



Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report **April 2025 - March 2026**



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



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1. Introduction and Summary

STAR Housing is an Arm's 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 at 31st March 2026: 4,080 council homes

Number of residents: Circa 9,000 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 work to enhance the experience of everyone who uses our services.

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 complaint handling culture, STAR Housing has appointed members of its governing body to take a lead role in 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. Following recent changes, Duncan Kerr has resigned from his MRC position. As of August 2026, the appointed MRCs are:

- Mark Owen, 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 role is to provide assurance that complaints are taken seriously, handled appropriately and used as a valuable source of learning and service improvement.

Throughout 2025/26, complaints performance, complaint trends, Housing Ombudsman outcomes and key areas of learning have been regularly reported through STAR Housing's governance arrangements. This has ensured that Board Members, Committees and Council representatives have maintained oversight of complaint handling performance, emerging risks and service improvement activity.

As part of the annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report, STAR Housing publishes a self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, alongside a response from its governing body. This provides assurance that the self-assessment accurately reflects STAR Housing's approach to complaint handling, compliance with the Code, key learning and planned improvement activity.

Alongside this, we publish a response from our governing bodies to provide assurance that the self-assessment accurately reflects STAR Housing's approach to complaint handling and compliance with the Code. This response considers complaint performance, key themes, lessons learned and the actions being taken to drive service improvement.

During 2026/27, STAR Housing intends to further strengthen engagement with the Members Responsible for Complaints through more structured and regular involvement. This will provide additional opportunities for discussion, challenge and feedback, supporting a positive complaint handling culture and ensuring that learning from complaints continues to influence decision-making and service improvement across the organisation.

Following recent changes in governance arrangements, responsibilities for complaint oversight are being reviewed. In the interim, complaint performance, learning and improvement activity will continue to be reported through STAR Housing's governance framework to maintain appropriate scrutiny, challenge and assurance.

The following groups have oversight of how complaints are managed:

- STAR Housing – Customer Services Committee
- STAR Housing – Executive Team
- Meetings of the Member(s) Responsible for Complaints
- STAR Housing – Board

Going forward, dedicated meetings with the Member(s) Responsible for Complaints will be held three times each year. These meetings will provide an opportunity to review complaint performance, consider emerging themes and trends, discuss learning from complaints and Housing Ombudsman determinations, and contribute to the ongoing development of STAR Housing's complaint handling processes, policies and procedures.

In addition to these meetings, complaints performance and learning will continue to be reported through STAR Housing's governance framework, ensuring appropriate oversight, challenge and assurance.

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

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 and learning arising from complaint analysis are regularly reported to STAR Housing's Executive Team, Customer Services Committee, Board, Members Responsible for Complaints and Shropshire Council governance forums. This ensures complaint trends, emerging risks, Housing Ombudsman learning, service improvements and performance issues are subject to appropriate scrutiny, challenge and oversight. Insights from complaints are used to inform service planning, policy reviews, staff training, performance monitoring and improvement activity across the organisation. This helps ensure that learning from complaints leads to meaningful service improvements and better outcomes for customers.

