

What it means to be an MRC

What does good look like?

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Introduction



- Chief Executive at Wirral Methodist Housing Association
- Board member and Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC) at Bespoke Supportive Tenancies (BeST)
- BeST is a specialised supported housing provider, managing 1,381 homes across England and Wales. Legacy of requirement to improve regulatory compliance

Focus of today:

- What the MRC role means in practice
- How BeST has improved complaints handling
- What “good” looks like, lessons and challenges

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What does it mean to be an MRC?

- Provides independent assurance, not involved in day-to-day handling
- Ensures landlord is compliant with the Code requirements
- Focuses on themes, trends, and risks, not usually individual cases, unless case studies – although recognise this can be done
- Champions a positive complaints culture across the organisation, including at Board
- Uses complaints as insight for learning and improvement, not just redress
- Oversees data, challenges anomalies, and ensures learning drives service improvements

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How does MRC mean at BEST?

- Elevates complaints from operational → strategic level
- Ensures complaints are part of strategic planning and risk
- Ensures complaints are part of our improvement plans
- Quarterly board reports & reviews of complaints data, outcomes and trends
- Meets with complaints lead to probe systemic issues
- Drives accountability: teams must evidence learning
- Tone from the top: complaints = opportunities

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Influencing the organisations approach



- Raised the profile of complaints as strategic feedback
- Challenged data and reporting, asking “what’s behind the numbers?”
- Pressed for stronger link between complaints and service improvement plans
- Promoted cross-team learning and staff training
- Ensuring BeST learns from Ombudsman guidance and sector reports
- New complaints system launched (July 2024)
- Reasonable adjustments built into process
- Named case handlers improving tenant experience

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BeST complaints performance overview



1st April 24 – 31st March 25:

- 101 complaints received; 93 stage one, 8 stage 2(+29% from previous year)
- 90% responded to on time (up from 14% in 2023/24)
- 89% of complaints were related to repairs and maintenance
- Common themes: delays in service delivery, failure to complete works, poor communication, lack of updates, service quality inconsistent
- Tenant satisfaction with complaints handling increased by 11%

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Examples of learning in practice

Repairs complaints

Themes: delays, repeat visits, poor communication

Actions:

- New contractors appointed
- Stronger performance standards set
- Plentiful repairs system rolling out (2025/26)
- Plan to bring service fully in-house by April 2026

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What does 'good' look like?

- Complaints seen as a learning tool, not a burden
- Tenants feel heard, respected, and informed
- Complaints resolved fairly and on time
- Clear evidence of learning → service improvements
- Data and trends drive service improvements
- Transparency with tenants and regulators
- Ombudsman Code and MRC role embedded in governance and culture

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What does success look like for an MRC?



- Board confident complaints are handled well and compliant with the Code
- Learning leads to visible change for tenants
- Learning leads to performance improvements
- **Culture shift**, staff and contractors view complaints as feedback and an opportunity to learn and improve services for tenants

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Embedding a positive complaints culture



- Complaints openly discussed at Board level as well as operational
- Opportunity to do something better and not playing the blame game.
- Staff training and Ombudsman eLearning uptake (83%+ at BeST)
- “You said... We did” feedback to tenants
- Named case handlers improving tenant experience
- Emphasis on being fair, putting things right and learning from outcomes.
- Being open and transparent

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Ensuring complaints data drive improvement

- Ask probing questions about **themes, root causes, repeat issues**
- Demand clear actions linked to complaints data
- Track whether actions reduce repeat complaints or improve performance
- Benchmark against peers and Ombudsman Spotlight reports
- Close the loop: feedback to tenants on changes made

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Challenges and reflections

- **Staying strategic, not operational**
- Data fragmentation and resource limits
- Cultural resistance, complaints seen as “bad” news
- Significant period of organisational change – responsibilities and priorities
- Sustaining momentum when issues persist
- Overcome by investing in systems, training, and MRC challenge

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Thank you



CHP

COMMUNITY
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ABOUT US



We are a group of community housing associations in the North of England. We collaborate so that our members can benefit from our collective capability, while individually maintaining our own diverse identities, staying close to the residents we serve, and remaining true to our roots. We will work together to advocate for smaller housing associations, and champion the approaches we think make us great landlords.

OUR VISION

Our vision is to create a dynamic and flourishing community housing sector, which puts customers and communities at the heart of everything we do.

