



Customer Newsletter



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Shropshire Towns and Rural Housing



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Allowing access for repairs in your home

It's important to remember that giving us access to your home for repairs and routine servicing is a legal requirement in your tenancy agreement. This ensures we can keep your home safe and well-maintained.



Read more on page 2

A snapshot of our achievements



Read more on page 2

Get Involved:

Make a Difference in Your Community



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It's important to remember that giving us access to your home for repairs and routine servicing is a legal requirement in your tenancy agreement. This ensures we can keep your home safe and well-maintained.

How It Works

Scheduled Repairs: We, or our contractors, will need to access your home to assess and carry out necessary repairs. You will always receive at least 24 hours' notice unless it's an emergency.

Emergency Access: In the case of an emergency, such as a burst pipe causing water damage, we may need to enter your home immediately if we can't reach you. This is to prevent further damage and ensure safety.

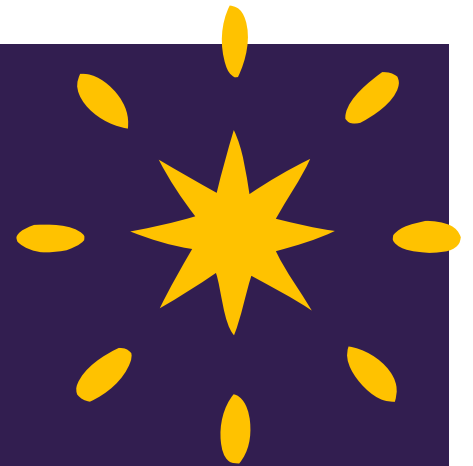
If you have any questions or concerns about allowing access, please get in touch with us. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation!



Annual Report 2024: A Snapshot of Our Achievements

We hope you enjoyed reading the 2024 Annual Report! Last year was full of progress and achievements, and we're excited to share some of the highlights with you.

You should have received a copy of the report via email. If we don't have your email, a printed copy should have arrived at your address.



82%
satisfaction
with recent
repairs service

88%
satisfaction
that your
home is safe

91
new homes
built and
delivered

£10k
invested in
community
projects

89%
customers agreed
we treat them fairly
and with respect



To watch our highlight video, scan the QR code.
For more details, you can also visit our website.

Tackling the Repairs Backlog

In our 2024 Annual Report, we highlighted our efforts to reduce the repairs backlog, a key priority for our customers. This year, we focused on addressing outstanding issues quickly and efficiently, ensuring our homes meet the highest standards.



Keep Your Boiler in check for a warm and efficient Home

With the cold months upon us, it's crucial to ensure your boiler is in top condition. Regular boiler checks are not just about preventing breakdowns, they are essential for maintaining efficiency, safety, and keeping your energy bills down.

Why Regular Boiler Checks Matter

- ✓ **Safety First:** Regular inspections can detect potential issues like gas leaks or carbon monoxide emissions, which are hazardous to your health.
- ✓ **Efficiency:** A well-maintained boiler runs more efficiently, using less energy to heat your home. This means lower gas bills and a reduced carbon footprint.
- ✓ **Longevity:** Routine maintenance helps extend the lifespan of your boiler, reducing the need for replacements.

Access for Repairs: To keep your boiler in peak condition, it's vital to allow our repair service access to perform these essential checks. Our skilled technicians need to inspect and service your boiler to ensure it operates safely and efficiently.

Cost Savings: By keeping your boiler well-maintained, you can avoid unexpected breakdowns and ensure it runs efficiently. This not only keeps your home warm but also helps in reducing your gas bills.

We aim to conduct boiler checks every 10 months and will contact you to book this in. Allowing access for this maintenance helps keep your boiler running smoothly and your home comfortable and warm in winter.

How to Make a Complaint

At STAR Housing, we are dedicated to providing you with an excellent service. Your feedback is crucial in helping us understand how we can improve our services across the organisation. If you have any concerns or are dissatisfied with the service you received from us, please don't hesitate to reach out. We want to make things right and ensure that you are satisfied with our service.

Complete our **contact us form** on our website
Call **0333 32 12 200**
Email **complaints@starhousing.org.uk**

Speak to a member of **staff directly**
Send us a **message via social media**

Not sure what a complaint means? It's simply an expression of dissatisfaction about the service provided by us. This includes any issues with our staff, actions, or lack of action that have affected you or a group of customers. We take your complaints seriously and want to work with you towards a resolution.

To read our updated Complaint Handling Policy, please visit our website or scan the QR code. Your feedback helps us improve and provide better services for everyone. Thank you for helping us make STAR Housing better!



