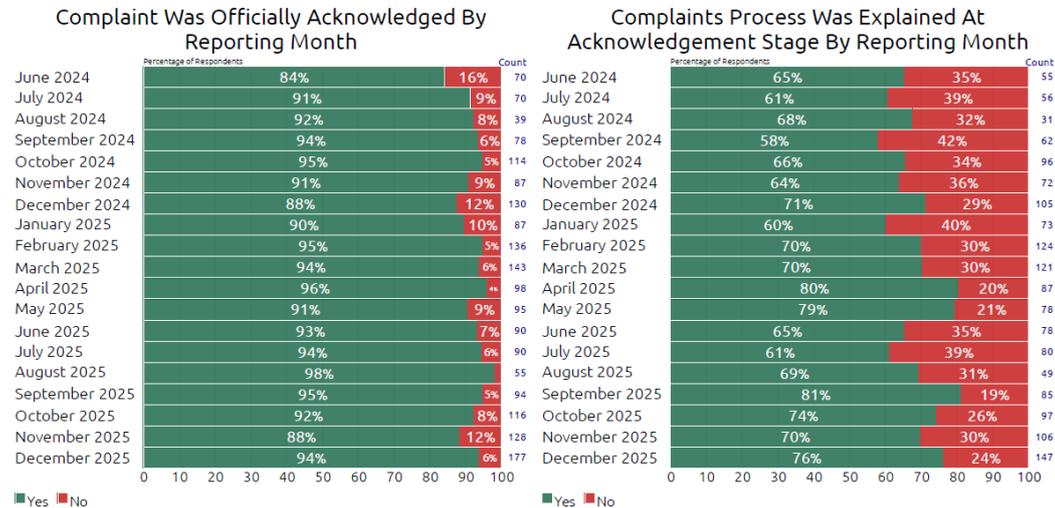
2.5 The chart overleaf shows that due to the pressures this Winter, GEM received the highest number of complaints among the contractors. This is a high-volume service, and GEM supports communal heating systems serving 14,000 homes. Officers are working closely with GEM to monitor their work in progress and any escalated cases. As outlined earlier, the Council is also investing significantly in its communal heating systems as part of its Housing Investment Strategy. More broadly, all complaints regarding our contractors are shared with the relevant contract managers for discussion at contractor performance meetings.



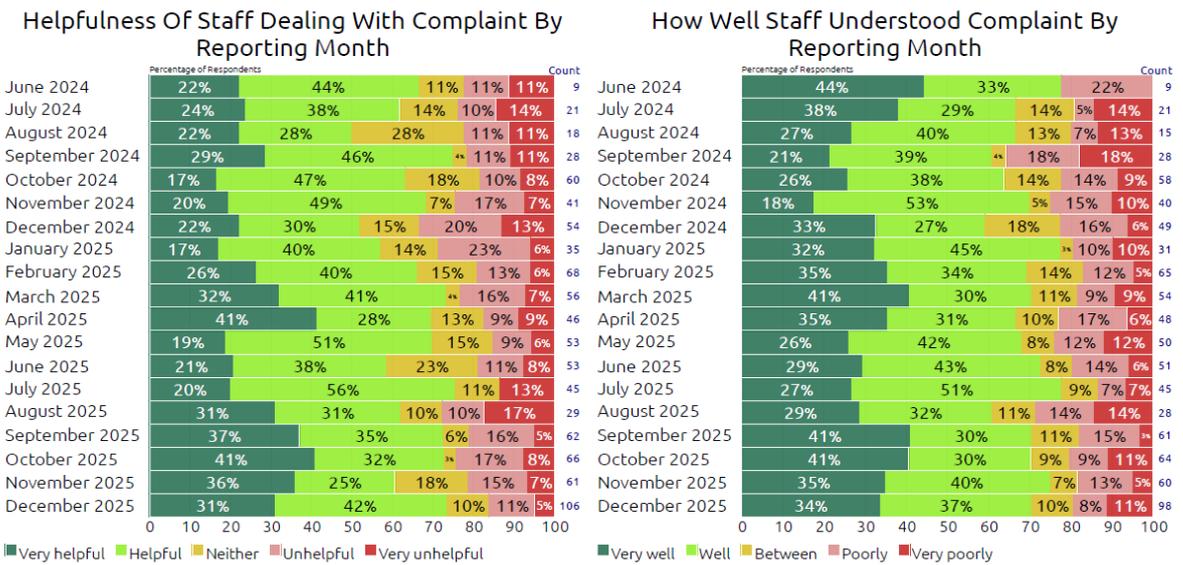
- 2.6 Aside from the heating issues referred to above, detailed analysis of complaints indicates that the primary reason for complaints still revolves around insufficient communication regarding ongoing or outstanding repairs. This situation clearly frustrates our residents and affects our overall operational efficiency. We understand how important it is for residents to be kept informed about the status of their repairs. Therefore, we are committed to making improvements in this regard, as enhancing communication is a crucial focus for us moving forward.
- 2.7 Members should be aware that following the completion of each Stage 1 of the complaint process, our independent outbound call handling provider will make every effort to reach out to the complainant. These calls play a vital role in our ongoing commitment to quality assurance. The primary aim of these interactions is to evaluate whether the complaint has been handled appropriately, with professionalism and the empathy that our members rightly expect. This feedback loop is essential for us to continually enhance our processes and ensure that we are effectively meeting the needs of our community.
- 2.8 Thanks to significant investment in staffing, training, and close collaboration with resident members of our Oversight Panel on quality, we have observed a marked improvement in customer satisfaction with case management. Our teams have participated in rigorous training programmes designed not only to develop their complaint-handling skills but also to foster a deeper understanding of the emotions and experiences of our complainants. By equipping our staff with the necessary tools and empathy to comprehensively address issues, we aim to transform our complaint management processes into a more supportive and constructive experience for all members.
- 2.9 These advancements directly respond to the key concerns raised in paragraph 49 of the Housing Ombudsman’s report on complaint handling. We recognise the importance of not only responding to complaints but also in a manner that reassures our residents and fosters trust in our organisation. Through these ongoing improvements and our dedication to maintaining high standards of service delivery, we strive to create an environment where complaints are resolved to the satisfaction of all parties involved. As we progress, we remain

