



Annual Complaints  
Performance and Service  
Improvement Report  
**April 2024 - March 2025**



"Vibrant Communities are achieved by listening to  
our customers and giving them quality homes."



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## 1. Introduction and Summary

### Introduction to the Complaints Performance Report 2024–25

STAR Housing is an Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO), set up by Shropshire Council in 2013 to manage council homes across areas including Bridgnorth, Oswestry, and parts of Shrewsbury. Although we operate independently, we remain wholly owned by the Council.

**Stock profile:** Approximately 4,000 council homes

**Estimated number of residents:** Around 9,000 to 10,000 people

**Key services delivered:** Responsive repairs, planned maintenance, building new homes, rent collection, and tenant support

We're responsible for:

- Managing council houses, flats, bungalows, and garages
- Supporting tenants and neighbourhoods
- Delivering repairs, collecting rent, and carrying out home improvements

At STAR Housing, we're committed to delivering excellent services and putting customers at the heart of everything we do. A core priority of our Corporate Plan 2024–27 is to *listen and act* on feedback, complaints, and customer insight. (Read here: [Corporate-Plan-2024-27.pdf](#))

We believe that learning from complaints is essential to improving services and building a positive, responsive customer care culture. Our Customer Care Strategy sets out how we're working to enhance the experience of everyone who uses our services. (Read here: [Business and Governance](#))

This report shows how STAR Housing meets the standards set out in the Housing Ombudsman's **Complaint Handling Code (2024 revision)**. It provides assurance to residents, our Board, and Shropshire Council that we are committed to transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement.

The Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code sets out clear standards for how complaints should be managed. Its purpose is to:

- Promote a positive complaints culture.
- Ensure fairness, transparency, and consistency in complaint resolution.
- Empower residents to raise concerns confidently.
- Support landlords in learning from complaints to improve services.
- Ensure accountability through mandatory compliance and annual self-assessments.

## 2. STAR's Complaints process

STAR Housing follows a **two-stage complaints process**. If a customer remains dissatisfied after both stages, they have the right to escalate their complaint to the **Housing Ombudsman**, who will carry

out an independent investigation.

Tenants and leaseholders also have the right to contact the Housing Ombudsman for **advice at any time**—whether before making a complaint to STAR Housing or during the complaints process.

### 3. Governance, Oversight, and Accountability

- Role of the Board and Committees in monitoring complaints.

To help strengthen our approach to complaints and promote a positive culture around complaint handling, STAR Housing has appointed two dedicated members of its governing body to take the lead on this area. This role is known as the **Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC)** and is supported by STAR's senior officer lead, the **Director of Corporate Services**. As at August 2025 they are:

- Duncan Kerr, representing STAR Housing as an ALMO
- James Owen, representing Shropshire Council as the landlord

Both have been fully briefed on their responsibilities and have received copies of all relevant reports. Their involvement helps ensure that complaints are taken seriously, handled effectively, and used as a valuable source of learning and improvement.

The following groups have oversight of how complaints are managed:

- STAR Housing – Customer Services Committee
- STAR Housing – Executive Team
- Shropshire Council – Asset Assurance Board
- Meeting of the Member(s) Responsible for Complaints
- STAR Housing – Board
- Shropshire Council – Cabinet

Complaints are presented in the form of a Board Report to the MRCs and we are committed to meeting with the MRCs individually so they understand the importance of their role and have the opportunity to review how we handle complaints and review the nature of the complaints we receive. Complaints are scrutinised at the Customer Services Committee meetings, as well as at STAR Board and Asset Assurance Board meetings. This ensures that MRCs receive consistent updates and can provide oversight and challenge where needed.

As part of our annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report, STAR Housing publishes a **self-assessment** against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. See Appendix A.

Alongside this, we also publish a **response from our governing bodies**. The purpose of this response is to provide assurance that the self-assessment accurately reflects how STAR Housing handles complaints. It outlines how the MRCs have reviewed and challenged the findings, how any risks have been identified and addressed, and what lessons have been learned through the process. It also highlights any actions taken, achievements made, and challenges faced during the reporting year.

By publishing this response, STAR Housing demonstrates its commitment to openness, accountability, and continuous improvement.

The governing body's response will be added to this report once it has been finalised.

