

How customers are influencing and improving services



**Customer Voice
and Insight Report**
April–September 2025

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You can find out more about customer voice and getting involved at www.southwayhousing.co.uk/get-involved/have-your-say or scan these QR codes below



**Customer Voice
Strategy**



**Get involved
and have your say**

Introduction

Welcome to our first Customer Voice and Insight Report, which shows how we're listening and acting on customer feedback.

This report covers the first half of the year, from April to September 2025.

Communities are at the heart of everything we do. We want to hear from as many people as possible to help us meet customers' needs and the standards of service you expect. We're also improving how customer feedback is discussed by our Boards and Committees before key decisions are made.

Whether it's good or bad – we learn from customer feedback. It's an opportunity to make changes where they're needed or do more of the things we do well.

In April, we launched our new three-year Customer Voice Strategy which has been produced in partnership with customers. It sets out our commitment to involving customers in lots of different ways so everyone has an opportunity to have their say and influence how services are run.

In this report you'll find lots of information about how we've been working with our customers and the changes we've been making.

Some changes recommended by customers take time to put in place so these results might not be covered until a later report.

We hope you enjoy reading more about the impact the customer voice is having at Southway. If you'd like to take part in any of the groups mentioned in this report, please call us on **0161 448 4200**. We want to find ways for all of our customers to get involved so please let us know how we can help you to take part.



Jane Gant
Executive Director of
Homes and Communities

What's happened so far?

April to June

Engagements include meetings and events held with customers and the completion of customer feedback surveys.

368



customers we've worked with

22



face-to-face events

85



hours of engagement

300



Tenant Satisfaction Measures surveys completed¹

July to
Sept

357



customers we've
worked with

23



face-to-face events

77



hours of engagement

300



Tenant Satisfaction
Measures surveys
completed

3



Fun and Feedback
events

Attended by **205** Adults, **240** Children

You said, we did

Over the last six months, you got in touch to tell us what we could do better. Here are some of the improvements we've made.

April to
June

- Our website was out of date

We launched a new website in consultation with customers

- We are spending too much time and money on out of hours emergency repairs

We have worked with our service improvement group to review the process to clarify which repairs should be treated as emergencies

- Customers should be rewarded for getting involved

We're launching incentives for customers in autumn 2025

- We needed to reduce the number of 'no access'¹ repairs

We're looking at how we speed up repairs and communicate the costs of missed appointments



July to
Sept

- Some tenants have told us they aren't happy with the layout of communal gardens

We're working on a trial project to improve the communal area on the Arrowfield Estate in Chorlton. We're asking residents for their feedback and ideas for the space

- We get a lot of complaints about pests and the pest control service

We're changing how we deal with pests and are carrying out a full review of the way we manage the pest control service during the next three months and will be asking customers to get involved

- Tenants at Grove Lane asked for a meeting and were worried the residents' lounge wasn't covered by CCTV

We set up a housing surgery where residents could drop in to discuss any tenancy related matters and we installed two cameras in the lounge

- From surveys and what you've told us, we know that we don't always get it right when it comes to communicating with you our customers

All our staff have been trained in delivering great customer service, and we've concentrated in the last three months on how we communicate to make sure we are always clear, customer focused and open & honest

Scheme improvements

Over the past six months, we've also made lots of improvements at our housing schemes following customer feedback some of which include:

- new bin store doors at Hayward Court to stop fly-tipping
- new steps and a handrail to improve safe access to bins and more CCTV signage at Gorton Mill House
- changing caretaker shifts at Gorton Mill House to empty bins more regularly
- more car park lighting at Merseybank Avenue
- fitting hooks in the foyer at Allingham Place in Altrincham to help a tenant store her pram
- giving car covers to customers at The Townhouse in Urmston to prevent damage from trees.

Achieving better value for money

We will continue to listen to our customers to achieve better value for money.

