

Peter Bedford Housing Association Board Meeting

Agenda Item:

Title: Annual Complaints Report 2025-26
Report to: Board
Author: Clare Norton
Purpose of report: Information

1. Recommendation

The Services Committee have considered this paper and are recommending it to Board for approval. Once approved it will be added to the PBHA website.

2. Background

The Housing Ombudsman requires all landlords who are members of the Ombudsman scheme to self-assess against their Complaints Handling Code annually. This is a statutory requirement under the Social Housing Regulation Act. We will also submit our return to the Ombudsman by 30th September 2026 on Complaints compliance and submit our 2026 self-assessment, see paper 9b.

PBHA is entering into a partnership to become a subsidiary of Single Homeless Project (SHP) in October 2026. As a result, this report takes into account the change to the structure and PBHA service delivery.

PBHA's most recent self-assessment is compliant with the following improvement actions to be taken:

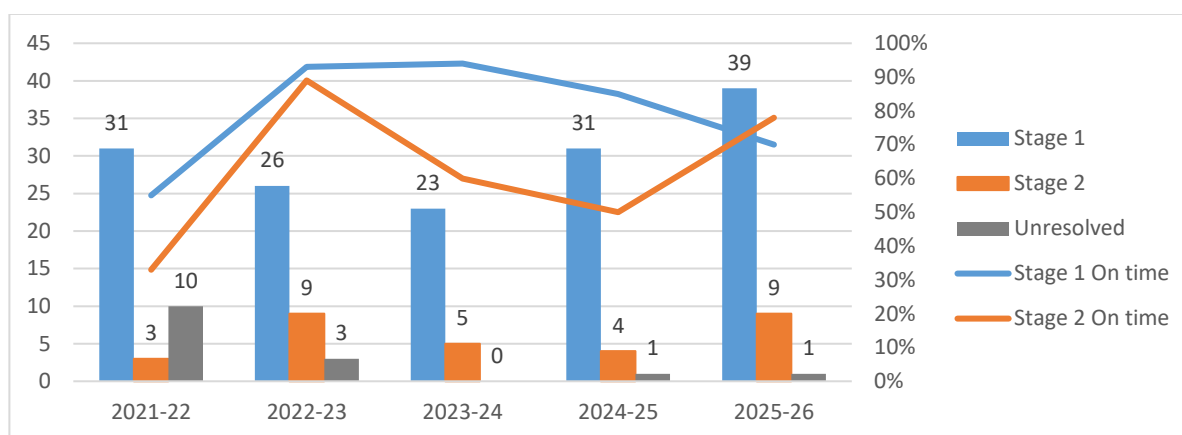
- Add learning from complaints onto the PBHA website
- Self-assess by end of 2026 and report to the Housing Ombudsman Service following the partnership with SHP going live
- Publish an Unreasonable behaviour policy to help ensure complaints are valid and reasonable.

3. Issues for consideration

Numbers of complaints

	2021-22		2022-23		2023-24		2024-25		2025-26	
		% Response on time		% Response on time		% Response on time		% Response on time		% Response on time
Stage 1	18	55%	14	93%	18	94%	27	85%	30	70%
Stage 2	3	33%	9	89%	5	60%	4	50%	9	78%
Unresolved	10		3		0		1		1	
Total	31		26		23		31		39	

Peter Bedford Housing Association Board Meeting



The target times for completion are 10 days for Stage 1 and 20 days for Stage 2. There is an additional 10 days if agreed in advance with the resident for stage 1 and stage 2.

The number of complaints received has risen by 26% from 2024-25. 77% of the total complaints were resolved at Stage 1 in 2025-26, compared to 87% in 24-25, 78% in 2023-24, 54% in 2022-23 and 59% in 2021-22. This represents a greater level of dissatisfaction of stage 1 investigations than previous years. Nine Stage 1 complaints progressed to Stage 2 (30%) up from 15% last year, back to the level of 2023-24 (28%). One complaint was unresolved, as the tenant did not respond to several contact attempts from the investigator.

