



Portus
Supported Housing

Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report

1st April 2025 – 31st March 2026

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1. Introduction

This report provides Portus Supported Housing's (PSH) annual summary of complaints performance and learning for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026, in line with the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) Complaint Handling Code (the Code). It fulfils the requirement for landlords to publish an annual complaint handling and service improvement report, together with a Board Statement confirming oversight and assurance. Both will be published on the PSH website and submitted to the Housing Ombudsman ahead of the 30 September 2026 deadline applicable to landlords with 1,000 or more homes.

In presenting this report, the Board is asked to: approve the self-assessment against the Code; note this report; and approve (or approve with amendments) the accompanying Governing Body Response.

This report should be read alongside PSH's separate self-assessment against the Code (confirming compliance with each individual provision) and PSH's Complaints Policy, both of which are also required as part of the annual submission and will be published and linked alongside this report.

This reporting year spans a significant organisational change. For the first eight months of the year, complaints were handled separately by the two legacy organisations, BeST and Westmoreland Supported Housing Limited (WSHL). Following the merger on 1 December 2025, complaints have been handled under a single, unified PSH process. This report brings together data from both legacy organisations and from PSH as the combined entity to provide a complete, reconciled full-year view, with subsidiary/legacy-organisation data clearly distinguished throughout.

As a smaller provider (832 customers pre-merger), WSHL's complaint volumes were correspondingly lower than BeST's, consistent with WSHL's own historic reporting. Its five complaints received between April and December 2025 are set out in detail at Section 3.4.

2. Executive Summary

Across the year, PSH (incorporating BeST and WSHL) received 106 complaints in total: 97 at Stage 1, seven at Stage 2, and two not accepted in line with policy due to absence of customer consent.

Complaint handling performance was strong throughout the year. BeST achieved 100% response within policy timescales in Q1 and Q2. WSHL responded within timescale in four of its five April-December complaints, with one case responded to outside timescale despite an agreed extension, reflecting the complexity of the investigation, which involved external legal advice and third-party liaison. Performance dipped slightly during the merger transition (Q3: 96%) before stabilising in Q4 (97%).



No Housing Ombudsman determinations or findings of non-compliance with the Code were issued at any point during the year, across either legacy organisation or PSH. PSH has not yet had a landlord performance report published by the Ombudsman, and no Spotlight reports or other Ombudsman publications relating specifically to PSH, BeST or WSHL were issued during the year.

Repairs and maintenance consistently represented the majority of complaints throughout the year across both legacy organisations, with communication failures, service delays and contractor performance the most persistent underlying themes. WSHL's complaints during April – December also included property condition, data protection, and a contested tenancy enforcement decision, broadening the picture slightly beyond repairs alone.

Compensation paid across the year totalled £4,638.40, reflecting proportionate, policy-compliant redress with no atypical or precedent-setting awards. No compensation was paid by WSHL during April – December.

3. Annual Complaint Performance

3.1. Headline performance – full year

Measure	Total
Total complaints received	106
Stage 1	97
Stage 2	7
Not accepted (no customer consent)	2
Housing Ombudsman involvement	None
Total compensation paid	£4,638.40

3.2. Breakdown by organisation and quarter

Period	Organisation	Total	Stage 1	Stage 2	% within timescale	Compensation
Q1 (Apr-Jun 25)	BeST	18	18	0	100%	£948.27
Q2 (Jul-Sep 25)	BeST	17	17	0	100%	£96.00
Apr-Dec 25	WSHL	5	5	0	80%	£0.00



Q3 (Oct-Dec 25)	BeST/WSHL/PSH	32	26	4	96%	£2,380.13
Q4 (Jan-Mar 26)	PSH	34	31	3	97%	£1,214.00
Year total		106	97	7	-	£4,638.40

Note: WSHL's two November 2025 complaints are captured within the Q3 total above, consistent with the Q3 Board Report. WSHL's April – December complaints are shown separately as they were not previously captured in any quarterly report.

3.3. Not accepted complaints

Two complaints during the year were not accepted, both within PSH's December 2025 volumes (Q3), due to the absence of customer consent. Both were correctly identified and recorded at triage stage in line with PSH's Complaints Policy, and customers were informed of the reason for non-acceptance and of alternative routes available to them (for example, providing consent, or a third-party obtaining authority to act on their behalf). No pattern or trend was identified in relation to not-accepted complaints during the year; this is not currently a recurring issue but will continue to be monitored as annual volumes grow.