Feedback from complaints analysis feed into

## 4. Key successes and challenges

- Listening to customers

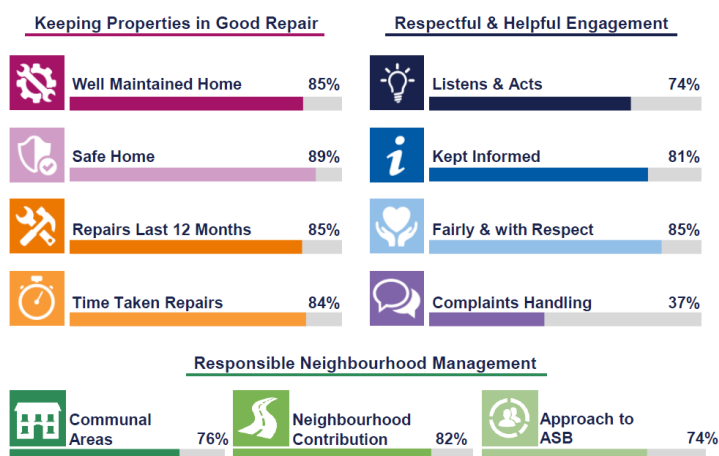
In May 2024 and January 2025, STAR Housing commissioned **Acuity Research & Consultancy Services** to carry out a Tenant Satisfaction Measures Survey. A total of **542 telephone interviews** were completed, with quotas applied for tenure, location, age, and ethnicity to ensure the sample reflected the diversity of our resident population.

The results showed a positive trend:

- **85% of residents** said they were satisfied with the overall service provided by STAR Housing.
- Satisfaction with STAR's approach to complaint handling rose to **37%**, up from **34% in 2023/24**, despite a significant increase in the number of complaints managed.

These findings demonstrate that even as the number of complaints are increasing, we continue to make progress in improving customer experience.

### 2024/25 TSM Key Metrics (LCRA)



The survey also found that a similar number of residents fell into the neutral category—neither very satisfied nor dissatisfied.

Customers in this category expressed some significant concerns about the repair and maintenance services provided by STAR Housing.

Despite many praising the STAR Housing repairs service, a key theme among this group is dissatisfaction with the speed and quality of repairs, with numerous respondents highlighting long wait times and inadequate follow-up on reported issues.

These tenants expressed frustration over unresolved problems including:

- Mould
- Leaks
- General maintenance, with some waiting years for necessary repairs
- Lack of effective communication - tenants requesting more timely updates and responses to their enquiry.



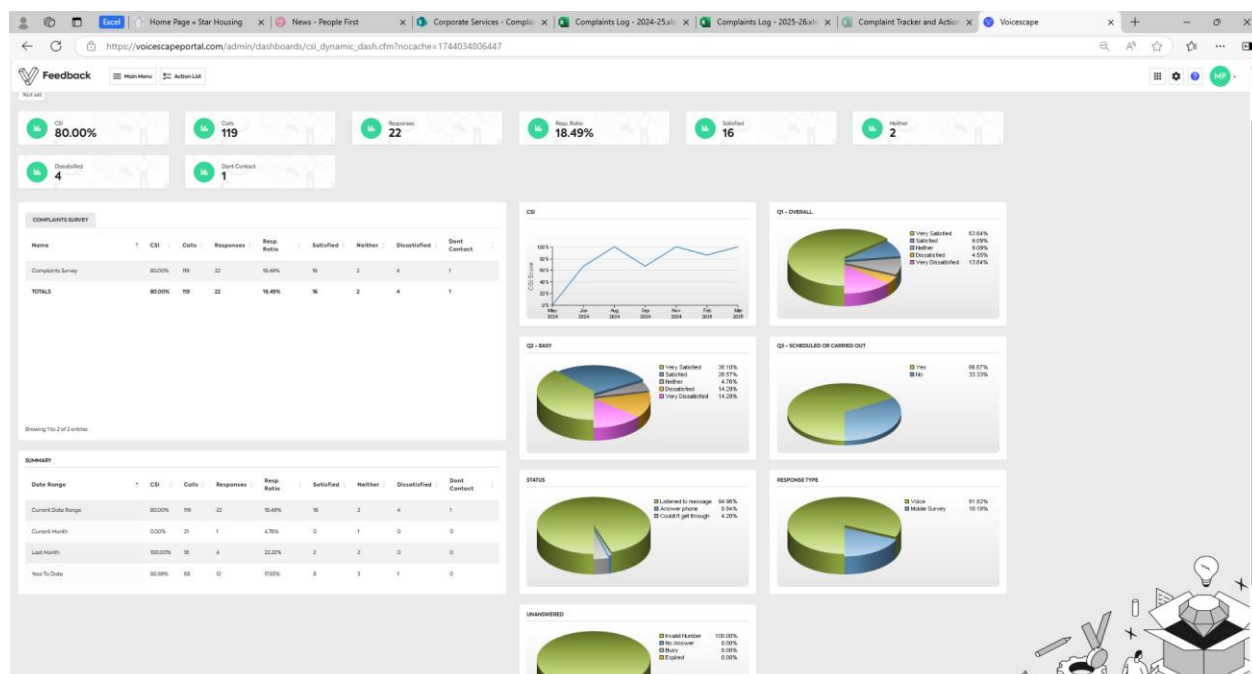
As a result of this feedback STAR Housing have undertaken a number of actions:

- A full review of the repairs service in partnership with STAR Housing scrutiny panel, with terms and conditions of staff being updated, new working arrangements being put in place and a move to a multi trade model.
- Investment in a new core Housing Management and Repairs system
- Procurement of new sub-contractor contracting partners with an emphasis on a customer centric approach

During 2024/25, STAR Housing carried out **additional transactional satisfaction surveys** using Voicescape, focusing specifically on complaint handling. We received feedback from 22 customers.

- **72%** of respondents said they were **satisfied with how their complaint was handled**
- This included 16 satisfied customers, 2 neutral responses, and 4 dissatisfied customers

While the sample size was small, the results provide useful insight into how customers feel about our complaints process and help us identify areas for improvement



Comments from residents revealed a mix of experiences with STAR Housing's complaints process. While some feedback highlighted areas for improvement, many residents also shared positive reflections.

**Positive themes** included:

- Prompt and polite responses from staff
- Clear communication and helpful explanations
- Effective follow-up and resolution of issues
- Specific praise for timely repairs and the handling of anti-social behaviour complaints

These comments show that while there is room to improve, many residents value the efforts made by STAR Housing to resolve concerns professionally and respectfully.

**Challenges** reflected in the increase in volume of complaints **include:**

- Financial pressures
- Local skills shortages
- Increased demand for a better service, indicating a shift in expectations
- Ageing homes / poor property condition
- Supporting more customers with complex needs

## 5. Priority areas for improvement

Last year, complaints about repairs, communication, and property safety led STAR Housing to take specific actions detailed in this report. The main takeaway is that customers want to be heard and have their complaints addressed promptly.

### Responding to Customer Feedback

In 2024–25, STAR Housing received a high volume of complaints related to **repairs, communication, and property safety**. In response, we implemented a series of targeted actions to improve how we handle and learn from complaints. (Summary of actions from self-assessment)

- Introduced a **Complaints Standard Framework** to guide Investigating Officers.
- Ensured **Senior Manager review** of all complaint response letters.
- Rolled out **role-specific complaints training** for staff.
- Expanded complaint submission options via **social media** and the **new customer portal**.
- Raised awareness through **posters in communal areas** and messaging on **rent uplift letters**.

These steps are designed to strengthen our response to customer concerns and ensure that every complaint is treated with care and urgency.

**The key takeaway:** Customers want to be heard—and they want their complaints addressed promptly and effectively.

## 6. Volume and Profile of Complaints Summary

- Total complaints received: 200 – (135 in 2023-24)
- Stage 1: 173 – (105 in 2023-24)
- Stage 2: 27 – (30 in 2023-24)
- Ombudsman: 3 – (1 in 2023-24)

Breakdown of complaints received

2024/25	RESPONDED TO WITHIN TIMESCALE - BY PERIOD												Cumulative YTD
	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	
Stage 1	33%	23%	100%	93%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	90%
Stage 2	50%	-	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	96%
Total	36%	23%	100%	94%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	91%

Stage 1 Received	11	3	17	11	12	10	19	14	9	27	19	21	173
Stage 2 Received	0	2	2	1	4	1	1	1	0	4	6	5	27
Total Received	11	5	19	12	16	11	20	15	9	31	25	26	
Stage 1 completed on time - number	3	3	10	14	9	12	20	10	15	17	20	20	153
Stage 1 total completed	9	13	10	15	9	12	20	10	15	17	20	20	170
Stage 2 completed on time - number	1	0	2	2	1	4	1	1	1	1	3	6	23
Stage 2 total completed	2	0	2	2	1	4	1	1	1	1	3	6	24
Total completed on time	4	3	12	16	10	16	21	11	16	18	23	26	176
Total Completed	11	13	12	17	10	16	21	11	16	18	23	26	194