29 out of 39 complaints (74%) were completed within the agreed response time, a lower figure than each of the last two years (85% and 87%) a figure that falls below the acceptance range at 85-94% and well below the target of 95%. Complaints have increased by 25% which will have contributed to the fall in meeting the response times target. While stage 1 responsiveness has worsened, stage 2 has improved. In addition to the increasing volume of complaints, some of the drop in responsiveness is due to new staff needing support and performance issues. More emphasis on performance and compliance at a senior level would improve performance particularly for stage 1 responses. Using the Housing management system and setting tasks for colleagues in advance of the deadlines is bringing more consistency.

Improving response times to within target time on both Stage 1 and 2 complaints remains a priority for 2026-27. It is worth noting this has improved to date with 79% in target time as of mid-September 2026.

Benchmarking metrics

On review of the benchmarking against similar supported housing organisations in 2025-26, PBHA achieved 96.77 for number of Stage 1 complaints per 1000 homes which is in the second quartile and achieved 29 for stage 2 complaints which is in the first or top quartile. This is good performance meaning we have a healthy number of complaints for the size of organisation we are. Our escalation rate to stage 2 is excellent which means we are resolving complaints successfully at stage 1 so tenants do not need to escalate to stage 2.

Our performance of stage 1 complaints responded to with target time remained at the benchmark of quartile 3, while we have improved to quartile 3 for stage 2. As mentioned above, improving our response times remains a priority, and we are hopeful this can be achieved once PBHA becomes a member of the SHP Group when we will have more capacity to focus on service delivery.

Satisfaction data

Peter Bedford Housing Association Board Meeting

We carried out a Tenant Satisfaction Survey in December 2025 based on the guidance from the Regulator of Social Housing for small housing associations. 44.7% of tenants were satisfied with PBHA's complaints handling (down from 50% in 2023) placing us in the 4th quartile when compared to Acuity's supported housing clients. This is a fall compared to the Supported housing benchmark, although it should be noted that Acuity report a London benchmark of 33.9% for all London landlords. We have been asking tenants to complete satisfaction surveys per complaint on the tenant portal and by adding the link in outcome letters. However, we continue not to have any responses and so will move to phone calls and posted surveys and aim to recruit a volunteer to assist with this.

Types of complaint

Type of Complaint	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
ASB	3	2	10
Housing Management			11
Multiple	9	7	
Other - specify	1	3	
Property	3	5	10
Property Contractors	3	8	1
Staff	4	6	7
	23	31	39

NB since moving to recording all complaints on our Housing Management System, the type of complaint categories have changed – Multiple and Other have been removed and Housing Management has been added.

Complaints about ASB, Property and staff have increased this year although as mentioned above the categories have changed and so direct comparisons between years cannot be made.

Outcomes

In 2025-26, 7 complaints were Upheld, 8 complaints were partially Upheld, and 24 were Not Upheld. This is a justification rate of 39% a significant improvement from 55% in 2024-25. This likely indicates greater consistency in service delivery and improving standards. Where outcomes are a matter of fine judgement, we continue to err on upholding the complaint which we expect will grow confidence in the complaints system.

	Upheld	Partially Upheld	Not Upheld
Stage 1	6	5	19
Stage 2	1	3	5
Total	7	8	24

Housing Ombudsman Service

There was 1 Maladministration determination issued by the Housing Ombudsman service relating to the handling of ASB.

There have been no reports published by the Ombudsman on PBHA.

Peter Bedford Housing Association Board Meeting

Multi- year themes

Improving communication around ASB handling is the strongest theme coming through complaints over several years. We are considering the most effective way to commission a review into our ASB practice, including seeking advice into how best to support residents when they experience ASB.

Compensation

£850 was paid in compensation to 3 tenants, 1 of which was compensation awarded by the Housing Ombudsman. This has increased since the previous year returning to the level seen in 2024-25. The number of awards are low and so it is difficult to make meaningful comparisons. The awards were for poor communication relating to ASB handling and a late repair. We have complied with the findings in full.

