

## Appendix 1-Annual Housing Complaints Handling Report

As a social landlord, the Council commitment to delivering quality housing and services is at the heart of everything we do. As a service we recognise we can continually develop and learn, and complaints provide a valuable opportunity to understand our tenants and leaseholders needs better, address concerns effectively, and continually improve in all areas.

The Annual Housing Complaints report and Self-Assessment report relates directly to and supports the following Council Plan outcomes: Outcome 2: A fair and inclusive city, Homes for everyone; Outcome 4: A responsive council with well-run services.

The Housing Repairs and Maintenance service is the area where we receive the highest number of customer contacts. This is also reflected in the figures around highest number of complaints. The service is completing over 3,000 repairs monthly, with high volumes of repair requests being received. While progress is being made to reduce our backlog of routine repairs, including with additional contractor capacity, this remains challenging. A steady reporting of new repair requests has meant that while the backlog of routine repairs has been reducing, progress has been slower than anticipated. Analysis is currently underway to identify key drivers, with early findings suggesting the trend aligns with national patterns.

In addition to our in-house team, we have invested heavily in additional repairs contractor capacity. Our focus is to ensure work is completed punctually and that we better understand and our service is more responsive to and reflective of our tenants' requirements and expectations.

We are also delivering an ambitious investment programme to modernise our ageing housing stock and a significant building health & safety programme to ensure compliance with regulatory and legislative requirements.

### Service Performance 2024/25

As of January 2025, the council's social landlord duties cover 12,145 rented properties and 2,210 leasehold properties. During 2024/25, we completed the following activities:

Repairs Helpdesk - calls answered	66,159
Housing Customer Service - call answered	21,975
New anti-social behaviour cases opened	785
Homes let	584
Homes with solar panels installed	400
Number of tenancy breach cases	419

## Key priorities for 2025/26:

Based on the complaints received last year, our key priorities are:

- **Tenant Voice:** Actively listen to tenants to ensure their needs and perspectives shape service improvements.
- **Complaint Handling:** Strengthen follow-up processes and enhance satisfaction by addressing concerns promptly and effectively.
- **Learning and Improving:** Use tenant feedback to continuously refine services and exceed customer expectations.
- **Transparency:** Build trust with residents through honest, open communication and accountability.
- **Effective Communication:** Improve channels to foster better dialogue, keeping residents informed and engaged.
- **Accessibility:** Ensure services are easy to access, inclusive, and responsive to tenant needs.

Following analysis of complaints 2024/25 (and other customer intelligence including member enquiries), we ran a series of co-produced workshops with tenants and staff, focussed on four key themes, Findings from these workshops will be used to form the basis for a **Creating Great Homes Together** plan.

1. **Day to Day Repairs** - addressing delays, improving repair quality, preventing missed appointments, enhancing diagnostics, and ensuring better communication.
2. **Complaints Handling** - focusing on empathetic responses, addressing all concerns, offering fair redress, and considering individual vulnerabilities.
3. **Health and Safety** - tackling issues such as anti-social behaviour, damp and mould, electrical safety, noise nuisance, asbestos, and pest infestations.
4. **Customer Service & Communication** - Improving information clarity, ensuring a respectful tone, enhancing staff conduct, and providing consistent updates.

## Examples of Service Improvements in 2024/25

**Digital Access:** New Housing Online service makes it easier for residents to report repairs.

**Tenant Handbook:** Reviewed with residents in Seniors schemes to improve clarity and service transparency.

**Neighbourhood Team Presence:** Dedicated staff recruited to regularly visit estates to identify and resolve issues early, creating a more responsive service.

**Increased focus on early intervention** and resolution of noise nuisance issues for residents, through review of the noise nuisance procedures working jointly across the Council with Environmental Health service and use of Community Protection Warnings and Community Protection Notices.

**Cleaning Services:** Restructured cleaning schedules to enhance efficiency, with a 4-week rota for high rises and clearer tasks for residents. Adjusted van routes to reduce travel time.

**Anti-social behaviour:** clearer case review process to ensure a more robust, responsive and accessible service. Whilst the number of complaints has reduced over the last year in this area we are still always looking at way we can improve the service based on resident feedback.






## Complaint Resolution Performance











This report shows the number and types of complaints we have received and resolved in 2024/25.

