



Blackpool Coastal
Housing

Blackpool Council

BCH ANNUAL COMPLAINT AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT REPORT

2024/25

(ON BEHALF OF THE LANDLORD
BLACKPOOL COUNCIL)

INTRODUCTION

This report outlines how we've performed against our complaints service standards from 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025. It outlines where we have got things wrong and what actions we have taken to improve our services.

We make sure our complaints process is simple and easy to access, whether a complaint is raised through our website, on social media, email, phone or in person. We treat all complaints confidentially, respectfully and fairly. We care about what our customers think, and we welcome your feedback. We want to know where our service may have fallen short of expectations so that we can put things right, learn from our mistakes and improve.

There are a number of ways for you to talk to us and get involved that can be quick and simple from the comfort of your own home or through more involved routes. We are committed to engaging customers in how we shape our services. We will communicate with customers and provide information so that tenants and residents can use our services, understand what to expect from us, and hold us to account. There are a number of ways you can get involved in how we manage complaints. As part of our Complaints panel, you can review and challenge our complaints performance to help identify where we can improve.

This report provides customers with information on customer feedback in the form of complaints and compliments. It provides information, as required, in line with the annual performance reporting requirements of the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) code.

The HOS code became statutory from 1st April 2024, and states that "landlords must produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge."

The annual self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code will be submitted on or before 30th September 2025 and published on the BCH website, along with this report and the Member Responsible for Complaints & Board Complaint Champion's response to this report.

If you're interested in getting involved with us, scan the QR code here



COMPLAINTS OPENED WITHIN PERIOD

The table below shows all new complaints opened within the period. This includes complaints from tenants, leaseholders and private residents.

	This Period 2024/25	Previous Period 2023/24
Stage 1	159	211
Stage 2	36	45
Housing Ombudsman Determinations	1	4

There has been a decrease in the number of complaints received compared to the last period. In 2024 all staff underwent mandatory customer case training with a focus on 'Right First Time'. The impact of this training presumably explains some of the reduction in complaints.

The complaints process and service has continued to be promoted through various communication channels so that all customers are aware of their right to complain and can access this process. The Involvement & Communications Manager has also attended all staff team meetings to explain the complaints process and responsibilities, outline expectations and discuss any queries. We have continued to promote the 'Four Million Homes' campaign and several of our involved residents have attended training and meetings offered by this campaign. The Four Million Homes programme is a government initiative which has been designed to be a catalyst for change in social housing providing free knowledge, guidance, and training to residents across the sector on their rights and on the duties of social housing landlords.

Whilst the number of Stage 2s have reduced from the previous period, there were also less Stage 1s so the escalation rate has increased slightly from 17% last year to 18% this year.

Tenant Satisfaction Measures – Management Data	This Period 2024/25	Previous Period 2023/24	Housemark early findings 2024/25 year-end results (Median)
TSM Complaints per 1000 properties (excludes Private)	40.65	50.88	
TSM Stage 1 complaints per 1000 properties	33.15	42.05	49.3
TSM Stage 2 complaints per 1000 properties	7.50	8.83	8.2

ALL CASES WITHIN PERIOD

The table below shows all complaints managed within the period. This includes complaints from tenants, leaseholders and private residents.

	This Period 2024/25
Stage 1	196
Stage 2	43
Housing Ombudsman Determinations	1

COMPLAINT PERFORMANCE

The tables below show the timescales for acknowledging and responding to Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints within Housing Ombudsman complaint handling code and Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs.)

STAGE 1

	BCH 2024/25	Housemark early findings 2024/25 year-end results (Median)
Acknowledged within 5 days	100%	
TSM: Stage 1 Completed within 10 working days	98.79%	93.4%
Stage 1 Extensions	16	
% with extensions	10.06%	

The TSM for Stage 1 responses being completed within 10 days has gone up to 98.79% from 97.93% in the prior year.

Of the Stage 1 responses within the period, 163 were completed within 10 working days and two were out of target. The two out of target were a result of an administration error with the response date being incorrectly calculated at opening. This has been raised with the team and an additional measure has been put in place for Complaint Officers to check response dates calculated at case opening.

The BCH scorecard target for Stage 1 responses to be completed within 10 working days is 85%.

STAGE 2

	BCH 2024/25	Housemark early findings 2024/25 year-end results (Median)
Acknowledged within 5 days	97.22%	
TSM: Stage 2 Completed within 20 working days	100%	91.5%
Stage 2 Extensions	5	
% with extensions	13.89%	

The TSM for Stage 2 responses being completed within 20 days remained at 100% from last period.

