

The Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report

Shian Housing Association

Giving BME people equality, dignity, and hope.

**Reporting period: 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026
For annual submission by 30 September 2026**

1. Annual Complaints Performance Report

This report sets out Shian Housing Association's complaints performance for the year from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026. It brings together the number and type of complaints received, how quickly we responded, the main lessons from those complaints and the service improvements we are making as a result.

The report has been prepared for scrutiny by the Board and residents and to support Shian's annual submission to the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS). It should be read alongside Shian's annual self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, the Complaints Policy and Procedure and the Board's response to this report. The completed self-assessment forms part of Shian's annual complaints reporting and is published alongside this report.

2. Our approach to complaints and service requests

We want residents to tell us when something has gone wrong. A complaint is an opportunity to put matters right for the resident and to identify where a service, process or contractor needs to improve.

We also take service requests seriously. A service request is a request for action to put something right, rather than a complaint in itself. Service requests are recorded and monitored through our customer relationship management system so that agreed action can be followed through. If a resident is dissatisfied with our response to a service request, we will treat that dissatisfaction as a complaint. We continue to deal with the underlying service request while the complaint is considered.

Residents do not have to use the word "complaint". Complaints can be made in different ways and staff are expected to recognise dissatisfaction, explain the complaints process and make sure the matter is recorded correctly.

3. Complaint performance in 2025/26

We received 16 complaints during the year. Ten of the 16 complaints related to repairs and maintenance. Gas heating and hot water repairs were the most significant recurring issue, particularly during the winter months. One complaint progressed to Stage 2; the remaining complaints were concluded at Stage 1.

Measure	2025/26	Position
Complaints received	16	All accepted and recorded
Stage 1 complaints	16	14 of 16 responded to within 10 working days (87.5%)
Stage 2 complaints	1	Responded to within 20 working days (100%)
Acknowledgements	16	All acknowledged within 5 working days (100%)
Complaints refused	0	No complaint was recorded as refused under the exclusions policy

Two Stage 1 responses took 14 working days. In one case an extension was requested because information was needed from consortium members. In the other case further information and access arrangements were requested from the resident. These cases reinforce the need to agree and record extensions clearly, keep residents updated and make sure delays do not become open-ended.

4. What residents complained about

Complaint area	Number	Share
Repairs and maintenance	10	62.5%
Staff behaviour / customer service	3	18.8%
Housing management services	2	12.5%
Estate services	1	6.2%

The largest group of complaints concerned repairs. The issues included heating and hot water failures, missed contractor appointments, delays in repairs, window works, leaks, damp and mould, access disputes and communication about scaffolding. Several complaints resulted in an apology, compensation or an agreed action plan.

Other complaints concerned staff behaviour and customer service, delays in providing a housing management service, and estate issues including fly-tipping and parking management. These cases show that clear explanations, timely updates and respectful communication are important across all services, not only repairs.

5. Complaint outcomes and remedies

Most complaints were resolved at Stage 1. This is positive, but early resolution must still be thorough and fair. Where we identified that a resident had experienced poor service, remedies included apologies, compensation and agreed action plans. Seven complaints included an offer of compensation or financial redress in the complaint records provided for this report.

Where our internal investigation did not identify a service failure, we explained the decision and the action taken. We have avoided using Housing Ombudsman determination terms such as “no maladministration” to describe our own internal complaint decisions, as formal maladministration findings are made by the Ombudsman.

6. Complaints not accepted

No complaints were recorded as refused under the exclusions in the Complaints Policy during 2025/26. Some complaints involved repeated or previously considered matters and unreasonable behaviour concerns, but the cases shown in the complaints register were still recorded and responded to. Where a complaint is not accepted in future, the reason will be given to the resident in writing together with information about their right to challenge that decision through the Housing Ombudsman.

7. Housing Ombudsman findings and publications

The Housing Ombudsman issued a determination concerning Shian on 24 March 2026 (complaint reference 202315994). The complaint itself related mainly to events between January 2023 and February 2024, but the determination falls within this reporting year and is therefore included here.

The Ombudsman found service failure in Shian’s response to concerns about staff conduct, in the handling of contact restrictions and in complaint handling. It found no maladministration in the response to the resident’s request for reasonable adjustments or in the handling of the repairs considered in that case. The Ombudsman ordered an apology, £175 compensation, updated vulnerability records and a review of contact restrictions, communication preferences and repair arrangements. It also required Shian to

consider reasonable adjustments and the recommendations in the Ombudsman's Spotlight report on Attitudes, Respect and Rights.

The determination also identified complaint handling lessons. In particular, Stage 1 responses must be issued within the Code timescale, complaint responses should use neutral and respectful language, and access to Stage 2 must not be made dependent on a resident providing written reasons or additional evidence. These points have been built into the improvement plan and staff refresher work for 2026/27.

No separate Complaint Handling Failure Notice or other finding of non-compliance with the statutory Complaint Handling Code has been recorded by Shian for 2025/26. The March 2026 determination did, however, identify complaint handling failures that are relevant to Code compliance and these have been treated as formal learning.

The Housing Ombudsman's Annual Complaints Review 2025/26 was published in September 2026. Repairs remained the largest area of concern nationally and the review highlighted poor communication, record keeping and person-centred service as recurring causes of failure. These themes are reflected in Shian's own complaints, particularly heating and hot water repairs, repeat repairs and the quality of updates to residents.

The most recent individual landlord performance report identified for Shian at the time of preparing this report is the 2024/25 report, refreshed in May 2025. It recorded two determinations, seven findings, five findings of maladministration or service failure and seven orders.

