

Wrekin Voices Report

Quarter 3

Customer Voice and Value Team
January 2025

**Wrekin
VOICES**

OVERVIEW

Background

The revised Consumer Standards (introduced 1 April 2024) set out a clear expectation that customers should have a range of ways to get involved, with their voices shaping service design and delivery. The Consumer Standards are broken down into 4 areas as follows:

- ▶ **Safety and Quality Home standard**
- ▶ **Transparency, Influence and Accountability standard**
- ▶ **Neighbourhood and Communities standard**
- ▶ **Tenancy standard**

The Transparency, Influence and Accountability standard sets out that landlords must be open with tenants and treat them with fairness and respect so that tenants can access services, raise complaints, influence decision making and hold their landlord to account. This report aims to provide assurance that Wrekin is meeting these requirements by detailing how our customers have been able to directly influence and shape Wrekin services. This report is a key part of the assurance to Committee that this standard is being met, and exceeded. Some of the involvement methods include:

- Policy reviews
- Engagement at Community events
- Staff Customer Group
- Service reviews (scrutiny)
- ShireLiving Forum
- Completing surveys
- Engagement at Youth groups
- Trailing new technology
- Focus groups

Wrekin Voices

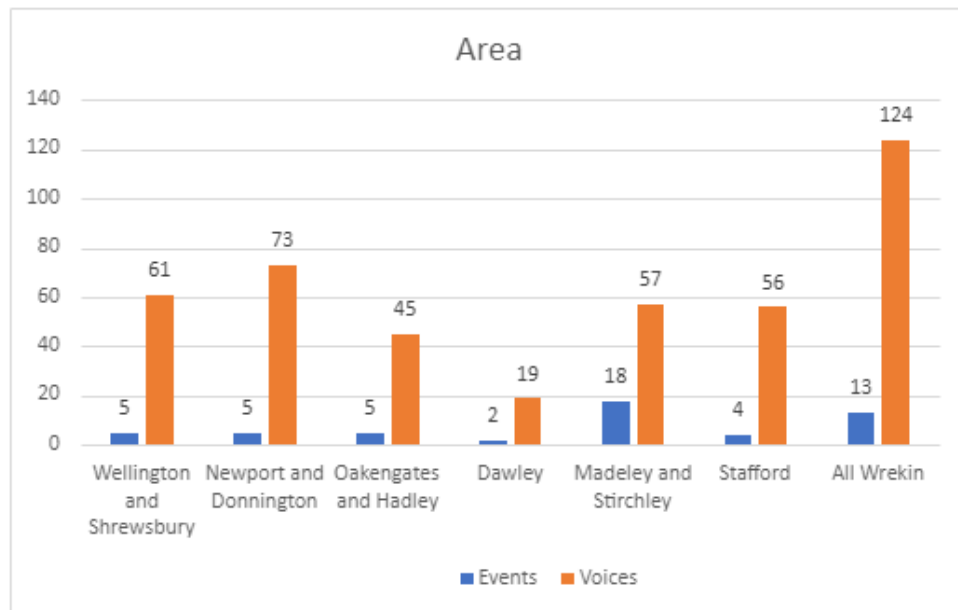
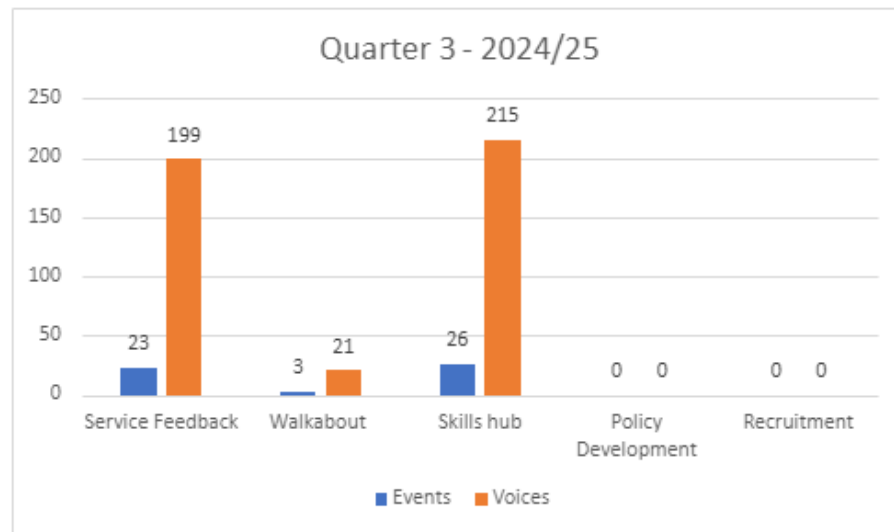
Wrekin Voices is our group of customers who are interested in getting involved, whether it's surveys or something more, they can get involved in a variety of ways that suits them. The group has grown to over 600 members.

