

Report to	Housing Advisory Board
Date	28/07/2026
Agenda No. & Title	No. 7 Complaints annual performance & learning report, self-assessment and draft Complaint Handling Policy
Purpose of the Report	To seek approval and endorsement of three key complaints governance documents which demonstrate compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code 2024 and support continuous improvement in complaint handling across Housing Services: 1. Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2025/26. 2. Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code Self-Assessment 2025/26. 3. Revised Housing Complaints Policy.
Status	Discussion and approval
Author	Claire Rogan
Report Contact	Claire Rogan Head of Performance Improvement and Assurance
Appendices	Appendix 1 – Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2025/26 Appendix 2 – Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code Self Assessment 2025/26 Appendix 3 – Housing Complaints Policy
Background Documents	The Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code requires landlords to: • Publish an Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report. • Complete and publish an annual self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code. • Maintain and regularly review a complaints policy that reflects current legislative and regulatory requirements. • Demonstrate learning from complaints and service improvement activities. The documents presented support Bury Council Housing Services'

	commitment to transparency, accountability, tenant voice and continuous improvement.
Recommendation/s	• Approve the contents and findings of the Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2025/26 and recommend the report to Cabinet. • Approve the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code Self-Assessment 2025/26. • Approve the revised Housing Complaints Policy, including the 17 HOS recommendations. • Note the improvements delivered during 2025/26 and the actions planned for 2026/27. • Confirm satisfaction that Housing Services remains compliant with the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code 2024.
Corporate Plan Objective	☒ Satisfied Tenants ☐ Quality Homes ☐ United Communities
Risk Implications	H3 Poor tenant satisfaction Failure to maintain compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code could result in: • Increased regulatory scrutiny. • Negative Ombudsman findings. • Reputational damage. • Reduced tenant confidence. Approval of these documents supports effective governance and mitigates these risks.
Mitigations/Controls	1. Revised Complaints Policy updated to ensure compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code 2024 and current regulatory requirements. 2. Annual Complaint Handling Code self-assessment completed to provide assurance of compliance and identify areas for continuous improvement. 3. Dedicated Complaints Team in place to oversee complaint handling, investigations, quality assurance and Housing Ombudsman liaison. 4. Regular performance reporting and scrutiny through senior

	leadership, the Housing Advisory Board and the Member Responsible for Complaints. 5. Ongoing monitoring of complaint trends, outcomes and Ombudsman decisions to identify learning and prevent reoccurrence of service failures. 6. Delivery of improvement actions arising from complaints, Ombudsman determinations and the independent Housemark review. 7. Mandatory complaint handling training and awareness sessions for managers and staff to promote a positive complaint-handling culture. 8. Enhanced arrangements for identifying vulnerability, recording reasonable adjustments and ensuring equitable access to the complaints process. 9. Clear governance arrangements, including publication of the Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report and annual Code Self-Assessment, to provide transparency and accountability to tenants and stakeholders. 10. Continued investment in systems, reporting and performance management to strengthen oversight, improve trend analysis and support earlier intervention where issues are identified.
Legal and Regulatory Implications	1. Ensures compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code 2024 and Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023. 2. Supports compliance with the Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards, particularly transparency, accountability and tenant engagement. 3. Confirms that Housing Services has undertaken the required annual self-assessment and annual complaints performance reporting. 4. The revised Complaints Policy has been updated to reflect current legislative and regulatory requirements and Housing Ombudsman expectations. 5. Approval of these documents provides assurance that appropriate governance, oversight and complaint handling arrangements are in place and reduces the risk of regulatory challenge, Ombudsman findings and reputational damage.
Assets and	N/A

Liabilities	
Resource Implications	This report does not identify any resource requirements, however increasing complaints and close monitoring of this will highlight our ability to continue delivering against the HOS code.
Customer Impact	1. Customers will benefit from a clearer, more accessible and transparent complaints process. 2. Improved complaint handling arrangements will help ensure concerns are resolved more quickly and consistently. 3. Stronger provisions for reasonable adjustments and accessibility will support vulnerable tenants and those requiring additional assistance. 4. ☐ Increased focus on learning from complaints will help improve service delivery and customer experience.
EDI Implications	The annual report contains detailed analysis of complaint demographics and service accessibility. The revised Complaints Policy includes strengthened provisions relating to: • Reasonable adjustments. • Accessibility. • Vulnerable tenants. • Equality of access to the complaints process. Housing Services will continue to monitor complaint data to identify any disproportionality or barriers experienced by specific tenant groups.
Sustainability and Environmental Implications	There are no sustainability or environmental impacts of this report.
Privacy/Data Protection	All data used for this report has been anonymised
Colleague Impact	• Provides staff with clearer guidance, responsibilities and expectations when handling complaints. • Supports consistency in complaint investigations, decision-making and record keeping. • Strengthens staff understanding of the Complaint Handling Code, vulnerability and reasonable adjustments. • Promotes a positive complaint handling culture focused on learning and service improvement.

