

# Complaints Customer Report 2022-23



Welcome to the Colchester Borough Homes annual complaints report. This report covers the period from April 2022 to March 2023. We welcome your feedback and want to listen to your voice and act upon your concerns. Your feedback helps us to improve services about the things that matter to you.

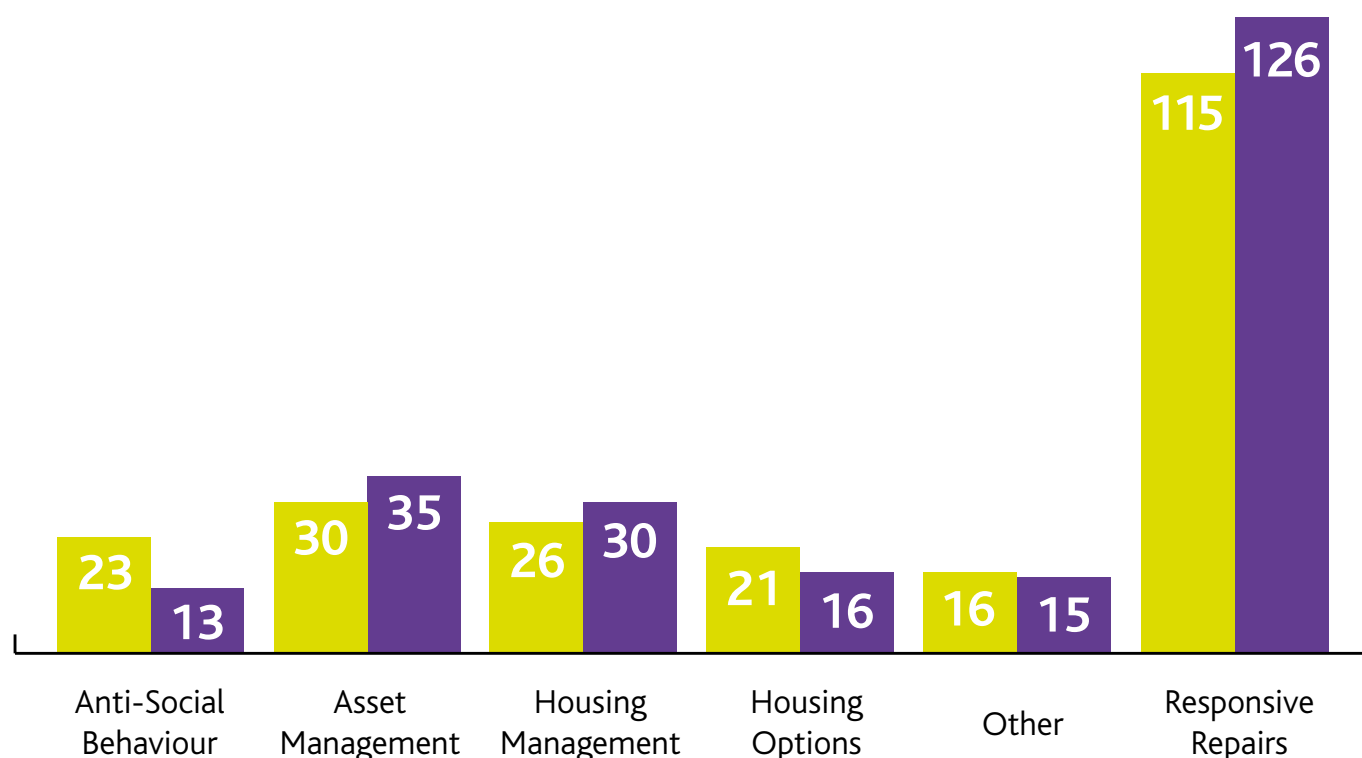
## How we deal with complaints

We log all complaints and refer them to the most appropriate officer for investigation. We have service standards for responding to complaints and what you can do if you are unhappy with the outcome of a complaint. These are set out in our [Complaints Policy](#).

We will send you an acknowledgement of your complaint within five working days. We aim to provide you with a detailed response to your complaint within a further 10 working days. If you are not satisfied with the response, you can escalate the complaint to stage 2. This is a review by a Head of Service, and we have twenty working days to reply to you. We can extend the response time in exceptional circumstances if a complaint is complicated or involves several service areas.

We logged 235 complaints at stage 1 of our complaints process during the year, an increase from 231 on the previous year. There have been national Government campaigns about holding social housing landlords to account, so an increase in complaints was expected. However, the increase was fewer than we expected.

■ 2021/22 ■ 2022/23



We upheld or partially upheld 148 out of 235 complaints stage 1 complaints.

36 complaints went to Stage 2 of our complaints process and were reviewed by a Senior Manager. 29 out of 36 complaints were upheld or partially upheld at Stage 2.