They receive a fortnightly newsletter along with other customers who are interested in hearing what's going with engagement, this currently goes to over 1,200 people.

SUMMARY PAGE - INVOLVEMENT IN QUARTER 3

► **52** opportunities to get involved, with **435** voices including:

- Different consultations to shape our services
- Formal meetings and informal drop-ins
- Events in the local community
- **1182** customers replied to the Stigma survey (numbers not included above)
- We did not conduct any policies engagement in this time but this will resume in Q4.



- And over **215** people attended Skills Hub activities across 26 events, including:
- Certified first aid training
 - Digital drop-ins and advise sessions on fraud awareness
 - Energy advice

INVOLVED CUSTOMER FEEDBACK – MERGER ENGAGEMENT

Background

Last summer it was proposed that The Wrekin Housing Group and Housing Plus Group could merge, this was agreed, and the two organisations came together on 6th January 2025. Customer Voice will be at the heart of the new organisation, but to start the discussions involved customers of Wrekin and Housing Plus Group got together on 13th December. This was a central part of ensuring that the regulatory requirements set out within the **Transparency, Influence and Accountability standard** were met.

Methodology

Involved customers who have worked with both organisations and have a passion for engagement, came together and discussed their thoughts and views on the merger with Wayne Gethings Designate Chief Executive. Wayne was joined by other members of staff as well as two customer board members of the New Housing Plus Group.

Discussions and workshop style planning made for an eventful and thought-provoking morning.

Findings

This event was very positive with both customer groups going away with lots of ideas and very much looking forward to working together in the coming months. The events aim was to break down barriers and start the conversations which it did.



CUSTOMER FEEDBACK – ASB WORKSHOP

Background

Building upon a focus group held in the summer, which looked at the ASB service at Wrekin, we wanted to focus on the new service that would be offered by the New Housing Plus Group. Linking into the **Transparency, Influence and Accountability standard** and the **Neighbourhood and Communities standard**.

Scope

To engage with customers from both Wrekin and Housing Plus Group to see what they valued most and what they would want to see from the new organisation.

Method

Two ASB workshops were set up with Wrekin customers, one in-person and one on-line, in each, discussions in small groups took place focusing on the current process and how it can be improved. 9 customers took part with the majority having personal experience of the ASB service in the last 12 months. This information was then shared with Housing Plus Group who replicated the process, and we combined the findings.

Findings

These were the specific areas customers want in the service going forward.

1. **Communication** - Clear, concise, and timely communication with empathy, understanding and a supportive approach. Listening is as important as talking.
2. **Transparency** – Honesty with regards what can be done and what is actually done.
3. **Specialist trained staff** – Understanding ASB, but also understanding people.
4. **Tenant Involvement** – Ongoing in all aspects of ASB, from policies to actual case audits.
5. **Specific individual policies**
6. **Community Health** – Being on the patch more, more community events, doing more in communities, having a greater understanding of communities that may help prevent ASB before it happens or escalates.



CUSTOMER FEEDBACK – KINGS HAYE ROADSHOW

Background

Within the **Neighbourhood and Communities standard** it states the views of tenants must be considered - whether this is about their local area, ASB or how they want to get involved. And what better way to find this out than to visit different areas, this case study looks at one example, Kings Hays in Wellington, Telford..

Scope

To gather different stakeholders, various teams from Wrekin and meet customers on their doorsteps. Discuss with them what's important and if there is anything we can do to support them.

Method

This event brought together employees from Housing, Social Value, Environmental Services and Customer Voice. We were also joined by local partners from the Police, The Safer Stronger team from the Council and Councillor Paul Davis from the Haygate and Park Ward.