Stakeholder Communications and Reputational Impact	This Self-assessment and Annual performance & learning report document will be published on our website once approved with the governing statement at Cabinet and Submitted to the Housing Ombudsman
Next Steps	Once discussed at HAB the report and associated papers will be reviewed at Cabinet in September and will need to be approved by both the leader of the council via a governing body statement and portfolio holder Cllr Arif via a statement from within the submission, that will be submitted HOS by 30th September 2026

1. Executive Summary

1.1 Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2025/26

The report provides an overview of complaint handling performance between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026. This report is being reviewed by tenants who have their own page for listing their identified priorities.

1.2 Key highlights include:

- 190 Stage 1 complaints received.
- 54 Stage 2 reviews requested.
- No complaints were refused.
- 71.58% of complaints were resolved at Stage 1, an improvement from 50% in the previous year.
- Complaint volumes equate to approximately 25 complaints per 1,000 homes.
- 61.13% of Stage 1 complaints were fully or partially upheld.
- 53.70% of Stage 2 complaints were fully or partially upheld.
- Compliments to the service have increased.

1.3 Key complaint themes identified were:

- Failure to follow policy.
- Delays in taking action.
- Poor communication and customer service.

1.4 The report also highlights:

- Repairs and Neighbourhood ASB Service as the highest complaint-generating service areas.
- Improvements made in response to Anti-Social Behaviour complaints.
- Enhanced contractor oversight relating to repairs.
- Recruitment to key vacancies.
- Creation of tenant review groups to strengthen scrutiny and co-regulation.

1.5 The report further outlines learning from Housing Ombudsman determinations, including actions taken in response to maladministration findings and service improvements delivered as a result.

2. Complaint Handling Code Self-Assessment 2025/26

- 2.1 The self-assessment has been completed against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code 2024. The assessment demonstrates compliance across the key requirements of the Code, including:
- Complaint definitions.
 - Accessibility.
 - Exclusions.
 - Complaint handling practices.
 - Stage 1 and Stage 2 processes.
 - Governance and oversight.
 - Learning and continuous improvement.
 - Remedies and putting things right.
- 2.2 The assessment evidences:
- A dedicated complaints team.
 - A two-stage complaints process.
 - Accessible routes for making complaints.
 - Effective arrangements for recognising vulnerability and reasonable adjustments.
 - Appropriate oversight arrangements through senior leadership, Housing Advisory Board and the Member Responsible for Complaints.
- 2.3 The assessment also identifies several areas for continuous improvement, including:
- Further embedding learning from complaints.
 - Improving complaint trend analysis.
 - Strengthening performance reporting.
 - Enhancing understanding of reasonable adjustments and vulnerability.
 - Continued implementation of recommendations arising from the Housemark review.
- 2.4 The self-assessment concludes that Housing Services is compliant with the requirements of the Complaint Handling Code.

3. Revised Housing Complaints Policy

- 3.1 The Complaints Policy has been comprehensively reviewed with tenants.
- 3.2 During 2025/26 the Housing Ombudsman review all local authority Housing Complaints Policies. Bury received the feedback from this review in March 2026. The Housing Ombudsman made 17 recommendations for improvement. These were reviewed with tenants along with ensuring the policy meets the Housing Ombudsman Complaint handling Code.
- 3.2 The revised policy strengthens several areas, including:
- Clear complaint definition aligned to the Ombudsman Code.
 - Distinction between service requests and complaints.
 - Early resolution arrangements.
 - Accessibility and reasonable adjustments.
 - Stage 1 and Stage 2 process requirements.
 - Timescales and extensions.
 - Complaint closure arrangements.
 - Learning from complaints.
 - Governance and performance reporting.

- Fair and reasonable exclusions.

3.3 The policy reflects current operational arrangements and formalises improvements already introduced across Housing Services.