# Brighton and Hove second highest for garden complaints despite council criticism



Recent findings from a study conducted by Airtasker have revealed that Brighton and Hove stands at the forefront of garden-related complaints in the UK, ranking second only to London. The analysis, which entailed submitting Freedom of Information requests to local authorities nationwide, indicated that Brighton and Hove received 452 complaints about gardens over a twelve-month period. This figure surpasses complaints from larger cities, including Liverpool and Manchester, which had 341 and 312 complaints respectively.

The complaints in Brighton have largely centred on issues such as overhanging trees and bushes, overgrown gardens, unruly hedges, and rubbish accumulation. Notably, of all the UK postcodes, BN2 emerged as the most problematic, with a striking 222 complaints logged within the same timeframe. Close behind, BN1 recorded 196 complaints. This ranking highlights an urban challenge that resonates with many residents, reflecting not only individual grievances but a broader concern about the state of local environments.

In response to the garden disputes, Brighton and Hove City Council has provided guidelines for residents wanting to lodge complaints about high hedges. The council stipulates that affected property owners or occupiers must formally submit complaints, although tenants also have the option to alert the council as long as their landlords or management companies are informed. Furthermore, the council has clarified its limitations in addressing complaints that do not pertain solely to height, indicating a stringent focus on specific hedge issues rather than general disputes involving garden aesthetics or upkeep.

However, the council's handling of environmental issues has drawn scrutiny beyond garden complaints. A recent report revealed that it has faced criticism for its overall effectiveness in managing tenant complaints, particularly regarding private landlords. An analysis from the union Acorn highlighted that only 14 out of nearly 10,000 tenant assistance requests were escalated to court over a decade, suggesting a lack of urgency in addressing serious housing issues. Acorn labelled this rate as 'shockingly low' and has called for a more rigorous approach towards ensuring landlords are held accountable.

The complexities of local governance are further illuminated by past incidents, such as that of 87-year-old Olive Taylor, who in 2012 was ordered by the county court to clear her garden of waste. Despite her facing significant obstacles due to her blindness, the court deemed it necessary to intervene after receiving multiple complaints. Such cases exemplify the challenges councils face in balancing enforcement with support, particularly for vulnerable residents.

Brighton and Hove City Council aims to address such grievances through a dedicated contact page where residents can submit inquiries and complaints, including those pertaining to garden disputes. However, the council has been marked by criticisms over its response times to Freedom of Information requests, with reports suggesting it has failed to meet stipulated targets. In August 2023, the Information Commissioner’s Office issued a notice indicating that the council had breached the statutory timeframe for responding to requests, calling for improvements in transparency and accountability.

As the city grapples with these issues, the weight of local discontent regarding garden maintenance and environmental upkeep serves as a microcosm of broader tenant and community concerns. Addressing these problems effectively may require not only improved local policies but also a deeper commitment to enhancing communication and responsiveness between the council and its constituents.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/25193871.brighton-hove-postcode-garden-complaints-uk/?ref=rss), [[2]](https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/23483265.brighton-council-slammed-acorn-private-tenant-complaint-record/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/25193871.brighton-hove-postcode-garden-complaints-uk/?ref=rss), [[3]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-sussex-17373147)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/23483265.brighton-council-slammed-acorn-private-tenant-complaint-record/), [[6]](https://www.brightonandhovenews.org/2021/09/29/council-has-never-met-freedom-of-information-targets-report-reveals/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/25193871.brighton-hove-postcode-garden-complaints-uk/?ref=rss), [[3]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-sussex-17373147), [[7]](https://ico.org.uk/action-weve-taken/decision-notices/2023/08/ic-250794-c7m9/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/25193871.brighton-hove-postcode-garden-complaints-uk/?ref=rss), [[4]](https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/contact-us), [[6]](https://www.brightonandhovenews.org/2021/09/29/council-has-never-met-freedom-of-information-targets-report-reveals/)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/25193871.brighton-hove-postcode-garden-complaints-uk/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/23483265.brighton-council-slammed-acorn-private-tenant-complaint-record/> - Acorn, a union representing private renters, criticised Brighton and Hove City Council for its handling of tenant complaints. An analysis of nearly 10,000 requests for assistance over ten years revealed that only 14 cases were escalated to court, representing a mere 0.15% escalation rate. Acorn described this as 'shockingly low' and called for a 'zero tolerance' policy towards rogue landlords. The council responded by stating that 97% of issues were resolved without formal action, emphasising informal resolutions over legal proceedings.
3. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-sussex-17373147> - In 2012, 87-year-old Olive Taylor from Brighton was ordered by the county court to clear 4ft high piles of rubbish from her garden by 10 April. The council had received complaints from neighbours about the state of her property. Despite being registered as blind, Miss Taylor claimed she had not been directly informed of the complaints. The council stated that it had made every effort to assist her in maintaining her garden but had to resort to legal action due to the accumulation of waste.
4. <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/contact-us> - Brighton and Hove City Council provides a dedicated contact page for residents to submit inquiries, including those under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The council aims to respond to such requests within 20 working days. Residents can submit their requests online, by email, or by post. The contact details include an email address, physical address, and phone number. The council also offers information on their disclosure log, which holds information released under FOI requests made from March 2018 onwards.
5. <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/brighton-hove-city-council-plan-2020-2023/make-freedom-information> - Brighton and Hove City Council offers a Freedom of Information (FOI) request service, allowing residents to request information under the FOI Act 2000 or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. Requests can be submitted via an online form, email, or post. The council provides a disclosure log for information released under FOI requests from March 2018 onwards. They also offer guidance on types of information exempt from disclosure and encourage residents to check the disclosure log before submitting a request.
6. <https://www.brightonandhovenews.org/2021/09/29/council-has-never-met-freedom-of-information-targets-report-reveals/> - A report revealed that Brighton and Hove City Council has consistently failed to meet its targets for responding to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests. The report highlighted delays in providing information, with some requests remaining unanswered for extended periods. The council's handling of FOI requests was described as 'amateur' and 'dysfunctional,' leading to criticism from residents and calls for improved transparency and efficiency in the council's processes.
7. <https://ico.org.uk/action-weve-taken/decision-notices/2023/08/ic-250794-c7m9/> - The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) issued a decision notice in August 2023, stating that Brighton and Hove City Council breached section 10(1) of the Freedom of Information Act by failing to provide a response within 20 working days. The council had received a request for information but did not comply with the statutory timeframe. The ICO's decision underscores the importance of timely responses to FOI requests by public authorities.