

# Voice of the customer report

October to  
December 2024



**Bromford.**

# What's in this report?

03

Four points  
of focus

04

Between October to  
December 2024

05

Feedback insight  
and themes

06

Customer  
comments

07

Communication

08

Customer support  
and assistance

09

Repairs

10

Homeowners: defects  
and service charges

11

My Place – High  
Rise Homes

12

Appendix 1



# Four points of focus

Our customer engagement plan, co-created with customers, uses four points of focus to ensure our engagement opportunities are flexible and varied for customers.

Feedback we collect across all engagement touch points are combined to create a single view to ensure the voice of the customer is loud and at the front of our strategic and operational priorities and our improvement plans.



## My home

### You and yours

Where the relationship with your neighbourhood coach supports you and your household to thrive.



## My place

### Local

Where you are part of your community, which makes a better place and helps everyone thrive.



## My society

### Future

Where you contribute to the local, regional and national conversation of housing.



## My Bromford

### Hold us to account

Where you monitor our performance and scrutinise our services and influence the improvement to services.

# Between October to December 2024



## My home

**9853**  
annual conversations held

**7256**  
Tenancy Satisfaction Measure (TSM) responses collected and analysed

**832**  
incoming customer complaints analysed



## My place

**2 drop-in sessions**  
to discuss high rise building safety

**2421 You Matter**  
feedback collected and analysed

**1 home ownership**  
virtual panel held



## My society

**Representation**  
from one of our customers on Housing Ombudsman Resident Panel



## My Bromford

**3 Local Influence Network**  
meetings held

**2 workshops**  
seeking customer input and co-creating solutions

**2 Customer and Community Influence Network**  
meetings held

**1 Voice of the Customer**  
session presented to leaders

**2 Customer Scrutiny**  
sessions

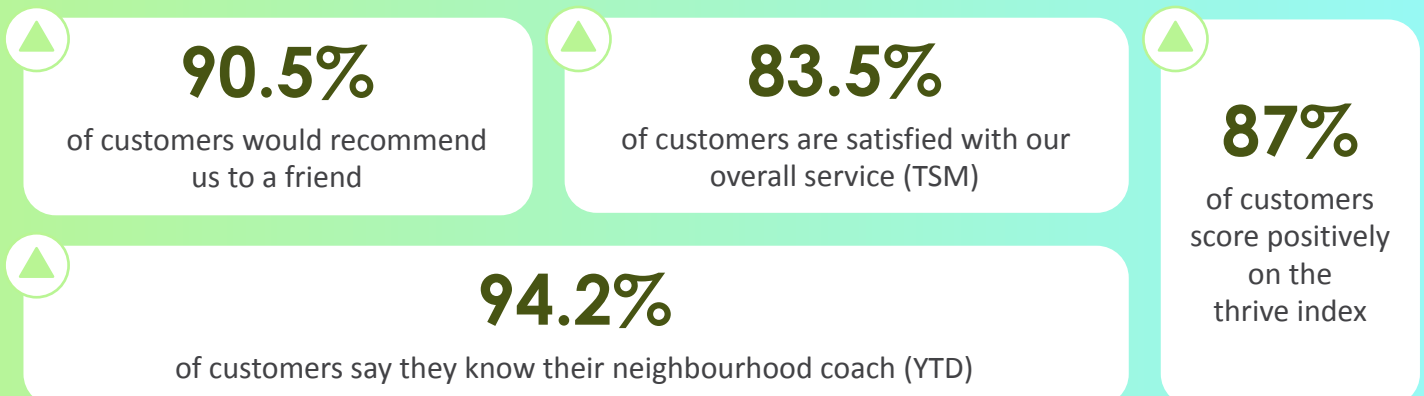


# Feedback insight and themes

Customer feedback is essential for improving our services, as it provides direct insight into what is working well and where we need to make changes. By listening to customer experiences, we can identify areas for improvement, enhance service quality, and ensure we meet the needs and expectations of those we serve. Regular feedback helps us to adapt, innovate, and deliver a better experience for everyone.

	Communication	Customer support and assistance	Repairs	Defects and service charges
Positive themes	69% of customers are feeling positive about their lives revealing that many customers are generally happy with their living situations and life	Fewer customers are chasing progress on repairs	When customers are happy with our services, they talk about the friendliness of our neighbourhood coaches and engineers, and the quality and promptness of our repairs team	
Negative themes	Keeping customers informed about repairs and complaints	Long wait times to speak to the customer service centre	Delays in completing repairs and resolving condensation damp and mould	<b>Homeowners:</b> Resolving defect issues after moving in and understanding the value from service charges

## How we're performing



# Customer comments

## Communication

It was a lovely person who I had spoken to, very kind and understanding.

