




Customer Care Strategy


2024 - 2027



Incorporating our
8 STAR Strategies

starhousing.org.uk

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Welcome to our Customer Care Strategy

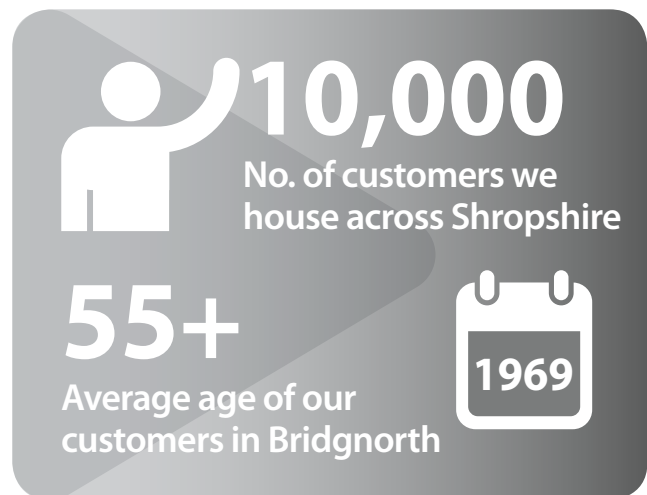
Introduction

Welcome to our Customer Care Strategy. It sets out key objectives for the next three years, showing how we'll approach delivering a better, more personalised customer experience, develop our customer-focused culture, and improve how we support customers to sustain and thrive in their tenancies.

Between now and 2027 we're aiming to build on the excellent work we do with our customers and enhance our local understanding and existing relationships with people across our community.

We house nearly 10,000 customers across Shropshire, with the majority of our customers living in the market towns of Bridgnorth and Oswestry. There is diversity and difference across these areas., For example, Oswestry has the more ethnically diverse community, whilst Bridgnorth has an older average age with more customers aged over 55. A key objective of this strategy is to understand our customers better and use this as a basis to develop and deliver better services.

Our customers, like anyone, want to live happy, healthy lives. We recognise the impact that we can have on that – in the services we provide; in the way we treat people; being there when things go wrong; and in supporting customers when they might need help. We've listened to what our customers have told us is important to them, hearing from almost a thousand customers in recent months. We've then used this insight to shape the priorities in this strategy.



Our customers are at the heart of what we do. We know that over the past 5 years customer expectation and behaviours have changed in terms of customer service. Yet we also know that people have busy, complex lives and often want services to be simple, convenient, straightforward and easy to access.

Introduction

To continue building trust with our customers we know it's really important to keep our promises and do what we say we will. The new consumer regulatory framework is based on a strong understanding of what's important to customers and this strategy will support us in achieving the outcomes needed to meet the new standards.


We recognise that a one-size-fits-all approach won't work for everyone, so we'll always aim to offer different ways for our customers to interact with us. We know that our repairs and maintenance service is critical for residents and while we have good levels of satisfaction, we know there's even more room for improvement. With our customers comparing us to other companies and service providers rather than other landlords, we aim to improve our customers' experience at STAR Housing by transforming our services, customer contact and service communication.

With the cost-of-living crisis and all the financial challenges it brings, including the negative impact on mental health, the last few years have put huge pressure on our customers and their abilities to thrive in their homes.

We want to focus on the support we can provide them to navigate through these challenges and complexities and build their resilience. Our commitment to investing in our people and services is stronger than ever, aimed at sustaining tenancies and supporting people to live happy, healthy lives, independently in their homes.



This strategy outlines key goals in four areas we'll achieve over the next three years. Our Customer Care Strategy also aligns and contributes to the broader vision set out in our Corporate Plan.



"Our customers, like anyone, want to live happy, healthy lives."

Aims

Know our customers

Our aim

We will improve the collection of data and use of customer insight to improve what we know about our customers, so that we can deliver more responsive and personalised services that better meet our customers' and their families needs.

Our customer base at STAR Housing is diverse with individual expectations and needs. To be able to deliver tailored services, we need to truly understand our customers. We'll focus on improving the collection and accessibility of customer data to inform our service models and daily activities. By implementing a range of initiatives we'll improve what we know about the people living in our homes and communities, but also how well we use that information to design and tailor our services to their needs.



How we'll achieve this:

- ▶ We'll develop a new customer profile to ensure the information we collect and hold is appropriate, useful and accurate, and develop a range of initiatives to increase the amount of data we hold
- ▶ By improving our customer-focused data analysis to get a better insight into how our services affect different customer groups
- ▶ By reviewing our approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and create a new vulnerable customers policy and approach that allows us to adapt our services where needed
- ▶ We'll implement a new CRM system that gives all our teams a single 360-degree view of the customer
- ▶ We'll invest in the right resources that help keep our customer data up to date and conduct annual household customer check-ins

Aims

Know our customers

How we'll measure success:

- ▶ With the introduction of a new customer profile framework and a clear approach to how we collect, manage and use customer data by the end of 2024
- ▶ A new vulnerable customer policy will be in place by the end of 2024
- ▶ We'll have a new dashboard available by Spring 2025 that will provide us with a strategic overview of our customers and communities
- ▶ We'll aim to visit or contact 100% of our customers on an annual basis to ensure we stay up to date with their circumstances by summer 2025
- ▶ We'll aim to complete gathering at least 80% of our customer data by spring 2026 and 95% by spring 2027



Aims

Customer experience



Our aim

We will deliver efficient services that are simple, reliable, right first time and easy to access, all based on excellent communication.

We know that almost 90% of customers want our online services to improve. We also want to ensure our customers experience a landlord who's easy to deal with, responsive and caring. At STAR we'll deliver what we say we will so that our customers know they can rely on us. By the end of this strategy, we aim to have increased our customer satisfaction to at least 85% and have 9 out of 10 customers feel we're easy to deal with through simplifying, streamlining and modernising our services as well as improving our repairs and maintenance service.

