Annual Complaints Performance & Service Improvement Report

April 2025 – March 2026

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About this report

This annual report is designed to tell you about the complaints we have received this year, and what action we have taken in response to them.

All the information shown relates to the period April 2025 - March 2026, for example complaints made in this period or due for resolution in this period. The report covers both Bournville Village Trust and Bournville Works Housing Society Limited.

To find out more about the service you should expect from us when you make a complaint, please visit:
https://www.bvt.org.uk/help-and-support/make-a-complaint-or-compliment/

Foreword

Response from the Board of Trustees

An updated self-assessment and annual complaints report, covering Bournville Village Trust and Bournville Works Housing Society Limited, has been presented to BVT's Executive Team, to its Customer & Neighbourhoods Committee, and to the Board of Trustees. As the Board of Trustees, we approve the self-assessment and annual complaints report as a true reflection of BVT's complaint handling process and agree with the findings of the self-assessment that BVT complies with all aspects of the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. The MRC (Member Responsible for Complaints) has discussed the self-assessment and report with the Business Improvement team and been fully informed on developments in our complaints handling.

The Board is encouraged to read the findings in this report. In particular, we welcome the continued improvement in how many complaints are responded to on time (98%). This represents much hard work on the part of staff to ensure complaints are dealt with in line with BVT's service standard and the Ombudsman's requirements. However, BVT must continue to strive to meet the target it has set itself for 100% of complaints to receive a response in time.

Additionally, we note that satisfaction with complaints handling, whilst up compared to previous years, remains below target. As well as responding to complaints on time, staff handling complaints must ensure that wherever possible they speak with complainants before issuing a written response to achieve a shared understanding of the issues, and that any promised actions are monitored to completion.

We also believe there are tangible signs that BVT is learning from the complaints it receives. The root cause of many complaints, poor communication, is being addressed via the business's focus on improved contact management and on embedding the repairs policy and service standard.

We note that there have been no Ombudsman adjudications on BVT casework in this latest period, even though there are 8 open cases currently with the Ombudsman. Looking ahead, the outcomes of these open cases will provide valuable feedback for BVT on its handling of complaints where the customer is unhappy with the outcome.

Our Approach to Complaints

We are committed to providing the best service we can to our customers. We want to be told if there has been a problem with a service we have provided or when a customer is very happy with something we have done. Complaints, compliments and comments are valuable feedback. It gives us a chance to learn and most importantly a chance to improve services.

To ensure we listen and improve we have a two-stage Complaints process. We want to empower our staff to resolve customer dissatisfaction as early in the process as possible and wherever possible without the need for a formal investigation.

- We have aligned our approach to meet the requirements set out in the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code
- We welcome and value complaints
- Complaints are an opportunity to put things right if we have not got it right
- We aim to learn from complaints
- We regularly report on our complaints' performance on our website
- We provide information about how to make a complaint on our website
- We report performance to our Executive Team, Customer and Neighbourhoods Committee and the Board of Trustees
- We seek to continually improve how we respond to and manage complaints

Complaint Stages

We aim to find a resolution to dissatisfaction at the first point of contact, however if this is not possible and the issue requires further investigation, then the complaint will be raised at Stage 1 of the complaints process.

Stage 1 – Investigating the Complaint (target 10 working days)

The relevant Manager/Head of Service will investigate the complaint within 10 working days. Wherever we can, we will call or meet with the customer in order to get a better understanding of the issues and reach a resolution quickly that the customer is happy with.

Stage 2 – Independent Review of the Complaint (target 20 working days)

A customer can escalate to Stage 2, an independent review of the Stage 1 decision, where either:

1) They feel not all aspects of the complaint were addressed at Stage 1

2) If the customer feels the response to their original complaint was not fully justified and any wrong has not been properly addressed or rectified.

All requests to escalate to Stage 2 will be accepted. We will work with the customer to find out how we can resolve their complaint at Stage 2 and seek to understand why we were unable to resolve the issues previously.