Our new Corporate Plan and Strategies

Earlier this year, we launched our brand-new Corporate Plan for 2024-2027, along with eight key strategies to help us improve our services and support the communities we serve. Here's a quick look at our priorities:

- 1. Customer Engagement**
We're committed to listening to your feedback and making sure you're happy with our services.
- 2. Homes and Asset Management**
We're dedicated to keeping our homes safe, comfortable and well-maintained.
- 3. Development and Investment**
We're building new homes and improving neighborhoods to create better places to live.
- 4. IT and Business Transformation**
We're upgrading our systems to make things more efficient and user-friendly.
- 5. People**
We're supporting our staff so they can deliver their best work for you.
- 6. Finance, Governance, and Risk**
We're ensuring transparency and fairness in everything we do.
- 7. Neighbourhood and Community**
We're investing in local communities to help them grow and thrive.
- 8. Customer Care**
We're focused on providing excellent customer service and ensuring your needs are met.

Our Corporate Plan is all about building vibrant, sustainable communities. We're committed to providing safe, secure homes where people can live happier, healthier and more fulfilling lives. Want to learn more? Scan the QR code for full details on our Corporate Plan and strategies.



Condensation, Mould, and Damp: What You Need to Know

We understand how important it is to keep your home safe and comfortable. Condensation, mould, and damp can be common issues, especially during the colder months. Here's what you need to know about these problems and how we're addressing them.

What Causes Condensation, Mould, and Damp?

Condensation occurs when warm, moist air meets a cold surface, like windows or walls. This can lead to water droplets forming and, if not managed, can cause mould growth.

Mould thrives in damp, humid conditions. It can appear as black, green, or white patches and can be harmful to your health.

Damp can be caused by leaks, rising damp from the ground, or poor ventilation. It can damage your home and lead to mould growth.

How We're Tackling These Issues

We're currently working with a group of customers to improve how we deal with damp and mould. This collaboration aims to ensure our policies and procedures meet your needs and keep your homes safe. We will publicise the outcomes of this work to keep you informed. This has been a key focus for us over the past two years, and we have already implemented several measures to address these issues.

Tips to Prevent Condensation, Mould, and Damp

Ventilate your home

Open windows or use extractor fans to reduce moisture.



Heat your home

Keeping your home at a consistent temperature can help prevent condensation.



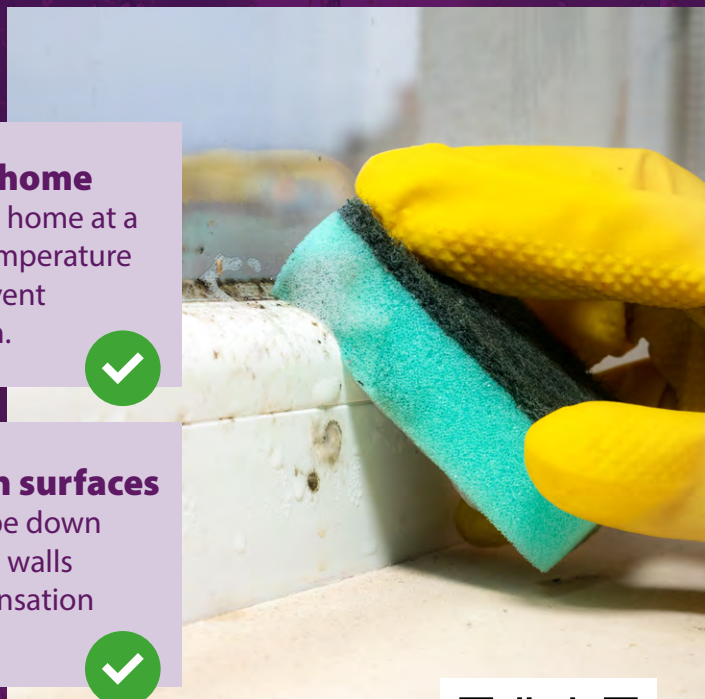
Dry clothes outside

If possible, dry clothes outside or use a tumble dryer.



Wipe down surfaces

Regularly wipe down windows and walls where condensation forms.



For more tips check out our damp & mould booklet on our website using the QR code or by going to Condensation, Mould and Damp If you can't access our website and would prefer a booklet to be sent out to you, call us on **0333 32 12 200** or Email: **enquiries@starhousing.org.uk**



Here to Help You

Managing finances can be challenging, especially during this time of year. Our Money Advice team offers personalised financial guidance, benefit maximisation, debt management, and energy-saving tips to help you make the most of your income and reduce expenses. We provide one-on-one consultations in person, over the phone, or via video call to ensure our services are accessible to everyone.