Findings

Customers were able discuss issues relating to their tenancy or suggest improvements to the local area. This started straight away with the help of the Environmental Services team removing bulk waste. Councillor Paul Davis was able to discuss the wider area and link into the Council for further support.

We were also able to support some customers with winter warm packs which included blankets and toiletries.

The event is just one of many where we aim to meet the community out in their local area.



The Wrekin
Housing Group

SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

We aim to offer a wide range of meaningful opportunities for our customers to shape and improve our strategies and services. This links in to the **Transparency, Influence and Accountability standard**.

The Tenant Satisfaction Measures **‘Satisfaction that the landlord listens to tenant views and acts upon them’**, **‘Agreement that the landlord treats tenants fairly and with respect’** and **‘being kept informed about the things that matter to you’** will reflect how Wrekin is performing.

Engagement activities	Details	Outcomes
Bike Safety - Cornovii Gardens, Oswestry	Following a few near misses, we've been working with the customers at Connovii Gardens to tackle complaints and improve road safety awareness with young children in the neighbourhood. The housing and Customer Voice & Value Teams held an event which brought the local community together. Bikes 4 Change were on hand to undertake free bike repairs and offer some sound safety advice. 8 adults and 12 children attended.	Lots of engagement with the local community, discussing all sorts of issues. The main focus was road safety and engaging where 2 bike racks can be placed. This event was really successful and a great example of the Neighbourhood and Communities standard , The impact will be seen in the neighbourhood TSM scores and is part of the assurance on the above standard.
MP Coffee Morning, The Anstice Library, Madeley	Shaun Davies MP hosted a drop-in session where the public could speak with Shaun, but also other partner agencies such as Mind, AgeUK and local Councillors. We spoke with 4 customers about moving homes and how other partner agencies can link in with us to support our customers.	This event is an examples of Safety and Quality Home standard , Neighbourhood and Communities standard , the Tenancy standard and Transparency, Influence and Accountability standard . Future drop-in sessions are planned. The impact will be seen in TSM data indirectly.
Drop-in's – Parklane centre, Donnington Turruff Hall and Lawley community Hub.	Being out in our communities enables customers to speak direct with employees. In this quarter we had 5 events with 24 customer taking the opportunity.	These drop-ins enable any issues to be raised, the majority are about tenancy issues and ASB. This links to the Neighbourhood and Communities standard .

Engagement activities	Details	Outcomes
Stigma survey to all customers	1,182 customers told us about their experiences of living in social/affordable housing and whether they felt that they had ever been treated differently because of where they live or if people make assumptions about them.	We currently only have the top line figures and are scrutinising the comments provided. This is part of a bigger piece of work, which will feed into the direction of the organisation. This linked to the Neighbourhood and Communities standard and Transparency, Influence and Accountability standard .
Engagement on upcoming areas of work	41 customers responded to a short survey sent to our Wrekin Voices group, to see which areas of engagement they would like to get involved in.	The form established interested in ASB, Complaints and the website. We now have a pool of people who would like to get involved and their preferred method and time for this. This linked to Transparency, Influence and Accountability standard .
ShireLiving Forum	20 customers attended the in person meeting at HQ from across the schemes. The session included repairs, a review of the year and discussion around the merger and Customer Committee and customer voice moving forward.	This was a busy session with lots to hear about and discuss, including: staffing levels, lift issues, decoration and recycling garden waste. This links to all the standards - Neighbourhood and Communities standard and Transparency, Influence and Accountability standard .

Engagement activities	Details	Outcomes
Interfaith drop-in event	Bi-monthly we hold an event at the Interfaith centre in the heart of Wellington, this location welcomes everyone from the community. After the success of the last session we were joined again by the Telford & Wrekin healthy lifestyles team to carry out free blood pressure tests. 10 customers came to this event.	The session was busy, with people attending the blood pressure checks, conversations were had with several customers wanting to discuss housing issues and lettings. 2 referrals were made to the housing team and ref made to money matters team. Neighbourhood and Communities standard and also the Tenancy standard and Transparency, Influence and Accountability standard are linked here.
Ketley Parish Consultation 2024	An event arranged by the local council bringing different organisations together, including the Safer Stronger team, Meadows primary school, Police, Friends of Ketley Mound, Sanctuary and St Marys church. 6 customers spoke to us directly but the event had over 50 people attend.	The event brought members of the community together to discuss any issues and ask questions. The event was also really good for networking with other stakeholders with contacts made with the local council, which in turn will benefit our customers. This is a good example of the Neighbourhood and Communities standard .
Parklane Christmas fayre	This annual event saw over 200 people come and enjoy the various stalls, crafts and food on offer. We spoke to 12 customers and provide help and advice.	As well as helping our customers this event was also good for partnership working with the Local Councillor and agencies such as Read Easy, which we can refer our customers too. This is a good example of the Neighbourhood and Communities standard .