This [repair] hasn't been done. An engineer turned up and I didn't know he was coming as I had no communication about this. I work 9-5 and don't want to take annual leave for an appointment.

## Customer support and assistance

I totally recommend the customer service; they always try their best to resolve things. The wait time is about 20 minutes, but the call back option is good.

It is very hard to get through and when I do it's hard to get the information I need.

## Repairs

He is always really professional; he did a good job. He is always polite, quick and also clean. If all engineers were as good as him there would be no problems.

The original appointment - a plumber was sent instead of a gas engineer. Happy it has been done. I had problems with the original engineer not turning up, it was stressful to get it done.

## Defects and service charges

I am very satisfied, please give it the top marks, all sorted now.

The communication is very poor with Bromford. They didn't sort out this defect I had to get a private engineer. I don't have any good feedback for Bromford. It is terrible.  
We need help.



### Key

Positive themes

Negative themes

# Communication



## Positive feedback

### Customers talk about:

- friendliness of our neighbourhood coaches and engineers
- when we do get it right, we provide clear communication and support

## Where we need to focus



### Customers tell us:

- they sometimes experience delays in completing repairs and poor communication regarding the status
- we are slow to responding and resolve complaints
- they regularly chase for an update or response

## What we're doing to make improvements



- we've invested in more colleagues and more training for complaints handling colleagues to ensure that customers receive a better service, including updating customers more regularly
- we've introduced a quality framework to ensure that the service we provide is consistent and in line with what customers expect of us
- we've launched our end-to-end repairs journey project which includes a focus on communication touch points

## How we're involving customers with making improvements



- customers have participated in our Voice of the Customer sessions with leaders who are responsible for service provisions
- customers are working with us to re-design our end-to-end repairs to ensure priority communication touch points are included
- a Bromford customer participated in the Housing Ombudsman Resident Panel (see appendix 1)

## How we're performing



**81%**

of stage 1 complaints responded to in line with complaints handling code timescales



**65%**

of stage 2 complaints responded to in line with complaints handling code timescales



**42.7%**

TSM satisfaction with complaints handling

# Customer support and assistance

## Where we need to focus



### Customers tell us:

- difficulty getting through to the customer services team and speaking to someone when they need to
- during the storm period at the end of November the wait times were very long

## What we're doing to make improvements



- we've been looking ahead to forecast weather events and peak periods to manage call volumes in our Customer Service Centre - sometimes, with the best will in the world, high and unexpected demand can lead to longer wait times - in the last month of this quarter, the average wait time was 6 minutes
- during periods of extreme weather, we receive higher volumes of calls - we updated our website and portal to ensure that non-emergency repairs are raised using the portal so that our customer services team can speak to customers with emergency repairs - we also have a call back service option for customers, rather than waiting in a queue
- we encourage customers to use web chat for non-emergency repair information
- we're reviewing our customer portal and have made incremental improvements which enables customers to view their online payments - we'll be involving our customers in the design of our future offer to ensure it is easy to use and meets their requirements
- we collaborated with customers to develop and publish 12 new service standards this quarter
- we continue to develop our self help guides for simple repairs which are the customers responsibility

## How we're involving customers with making improvements



- customers continue to help us develop service standards
- customers are working with us to consider how we make adjustments to a service with the introduction of a new vulnerability policy

## How we're performing



**76%**

of chase calls related to repairs and heating



**94%**

of your telephone calls were answered



**54.7%**

of colleagues say we deliver an excellent service for our customers



**89.9%**

of customers would recommend their experience with our customer service centre (an increase of 1.4% from Q2)



# Repairs

## Positive feedback



### Customers talk about:

- colleagues going 'above and beyond'
- the politeness of engineers, that they are clean and tidy and deliver good quality repairs

## What we're doing to make improvements



- we've launched our end-to-end repairs journey project in collaboration with customers
- we've increased the number of engineers available to complete repairs, focussing on fixing repairs the first time
- we've focussed on aged CDM cases which has involved a review of the use of external contractors used to speed up work. We've also identified our major works referral process needs improvement as it is sometimes the cause of delays
- we've created service standards and published them on our website so it's clear what customers can expect us

## Where we need to focus



### Customers tell us:

- we need to reduce the amount of repeat visits to resolve an issue
- we are not always clear what customers can expect from us
- we need to make improvements to the time to diagnose and resolve condensation damp and mould (CDM) - whilst improved, is still an issue for some customers

## How we're involving customers with making improvements



- customers are working with us to re-design our end-to-end repairs journey to ensure priority communication touch points are included
- customers supported us in the design and implementation of 12 clear service standards
- customers were involved in a full review of our policies; including repairs, contractor conduct and CDM

## How we're performing



**95.4%**

of customers would recommend their recent repairs experience



**77%**

of repairs were fixed the first time in December



**73.1%**

TSM satisfaction with repairs



**8164**

Repairs in progress (down by 3000 fewer than the same time last year)

