

Cornwall Housing Board

Response to Complaints Annual Report 2024/25

31 July 2025

The Board of Cornwall Housing (CHL) was presented with the Complaints Annual Report 2024/25 by the Executive Director of Housing Operations at its 27 June 2025 meeting and a further update presented on 31 July with recommendations from the Housing Ombudsman in relation to the June 2024 submission. The presentation and reports included CHL's self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code, CHL's Complaints Policy and CHL's Complaints Annual Report 2024/25.

"The Board has monitored the progress of complaints handling closely over the past year and is encouraged to see a continued focus on complaints by staff at all levels across CHL. There have been notable improvements in the application of complaints data, evidenced in the learning from complaints section of the report. This is particularly encouraging as, if the changes made deliver the anticipated results to the repairs service, they could represent a major turning point in the performance of CHL and its reputation with residents.

One of the large-scale changes made within the past 12 months includes introducing four new repairs contractors to deliver responsive repairs, home safety checks and servicing for CHL. This decisive action sought to address fundamental issues raised through the complaints process, including issues with appointments, failure to carry out works, delays to works and poor communication throughout the repairs process. CHL has cause to be hopeful these changes will result in improvements during 2025/26, and it is an area the Board intends to monitor closely.

Although complaints increased again this year, the trend is not unusual for the housing sector as a whole, and despite the large number of stage 1 complaints received, CHL responded to 73.5% of complaints on time. Whilst this continues to be an area for improvement, it demonstrates that residents are aware of how to make a complaint and believe in the process enough to submit one. This is a marked change from the complaint culture of just two years ago, when residents saw little point in complaining.

However, it is clear from the Annual Report that greater efforts need to be made to ensure that the actions promised in Stage 1 complaint responses are delivered in good time to avoid the need for escalation to Stage 2. This was evident to the Board from the number of Stage 2 complaints received over the past year, which more than doubled from the previous year. This, therefore, will be an area of scrutiny for Board in the year ahead and members will pay particular attention to escalations indicating a lack of action and communication.

Likewise, Board noted that the top reasons for complaints remained a lack of action, lack of communication and damp and mould. Steps need to be taken to ensure that these issues are addressed, particularly within the responsive repairs function. The Board is optimistic that this will be the case with the new repairs contractors but will closely monitor the situation to ensure the anticipated improvements are realised. Damp and mould repairs must also remain an area of focus, particularly with the introduction of Awaab's Law this coming year, and therefore complaints intelligence will be used to provide an indication of whether more work is needed in this area.

Board received quarterly complaints updates in 2024/25, as did the Tenant Forum, and will continue to do so in 2025/26. The regular reports help provide both Board and invested residents with the assurance and confidence complaints are being given the appropriate level of attention throughout CHL. The Board was also very pleased that the Tenant Forum carried out another complaints quality review in 2024/25 and will complete this exercise again in 2025/26 with the aim of assessing how well complaints are handled by the business from a resident's perspective.


The Board was also pleased to note the anticipated improvement in the Housing Ombudsman's findings and await the publication of their annual performance report 2024/25 for official confirmation. It also noted that CHL did not receive any complaint handling failure orders from the Ombudsman for the third consecutive year, which demonstrates CHL's co-operation and willingness to learn and develop. The Council, through its Commissioner, will also continue to be notified of

any findings of severe maladministration should they arise in 2025/26, although the Board was hearted to see a reduction in these from six to two this year.

However, the Board recognises there is still much work to be done before complaints performance reaches satisfactory levels. More complaints should be resolved at Stage 1 of the process and CHL should aim to reduce cases reaching the Housing Ombudsman by taking swift and decisive action to fulfil promises detailed in complaint responses. Furthermore, the Board would like to see an improvement in complaint satisfaction scores through the TSM results and in-house surveys.

To conclude, the CHL Board and Cornwall Council supports the progress made in 2024/25, is assured that CHL is compliant with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code through its Complaints Policy, annual report and self-assessment evidence and looks forward to building on the improvements made in recent years.

As CHL's Members Responsible for Complaints (MRCs), Karen Ayling, Non-Executive Director makes this statement on behalf of the CHL Board and Louise Wood, Cornwall Council Commissioner, makes this statement on behalf of the Council."



Karen Ayling
Non-Executive Director



Louise Wood
Service Director – Housing and Planning
(Cornwall Council)