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In Motion

Public Sector Complaint Management

2025 Autumn Edition

Executive Summary

The public sector is navigating a perfect storm: surging demands, tighter budgets, growing complaint volumes, and soaring citizen expectations. Since 2010, central government funding [has fallen by nearly 60%](#), while responsibilities in adult social care, housing, and other statutory services continue to expand.

Meanwhile, citizens expect faster, fairer, and more transparent complaint responses at a time when public satisfaction with services has [plummeted over two decades](#). With studies showing [a 10% drop in satisfaction leads to a 54% increase in complaints](#), it's imperative for public sector bodies to move from being reactive to proactive. Councils need complaint systems that not only resolve issues efficiently but also proactively improve services and rebuild trust.

Complaints are escalating at every stage. The Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) has reported a rise in both the number and severity of complaints—especially in complex areas such as SEND, housing, and social care. One council recently recorded [a 19% increase in Stage 1 complaints and a 144% spike in final-stage complaints](#) year-on-year, suggesting rising dissatisfaction and failure demand.

The challenge in Housing is even greater. The Housing Ombudsman had a **60% YoY increase** in 2023/24 of complaints accepted, and made 21,740 interventions to put things right for residents – an astonishing **329%** increase.

£4.9m in financial compensation had to be paid out in 2023/24. An increase of an even higher **345%** from £1.1m the previous year.
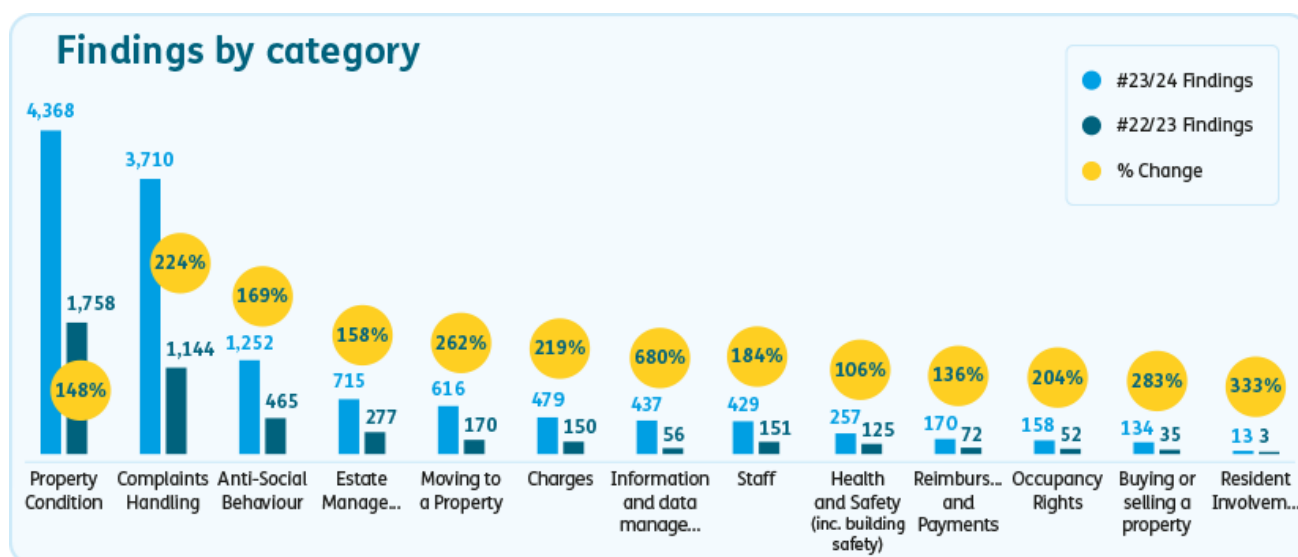

Figure 1 - Housing Ombudsman Complaints by Category 23/24 vs 22/23

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Regulatory pressure is also mounting

Local councils are facing a pivotal shift in how they manage public complaints. Regulatory standards such as:

➢ The Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code (**mandatory since April 2024**),

➢ The emergence of higher property condition standards such as **Awaab's Law** and **the revised Decent Homes Standard**

➢ The **expected moved to make the LGSCO Complaint Handling Code formally assessed from April 2026**

Are raising the bar for effort, timeliness, transparency, and learning from complaints.

The cost of inaction is high. A single complaint can **cost a council thousands** to resolve if it relates to a statutory service like housing and social care. Without even taking into account financial compensation.

When processes are fragmented or reactive, councils risk both reputational damage and systemic failure demand—where underlying issues repeatedly drive formal complaints and appeals.

Why Focus on Complaint Handling Now?

So, as we can see regulations, complaint volumes, and citizen expectations are causing a trifecta of compounding challenges that require novel approaches to mediate.

Novel because if public sector teams don't have the resources to handle the complaints themselves, they almost certainly do not have the capacity to carry out detailed root cause analysis. Nor to take action on the issues derived from these in a proactive manner.

| Regulation Rising | Complaint Volumes Up | Citizen Expectations | Failure to act on learnings | Legacy Technology |

Figure 2 - The Five Core Challenges in Complaint Management 2025

Plus, most complaint management systems were designed and built ten/twenty years ago. Or were cobbled together using technology from other platforms not designed with a focus on complaint management.

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Finally, Generative AI is having a tremendous effect on the capabilities of businesses globally but this has not yet been taken advantage of in the public sector yet. There is therefore a massive opportunity to create solutions powering complaint management from the 2000s into the 2030s using a compliant, data protected, AI-led approach.

This edition of In Motion walks through some examples of acute challenges and how next generation technology available today can simplify all 5 of the challenges above.

John McMahon

Chief Operating Officer

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Complaint Management Software 101

This report evaluates the evolving landscape of complaint management software in 2025. We compare what the latest generation of complaint management solutions delivers against legacy complaint systems and the challenges of using generic solutions in an increasingly regulated world.

Key areas of focus include:

- compliance automation,

- service-level agreement (SLA) monitoring,

- regulator-aligned workflows,

- operational alignment, and

- AI-driven capabilities for:

  - triage,

  - trend detection, and

  - automation.

We also highlight how modern platforms meet Housing Ombudsman, LGSCO, and Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) standards by design, and expose common weaknesses in legacy or generic case management systems (e.g. a lack of real-time compliance reporting, outdated interfaces, costly integrations, and poor root cause analytics).

Strategic and operational benefits – from reduced escalations and faster resolutions to staff time savings and better audit trails – are discussed with visuals and a feature comparison table for decision-makers.

First, we will start with the existing legacy systems and processes.

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Legacy Complaint Management Apps

Traditional complaint management in councils has often relied on either generic CRMs or older specialist systems.