4. Key successes and challenges

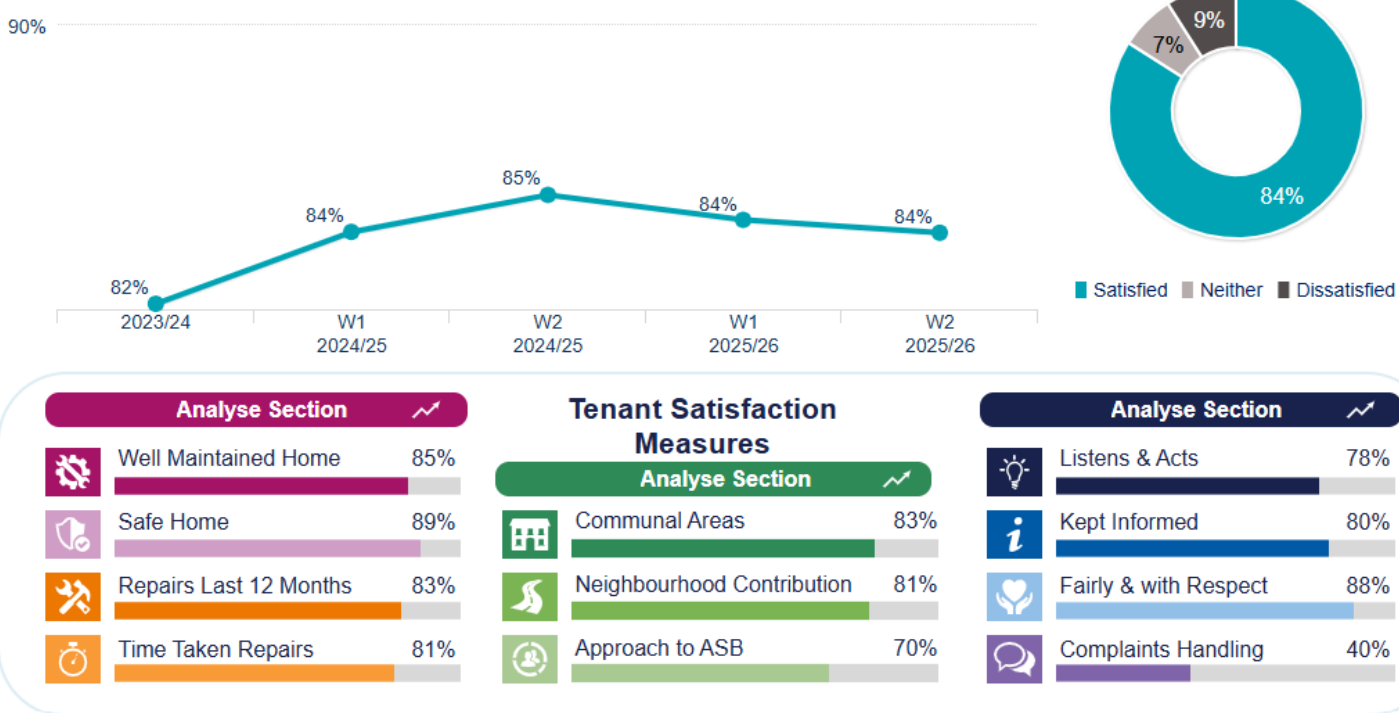
- Listening to customers

STAR Housing commissioned Acuity Research & Consultancy Services to carry out the Tenant Satisfaction Measures Survey during 2025/26. The survey was completed in two phases during the year, with 554 responses received. Quotas were applied for tenure, location, age and ethnicity to ensure the sample reflected the diversity of the resident population.

The results showed that

- 84% of customers said they were satisfied with the overall service provided by STAR Housing
- Satisfaction with STAR’s approach to complaint handling rose from 37% in 2024/25 to 40% in 2025/26 with a further 13% remaining neutral to the process.
- Additionally, it is worth noting that satisfaction increased significantly between the first wave of surveys carried out in August 2025 (34%) and the 2nd wave in January / February 2026 (47%)

Overall Satisfaction



When looking at customer comments, the overall opinion of STAR Housing is positive. However, there were some

areas where customers noted frustration. These included:

- Timeliness and responsiveness around repairs and maintenance
- The quality of work completed
- Communication and transparency

As a result of feedback received through complaints, STAR Housing has undertaken a number of service improvement initiatives, including:

- Strengthening the scrutiny of complaint trends and root causes through regular cross-service review meetings, enabling recurring issues to be identified and addressed at an earlier stage.
- Introducing enhanced monitoring of complaint actions to ensure commitments made to customers are completed, tracked and evidenced following case closure.
- Making greater use of customer insight and performance data to identify themes, recurring issues and potential risks, enabling improvement activity to be targeted where it will have the greatest benefit for customers. This includes analysing complaint trends, customer satisfaction feedback, root cause analysis and performance information to inform service improvements and monitor emerging areas of concern.

Increasing management oversight of complaint handling performance, including quality assurance reviews to support consistency, learning and compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. This includes regular root cause analysis meetings and debrief discussions following significant complaints. By reflecting on what went wrong and sharing learning across teams, we can make improvements to our services and help prevent similar issues from occurring in the future.