We do this in a range of ways by:

- Collaborating to maximise our collective capability, helping our members to focus on making a difference for their residents.
- Ensuring we continue to provide an open, trusting and supportive environment for our members to share information, learn from one another, and stay up to date with changes in the sector.
- Advocating for our members and the community housing sector as a whole in promoting the benefits of our work and the outcomes we achieve.



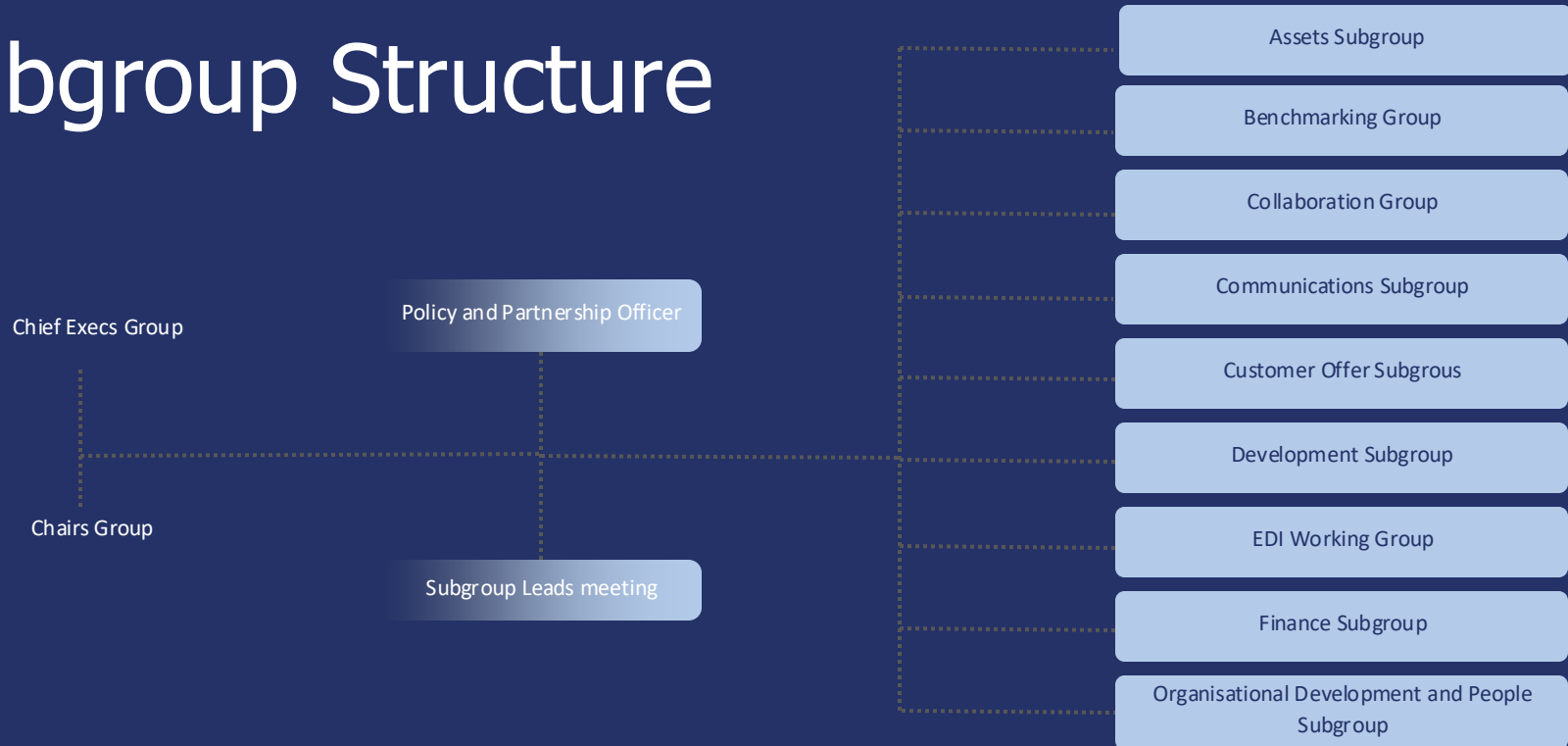
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Shared Policy resource



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Subgroup Structure



Complaints Collaboration



Some Challenges for HOS



- Discussions with NHF
- Drive for compensation?
- Some level of detail obscuring outcomes?
- There are some significant resources in the MRC role – this works both ways

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Closing



- Complaints are a gift for improvement
- The MRC role ensures fairness, accountability, and learning
- 'Good' = fairness, transparency, and real change for tenants

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Discussion Topics



- Roundtable Discussions

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