## Increase in Complaint Volume

During the reporting period, STAR Housing experienced a significant rise in the number of complaints received. This increase reflects both local improvements in accessibility and a wider national trend:

- Greater awareness: STAR Housing has actively promoted how residents can make a complaint
- Improved accessibility: The STAR Housing complaints process has been made easier and more straightforward for customers to use
- National publicity: The Housing Ombudsman has run campaigns to raise awareness of tenants' rights and how to escalate concerns
- National trend: The Housing Ombudsman's Annual Complaints Review 2023–24 reported a sharp rise in complaints across the sector, with 21,740 remedies issued—a 329% increase compared to the previous year [\[1\]](#). This reflects growing tenant engagement and expectations, as well as increased scrutiny of landlord performance.
- Training: STAR has implemented role-specific complaints training for staff to ensure all dissatisfaction is recorded appropriately.

This rise in complaint volume highlights the importance of maintaining a responsive, transparent, and customer-focused approach to service delivery.

## References

[1] [Annual Complaints Review 2023 to 24 | Housing Ombudsman](#)

## 7. Responsiveness and Timeliness

### Complaints Response Performance

In 2024/25, STAR Housing responded to a total of **194 complaints**. Of these:

- **176 complaints** (or **90.72%**) were responded to **within the timescales set out in the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code**
- At **Stage 1**, **90.00%** of complaints met the required response timeframe
- At **Stage 2**, **95.83%** were responded to on time

These results **exceeded STAR Housing's annual performance targets**, which were:

- **80.58%** for Stage 1 responses
- **81.58%** for Stage 2 responses

In addition, only **11 complaints** were not acknowledged within the required timescale, showing strong



overall compliance and responsiveness.

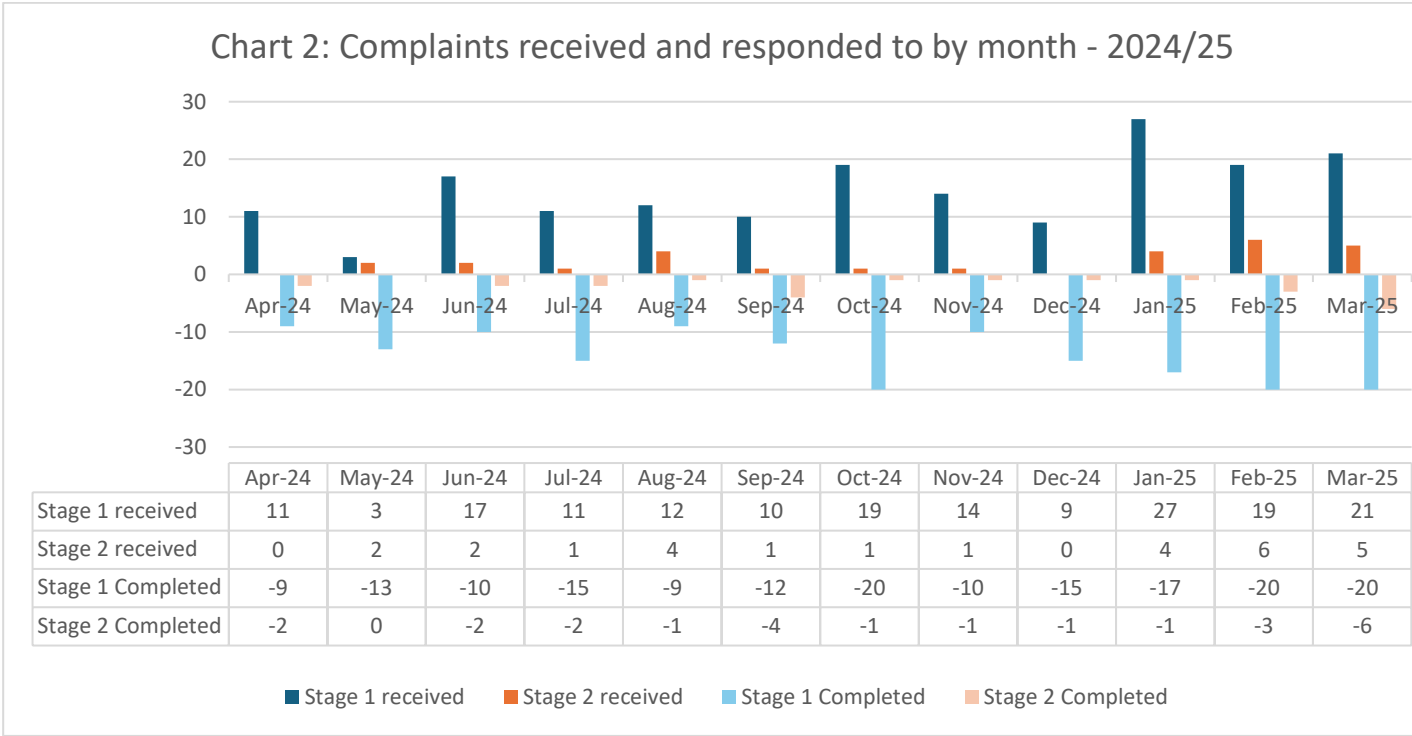
2024-25	No of Complaints Responded to in the year	No of Complaints responded to within code timescales	%age of Complaints responded to within code timescales
Stage 1	170	153	90.00%
Stage 2	24	23	95.83%
Total	194	176	90.72%

