

Annual Complaint and Service Improvement Report

Governing Body and Member Responsible for Complaints

This report builds on regular updates to the Customer Feedback Improvement Panel and the BCHG Board. We continue to demonstrate our commitment to transparency, and in September 2024 we invited the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) to speak at our Customer Scrutiny Conference hosting a follow-up session in January 2025.

In May 2024, I wrote to all customers to highlight their rights, including the right to complain.

Members of the BCHG Board regularly attend customer events to hear directly from residents and offer visible support for a positive complaint culture.

Our self-assessment continues to guide service improvements. In November 2024, an internal audit reviewed our complaint handling and provided positive assurance and further recommendations to strengthen our handling, which we will complete by Quarter 1 of 2025/2026.

One key change has been the introduction of an “Ask Once” approach to service requests, alongside improved communication, and colleague training. The BCHG Board believes these actions are strengthening our culture and driving positive progress.



Adrian Eggington, Chief Executive

Introduction

This is our second annual complaints report. Last year was the first time we were asked to produce one under the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.

This report shares what residents have told us, what has changed since, and where we still need to improve. Complaints are a valuable way for residents to raise concerns and shape better services. Over the year, residents have helped us review complaints, track progress, and make sure we're learning from feedback.

We see complaints as a positive part of improving what we do. They help us spot issues, respond faster, and build trust. We have also included examples of compliments in this report, as both positive and negative feedback help us understand what matters and where we can improve.

This report covers four key areas:

1. Checking ourselves against the Code
2. Complaint Handling Performance
3. What we have learned from the Housing Ombudsman
4. Service Improvement and Learning

Summary

Between April 2024 and March 2025, we received 103 complaints, up from 75 the year before.

Residents told us they wanted a clearer and easier way to complain. This increase shows more people feel confident to speak up, which we see as a positive sign of trust and engagement.

One complaint was upheld by the Housing Ombudsman in May 2025. This related to delays in dealing with a neighbour dispute. We accepted the outcome, made changes, and the case is now closed.

The Ombudsman also looked at five other complaints:

- Two were withdrawn by residents.
- Three were closed after we provided information.

Alongside complaints, we received 818 compliments. These mostly related to colleagues going above and beyond, especially in repairs and housing management. This feedback helps us understand what is working well.

1. Checking ourselves against the Code

We regularly scrutinise how well we are following the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. Residents are involved at various stages to ensure our approach is fair, transparent, and focused on what matters to them.

How we involve colleagues and residents:

- **Resident Scrutiny Voice Panel (RSVP)**
Residents review stage 2 complaints and help with self-assessments. They receive regular reports to help spot areas for improvement.
- **Repairs Partnership Board**
Residents look at repair-related complaints and help set service standards.
- **Customer Feedback Improvement Panel**
Managers and the Member Responsible for Complaints meet regularly to review complaint learning.
- **Board of Management**
Our leadership team receives a quarterly report with complaint and resident feedback analysis.

Through this scrutiny, you told us to make the following improvements:

- Make it clearer what counts as a complaint, not just a service request.
- Fix problems the first time without the need to chase.
- Show how we are learning from complaints and using that to improve.

In response we have:

- introduced an Ask Once approach. If a resident tells us twice, it becomes a complaint.
- Trained staff to resolve problems quickly and fairly.
- Improved communication, especially where complaints are complex or ongoing.
- Shared learning through updates like You Said, We Did. (for more detail see **Appendix 1 Code self-assessment**).

2. Complaint Handling Performance

As a values driven organisation, we see complaints as a helpful way to understand whether we are meeting the requirements of the Code, delivering on our promises, and staying true to our values. They help us recognise what is not working, simplify how we do things, and improve services for everyone.



We not me



We do what we
say we will



We care



We do the
right thing



We love to
learn

To make sure we learn from complaints, we ask:

- Are we treating people fairly and consistently?
- Why are some complaints being escalated, and how can we stop that from happening again?
- Are there any barriers between teams that slow things down?
- How does complaint feedback compare with our Tenant Satisfaction Measures?

