

**RESPONSE FROM BLACKPOOL COUNCIL MEMBER RESPONSIBLE FOR COMPLAINTS, CLLR MARK SMITH, TO:**



Blackpool Coastal  
Housing

**BLACKPOOL COASTAL HOUSING ANNUAL COMPLAINT REPORT AND SELF-ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE HOUSING OMBUDSMAN CODE 2025.**

Blackpool Council



Blackpool Council delegates complaint handling to its social housing ALMO, Blackpool Coastal Housing (BCH). It remains our responsibility as Landlord to ensure complaints received are investigated in a way aligning with the Housing Ombudsman's Service (HOS) Complaint Handling Code 2024. This includes ensuring customers are listened to and their individual needs considered with any required action taking place in a timely manner and learning taken to improve services going forward.

I attended a meeting on 21st August 2025 with officers from BCH and Blackpool Council, where I scrutinised, considered and challenged BCH's Complaint's Policy, annual complaint report and self-assessment. I am also assured of the policy's compliance with the HOS Complaint Handling Code and that the self-assessment is a true reflection of BCH's approach to complaint handling.

Blackpool Council's Corporate Leadership Team agreed on 26th August 2025 that the updated Complaint Policy developed by BCH fully meets the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code and that they were assured that the self-assessment is a true reflection of BCH's approach to complaint handling.

It is noted and appreciated that BCH and the Council's housing client function have developed robust governance and oversight of complaint handling. Additional staffing resource has been implemented to ensure complaints are investigated with rigour in the prescribed timetables.

The report shows welcome evidence of improvement in the management of complaints. There remain some areas where further improvement can be made. These include the level of complaints not upheld at Stage 1, the initial investigation, that are upheld at Stage 2, the appeal stage, and the number of complaints being taken to Stage 2 therefore requiring additional resources to complete the investigation.

That said there a number of clear steps BCH have taken over the last year which are a positive change including:

- 'Right First Time' training to enable all staff to review their approach to customers
- Revised complaint evaluation forms to generate more meaningful learning
- More complaint handling resource being allocated
- Increased emphasis on discussion with the complainant at the first stage of the complaint
- Improved repairs service delivery reflected in upper quartile Tenant Satisfaction Measure results
- Revisiting the contribution of involved tenants to complaint investigation to focus on lessons learned

Councillor Mark Smith  
Cabinet Spokesperson for Housing

**RESPONSE FROM BLACKPOOL COASTAL HOUSING COMPLAINTS  
CHAMPION, ANDREI SZATKOWSKI, TO:**



Blackpool Coastal  
Housing

**BLACKPOOL COASTAL HOUSING ANNUAL COMPLAINT AND LEARNING  
REPORT AND SELF-ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE HOUSING OMBUDSMAN  
CODE 2025.**

Blackpool Council



Blackpool Coastal Housing (BCH) is responsible for handling complaints in a way that is aligned to the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code. It is the role of the BCH Board to give assurance to Blackpool Council that BCH have done this properly. This includes facilitating complaints being made, replying quickly and effectively, providing appropriate redress for individuals and improving services for all customers going forward.

On 15 July 2025 the BCH Board gave assurance to our Senior Management Team that the Complaint Policy is aligned with the code. We also considered the company's Annual Complaint Performance Report and the annual self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code.

As Board Complaint Champion I am pleased to endorse the update policy as comprehensive and setting BCH up to prevent and respond effectively to complaints. It is reassuring to see that the number of complaints has levelled off somewhat, this is apparently ahead of national trends. The investment in complaints handling staff is probably a factor in this, as is the training all staff have received following concerning feedback in a prior Ombudsman's judgement. Repairs complaints have been an issue in the past so it is pleasing to see increasing satisfaction in this service area, but I have challenged service management to get a greater level of repairs and anti-social behaviour complaints redressed at an earlier stage in the process.

In my role as Board Complaint champion I will continue to meet senior management to review progress and provide critical friend challenge. I will review a sample of complaint cases to ensure they are in line with my understanding of the quality of service being provided by complaints handlers and the relevant service departments. I will ensure that the recent positive direction of travel continues so that Blackpool Council's social housing tenants receive a first rate response on the occasions where they need to raise issues with the service they have received.

Andrei Szatkowski  
Blackpool Coastal Housing Board Member and Complaint Handling Champion