We will:

- Show our Board and Committees how customers have helped to co-design our services, policies and future plans
- Let customers know how their feedback from satisfaction surveys and complaints drives change and innovation
- Involve tenants when we're looking to buy new services or products for their homes so they can have their say on value for money
- Ask our tenant influencing groups to monitor progress on value for money.

What our customers have been involved in

Tenant Scrutiny Panel

April to June

The panel met five times

There are currently five customers on the panel who have been involved in:

- Reviewing our Tenant Satisfaction Measures* Action Plan
- Being observed and interviewed by the Regulator of Social Housing as part of Southway's Regulatory Inspection
- Looking at our process for failed repairs appointments and call backs to improve performance and make sure customers receive follow up information

July to Sept

The panel met six times

A new member joined the panel in July so there are now six customers on the panel. The panel has been involved in:

- Carrying out the full review of the process for failed repair appointments and call backs
- This included looking at data and reports
- Interviewing Southway staff
- Drafting the report that goes to People and Places Committee in November

*Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) are an important survey which every social landlord needs to undertake each year. The results help us to understand what our customers feel about our services. Using customer feedback, we've created an action plan to drive improvement, which the Tenant Scrutiny Panel oversees.

Customer Voice Panel

April to June

This group oversees the Customer Voice Strategy Action Plan. There are currently eight customers on the Panel. The group asked for us to make our action plan clearer with less jargon. A member of the Panel said:

“I commented on the new Customer Voice Strategy when it was first consulted on as I was keen that the document was clear and concise and customer friendly, and that it included everything customers needed to know about how they could influence services at Southway. So, when I was asked to be part of the Customer Voice Panel that would oversee the delivery of the action plan, I was more than willing. I’ve been happy with the progress updates we’ve received and seen evidence that actions are being taken.”

Nicola England
Tenant from Chorlton



July to Sept

This panel oversees the customer voice strategy action plan, which is our road map for ensuring customers are at the heart of service improvement at Southway. We’re improving how we listen to our customers and demonstrate how they are influencing decisions we make and the way we run services.



Fun and Feedback event, held in Chorlton this year in August 2025

Service Improvement Groups

A Service Improvement Group (SIG) is a group of customers who work with Southway to review services and suggest improvements. The groups meet every three months to see how we're performing against our targets, review policy, provide evidence-based feedback and recommend changes to make improvements and influence what we do. There are now five SIGs.

More information →



Repairs Service Improvement Group



April to
June

The group met on 21 May

Seven customers attended and discussed:

- Out of hours emergency repairs — what repairs should be attended out of normal working hours and which repairs can safely be left until the next working day
- Performance information including where things are going well, where we're not meeting targets and what is being done to improve
- The type of toilet seat used in homes — a new product was agreed that is more cost effective without compromising on quality
- A new process for ordering materials for repairs now means less driving time for operatives and more repairs being completed



July to
Sept

The group met on 2 July & 10 September

Six tenants attended in July, but only three attended in September. They discussed:

- Performance information including where things are going well, where we're not meeting targets and what is being done to improve
- Updating the group on projects including our new way to order supplies
- Work that is underway to improve how we book repairs appointments including:
 - improvements to the new tenant portal which will mean customers will be able to cancel and rearrange a repair. The new portal is coming soon
- The Responsive Repairs Policy which is being reviewed and a new policy will be in place by the end of the year. The group discussed the changes they want to see in the new policy

Anti-social Behaviour Service Improvement Group



April to
June

The group met on 4 June

Eight customers attended and discussed:

- How mediation is used to resolve neighbour disputes
- Performance information including where things are going well, where we're not meeting targets and what is being done to improve
- Southway's Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- A pilot Good Neighbour Project to create a community spirit where people welcome each other and respect differences.

July to
Sept

The group met on 24 September

Three customers attended and discussed:

- Community Protection Notices — the group expressed concern about these being delegated to Southway so further work is taking place with Manchester City Council, and more consultation will be carried out
- Case reviews and how we learn from them
- An update on legal action we have taken
- A change to how we survey customers when an anti-social behaviour case is closed for in an effort to get more feedback.