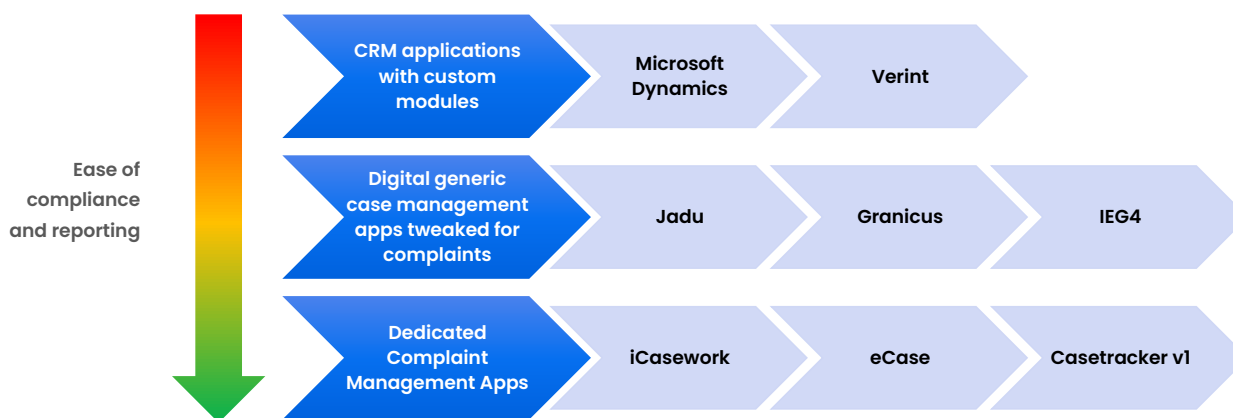Loosely, legacy complaint management applications fall into these categories:

Figure 3 – Legacy Complaint Management Apps vs Ease of Compliance

Legacy platforms have been in use for years and while many of these systems introduced digital workflows, they now show their age in the face of new demands:

- **Limited Real-Time Oversight:** Older and more generic systems often lack dynamic dashboards for tracking automation and compliance. For example, one council found their previous CRM provided *"minimal information"* on complaints, forcing staff to [resort to Excel spreadsheets for tracking and oversight](#). Trend analysis was only possible by manually manipulating data exported to spreadsheets – a slow, error-prone process that left managers reactive rather than proactive.

- **Outdated Interfaces & User Experience:** Legacy complaint modules were frequently bolt-ons to CRM systems not purpose-built for complaints. Interfaces are often clunky or not intuitive for case handlers. In the Lagan example, it wasn't tailored to complaints – *"[not a purpose-built platform](#)"* – which led to inconsistent usage by departments. Councils and Housing Associations using generic case management or CRM systems require significant training or IT support for configuration changes, reducing frontline staff adoption and agility. While simultaneously increasing the overall lifetime cost of the solution.

- **Fragmented Data & Integrations:** Older solutions struggle with integrating across service areas or other case types. Councils reported difficulty capturing a single view of a citizen's case history; e.g. [complaint handlers often couldn't easily link to related FOI or member inquiry cases in separate systems](#). Adjusting categories or workflows often required vendor support or costly custom development.

- APIs exist in products like iCasework, and eCase, but without native connectors leveraging them could incur extra costs or require technical expertise; making real-time data exchange with other systems expensive and slow.

- **Compliance Reporting Gaps:** Legacy systems were not built with today's regulatory codes in mind. Generating reports aligned to Ombudsman standards (e.g. showing Stage 1 response times, Stage 2 outcomes, outstanding "learnings") is often cumbersome.

  For instance, prior to adopting a modern system, **Barnet Council** noted their old CRM's complaint function had *"limited reporting capabilities… trend analysis only possible through manual spreadsheets"*. This made it difficult to prove compliance or identify patterns in a timely fashion. Real-time alerts for SLA breaches were also lacking – some councils had no automated warnings for approaching deadlines, relying on staff to manually check due dates.

  Put simply, there is a lack of point and click reporting across all of the apps that were designed for generic use cases. Statutory reporting for Housing is tedious and takes "2-3 days per month" said Enfield Council, Westminster Council, and Hull City Council.

- **Analytics and Root Cause Learning:** Perhaps the biggest weakness is turning complaint data into insight. Older platforms might capture the immediate issue but lack features for systematically tracking root causes, actions taken, and lessons learned. Users often export data to analyse in Excel or not at all.

  Generic CRM style solutions don't have these reports and so creating them and maintaining them is expensive and subject to more cost going forward.

  The largest council in Europe (Birmingham City Council) reported that while their application had root cause analysis reports the reports only permitted one to see the themes e.g. Poor Communication. Without the context of Service Area, Specific Services, Complaint Stage, Channel, and Source, there was little one could actually do with the data.

  Barnet Council also mentioned that when using a generic CRM based solution they had *"restricted [the] ability to use complaints data to support learning and improvement."* In short, legacy and generic case management systems tend to be case **record** systems, not compliance and learning systems.

These pain points have real consequences: without real-time compliance tracking, councils risk missing statutory response times. Poor interfaces and siloed data lead to delays and frustrated staff, which in turn means slower responses to the public. Lack of analytics means repeat issues fester, driving up complaint volumes over time.

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Enter the Next Generation

A Step-Change in Complaint Handling

As councils look beyond legacy technologies and generic case management systems, a new set of expectations is shaping the future of complaints management. These aspirations reflect a desire for platforms that are modern, intelligent, regulator-ready, and designed around citizen experience.

☑ Built-In Compliance & Regulator Alignment

Next-generation systems will embed compliance with complaint handling codes as standard – not as an afterthought. Councils increasingly expect:

- **Pre-configured workflows** aligned to major codes (e.g. Housing Ombudsman, LGSCO, SPSO), with automated timeframes, escalation rules, and learning capture.

- **Automated reporting** for annual returns, audits, and self-assessments – no more chasing data across spreadsheets.

- **Live dashboards** showing real-time regulatory performance, such as timeliness of acknowledgements and resolution across departments.

The goal is clear: enable councils to prove compliance effortlessly and reduce the risk of maladministration.

☑ Streamlined, Role-Based User Experience

Legacy systems are often clunky, fragmented, or generic. Councils now expect:

- **Clean, accessible interfaces** (WCAG 2.2-compliant) designed around real users – from frontline staff to complaints officers to service managers.

- **Tailored views** and intuitive workflows that reduce training time and improve adoption.

- **Built-in actions** (e.g. escalation, clarification request, learning capture) surfaced contextually to reduce clicks and speed up resolution.

The emphasis is on usability, efficiency, and seamless collaboration.

☑ End-to-End Workflow & SLA Monitoring

Modern complaints platforms must support the full journey, from intake to investigation to learning. Councils are asking for:

- **Multi-stage workflows** (Stage 1, Stage 2, appeals) with configurable steps for different complaint types (e.g. statutory children's complaints).

- **SLA tracking** with countdown clocks, auto-reminders, and escalation triggers when deadlines approach.

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- **Audit trails** for every action – when the complaint was received, what was done, and by whom.

Peace of mind comes from knowing the system is "watching the clock" on every case.

☑ Seamless Integration with Microsoft 365 – Reduce Friction, Boost Adoption

Council staff already live inside Microsoft 365 – using Teams, Outlook, SharePoint, and Planner daily. Next-generation complaint systems are expected to **integrate natively with this ecosystem**, enabling:

- **Teams-based alerts and escalations** – surfacing time-sensitive case updates, SLA breaches, or next steps directly into Teams channels.