One Stage 2 acknowledgement was out of target, this was due to a delay in awaiting confirmation from the complainant that they wished to attend the Stage 2 hearing, before sending the acknowledgement.

COMPLAINT AREAS/CATEGORIES

A complaint may have more than one recorded category. Table ordered by total Stage 1 categories.

STAGE 1

Service	Total Stage 1 categories	Upheld	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Escalated	Withdrawn	Total upheld or partially upheld at Stage 1	% upheld or partially upheld at Stage 1	% escalated to Stage 2
Responsive Repairs	91	21	22	31	16	1	52	70%	18%
ASB	37	1	20	5	11	0	6	23%	30%
Hotline	24	7	3	12	2	0	19	86%	8%
Neighbourhoods	21	7	4	5	5	0	12	75%	24%
Contractors	17	7	5	4	1	0	11	69%	6%
Choice Based Lettings	14	1	6	2	4	1	3	33%	31%
Voids	9	3	1	2	3	0	5	83%	33%
Compliance	8	1	3	3	0	1	4	57%	0%
Homeownership / Leasehold	8	0	2	3	3	0	3	60%	38%

Adaptations	7	0	2	2	3	0	2	50%	43%
Resettlement - Hostels	7	1	3	0	3	0	1	25%	43%
Resilience Housing - Sheltered	5	1	2	0	2	0	1	33%	40%
Assets	4	3	0	1	0	0	4	75%	0%
Rents	4	1	2	1	0	0	2	50%	0%
Other	3	1	0	2	0	0	3	100%	0%
BCH Corporate	3	1	1	1	0	0	2	66%	0%
Care & Repair	3	1	1	0	1	0	1	66%	33%
Technical & Electrical	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0%	0%
Business Support	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	100%	0%
Resilience Housing - MPT	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	100%	0%
TOTAL	269	58	79	75	54	3	133	63%	20%

The total number of complaints upheld or partially upheld at Stage 1 was 133. This is 63% of Stage 1 complaints. A total of 54 complaints were escalated to Stage 2 which represents an escalation rate of 20%, meaning that overall, 80% of complaints were resolved at Stage 1.

Table ordered by total Stage 2 categories

STAGE 2

Service	Total Stage 2 categories	Upheld	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Escalated	Total upheld or partially upheld at Stage 1	% upheld or partially upheld at Stage 1
Responsive Repairs	22	8	6	8	0	16	73%
ASB	9	2	4	2	1	4	44%
Choice Based Lettings	5	3	2	0	0	3	60%
Neighbourhoods	5	2	0	3	0	5	100%
Adaptations	3	2	1	0	0	2	66%
Resettlement - Hostels	3	0	1	2	0	2	66%
Care & Repair	2	0	2	0	0	0	0%
Homeownership / Leasehold	2	1	0	1	0	2	100%

Hotline	2	0	0	2	0	2	100%
Resilience Housing - Sheltered	2	0	1	1	0	1	50%
Voids	3	2	2	1	0	3	100%
Contractors	1	1	0	0	0	1	100%
Capital Works	1	0	1	0	0	0	0%
Total	60	21	18	20	1	41	69%

The total number of complaints upheld or partially upheld at Stage 2 was 41. This is 69% of Stage 2 complaints. One complaint for ASB escalated to the Housing Ombudsman and details of this are provided later in this report.

COMPLAINT REASON BREAKDOWN

This process was implemented within 2024/25 period thus the data is not for the full year, it will however be fully reported from April 2025 for the current year.

Note that a complaint may have more than one recorded reason. Reasons are derived from the contents of the initial customer complaint.

STAGE 1

Complaint Type	Total
Damp / Mould Issues	15
Discrimination	5
Dissatisfied with Service	142
Missed Appointments	4
Poor Communication	12
Procedural	8
Repairs Fix	4
Repairs Request	2
Staff Issue	41

STAGE 2

Complaint Type	Total
Damp / Mould Issues	6
Discrimination	2
Dissatisfied with Service	32
Missed Appointments	1
Poor Communication	3
Procedural	2
Repairs Request	1
Staff Issue	10

As a service improvement to address the issues with root cause data extraction, new processes have been added to the MRI case management system which will enable more thorough extraction and analysis from the case management system. Evaluations are also tracked on Sharepoint.

