



REPORT TO MANAGEMENT BOARD

**AGENDA
ITEM No.**

7.2

Name of Committee:	Board Meeting	Date:	9th September 2026
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Title & Brief Summary:	The Governing Body's Response to the Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2025/26
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Classification:	☐ For info and discussion	☐ Confidential
	☒ For info and decision	☒ Non-Confidential

Background Papers

Regulatory Framework – Consumer Standards

Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code

Housing Ombudsman Guidance on Annual Submissions (17 April 2025)

Complaint Handling Code Self-Assessment 2025/26

Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2025/26

Complaints Policy and Procedure

Housing Ombudsman determination 202315994 (24 March 2026)

Summary of Recommendations Action Requested

The Board is asked to note and approve:

- the Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2025/26;
- the annual self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code;
- this Governing Body response and the service improvement priorities for 2026/27; and
- publication of the required documents on Shian's complaints webpage and completion of the Housing Ombudsman annual submission by 30 September 2026.

Diversity Impact

Shian is mindful of its duties under the Equality Act 2010. The Board expects complaint handling to be accessible, fair and responsive to individual needs, including reasonable adjustments and known vulnerabilities. Equality considerations will continue to be reviewed through complaint monitoring, service improvement work and resident feedback.

Value for Money and Financial Implications

Effective complaint handling supports value for money by resolving issues early, reducing repeat contact and identifying service or contractor failures before they become more costly. The Board expects remedies to be proportionate and service improvements to address the underlying cause of complaints, particularly in repairs and contractor performance.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

To provide quality homes to the BME and wider community. To know and understand our residents and to deliver services that respond to their needs and challenges.

Risk Assessment

Impact Severity	Impact Multiplier	Assessment of risk Impact multiplier x Likelihood Multiplier (see below)				
Catastrophic	5	5	10	15	20	25
Major	4	4	8	12	16	20
Moderate	3	3	6	9	12	15
Minor	2	2	4	6	8	10
Insignificant	1	1	2	3	4	5
Multiplier		1	2	3	4	5
Likelihood		Rare	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain



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Title & Brief
Summary:

The Governing Body's Response to the Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2025/26

1. Complaints performance and Board scrutiny

Critical Success Factor (CSF): Timely, fair and effective resolution of complaints about Shian's services.

Key Result Indicators (KRI): complaint acknowledgements within 5 working days, Stage 1 responses within 10 working days and Stage 2 responses within 20 working days, unless a Code-compliant extension is agreed and recorded.

- During 2025/26 Shian received 16 complaints. All 16 were acknowledged within 5 working days.
- Fourteen of the 16 Stage 1 complaints were responded to within 10 working days (87.5%).
- One complaint progressed to Stage 2 and was responded to within 20 working days.
- No complaint was recorded as refused under the exclusions in the Complaints Policy.

The Board notes that acknowledgement and Stage 2 performance met the required timescales. Stage 1 performance was below Shian's 90% internal target, with two responses taking 14 working days. The Board expects any extension to be clearly explained, agreed where required, recorded and supported by regular updates to the resident.

2. Governing Body assurance

At its meeting on 9 September 2026, the Board considered the Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2025/26, the completed self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code, the Complaints Policy and Procedure, complaint performance data and the relevant Housing Ombudsman findings. This response is made on behalf of the Board as a whole.

Giving fair access to decent housing for members of the BME community

The Vice-Chair is Shian's Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC). The MRC's assurance is informed by the quarterly complaint information provided to the Board, access to the Managing Director and Operations Director, the annual complaint register and performance data, the self-assessment evidence, and Housing Ombudsman findings. This enables the MRC to compare the self-assessment with how complaints have been handled in practice, including timeliness, escalation, remedies, record keeping, reasonable adjustments and learning from complaints.

The Operations Director remains the senior officer responsible for complaint handling and liaison with the Housing Ombudsman. Complaint volumes, categories, outcomes, timeliness, trends and service improvements will continue to be reported to the Board, with redacted information provided to the Scrutiny Panel where appropriate.

3. Main themes and areas of concern

- Repairs and contractor performance: Ten of the 16 complaints related to repairs and maintenance. Heating and hot water failures, missed appointments, repair delays, repeat visits and contractor follow-up were the main recurring concerns, particularly during the winter months.
- Repeat repairs, damp and mould: Complaints showed the need to identify root causes earlier where problems continue after an initial visit. The Board supports earlier intrusive investigation where this is appropriate, particularly for leaks, damp and mould.
- Communication and record keeping: Several cases show that residents need clear, realistic and regular updates. Records must show contact, appointments, agreed actions, extensions, vulnerabilities, communication preferences and outstanding work.
- Customer service and staff conduct: Complaints about staff behaviour and service standards underline the need for respectful, neutral and person-centred communication, especially where residents may be vulnerable or where a matter is sensitive.