A total of 832 Stage 1 complaints were received in 2024/25, with 50% being either upheld or partially upheld. This is equal to 68 complaints per 1,000 homes. This compares with a total of 775 in 2023/24. This is equal to 59 per 1,000 homes.

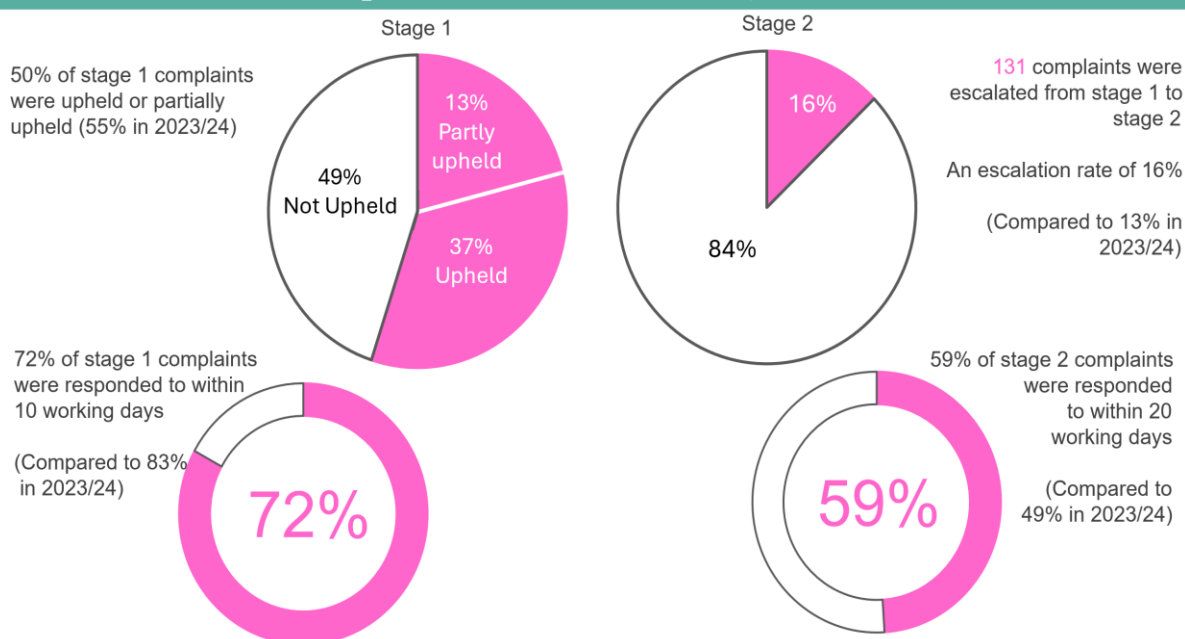
72% of Stage 1 complaints were responded to within the target of 10 working days. 16% of Stage 1 complaints were escalated to Stage 2, with 59% being responded to within the target of 20 working days.

The top three areas of complaint in 2024/25 were in relation to the condition of property (Repairs, maintenance & improvement) (68%), staff conduct (8.41%) and unhappy with service delivery (5.89%).

Type of Complaint		Number	2024/25	2023/24	Performance
	The condition of property-Repairs, Maintenance and Improvement.	572	68%	80%	↑
	Anti-social behaviour	17	2.04%	3.36%	↑
	Staff conduct	70	8.41%	2.27%	↓
	Failure to take action	19	2.28%	1.68%	↓
	Unhappy with service delivery	49	5.89%	1.55 %	↓

Type of Complaint		Number	2024/25	2023/24	Performance
	Estate management services (12 in 2023/24)	31	3.73%	1.55%	
	Rehousing	8	0.96%	0.77%	
	Disagree with policy or procedure	15	1.8%	0.65%	
	Delay in providing outcome	13	1.56%	0.65%	
	Range of other tenancy matters e.g. wording of letters, tenancy succession issues.	38	4.57%	7.1%	

## Complaint outcomes in 2024/25



## Where we have not met compliance in 2024/25

There have been instances this year where we have not been able to meet compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.