Below is an outline of the root causes captured within part of the 24/25 period, when the new process was trialled, however is not reflective of total number of complaints. This covers both Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints and a complaint may have more than one recorded root cause.

	Customer expectations not managed properly	Human error	IT System failure	Lack of funding or resource	Lack of responsiveness to/understanding of customer need	Policy or Regulatory defined	Poor communication	Poor staff conduct
Adaptations	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
ASB	5	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
Assets	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Care & Repair	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Compliance	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Contractor	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	2
Homeownership	3	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
Choice Based Lettings	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Neighbourhoods	3	3	0	0	0	0	1	0

Rents	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Repairs & Maintenance (Inc Hotline)	16	2	0	2	4	0	8	2
Resettlement (Hostels)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Resilience (Sheltered)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	34	6	1	3	6	2	14	6

With regards to root cause analysis and recording complaint outcomes and lessons learnt, the complaint evaluation form has been reviewed with Heads of Service and updates have been made to ensure that specific root cause and learning detail is captured.

This will be analysed by Senior Management to inform decisions and improvements.

COMPLAINT OUTCOMES

A complaint may have more than one recorded outcome.

STAGE 1

Outcome	Upheld	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Escalated	Withdrawn
Apology Provided	51	6	48	5	0
Change to Process / Policy / Procedure	6	4	6	0	0
Compensation Awarded	11	0	1	0	0
Compromise Reached	2	0	5	0	0
Expectation Not Managed	0	12	1	2	0
Explanation Provided	2	63	7	39	0
Good will Gesture Made	3	0	4	0	0
Individual / Team Discussion	15	2	9	1	0

Individual / Staff Training	7	0	1	0	0
Mediation Offered	0	0	0	0	0
Remedial Service	4	0	2	0	0
Remedial Works	1	0	2	0	0
Repairs Completed	14	4	18	3	0
Not Needed	0	0	0	0	3
Total	116	91	104	50	3

There was a total of 311 outcomes/actions taken as a result of complaints at Stage 1. This represents 1.67 resolution reasons per upheld or partially upheld Stage 1 Complaint.

The main outcomes were;

■ Apologies provided

■ Individual/team discussions

■ Repairs completed

■ Compensation awarded

STAGE 2

Service	Upheld	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Escalated	Withdrawn
Apology Provided	13	0	14	1	0
Change to Process / Policy / Procedure	4	1	1	0	0
Changed Management of Contractor	0	0	0	0	0
Compensation Awarded	8	0	5	0	0
Expectation Not Managed	0	4	3	0	0
Explanation Provided	0	15	1	0	0
Good will Gesture Made	5	0	2	0	0
Individual / Team Discussion	2	0	6	0	0
Individual / Staff Training	1	0	0	0	0
Mediation Offered	0	0	0	0	0
Moved property	0	0	0	0	0

Remedial Service	1	0	0	0	0
Remedial Works	0	0	0	3	0
Repairs Completed	2	0	2	0	0
Total	36	20	34	1	0

There was a total of 90 outcomes/actions taken as a result of complaints at Stage 2. This represents 1.89 resolution reasons per upheld and partially upheld Stage 2 Complaint.

SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS AND LESSONS LEARNT

The following outlines key learning and improvement outcomes from complaints:

ADAPTATIONS

- Change to process and form now in place for future customers to sign to confirm items removed will be disposed of by partnering contractor.

ASB & NEIGHBOURHOODS

- Process changes in relation to case management and how long cases should be open and a new walkabout procedure has been implemented that focuses on recording outcomes and feeding back to customers.
- Information on our website relating to CCTV has been reviewed and updated and a CCTV Policy is under consideration to provide clarity for both staff and customers.

- Policy review in relation to the cleaning of the communal areas of two storey blocks to in consultation with customers.
- Staff have undertaken several relevant courses relating to neurodiversity and related areas. These courses were developed with input from neuro-diverse customers.
- Several individual and team discussions have taken place regarding policies, procedures and communication.

ASSETS

- Contract Management arrangements reviewed and monitored.
- Communication improvements regarding informing the wider community when planned works are scheduled.

CHOICE BASED LETTINGS

- The BCH Tenancy Termination Officer has attended different team meetings across the organisation so other services are aware of the role. This is to ensure that other services refer to the Lettings Team if they are made aware that a tenant has died or gone into care permanently.
- Mutual exchange procedure reviewed and updated.
- Process changed in agreement with Housing Options regarding reviewing individual circumstances concerning location of support networks when assisting them to be housed and determining a suitable offer.

