

**BCHA Board Meeting – 24<sup>th</sup> May 2023**

**Agenda Item 10.4**

## Introduction

This is the annual Complaints Performance Report for Bedford Citizens Housing Association (BCHA). This report provides detailed information regarding housing complaints recorded through the BCHA's Complaint Procedure during 2023/24 (1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024).

Complaints give us valuable information we can use to improve our services and overall customer satisfaction. Our complaints policy should enable us to address customers' dissatisfaction and may also help us to prevent further dissatisfaction for other customers.

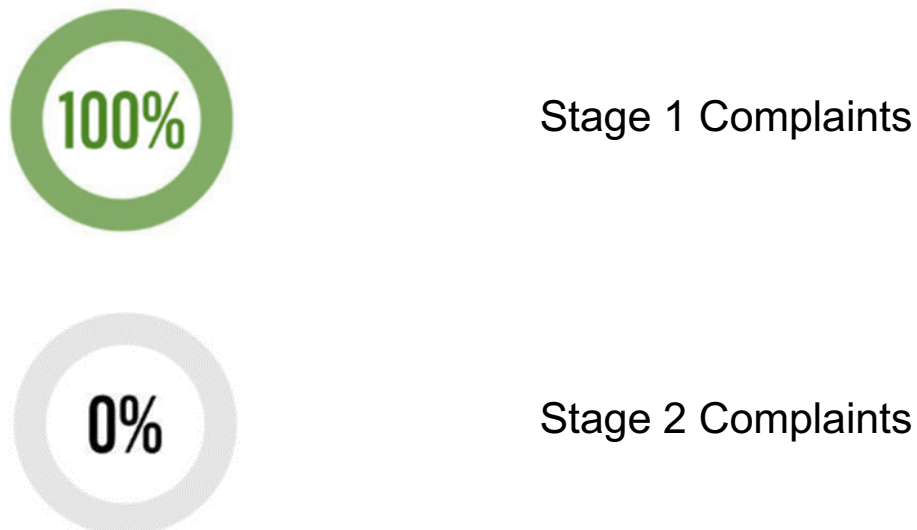
Complaints provide us with a firsthand account of our customers views and experience and can highlight problems we may otherwise be unaware of. Handling a complaint well can significantly improve a customer's view of us as an organisation. BCHA's complaints policy is in line with the Housing Ombudsman complaint handling code which is subject to regular review.

## Quantitative Analysis Complaints

The total number of Housing complaints received were:



The percentage of complaints at each stage which were closed in full within the set timescales were:



The outcome of complaints at each stage:



of Stage 1 Complaints  
were Upheld



of Stage 1 Complaints  
were Partially Upheld



of Stage 1 Complaints  
were Not Upheld



of Stage 2 Complaints  
were Upheld



of Stage 2 Complaints  
were Partially Upheld



of Stage 2 Complaints  
were Not Upheld

### Qualitative Analysis Complaints

Due to the small number of complaints recorded through our complaint's procedure during 2023/24, BCHA have provided a short summary of each complaint rather than an analysis on themes.

#### Complaint – Lunch Club Extra Care Housing

One complaint was received from a tenant regarding the service charge for “Lunch Club” still being applied whilst they were unable to access the service due to requiring a liquid diet.

#### Action & Solution

We visited the complainant to discuss the concerns they raised. We took on board their views and discussed the importance of the “Lunch Club” to tenants in Extra Care housing and how we could make changes to improve their experience. We then consulted with all tenants who received this service about these changes.

#### Learning

By creating a dialogue with tenants, we were able to take on Board some tenants suggestions which has improved this service

### **Complaint - Tenant Data Collection**

Tenant complained regarding the “Tenant Census” sent out to all properties to update the information we hold on tenants and occupants as part of the move to our new Housing Management System. The tenant felt that:

- Calling the questionnaire a census was misleading
- Requesting information on Cars parked in the communal car park was not appropriate
- Asking for ED&I information on Gender & Sexual Orientation was not necessary
- Incentivising the completion of this with Prize Draw was not required.

In addition, they felt that there was a lack of information regarding the operation of the new Storage Heaters installed in the block.