- **Outlook integration** that allows users to view or act on a complaint (e.g. acknowledge receipt, add comments) straight from an email.

- **SharePoint/OneDrive linking** for seamless access to documents, decisions, and correspondence – stored in familiar, governed locations.

- **Planner or To Do syncing** to track deadlines and assignments without needing to check a separate dashboard.

- **Single sign-on and role-based permissions** via Microsoft Entra ID (formerly Azure AD), making user management automatic and secure.

By embedding functionality where users already work, councils can **increase adoption, reduce training time**, and ensure complaint handling becomes a natural part of daily operations – not an extra chore.

☑ AI-Driven Intake, Triage & Assistance

Artificial intelligence is now seen as a core enabler – not a gimmick. Councils increasingly expect systems to offer:

- **AI-assisted triage**, which interprets the content of a complaint, determines if it's valid, and categorises it by service area or severity.

- **Conversational intake** to guide citizens or staff logging complaints, helping avoid misrouting and reducing friction.

- **Response generation support**, where AI can draft letters based on investigation notes and tone guidance, ready for officer approval.

- **Monitoring agents** that follow up automatically, ensure nothing slips, and verify resolution quality.

The ambition is clear: automate the routine, empower the human.

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☑ Real-Time Analytics & Early Warning Signals

Data must be actionable. Councils want more than just static reports:

- **Interactive dashboards** showing complaint volumes by type, service area, or outcome – updated in real time.

- **Trend detection** that highlights spikes in complaints or emerging issues early, enabling proactive service improvements.

- **Root cause analytics** and "lessons learned" tools to identify systemic issues and inform transformation work.

This empowers councils to shift from reactive to preventative complaint handling.

☑ Continuous Improvement, Not Just Case Closure

Complaint systems are evolving into **learning systems**. Councils increasingly view complaints as a key channel of citizen feedback and expect tools to:

- **Log and track learning outcomes** per case and prompt follow-up actions.

- **Link complaint insights** with other service feedback (e.g. satisfaction surveys) for a 360° view.

- **Surface recommendations** for service improvement based on recurring themes or narrative analysis.

Ultimately, the best systems will not just manage complaints, but reduce them over time.

Example Nex Gen App - CaseTracker Pro

CaseTracker Pro is a new platform comprised of a heavily enhanced case management app (CaseTracker) and Octavia an AI powered team of digital workers that automate complaint workflows.

CaseTracker is a unified case management app, and Octavia is an AI "complaint agent" layer that automates and augments the process. Together, they address legacy shortcomings head-on:

Compliance Automation & Regulator Alignment

CaseTracker was designed in partnership with councils to hard-wire regulatory best practices. It comes _"compliant with LGSCO, SPSO, [Housing Ombudsman] HO" codes out-of-the-box_. This means workflows (number of stages, response timeframes, escalation rules) and data fields (like "learning categories" or "delay reasons") already align with what Ombudsmen expect. For example, the Local Government Ombudsman's new code mandates acknowledgements within 5 days and full Stage 1 response within 10 days – CaseTracker's timers and alerts are configured accordingly from day one.

The system can automatically compile the annual _complaints performance report and self-assessment required by the code. "Compliance made easy" is a core principle – with built-in reporting for regulatory audits and Ombudsman reviews, councils can instantly see if any case is breaching a deadline or falling foul of policy._
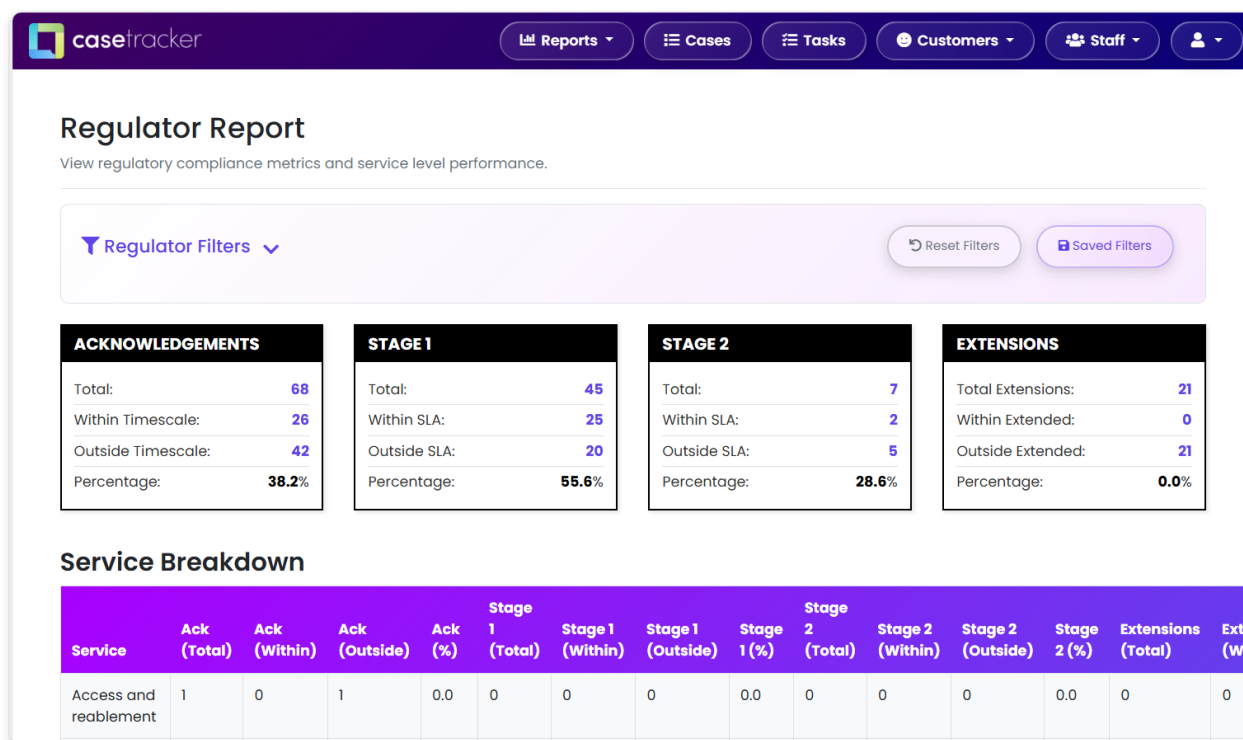

Figure 4 – CaseTracker Pro Regulator Report

CaseTracker's compliance dashboard provides a live overview of regulatory performance. In this "Compliance Overview" screen, managers can filter by date, case type or status and see at a glance how many complaints met acknowledgement and resolution timeliness targets at Stage 1 and Stage 2.

In this example, the widgets for acknowledgements and Stage 1 show how many cases were within vs. outside the set timescales, and the table breaks down performance by service area. Such real-time monitoring ensures no complaint "falls through the cracks," and any breaches of the Housing Ombudsman or LGSCO standards are immediately visible for remedial action.

