



# Learning from complaints – dealing with pests

29.01.2026 (V1)



# What happened?

A tenant living in one of our homes with their children, including a young baby, reported an infestation within their home. They also told us that one of their children was neurodivergent.

On hearing this, we raised a work order with one of our contractors to investigate and treat the issue. A week later the tenant called to inform us that they had not heard anything, and no one had visited. Following this, we chased the contractor who visited that day to assess and treat the issue. They returned nine days later to complete a second treatment.

The tenant was unhappy with the treatment and raised a complaint. This was investigated and responded to in line with our complaints process timelines. However, the tenant was unhappy with our Stage 1 response as the treatment had started later than we had stated and they told us that this was having a negative impact on their children.

We responded to the Stage 2 complaint and agreed to appoint a specialist contractor to complete a full survey and treat their home including lifting floorboards in the room that was affected. The full treatment took around four months to complete, but the contractor missed an appointment as it had been booked on a day that they did not work.

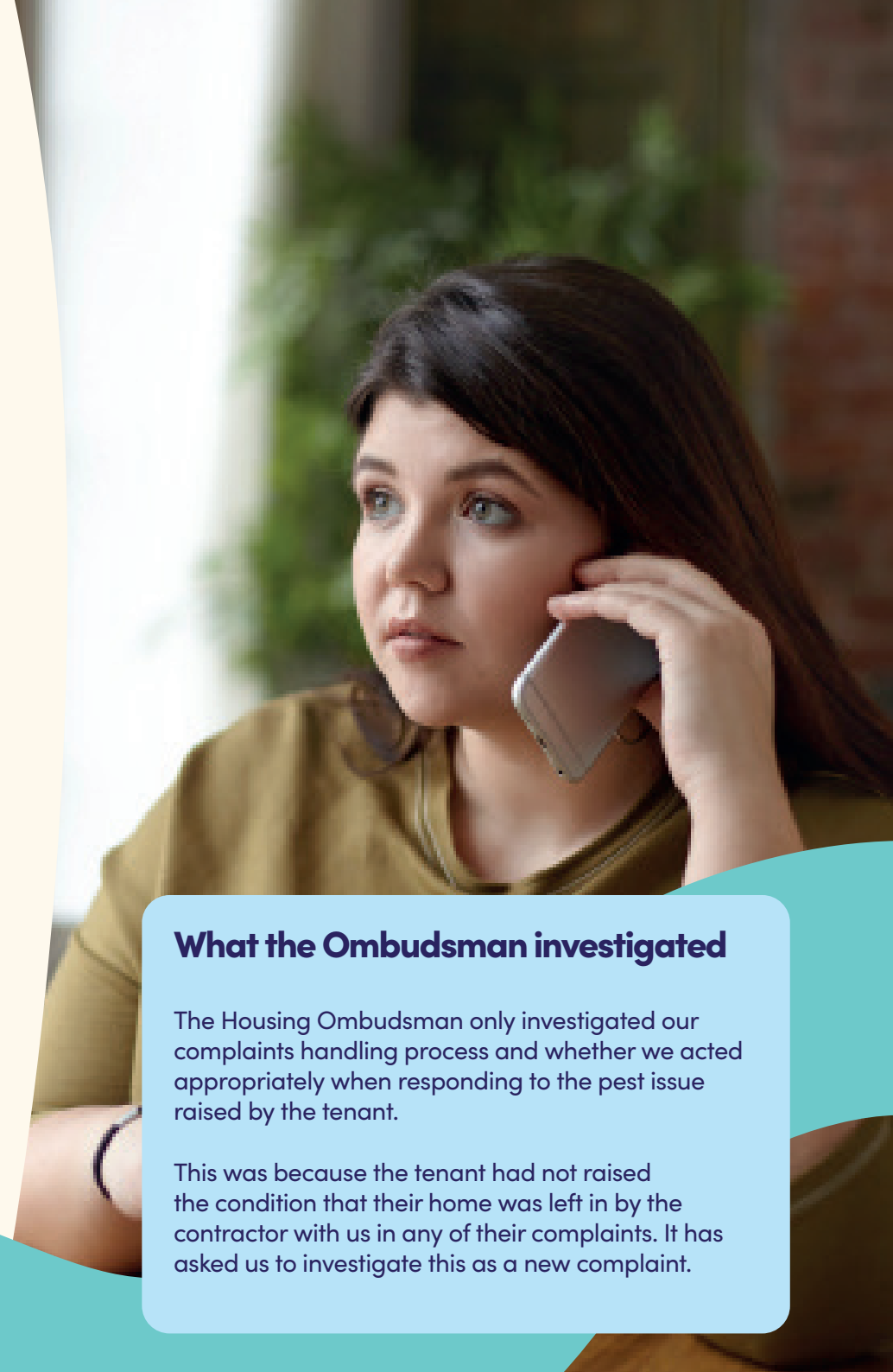
The tenant raised their complaint with the Housing Ombudsman Service because they felt that:

- The treatment that we had arranged did not work, and the issue was only resolved when they completed their own treatment.
- They were unhappy with the condition that the specialist contractor had left their home in during the treatment.

## What the Ombudsman investigated

The Housing Ombudsman only investigated our complaints handling process and whether we acted appropriately when responding to the pest issue raised by the tenant.

This was because the tenant had not raised the condition that their home was left in by the contractor with us in any of their complaints. It has asked us to investigate this as a new complaint.



# Housing Ombudsman findings

## How we handled the complaint

The Housing Ombudsman found a service failure in how we handled the complaint raised by the tenant. This was because:

- We did not address all the issues raised by the tenant within their complaints and therefore have not fully resolved the complaint.

The main points raised by the Housing Ombudsman through its investigation were:

- That we had not been able to resolve the issue for the tenant through our early resolution process and had therefore raised a Stage 1 complaint. This was a reasonable approach.
- That while our Stage 2 response was outside our 20 working day response time, we had agreed an extension with the tenant in advance. This was a reasonable approach.
- That we had not addressed the tenant's complaint in full and therefore did not resolve the issue fully.

## How we dealt with the pest issue

Overall, the Housing Ombudsman found a service failure in how we responded to the pest issue raised by the tenant. This was because:

- We failed to acknowledge the time, effort and inconvenience caused to the tenant and their family by the appointment being missed by our contractor, and;
- We did not take reasonable steps to monitor the initial treatment of the issue (and did not have detailed, accurate records on this), which caused delays to the follow-up treatment.

The main points raised by the Housing Ombudsman through its investigation were:

- We took reasonable action to investigate the pest issue within the tenant's home and acted within a reasonable timescale to have the contractor attend and investigate. However, we failed to keep the tenant informed about the process including the next steps of the treatment and it was left to the tenant to chase us for information.
- Our contractor missed an appointment that the tenant has made specific arrangements for including making sure the family were out while the treatment was due to take place. We did not address this part of the tenant's complaint. The Ombudsman said that we failed to take the families circumstances into account and did not address the impact this would have on them.
- The Ombudsman acknowledged that our contractors had visited the home and completed treatment. However, we did not have comprehensive information or full reports of their findings or the treatment they completed. This caused delays to the second lot of treatment being completed.
- It found that our actions to appoint a specialist contractor and the action we took to limit the issues for our tenant was reasonable. It also said that our agreement to cover the costs to remove damaged items and contribute to replacements was a positive and reasonable approach.

# Learnings and actions

## Housing Ombudsman determination

The Housing Ombudsman's determination was as follows:

- Service failure in the handling of the pest control issues raised by the tenant.
- Service failure in our complaints handling process

## What action must we take?

The Housing Ombudsman has ordered that we:

- Write to the tenant and apologise for the failings identified in this report
- Pay £150 in compensation for the missed appointment and failure to monitor the initial treatment effectively.
- Raise a new complaint on behalf of the tenant to investigate the concerns raised about the condition that the contractor left their home in.
- Remind our team of the importance of considering the individual needs and circumstances of tenants when taking action.
- Review our processes and guidance for pest control within our homes and ensure that this is adequate to prevent similar service failings happening in the future.

## Learning from complaints

Through this complaint, we can see clear learning points that we need to implement across the organisation.

These include:

- Making sure that we keep tenants updated on any work happening within their homes.
- Ensuring that we get full and accurate reports from any contractors completing work on our behalf and that this is recorded within our systems.
- Making sure that we address all points raised within a complaint when we investigate them.
- Making sure that we consider the individual needs of the tenant and their family onto account and making reasonable adjustments wherever possible to limit any negative impact on them.



## Contact us

Telephone: **033 33 55 44 33**

Website: **[www.tworivershousing.org.uk](http://www.tworivershousing.org.uk)**

Email: **[customerservices@2rh.org.uk](mailto:customerservices@2rh.org.uk)**

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