### **Action & Solution**

We visited the complainant to discuss the concerns they raised.

We took on board their views on calling the questionnaire a “census”. We advised about the reasons for updating the information we held and how this benefits us all. We explained that the reasons for requesting information on vehicles parked on BCHA land.

We explained the reasons why we would like to collect ED&I information on our tenants and reassure the complainant that if they did not want to answer those questions, they could be left blank.

We explained the prize draw may be an incentive to some tenants and our focus was about getting this important data.

We discussed the new storage heaters installed and the need to change over to a more efficient and cost-effective heating system. Directed the tenant to the short instruction leaflet and how to video on operating these that had been produced. Advised BCHA had visited any tenants who have reported difficulties with these and offered to arrange this also.

### **Learning**

We used the feedback from the tenant to provide some further Easy Read guidance for all tenants on the operation of storage heaters in their block. This improved upon the video guidance we had already issued.

During the year we have promoted complaints in our Autumn 2023 edition of Citizens News. <https://bchal.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/BCHA-Citizens-News-Autumn-2023-WEB.pdf>

## **Refused Complaints**

During 2023/24 BCHA did not refuse to accept any complaints made.

## **BCHA's Compliant policy**

During the year BCHA's Complaints Policy has been reviewed to reflect the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. This policy has been presented to BCHA's Board and made available on BCHA's website.

## **Annual self-assessment**

During the year BCHA's completed the Annual Self-Assessment in line with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. This policy has been presented to BCHA's Board and made available on BCHA's website.

## **BCHA & the Housing Ombudsman**

During the year 2023/24 BCHA has not had any complaints passed to the Housing Ombudsman, or any findings of non-compliance with Code or contact from them in relation to the work of BCHA.

Details of the complaint's performance of BCHA can be found on the Housing Ombudsman's website in their landlord search/performance data at <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/landlords/>

## **Future Focus**

In 2024/25 BCHA will look to:

- Elect a Member of BCHA's board to be the named Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC)
- Review and publish BCHA's Complaints Policy.
- Publish BCHA's Annual Housing Ombudsman Complaint Self-Assessment.
- To Publish this report and BCHA's Board response to this.

The new complaint definition will lead to the recording of more complaints as more issues will be brought into the scope of this report. Higher volumes of complaints are not negative, but an opportunity for BCHA to learn and improve our services.

Understanding why customers experience dissatisfaction will help BCHA develop what we do.

As part of our drive to let customers know we are committed to ensuring views about our services are valued and we actively encourage feedback. Complaints, compliments, and suggestions give us the opportunity to continually improve our service. We foster a culture which welcomes customer feedback and listening and responding effectively is very important to us. We have included information about how to give BCHA feedback in the latest edition of Citizens News which can be viewed here:

<https://bchal.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/BCHA-Citizens-News-SpringSummer-2024-WEB.pdf>

### **Board Response**

I am pleased to be able to share BCHA's Complaints Report for the financial year 2023/24 with our residents, tenants and key stakeholders.

This report demonstrates BCHA's commitment to continuous improvement and our commitment to working with our residents and tenants to improve services. Ensuring that we are listening to our residents and tenants and working together to provide the services and support they need is a priority to BCHA.

As a Board we are particularly encouraged by the following:

**Level of Complaints:** BCHA has received a low number of complaints during 2023/24, however we expect to see an increase in complaints in 2024/25. This will be impacted by BCHA changing the complaint definition inline with the Housing Ombudsman New Complaint Handling code.

**Learning:** BCHA's approach to learning from complaints demonstrates a proactive approach to service improvements learning and adapting from the experiences of residents and tenants. We hope to see this commitment continue through 2024/25.

**Compliance:** The review of BCHA's complaint policy, annual self-assessment and details made available on BCHA's website confirms BCHA compliance with Code. It is again encouraging the steps have been taken to ensure compliance in 2024/25 demonstrating our commitment to best practice.

The Board recognise the need to provide a responsive and effective complaint handling service to residents and tenants in the coming financial year. BCHA will focus on resolving complaints as early as possible and this commitment to put things right promptly is welcomed. BCHA performance in complaint handling will be monitored by the Board and the Member Responsible for Complaints.