Streamlined, Modern User Experience

CaseTracker offers an intuitive web interface with role-based views for staff. Frontline staff see a simple, guided form to log complaints (with no training needed), while complaint officers have a powerful case workspace. The interface is modern and accessible:

Figure 5 – CaseTracker Pro Case List Review with a single view of all cases

Key information – status, owner, deadlines – is presented clearly for each case, and actions (like escalating to Stage 2 or requesting info) are built into the workflow buttons. This contrasts with older UIs where officers had to navigate generic CRM screens or separate spreadsheets for status.

Tony Stead from Cambridge City Council noted that CaseTracker *"covers everything we need and more... super easy to use."* Lower training overheads and better adoption by staff ultimately lead to faster complaint resolutions.

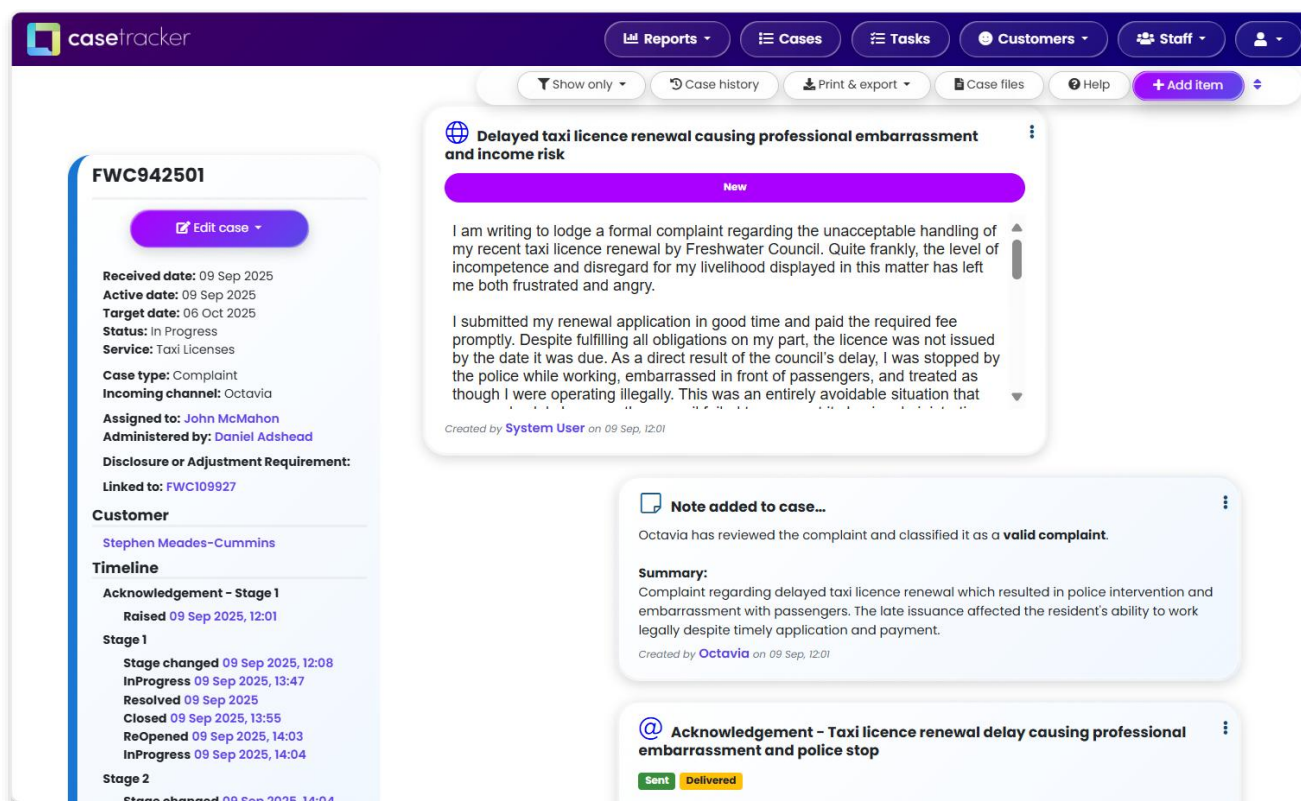*Figure 6 – CaseTracker Pro Case Timeline with AI Summary provided by its inbuilt Octavia AI*

End-to-End Workflow with SLA Monitoring

Every step of the complaint journey is managed within CaseTracker, ensuring a single system of record. The platform supports multi-stage workflows (Stage 1, Stage 2, appeals) with automated escalations. Managers can configure bespoke workflows for different departments or statutory processes (e.g. children's social care complaints have specific steps) while maintaining overall compliance.

Crucially, **SLA clocks and reminders are automated** – CaseTracker sends alerts to handlers and managers before a due date is breached. It even tracks extensions (with reasons) to ensure they are used appropriately. All of this is visible on live dashboards. This level of monitoring was a known strength of iCasework as well (which introduced *"SLA monitoring tools"* applytosupply.digitalmarketplace.service.gov.uk), but CaseTracker takes it further with ease-of-use and integration with notifications (including email alerts). In short, managers get peace of mind that the system is watching the clock on every case.

AI-Driven Triage and Assistance (Octavia)

The addition of **Octavia AI** **into CaseTracker Pro** is what truly distinguishes the GovMetric solution. Octavia is *"an AI-powered complaint agent"* that automates many routine tasks.

For incoming complaints, Octavia's **Triage Agent** uses AI to interpret the complaint text and ask clarifying questions. It can determine, for instance, if a submission is actually a service request (e.g. a missed bin collection) and divert it accordingly, preventing it from clogging the complaints process.
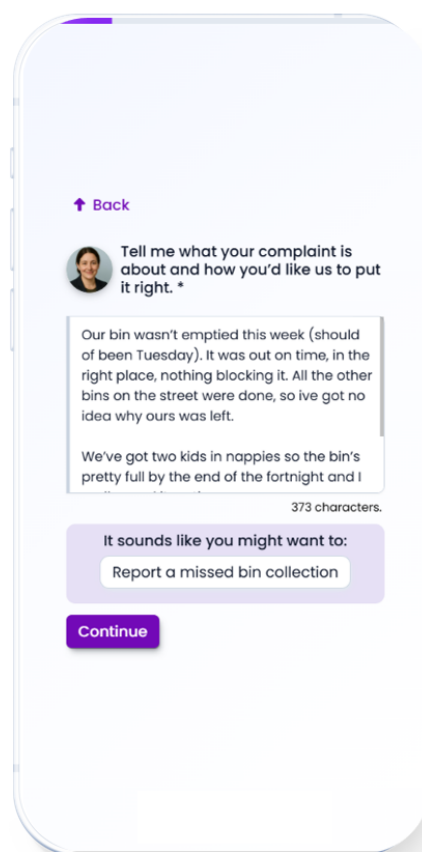

Figure 7 – Octavia AI is used to detect if something is a complaint and deflect/deter if not

Octavia categorises the complaint by service and severity, and assigns it to the appropriate team automatically. This intelligent triage not only saves admin time but also ensures the complaint is directed *"to the right team as quickly as possible."*

Octavia's conversational intake guides the citizen (or staff logging a complaint) with simple questions. In the example above, Octavia asks the user to confirm the service area related to the complaint, offering dynamic options like "Waste & Recycling" to route the case correctly. By engaging in a chat-style interaction, Octavia can prevent misrouted or invalid complaints (for

![govmetric logo]

instance, flagging issues that are really requests or queries). This reduces back-and-forth and helps get the complaint to the correct resolution path immediately.