committed to transparency and continual improvement in our complaint management approach, ensuring that every voice is heard and valued. The following charts provide satisfaction data on complaint handling, for all complaints including those upheld and those not upheld.

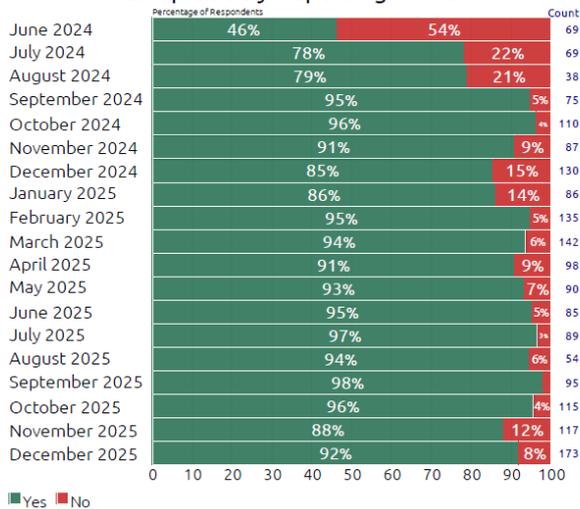
Camden's Acknowledgement Of The Complaint



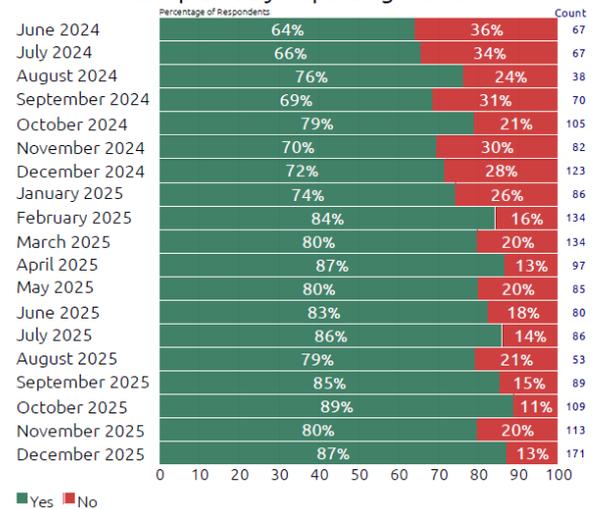
Personal Care During The Complaint Procedure



