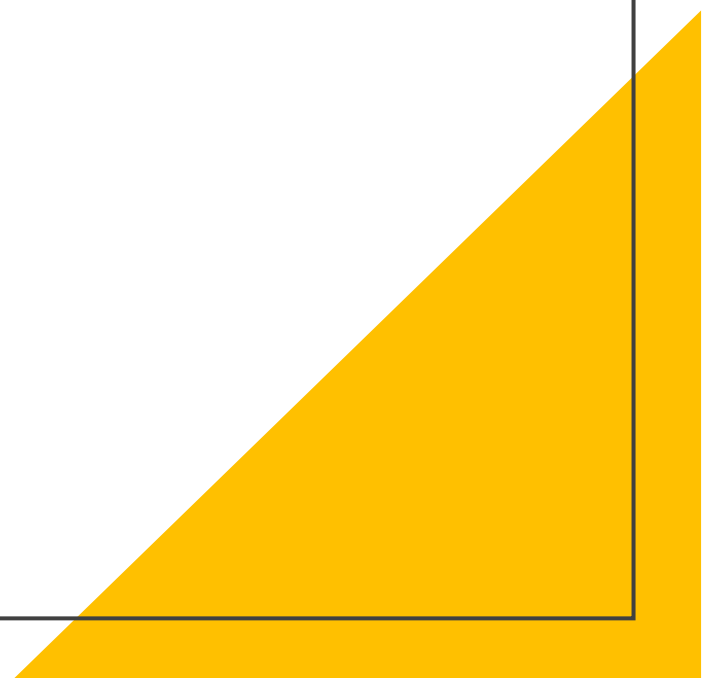
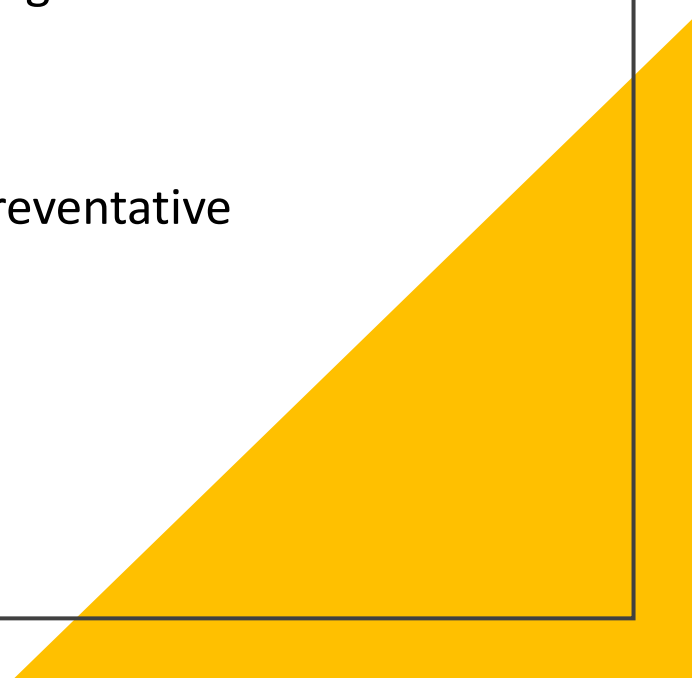


# Housing Complaints Task Force – Q3 2024/25

7<sup>th</sup> January 2025



# Agenda

- Welcome & Introductions
  - Actions from Last Meeting
  - Q3 Stage 1 and Stage 2 Complaints Data
  - Housing Ombudsman Data, Housing Ombudsman Updates, and Regulator Update
  - Positive News
  - Task: Lessons Learned and Preventative Actions for last quarter
  - Up Next
  - AOB
- 
- A yellow triangular graphic is located in the bottom right corner of the slide, pointing towards the top right.

# Actions from Previous Meeting: Action 1

## **Action 1: To include the following information in this quarter's meeting:**

- To include information surrounding compliments
- To include good/positive news

Both of these items will be kept on the agenda for each quarter moving forward.