3.4. Quarterly narrative

- Q1 (Apr-Jun 2025): 18 complaints, all handled by BeST. 100% responded to within policy timescales. 17 upheld, 1 not upheld.
- Q2 (Jul-Sep 2025): 17 complaints, all handled by BeST. 100% responded to within policy timescales. 13 upheld, 4 not upheld.
- Q3 (Oct-Dec 2025): 32 complaints across the merger transition – 10 BeST (Oct), 8 BeST/WSHL combined (Nov: 6 BeST, 2 WSHL), and 14 PSH (Dec, post-merger). 96% responded to within policy timescales; 23 upheld, 2 not upheld; 2 not accepted due to absence of customer consent.
- Q4 (Jan-Mar 2026): 34 complaints, all handled by PSH as the unified organisation. 97% responded to within policy timescales, with one complaint outside timescale due to case duplication at a single address (no detriment to outcome).

3.5. Westmoreland Supported Housing Limited (WSHL) complaints, April – December 2025

WSHL received five complaints between April and December 2025, prior to the merger, all handled at Stage 1. Four of the five were responded to within policy timescales; one was responded to outside timescale despite an agreed extension, reflecting the complexity of an investigation that required external legal advice and third-party liaison.



Of the five complaints, four were not upheld and one was partially upheld, with remedial action confirmed on the majority of points raised in that case and one point (relating to communal storage arrangements) not accepted, as no suitable alternative site was identified.

Complaints covered a range of issues consistent with a small provider's typical complaint profile: property condition and fire safety perception, data protection and third-party information sharing in connection with statutory compliance duties, a contested tenancy enforcement decision (handled with an appropriate multi-agency safeguarding approach), ongoing repairs and communication following prolonged disrepair, and communal cleanliness. No compensation was paid by WSHL during this period, consistent with the position reported for WSHL in Q3.

As with WSHL's own historic annual reporting, individual case detail (including addresses and complainant information) is retained on file and available to the Board and Housing Ombudsman on request, but it is not reproduced in this published report.

4. Complaint Themes and Trends

Across BeST and PSH, themes remained highly consistent throughout the year, reflecting structural, sector-wide operational pressures:

- Repairs and maintenance: the dominant category in every quarter.
- Delays in service delivery and timescales: the single most significant driver of dissatisfaction across the year.
- Communication failures: a persistent theme in every quarter.
- Contractor and third-party performance: a recurring dependency issue linked to extensions and delayed investigations.
- Tenancy management and services: a smaller but consistent secondary category (e.g., rent/service charge queries, adaptation requests, void works delays).

WSHL's April – December complaints reflect a slightly broader spread of themes than BeST's repairs-dominated pattern: property condition and fire safety perception, data protection and third-party information sharing, a contested tenancy enforcement/eviction decision, repairs/mould/communication, and communal cleanliness/hygiene. This is a small sample (five cases) so should be treated as indicative rather than a statistically robust trend.

From a supported housing perspective, no complaints during the year identified unmanaged safeguarding concerns. One WSHL case, while not upheld, involved a genuine safeguarding-related tenancy enforcement decision and was handled with an appropriate multi-agency approach. Another WSHL case highlights the importance of clearly explaining to customers and families, in advance, why third-party information is being sought under statutory compliance duties. One upheld Q3 case (PSH, damp and



mould arising from a leak) highlighted the importance of early assessment and escalation.

5. Regional Distribution

Complaints were spread across all operating regions throughout the year, with some quarterly fluctuation but no sustained concentration in any single region, scheme or provider. Notable patterns include increases in the North and Midlands in Q2, a shift towards Yorkshire and the Humber during the December merger period, and a further shift towards the Southeast in Q4. WSHL's April – December complaints were concentrated in the Southeast and Midlands, consistent with WSHL's operating footprint.

6. Complaints by Support Provider

BeST's data shows complaint volumes concentrated among a small number of higher-volume support providers, notably Eden Futures, Achieve Together, UBU and Voyage, broadly proportionate to the number of schemes each operates. Partnership meetings have been scheduled throughout 2026/27 with the highest-reporting providers to identify concerns early and improve service delivery collaboratively. WSHL's April – December complaints involved Allerton and Shine Partnerships as named support providers.

7. Compensation and Redress

Period	Compensation paid
Q1 (BeST)	£948.27
Q2 (BeST)	£96.00
Apr – Dec (WSHL)	£0.00
Q3 (BeST/WSHL/PSH)	£2,380.13
Q4 (PSH)	£1,214.00
Year total	£4,638.40

Compensation was consistently awarded for service failure, loss of room or facilities, distress/anxiety, accidental damage and missed appointments, in line with the Compensation Policy in place at the time. A revised, unified PSH Compensation Policy – standardising thresholds and ensuring consistency across all legacy areas – has been progressed through the year, in line with Housing Ombudsman guidance.



