



# Governing Body Statement on Complaints Handling Performance

**Sofiah Shazali – Board Member and Chair of the Operations Committee**

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Ash-Shahada Housing Association's Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report for 2025/26 provides a transparent overview of our complaint-handling performance this year, the lessons we have learned, and the actions we have taken to strengthen service delivery for our residents. This is the third year we have produced this report.

This report has been scrutinised by staff and the executive team and was formally approved by our Board. It draws on operational performance data, resident feedback, staff training, and our annual self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. As part of our commitment to continuous improvement, we have proactively reviewed and strengthened our processes, particularly within repairs - historically our highest area of complaint - with many of the resulting lessons already embedded through our complaints and repairs improvement workstreams.

During the year we also restructured our housing team so that staff hold clear responsibility for specified service areas, strengthening accountability and improving how quickly we respond. There are regular touch points in year, reports are presented at the quarterly Operations Committee meetings, quarterly board meetings, and quarterly tenant forums to support and constructively challenge our performance in the course of the year.

We have also completed our annual self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, which has been reviewed and approved by our governing bodies (the board and executive management). The assessment confirms full compliance across all sections of the Code, supported by evidence of strengthened processes, improved accessibility, clear complaint definitions, and robust governance oversight. It demonstrates that our policies, training, and operational practice continue to meet the Ombudsman's standards and that learning from complaints is embedded across the organisation. The self-assessment has been published alongside this report to provide transparency and assurance to residents and stakeholders.

## Performance Summary

We received 14 complaints in 2025/26 14 in total, out of which 11 were concluded at stage 1, 3 progressed to stage 2. All complaints at both stages were responded to within target times - 100% compliance - and we did not need to issue any holding responses. One case, concerning overcrowding, has progressed to further investigation by the Housing Ombudsman; statutory responsibility for this matter rests with the Local Authority.

Repairs remained our largest complaint category (42.86% of all complaints), with our Central Repairs team receiving 6 complaints in total, 3 of which related to contractor conduct.



Complaint volumes rose slightly from 12 in 2024/25 to 14 in 2025/26. We are confident this does not reflect a decline in service: response-time compliance remained at 100% across both stages, and only 21% of complaints required escalation beyond Stage 1.

### **Improvements Made in 2025/26**

- A restructure of the housing team, with staff responsible for specified service areas to strengthen accountability and responsiveness.
- Centralisation of complaints management to the Office/Housing Manager, with a dedicated tenancy officer investigating and responding to all Stage 1 complaints.
- Regular staff training, alongside internal sessions with the Deputy Chief Executive and Associate Directors.
- Completion of our digital transformation programme, giving tenants access to their tenancy accounts through a new portal, now used by 127 tenants - 59% of our tenant base - and an improved website.
- Strengthened contractor oversight, including reviewed terms of engagement and a new tenant-facing leaflet, following upheld complaints about contractor conduct.
- A more systematic approach to damp and mould cases, supported by independent specialist consultants and a new high/medium/low RAG-rated prioritisation procedure.
- Approval of a new Complaints Policy aligned with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, published on our website, alongside enhanced governance oversight from our Associate Director of Housing

Taken together, these actions have improved complaint logging and response times and given tenants greater visibility and accountability throughout the process.

### **Looking Ahead**

The table below presents tenant satisfaction figures for work completed by contractors. As part of our commitment to delivering high-quality services and putting things right for our tenants, the Senior Management Team will be reviewing the results to understand why contractor satisfaction levels remain consistently positive quarter-on-quarter, while the annual complaints data presents a slightly different picture. This review will help to identify any underlying issues and ensure that lessons learnt results in further improvement to our service.

| <b>Quarter</b>    | <b>Satisfaction</b> |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| Q1 (Apr-Jun 2025) | 95%                 |
| Q2 (Jul-Sep 2025) | 92%                 |
| Q3 (Oct-Dec 2025) | 97%                 |
| Q4 (Jan-Mar 2026) | 94%                 |



Our self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code has been published on our website, and we plan to review it with tenants to keep them informed and gather their feedback. We remain committed to delivering excellent customer service within a challenging economic and regulatory environment, and to embedding the lessons in this report across our organisation.

We trust this report provides assurance of our continued commitment to learning, accountability, and service improvement. We welcome ongoing dialogue with the Housing Ombudsman and value the guidance provided through your investigations, training, and published determinations.