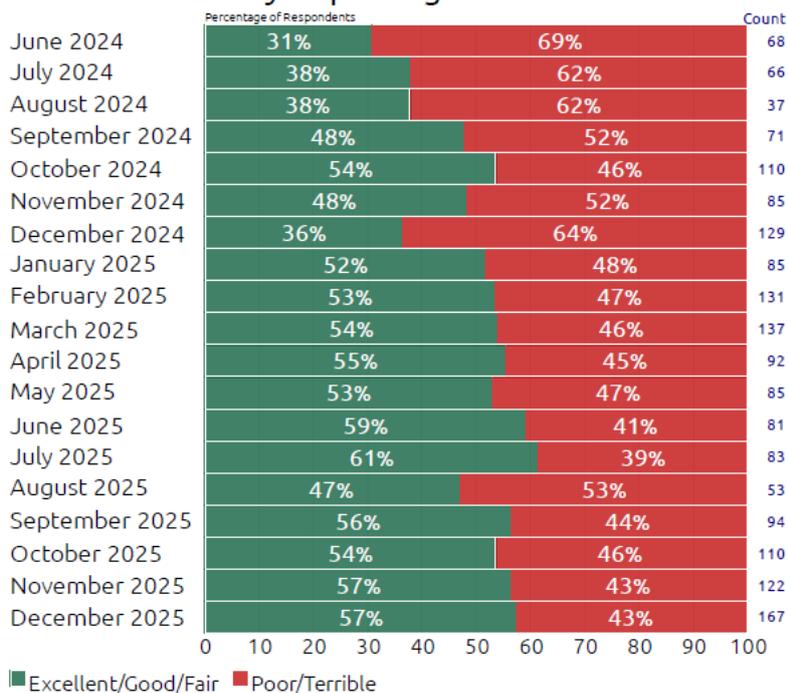
Staff Contacted Customer While Looking Into The Complaint By Reporting Month



Given The Name Of Staff Member Investigating Complaint By Reporting Month



Rating Camden Council's Handling Of Complaint By Reporting Month



- 2.10 Recognising and addressing areas where we have let customers down has become the foundation of our new approach to case management. A lessons-learned approach has emerged as a key component. Over the past year, we have appointed two lessons-learned leads to the case management team. Their roles are to serve as resident champions and drive cultural change throughout the organisation, ensuring that our service remains customer focused. We are already witnessing significant changes.
- 2.11 A key responsibility of the Lessons Learned Lead is to write case reviews based on formal case orders submitted by the Housing Ombudsman. Once a case has

been investigated and closed, the Lessons Learned Lead actively works to integrate the lessons learned into day-to-day operations. This involves conducting a root-cause analysis and developing an action plan in collaboration with the Repairs and Complaints teams. Each action in the plan is assigned an owner and specific completion timelines.

- 2.12 The action plan is included in the monthly report on complaint trends and themes, which is presented to the Housing Safety and Regulatory Board. It is also discussed further with the Repairs Managers during joint monthly service improvement meetings led by the Lessons Learned Lead.
- 2.13 The primary areas for improvement have included enhancing repair oversight, addressing the causes of missed appointments, promoting clearer communication both internally and externally, improving record-keeping, and strengthening contractor management. Progress on these initiatives is monitored and reported during the monthly meetings, which provides the Scrutiny Board with confidence that the Ombudsman's findings are being addressed, thereby reducing recurring issues and enhancing outcomes for residents.
- 2.14 The Lessons Learned Lead meets with members of the Complaints Oversight Panel monthly, starting in April 2025, at our Holmes Road office. These two-hour workshops involve reviewing three different Stage 1 complaint responses, during which the panel provides feedback on how the Complaints Management Officer (CMO) addressed each case.
- 2.15 The group assesses the clarity and quality of the responses, the level of empathy shown, whether all points raised by the resident are addressed, and if all their questions are answered. Feedback is recorded during the session and shared with the Housing and Property Services Casework Manager.
- 2.16 Learning outcomes from these sessions are discussed with the broader team at regular meetings and with the officers who authored the responses, ensuring they receive direct feedback on areas for improvement. These workshops also help identify additional training needs and provide Camden residents with an opportunity to express what they want to see in complaint responses.

3 Awaab's Law

- 3.1 Members will be aware of the significant changes that came into effect in October 2025, known as Awaab's Law. In summary, the new law required local authorities and housing providers to take significant action to tackle damp and mould issues in residential properties. This legislation arises from the tragic case of Awaab Ishak, which underscored the urgent need for better living conditions and accountability in housing. Under Awaab's Law, Registered Providers (including local authority landlords) are obligated to ensure that properties are adequately maintained, allowing tenants to report concerns without fear of repercussions. Providers must establish effective maintenance protocols, conduct regular inspections, and prioritise preventative measures to create healthier living environments for all residents. This proactive approach aims to foster safer homes and improve the overall quality of life for tenants across the UK.

