

Governing Body statement on Southway's Complaint Performance and Service Improvement Report 2025/26

Katie McGrouther, Member Responsible for Complaints, and Shefali Kapoor, Chair of the Customer Voice Committee, have responded to our Annual Performance and Service Improvement Report on behalf of Southway Housing Trust's Board. This statement was updated in July 2026 to reflect improvements in our Housing Ombudsman performance and our 2025/26 Tenant Satisfaction Measure results.

Improving our complaints performance was a central priority for the Board in 2025/26, with particular emphasis on delivering timely responses that meet the Housing Ombudsman Service's expectations and deadlines and resolve concerns more quickly for our customers.

We are pleased to report that our decision to strengthen resources within the Customer Experience team, responsible for managing complaints, has led to substantial improvements – with 97.6% of acknowledgements and responses shared with residents on time this year. This investment, combined with a renewed, organisation-wide commitment to best practice, has resulted in notable progress across our complaints handling processes.

Our latest Tenant Satisfaction Measure (TSM TP09) results highlight this positive trajectory, with satisfaction with our complaints approach rising from 32% in 2024/25 to 45% in 2025/26. This places Southway among the highest performing landlords in Greater Manchester and nationally, and most importantly, reiterates the high value our team of colleagues place on resolving customer's concerns fairly.

Whilst we are pleased with the progress made in our complaints management, we understand there is still room for improvement to meet our customers' justifiably high expectations. Our priority moving forward is to resolve a greater proportion of Stage 1 complaints swiftly, thereby reducing the number of cases that need to be escalated to Stage 2. Additionally, we will enhance our systems and processes, which will support us in preventing any further issues with complaint handling.

We expect to receive confirmation of our annual maladministration rate from the Ombudsman by September 2026. Meanwhile, our internal review indicates that the maladministration rate - measuring maladministration findings against effective resolutions - has dropped to 65% from 89% in 2024/25, marking positive progress.

We also want to note how much we appreciate the valuable contributions of our customers in reviewing our Complaints Handling Policy, Managing Unacceptable Behaviour Policy, and Compensation Policies for 2025/26. These changes were made in collaboration with tenants, enabling us to enhance our procedures and achieve full compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, as confirmed by our recent self-assessment.

We remain committed to learning from complaints and the wider customer voice. Complaints provide essential insight into how we can improve services, and performance is reviewed at least quarterly to ensure learning is acted on. Progress in 2025/26 includes the introduction of the Complaint Learning Framework, with new complaint categories from April 2026 enabling more detailed root cause analysis.

We are determined to ensure this learning leads to genuine, positive change for tenants. Examples include investment in boundary improvements, expanding our team of housing officers and launching a new solar panel netting programme in 2026.

We deeply value the ongoing support and participation of our tenants, and we warmly invite you to continue engaging with us through our various groups and events. Together, we are shaping a stronger, more responsive Southway for the future.