Monthly Complaint Trends

In 2024/25, STAR Housing received an average of:

- **14.41 Stage 1 complaints per month**, up from **8.75 per month** in 2023/24
- **2.25 Stage 2 complaints per month**, slightly down from **2.5 per month** in 2023/24

This shows a notable increase in initial complaints, while escalations to Stage 2 have slightly decreased. (See Chart 2 for a visual breakdown.)

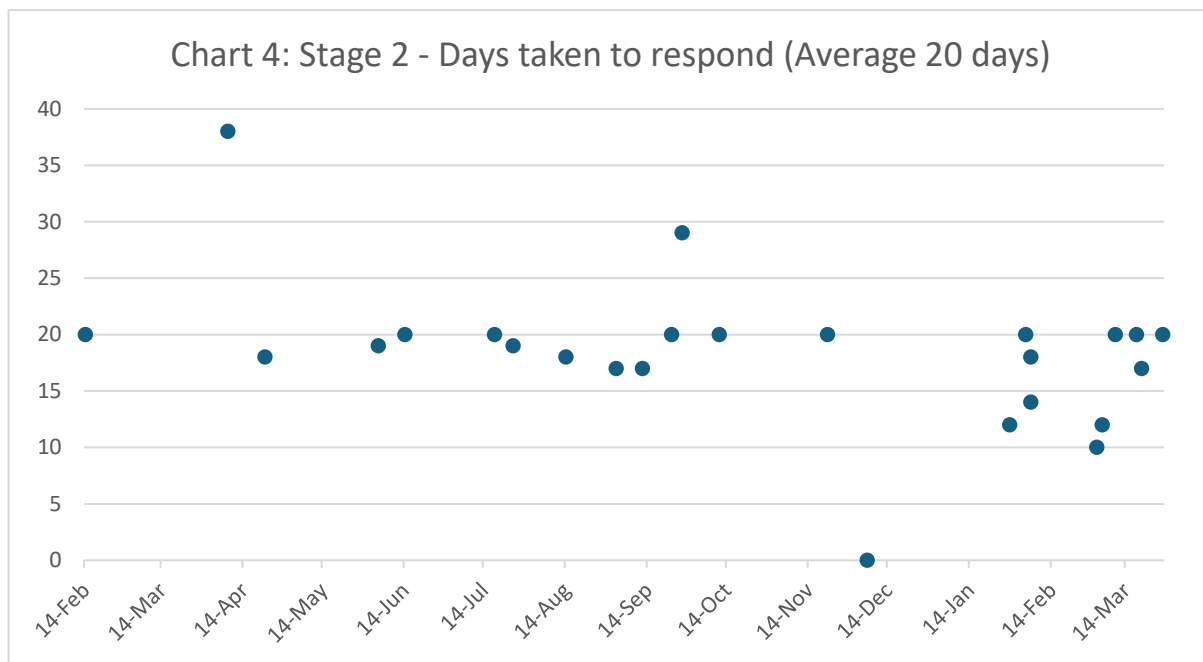
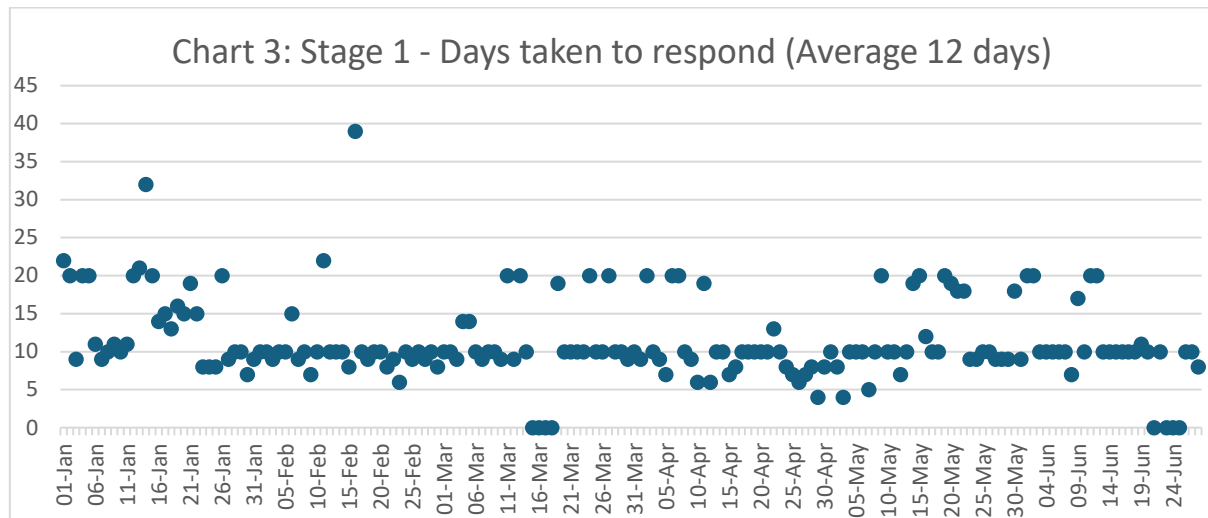