The Independent Review will be carried out by the Director/Head of Service alongside the Head of Business Improvement.

Performance Summary

Measure	*Quarter 2 23-Quarter 1 24*	Quarter 2 24-Quarter 1 25	Quarter 2 25-Quarter 1 26	Target
No. of complaints received	*237*	*288*	**256**	**Report**
% of complaints responded to within target time	*90%*	*95%*	**98%**	**100%**
% of customers satisfied with complaints handling (transactional survey carried out upon closure of the complaint)	*63%*	*57%*	**65%**	**70%**
Satisfaction with complaint handling (where complaint made in last 12M) (Tenant Satisfaction Measure)	*36%*	*30%*	**42%**	**42%**

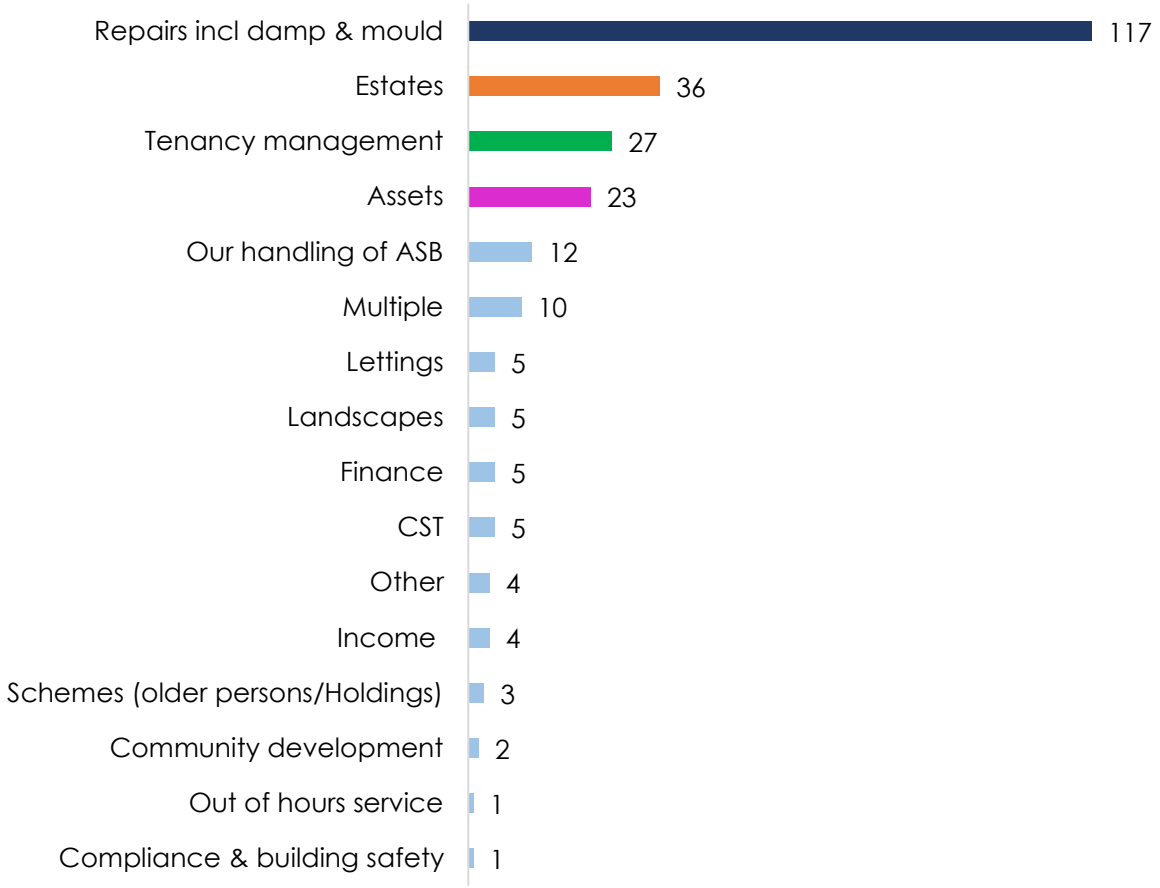
- We have seen further improvement in the proportion of complaints **responded to within target time** (98%, up from 95% last year and 90% the year before that). This is a positive result, driven by continuing focus on this metric including a monthly update to all staff from the Chief Executive at the Staff Brief.

