

**Blackpool Coastal Housing (On behalf of the landlord Blackpool Council)
Quarter 4 Complaint Performance 2025/26**

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Author: Suzanne Tomlinson, Involvement & Communications Manager

This report covers complaints received, actioned or closed by Blackpool Coastal Housing within Q4 (January – March).

An annual complaint report for 2025/26 will be prepared and presented at the July 2026 Board, along with the Complaint Handling Code and Complaint Policy, ahead of submitting to the Housing Ombudsman and publishing.

Complaint Audit Recommendations/tracker

Below are the recommendations following the Internal Audit. All recommendations have been completed.

	Recommendation	Update
1	The requirement to make personal contact should be reflected in the BCH Complaint Policy and Procedure document.	Policy amended and approved by Board.
2	Lessons learned from previously closed complaints should factor into the ongoing approach to help maintain the momentum already achieved in ensuring a consistent approach towards complaint handling.	The Involvement, Communications and Complaints Manager will include lessons learned from previously closed complaints in her meetings with managers, so that this can be filtered down to team members. Meetings scheduled during the year for all services.
3	Additional narrative regarding the importance of effective complaint handling in line with the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code should be included in the BCH Strategic Risk Register.	New SRR now in place.

4	The role of the Complaints Champion should be formally agreed in order to ensure that responsibilities of the role are transparent and understood.	The role of the Complaints Champion has now been agreed and approved by Board.
5	Consideration should be given to recording complaint related detail on a tracker so that any identified areas of concern can be drawn to the attention of the Board members effectively. This is particularly important when potential thematic or systemic issues are identified or suspected.	This will be a regular agenda item at the meetings with the Board complaints champion. Learning will also be shared with the Tenant Complaints Panel.

Complaints opened within period

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

	Q4 (2025/26)	Last Quarter (Q3 2025/26)
Stage 1 (Tenant, Leasehold and Private)	31	39
Stage 2 (Tenant, Leasehold and Private)	9	6
TSM Complaints per 1000 properties (Cumulative, excludes Private)	36.08	27.66
TSM Stage 1 complaints per 1000 properties (Cumulative, excludes Private)	28.74	22.21
TSM Stage 2 complaints per 1000 properties (Cumulative, excludes Private)	6.71	4.82

There has been a decrease of 8 Stage 1 complaints and an increase of 3 Stage 2 complaints compared to the last quarter.

In Q4 78% of complaints (including private) were resolved at Stage 1, meaning the escalation rate to Stage 2 is 22%. This is up 8% from the last quarter.

Year to date 73% of complaints have been resolved at Stage 1.

Housing Ombudsman Cases

No cases were determined in the quarter.

We have had one request for information as an initial assessment in relation to a noise nuisance and electrical safety complaint due to decorations at a neighbouring property.

The Housing Ombudsman completed a check of the Complaint Policy as part of their compliance arrangements and noted some recommendations and requested to meet with Blackpool Council and BCH.

The recommendations are as follows:

1. Reports of anti-social behaviour or breaches of tenancy. The landlord should amend the wording of this exclusion so that it is clear that residents can make a complaint about the landlord's handling of reports of anti-social behaviour and breaches of tenancy.
2. Insurance claims; these will be handed to relevant services within both BCH and the Council. The landlord should amend the wording of this exclusion, so that it is clear that residents can make a complaint about the landlord's handling of insurance claims.
3. The landlord must publish Blackpool Coastal Housing's (BCH) complaint policy on Blackpool Council's website as it has explained that it has an ALMO arrangement with BCH for handling housing complaints on its behalf. Residents must be able to access the correct complaint policy from the landlord's website. The landlord should also review its complaint policy and include an explanation in its policy about its managing agent arrangements.
4. The landlord should review section 4 of its policy and remove the part where it says "we will first try to resolve expressions of dissatisfaction as early resolution, outside of this Policy where possible". The landlord to ensure the wording in section 4 is consistent with it having a two stage complaint process only.
The landlord should also review section 14 of its policy and remove reference to the "Early local resolution" as this is not consistent with the landlord having a two-stage complaint process.
5. The landlord should review section 15 of the policy and amend the wording for escalations to stage 2, it should say "if all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the resident's satisfaction at stage 1, it must be progressed to stage 2 of the complaint procedure".