More information on these can be found on slides 18-20.

# Actions from Previous Meeting: Action 2

**Action 2: Come back to the group with data around average zap carbon times and how we are keeping tenants in the loop around their damp and mould case.**

The average time from a customer enquiry to a ZapCarbon site visit is (8 days for BDC and 9 for MSDC)

Once ZapCarbon have attended site and conducted an inspection they will arrange to carry out a mould clean (usually the same day). ZapCarbon then send a report including their finding and repair recommendations to BMSDC via email in PDF format within 10 days. However, the repair recommendations are visible on the ZapCarbon portal within 5 days. It's this repair information on the portal which we use to raise the works to other contractor(s).

At the moment we are sending most of the work to Aran insulation to improve customer experience and we have agreed that letters be sent out to our residents to keep them updated about the next steps. Aran then call the customers directly to arrange a convenient time to carry out the works following a quick prestart survey.

Regular contractor meetings are held with both ZapCarbon and Aran Insulation to keep an eye on performance and continue to improve our service.

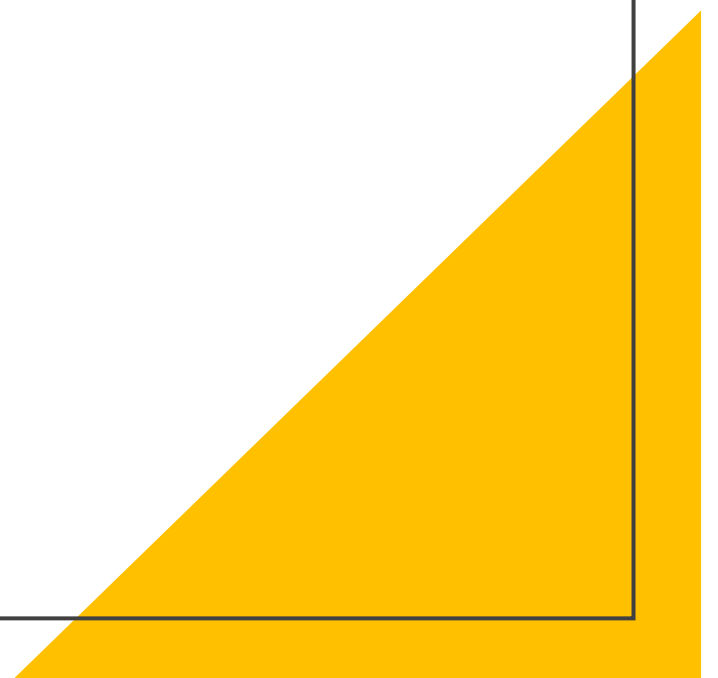
Going forwards, new contracts for both the consultant surveyor and the remedial delivery contractor are being finalised and this is on track to go out to tender very soon. As part of this procurement exercise the timeframes for both the inspection, commencement of remedial work and customer communication are in line with the proposals set out in Awaab's law (which has yet to be fully finalised).

# Actions from Previous Meeting: Action 3 and 4

- **Action 3: Find out and get back to group about how previous contractors communicated with tenants and where the problems were**
  - Not very well, however for the new contractor for repairs contractor phones tenant and arranges access, unless emergency they will still try and call but may just turn up if nearby.
- **Action 4: Discover if the new contractors do communicate to the tenants and what their process is?**
  - Planned works (electrical test) – recorded letter is sent to tenant with appointment date and reason for visit (up to 1 month prior to visit but no less than 2 weeks) + phone call, reminder text 24 hrs prior to appt. On occasion they will try and email if they have details and the 1<sup>st</sup> appt missed. Calling card on all failed appointments. Final visit door stickered.