Home In Focus Service Improvement Group



April to
June

The group met on 25 June

Seven customers attended and discussed:

- The Terms of Reference for the group — the role of the group, what they'll work on and how
- Home Improvement and Energy Surveys and the investment programme in homes which will start in 2026
- Energy saving projects to help residents lower their bills

July to
Sept

The group met on 27 October

Two customers attended and discussed:

- Damp and mould. They reviewed the process to ensure compliance with the new Awaab's Law
- The process for agreeing which contractors to partner with to make homes more energy efficient.

Complaints Service Improvement Group



April to June

The group met on 26 June

Four customers attended and discussed:

- Performance information including where things are going well, where we're not meeting targets and what is being done to improve
- A number of closed customer complaints

What's next?

The group's next meeting will be confirmed soon

Customer Access Service Improvement Group



July to Sept

The group met on 30 July

Nine customers attended and agreed:

- The purpose of the group is to look at the different ways that customers use our services to improve accessibility and inclusion

What's next?

The group's next meeting is on 25 November when they want to look at the process for booking repairs where the customer has vulnerabilities or if more than one trade is required — to identify where things could be improved in the booking process

Beautiful South Fund Panel

This panel oversees how our £25,000 annual community fund is spent. They look for initiatives from individuals or groups that will benefit a majority of Southway tenants and neighbourliness. There are six customers on the Panel.

April to June

The group met on 2 June

The group reviewed 10 applications with funding being awarded to six projects which met the criteria. Recent projects include a coach trip to Llandudno for residents, dance classes and activities for young people with disabilities.

July to Sept

The group met again on 7 July

They reviewed the five funding applications and approved three of these. One application was for a group planning their Christmas celebrations, including a festive meal and event for older residents at Gorton Mill House. The second was towards an outdoor classroom seating area for children in Old Moat. And the third was to support the Withington Pride event this summer.

Cosy Mondays

Every Monday part of our office becomes a drop in for residents to have a brew and a chat and we extend the invite to non-Southway tenants too.

We have a clothes rail that people can donate to and take from and we use the time to talk to customers and get their views on a number of projects. Around 15–30 people attend each week depending on the focus of the session.

April to June

- Held two free rug giveaways
- Held two children's craft activities
- Welcomed Manchester Carers Organisation who spoke to tenants about caring
- Hosted Energyworks who provided advice and information to help residents save energy and money

July to Sept

- Held two spruce up events including paint, homewares, rugs and Tupperware
- Held two crafting events
- Welcomed Be Well who spoke to customers about their service and how to access it
- Hosted Answer Cancer, who improve cancer awareness and increase uptake of cancer screening across Greater Manchester.



Priorities for the next three months

October to December

We will:

- Finalise the review of our tenant scrutiny model to make it more flexible and accessible to more customers
- Hold a Customer Voice Panel meeting to update customers on progress with the Customer Voice Strategy Action Plan
- Hold our next Service Improvement Group meetings
 - Repairs
 - Customer Access
 - Homes In Focus
- Consult on and finalise our new Repairs Policy
- Welcome tenants and residents every week to Cosy Mondays at Southern Gate
- Hold Customer Voice roadshows to encourage more tenants to get involved

We're already making great progress towards these priorities and will report back to you in our next Customer Voice and Insight Report.

Customer complaints

What's happened so far?

April to June

We received 143 formal complaints. All of these were responded to within target timescales or with agreed extensions where appropriate.