A meeting was held with the Housing Ombudsman and in attendance were Hannah Cassidy, Housing Standards and Compliance Manager at Blackpool Council and Stephen Dunstan, Director of Resources at BCH. It was noted at the meeting that the Housing Ombudsman complimented the policy and said it was the fewest number of recommendations that had been made by the HO Team undertaking the review.

The actions agreed at the meeting are as follows:

- Blackpool Borough Council (“the Council”) agreed to implement all 5 recommendations.
- In respect of Code Provisions 5.4 and 5.5, the landlord clarified that Blackpool Coastal Housing (“BCH”) is the sole ALMO responsible for managing its housing complaints service and Blackpool Housing Company Ltd is not involved in any part of the Council’s complaint process for housing. The Council confirmed that it is happy to make changes to its website and complaint policy to ensure its arrangements with BCH are clear for residents to understand.
- The Council should also publish the most recent version of its complaint policy to the resident portal area.
- The Council should update its self-assessment when it completes its next annual submission (30 September 2026) to reflect the arrangements with BCH.

BCH is required to implement all 5 recommendations and provide its draft policy to the Ombudsman by 30 April 2026.

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

Acknowledged within 5 days	33
Acknowledged within 5 days %	100.00%
Completed out of time	1
Completed within Time	27
TSM: Stage 1 Completed within 10 working Days Timescales	98.48%
Stage 1 Extended	14

There was one slippage of a Stage 1 response. This was due to an error by the Complaint Officer. The cumulative year to date TSM figure for Stage 1 responses within timescale is 98.48%

Responsive Repairs	7	5	2	1	1	1	17	9
Neighbourhoods	3	2	4	0	0	0	9	7
Choice Based Lettings	2	2	1	0	0	0	5	3
Assets	2	1	0	0	0	1	4	2
Homeownership / Leasehold Services	1	0	0	0	1	2	4	1
Hotline	3	0	1	0	0	0	4	4
Resilience Housing - Sheltered	1	2	1	0	0	0	4	2
Rents	0	2	1	0	0	0	3	1
Adaptations	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	0
Voids	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	1

Stage 2:

Q4	Upheld at Stage 2	Not Upheld at Stage 2	Partially Upheld at Stage 2	Total	Total upheld or partially upheld at stage 2
Responsive Repairs	0	2	4	6	4
Assets	0	2	0	2	0
Homeownership / Leasehold Services	0	2	0	2	0
Neighbourhoods	1	0	1	2	2
Rents	0	1	1	2	1
ASB	0	0	1	1	1
Bambers	0	1	0	1	0

Choice Based Lettings	0	1	0	1	0
Hotline	1	0	0	1	1
Contractor	0	1	0	1	0

In the quarter, 30 complaints (56%) were upheld or partially upheld at Stage 1. Eight complaints escalated to Stage 2. A total of 38% of complaints that escalated were upheld or partially upheld and 62% that escalated were not upheld at Stage 1.

The numbers of upheld/partially upheld complaints at Stage 1 which are 50% and over are outlined below:

Repairs Hotline: 4 (100%)
 Neighbourhoods: 7 (78%)
 Lettings: 3 (60%)
 Responsive Repairs: 9 (53%)
 Assets: 2 (50%)
 Sheltered: 2 (50%)
 Voids: 1 (50%)

No complaints closed in the quarter have escalated to the Housing Ombudsman to date.

There were 55 complaints closed at Stage 1 in the quarter and 18 complaints closed at Stage 2. Of the 18 complaints that closed at Stage 2, 17 had the same outcome at Stage 2 as they did at Stage 1. The complaint that had a different outcome at Stage 2 is outlined below:

Service Area	Stage 1	Stage 2	Detail
Repairs	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Damp and mould complaint that was not upheld as there was not damp and mould. Partially upheld at Stage 2 due to compensation being given for previously damaged goods, agreed with the S1 response on not upholding other elements.