Actions from the 2024-25 Annual Complaints report have been taken, with outcomes in red below:

- Publish Self-assessment, Complaints report, Board response and Learning in Annual Impact report 2024-25 - **Completed**
- Consult tenants on the Complaints Policy amending as required – **Completed** we have amended the Complaints Policy to be a shared policy with SHP and will consult with tenants on this post partnership
- Improve use of Sassha to update all repairs, tasks and to log all calls - **Completed**
- Establish a target of 10% repairs post inspected – **Carried forward** a resident and the new Property Inspector will take this forward as a co production initiative
- Deliver management course on managing Probation periods and managing values – this has not been a priority over 2025-26 due to developing the partnership with SHP. However, this will be **Carried forward** to be scheduled before March 2027.
- Review the Participation Policy to include consulting tenants on changes to their homes - this is **Carried forward** to be reviewed in line with SHP's Co-production Policy with an aim to have a group policy.
- Add how to complain into the Repairs satisfaction survey and improve return rates for repairs and complaints transactional surveys – this remains a concern, there is the potential for the new systems with SHP to auto generate satisfaction surveys once a repair is closed which will improve this position. We will explore recruiting a volunteer to carry out surveys.
- Revise the Remedies, Keys and Social Media policies – Remedies policy **Completed**, Keys and Social media to be reviewed as part of SHP partnership **Carried forward**
- Deliver Customer service including complaints and service request handling training for all staff – **Carried forward** due to lack of capacity
- Review our policies which cover unacceptable behaviour from tenants following guidance from the Ombudsman – **Carried forward** We will adopt the SHP policy as part of the partnership.
- Begin to categorise complaints about charges in 2025-26 and reduce the number of complaints in the category of Other – Other complaints category has been removed; there were 2 complaints about Charges in year, going forward we will develop a category in the new system to map complaints about charges
- Review how to improve the environment at 4 Hargrave Road, with a view to maximising how many people benefit from the housing there – **Completed**, we have consulted with residents on installing a second kitchen to meet local authority HMO standards. We are likely to go ahead in the Autumn.
- Identify themes over several years, as well as recurring lessons learned or next steps – **Completed** see above.

4. Learning from complaints

The drive to provide high-quality tenant lead services has led to less complaints being upheld. In order to drive further improvement in complaints handling we seek to learn from complaints and continually improve our practice.

Learning from individual complaints over 2025-26 has been:

- To allocate complaints more effectively taking into account annual leave, referring complaints quickly to Quality if they do not come through the usual channels etc
- Improving the quality of handover during staff turnover
- Consider impact on neighbours about refurbishment before making commitments
- Staff to oversee 4HAR lettings to ensure General Needs criteria are met
- More frequent House meetings to cover topics including hygiene
- All staff to be polite and welcoming
- All staff to use Out of Office when on extended leave (managers to remedy if this is not set up)
- Follow up with residents after repairs have been completed to check the issue has been resolved
- Contractors to inform PBHA of information provided to residents about their repair
- Feedback on concerns to residents privately, not in a group setting
- Include briefing the On call service on new properties as soon as they are brought into management, and add this into the Onboarding checklist
- Staff to introduce themselves when texting a resident
- Residents to be informed when their Housing worker changes (this was also learning in 2024-25)
- Managers to review regularly when residents express dissatisfaction with support services
- Address all elements of the complaint at stage 1 to avoid it going to stage 2
- Respond to meter enquiries at the earliest stage
- Keep actions from stage 1 under review to ensure they are completed

5. Next steps and recommendations

- Complete a new Self-assessment by the end of 2026 following the partnership with SHP
- Register the partnership with the Housing Ombudsman Service and follow any requirements from them
- Approve the Group Complaints Policy in advance of the partnership date of 5th October 2026, including tenant consultation
- Manage complaint responsiveness closely from a senior level to improve timeliness of responses to tenants
- Establish a Learning from complaints section on the PBHA website
- Review the Remedies policy to ensure it adequately covers remedies other than financial recompense
- Adopt a Reasonable Behaviour Policy across the SHP group including best practice on using AI when submitting complaints
- Consider whether to commission an effective review into how PBHA handles ASB, and how to support residents experiencing ASB
- Re-establish the ASB forum for tenants to influence and direct improvements in how PBHA handles incidents of ASB
- Deliver customer service and complaints handling training for housing staff
- Establish an action log arising from complaints and monitor these at senior level to ensure all are completed

Peter Bedford Housing Association Board Meeting

- Deliver management course on managing Probation periods and managing values – carried forward
- Establish a target of 10% repairs post inspected – carried forward
- Develop a Group Participation Policy with SHP – carried forward
- Establish satisfaction surveys for complaints and repairs handling – carried forward
- Review Keys and Social Media policies – carried forward
- Track complaints about charges – carried forward