8. Ombudsman Performance Reporting

In line with the Code's requirement to report on Ombudsman findings and publications relating to the landlord:

- Findings of non-compliance with the Code: none were issued against BeST, WSHL or PSH during the year.
- Most recent annual landlord performance report from the Ombudsman: not applicable – the Ombudsman has not yet published a landlord performance report for PSH, BeST or WSHL.
- Other relevant Ombudsman publications (e.g., Spotlight reports): none issued specifically in relation to PSH, BeST or WSHL during the year. General sector-wide Ombudsman guidance on complaint handling and extensions has informed the learning and service improvement priorities set out in Section 10.

9. Compliance, Oversight and Risk Management

No Housing Ombudsman determinations, maladministration findings or formal regulatory challenge were recorded at any point during the year, across BeST, WSHL or PSH. Complaint handling remained within policy timescales for the substantial majority of cases throughout, with a short-term increase in Stage 1 extensions and response times during the merger transition (Q3), attributed to operational disruption and staff leave, which stabilised by Q4.

Prior to the merger, BeST staff completed internal training on the Complaint Handling Code and the Housing Ombudsman's eLearning course. Following the merger, PSH staff involved in complaints handling received an initial training session on policy, procedure and the Code, with further targeted training delivered through the year covering investigation techniques, evidence-based decision-making, dispute resolution, and clear response writing.

All complaints are logged and tracked via Podio throughout their lifecycle, providing oversight of case status, themes and potential Ombudsman escalation risk, with regular review to ensure records remain accurate and learning is captured.

10. Learning and Continuous Improvement

Key improvements delivered or progressed during the year include:

- Introduction of Plentific to improve oversight, tracking and scheduling of repairs and contractor performance, including providing wider contractor coverage in areas (such as those historically served by WSHL) where existing subcontractor networks were insufficient.



- Reduction of the outstanding complaints action backlog from 54 to 12 cases through dedicated working-group focus.
- Progress towards a single, unified PSH Compensation Policy aligned with Housing Ombudsman guidance.
- Structured staff training plan covering the Complaint Handling Code, investigation skills and complaint-handling culture.
- Preparation throughout the year for bringing the repairs service in-house under Portus Property Management (PPM), replacing the previous external contractor, Renov8.

Since the year end, from 1 April 2026, PSH has brought its repairs service in-house, with Portus Property Management (PPM) now directly managing repairs previously delivered by external contractor Renov8. While this falls just outside the 2025/26 reporting period, it represents one of the most significant service improvements arising from complaints learning during the year, directly addressing the repairs delays, contractor performance and communication failures that were the most persistent themes in complaints throughout 2025/26. Complaints relating to repairs handled under PPM will be reported on for the first time in next year's annual report.

Also from 1 April 2026, the post-merger organisational restructure has established a dedicated Customer Experience team, which gatekeeps and monitors all complaints to ensure ongoing adherence to the Code.

Priorities for 2026/27 include reducing reliance on Stage 1 extensions, closely monitoring repairs complaint volumes and themes as PPM beds in, and continuing to monitor consistency of complaint handling standards across all legacy areas.

11. Governing Body Response

In line with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code, the Board's response to this report is published as a separate, standalone document: the Governing Body Response to the Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2025/26. That document sets out the Board and Member Responsible for Complaints' (MRC) assurance that the self-assessment reflects PSH's actual complaint handling practice, progress made during the year, opportunities for improvement, and next steps, and is signed and dated separately by the Chair of the Board.

This report and the Governing Body Response should be read together, alongside PSH's self-assessment against the Code and the PSH Complaints Policy, as the complete set of documents required for the annual submission to the Housing Ombudsman.



12. Recommendations

Having considered this report and the accompanying Governing Body Response, the Board is asked to confirm the following:

- Note the self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code, originally submitted on 1 December 2025 on the day of merger, confirming PSH's compliance with each individual provision, for publication and submission to the Housing Ombudsman, together with this report, ahead of the 30 September 2026 deadline.
- Note this report, and take assurance that complaints across BeST, WSHL and PSH were managed effectively and consistently throughout 2025/26, including through the merger transition, with no Housing Ombudsman determinations or findings of non-compliance recorded during the year.
- Approve (or approve with amendments) the accompanying Governing Body Response, which sets out the Board and Member Responsible for Complaints' assurance that the self-assessment reflects PSH's actual complaint handling practice, together with progress made, opportunities for improvement, and next steps.
- Confirm that Board are in agreement that all of the above documents can be published on the Portus website and be submitted to the Housing Ombudsman