Octavia's capabilities don't stop at intake. A **Quality Agent** will keep an eye on each case's progress – automatically chasing up team members if deadlines approach, and verifying that all complaint points are addressed in the response. When a case handler finishes investigating, Octavia's **Response Agent** can draft a tailored response letter using AI, pulling in the investigation findings and phrasing it in an appropriate tone. The officer just needs to review and approve, dramatically cutting down writing time.

In essence, Octavia acts like an autonomous assistant throughout the complaint lifecycle. By *"automating triage, assignment, tracking, and response generation, Octavia eliminates manual bottlenecks"* and frees up staff to focus on complex cases and service improvement.

Real-Time Analytics and Trend Detection

CaseTracker includes robust reporting tools that give councils insight into why complaints happen and how to prevent them. It logs "lessons learned" for each case and can aggregate these to show common root causes. More powerfully, it features trend reports and dashboards that visualize patterns over time – for example, spikes in complaints about a particular service or issue. Managers can slice data by category, date, service, outcome etc., without exporting to Excel. The platform supports **free to use APIs for external business intelligence**, but most councils will find the insights available in-app are far beyond what's needed.

By contrast, legacy systems often had only static reports or required IT to build new reports. Having on-demand analytics means councils can proactively identify emerging issues (e.g. an uptick in missed collection complaints in one region) and act before they escalate.

Figure 8 below shows the trend analysis report conveying the volume of cases by type each month, with interactive charts (line, bar, area) to spot peaks and troughs. In this example, the purple line represents general complaints trending over time. The panel on the right lists categories with totals and whether they are stable or increasing/decreasing. Such visual analytics help complaints managers identify patterns – for instance, if "Housing Repairs" complaints are rising quarter by quarter – so they can prompt service teams to investigate underlying causes. Importantly, these insights are available in real-time, not weeks after an analyst crunches spreadsheets.
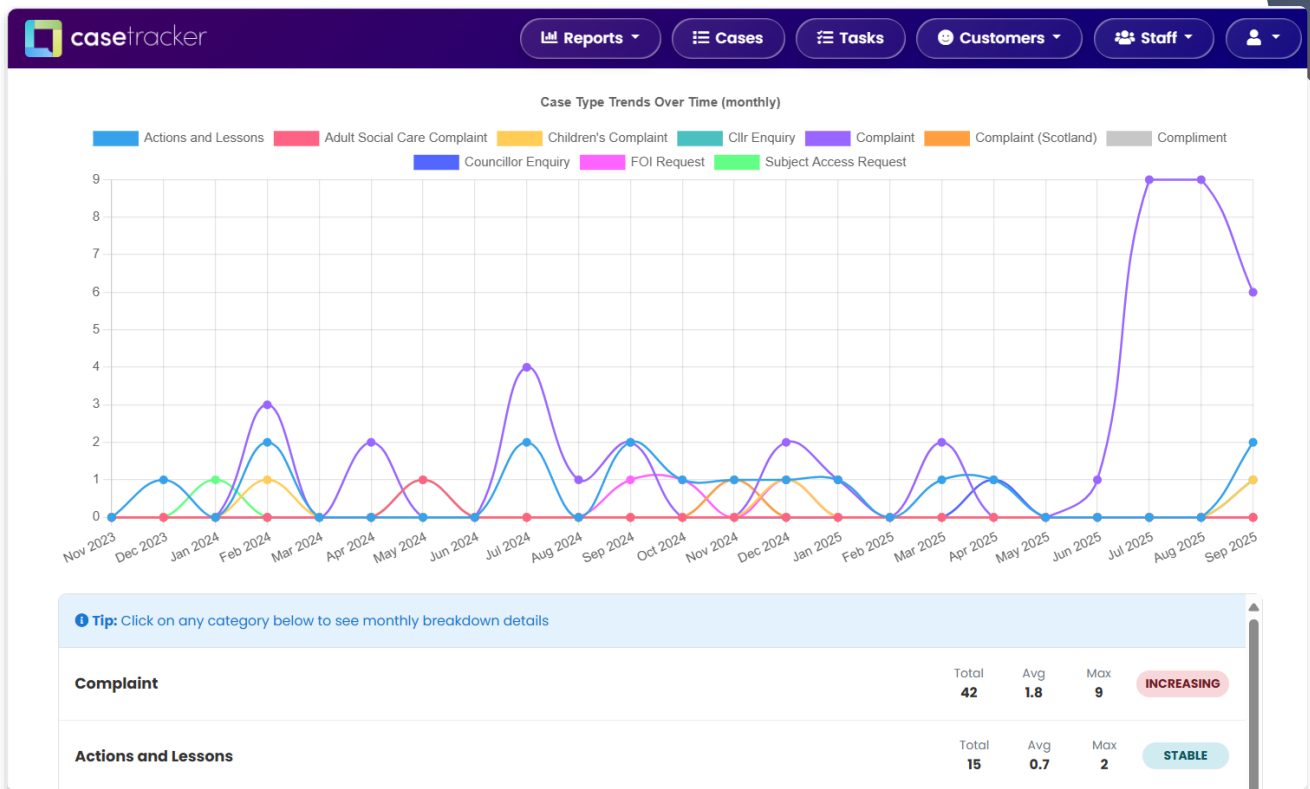
Figure 8 – CaseTracker reporting shows highly visual trend analysis