Responsive Repairs received the most complaints. This is where you have most contact with our service. This also includes complaints made about contractors working on our behalf. Property condition is where most complaints are made across all social housing providers. We expect our contractors to co-operate with our complaints handling process, should any complaints be made about the services they provide to you.

We carried out 16,389 emergency and non-emergency repairs, £18.6million of planned maintenance work, processed 3,831 Homechoice applications and 13,168 web messages through the Homechoice web portal.

We answered 157 stage 1 complaints within timescale, and 25 stage 2 complaints within timescale in 2022/23. To help improve response times we created an action plan which included extra training for our staff in complaint handling.

We also carried out the annual [Self-Assessment](#) of our complaints handling process in line with the [Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code](#).



## Top things reported

Outstanding repairs and communication were the things our customers complained about most during the year.

We have been working hard to make improvements to our Repairs service. There are several challenges facing all social housing landlords such as material shortages, price inflation and labour scarcity. There is also a lot of new legislation and regulation coming into effect, which all social housing landlords must comply with.

We are reviewing our Damp and Mould policy with the help of some of our involved customers to enable us to provide a better service to diagnose, treat and rectify any damp, mould and condensation issues reported to us.

We aim to improve our communication and there are several areas in which we hope to do this. We are developing the 'Housing Online' self-service customer portal where you will be able to view details of your tenancy, rent charges and rent accounts, view repairs logged and see planned works relevant to your home.

We are currently co-creating a Resident Dashboard with our involved customers. This will show how we are performing as a landlord and for customers to be able to hold us to account.

The dashboard will include information on the new [Tenant satisfaction measures](#) set by the Regulator of Social Housing. All our performance and compliance information will be in one dashboard on our website for customers to view and will be live current data. Our performance will be added to future Resident Voice agendas to provide an overview for our involved customers.



## You said, we did



### You Said - You were not happy with the conduct of contractors and staff.

We Did - We held meetings with our contractors and our staff to discuss behaviour and conduct, introducing themselves and showing proof of identity.

We listened to your feedback and acted by recruiting a new Repairs Co-Ordinator to build better working relationships with our contractors. This means we have regular progress updates and can oversee the work we have scheduled, which also gives our supervisors more on-site time to do inspections.

### You said - You weren't being updated about complaints and they weren't being answered on time.

We did - We carried out training for all staff that deal with complaints, including our Senior Management Team. This means that staff are aware of their responsibilities to answer complaints on time and to keep our customers informed throughout the process. We also had an audit of our complaints handling service carried out by an external company to ensure that we handle complaints appropriately.

### You said - That you felt that the wording in our Complaints policy was not clear.

We Did - We re-wrote part of the Complaints policy and included information on the difference between a 'service request' and a 'complaint'.

## Here is what you said about the complaints handling service:

"I was really impressed with the complaint process and how it was handled. I was visited and given compensation. I was pleased that CBH listened to me."

"I feel that I should have an apology. I was listened to though."

"My complaint was managed well, and I was contacted quickly. Everyone was very respectful."



# Housing

## Ombudsman Service

This is a free service set up by law to look at complaints about the housing organisations that are registered with them. You can contact them at any time for impartial support and advice if you need help to make or resolve a complaint.

You can contact the Housing Ombudsman:

- ✓ online at [www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk)
- ✓ by telephone on 0300 111 3000
- ✓ In writing at Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 152, Liverpool, L33 7WQ

You can see how your landlord is performing [here](#). The Housing Ombudsman Service opened seven investigations into complaints made by our customers during the period April 2022 – March 2023. The Housing Ombudsman made the following decisions on their investigations:

A complaint about an ongoing leak which was not dealt with in a timely manner – We were ordered to pay compensation and carry out decoration. We complied with the order.

A complaint about our Empty Properties Standard and Lettings process and the condition of a property – The Housing Ombudsman ordered us to pay compensation, apologise to the resident and to review our Empty Property Standard. We complied with the order and will be reviewing our Empty Property Standard.

A complaint about our handling of an Anti-Social Behaviour case – We were ordered to pay compensation and review the case handling. We complied with the order.

A complaint about damage to a Colchester City Council owned property by a 3rd party – No fault was found with Colchester Borough Homes actions, and no recommendations received.

A complaint about the condition of a garden and a pet – No fault was found with CBH actions.

## How to make a complaint

If you have a complaint, a comment, or a compliment please get in touch:

-  Through our website [Complaints - Colchester Borough Homes](#)
-  By email at [complaints@cbhomes.org.uk](mailto:complaints@cbhomes.org.uk)
-  On Facebook or X (formerly Twitter) using @ColBoroughHomes
-  By letter to Freepost Colchester Borough Homes
-  By telephone to our Customer Services Team on 01206 282514



**CBH**  
Together we are better

