

## ANNUAL COMPLAINTS PERFORMANCE & SERVICE IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2023-2024

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This annual report sets out the complaints that Belgrave Neighbourhood Co-operative Housing Association (BNCHA) has received between April 2023 and March 2024 and what actions we have taken in response to them.

To find out more about what our tenant members should expect from the co-op when you make a complaint, please click [here](#).

### Response from the management committee

The BNCHA management committee has considered this report at a special committee meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2024. The committee also considered the co-op's self-assessment regarding compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code.

The management committee approves both this report and the self-assessment. It is noted that the co-op needs to do further work to identify complaints that may require further investigation. This is the only area where the co-op is not fully in compliance with the Code. This is due to the low numbers of complaints we receive not giving us sufficient information to know which complaints will take longer to investigate. The committee will ensure further work is done in this area to address this requirement in the next year.

BNCHA is a small Registered Provider landlord. The volume of complaints from our members is very low. Nonetheless, we are pleased that the ten complaints we received in 2023/2024 have led to learning and action for the co-op – introducing repair receipts/satisfaction responses for all repairs.

The committee welcomes that we met our target timescales in respect of all but one the complaints considered this year and

complied with the extension target timescale in respect of the other complaint.

We aim to continue both our proactive learning approach as well as our intention to respond to complaints in accordance with the Housing Ombudsman's Code.

## Our approach to complaints

BNCHA aims to provide the best service it can to our tenant members. We encourage our members to tell us if there is a problem with something we have done. We consider complaints and comments to be valuable feedback. It gives us a chance to learn and improve services.

Our general approach incorporates the following features:

- a two stage complaints process in accordance with the Housing Ombudsman's Code. The 1<sup>st</sup> Stage includes the Chair of the Coop.
- an approach where we welcome and value complaints
- seeing complaints as an opportunity to put things right where we have not got things right
- learning from complaints
- providing simple information about how to make complaints on our website and through other methods
- complaints are reviewed by an experienced Independent Chair and a senior officer from our service provider who consider opportunities to learn from complaints
- we will seek to continually improve how we manage complaints

## Our complaint stages

We aim to find a resolution to dissatisfaction at the first point of contact. Where this is not possible, the complaint progresses as follows:

### **Stage One – investigating the complaint (target 10 working days)**

An investigation of the complaint takes place, including interviews with the complainant and other relevant parties, and a formal written communication to the complainant regarding the outcomes of the investigation within 10 working days.

### **Stage Two – independent review (target 20 working days)**

If the complainant is not happy with some or all the outcome of their complaint, they may request a review. The co-op will form an independent review panel consisting of two people and both of whom will be independent of the complaint and the previous investigation.

The Review Panel will offer a final written response seeking to resolve the problem within 20 working days of a review request being received.

If the complainant is still unhappy with the outcome, they may refer the complaint to the Housing Ombudsman Service.

## BNCHA complaints and how we responded

We received ten complaints between April 2023 and March 2024. Only one complaint was escalated to Stage 2 of the procedure.

- Eight complaints related to repairs, six specifically that repairs had previously been reported, however, no action had been taken. The other two related to repairs being promised, however, had not been undertaken. These complaints were investigated but were not upheld.

The investigation into the complaints found no evidence of previous reporting or any commitments being made that were not followed up. However, it was recognised that a receipt of all

repairs requested would be sent to tenants. This was a record of the repair, the timescales for when the repair would be completed by and the contractor details. A satisfaction response was also included for the tenant to fill in post completion.

- One complaint was from the daughter of a tenant, who felt that we had not undertaken appropriate action to investigate a smell that was coming into her parents' home. The complaint was not upheld, and the complainant requested a review. The review was heard by an independent panel and the complaint was part upheld. A more thorough investigation was undertaken, however, no defect or follow up work was identified.
- One complaint was a tenant complaint that follow up structural works were not undertaken, following the works to repair the drainage were completed. The contractor had planned to carryout the follow up works, however, the tenant felt it should have been done at the same time. This complaint was not upheld.

The complaint that was reviewed did result in an extension of time, by 1 week, all other complaints were dealt within the target time.

Our learning from these complaints was as follows:

- we have introduced repair receipts that record when a repair has been requested. This is sent to the tenant and confirms the repair requested, the contractor details and the timescale for the repair to be completed by.
- The receipt includes a satisfaction response post completion, so that the tenant experience is measured from reporting to completion.
- our staff are now more proactive in explaining actions and timeframes on major works i.e. structural repairs.

## Our plans to improve complaints handling

The co-op will action the following points in the next year to improve complaints handling:

- we will continue to publicise our complaints procedure to our tenant members, ensuring that all members know that we welcome complaints
- we will continue to embed a positive culture around complaints amongst staff and committee members
- we will analyse satisfaction with our complaints handling with our members
- we will continue to track complaints through to completion to ensure we are achieving timescale targets
- we will ensure that staff involved in complaints handling take an approach where they identify how our policies, procedures and systems could be improved as a result of complaints
- we will analyse complaints we receive in order to develop a matrix of complaints that may take longer to investigate.

## The Housing Ombudsman and our self-assessment

Each year, we publish a self-assessment of how we perform against criteria for complaints handling set out by the Housing Ombudsman. To view our 2024 self-assessment, please click [here](#).

It has been particularly identified in the self-assessment that:

- a) the co-op needs to develop policies and procedures to manage repair expectations and timeframes for repairs to be completed.
- b) there is a need to identify types of complaints that may take longer to investigate. The low number of complaints has made

this difficult, but the co-op will seek to address this during 2024/2025.

No complaints cases have been referred to the Ombudsman during April 2023-March 2024 and the Ombudsman has published no reports in this period regarding BNCHA's performance.