# Complaints Data

Quarter 3 – 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024



# Housing Repairs & Maintenance

## Year on Year Comparison

- Q3: 2022/23 – 73 Stage One Complaints Received
- Q3: 2023/24 – 129 Stage One Complaints Received **(+76%)**
- Q3: 2024/25 – 55 Stage One Complaints Received **(-57%)**

## Outcomes for Q3 2024/24

- 37 - Upheld
- 8 - Not Upheld
- 5 - Not Considered to be a complaint
- 2 - Comment Received

## Timeframes

- 3.42 - Average working days to acknowledge
- 9.15 - Average working days to respond

# Property Assets and Compliance

## Property Assets

### Year on Year Comparison

Q3: 2022/23 – 25 Stage One Complaints Received

Q3: 2023/24 – 2 Stage One Complaints Received (-92%)

Q3: 2024/25 – 8 Stage One Complaints Received (+300%)

### Outcomes for Q3 2024/24

3 – Blank

2 – Upheld

2 – Not Upheld

1 – Withdrawn

### Timeframes

4.57 – Average working days to acknowledge

13.80 - Average working days to respond

## Compliance

### Year on Year Comparison

• Q3: 2022/23 – 50 Stage One Complaints Received

• Q3: 2023/24 – 64 Stage One Complaints Received (+28%)

• Q3: 2024/25 – 48 Stage One Complaints Received (-25%)

### Outcomes for Q3 2024/24

• 25 – Blank

• 12 – Upheld

• 7 – Not upheld

• 3 – Not Considered to be a complaint

• 1 – Comment Received

### Timeframes

• N/A – Average working days to acknowledge

• 12.79 - Average working days to respond



# Tenancy Services and Housing Solutions

## **Tenancy Services**

### Year on Year Comparison

Q3 2022/23: 9

Q3 2023/24: 21

Q3 2024/25: 22

### Outcomes

8 – Not Considered to be a complaint

6 – Not upheld

5 – Upheld

3 – Blank

### Timeframes

N/A – Average working days to acknowledge

7.32 – Average working days to respond

## **Housing Solutions**

### Year on Year Comparison

Q3 2022/23: 4

Q3 2023/24: 6

Q3 2024/25: 12

### Outcomes

8 – Not considered to be a complaint

2 – Not upheld

1 – Upheld

1 - Blank

### Timeframes

N/A – Average working days to acknowledge

4.33 – Average working days to respond

\*not all housing solutions complaints relate to landlord function but are included in these figures.

#increase could also be down to adaptation

complaints now being handled by housing solutions

# Stage Two Complaints

## Year on Year Comparison

Q3 2022/23: 12 Stage two complaints received / Q3 2023/24: 29 Stage two complaints received / Q3 2024/24: 24 Stage two complaints received

## Outcomes

10 – Upheld, 6 – Not considered to be a complaint, 5 – Not upheld, 3 – blank (not yet responded to)

## Other Information

The 24 for Q3 2024/25 are made up Housing as follows:

Repairs – 13, Compliance – 4, Property Assets – 3, Tenancy Services – 3, Housing Solutions – 1.

## Timeframes

2 of the 24 were extended

Average response time was 14.2 working days

## Matters Identified in Stage Two Complaints

- Delays to repairs scheduled with works not being undertaken in a timely manner
- Lack of communication between staff and our tenants when repair is being undertaken. This seems particularly prevalent when multiple larger repairs are required.
- Misunderstanding of Fencing Policy. Boundary fence should have been erected as the boundary backed onto an open area.
- Failure to complete repairs to two storage heaters in our tenant's home, the repair took over 12 months to resolve. This was not resolved until the stage two complaint, with multiple missed opportunities.

# Reminders for Responders

Please ensure that you are contacting the complainant within five days and evidencing this using the acknowledgement template. This can then be copied into the system.

Please ensure that you are completing the outcomes tab once your response has been approved. This directly feeds into the data used for complaints taskforce and is contributing to some of the blank data that we have seen this quarter.