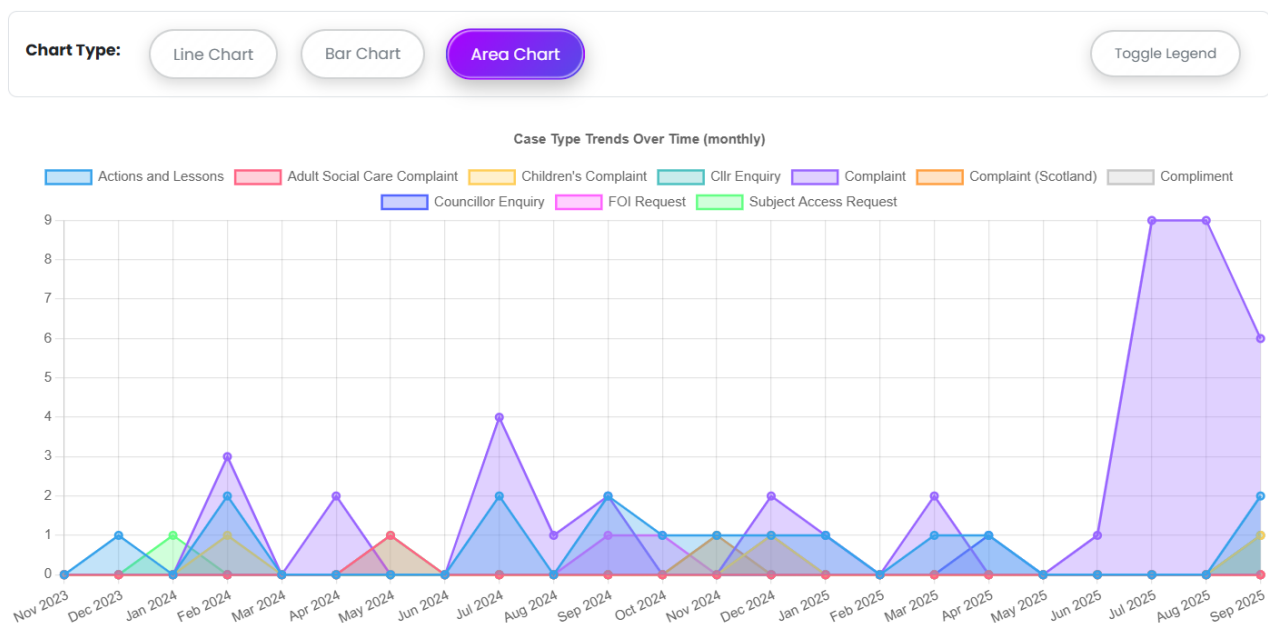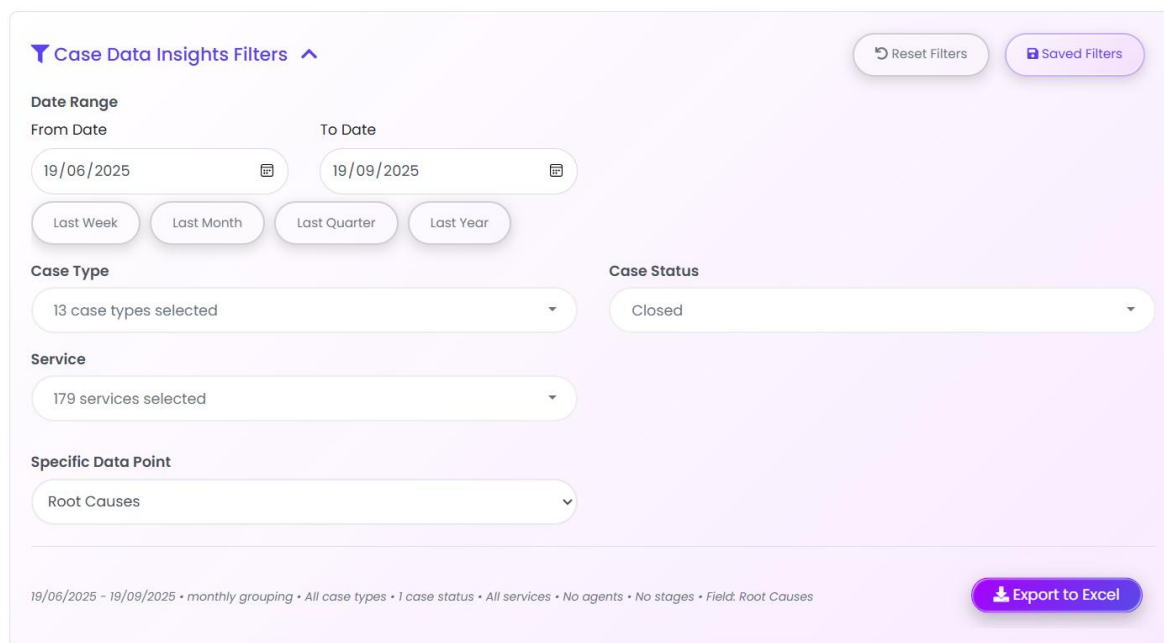With the ability to visualise this in different ways:

Figure 9 – CaseTracker reporting shows highly visual trend analysis – Area Chart mode

And quickly and easily filter the data on date ranges, case types, service areas etc:

Figure 10 – CaseTracker reporting sample filters

Reporting extends to visuals like heatmaps and being able to see which specific properties have vexatious complainants. Enabling quick and simple identification:
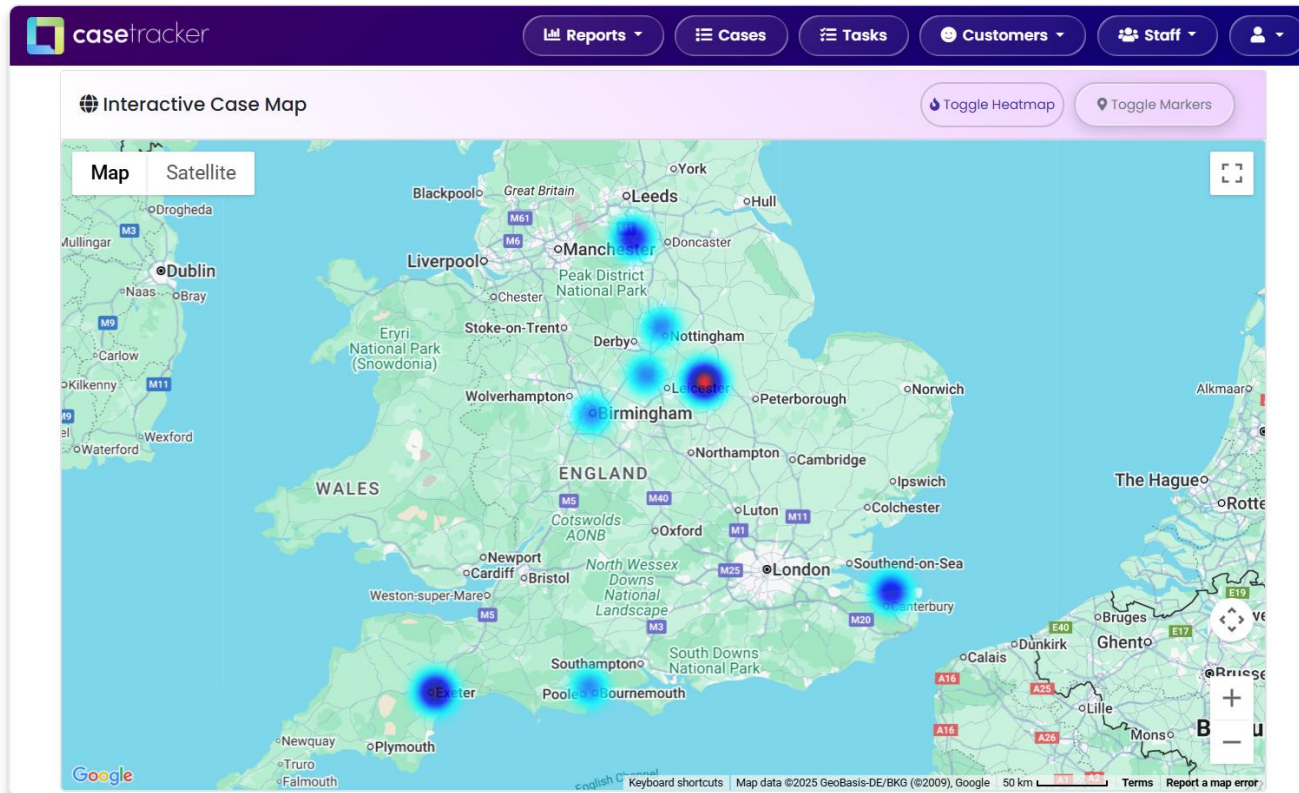

Figure 11 – CaseTracker Case Location Report Heatmap

Integration of Feedback and Continuous Improvement

Modern complaint management is not just about closing cases, but feeding the insights back into service design. GovMetric's wider suite (GovMetric CX) captures real-time satisfaction feedback, and CaseTracker ties in by capturing complaints data as a form of rich feedback. Some councils using GovMetric have adopted a *"proactive complaints management"* approach – combining **reactive handling** with data-driven prevention.

