



Response from Barnsley Council Member Responsible for Complaints, Cllr Wheat, Cabinet Spokesperson for Regeneration and Assets to:

Berneslai Homes Annual Complaint and Learning Report and Self-Assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Code (HOS) 2025/26

Barnsley Council has confidently delegated the handling of complaints about our social housing service to our ALMO, Berneslai Homes. But it is our responsibility as Landlord to make sure that Berneslai Homes does this in a way that is aligned to the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code and importantly to make sure that Berneslai Homes respectfully listens to those who are dissatisfied, considers individual needs, puts things right in a timely and reasonable manner and then learns from the complaints to deliver an improved service for tenants.

As BMBC's Cabinet Member Responsible for Complaints agreed that the updated Complaint Policy (developed by Berneslai Homes and published in August 2026) fully meets the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman Service Complaint Handling Code following a review in early 2026. We acknowledged the recommendations from the Housing Ombudsman Service and made some minor amendments to ensure the policy remains robust and up to date.

In terms of the draft Self-Assessment on the Complaint Handling Code, this has been undertaken by the Customer Services Manager and Berneslai Homes and concludes full compliance for the 2025/26 financial year whilst highlighting some additional improvements to enhance compliance further. Robust monitoring arrangements are in place to ensure both operational and governance oversight of complaint handling from both the Council and Berneslai Homes.

We supported their thorough self-assessment against the code which recognises the challenges they face in delivering against the code and their policy.

Having reviewed and scrutinised the self-assessment, I consider this to be a transparent and honest reflection of their performance, and acknowledge measures that Berneslai Homes are putting in place in respect of complaints and also wider services areas, including:

- Complaints specific:
 - Update of the Complaints Policy (published August 2026)
 - Staff training
 - Website updates

- Adequate capacity to deal with complaints
- Improving communication and transparency
- Wider ongoing service improvements:
 - In-depth training for Maintenance Surveyors
 - Review Improving Access Policy
 - Review Equipment and Adaptations Policy
 - Review Decant Policy and develop staff procedure
 - Review Warning Indicator Policy and develop Unreasonable Behaviour Policy
- Key priorities for 2026/27:
 - Review Reasonable Adjustments Policy
 - Review of Empty Home Garden clearance process
 - Knowing your Customers project
 - Mandatory ASB Risk Assessment Protocol
 - Damp and Mould Improvement Action Plan

In summary, on behalf of Barnsley Council, I fully endorse Berneslai Homes' Annual Complaint and Learning Report 2025/26 and their alignment with the HOS Complaint Handling Code.



Councillor Luke Wheat

Cabinet Spokesperson for Regeneration and Assets

Date: 28 September 2026



Response from Berneslai Homes Chair of Customer Services Committee acting as Complaint Champion to:

Berneslai Homes Annual Complaint and Learning Report and Self-Assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Code (HOS) 2026

I am pleased to respond to Berneslai Homes' 2026 Annual Self-Assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.

This is a robust and well evidenced self-assessment which shows continued improvement in our strong and positive complaint handling service.

Over the last year, along with the Annual Self-Assessment, Customer Services Committee has received detailed complaint handling reports which have given assurance that Berneslai Homes is fully compliant with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code, responds to complaints in time and actively reflects on the cause of complaints to identify and drive service improvements.

The focus for the complaint handling team in 2026/27 is to continue responding well to complaints, to reduce the proportion of complaints progressing to Stage 2 and improve the experience for residents making complaints.

As a committee, we have a responsibility to hear tenants and ensure Berneslai Homes implements the priority service improvements which have been identified from complaints.

Richard Fryer

Chair of Customer Services Committee