Complaint Response Times

In 2024/25, STAR Housing aimed to respond to complaints within the timeframes set out in the Housing Ombudsman’s Complaint Handling Code:

- **Stage 1 complaints** were responded to in an average of **12 days**, slightly above the target of **10 days**
- **Stage 2 complaints** were responded to in an average of **20 days**, meeting the target exactly

These figures show that while Stage 2 response times are on track, there is room to improve the speed of Stage 1 responses. (See Charts 3 and 4 for a visual breakdown.)

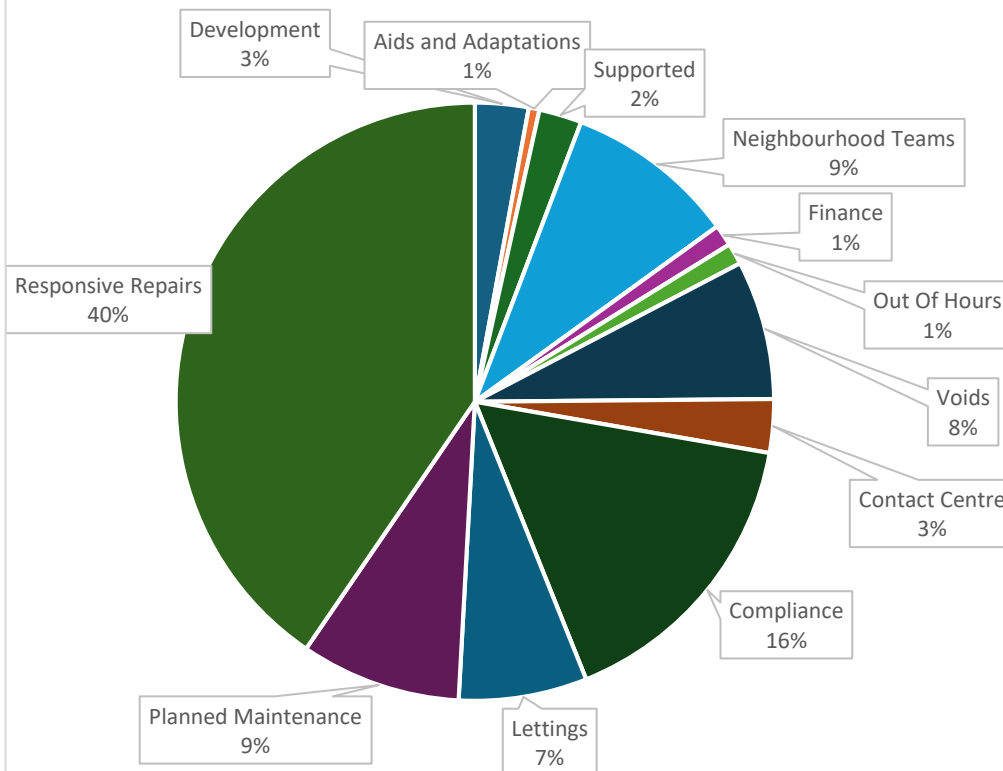


## 8. Breakdown by service area / complaint category

Complaints by Service Area

**Responsive Repairs** continues to be the service area with the **highest number of complaints**, accounting for **47.35% of all complaints in 2023/24**. This is largely reflective of the **high volume of work** carried out in this area. *(See Chart 5 for details.)*