- 3.2 In anticipation of the upcoming changes, the Council proactively developed comprehensive advanced plans, showcasing our commitment to adaptability and progress. We made significant investments in staffing and IT resources, positioning us to tackle the unknown challenges ahead and strengthening our overall infrastructure.
- 3.3 Staff across repairs, damp and mould, and contact centre services have received targeted Awaab's Law training covering statutory requirements, hazard identification, escalation processes, and use of updated scripts and procedures. Delivery is supported through coordinated working between repairs, damp and mould, contact centre, legal disrepair, alternative accommodation, and digital teams.
- 3.4 The team has been monitoring contacts and performance very closely, and during the last reporting period (28 Nov – 28 Dec 2025), the Council managed 826 Awaab's Law inquiries, comprising 633 cases through the Rapid Response Team (Day-to-Day Repairs) and 193 cases managed by the Damp and Mould Team. During the period, 7 cases required alternative accommodation, all managed within required timeframes. This represents an expected increase in case volumes following the introduction of Awaab's Law, reflecting improved resident reporting routes, clearer triage processes, and strengthened internal monitoring, rather than a deterioration in housing stock condition. Most enquiries related to damp and mould hazards, with a smaller proportion categorised as other emergency or significant hazards. While most did not meet the emergency threshold, a proportion required escalation due to severity or access challenges.
- 3.5 Performance against statutory Awaab's Law timescales is monitored through specific measures, and the following figures relate to the period 28 November to 28 December 2025:
- Rapid Response Team (633 cases):
- 100% acknowledged and triaged within 24 hours
 - 100% emergency investigations completed within 24 hours
 - 100% significant hazard investigations completed within 10 working days
- Damp and Mould Team (193 cases):
- 100% acknowledged and triaged within 24 hours
 - 83.55% emergency investigations completed within 24 hours
 - 95.68% significant hazard investigations completed within 10 working days
- 3.6 Where timescales were not met, delays were primarily due to access issues, with escalation and senior oversight in place.

4 The Rapid Response Team

- 4.1 Since its introduction on 27 October 2025, Camden's Rapid Response Team (RRT) has transformed the approach to managing emergency repairs. This approach was developed in response to the growing demand for prompt and

efficient repairs, particularly in situations where safety and urgency are paramount.

- 4.2 The RRT has contributed to reducing operational risks associated with emergency repairs, ensuring that issues are dealt with swiftly and effectively. With a dedicated team on standby, the Council has been able to respond to incidents more efficiently, preventing minor issues from escalating into major problems. This proactive approach has not only safeguarded the physical integrity of properties but also reassured residents that their safety is a top priority.
- 4.4 The introduction of the team has also meant more emergencies are dealt with during normal working hours, reducing reliance on the out-of-hours team and external contractors.

5 Improvement and integration of systems

- 5.1 The integration of MadeTech (front end used to book repairs) with ROCC (the system that manages day to day building repairs) to support Awaab's Law delivery is now live, with the system in active operational use. Teething issues are being effectively managed through regular cross-service review meetings, ensuring prompt resolution and continued stabilisation. A structured programme of testing and post-go-live audits is underway, aligned with the established KPI monitoring cycle to provide assurance on statutory compliance and data accuracy. Work continues to automate the 3-day written reports and the 1, 3, 6 and 12-month follow-on contact requirements; although this automation is taking longer than originally anticipated, a robust interim plan is in place. Teams are issuing manual leave-behind reports and coordinating follow-up checks directly with residents to ensure that all statutory and safety obligations are met pending full system automation.
- 5.2 The MadeTech system allows residents to make, track and amend appointments online, a quarter of repairs orders are now raised on this system. Appointments for in house services, including damp and mould, that are raised through MadeTech are managed in ROCC, alongside appointments raised through all other channels (such as WhatsApp, webchat or by phone). This helps our schedulers and repairs managers track appointments in real time, also the keeping of appointments by operatives. To try and help prevent no access cases, the system also sends three SMS reminders to so that residents are aware of the appointment that is scheduled.
- 5.3 The range of services that can be booked via MadeTech is expanding, this now includes heating and hot water repairs between 9AM and 5PM, and from April 2026 the individual heating servicing and repairs will come in house and will be fully managed on MadeTech and ROCC. The Council is also mobilising new contracts for communal heating, lifts and other mechanical and electrical services in April 2026, and in 2026/27 we will be introducing interfaces to provide full visibility over orders raised and appointments made and kept (there is some technical due diligence required when new suppliers are appointed and interfaces introduced).

5.4 Many tenanted homes require a range of compliance checks, for example gas checks (annual), electrical checks (five yearly) and fire door checks (annual) and this can be a cause of inconvenience to residents. To help co-ordinate this, 'multi-visit' functionality is expected to be available from late March 2026 when an upgrade to ROCC is completed, allowing repair and compliance appointments such as gas checks to be allocated together. This will require service development work in early 2026/27 before it is deployed, however it will help reduce the number of times the Council needs to visit tenants' homes. In the meantime, to help speed up fire door repairs identified following inspection, and improve convenience for residents, the Council has introduced the ability to book door repairs directly online via MadeTech after inspections have been completed. In the first two weeks of this trial, 62% of fire door repairs have been booked in this way.

6 Legal comments of the Borough Solicitor

6.1 The Borough Solicitor has been consulted and has no comments to add.

7 Finance Comments of the Executive Director Corporate Services

7.1 The Executive Director Corporate Services has been consulted and has no comments to add.

8 Environmental Implications

No environmental impact

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