- **Satisfaction with our complaints handling** is up slightly compared to previous years but is still below target. We will inevitably disappoint some customers with the outcomes of our complaint investigations; however, there is still scope to use the results of these surveys to drive improvements in complaint handling perceptions (see *Complaints handling surveys* slide later in this report).

- The **number of complaints received** is broadly stable over time. Whilst tenant satisfaction with our services has increased over this period (see TSM survey results), the timeliness of our response to complaints may be encouraging use of this service amongst those who are still not satisfied.

What our customers complain about

Complaints - By service area



Complaints include:
- **42** communication, including missed appointments
- **29** time taken to attend / time to resolve issues
- **17** quality of workmanship
- **14** staff attitude

Complaints include:
- **10** lack of enforcement against individuals for perceived breaches
- **9** no response / delayed response to enquiries
- **3** standard of tree works carried out in Oak Farm Rd

Complaints include:
- **8** staff attitude / behaviour (often in relation to enforcement)
- **5** handling of neurodiversity / mental health issues
- **4** communication

Complaints include:
- **6** communication
- **4** quality of planned works
- **3** refusal to replace a component (windows, doors, bathrooms)
- **3** aids & adaptations
- **3** contractor attitude

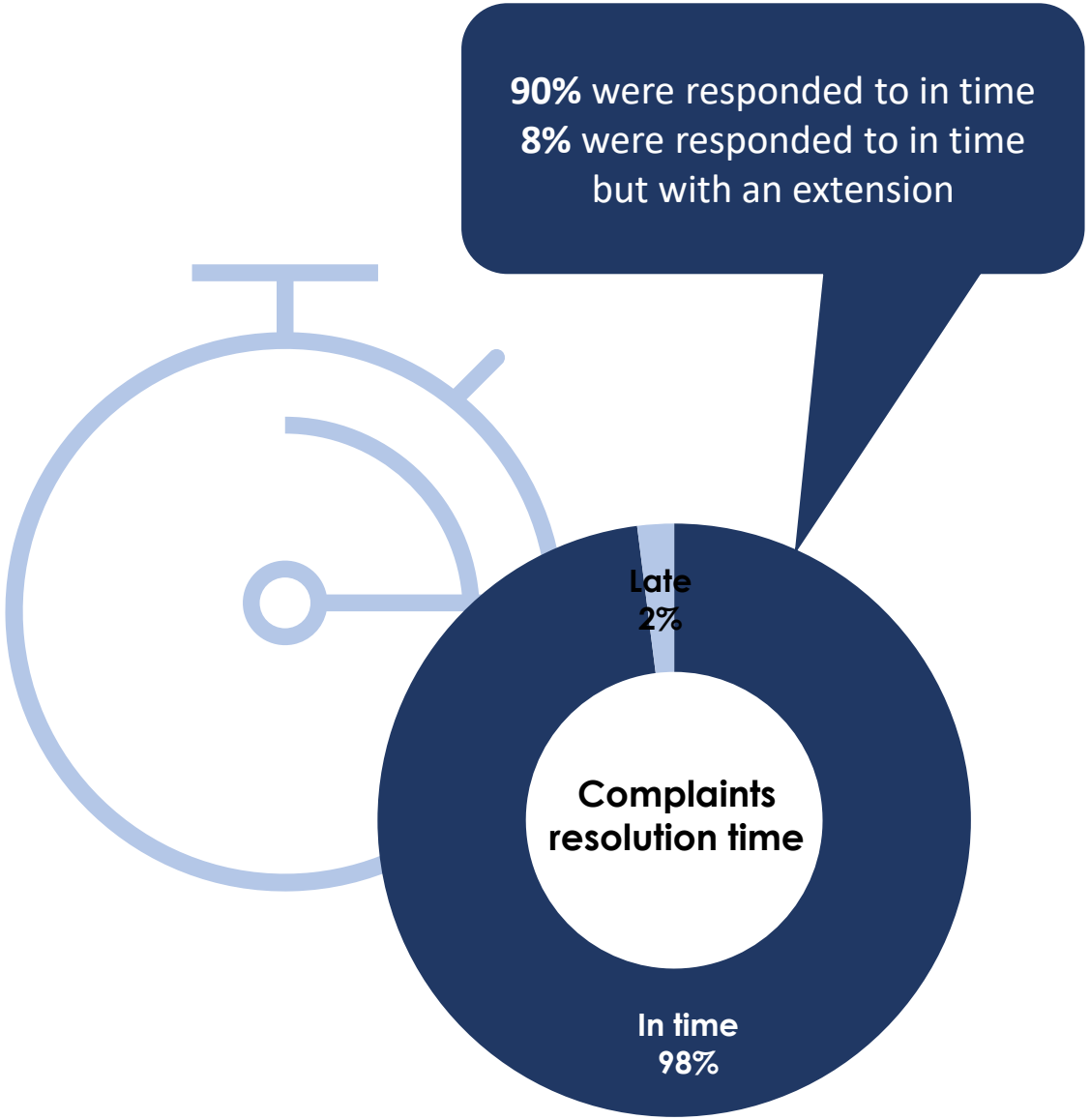
Responding to complaints

We promise to deliver a full response to complaints **within 10 working days at Stage 1**, and **within 20 working days at Stage 2**. For more complex investigations, we may need longer, and in these cases we will keep complainants notified of progress.

We also promise to acknowledge in writing all complaints within 3 working days of receiving the complaint.

Only complaints acknowledged and responded to within these timescales, or with a valid reason for extension, are counted as 'in time'.

71% of complaints on investigation were upheld, either fully or in part.



Complaints handling surveys

We have two sources of information on customer satisfaction with our handling of complaints:

- Satisfaction with complaint handling on our **TSM (Tenant Satisfaction Measures) survey**, amongst customers who state they have made a complaint in the last 12 months. Detailed analysis of responses at this question indicates most have not made a complaint about our services; in many cases the customer has instead 'complained' to us about a neighbour, local bin collections, etc. The *National Tenant Survey* findings have found the same pattern of response to the same question nationwide. The Regulator does not permit us to change the question wording for greater clarity. Our work to embed case management and to regularly review open contacts is designed to improve our response to customer enquiries, regardless of whether or not they are a complaint.

- Satisfaction with complaint handling on our **transactional survey**, which we carry out after the complaint is closed. In many cases we find that 'not satisfied' scores at this question often link back to the original cause of the complaint, not the handling of the complaint itself - for instance, the word cloud here shows the terms most often used by respondents asked to find three words to describe staff handling the complaint. However, the survey also identifies a small number of cases where actions promised in the complaint response are not monitored to completion; where we have not responded to further contact from the customer after a Stage 2 response where it was reasonable to do so; and where we could have made a more concerted effort to speak with the customer before issuing the written response. Such cases where an issue has been identified with complaint handling are included in monthly reporting on the survey findings sent to BVT's Executive team and main complaints points of contact. This is being proactively used to identify and reduce such cases. We also action all cases where the customer asks for recontact about the complaint during the survey, enabling service recovery where necessary.

How we report internally on complaints, complaints handling, and complaints learnings

All staff

The % of complaints resolved on time, for BVT overall and by directorate, is shared with all staff by the Chief Executive at the monthly staff brief, as are compliments.