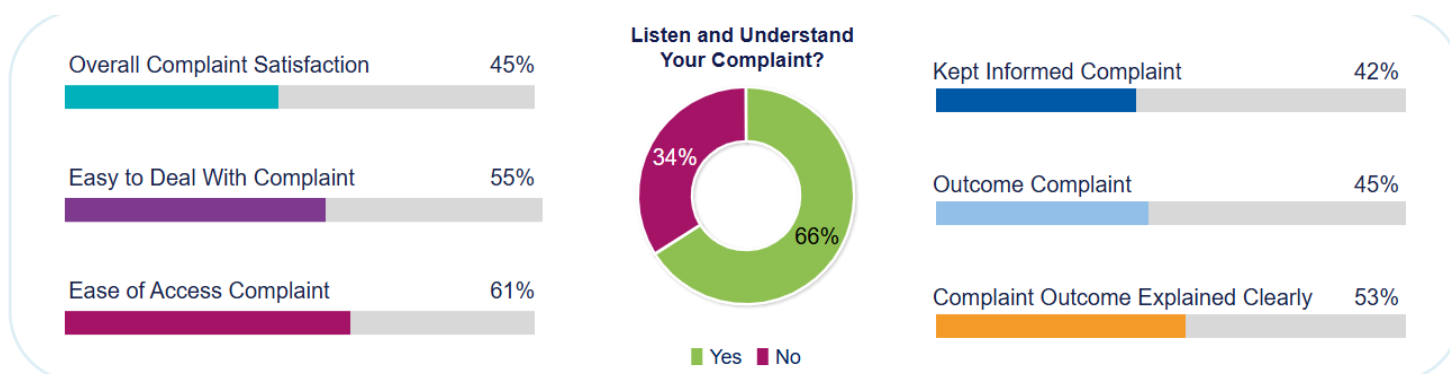
- Developing reporting arrangements to provide deeper analysis of complaint themes, outcomes and learning, supporting informed decision-making and service improvement.
- Strengthening the sharing of lessons learned across teams to ensure learning from complaints results in measurable and sustainable service improvements for customers.

During 2025/26, STAR Housing continued to carry out complaint satisfaction surveys through its partnership with Acuity. A total of 33 surveys were completed. The results provide further insight into customers' experience of accessing the complaints process, communication and complaint outcomes.

Qualitative feedback from complaint satisfaction surveys shows positive comments about the complaints service, but also highlights opportunities for improvement. Communication remains a consistent theme across STAR Housing's services, with customers wanting to feel listened to, understood and kept informed. STAR Housing will continue to work with customers and service teams to strengthen communication throughout the complaint journey.

Challenges reflected include:

- Better awareness of how to make a complaint and customers' rights under the Complaint Handling Code.
- Increased accessibility of complaint channels and opportunities for customer feedback.
- Increased demand for a higher quality service, reflecting changing customer expectations.
- Ageing homes and ongoing investment challenges associated with older housing stock.
- Supporting more customers with complex needs and vulnerabilities.



- Greater expectations regarding communication, responsiveness and service transparency.
- Increased scrutiny and accountability across the social housing sector.

Responding to Customer Feedback

During 2025–26, STAR Housing continued to receive complaints relating primarily to repairs, communication and service delivery. We recognise that every complaint provides an opportunity to understand our customers' experiences and identify where improvements are needed.

In response to customer feedback, STAR Housing has strengthened complaint oversight, increased use of root cause analysis, improved monitoring of complaint actions, enhanced quality assurance and continued to share learning across teams. These actions support a positive complaint handling culture and help ensure feedback is used to improve services and prevent recurring issues.

- Ongoing review and scrutiny of complaint trends through regular root cause analysis meetings.
- Enhanced oversight of complaint responses to ensure consistency, quality and compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.
- Continued training and support for managers and investigating officers to improve complaint investigations and resolution.
- Increased promotion of the ways customers can raise concerns and provide feedback.
- Improved monitoring of complaint actions to ensure agreed improvements are delivered and lessons learned are embedded across services.
- Strengthening collaboration between service areas to address recurring issues and prevent complaints from being repeated.

These actions form part of STAR Housing's commitment to creating a positive complaint handling culture, where feedback is welcomed and used to drive service improvement.

The Key Message

The clearest message from our customers is that they want to feel listened to, kept informed and confident that concerns will be resolved promptly. We will continue to use customer feedback, complaints and lessons learned to improve services and ensure that residents remain at the heart of what we do.

Breakdown of complaints received

Stage 1 Received	16	16	20	18	13	11	19	16	15	13	21	18
Stage 2 Received	1	0	3	6	3	1	2	2	3	5	2	2
Total Received	17	16	23	24	16	12	21	18	18	18	23	20
QRT Completed - number	0	0	0	0	2	2	11	11	4	10	12	10
Stage 1 completed on time - number	18	17	24	14	10	23	14	18	9	22	21	21
Stage 1 total completed	17	19	24	14	10	23	14	18	9	22	21	21
Stage 2 completed on time - number	3	2	0	4	3	5	0	3	1	3	4	5
Stage 2 total completed	3	2	0	4	4	5	0	3	1	3	4	5
Total completed on time	#VALUE!	20	17	28	17	15	23	17	19	12	26	26
Total Completed	20	21	17	28	18	15	23	17	19	12	26	26

Increase in Complaint Volume

During 2025/26, STAR Housing saw an increase in complaints received. While higher complaint volumes may reflect service pressures, they can also indicate that customers are more aware of their right to complain, better able to access complaint channels and more confident that their concerns will be listened to and investigated. We have not seen a dip in satisfaction therefore we can assume it is the latter.