- What themes can we explore collaboratively with residents, including at the Customer Scrutiny Conference?

Complaint Performance 1 April 2024 until 31 March 2025

Breakdown of Complaints by Team

Team	General Complaint/ Stage 1	10 day Extension Stage 1	Review/ Stage 2	Fast Track	HOS	Total
Homeforce	32	2	3	0	0	37
Assets	25	3	1	0	0	29
Development	3	1	0	0	0	4
Supported Living	1	0	1	0	0	2
Operations	22	5	3	1	*6	31
Total	83	11	8	1	0	103

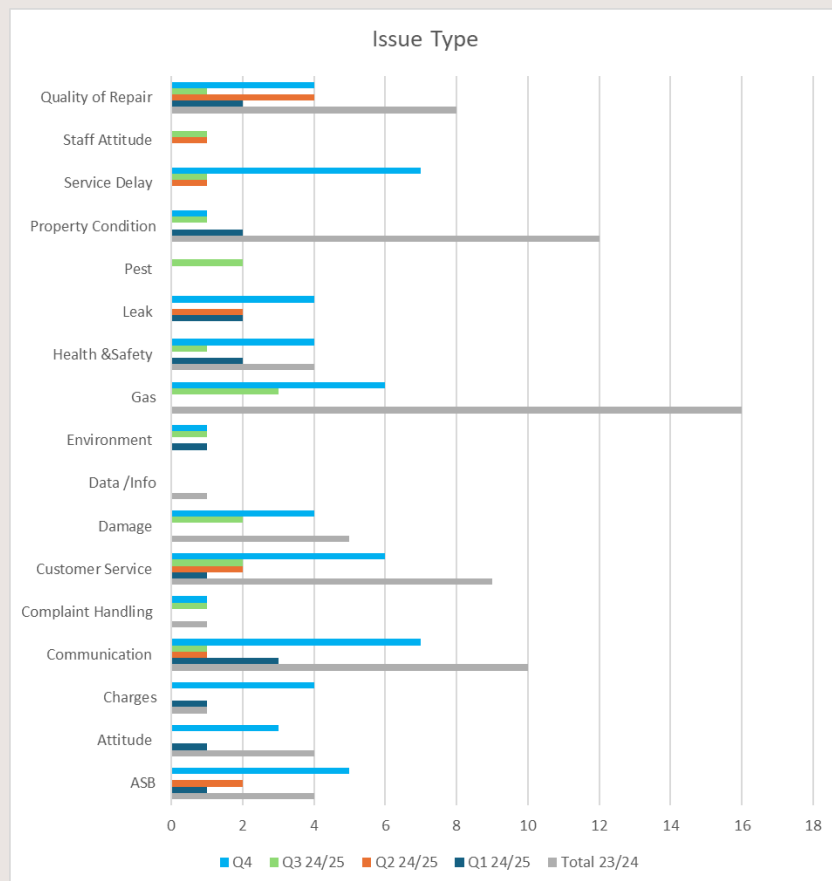
*Six are enquiries made by the HOS. One determination was received in May 2025, two were withdrawn by the customers and the remaining three were responded to without escalation.

Compliments:

Alongside complaints, residents made 818 **compliments**, most commonly recognising colleagues going above and beyond in

repairs and housing management. This demonstrates the balance of resident experience and provides additional insight into what is working well.