Chart 5: 2024-25 Complaints by Service Area



## 9. Housing Ombudsman engagement and compensation

There have been three Housing Ombudsman complaints in 2024/25. Evidence has been submitted for each along with the appropriate reports and documentation. At the time of writing, **STAR Housing has not yet received any responses** from the Housing Ombudsman regarding complaints submitted during the reporting period.

A total of £26,404 in compensation was paid during the year across 66 cases. This represents an average of £400 per complaint compensated. Payments ranged from £50 to £5000 for a complaint where personal property had been damaged because of damp and mould.

## 10. Outcomes and Resolutions

Of the complaints responded to during the year the decisions were evenly split between the three categories for Stage 1 and Stage 2 responses (See Chart 6 and 6a).

Chart 6: Outcome - Stage 1  
complaints responded to in  
2024/25

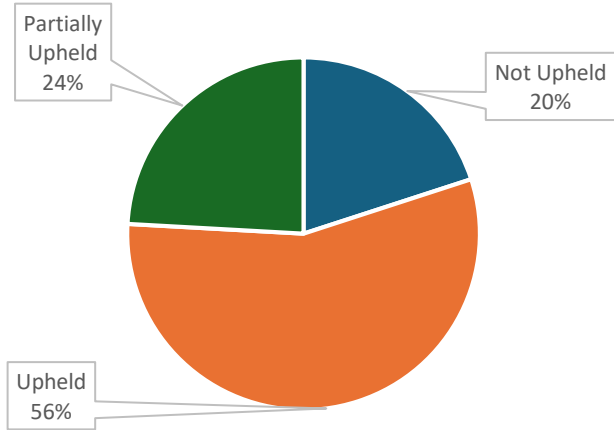
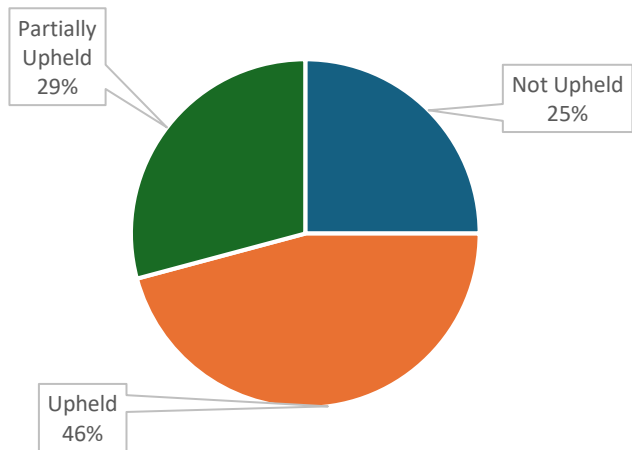


Chart 6a: Outcome - Stage 2  
complaints responded to in  
2024/25



## 11. Learning and Service Improvement

### Key lessons and Areas for Improvement

To continue improving customer satisfaction, STAR Housing has identified several priority areas for action:

- **Streamlining repair processes** to reduce delays and improve efficiency
- **Improving communication** with customer throughout the complaints and repairs journey
- **Delivering high-quality workmanship** to meet expectations and build trust
- **Providing a consistent approach** across all services and interactions

It's important to note that many customers already praise these aspects of our service. Ensuring consistency in how these strengths are delivered will be key to maintaining and building on this positive feedback.

A substantial number of customer survey respondents expressed frustration over unresolved issues and a perceived lack of responsiveness. Many reported that their complaints were either ignored or inadequately addressed, leading to feelings of being in limbo. Notably, issues related to anti-social behaviour, repairs and communication were frequently cited as areas of concern.

Some respondents highlighted long wait times for resolution, with one individual mentioning a 12-month delay in addressing their complaint. Additionally, there were instances where tenants felt that their concerns were not taken seriously or that communication was one-sided.

