Governing Body Response to Complaints 2024 - 2025

Introduction

This statement outlines the Marylebone Project's Board (governing body's), owned by Church Army Portman House Trust, response to the complaint handling performance for the reporting year 2024-2025. It summarises our oversight, key findings, assurances, and planned improvements in line with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.

We recognise the importance of listening to residents, learning from complaints, and ensuring our practices meet the expectations of the Housing Ombudsman. This response sets out how the governing body has exercised its duties during the reporting period and how it will continue to do so going forward.

Oversight of complaint handling

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.

Review of annual complaint data

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

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.

All complaints were responded to within the complaints policy timeframes and service improvement measures implemented as a result.

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.

Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code

Although a full self-assessment of compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code has not been undertaken as this is the first time that this report has been requested, in September 2025, the Marylebone Project Board was informed of this request and agreed for the following information to be progressed:

- 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.

A full self-assessment of compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code will be undertaken at the next Marylebone Project Board meeting on 16th February 2026.

Learning and service improvement

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 Marylebone Project Board will monitor the feedback on

communication through the individual complaints reported to the Marylebone Board during 2025/2026.

The most common complaint themes this year were repairs delays and anti-social behaviour. Service improvement plans have included

- structured timed response for repairs and maintenance issues reported.
- Increased communication with residents regarding repairs and maintenance that they report.
- Repairs and maintenance added to monthly residents' floor meetings agendas.
- Training for all staff as part of the weekly staff meetings with an emphasis on responding via trauma-informed and psychologically informed practices.
- Staff opportunities to share experiences for peer support and guidance to use the reflective practice in place.

This service improvement plan will be discussed at the next Marylebone Project Board meeting on 16th February 2026 for the Marylebone Project to endorse.

Governing Body Assurance

The Marylebone Project Board will assure itself that complaints are handled fairly, transparently, and in accordance with policy by discussing this at the next Marylebone Project Board meeting on 16th February 2026.

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.

Actions for the year ahead

- The Marylebone Project Board will appoint a Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC).
- The MRC and the Marylebone Project Board will, going forward, consider and approve the self-assessment that complies with all aspects of the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code 2024.

- The Marylebone Project Board will discuss, and endorse, the current service improvement plan.
- Actions from the service improvement plan will be implemented and embedded.
- Complaint data will continue to be collated, assessed and reviewed and any identified trends analysed for ongoing service improvement.

Governing Body statement of Commitment

The Board remains committed to ensuring that complaints are handled with fairness, empathy, and transparency. Listening to residents and acting on feedback is central to our mission. We will continue to oversee improvements closely and ensure that learning from complaints drives positive change across the Marylebone Project.

Sign off

Signed: Sue Way, Representative of Marylebone Project Board

Date: 9 December 2025