For example, **Stevenage Borough Council** recently expanded from GovMetric's satisfaction tool to CaseTracker for complaints, aiming to *"drive better outcomes for both their teams and citizens"* by learning from every complaint. The platform facilitates this by logging "Actions and Lessons" on each case and even prompting managers to review them. Competing systems like iCasework also emphasize and the ability to produce reports to identify trends.

CaseTracker's advantage is its reporting has a much finer level of granularity. So rather than just identifying themes/causes. One can identify these by

Built-In Regulator Compatibility

One of the standout strengths of CaseTracker is its compliance with public sector complaint handling codes **by design**. It is explicitly *"the simplest, most compliant complaint handling app in the UK"*. Let's unpack what that means for major regulators:

- **Housing Ombudsman (England)** – The Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code sets strict requirements for social housing providers (including council housing departments), such as two-stage max processes, 10-day responses, and an annual self-assessment against the code. CaseTracker was developed with these in mind; it can produce the self-assessment report showing compliance status on each point of the code. It tracks all extension requests and automatically flags if a housing complaint is approaching the 10-day limit for response. When the Housing Ombudsman updated the code to be statutory in 2024, GovMetric ensured CaseTracker's workflows aligned with the new requirements (e.g. mandatory learning from each complaint, resident-focused tone in responses). Legacy systems require significant re-configuration to meet these new rules – or worse, reliance on policy outside the system.

- **Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (England)** – The LGSCO's new guidance (launching fully by 2026) introduces standard timescales and expectations for councils. CaseTracker already meets these: acknowledgements, responses, and escalation steps are built around the LGSCO code's two-stage process. The system can differentiate corporate complaints versus statutory Adult/Children's social care complaints (which follow slightly different regulations) and ensure each follows the correct path. Early-adopter councils like Telford & Wrekin, who have piloted the LGSCO code ahead of 2026,

find a compliant system invaluable – it reduces risk of Ombudsman findings of maladministration due to process errors. Competing products like iCasework also tout meeting Ombudsman guidance, but CaseTracker goes further by **embedding** the code's reporting requirements. For instance, the LGSCO code expects an annual complaints performance report with qualitative analysis and a published complaints policy – CaseTracker's reporting suite can generate much of this content on demand, including trend graphs and breakdowns required for that report.

- **Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO)** – Scotland has had a unified **Model Complaints Handling Procedure (MCHP)** for years (two stages: Stage 1 "frontline resolution" within 5 days, Stage 2 investigation within 20 days). CaseTracker is fully compatible with the SPSO model – in fact, it labels stages in line with SPSO terminology and can produce the quarterly statistics that Scottish authorities must report (like % resolved at Stage 1, average time to close, etc.).

  Councils in Scotland benefit from templates and correspondence libraries that meet SPSO's standards for clear communication. Essentially, whether it's England or Scotland, the software's **"Public Sector Compliance built-in"** means less time configuring and more confidence that the system inherently supports best practice.

This built-in compliance is a major differentiator in the market. A legacy system can be configured to follow these codes, but it often requires a project team to adjust forms, add fields for "learning outcomes," create new reports, and train staff on new processes.

CaseTracker provides these out-of-the-box – for example, it includes pre-set **"Ombudsman view"** filters so one can instantly pull up all cases escalated to an Ombudsman and their status. It also handles nuances like excluding working weekends in deadline calculations, as required by the codes.

Key Features and Benefits Comparison

To summarise the differences between the **CaseTracker Pro** platform and typical legacy solutions (iCasework, Dynamics, eCase, Verint/Lagan), the table below highlights feature gaps and strengths:

Capability	CaseTracker Pro	Legacy Systems (iCasework, Dynamics, eCase, Verint)
Regulator-Aligned Workflows	Pre-configured two-stage process compliant with LGSCO, HO, SPSO codes. Timers and escalation rules match code requirements out-of-box.	Often configurable, but require manual setup for new codes. Risk of inconsistency if not updated. E.g. many councils still adapting systems for LGSCO 2026.
Real-Time Compliance Dashboard	Live dashboard shows acknowledgements and responses within/outside SLA, by service (example in CaseTracker's "Compliance Overview"). Automatic alerts for breaches.	Basic reporting in some but often need to run reports or use spreadsheets. Limited instant visibility; compliance issues often found after the fact.
AI-Powered Triage & Routing	Octavia AI intercepts complaints, classifies type, and routes to correct team automatically[landing.govmetric.com](landing.govmetric.com). Can deflect service requests and gather missing info via chat.	No AI in legacy systems. Some allow rule-based routing by category, but rely on correct manual categorization. Service requests often come through complaint channels unchecked.
Automated Acknowledgements	Immediate personalised acknowledgment emails/letters auto-generated by Octavia, ensuring 100% on-time acknowledgments.	Requires manual officer action or template use. Delays common if staff forget; some systems can send auto-receipts but not tailored to content.
Guided Casework Interface	Modern web UI with guided forms and one-click actions (escalate, respond, close). Minimal training needed; accessible on mobile. Progress tracking available to citizens via secure portal.	Interfaces vary: iCasework is web-based and fairly modern, but others like older Dynamics or Verint CRM screens are less user-friendly, leading to heavier training and occasional user error. Citizen-facing tracking often absent or not real-time.
Integrated Analytics & Trends	Built-in trend reports (visual charts) to spot patterns by category or service. Root cause	Standard reports on volumes and timeliness. Custom reports