Complaint Root Causes

Data taken from Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints closed within the period. A complaint may have more than one recorded root cause.

The tables below show the number of root causes recorded across all complaints, broken down by service area. The request that the information was broken down by service area was from the Customer Complaint Panel, to enable any trends to be identified within services.

Upheld/Partially Upheld

Root Cause	Contractor not performing or managed	Equipment Fault	Human error	Lack of ownership to resolve issue	Lack of staff training or knowledge	Lack of understanding or responsiveness to customer need	Poor Communication	Poor conduct
Adaptations	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ASB	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Assets	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0
Contractor	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Care & Repair	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Choice Based Lettings	0	0	1	0	1	1	2	0
Homeownership	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Hotline	1	0	0	1	1	2	2	0
Neighbourhoods	1	0	4	0	0	0	5	1
Rents	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
Responsive Repairs	0	1	4	0	1	3	9	0
Resilience Housing - Sheltered	0	0	1	0	1	0	5	1
Services (Compliance)	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Voids	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Total	2	1	15	1	4	6	18	2

The main root cause for both upheld and partially upheld complaints at Stage 1 and Stage 2 remains as poor communication (18). Human error was the cause of 15 complaints.

Not upheld:

Root Cause	Complaint was a service request that had not been reported	Customer expectation beyond service provision/standard	Customer unhappy with tenancy condition/responsibility	Issue is responsibility of another organisation beyond BCH control	Unfounded allegation
Adaptations	0	1	0	0	0
ASB	0	1	0	0	0
Assets	0	1	1	0	1
Contractor	0	0	0	0	1
Care & Repair	0	1	0	0	0
Choice Based Lettings	0	2	0	0	1
Homeownership / Leasehold Services	0	2	0	0	1
Hotline	0	0	0	0	0
Neighbourhoods	1	6	2	1	3
Rents	0	1	3	0	0
Responsive Repairs	0	7	0	0	2
Resilience Housing - Sheltered	0	1	0	0	1
Services (Compliance)	0	0	0	1	0
Voids	0	1	0	0	0
Total	1	24	6	2	10

The main theme for complaints not upheld at Stage 1 and Stage 2 was that expectations were beyond service provision and/or standards.

Complaint Outcomes

Data taken from Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints closed within the period. A complaint may have more than one recorded outcome.

Stage 1:

Outcome Type	Total
Apology Provided	16
Change to Process / Policy / Procedure	3
Compensation Awarded	1
Disciplinary	1
Explanation Provided	26
Individual / Team Discussion	11
Mediation Offered	1
Remedial Service	1

Stage 2:

Outcome Type	Total
Apology Provided	2
Change to Process / Policy / Procedure	1
Explanation Provided	11
Individual / Team Discussion	1

Compensation Spend

Q1 spend	£905
Q2 spend	£495
Q3 spend	£650
Q4 spend	£100
Total	£2,150

Specific Area Outcomes/Lessons Learnt

Adaptations:

A written procedure and standard documentation for customers wishing to use their own contractor has been produced.

Assets:

Guidance issued to contractor regarding conducting checks on ownership of sheds or outbuildings should they need to store materials.

Contractor spoken to reiterate they should check tenancy/person alerts when arranging appointments with customers.

Lettings:

All Lettings Officers completed Equality and Diversity Training.

Process for pursuing recharges reviewed and changed to ensure it is more structured.

Neighbourhoods:

Process for reviewing risk markers reviewed and amended, with expiry dates checked.

Customer leaflet developed to provide information on our stock and transfer process.

Staff discussion to reiterate our response time to reports of hate crime.

Rents

Process for serving notices reviewed and amended.

Repairs:

Process reviewed and amended for re-inspection reminders when elements need to dry out.

Going forward a note will be added to situations such as this to remind Inspectors to re-attend.