Number of complaints received and outcomes:

- 118 Stage 1 complaints 62% more than those received in the same period last year
- 25 Stage 2 complaints. This was a 257% increase on the same period last year
- 59% of Stage 1 complaints were upheld, 28% were partially upheld and 13% were not upheld
- 88% of Stage 2 complaints were upheld or partially upheld and 12% were not upheld



Key themes

- The main reasons for complaints were delays and poor communication which accounted for:
 - 58% of Stage 1 Complaints
 - 52% of Stage 2 Complaints
- We're currently reviewing how we categorise complaints to help manage these more effectively, more quickly and reduce reoccurring themes

Lessons learned

- We have 111 lessons learned from complaints between April and June. We have put changes in place to learn from 86% of these complaints and are working on the remaining which need further consideration against our current policies and procedures or additional training for our teams
- We held a Complaints Service Improvement Group to gather feedback on complaints and our Armchair Tenants' group have made suggestions for improving our complaint responses

You said, we did

How we've acted on customer feedback since April.

- Some complaint responses could be more reader-friendly; clearer separation of dates from text is suggested

We have updated our templates and guidance to introduce this

- Distinguishing tenant remarks from Southway's comments (using italics, bold, colour, or separate paragraphs) would improve clarity

We have updated our templates, and have quality checks in place

- Instances of unlogged complaints or issues that caused delays and confusion is frustrating

We now have a tracking system in place and have changed how we log complaints to ensure they are not missed

- Operatives wear shoe covers but sometimes put them on outside or leave them on when going to the van, making them less effective

This feedback has been shared with our operatives who have all completed customer service training this year

- Noted repetition of apology sentences in some letters; consistency and conciseness are important

We have now implemented a quality check on all complaints to help to ensure these issues are addressed

Things we're working on over the next few months:

- Improved layout with bullet points and separate repair summaries is helpful, especially for complex cases

We are running complaint handling training to help improve our external communication with customers and we have a new tone of voice to ensure we're communicating clearly and using common words that everyone will understand

- Have a dedicated person regularly update tenants and explain repair service issues

Cases managed by operational managers will be brought in line with those completed by our Customer Experience Team to ensure a consistent high standard of case management and ownership. This is a significant part of the complaints training we're planning to run for colleagues early next year



Customer complaints

What's happened so far?

July to Sept

We received 153 formal complaints – a 7% increase on the last three months.

All complaints were responded to on time.

Number of complaints received and outcomes:

- 117 Stage 1 complaints
- 36 Stage 2 complaints — 40% more than those received in the last three months
- 62% of Stage 1 complaints upheld, 25% partially upheld and 13% not upheld
- 91% of Stage 2 complaints upheld, 9% not upheld



Key themes

- The most common reason for complaints continued to be delays and poor communication accounting for:
 - 60% of Stage 1 complaints
 - 42% of Stage 2 complaints
- We're continuing to review how we categorise complaints to improve how we manage these and resolve issues for customers more quickly and learning from any previous patterns

Lessons learned

- We have 81 lessons learned from complaints received between July and September
- We're reviewing these and the best action to take which might include changes to policies, processes, other service improvements and staff training

What our complaints data is telling us?

We need to:

- Continue to raise standards across our communication building on training we've run with colleagues to improve how we communicate with customers and deliver excellent customer service
- Hold further training and coaching on handling complaints for colleagues to avoid further complaints escalation. We're running this training early next year
- Be proactive in addressing any service delays with customers and have better systems in place to spot failures which may lead to complaints
- Regularly review internal resources to make sure we have enough colleagues to answer calls into our customer hub during busy periods
- Get better at resolving Stage 1 complaints
- Review how we handle and categorise complaints which we have started to do
- Identify potential customer complaints early to prevent them from happening. This includes monitoring things like how many times customers contact us, failed repairs and low satisfaction scores on our customer surveys. We're making progress towards this goal

1. Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) surveys are completed every three months and we survey 300 tenants each time. We complete 100 surveys with tenants in person in person colleagues. A company called ARP Research carry out 100 online surveys and 100 phone surveys on our behalf. These surveys are a requirement and are conducted by all housing associations. They highlight areas for improvement which we then put into an action plan.

2. No access is where we attend a pre-arranged appointment to complete a repair but the customer is not at home and the repair cannot be done.



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