	and "lessons learned" fields aggregated into dashboards for learning. AI can summarize themes across cases.	needed for deeper analysis; often exported to Excel for trend analysis. Limited ability to capture qualitative "lessons" – depends on manual entry and separate analysis.
Extensions & Exceptions	Tracks extensions with reason codes; can require manager approval in-system. Ensures compliance with allowable extension limits.	Many legacy systems lack dedicated extension tracking – users handle extensions offline. Compliance to extension rules (like Housing Ombudsman's 10-day extension limit) not enforced automatically.
Multi-Channel Intake	Omni-channel: web form, mobile, phone, and social media inputs all feed into one queue. AI helps standardize data from all sources. Web forms are AI-powered to classify as complaint vs request.	Most accept email, web, phone inputs but without AI classification. Some newer ones integrate social media. However, inconsistent data capture – e.g. citizen web complaints might come as email to officers in older setups.
Collaboration & Integration	Two-way integrations with council systems (CRM, contact centre, etc.) via open API and webhooks. CaseTracker uses an open REST API (Swagger) for seamless data flow. Also integrates with GovMetric CX feedback.	APIs exist but may incur extra cost or complexity. Microsoft Dynamics can integrate deeply (with significant dev effort). Verint/Lagan often requires vendor services for integration. Data silos common – e.g. complaints not linked to service request system without custom work.
Microsoft 365 Integration	Natively integrate with existing applications. Such as NEC, Granicu, Jadu, Microsoft Teams and Outlook. Alerts, reminders, and escalations appear in Teams channels or via adaptive cards. Officers can view and act on complaints directly from Outlook. System fits into staff's existing work environment with minimal switching.	Some M365 integration possible but typically limited or requires significant configuration. Outlook may be used for notifications, but no native "action from inbox." Teams alerts uncommon without custom work. SharePoint/Planner rarely integrated. Dynamics offers deeper integration with Microsoft stack but often requires IT/developer involvement. Most systems are standalone,

		requiring staff to toggle between apps.
Cost Model	Typically unlimited user licensing (flat annual fee) – encouraging wider use (including giving all departments access). Cloud-based (SaaS) with updates included, such as new AI features.	Often per-seat licensing (e.g. iCasework ~£660–£1,100 per user/year). This can make expanding access expensive, leading some councils to limit users. Customizations and upgrades may cost extra (especially for on-premise or older versions).

As shown above, CaseTracker Pro addresses many of the gaps left by legacy solutions. Notably, the AI capabilities and built-in compliance features are unique in the market. Even where legacy systems have improved (for example, iCasework is now cloud-based and configurable, and eCase offers some dashboard tools), they still largely lack the proactive automation that an AI-first platform provides.

Strategic and Operational Benefits

Adopting a next-gen complaint management platform yields significant strategic and operational gains for a council:

- **Reduced Escalations:** By handling Stage 1 complaints more effectively and on time, councils can prevent unnecessary escalations to Stage 2 or the Ombudsman. Octavia aids this by ensuring the initial complaint is properly triaged and nothing is overlooked in the response. A well-handled Stage 1 can resolve the issue to the citizen's satisfaction more often. Fewer escalations mean less resource drain and better reputational outcomes. In practice, councils using AI-assisted systems foresee a drop in escalated cases thanks to quicker, more thorough first responses.

- **Faster Resolution Times:** Automation speeds up the process. With legacy tools, days could be lost just assigning a complaint to the right person or gathering basic info. Now, Octavia assigns cases instantly and drafts responses in minutes. One council reported that with a modern system, they log cases **3x faster** than before. Faster acknowledgements and responses not only improve compliance metrics but also increase public trust (citizens feel their issue is taken seriously and promptly addressed). This is critical as survey data shows timeliness is a key factor in citizens' satisfaction with complaint handling.

- **Resource & FTE Savings:** Automating routine tasks translates to significant staff time savings. By some estimates, an AI-driven approach can save **hundreds of hours** per year that were previously spent on administrative tasks – logging complaints, sending template emails, compiling reports, etc. These time savings can be reinvested into complex case investigations or service improvements. For example, if Octavia handles initial triage and acknowledgments, a complaints team can manage a higher volume of cases without adding headcount. Some early adopters anticipate being able to provide *"the same quality performance with fewer staff"* by leveraging such software. This efficiency also has a cost-saving angle: fewer overtime hours rushing to meet deadlines, and potentially lower spending on Ombudsman remedies or litigation that result from delayed or poor complaint handling.

- **Better Audit Trails & Risk Mitigation:** Modern systems maintain a comprehensive, timestamped audit trail of every action on a case – who did what and when – which is invaluable for internal audits and external investigations. In CaseTracker, even correspondence via email is automatically attached and logged. This ensures transparency and accountability. Should the Ombudsman investigate, the council can easily produce a complete chronology. Strong audit trails also help identify any bottlenecks in the process (e.g. if certain departments are slow to respond) so managers can intervene. Moreover, compliance reports that previously might have exposed the

council to criticism (for missing responses or lacking learning) can now be robust and positive, since the system supports meeting all obligations.

- **Improved Citizen Experience:** Ultimately, the goal of complaint handling reform is to improve citizen satisfaction and trust. A next-gen platform contributes directly to this. Citizens benefit from quicker acknowledgments and responses, clearer communication (with consistent tone and content thanks to templates/AI), and even the ability to track the status of their complaint online. For instance, CaseTracker offers a secure portal where a citizen can see updates or add information to their case, much like tracking a service request. This level of transparency is often lacking in older processes (where a citizen might hear nothing until a final response). By making complaints easier to submit and by closing the feedback loop with customers (some councils send a follow-up survey after a complaint is closed to gauge satisfaction), councils can turn a complainant into a satisfied (or at least appeased) citizen. In the bigger picture, demonstrating that complaints lead to service improvements can rebuild public trust: people see that raising their concerns results in tangible changes, which encourages a positive feedback culture rather than cynicism.

- **Continuous Improvement & Learning Culture:** Modern complaint systems don't let lessons learned slip through the cracks. Every upheld complaint can trigger an action – whether it's updating a policy, providing staff training, or fixing a service issue. CaseTracker, for example, has a module for tracking these actions to completion. Over time, this creates a knowledge base of frequent issues and how they were resolved, benefiting new staff and preventing repeat mistakes. Competitor systems like eCase also highlight this benefit (e.g. Ministry of Defence using eCase saw reporting tasks that *"used to take a month are now done with one click,"* enabling them to focus on higher-value tasks). The key is that staff move from firefighting individual complaints to analysing systemic issues. This proactive stance is exactly what Ombudsman authorities want to see – complaints as a catalyst for positive change. A next-gen platform is an enabler of that cultural shift, making it easy to capture insights and hard to ignore them.

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Conclusion

The landscape of local government complaint management in 2025 is one of transformation. Compliance requirements are tightening, citizens expect faster and smarter service, and technology – especially AI – is opening new frontiers for efficiency and insight. Council complaints teams are no longer satisfied with adapting generic tools or stitching together spreadsheets and email alerts.

For senior council decision-makers, procurement officers, and complaints/CX managers, the message is clear: upgrading to an AI-enabled, compliance-centric complaint system is no longer a tech luxury, but a strategic necessity. It means fewer complaint failures appearing in Ombudsman reports, more satisfied residents, and ultimately a feedback loop that drives service excellence. In procurement terms, it's about future-proofing – choosing a platform that will adapt with emerging technologies (agentic AI, predictive analytics) and evolving regulations, rather than one that will need replacement or extensive reworking in a few years.

Councils need smart, purpose-built systems that:

- Are regulator-ready from day one.

- Offer intelligent automation without losing the human touch.

- Provide actionable insights, not just record-keeping.

- Help prevent future complaints – not just process them.

- Work seamlessly with the tools and systems you have to fit into existing ways of working.

This is the direction of travel: AI-powered, compliant by design, citizen-focused, and improvement-oriented.

The next generation is here – and it's about more than just case management.

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