WALKABOUTS – AREA VISITS

The **Neighbourhood and Communities standard** outlines that landlords must engage with their customers about the communities they live in. At Wrekin we are regularly out and about including these publicised walkabouts.

The Tenant Satisfaction Measures '**Satisfaction that the landlord keeps communal areas clean and well maintained**', '**Satisfaction that the landlord makes a positive contribution to your neighbourhood?**' and '**Satisfaction with the landlords approach to handling anti-social behaviour?**' will reflect how Wrekin is performing.

Engagement activities	Details	Outcomes
Hills Lane Drive and Springhill Crescent	Employees of the Madeley/Stirchley team armed themselves with pickers and bin bags to get out in the community. They spoke with 8 customers.	Discussions took place with local customers and the team even witnessed some potential issues, which they were about to respond to on sight. This linked to the Neighbourhood and Communities standard .
Attwood rise, Kidsgrove in Stoke-on-Trent	Customers raised some concerns with their properties and also some low level ASB. 3 employees spoke with 6 customers and conducted a litter pick of the area.	Issues relating to ASB and repairs were logged. A follow up 'you said, we did' document was produced and hand delivered to the neighbourhood answering all the questions put forward. The document contained contact numbers and ways to raise future issues. A follow up Walkabout will take place in the spring to see if the issues have been resolved. This linked to the Neighbourhood and Communities standard and Transparency, Influence and Accountability standard .
Queen Elizabeth Way & Prince Charles Crescent flats, Dawley	5 employees helped tidy up the area and spoke to 7 customers on the day.	Customers shared their feeling about the area and the team were able to pass on advice, another example of Neighbourhood and Communities standard .

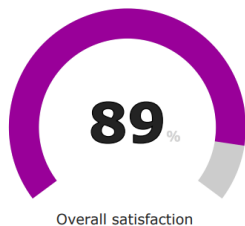
SUMMARY OF TRANSACTIONAL SURVEYS

As well as the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM's) Wrekin conduct a range of surveys after a customer has interacted with the organisation, this could be following a repair or if you have requested a service from our Housing teams for example. This shows how Wrekin is performing but also enables us to continually improve and identify what's most important to our customers. This links in to the **Transparency, Influence and Accountability standard** and the **Safety and Quality Home standard**.

These are some key transactional survey findings for quarter 3:

Satisfaction with your recent contact with your Housing team

141 responses which was a 6% return.



Satisfaction following your recent repair

612 responses which was a 14% return.



Satisfaction with Heating Safety check

308 responses which was a 16% return.



Satisfaction following your recent Damp and Mould treatment

52 responses which was a 14% return.



Satisfaction with Planned works

107 responses which was a 17% return.



Please note: each survey is sent out following an interaction with Wrekin at the start of the month, with the exception of repairs which is weekly. This information is only for quarter 3.

COMMENTS FROM TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES

Within our TSM responses we 'Tag' and follow up any issues that are highlighted. This is a randomly chosen selection of comments and the outcome.

Satisfied

There is one service or extra support I didn't expect which is really good. They have a person who helps with any benefits claims or PIP claims and helped with budgeting. They offered this and I used it. I didn't expect to get that extra kind of support from a housing provider or landlord. Mrs J.

Repair response is excellent, my housing officer has been great in attempting to help with a challenging situation, often see trust at local events. Thank you for everything. Mrs A.

Neither

We have not really had any issues. I had a fence post broke on the communal car park and they came out and repaired it. It wasn't the best repair but they did act on it. Mr S.

Would be nice for the older properties to be updated with greener and energy efficient extractor fans in kitchen and bathroom. Mrs K.

Outcome

Comment noted.

Comment noted.