RENTS

- Internal processes reviewed and contact telephone numbers given to customers by members of the team updated.

REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE (INCLUDING REPAIRS HOTLINE)

- Procedure for managing scaffolding has been reviewed and amended and a register of erected scaffolding is now kept and checked on a regular basis by the Responsive Operations Manager and Empty Homes Manager.
- Customer information leaflet developed explaining the damp works process and timescales.
- The procedure for key storage following lock changes has been reviewed and discussed internally. The procedure has been reiterated as to what should be done in these circumstances.
- IT solution developed and implemented regarding the Self-Service Portal.
- Several individual and team discussions have taken place regarding policies, procedures, customer care and communication and this is monitored.
- Several contract management arrangements reviewed and monitored.

RESETTLEMENT – HOSTELS

- Customer communications developed regarding communal facilities and how to report if not to the standard expected.

As previously stated, the system and evaluation process for recording complaint outcomes and lessons learnt has been reviewed to improve data and ensure that lessons learnt are a focus.

COMPENSATION

In the period a total of £4,555 was paid in compensation for service failures identified by complaints. This is broken down by service area below:

Service	Amount
Leasehold	£130
Care & Repair	£190
Resettlement - Hostels	£49
Housing Operations	£300
ASB & Estate Management	£200
Choice Based Lettings	£378
Rents	£200
Electricity Contract	£500
Responsive Repairs	£2,608
Total	£4,555

COMPLAINTS REFUSED

There have been seven complaints made within the period which BCH refused to accept.

The reasons for refusal are given below:

Refusal reason	Number of complaints
The matter giving rise to the issue occurred over 12 months ago and upon consideration there were no good reasons to investigate as a complaint.	2
The complaint had already been considered through the complaints process and the matter giving rise to the issue occurred over 12 months old.	2
Issue was a service request that had not previously been reported	3

In all instances, the customer received a written response explaining why the complaint was not being accepted and if necessary what other action BCH intended to take to support with the matter. All customers were provided with the contact details of the Housing Ombudsman should they disagree with BCH's decision.

HOUSING OMBUDSMAN DETERMINATIONS

In 2024/25 there were no complaint handling failure orders made.

There was one case determined by the Housing Ombudsman within the period. The complaint related to Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and had two elements. The Housing Ombudsman made one finding of service failure and one finding of no maladministration.

This determination has not been published by the Housing Ombudsman as of the date of this report, however the case is summarised below and the full report has been shared with the Senior Management Team and BCH Board and lessons have been learnt around the case management and customer information around the use of cannabis and the Tenancy Agreement.

CASE 202406846

The complaint was regarding:

- a. Handling of the resident's reports of antisocial behaviour
- b. Response to the resident's concerns about staff conduct.

Determination

There was service failure in the landlord's handling of the resident's reports of ASB.

There was no maladministration in the landlord's response to the resident's concerns about staff conduct.

The Housing Ombudsman ordered that within 4 weeks of the determination, the resident was to be paid £50 compensation for the frustration caused by the identified failings in our handling of the resident's reports of ASB. BCH complied with this order and provided confirmation to the Housing Ombudsman.

HOUSING OMBUDSMAN ANNUAL REPORT ON PERFORMANCE

The Housing Ombudsman Annual report on landlord performance for 2023/24 can be found at the attached link:

[Landlord Report - Blackpool Council \(bch.co.uk\)](https://www.bch.co.uk)

The Housing Ombudsman Annual report on landlord performance for 2024/25 has not yet been published.

COMPLAINT SATISFACTION

Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) Results:

	BCH 2024/25	BCH 2023/24	Housemark early findings 2024/25 year-end results (National Median)
TSM: If you have made a complaint, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with Blackpool Coastal Housings approach to complaints?	51.40%	54.85%	35.3%

BCH Transactional Surveys:

Upon complaint closure, a satisfaction survey is sent. Within the period, 29 satisfaction surveys were received. This represents a 15% return rate.

Halfway through the period a process was put in place to follow up non-responses by phone or email where possible. This will continue in 2025/26 with an aim of increasing return rates.

The results from the surveys received are summarised below:

How easy was it to contact us to make a complaint?