Process developed to ensure if numerous repairs to the same element are undertaken that this is flagged to look into further.

Process developed for recharge disputes to be reviewed by a Repairs Manager and Recharges Policy is in development.

Sheltered:

Sheltered Housing Handbook reviewed to advise about the role of the Sheltered Housing Officer to clear properties, however they can offer advice and support to access services that can assist individuals with this.

Review and reminder of record keeping with contractor.

Voids

Photographs of empty properties to be reviewed before recharges are raised.

Customer Voice – Complaint Transactional Surveys:

Upon complaint closure, a satisfaction survey is sent to all customers. In the quarter nine satisfaction surveys were received.

The results from the surveys received are summarised below:

How did you make your complaint?

All 9 respondents answered this question

Response	Number	Percentage
Email	3	33%
Telephone	3	33%
Website	3	33%

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

All 9 respondents answered this question

Response	Number	Percentage
Very Easy	8	89%
Fairly Easy	1	11%
Neither Easy nor Difficult	0	0%
Fairly Difficult	0	0%
Very Difficult	0	0%

100% of respondents found it very or fairly easy to make a complaint.

Was the information provided clear and concise?

All 9 respondents answered this question

Response	Number	Percentage
Strongly Agree	7	78%
Agree	2	22%
Neither agree nor disagree	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%

100% of respondents agreed that the information provided was clear and concise.

Did you receive personal contact (i.e. a phone call or visit) from the Investigating Manager at Stage 1 of your complaint?

All 9 respondents answered this question

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	6	67%

No	3	33%
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Having reviewed the cases for the 3 respondents who had no contact, the following was established:

Repairs complaint – The Stage 1 response noted that the Manager visited the customer to discuss the complaint and assess the repair prior to the Stage 1 response being issued, however there was a significant period before the customer then escalated. Case escalated to Stage 2 and customer did not wish to attend hearing.

Lettings complaint – Personal contact not made at Stage 1 by Manager. Case escalated to Stage 2 and customer attended hearing.

Adaptations complaint - Personal contact not made at Stage 1 by Manager. Case escalated to Stage 2 and customer attended hearing.

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

All 9 respondents answered this question

Response	Number	Percentage
Very Satisfied	4	67%
Fairly Satisfied	2	0%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	0	0%
Fairly dissatisfied	0	0%
Very dissatisfied	3	33%

A total of 67% of respondents were satisfied with how their complaint was handled overall and 33% were dissatisfied.

Two respondents who were very dissatisfied did not have a personal contact from the Investigating Manager at Stage 1 and both cases escalated to Stage 2. The reasons for one respondent’s dissatisfaction was that nothing was done about an ASB issue and the other respondent advised that BCH had a biased opinion of a contractor.

The third respondent who was very dissatisfied did receive a personal contact at Stage 1 but advised they had been left out of pocket and not compensated. The complaint was in relation to the conduct of a staff member.

Learning outcome: The requirement for Investigating Managers to make personal contact at Stage 1 has been added to the Complaint Policy In agreement with the Customer Complaint Panel, we are also making this requirement a monitored service standard.

Complaint Monitoring & Customer Voice

A draft of this report was shared and discussed with the Customer Complaint Panel on 15th April. The Panel noted assurance with complaint performance but recommended that Stage 2 escalation rate is monitored due to the increase in this. They requested a breakdown of root cause data into service area so that any trends or concerns can be picked up, particularly with poor communication and human error. The Complaint Panel would like the Board to note this. The Panel meet quarterly and also review examples of Stage 1 and Stage 2 responses to check for quality, clear explanations, resolutions offered, empathy and tone.

Quarterly meetings are held between the Board Complaint Champion and the Involvement & Communications Manager where updates are provided around performance, trends, risks and any areas of concern.

This report has been circulated to the Board Complaint Champion for approval and shared with BCH's Senior Management Team.

Quarterly meetings are also held with the Member Responsible for Complaints, where they will seek assurance on behalf of the governing body, Blackpool Council that BCH is delivering on an effective complaint handling process.