Dissatisfied

We are using a bathroom which is not fit for purpose. We have an old pump which is noisy, and the condensation is still bad and rust is forming on the radiator and pipes, we will be reporting again this year. We need a wet room or a better shower arrangement which we requested initially over 2 years ago, without any success. It would make our home much nicer to live in and less embarrassing when we have visitors. Mrs P.

I have constantly complained about the bin room being a health hazard but no one seems to take responsibility for i.e. power washing the floor which was done every few weeks when I first came to live here 7yrs ago. Mr D.

Outcome

Escalated to Maintenance Supervisor to investigate further and provide an update to the customer.

Escalated to Housing exec to investigate.

COMPLIMENTS

At Wrekin we receive many compliments about all areas of the organisation. Here is a selection.

"I would just like to say thank you to the plumber for his efficient and friendly service."

Mr A

"I have been lucky to have a new wet room installed recently by Wrekin Housing. I just want to say a huge thank you to Wrekin Housing for the installation of the wet room which will make my life much easier and has made me very happy. I must also highly commend the man who carried out the installation, Dale Hardy. His workmanship is of the highest standard and his working practices are exceptional. He is a great asset to the Company."

Mrs J

"I would like to say thank you to all the team at Wrekin Housing Group for making my application for accommodation at Queenswood as smooth and uncomplicated as it has been. I am so looking forward to moving into my new home soon."

Mrs R

"I just wanted to share my appreciation of many jobs completed by a staff member today at my rented property. The employee was professional, polite, approachable, hardworking and completed the work to a high standard. He was very helpful with all my queries/requests and he has made such a wonderful difference to the bathroom and small bedroom in one day. Absolutely fantastic. Thank you very much."

Mrs S

"I am writing to compliment your colleague, Martin Edwards. Today we have visited a very vulnerable client who is a tenant of yours and Martin arrived to ensure that the property was secured due to damage to the door. Not only did Martin do an excellent job on securing the property for the tenant, but he went above and beyond ensuring the communal areas were also secure. Martin also was concerned for our safety and remained in the communal area waiting for us to lock the tenant's door behind us and walked outside with us to ensure our safety. What an incredible man, very kind and caring and an asset to your business. I hope that he gets recognition for a superb job today, and please pass on our thanks for working in partnership with us."

Heather, Senior Support Officer – Outreach, Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service

SKILLS ACADEMY

Through the Wrekin Skills Academy we are developing a suite of learning and development opportunities for customers. These may be face to face opportunities, online sessions or signposting to local training partners programmes. This links in to the **Tenancy standard**, which details how landlords must provide services that support tenants to maintain their tenancy.

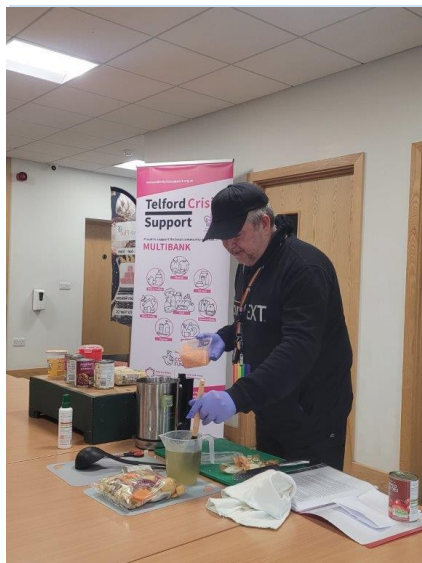
The Tenant Satisfaction Measures relating to overall satisfaction will be the areas this work is most likely to be visible.

