

# ANNUAL COMPLAINTS STATEMENT

SEPTEMBER 2024

As a member of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme, we comply with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. Following the Social Housing (Regulation) Act, the Code became statutory on 1 April 2024. There is now a legal duty placed on the Ombudsman to monitor compliance with the Code regardless of whether they receive complaints. The new Code states, in the following sections:

8.1 – 'Landlords must produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge'.

8.2 – 'The annual complaints performance and service improvement report must be reported to the landlord's governing body (or equivalent) and published on the section of its website relating to complaints. The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside this'.

9.5 – 'In addition to this, a member of the governing body (or equivalent) must be appointed to have lead responsibility for complaints to support a positive complaint handling culture. This person is referred to as the Member Responsible for Complaints (the MRC)'.

The Ombudsman's guidance on the governing body's response states: 'The response should set out how the MRC has scrutinised and challenged the self-assessment and how any risks identified as part of the review have been addressed. Landlords should also include any lessons learned through the self-assessment process and actions taken as a result. The response can also highlight areas of achievement and any challenges that the landlord has faced during the reporting year'.

At Brighter Futures, we will continue to make further improvements to how we handle complaints and learn from them. We have a clear Improvement Plan that the Board will monitor progress against, working in partnership with Officers. Planned improvements include continuing to monitor completion of the actions recorded on lessons learned, to ensure implementation, and ensuring that all relevant colleagues have a standard objective each year in relation to complaint handling.

Finally, we confirm that Brighter Futures is very committed to continuously improving what we do, and we welcome open and honest feedback from our customers to help us do this, whether it be positive or constructive. We are confident that we will continue to improve further in the handling of complaints over the coming year.