Factors contributing to the increase include:

- **Increased customer awareness** of STAR Housing's complaints process and the different ways concerns can be raised.
- **Higher customer expectations** regarding communication, response times and service standards.
- **Ongoing sector-wide focus** on complaint handling following the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code and increased scrutiny of landlord performance.
- **Improved recording and recognition of dissatisfaction**, supported by staff training and greater understanding of what constitutes a complaint.
- **Greater accessibility**, with customers able to raise concerns through a range of channels including telephone, email, social media and the customer portal.
- **A more open complaint handling culture**, encouraging customers to provide feedback and helping STAR

Housing identify opportunities for improvement.

STAR Housing recognises that complaints are a valuable source of customer insight. Throughout the year, complaint trends have been reviewed through regular root cause analysis and service scrutiny, helping to identify recurring issues, improve service delivery and drive learning across the organisation.

This increase in complaint volume reinforces the importance of delivering responsive services, maintaining clear communication and ensuring that lessons learned from complaints lead to meaningful improvements for customers.

5. Responsiveness and Timeliness

Complaint Response Performance

STAR Housing continued to deliver strong complaint handling performance during 2025/26 despite a significant increase in complaint volumes. The number of complaints responded to increased from 194 in 2024/25 to 242 in 2025/26, representing an increase of almost 25%.

Performance in responding to complaints within the Housing Ombudsman's required timescales, improved from 90.72% in 2024/25 to 99.17% in 2025/26. During 2025/26, 240 of the 242 complaints responded to were completed within the required timescales.

Performance across both stage 1 and stage 2 complaints processes remained strong:

- Stage 1: 207 out of 208 complaints responded to within timescale (99.52%)
- Stage 2: 33 out of 34 complaints responded to within timescale (97.06%)

The improvement in performance has been supported by increased management oversight, enhanced quality assurance arrangements, ongoing complaints training, and a stronger focus on monitoring complaint actions and learning from complaint outcomes. STAR Housing will continue to build on this progress during 2026/27 by further strengthening complaint monitoring, root cause analysis and service improvement activities.

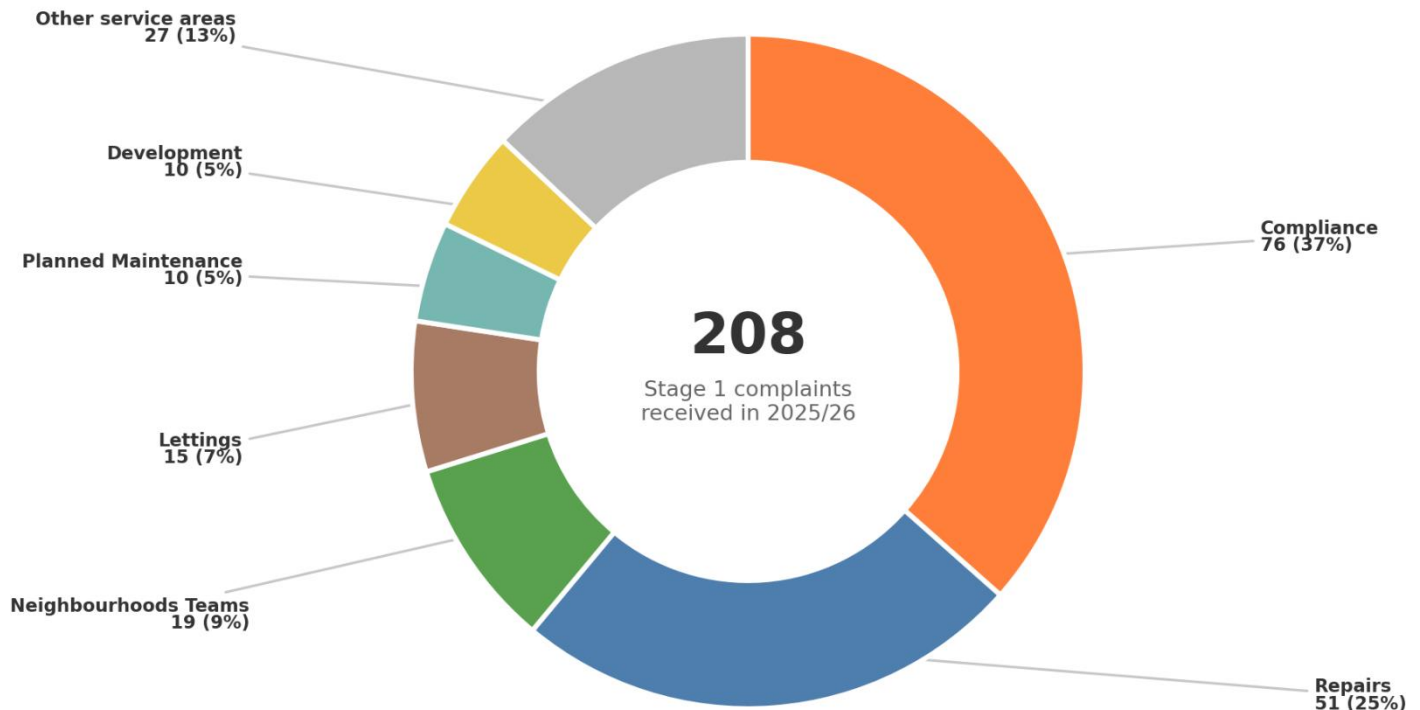
The number of complaints upheld during the year were as follows:

Stage	Upheld	Partially Upheld	Not Upheld	Total
Stage 1	101 (48.5%)	39 (18.8%)	68 (32.7%)	208 (100%)
Stage 2	8 (23.5%)	9 (26.5%)	17 (50%)	34 (100%)
Total	109	48	85	242

Key Message

Although complaint volumes increased by almost a quarter during 2025/26, STAR Housing improved complaint response performance across both Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints, demonstrating greater resilience, stronger oversight and a continued focus on meeting the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.

Stage 1 complaints received by department, 2025/26



This graph represents Stage 1 complaints received by department during 2025/26. The majority of Stage 1 complaints related to Compliance and Repairs, which together accounted for approximately 61% of all Stage 1 complaints received. This reflects the high level of customer contact within these service areas and the direct impact that repairs, safety-related work and contractor activity can have on customers' homes and day-to-day lives.

Whilst other departments received lower volumes of complaints, the data continues to provide valuable learning regarding communication, record keeping, customer expectations and follow-up actions. The chart helps identify where improvement activity should be focused, particularly in relation to property-related services, strengthening communication with customers and ensuring actions are monitored and completed in a timely manner.

Stage 1 & Stage 2 Compensation payments remained higher during the first half of 2025/26 and reduced significantly during the second half of the year. During this period, STAR Housing reviewed its approach to complaint resolution and the circumstances in which financial redress is offered. This review reinforced that compensation is only one of several possible remedies available when resolving complaints, and that the most appropriate outcome will depend on the individual circumstances of each case. Greater emphasis is now placed on identifying the underlying cause of dissatisfaction, putting things right for customers where possible, and ensuring learning is captured to prevent similar issues from recurring. As a result, decisions regarding compensation are subject to increased scrutiny and are considered alongside other remedies such as apologies, service improvements, corrective actions and practical resolutions. The table below shows the level of compensation payments made for Stage 1 & Stage 2 complaints each quarter of the financial year to 31st March 2026.

Quarter	Compensation Paid	% of Annual Total
Q1 (April – June)	£4,942	55.4%
Q2 (July – September)	£2,745	30.8%
Q3 (October – December)	£280	3.1%
Q4 (January – March)	£958	10.7%
Total	£8,925	100.0%

6. Housing Ombudsman engagement and compensation

During 2025/26, the Housing Ombudsman concluded four investigations relating to Shropshire Council/STAR Housing. The determinations included findings of maladministration, service failure, reasonable redress and no maladministration across different aspects of the cases. Themes included repairs, damp and mould, complaint

handling, communication, heat pump installation, electrical concerns linked to a PIV unit, and the handling of aids and adaptations.

Across the four determinations, the Housing Ombudsman ordered compensation totalling £4,305, excluding any separate recommendations or previously offered payments. The highest individual award related to the handling of an adaptations request, where the Ombudsman found maladministration and ordered £1,025 compensation.