4. Service requests

The Board is clear that service requests must be taken seriously. They are often the first indication that something needs to be put right and can help Shian identify recurring service problems before they become formal complaints. Service requests are recorded and monitored through the customer relationship management system so that agreed actions can be followed through.

Where a resident expresses dissatisfaction with the response to a service request, the matter must be recognised and handled as a complaint in line with the Complaint Handling Code. The underlying service request should continue to be dealt with while the complaint is investigated. The Board will continue to seek assurance that staff recognise this distinction and do not use the service request process to delay or prevent access to the complaints process.

5. Housing Ombudsman findings and learning

The Board considered the Housing Ombudsman determination issued on 24 March 2026, reference 202315994. The Ombudsman identified service failure in Shian's response to concerns about staff conduct, the handling of contact restrictions and complaint handling. The Ombudsman did not find maladministration in relation to the reasonable adjustment request or the repairs considered in that case.

The Board has taken particular account of the learning on complaint response times, access to Stage 2, respectful language, communication preferences, vulnerabilities, reasonable adjustments and the need for clear records. The Stage 2 wording and complaint templates have been reviewed so that residents are not required to provide written reasons or additional evidence as a condition of escalation. The Board also notes that no separate Complaint Handling Failure Notice was recorded for Shian during 2025/26.

6. Service improvement priorities for 2026/27

- Heating and hot water: maintain closer oversight of emergency and essential repairs, repeat missed appointments and contractor follow-up, with prompt escalation where service standards are not met.
- Repeat repairs and property condition: consider earlier intrusive investigation where repairs, leaks, damp or mould continue after initial attendance, and use repair and stock condition information to identify recurring problems.
- Resident communication: provide clear updates on progress, delays, changed appointments, planned works and the next action. Communication should be in plain language and reflect agreed communication preferences and reasonable adjustments.
- Complaint handling: improve Stage 1 timeliness, make sure extensions meet the Code, keep outstanding actions under review and maintain straightforward access to Stage 2 and the Housing Ombudsman.
- Learning and oversight: carry out quarterly trend reviews covering complaints, service requests, repairs and contractor performance, and report progress to the Board and MRC. Learning will also be shared with residents through the newsletter and Scrutiny Panel.
- Staff and contractor development: continue refresher training on complaint handling, customer service, respectful communication, vulnerabilities, safeguarding awareness and reasonable adjustments.
- Record keeping: strengthen the recording of resident contact, service requests, repairs updates, agreed actions, extensions, remedies and outstanding work so that there is a clear audit trail.

7. Information security, confidentiality and resident safety

Complaint handling involves personal and sometimes sensitive information. The Board expects complaint information to be handled in line with data protection requirements, Shian's policies and appropriate access controls. Reports shared for scrutiny should contain only the KPI information needed for that purpose and are redacted where personal details are not required.

The Board also expects complaint handlers to consider known vulnerabilities, safeguarding concerns, health and safety risks and reasonable adjustments when deciding how to communicate with a resident and how quickly action is required. Restrictions on contact must be proportionate, recorded, kept under review and must not prevent access to the complaints process or emergency services.

8. Equality, accessibility and fairness

The Board expects the complaints process to remain easy to access and fair to all residents. Residents can complain through different channels and may use a representative. Reasonable adjustments should be recorded and kept under review. Complaint decisions must be based on the individual circumstances of each case and remedies should reflect the impact on the residents where service failure is identified.

9. Board decision and ongoing monitoring

The Board approves the Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2025/26 and the annual self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code. The Board also endorses the service improvement priorities set out above and will monitor progress through quarterly complaint reporting during 2026/27.

The Board requires the annual report, self-assessment, this Governing Body response and the Complaints Policy to be published on the complaints section of Shian's website, with live direct links used for the Housing Ombudsman annual submission by 30 September 2026.

Conclusion

The Board recognises the progress made in acknowledging complaints promptly and resolving most complaints at Stage 1. It also recognises that the main test is whether learning leads to a better service. Our focus for 2026/27 is therefore on repairs and contractor performance, communication, record keeping, accessibility and consistent complaint handling. Service requests will continue to be taken seriously and used alongside complaints to identify problems early and improve services for residents.

Shian Housing Association Board
9 September 2026