Please ensure you are considering all evidence from the tenant, open housing, our contractors and other information. Your complaint investigation is supposed to be impartial, not just based on what a contractor is telling you.

Now that we have a Repairs and Maintenance Policy, please refer to this in complaint responses. Your complaint investigation should demonstrate how we have met or breached the policy. This also applies to any other policies that the Council has and is relevant to the complaint, such as fencing, recharge, and ASB for example.

# Housing Ombudsman

Outcomes, Best Practice,  
and Latest Information

# Housing Ombudsman Determinations

There were two housing ombudsman determinations in Q3, both were upheld.

- The first one in October was upheld as the Councils had not undertaken repairs to a window for around two years and there was fault with the Councils complaints handling processes. The Council were ordered to pay £1,000 compensation to our tenant.
- The second determination was provided over Christmas and has not been shared widely yet. The Councils were found at fault, and we have around 4 more weeks to go back to the Ombudsman to demonstrate that we are following their report. More information will be provided on this complaint in Q4's taskforce however, the Council have been ordered to pay our tenant £700 as well as create a schedule of works.

Following each Housing Ombudsman case, there will now be a further internal report written. If the complaint was relevant to your team, you will likely be asked for input. This report will then be shared further at future complaint taskforce meetings.

## **Severe Maladministration Report – Anti-Social Behaviour**

ASB is the second highest driver of traffic to the Ombudsman, and it can be a complex and sensitive topic to handle.

The decisions are grouped around 5 key themes that the Ombudsman is seeing consistent failings in its casework:

- action plans
- risk assessments
- working with other agencies
- hate crime
- communication/complaint handling

# Housing Ombudsman Latest

## Action Plans

When a resident reports Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), one of the earliest actions a landlord should take is a risk assessment. This may be to help the landlord assign the case a priority or because it is a high priority. A common service failure is not undertaking this risk assessment in line with the landlord's policy or not taking appropriate action following it.

Agreeing an action plan helps landlords to manage residents' expectations and keep them informed about the progress of the case. This can also reduce the stress and anxiety about the situation and provide confidence that the landlord has the matter under control.

It also allows the landlord to show the range of solutions it has available to it and can ensure it is providing a human-centric response by involving the resident to get the best outcome for them. It also supports the landlord to make clear and consistent decisions and ensure staff are aware of the approach it is taking.

Landlords should use action plans to clearly set out what it can and will do, which will also help to make sure that competent and accurate records are kept.

It is important to note that an action plan should be a 2-way agreement with the resident. Landlords should take overall responsibility for implementing it and explain what actions it will take by when but, equally, action plans may include steps the resident will need to take over a period of time. For example, keeping diary sheets for a period of X months, to help with evidence gathering. A good action plan will also summarise when the resident can next expect contact from the landlord on when the action plan will be reviewed. Some landlords will do an action plan at the start of the case and leave it, but it needs to be a working document as if the situation escalates, the actions may change over time.

# Housing Ombudsman Latest

## Risk Assessments

When a resident reports Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), one of the earliest actions a landlord should take is a risk assessment. This may be to help the landlord assign the case a priority or because it is a high priority. A common service failure is not undertaking this risk assessment in line with the landlord's policy or not taking appropriate action following it.

This can have significant consequences and means the landlord is on the back foot from the start of the case being opened. Not undertaking a risk assessment after the report of anti-social behaviour can lead to numerous other failings throughout the lifetime of a case. Getting the risk assessments right is an essential foundation for responding effectively.