The learning from that report has informed our continued focus on repairs, contractor performance, complaint handling, communication and record keeping. No separate 2025/26 individual landlord performance report for Shian had been identified at the date this report was prepared.

8. What we have learned

Heating and essential repairs need closer oversight

Several complaints concerned delays in restoring heating or hot water, missed appointments and poor contractor follow-up. These issues have a direct impact on residents, especially during colder weather.

Repeat repairs need earlier investigation

Where the same problem is reported more than once, particularly leaks, damp and mould, we need to consider intrusive investigation sooner so that the root cause is identified.

Residents need regular and realistic updates

Complaints often become more difficult when residents are unclear about what is happening, why there is a delay or what will happen next.

Clear explanations can prevent avoidable disputes

Complaints about major works, scaffolding, adaptations and estate services showed the value of explaining safety requirements, service limits and expected disruption at an early stage.

Complaint records must show the full story

Accurate records of contact, appointments, agreed actions, extensions and outstanding works are essential for good case management and fair complaint investigations.

Tone and accessibility matter

The March 2026 Ombudsman decision reinforces the need for respectful, neutral language and for the complaint process to remain accessible to residents who may need different communication arrangements.

9. Service improvements made and underway

We have already taken steps to strengthen complaint handling and service delivery. These include regular monitoring of open repair cases, clearer escalation with contractors, improved communication with residents, staff training and closer review of complaint trends. Complaints and service requests are used together as an early warning of where a service may not be working as intended.

Area	Action	Expected outcome
Gas heating repairs and contractor management	Enhanced monitoring of emergency and essential repairs, including outstanding heating and hot water cases and repeat missed appointments.	Reduced delays and stronger contractor accountability.
Repeat repairs, leaks, damp and mould	Earlier consideration of intrusive investigation where an issue continues after initial attendance.	Earlier identification of root causes and fewer repeat visits.
Communication with residents	Clearer standards for updates on repairs, complaints, estate services and delayed works.	Better management of expectations and improved resident confidence.
Major works and planned activity	Earlier engagement before adaptations, fire safety works, scaffolding and other projects, including clear information on timescales and disruption.	Fewer misunderstandings and better-informed residents.
Complaint learning	Quarterly trend reviews covering complaint themes, outcomes, contractor performance and recurring service issues.	Earlier identification of systemic issues and clearer evidence of learning.
Staff and contractor training	Refresher training on complaint handling, customer service, communication, vulnerable residents and reasonable adjustments.	More consistent and person-centred service.
Record keeping	Improved recording of resident contact, repair updates, agreed actions, extensions and outstanding work.	Stronger case oversight and more reliable evidence for investigations.

10. Priorities for 2026/27

The following priorities will be monitored through the year:

- Improve Stage 1 response performance so that responses are issued within 10 working days, or a Code-compliant extension is agreed and recorded.
- Wording of the Stage 2 escalation process and template letters have been revised to make clear that residents do not have to provide written reasons or additional evidence as a condition of escalation.
- Continue close monitoring of heating, hot water, damp and mould cases, with prompt escalation where repeat visits or missed appointments occur.
- Use service request data, repairs record alongside complaint data to identify recurring service problems before they develop into formal complaints.

- Continue quarterly reporting of complaint volumes, categories, outcomes, timeliness and learning to the Board and the Member Responsible for Complaints.
- Share learning with residents through the newsletter and scrutiny panel.

11. Oversight, scrutiny and accountability

The Operations Director has senior responsibility for complaint handling and for liaison with the Housing Ombudsman. Complaint performance and learning are reported to the Board. The Vice-Chair is the Member Responsible for Complaints and has access to the information and senior staff needed to provide challenge and assurance.

The Board receives information on complaint volumes, categories, outcomes, response performance and trends. It also receives updates on Ombudsman investigations and the progress of service improvements. Resident scrutiny and feedback provide an additional source of challenge and help test whether changes are improving the service in practice.

12. Self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code

Shian has completed its annual self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's statutory Complaint Handling Code. The self-assessment records compliance with the Code and sets out the evidence used to support each response. It is reviewed by the Board and published with this report.

The March 2026 Ombudsman determination has been considered as part of this year's scrutiny. The specific learning on Stage 2 access, communication, complaint response times and respectful language has been included in the improvement actions above. This is important because compliance is not only about what the policy says; it must also be reflected in day-to-day complaint handling.

13. Conclusion

Complaints in 2025/26 were concentrated mainly in repairs and maintenance, particularly gas heating and hot water. Most complaints were resolved at Stage 1 and all were acknowledged within the five-working-day target. Our main areas for improvement are contractor oversight, repeat repairs, communication, record keeping and consistent compliance with complaint response times.

We will continue to take service requests seriously and use them, together with complaints, to identify problems early. Where a resident is dissatisfied with the response to a service request, we will make sure they have straightforward access to the complaints process while the underlying service issue continues to be addressed.

The Board will continue to scrutinise complaint performance and the delivery of the service improvement plan during 2026/27. Progress will be reported to residents and will inform the next annual review.

References considered

- Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code (statutory Code, effective from 1 April 2024).
- Housing Ombudsman guidance on annual submissions for 2025/26 and 2026/27.
- Housing Ombudsman Annual Complaints Review 2025/26, published September 2026.
- Housing Ombudsman determination: Shian Housing Association Limited, complaint 202315994, 24 March 2026.
- Housing Ombudsman individual landlord performance report for Shian Housing Association Limited, 2024/25 (data refreshed May 2025).
- Housing Ombudsman Spotlight report: Attitudes, Respect and Rights.

- Shian Housing Association Complaints Policy and Procedure and 2025/26 Complaint Handling Code self-assessment.
- Shian Housing Association complaints register and annual submission data for 2025/26.