# Homeowners: defects and service charges

## Positive feedback



### Customers talk about:

- a really fast process from application to move in
- the friendliness and helpfulness of our colleagues
- they are very happy in their new home

## What we're doing to make improvements



- contractor performance is being closely monitored and we are bringing our defects service in-house if service level agreements are not met
- contract performance will be a factor in deciding which house builders we work with in the future- when performance is poor, we will factor this into our selection process
- volume and age of defects are scrutinised monthly by the leadership teams to reduce the number of outstanding issues

## Where we need to focus



### Customers tell us:

- it takes too long to get defect issues resolved after moving in
- we should be more transparent about our charges and focus on the quality of delivery of the services charged for

## How we're involving customers with making improvements



- service charge customer scrutiny review is underway, and outcomes will be used to develop future improvement actions

## How we're performing



**67.3%**

Low-cost home ownership TSM: Bromford listens to and acts on my views (an increase of 1.4% from Q2)



**70.1%**

Low-cost home ownership TSM: overall satisfaction score (70.2% in Q2)



**4.7%**

of complaints were from home ownership customers



**77.6%**

of customers would recommend their experience of getting defect works completed (an increase of 2.3% from Q2)

# My Place – High Rise Homes

The safety of all our customers is important to us. For those customers living in our high rise customers, we meet with them every quarter with a focus on fire safety.

**Customer Engagement is a requirement of the Building Safety Act, and we engage with our customers as described in our Customer Engagement Building Safety Policy. This includes:**

- what information will be provided to residents
- what residents will be consulted on
- how residents' views will be sought
- how the effectiveness of the strategy will be measured

## Activities undertaken in the last 3 months

### North

#### David Garrick Gardens, Lichfield

- **fire safety communications:** Christmas focused fire risk communications relating to unattended cooking and demonstrating how to hang a door wreath without breaking the smoke seal
- **safety improvements:** a training exercise with Staffordshire Fire and Rescue involving five appliances, resulted in additional keys and lobby and bridgehead plans for Fire Service use being included in the secure information fireproof box



### South

#### Berkeley House, Staple Hill, Bristol

- **fire safety communications:** fire related safety messages included in chocolate gift sets
- **safety improvements:** customers were invited to learn about Christmas safety with a focus on annual checks of fire doors as customers return via the entrance foyer of the block



# Appendix 1

## The Housing Ombudsman Resident Panel: my experience

I joined the Residents Panel to learn more about the service and to add my voice, as a customer, to support Richard's belief that customers should be at the centre of its work, and to help shape its services.

The Panel meets regularly to receive updates on the work the Ombudsman team does, and members also participate in several other ways: providing evidence, taking part in surveys and polls, and providing feedback on our own experience. We also have access to the Resident Panel Hub which allows us to read reports, find complaints and determinations about all providers across England. A wealth of information is to be found on the Hub as well as ways to ask The Ombudsman questions.

At our recent meeting we discussed the findings of the latest Annual Review, 2023-2024. There was lots of data to absorb in the presentation, but it provides a good insight into trends related to complaints. This information helps us to understand what goes wrong and what is most important to social housing customers. The data also highlights the risks for housing providers – reputational, regulatory and financial. Unsurprisingly, the number of complaints, determinations and more worryingly, examples of severe maladministration from 3% the previous year to 7% last year are evident.

The top three causes of complaints are:

1. property condition; 2. complaint handling; 3. ASB. Looking at 'Maladministration Determination' rates by category, complaint handling and information and data management, jumped out for me. Respectively, these received high maladministration rates of 84% for complaint handling and 90% for information and data handling. If you have been involved as a customer assisting with complaints, this comes as no surprise. Nor indeed, do problems with information and data systems, some of which are not fit for purpose. Poor communication, an unwillingness to take customer concerns seriously, and lack of respect: all contribute to the escalation

of complaints and a rising tide of frustration from complainants.

In my view it is evident that much of this could be avoided if landlords stopped thinking so defensively and focused their efforts on delivering the best service possible. The customer is not the enemy.

I was also interested in the different statistics across the regions. London inevitably was top on every measure. The South-West compares quite poorly with areas further north. The demographics of complainants also intrigued me - apparently women are more likely to complain to the Ombudsman than men. Who knew?



The real gold is to be found when you unearth actual complaints submitted and the determinations reached. Frankly, some are so shocking. The large increase in the workload of the Ombudsman, requiring additional staff, suggests that there are still serious problems in the management of social housing by providers. The positive note I want to end on is the absolute commitment the Ombudsman Service has shown to customers in the sector and the advice to providers themselves who strive to improve, in the light of its findings.

# Bromford.

 [bromford.co.uk](https://bromford.co.uk)  
 0330 1234 034  
 Find us on social