- Risk assessments form part of statutory guidance which accompanies the ASB Crime and Policing Act 2014. It says landlords should assess the risk of harm to the victim, along with any potential vulnerabilities, at the time it receives an ASB report.
- Failing to undertake a risk assessment at an early stage of an ASB report instantly puts residents at a disadvantage, and many other failings often follow. If a landlords' policy makes no mention of risk assessments at all, this should be reviewed, and landlords should make sure that systems are updated to reflect any vulnerabilities within a household. Failure to correctly record individual circumstances which are relevant to the case, including mental health or protected characteristics, can result in delays in assisting vulnerable residents accessing additional services they may need.
- Risk assessments should take into consideration all the circumstances a resident outlines to a landlord, and this should then guide the actions it takes.
- This includes whether any support or signposting is appropriate and what safeguarding measures need to be implemented. These risk assessments should be kept up to date during an ASB report, as circumstances may change.
- A resident's circumstances may mean that they are more affected by landlord's actions or inactions than others. This might be due to their particular circumstances, or as a result of a vulnerability. When considering redress for a situation, consideration of any aggravating factors (such as a resident's physical and mental health conditions) should be reflected in the level of redress for the specific impact on the resident.



# Housing Ombudsman Latest

## Engagement with Third Parties

Landlords will often need to respond to ASB in coordination with other agencies. This can include the police, the local authority, and social services or even its own (or appointed) managing agents. It is important that landlords can engage effectively with this range of 3rd parties when dealing with ASB.

A partnership arrangement works where agencies work together effectively to share information with the purpose of assessing risk so that safe interventions can be planned to reduce the risks identified.

Third parties can be a key way for landlords to successfully tackle ASB and minimise the distress on residents. It can also be a way of determining how best to tackle the issue, with this advice helping to determine risk and what actions could be taken. While the Ombudsman understands that landlords have limited resources, a response to the police in cases of potential risk should be an absolute priority and will develop strong local partnerships on these cases.

However, landlords should not be over reliant on police action for outcomes, when it should be a partnership, and it needs to fulfil its own management responsibilities. Landlords should look at what actions they should be taking, as well as take on a range of expert opinions to inform their decision-making process.

It is also important to keep residents up to date with the landlord's partnership working and what that means for the resident. This can often help the resident to have confidence that the landlord is taking firm action and all the necessary steps to keep them safe.

# Housing Ombudsman Latest

## Hate Crime

It may be that Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) involves a hate crime. It is important that when a resident reports a hate crime, that the landlord takes firm action and has policies that can deal with this in a robust and timely manner. This means it is also important the landlord records hate crimes appropriately and is aware what specific action it may need to take.

When a resident reports a hate crime, landlords must treat these reports with seriousness and sensitivity. This should involve specific recording of incidents and a specific policy and procedure. Effective policies of this kind see landlords taking early, firm, and effective action against alleged perpetrators, including those who fail to engage with any support offered.

Like in all ASB cases, landlords should take a victim-centred approach.

Landlords should recognise and consider the debilitating impact that persistent or repeated ASB can have on victims, more so over a period of time. It should also consider appropriate signposting to other services.

Wider than initial reports, landlords should monitor hate crime incidents across its homes and identify any persistent alleged perpetrators and use this information to improve the services it offers.

# Housing Ombudsman Latest

## Complaint Handling and Communication

It is important that when residents report ASB, it is dealt with in the right way and that complaints are similarly accepted in the same way and not confused with its handling of the ASB process.

Effective, empathetic communication is also key throughout the case. This can be the difference between a resident having trust in the landlord to take seriously and address the issues for them or feeling helpless and anxious.

Effective and proactive communication is vital in any complaint, but can be especially important during an ASB complaint, where a resident may feel anxious and distressed in their own home. Agreeing a contact arrangement or providing regular and sensitive updates can be tools to help landlords manage cases more effectively.

A landlord should also ensure that it does not confuse how it handles complaints about ASB and a complaint about its handling of the ASB, and these separate issues should be triaged accordingly.

When a resident has been through a traumatic time with ASB, it is important that the landlord responds within timescales set out in the Ombudsman's statutory [Complaint Handling Code](#). This not only helps landlords recover any service failures in the individual case but also deploy learning from its complaints to improve its handling of ASB overall.

