Annual complaints performance and service improvement report Financial year 2024 - 2025

A review of complaints at the Marylebone Project 2024-2025

During 2024 to 2025 we received 27 complaints from 24 residents living in the Marylebone Project owned by Church Army Portman House Trust.

- **7** complaints related to our repairs and maintenance service.
- **8** complaints related to how we dealt with anti-social behaviour issues.
- **7** complaints related to how our staff engaged/responded to residents.
- **2** complaints related to theft of post.
- **2** complaints related to stalking.
- **1** complaint related to lack of knowledge of Receptionist.

In 1 of the cases, the complainant was not satisfied with Church Army's reply at Stage 1 of the Complaints Policy, and they asked for their complaint to be escalated to Stage 2.
The outcome at Stage 2 was that the outcome made at stage 1 was upheld.

None of our complaints were referred to or investigated by the Housing Ombudsman Service in 2024/2025.

Learning from complaints to improve services

Issue	Learning point
A third of the complaints were about our repairs and maintenance service. In some cases, our internal Handyman did not address the reported repairs in a timely manner, in some cases there was a delay whilst external contractors were awaited and in some cases the repairs were related the cyclical maintenance programme across the Marylebone Project.	We realise that not knowing what is going on has a big impact on residents, so we have implemented a structured timed response for repairs and maintenance issues reported. Residents have been informed of this structured timed response, and we have increased communication with residents regarding repairs and maintenance that they report. We have also added a section on repairs and maintenance to monthly residents' floor meetings so that regular updates can be given.
A third of the complaints were about anti-social behaviour and a third were about how the residents feel that they have been treated/responded to by staff. Most of these have been as a	We realise the difficulty in engaging with residents when they are in a heightened state of stress and are agitated when they are desperate to use facilities that are not immediately

result of the residents being challenged for their behaviour towards each other and in our rough sleeping drop-in service and the need for them to be patient whilst waiting for resources/services to become available in the shared environment. All staff have had training as part of the weekly staff meetings in responding to residents in a trauma informed and psychologically informed way.	available. We have implemented training for all staff as part of the weekly staff meetings with an emphasis on our response being trauma informed and psychologically informed. We have also encouraged staff to share their experiences for peer support and guidance and also use the reflective practice in place.
Two complaints were related to our residents alleging that they were being stalked. Both these residents were referred to specialist stalking support services and the police	We have learnt that stalking is a specialist area that requires specialist and collaborative support. As such, we have strengthened our partnership with the external stalking support agency to ensure that referrals can be made, and accepted, as soon as possible. Similarly, we have strengthened our partnership with the police so that all three agencies work together, and collaboratively, for the benefit of the resident.
One complaint was related to the Receptionist lacking in knowledge and not being able to offer advice. The Receptionist has received further training and the generic information book held at reception has been updated.	We have learnt that the Receptionist is the first point of contact for a variety of requests and is expected to have a level of knowledge to respond to such requests. It is impossible for one person to know/remember everything, so we have ensured that the generic information book held at reception is up to date.

Conclusions:
The complaints we received covered a range of issues, but the common themes of dissatisfaction which we will attempt to resolve are:

- Not keeping residents up to date
- Not engaging/responding to residents in an appropriate manner

We have strengthened our communication methods and built in additional ways/forums for communication to be improved. Our feedback policy enables feedback to be made via verbal means of speaking to a member of staff, telephoning and/or texting, via written means of completing a feedback form and depositing this in the collecting boxes across the Project and via email to feedback@maryleboneproject.org.uk.

We have improved our ability to respond more appropriately to residents via increased staff training in trauma informed and psychologically informed training. We have also implemented systems whereby any agency staff needed to cover sick absence and annual leave, are workers who have worked for the Project previously and are aware of the standards of behaviour expected the most appropriate way to engage with a client group with complex needs and who have suffered multiple disadvantage.

Marylebone Project Board's (governing body) response to the annual complaints' performance and service improvement report

As this is the first time that this report has been requested, the Marylebone Project Board was informed of this request and the information needing to be submitted at their meeting on 15th September 2025. The Board were informed of:

- the 2024/2025 annual complaints performance and service improvement report for residents living in homes owned and managed by Church Army.
- The need to update the complaints policy for residents living in homes owned and managed by Church Army to meet the requirements of the new Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code 2024.
- A self-assessment against the new Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code 2024.

At the Marylebone Project Board meeting on 17th November 2025, the Marylebone Project Board were updated that the information requested by the Housing Ombudsman had not been completed due to a long-term absence and that an extension was requested and approved.

The need for a Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC) who will provide additional assurance to the Marylebone Project Board on the effectiveness of Marylebone Project's complaints system. The MRC and the Marylebone Project Board will, going forward, consider and approve the self-assessment that Charity complies with all aspects of the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code 2024.

The full annual complaints performance and service improvement report will be presented to, and discussed at, the next Marylebone Project Board meeting on 16th February 2026.

Thereafter, the full annual complaints performance and service improvement report will be presented to, and discussed at, the next Marylebone Project Board meeting following the closing date of the reporting period.

Throughout the coming year(s) the Marylebone Project Board will challenge the data and information provided to the Marylebone Project Board. The Marylebone Project's Board agreed to adopt the Housing Ombudsman's definition of a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction. This will give the Marylebone Project Board assurance that Church Army is recording an accurate volume of complaints, as the Marylebone Project Board will not believe that a low volume of complaints would be a positive sign. A new complaints management system is, therefore, being put in place from 2024/2025 and this will provide the Marylebone Project Board with additional assurance on the accuracy of data on complaint handling.

One of Church Army's values is 'we learn.' As a small provider owning and managing 112 bed spaces, the Marylebone Project Board will consider a summary of each complaint and the lessons learned from individual complaints. Given our size, Church Army will not have enough complaints to learn from trends, but our learning from individual complaints will show that communication is a key factor across complaints. Training, expectations, and systems have all been improved during 2024/2025. The Board will monitor the feedback on communication through the individual complaints reported to the Marylebone Board during 2025/2026.