Skills Academy	Details	Outcomes
<p>Cadent - Let's Talk energy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Oliver court - Adams close - Stallard Close 	<p>45 customers took up the opportunity for free energy advice and an opportunity to chat about any other support needs.</p>	<p>An opportunity for customers to chat with us while waiting to see the energy advisors. promoting the Housing Perks app and demonstrated how to save with it.</p> <p>This work links to the following standards</p> <p>Neighbourhood and Communities standard and Tenancy standard.</p>
<p>Get online events at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wellington library - Madeley community Library - Newport Community library - Silver Threads Hall 	<p>46 customers attended the Get online events which worked in partnership with Telford college, Telford and Wrekin Council, Barclays bank and AgeUK to promote digital inclusion and offer digital support.</p> <p>Wrekin also conducted a telephone conversation with 14 customers in Staffordshire and Shropshire, who would have benefited from this event.</p>	<p>These sessions prove popular and give customers the chance to ask questions and feel reassured.</p> <p>This work links to the following standards</p> <p>Neighbourhood and Communities standard and Tenancy standard.</p>
<p>Barclay's Fraud Awareness Sessions. Awareness sessions on how to stay safe online. We offered events at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Highfield House - Lawndale - Chasewood 	<p>3 further fraud awareness session held within ShrieLiving and Retirement Living locations with a total of 45 customer attending. Sessions delivered by Barclay's.</p> <p>This was promoted on scheme but also within the Wrekin Voices newsletter.</p> <p>..</p>	<p>Customers provided positive feedback and found the session helpful reassuring.</p> <p>This work links to the following standards</p> <p>Neighbourhood and Communities standard and Tenancy standard.</p>

Skills Academy Case Studies

Certified Emergency First Aid training with Wrekin

Customers of Wrekin can now undertake a certified Emergency First Aid training course as part of the Skills Academy. The course is for one day and focuses on preparing for an emergency situation and what to do when it happens. Sonya Proctor Sales Training Development Officer (pictured to the right) said “In this course, we have participants from various roles, including care and support staff, supervisors, maintenance teams, and carpenters as well as a Wrekin customers”. Also pictured is Steph who is a customer, Steph said “I saw the training offered, and my certification had run out, so it was a great opportunity. First aid is constantly evolving, so staying on top of it is essential. There’s always a friendly and supportive atmosphere when working with Wrekin teams.”



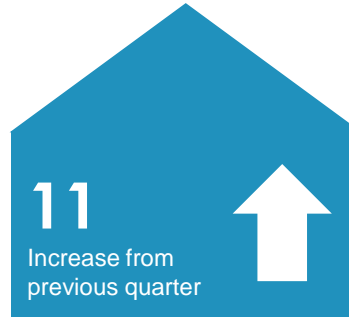
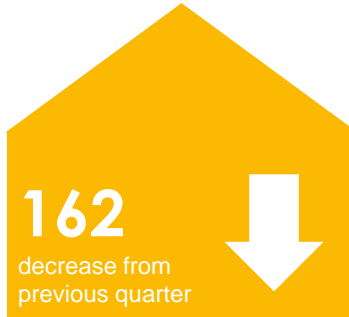
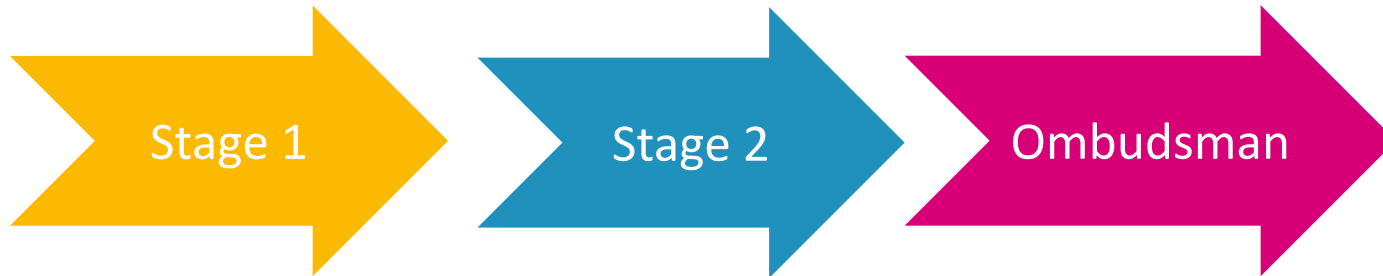
Soup making

Simon Lellow of Telford Crisis Support delivered a soup making session to members of the community in Brookside, Telford.

Miss R attended the session as she was grateful to receive any tools / advice to be able to keep costs low. After the demonstration had finished Chloe Ramsay, Energy advisor met with each participant individually. Miss R broke down about her struggles to manage after a change in circumstances.

Energy advice were able to issue energy saving items to reduce her usage by £273 annually as well as issuing £200 in supermarket vouchers and £294 in energy vouchers. Referrals were also made on for support such as a benefits check. This is an example of our tenancy sustainment work.