- Maladministration in our handling of a resident's reports of multiple leaks resulting in damage to the property, there was also service failure in our handling of the related complaint.
- Maladministration in our handling of reports of roof leaks, major works and reports that the property was not fit to let at the start of the tenancy. There was also maladministration in our associated complaint handling.
- Maladministration in respect of our response to the resident's reports of anti-social behaviour, reports of discrimination, including a failure to make reasonable adjustments, concerns about the communal cleaning and the handling of the associated complaint.
- Maladministration in our handling of a resident's reports of ASB and the associated formal complaint.
- Service failure in our handling of the resident's concerns about asbestos linked to plastering works and reports of repair issues relating to electrics and a kitchen worktop.
- Service failure in response to the resident's reports concerning asbestos, damp and mould.
- Service failure in our handling of repairs to the resident's roof and the handling of the associated complaint.
- Service failure in our handling of a resident's inclusion on the client of concern register.
- Maladministration in our handling of a resident's reports of water ingress.
- Maladministration in our handling of a resident's reports of a leak coming from the property above, communication on our process regarding the resident's insurance claim and the associated formal complaint.
- Severe maladministration in our handling of the resident's reports of a roof repair and leak resulting in damp and mould and service failure regarding reports about bathroom flooring.

We apologise for all occasions when we've got it wrong and have undertaken a review of each case to identify what we need to improve.

### **Instances where we have not accepted complaints**

There are some types of complaints that we can't accept. This year we have refused to accept complaints for the following reasons:

- Where the same matter had already been considered at all stages of the internal complaint procedure, where the issue was not part of an ongoing

situation, no new matters were raised and where no new evidence was provided which may have affected the previous outcome.

- Where the outcome sought by the customer was solely compensation for damages, whether personal injury or unquantifiable financial loss, and no additional matters were raised.
- Where a more appropriate route of appeal or challenge was available (Data Protection or Information Governance issue, Leaseholder service charge dispute, complaint solely about the conduct of elected members) and where no additional matters were raised.
- Where a customer wished to complain that senior members of staff had not replied personally to their emails, despite the customer requests having been considered and responded to through the relevant process (e.g. as a complaint, a Subject Access Request or a service request)

## Housing Ombudsman

Where tenants/leaseholders are dissatisfied with the outcome of the council's internal complaint processes, they can escalate their complaint to the Housing Ombudsman.

The Housing Ombudsman can consider matters where the local authority is the landlord or freeholder, all other types of complaint (including those relating to homelessness or emergency accommodation) can be escalated to the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman.

The information provided enables us to benchmark our performance against two different comparators:

1. Comparison to other landlords with a similar number of properties
2. Comparison to other local authorities

The Housing Ombudsman Service produces a combined comparator figure. The analysis for Brighton & Hove City Council's performance for 2023/24 is below. This is known as the maladministration rate. In 2023/24 the Housing Ombudsman investigated 10 cases relating to Brighton & Hove City Council's landlord services. BHCC's performance has declined since this was last reported in 2022/23. Our performance is better in most areas than comparable local authorities with similar numbers of properties, however, our performance compared to last year has declined and so it is important that we learn the lessons with the aim of recovering our performance.

Outcome category-2023/24	National (Local Authorities)	National (landlords with +10,000 units)	Brighton & Hove City Council
<b>Severe Maladministration</b> This is the most serious failing	9%	8%	6%
<b>Maladministration</b> This is when there was a failure which has adversely affected the resident	45%	42%	39%
<b>Service failure</b> When there was a minor failing, but action is still needed to put things right.	18%	18%	33%
<b>Mediation</b> Where the resident and landlord agree to enter into mediation and, with the Ombudsman's intervention, reached an agreed outcome.	1%	1%	0%
<b>Redress</b> This finding is made when there is evidence of maladministration but the landlord has identified and acknowledged this prior to the Ombudsman's formal investigation and has, on its own initiative, taken steps and/or made an offer of compensation, that puts things right.	4%	16%	0%
<b>No maladministration</b> We find no maladministration where the landlord acted in accordance with its obligations and policies/procedures. Minor failings may have been found but these caused no detriment to the resident	21%	22%	17%
<b>Outside Jurisdiction</b> The complaint will not or cannot be considered by the Ombudsman	9%	7%	6%
<b>Withdrawn</b> The resident withdrew their complaint, and the Ombudsman was satisfied as to the circumstances.	0%	0%	0%