In 2025-26, to further improve the complaints process and strengthen relationships with residents, STAR Housing is focusing on the following areas:

- **Improving communication** by providing timely updates and follow-ups throughout the complaints journey
- **Implementing a robust tracking system** to monitor complaint progress and ensure accountability
- **Training staff** to handle complaints with greater empathy and urgency, helping to build trust and foster more positive interactions with customers. Training will be refreshed annually and given to all new starters.
- **Recording root cause analysis** to identify themes and create service improvement plans for service delivery teams

These steps will support STAR Housing's commitment to delivering a responsive, customer-focused service.

### Service Improvements Delivered in this period

STAR Housing has taken several steps to improve service delivery based on feedback and learning from complaints:

- **Clearer communication:** Wording on missed appointment letters has been updated to make it easier for customers to understand.
- **Proactive repairs:** Trades operatives have received training to help them identify issues during visits, allowing repairs to be addressed more efficiently.

- **Quality assurance:** A new contractor procedure now requires evidence of completed work to ensure it meets STAR Housing's standards.
  - **Better communication from contractors:** Planned maintenance contractors now provide clearer explanations of the work being carried out, helping residents feel more informed.
  - **Improved lettings process:** STAR's Lettings Team and Development Team are working together to ensure new homes are handed over in a more consistent manner.
- Planned improvements for 2024-25
- Assigning repair staff to focus on resolving repair complaints quickly through early intervention.
  - Allocating more resources to support the administration of complaints.
  - Implementing a Customer Relationship Management system to improve customer communication.
  - Providing further training to all staff on complaint handling, enabling timely resolution of issues while ensuring thorough investigation
  - Complaint responses are reviewed by a member of the Senior Management Team prior to being sent to customers. A practice which has already been introduced but is now being enhanced.

## 12. Complaints Improvement Plan

The **Complaints Service Improvement Plan**, attached at *Appendix B*, sets out the actions STAR Housing will take to enhance the way complaints are managed and responded to.

The plan has been shaped by:

- Insights from the **annual self-assessment** against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code
- Feedback from the **Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) survey and additional STAR transactional surveys**
- Lessons learned from handling complaints throughout the year

Delivery of the improvement plan will continue to be closely monitored by STAR Housing's **Senior Management Team** throughout 2025/26 to ensure progress and accountability.

## 13. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

### Making the Complaints Process Accessible

STAR Housing is committed to ensuring that all residents can easily access the complaints process, including those who may need additional support. Information is shared through a wide range of channels:

- The **STAR Housing website**, which includes an online complaints form (also used by staff to submit complaints on behalf of customers)
- The **STAR Housing customer portal**
- **Social media platforms**
- **Newsletters, leaflets, and posters** in communal areas
- The **Tenancy Handbook**
- A dedicated paragraph in the **annual rent changes letter**



- **Staff briefings and training sessions**
- **Support for vulnerable residents**, including the **Recite Me accessibility tool** on the STAR Housing website, which helps users customise how they access and read online content

This multi-channel approach ensures that all residents—regardless of their needs or preferences—can engage with the complaints process confidently and independently.

## 14. Benchmarking & Compliance

To comply with the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code this report must include:

- a) a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the landlord's complaint handling performance. This must also include a summary of the types of complaints the landlord has refused to accept\*;
- b) any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman;
- c) the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints;
- d) any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman; and
- e) any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord.

\*STAR does not currently record the types of complaints that have been refused. This action has been added to the STAR Complaints Service Improvement Plan.

See completed self-assessment against the Code (see Appendix A).

The Self-Assessment will be put forward for review, endorsement and approval to the following committees and meetings:

- Shropshire Council – Asset Assurance Board
- Meeting of the Member(s) Responsible for Complaints
- STAR Housing – Board
- Shropshire Council – Cabinet

## 15. Forward look

During the next 12 months, our key focus will be on the following areas:

- Embedding new systems so we are better able to respond to customer complaints through more comprehensive data and through better response times
- Using A.I to better understand, investigate and develop solutions for complaints
- Working with the Board and the Scrutiny Panel to improve our complaints process

## 16. Publication and Transparency

- This report and the self-assessment form will be published on the STAR Housing website and shared with customers and the Council.
- STAR Housing will review and update the complaints self-assessment and publish it annually.

## Appendix A – Complaints Handling Annual Self Assessment 2024-25

**Appendix B – Complaints Handling Service Improvement Action Plan 2024-25**

**Appendix C – Complaints Handling MRC Governance Response 2024-25**