All 29 respondents answered this question

Response	Number	Percentage
Very Easy	16	55%
Fairly Easy	7	24%
Neither Easy nor Difficult	2	7%
Fairly Difficult	3	10%
Very Difficult	1	3%

Excluding the respondents who responded neither, 85% found it very or fairly easy and 15% found it fairly or very difficult. Of the four respondents who said they found it fairly or very difficult, two complaints were made via the complaint form on the website and two were made via telephone directly to Involvement & Communications Team.

LEARNING/IMPROVEMENT POINT:

As a result of this feedback we arranged for our Customer Complaint Panel representatives to review the complaint section of the website to see if it was clear on ways a complaint can be made and if the web form was easy to fill in. The panel reported that the way to make a complaint was clear and easy to access. An issue was picked up with a mandatory field on the online complaint form which was causing some confusion. This has now been amended.

When your complaint was acknowledged, you were provided with a copy of our Complaints Policy. Did you find this helpful?

All 29 respondents answered this question

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	21	72%
No	8	28%

The reasons given for the 'No' responses were:

■ Can't remember

■ Didn't read it

■ Didn't understand it

LEARNING/IMPROVEMENT POINT:

As a result of this feedback we will not be sending out the full complaint policy with acknowledgement letters as this is a lengthy document and can appear very formal. We will send a link to the policy on the website and outline that copies are available upon request. We will instead use our customer complaint booklet, which summarises the policy and explains the process. This booklet has been reviewed by our Customer Reading Panel and the feedback was that it was clear and easy to understand.

Was Your Complaint Officer polite and courteous?

All 29 respondents answered this question

Response	Number	Percentage
Strongly Agree	20	69%
Agree	6	21%
Neither agree nor disagree	2	7%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	1	3%

Excluding the respondents who noted neither, 96% found their Complaint Officer to be polite and courteous. The one respondent who disagreed was unhappy with all aspects of their complaint and follow-up contact was made but no response received.

Was the information provided clear and concise?

All 29 respondents answered this question

Response	Number	Percentage
Strongly Agree	20	69%
Agree	5	17%
Neither agree nor disagree	1	3%
Disagree	1	3%
Strongly Disagree	2	7%

Excluding the respondents who noted neither, 89% of respondents agreed information provided was clear and concise. Three respondents answered that they did not agree.

LEARNING/IMPROVEMENT POINT:

We have amended the 2025/26 satisfaction survey to allow opportunity for customers to provide feedback on why they found the information unclear so that we can understand this further and future improvements can be made. Our Customer Complaint Panel will also be reviewing Stage 1 and Stage 2 sample responses on a quarterly basis for quality assurance and for feedback to be given on any areas of improvement.

Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way your complaint case was handled by BCH?

28 of 29 respondents answered this question

Response	Number	Percentage
Very Satisfied	16	57%
Fairly Satisfied	5	18%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	3	11%
Fairly dissatisfied	0	0%
Very dissatisfied	4	14%

Excluding the respondents who noted neither, 84% of respondents were satisfied with how their complaint was handled overall and 16% of respondents were dissatisfied.

The four respondents who were very dissatisfied in summary responded that they had not had an apology, a staff member was not dealt with harshly enough, outstanding actions and dissatisfaction with a neighbour respectively.

Follow-up contact was made with the customers who had stated they were dissatisfied to find out why. In the case of an issue still not being resolved, it was established that some repair works were still outstanding and the customer had not been updated. This was passed to Repairs and the customer has now had an update, an apology and works confirmed.

LEARNING/IMPROVEMENT POINT:

When cases are being closed and closure letters/surveys are being sent, it has been confirmed to the Complaint Officer that they must liaise with the Manager/Complaint Handler to ensure that any outstanding works/actions outlined in the Stage 1 response have been completed or are scheduled in and the customer has been informed of any necessary updates.

What do you think we could do in order to improve the Complaints Service?

18 of 29 respondents answered this question

Key themes were;

■ Improvements on timescales for repairs

■ Staff training and better communication, both with customers and within departments/contractors

■ Empathy

■ Listening

LEARNING/IMPROVEMENT POINT:

Managers/Complaint Handlers are now being asked to make a personal contact with complainants as part of their Stage 1 investigation to improve communication, understanding and empathy.

The ASB & Neighbourhoods Team have completed neuro-diversity training, which was developed alongside customers who are neuro-divergent and this has now been rolled out to all staff.

IT improvements are underway in relation to a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system that will improve communication both internally and externally.

The BCH Performance Team, supported by our Tower Scrutiny Panel have also undertaken a review of the Repairs Service and an action plan is being developed.