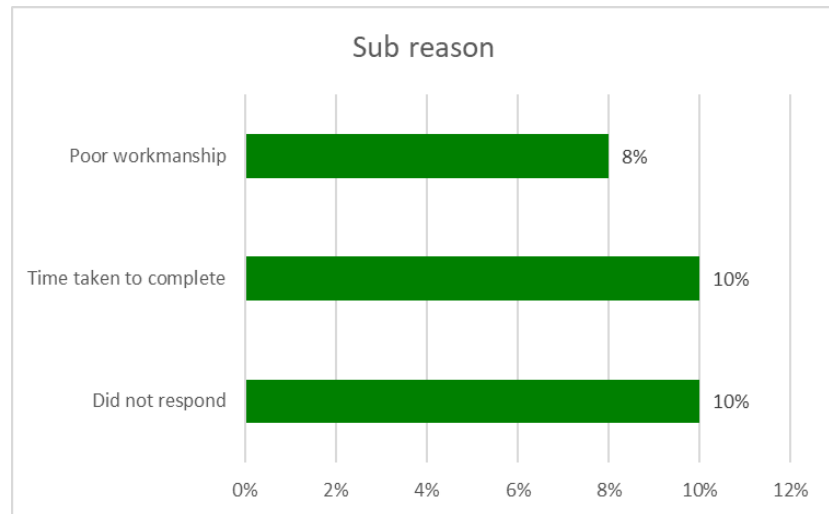
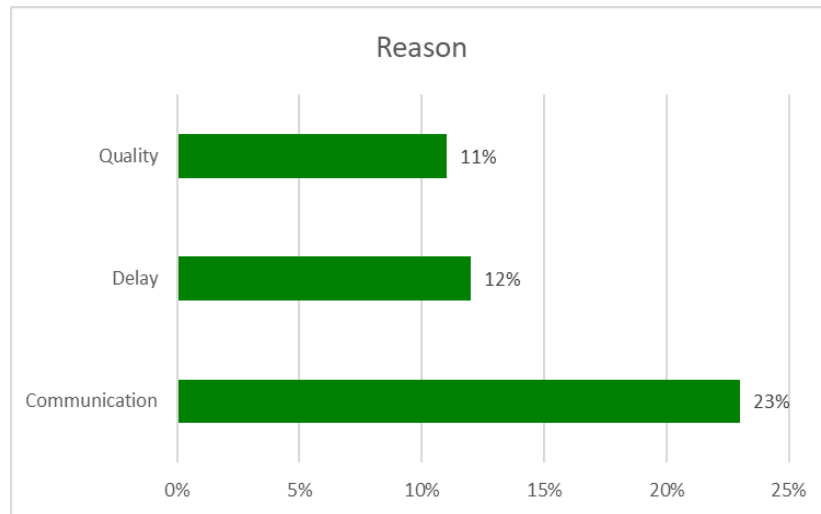
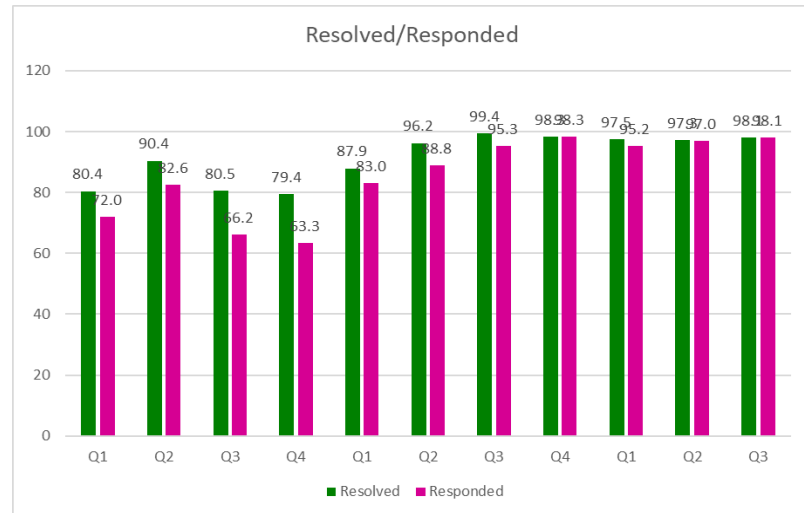
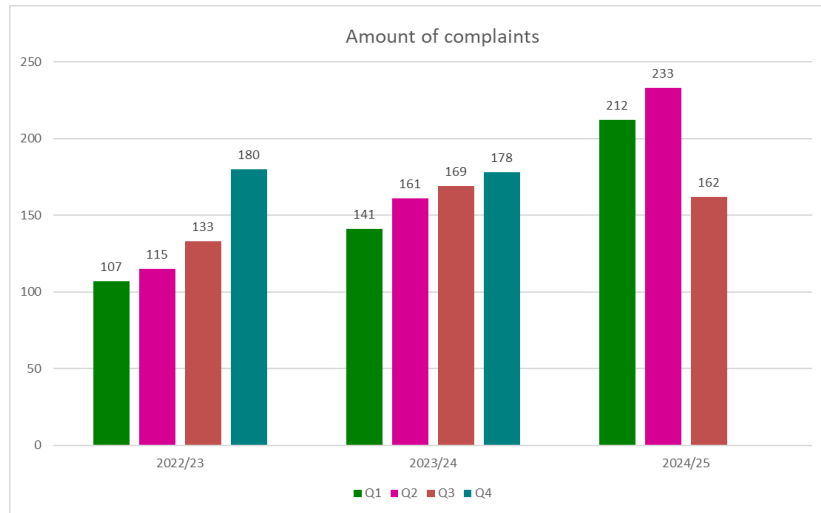
COMPLAINTS PERFORMANCE – Q3