Full report can be read here [Housing Ombudsman Severe Maladministration Report Anti Social Behaviour](#)

# Positive News!

Compliments and Good  
News



# Compliments Received in Q3



"I had an emergency repair today as my front door would not lock. The operative attended within 90 minutes and changed the lock. Excellent service and was polite and done a fab repair!"



"Would like to thank the plumber for his service today doing repairs. He is always cheerful and helpful."



"Had repairs ops come to fit handrails within the property and would like to thank them for their hard work and enabling me to get about the house without fear of falling"



"I would like to what a wonderful way in which your employee from housing solutions helped me and supported my way into a flat after my homeless"



"I would like to pass on my thanks for the work that has been done in my bathroom today and for the manner in which the workers carried out the works and reassured me"

- Complaint numbers across our housing services have fallen in comparison to Q3 2023/24 to Q3 2024/25. We have seen a reduction of 228 to 145, a decrease of 83 (or 36%)
- The most recent customer satisfaction survey results indicated an improvement in our complaint handling procedures. We are up to around 33% satisfaction with complaints which is around the national average.
- We now have a repairs policy. All decisions can be made in line with this policy, including the investigation into complaints

#### Additional Compliments

'I just want you thank you again and let you know the workers you sent out today have not stopped working for 5 minutes as they understand it's stressful for my son, they are still working now which I really appreciate and hope they get they get praise from your side to I've never known any one private to work like they have today thank you'

'would like to compliment the people who changed her side door to a upvc door. She can definitely tell the difference with heat not escaping.'

'I would also like to thank the team who converted my bathroom into a wet room, I am so much happier now.'

# Positive News

**TASK:** Lessons learned and Preventative Actions Identified during Q3.

In groups, discuss what lessons learned your teams found this quarter.

On the next slide, we will include these lessons learned that you have discussed and include what the next steps are to ensure that we can minimise these issues from occurring again.

# Lessons Learned Task - Discussion Points

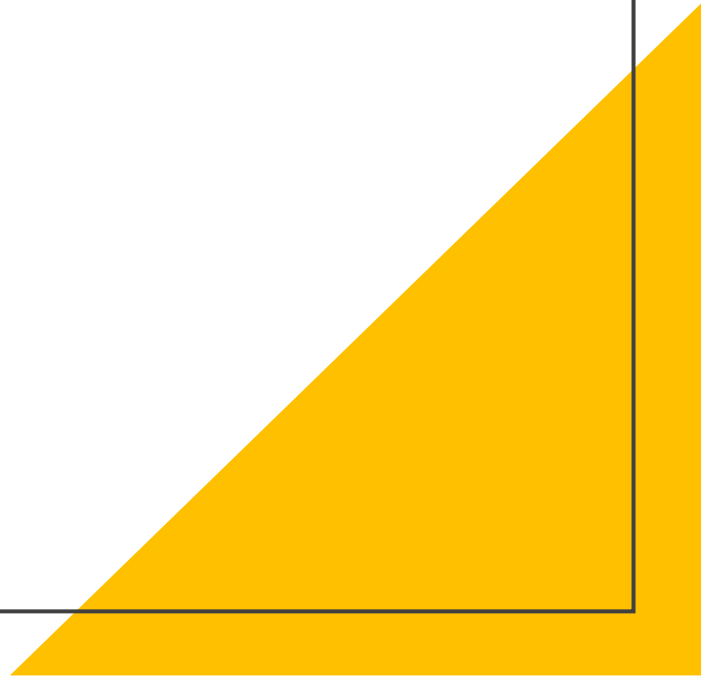
1-

2-

3-

4-

5-





# Up Next...

01

Stop Social  
Housing Stigma  
Action Plan

02

Vulnerabilities  
Improvement  
Session

03

Complaints  
Scrutiny  
Activity by  
Tenant Board

04

ASB Scrutiny  
Activity by  
Tenant Board in  
February 2025