How we'll achieve this:

- ▶ We'll review all our service standards with customers and publish what customers can expect from us by the end of 2024
- ▶ We'll put a new customer-focused performance framework into place to ensure all performance is monitored, and report this to our customers annually from spring 2025
- ▶ By reviewing our repairs and maintenance service by spring 2025 to ensure that it remains fit-for-purpose and supports us in meeting increasing customer demand expectations
- ▶ We'll introduce a new case management and performance system so we can monitor how well we're meeting our service standards by Summer 2025
- ▶ Introducing new, modern and convenient ways for customers to choose how to contact us. For example including improving our online portals and introducing digital channels of contact, whilst always maintaining a telephone option by summer 2025
- ▶ Redevelop our website so that it's a simple, user-friendly tool for customers by summer 2025
- ▶ Introducing new tools to help our staff communicate with customers quickly by autumn 2025
- ▶ We'll re-design all our core customer services, simplifying processes and making it more customer focused by the end of 2025

Aims

Customer experience



How we'll measure success:

- ▶ We'll achieve at least 90% satisfaction with our repairs and maintenance service
- ▶ 90% of customers will say we are easy to deal with
- ▶ 85% of customers will say we keep them informed
- ▶ With increased use and access of our website to provide information and updates to customers
- ▶ We'll achieve an external accreditation for our service quality in key areas by summer 2026
- ▶ We'll have a new set of measurable customer service standards, that have been agreed with customers, and we'll achieve 90% of these targets by spring 2027

Aims

Professionalism and culture

Our aim

To ensure all our teams are customer-focused and well trained, ensuring the delivery of excellent customer care with a focus on respect, openness and fairness.

Our recent learns as a sector have helped us to understand the emphasis on listening to customers and ensuring people are treated fairly and with respect. Whilst we're pleased that 89% of our customers feel we do this, it means that there are still some that don't. With a lot of change at STAR over the past 12 months, the culture is now developing. In the next three years, we've committed to putting the customer at the core of our culture, responding to and resolving any challenges on the way and using our learning to improve services.



How we'll achieve this:

- ▶ We'll introduce a new complaint management system to improve and strengthen our approach to resolving things when they go wrong
- ▶ By reviewing our customer satisfaction framework and the ways we get feedback. We'll also introduce a formal learning loop that uses feedback to drive improvement and reinforce positive behaviours
- ▶ We'll put a process in place to learn from complaints to avoid repeat mistakes
- ▶ We'll improve empathy, respect and customer service by delivering a new training programme for all customer-facing staff
- ▶ By investing in the professionalism and qualifications of our housing staff
- ▶ We'll review our tone of voice to keep communication clear, simple and respectful
- ▶ By introducing ways to measure our customer-culture internally

Aims

Professionalism and culture

How we'll measure success:

- ▶ 90% of customers will say we treat them fairly and with respect
- ▶ 100% of complaints will be responded to within the correct timescales
- ▶ 75% of customers will be satisfied with how we resolve their complaint
- ▶ A new tone of voice and communication standard will be in place by spring 2025
- ▶ All staff identified as needing qualifications as part of Competency and Conduct Standard will achieve the qualification or be working towards it by summer 2026
- ▶ 100% of staff will have undergone relevant customer service training



Aims

Tenancy sustainment

Our aim

We will help our customers to live successfully and independently in their homes by offering an impactful, customer-focused, and well valued approach to tenancy sustainment.

We'll ensure that we support customers to sustain and thrive in their tenancies with us – increasing their happiness and reducing the impact of failed tenancies on STAR and our stakeholders. We'll increase our investment in supporting customers and improve our understanding of the impact our support has on them as well as STAR and our stakeholders.

How we'll achieve this:

- ▶ By developing a programme and brand for our tenancy sustainment activities that improves awareness, clarity and consolidated reporting
- ▶ By introducing new tools and resources that help frontline teams to support more customers in a way that encourages and enables customer independence



- ▶ We'll look to develop external partnerships and strengthen signposting for customers in areas where we're not experts
- ▶ We'll seek external investment and funding that can further strengthen our tenancy sustainment offer
- ▶ Use our improved data and insight to develop a targeted and proactive programme of early intervention measures to prevent tenancy failure and ensure sustained tenancies and independent living
- ▶ We'll work proactively with our customers and Shropshire Council to ensure our housing stock is used effectively to reduce pressure on social care services across the county
- ▶ Invest in our frontline teams to reduce neighbourhood patch sizes and align resources focused on supporting customers

Aims

Tenancy sustainment



How we'll measure success:

- ▶ At least 95% of new tenancies are sustained for at least one year from spring 2025
- ▶ Introduction of new reporting frameworks and metrics to measure success and impact of tenancy sustainment – ensuring reporting to Board and stakeholders by summer 2025
- ▶ A new programme for tenancy sustainment support will be in place, reaching at least 75% awareness by the spring 2027
- ▶ We'll have three new strategic partnerships to leverage external expertise and resources for our communities by spring 2027
- ▶ We'll see an increase in external funding for tenancy sustainment activity of at least £300,000 by spring 2027
- ▶ We'll achieve at least a 25% increase in support provided to customers from the 24/25 baseline by the end of the strategy

STAR Strategies

Our STAR Strategies that specifically outline our objectives in key areas of our organisation, can be found and downloaded from the website at starhousing.org.uk

-  Homes and Asset Management
-  Customer Engagement
-  Development and Investment
-  IT and Business Transformation
-  People
-  Finance, Governance and Risk
-  Neighbourhood and Community
-  Customer Care

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Delivering vibrant communities in a changing world



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