Learning from these determinations highlights the importance of timely communication, clear ownership, accurate record keeping, effective follow-up of agreed actions and ensuring that residents are kept informed where cases are complex or dependent on several service areas. STAR Housing has used these findings to strengthen oversight of complaint actions, improve communication expectations and ensure Ombudsman orders are completed and evidenced within required timescales.

7. Learning from Complaints

Customer feedback has consistently highlighted the importance of customers feeling listened to, kept informed and treated fairly throughout their complaint journey. Where dissatisfaction was expressed, this was often linked to a lack of updates, delays in resolving issues, uncertainty about what would happen next, or concerns that agreed actions would not be followed through.

During 2025/26, learning from complaints has helped STAR Housing to strengthen its approach to complaint handling, improve oversight and focus improvement activity on the areas that matter most to customers. Complaints have continued to provide valuable insight into recurring issues, particularly around repairs, communication, contractor performance and service delivery.

Key Learning Themes

What customers told us	What we learned	What we changed
We were not always kept informed about what was happening.	Customers want regular updates and clear explanations, particularly when there are delays or issues cannot be resolved immediately.	We strengthened management oversight of complaints, reinforced expectations around customer updates, and improved monitoring to ensure customers are kept informed throughout their complaint journey.
Repairs and property-related issues remained a key source of dissatisfaction.	Delays, repeat visits, quality concerns and uncertainty around appointments can significantly affect customer satisfaction.	We increased scrutiny of repairs-related complaints through regular root cause analysis meetings and strengthened collaboration between Housing, Repairs and contractor teams to address recurring issues and improve service delivery.
Customers wanted greater confidence that actions promised during complaints would be completed.	Resolving a complaint is only part of the process. Customers want assurance that agreed actions are delivered and followed through.	We introduced enhanced tracking of complaint actions, strengthened quality assurance processes and increased management oversight to ensure commitments made to customers are completed and evidenced.
The service provided by some contractors did not always meet the standards customers expect from STAR Housing.	Customers see contractors as representatives of STAR Housing and expect the same levels of professionalism, communication and customer care.	We reviewed contractor performance and reliability, strengthened contract management arrangements, and worked closely with contractors to ensure service delivery is aligned with STAR Housing's customer-focused values

		and standards.
Customers want to see that complaints lead to real improvements.	Complaints, customer feedback and Housing Ombudsman decisions provide valuable insight into how services can be improved and repeat failures prevented.	We introduced fortnightly root cause analysis meetings involving senior managers and directors, improved reporting on lessons learned, and strengthened the sharing of learning across teams to drive continuous service improvement.

Overall, learning from complaints has strengthened STAR Housing's focus on communication, timely resolution, follow-up of agreed actions and cross-service learning. These insights have directly informed the priorities set out in the Complaints Improvement Plan for 2026/27.

8. Complaints Improvement Plan and Priorities for 2026/27

STAR Housing remains committed to strengthening its positive complaint handling culture and ensuring that customer feedback drives meaningful service improvement. Learning from complaints, customer feedback, Housing Ombudsman decisions and service performance information will continue to shape our approach during 2026/27. The Complaints Service Improvement Plan sets out the actions STAR Housing will take to enhance the way complaints are managed and responded to.

The plan has been informed by:

- The annual self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.
- Feedback from Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) and STAR's transactional surveys.
- Lessons learned through complaint investigations and complaint outcomes.
- Fortnightly root cause meetings involving senior managers and directors, introduced during the final six months of 2025/26 and now embedded as a permanent feature of STAR Housing's governance arrangements.

Key Priorities for 2026/27

Our priorities for the coming year are to:

- Strengthen early resolution by supporting service teams to identify and resolve issues before they escalate.
- Enhance root cause analysis and cross-service learning to identify and address recurring issues at the earliest opportunity.
- Develop more detailed reporting and customer insight analysis to better understand complaint trends, emerging risks and opportunities for improvement.
- Improve communication with customers through better use of technology, clearer updates and improved record keeping.
- Continue investing in staff development to ensure colleagues have the skills and confidence to investigate complaints thoroughly and resolve concerns fairly.
- Strengthen quality assurance arrangements and management oversight to support consistency, transparency and compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.
- Monitor and evidence the completion of actions arising from complaints to ensure learning results in measurable service improvements.

Progress against the improvement plan will be monitored by STAR Housing's Senior Management Team throughout 2026/27 to ensure accountability, maintain momentum and demonstrate that learning from complaints translates into meaningful improvements for customers.

9. 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 that customers can use directly and staff can use to submit complaints on behalf of customers.
- 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.

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

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

10. 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.