Breakdown by the primary issue type



Top three themes for Complaints:

Theme	What residents told us	Impact
Repairs and Maintenance Delays	Residents raised concerns about issues like leaks, damp, mould, faulty boilers, broken radiators, pests, and plumbing failures. In many cases, there were multiple callouts without resolution	Delays meant residents took time off work, experienced health risks, and felt frustrated. When things weren't fixed the first time, complaints often followed. This adds cost and reduces trust.
Contractor / Operative Performance	Some contractors arrived late, missed appointments, or didn't meet service expectations. Reports included poor workmanship and accidental damage during repairs (such as to carpets or kitchen units).	This affected residents' trust in both BCHG and our partners. It also poses a reputational risk when contractor behaviour or quality falls short of our standards.
Communication	There were delays in updates, confusion about responsibilities, and a lack of empathy—especially in complex situations, such as anti-social behaviour or where residents had additional needs.	Even when the issue was eventually resolved, poor communication was often what caused the complaint. It remains one of the biggest drivers of dissatisfaction

Most upheld or partially upheld complaints were in our Homeforce and Assets teams. This suggests genuine service failures rather than perception issues. Most not upheld complaints were in the Operations team, which often relate to issues like service charges or disputes where the outcome is based on policy.

Your Feedback

We use tenant satisfaction data to measure how we're doing with complaint handling:

- TP09 (Tenant Satisfaction Measure) asks: How satisfied are you with BCHG's approach to complaints handling? We saw an improvement from 36.40% to 44.95%, now above the sector average of 35.30% (Housemark). This is good progress, but we know there is more to do.
- Transactional surveys: We received eight survey responses, with a 65% satisfaction rate. This is below our 70% target agreed with the Resident Scrutiny Voice Panel but gives us helpful insight into where we can improve the complaint experience.

Ask Once

At the Customer Scrutiny Conference 2024, residents raised concerns about the gap between those who think they have made a complaint and those where one has formally been registered. This led to our Ask Once approach, where if a concern is raised again, it is automatically treated as a complaint. This change helps ensure residents are not missed or misunderstood.

3. Learning from HOS maladministration

We are reporting one case of maladministration involving a long-standing neighbour dispute. The investigation identified service failings in several areas, including procedural shortcomings, insufficient signposting to support services, and inadequate follow-up communication after meetings.

BCHG acknowledged these issues in its Stage 1 response, highlighting key learning points around improving referral processes and ensuring timely written communication post-meetings. Following review, the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) directed BCHG to issue a formal apology and awarded £250 in compensation for the distress and inconvenience caused.

Positively, the HOS noted strong record-keeping and did not uphold the tenant request for £1,000 compensation for fencing, recognising that remedial action had been taken promptly. The case is now closed, with confirmation from the Ombudsman that all required actions have been completed.

The key takeaway from this case was the need to have an agreed plan of action in place, and to regularly review the risk assessment. The procedure has been amended and training delivered to colleagues.

4. Service Improvement and Learning

BCHG is a learning organisation. We demonstrate some of our learning from complaints in the 'You Said, We Did' detailed at <https://www.bchg.co.uk/media/yvqhhmr0/you-said-we-did-learning-from-complaints-2024-25.pdf>



Based on what residents have told us, the insights from complaints, and what we have learned through our self-assessment, we have put together a focused Service Improvement Plan and these are the changes we are working on:

i. Embed the "Ask Once" approach.

We want issues to be resolved the first time they are raised. To help achieve this, we are training our frontline colleagues to feel confident using our Resolution and Remedy Policy, so they can sort things quickly and fairly.

ii. Check complaints against our service standards.

We will start reviewing complaints alongside our values-based service standards. This will help us understand where our responses need to improve and where our values are not coming through clearly enough.

iii. Create an Easy Read version of the complaints policy.

We know policies can sometimes be hard to follow. We are producing a clear, easy-read version of our Complaints Policy so that it is more accessible to everyone.

iv. Record complaints in one central system.

We are moving to a central housing system for recording all complaints. This will help us track issues more effectively, spot trends faster, and improve how we respond.

5. Contact address and accessibility.

You can raise a complaint or send us a compliment via our website form here: <https://www.bchg.co.uk/feedback/comments-or-complaints/>.

For any general enquiries, you can find contact details across various departments via the following page: <https://www.bchg.co.uk/contact-us/>