Many customers have successfully turned their financial situations around with our help, from reducing debt to increasing savings. To book an appointment or learn more about our services, please contact us at moneyadvice@starhousing.org.uk or call us on **0333 32 12 200**. Remember, you don't have to face financial challenges alone—reach out to our Money Advice team today!



Shower Heads

We kindly ask that customers refrain from replacing the standard shower heads with non-standard alternatives. Recently, we've noticed a few instances where shower heads from online sources (like TikTok or Temu) have been installed, causing damage to the plumbing.

If you need to change your shower head, please ensure its compatible with the system and from the same manufacturer. This helps us maintain the quality of the plumbing and avoid costly repairs. Non-standard shower heads can lead to leaks, uneven pressure and even affect neighbouring properties.

If you have any concerns or questions, please reach out to us.

Skip Event Success: Keeping Our Neighbourhoods Tidy

We're excited to share the success of our 2024 skip events, which helped keep our neighbourhoods clean and more pleasant places to live. We collected an impressive 283 tonnes of rubbish across 17 different locations.

We can't cover all areas every year, but our neighbourhoods team works hard to rotate the locations annually. This way, different areas get a chance to have a clear-out and benefit from these events.

If you think your area could benefit from a skip event, please speak to your housing officer. They may consider your area for a skip this year.

Thank you to everyone who participated and contributed to the success of our skip events. Together, we can make a difference!



Tenant Satisfaction Measures: Year-End Results 2023/24

If you missed it, we were pleased to share the results of our Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) for the year ending March 2024. These measures are crucial for understanding how well we are meeting your needs and where we can improve. The TSMs were published on our website last year.

Last year, we gathered feedback through surveys and performance data, covering areas such as overall satisfaction, building safety, repairs, complaints, and anti-social behaviour. The results show how we performed from April 2023 to March 2024, and we have compared our performance against industry benchmarks to ensure we are on the right track.

Key highlights from this year's TSM results include:



Overall Satisfaction:
Most customers said they were happy with our services.



Building Safety:
High marks were given for the safety measures in place.



Repairs and Maintenance:
Customers liked how quickly and well repairs were done.



Handling of Complaints:
We've improved how we deal with complaints, but we're working to get even better.



Repairs and Maintenance:
Customers feel we are making a positive impact on neighbourhoods.

To see the full results, visit our website using the QR code



Service Improvements and Lessons Learned

Your feedback has helped us make several key improvements:



1. Repairs Service



- A. **Backlog Reduction:** We hired a team to reduce the backlog of repairs from over 2000 to 1000 by year-end. Daily and weekly reviews have further reduced this to 750.
- B. **Contractor Performance:** We have had more meetings with key suppliers, leading to improvements in roofing and drainage repairs. A new project for a repairs contractor framework will start in Autumn 2024.

2. Handling of Complaints



- A. **We continue to improve** how we manage and resolve complaints.

3. Maintenance of Communal Areas



- A. **Resource Allocation:** More resources in the Grounds Maintenance team have improved the upkeep of communal areas. New estate inspections will start in 2025 to ensure quality.
- B. **Service Charge Assessment:** Ongoing work to assess service chargeable activities will help improve budget setting and resource allocation.

4. Damp and Mould Management



- A. **Surveyor Introduction:** The introduction of a damp surveyor has improved the quality and speed of initial surveys. We have reduced the number of open damp cases beyond six months from over 100 to 8.
- B. **Winter Preparation:** Our in-house repairs team is now trained to handle minor mould wash activities, allowing for quicker responses to customer reports.



These changes show why your feedback is so important. It helps us find areas to improve and make changes that make a real difference in your living experience. We look forward to hearing your feedback in our next TSM survey which will commence in late January 2025. This will be a random telephone survey, so if you are contacted, please participate. We encourage all customers who are contacted to participate and share their experiences to help us serve you better.

Hilltop Close Development Completion

Last year, a big highlight was the opening of a new development! In May 2024, we proudly completed the Hill Top Close development in Whittington. Bringing 24 affordable homes to Whittington. This project, featuring a mix of 1, 2, and 3-bedroom houses and bungalows, was designed with community input and prioritised local customers. We hope Hill Top Close customers are enjoying their new homes!



Get Involved Make a Difference in Your Community

In November 2023, we conducted a customer survey called Shaping our Services. Over 2600 customers were invited to comment on how they would like our services to be delivered, **we had over 440 responses!!!** We have used this feedback to develop a new Customer Engagement Offer. We value your input and encourage you to share your thoughts with us.

If you have any comments or want to get involved in one of these ways, please contact us at involvement@starhousing.org.uk or call 0333 32 12 200.