Team meetings (all main customer-facing directorates i.e. Maintenance Services, Communities, Assets)

Complaints handling and learnings on the agenda for all such team meetings

Continuous Improvement Group (consisting of Head of Business Improvement and members of BVT's Executive team)

Meets monthly to discuss matters including complaints learnings and process

Executive Team

Monthly KPIs reported on complaints satisfaction and resolution times

Executive Team & Board

Quarterly KPIs reported on complaints satisfaction, resolution times, and complaints learnings

Learning and improving from our complaints, service requests, and feedback - examples

- **Contact management**: An important part of getting back to customers within the timescales outlined in our Customer Service Offer is contact management – ensuring that customer contacts and our responses to them are logged. This contact management data is now reported on at each monthly Staff Brief, ensuring visibility of how many contacts are raised for each team and how many are responded to within Customer Service Offer timescales. As a result of this focus, the proportion of customers in our TSM survey mentioning that we have failed to get back to them or to follow up on promises has fallen markedly.
- **Embedding the repairs policy and service standard** that was introduced in May 2025 to improve customer communication and experience. This includes a stronger focus on planners liaising with customers about appointments, including calling whenever changes occur; operatives calling ahead when they are on their way; and a new phone system that enables operatives to book follow-on jobs while still at the customer's home. These updates ensure customers are kept informed throughout the process.
- **Work with contractors**: Tighter controls on contractors carrying out work on behalf of our Maintenance Services team. Jobs are now reviewed for customer complexities before the decision is made to sub-contract, recognising that some customers require additional communication and reasonable adjustments. A new Planned Maintenance Manager is now in post to avoid unnecessary delays with sub-contracted jobs and ensure customers are kept up to date. Customer feedback and complaints forms an important part of our performance monitoring of contractors, and in response to such feedback we have stopped allocating kitchen and bathroom replacements to a particular contractor. As a result, all kitchen and bathroom replacements are currently completed in-house by our Maintenance Services team.
- **Resource in Estates & Stewardship**: In this period we received several complaints about a perceived lack of response to enquiries from the Estates & Stewardship team, and lack of enforcement against individuals on breaches. We now have additional administrative resource to help with tracking inspections and breaches.

Refused complaints

We refused to accept three complaints in this period (details below). In all these cases, we did all we could to provide support outside of our formal complaints process:

- A customer asked us for specific information about charges, asking for the request to be dealt with through our complaints process.
  - The complaint amounted to a request for information rather than an expression of dissatisfaction. We responded with the required information, whilst also notifying the customer that we would not process their request via our complaints process. We provided the customer with the Housing Ombudsman's details.
- An individual contacted us about dog mess in an area for which we were not responsible.
  - We passed the complaint to the body responsible.
- A customer contacted us about an issue that had already been dealt with at Stage 2 of our complaints process.
  - We reiterated the advice offered in our Stage 2 response; stated we would be happy to work with the customer's MP on this issue as we had done this in the past; and enclosed the Housing Ombudsman's details.

The Housing Ombudsman and our Self-assessment

Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code Self-assessment

Every year we publish our self-assessment of how we perform against criteria for complaints handling set out by the Housing Ombudsman. To view our 2026 self-assessment, click here.

Housing Ombudsman Material relating to BVT

In April 2025-March 2026, the Ombudsman made no adjudications on BVT casework. At time of writing, we have 8 open cases with the Ombudsman.

The Ombudsman publishes reports for individual landlords where 5 or more findings have been made in the 12-month period. A report for BVT relating to the April 2024-March 2025 period is available on https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/landlords/

To find out more about how to access the Ombudsman's services, click here:
https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/residents/

To view the Ombudsman's complaint handling code, click here:
https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/landlords-info/complaint-handling-code/

To search for any Ombudsman decisions relating to BVT, click here:
https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/decisions/