49% about Repairs (79)
20% about Housing (32)
7% about Customer contact Centre (12)
5% about Gas (8)

We are still awaiting judgment of the 2 previous Housing Ombudsman investigations.
The complaints for repairs and housing equate to 0.054% of the total repairs/housing enquiries dealt with in the period.

PERFORMANCE – Q3



COMPLAINTS CASE STUDIES- STAGE 1

Mr A a
leaseholder for
1 year

Nature of complaint - Repairs - Communication

The leaseholder complained previously about the damp & mould caused by the roof. Repairs were made internally and externally but there was a delay resulting in damage to personal belongings. A further complaint was raised because the leaseholder was charged for the works.

Learning from complaint

It was found that the delay was caused by issues with the contractor and scaffold being erected in the wrong place, also charges were made to the block instead of the property.

A new repairs portal for contractors is in use with better communication and less chance of delay. A discussion took place around charges being raised correctly.

Compensation

£900, Leaseholder charges written off

Mr A has
been a
tenant for 4
years

Nature of complaint - Planned Work - Appointment

The tenant was unhappy due to Wrekin attending to carry out a 5-year electrical check and he had not received an appointment. He allowed access due to the engineers wearing and showing their ID. He stated that it isn't the first time that "we have turned up without notice".

Learning from complaint

The appointment letter had not been received. The current two-week lead time for sending out appointment letters is generally reasonable; however, reliance on second-class postage introduces delays that can undermine the effectiveness of the process. While cost-effective, second-class postage presents a risk of delayed notifications, especially during peak postal periods. Future communications strategies should evaluate balancing cost efficiency with reliability to ensure timely receipt of critical notifications.

Compensation - £25 love2shop voucher as way of an apology and gesture of goodwill.

COMPLAINTS CASE STUDIES- STAGE 2

Mr A is not a tenant.

Nature of complaint - Lettings application – Not upheld

Was unhappy with the inconsistent communication he believed he received relating to the lettings system. He requested a property on a scheme that was for over 65's even though there were no properties advertised for the scheme, he has disabilities and owns his own property. He was advised that due to his age he was not eligible and we had no bungalows available on that site. He believed we were discriminating against him.

Learning from complaint

The root cause of the complaint was the website was not very clear and could be more user friendly. Also that our age criteria for retirement living bungalows was discriminating against his disabilities. Website developments are in progress, but a further discussion on the strict age criteria would take place when the policy was reviewed in the new organisation.

Complaint was not upheld.

LEARNING FROM COMPLAINTS

Complaints Learning

After each complaint case, staff log the lessons learnt and act upon anything they feel would reduce the chance of the same issue recurring. These are logged centrally so we can see themes. The list below highlights some of the actions taken.