Upcoming Estate Walkabouts

We are committed to keeping our neighbourhoods clean and safe. As part of this, we will be doing regular estate walkabouts. This is a great chance for you to work alongside our Neighbourhood Service teams and help spot any issues in your neighbourhood.

During these walkabouts, a small group of customers, tenancy and repairs officers and estate staff will check the outside and shared areas of our estates. Each walkabout can take from one to two and a half hours, depending on the size of the estate.

After the inspection, we will:



List the issues found



Decide what needs to be done next



Set a timeframe to fix the issues

You can find the dates and locations of these walkabouts on our website and communal notice boards, so keep an eye out if you want to join in!

If you have any questions or want to talk about an inspection in your area, please contact your housing officer. We look forward to working with you to keep our neighbourhoods clean, safe, and welcoming.



Resident Engagement Your Voice Matters

At STAR Housing, we want to make our services the best they can be, and the best way to do that is by listening to you! In November 2023, we ran a Shaping Our Services survey, and over 440 of you responded—thank you! Your feedback has helped us create a new Customer Engagement Offer with lots of exciting ways to get involved.

Here's a quick look at what you can do:

- ✓ **Customer Board Member:** Help make important decisions and represent other customers.
- ✓ **Survey STAR Team:** Share your thoughts through surveys from home.
- ✓ **One Voice Forum:** Work with other customers to improve STAR Housing services.
- ✓ **Resident Procurement Panel:** Help STAR choose contractors that are the best for customers.
- ✓ **Mystery Shopping:** Secretly test our services and share what you think.



This newsletter will focus on the Customer Scrutiny Panel, an important group of customers who help us keep improving by giving honest feedback and making sure we're doing the best job possible.



Join the STAR Customer Scrutiny Panel

The Scrutiny Panel is a group of customers who check how STAR Housing is doing and suggest ways to make things better. Members act as a “critical friend,” sharing ideas and asking questions to help improve services.

What You'll Do:

- ✓ **Check Services:** Look at how well our services work and where we can improve.
- ✓ **Give Feedback:** Share your thoughts and ideas to help make things better.
- ✓ **Work Together:** Team up with staff and customers to improve STAR Housing.

The panel focuses on key areas, like how we deliver services, how we communicate with customers, and making sure our policies are right.

Scrutiny Spotlight: Repairs Service

The Scrutiny Panel recently looked at how well our repairs service works. Here's what they found and the changes we're making:

What We Found:

- ✓ **Repairs:** Most customers are happy, but we need to be quicker and more consistent.
- ✓ **Communication:** Good overall, but we need to keep customers better informed.
- ✓ **Efficiency:** Staffing issues have slowed us down at times.

What's Changing:

- ✓ **Better Planning:** Customers now know if their repair is the first job of the day.
- ✓ **Improved Communication:** We've introduced text reminders and calls before visits.
- ✓ **More In-House Repairs:** Most jobs are now done by STAR staff for better quality.
- ✓ **Training:** We're helping staff develop their skills with new systems and support.
- ✓ **Better Materials:** Repairs now use more durable, high-quality materials.

If you'd like to join the Scrutiny Panel or find out more about getting involved, contact us at involvement@starhousing.org.uk or call 0333 32 12 200.

Your voice matters - help us make STAR Housing even better!



Exciting News: Retrofit Work Begins in Albrighton!

We are excited to announce that we have started retrofit work in Albrighton. This project is part of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, which aims to make our homes more energy-efficient and environmentally friendly.

What is the Retrofit Work in Albrighton?

This project focuses on upgrading our homes to be more energy efficient. This means making changes that help reduce the amount of energy needed to heat and power our homes. These upgrades will help lower energy bills for our customers and make homes warmer and more comfortable.

What Will Be Done?

We will be making several improvements to our homes, including:

- Adding better insulation to keep homes warm in winter and cool in summer.
- Installing new, energy-efficient windows and doors.
- Upgrading heating systems to be more efficient and environmentally friendly.



Why Is This Important?

These upgrades are important because they:

- Help reduce energy bills for our customers.
- Make homes more comfortable to live in.
- Reduce carbon emissions, which is good for the environment.
- Support green jobs and the local economy.





Building on Past Success

This new project builds on the success of our previous Wave 1 project in Gobowen. In Wave 1, we improved 26 homes by adding insulation, new windows, doors, and roofs. These changes made the homes more energy-efficient and improved their appearance. Customers have noticed lower energy bills and more comfortable living conditions.

Looking Ahead

We are also starting work on Wave 3, continuing our commitment to improving the energy efficiency of our housing stock. We are dedicated to making our homes better for our customers and the environment.

Stay tuned for more updates as we progress with these exciting projects. We look forward to seeing the positive impact on our community.

For more information, visit our news page.

