WILLOW TREE

HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

NEWSLETTER WINTER 2025

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RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

Helping us to provide better services

We value and encourage customer involvement and feedback to help shape and improve the services we deliver, also to provide scrutiny on how we are performing to support our collaborative continuous improvement ethos.

There are a number of ways you can get involved, including the following:

RESIDENT SCRUTINY PANEL MEETINGS

The Resident Scrutiny Panel meet every three months online to review our performance information, anonymised complaint responses and policy updates. They also carry out in depth scrutiny projects to review certain aspects of our service. Take a look at the most recent review, carried out to dig deeper into our repairs service. You can find the report on our website on the Get Involved page. In August we were delighted to be joined by our newest member.

THE HOMEOWNER FORUM

The Homeowner Forum, set up earlier this year, offers an opportunity for our shared owners and leaseholders to meet online twice a year with key members of the operations teams to discuss what's important to them. On the agenda in July we discussed the following key areas, staircasing and lease extensions, repair responsibilities and communications.

The next meeting will be held early in 2026.

ESTATE WALKABOUTS

Estate walkabouts are carried out where we have a number of homes together. Come along and join your housing officer and property inspector to look around your local area. **See page 3 for more information.**

CUSTOMER FACING POLICIES

Customer facing policies are now shared online on our website for consultation when we are reviewing and updating them, as well as being shared with the Resident Scrutiny Panel. Recent policies we have consulted on include the Resident Engagement, Safeguarding and Damp and Mould policies. Keep a look out on the home page of our website for more policies coming soon or contact us if you are interested in finding out more.

CLEANING AND GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS

We are also looking for customers to get involved in the procurement of our new communal cleaning and grounds maintenance contracts. If you'd like to have your say on what these services look like, **please get in touch.**

SATISFACTION SURVEYS

Completing satisfaction surveys – we now carry out regular surveys to understand satisfaction and areas for improvement with our repairs, complaints and allocations processes. **See page 10 for more information.**

For more information about any of these important engagement opportunities, please contact us by emailing **customerservices@willowtreehousing.org.uk** or calling us on **01934 750780.**

ESTATE WALKABOUTS

In addition to monthly estate health and safety inspections, our Housing Officers have continued to carry out estate walkabouts over the summer months

Willow Tree Housing Partnership (WTHP) Housing Officers have been joined on the estate walkabouts by our residents, property inspectors, contractors, gardeners, and cleaners.

Estate walkabouts have been carried out at Hill Fort View, Stafford Court, Bramley Court and Longbrook Barton. Experience tells us that attendance for the estate walkabouts dwindles during the winter months and therefore these will begin again in the spring.

Our trial for a pilot scheme of attending an estate surgery online, did not receive any interest but if this is something you would be interested in, then please contact your Housing Officer.

Denise Nurse

Housing Officer
Plympton, Crownhill, South Hams, Denbury, Mannamead, Manadon, Pennycross, Laira and Efford

Emma Benney

Housing Officer
Cornwall, West Park, West Hoe, The Hoe, The Barbican, Stonehouse, Thornbury, Crapstone, Guildford Street and Ford

Matt Bullock

Housing Officer
Stoke Sub Hamden, Silverton, Shepton Mallet, Okehampton, Lapford, Creech St Michael, Cotford St Luke, Morchard Bishop and Bishops Lydeard

Angela Derry

Shared Ownership & RentPlus Officer
In all areas

Roxanne Sweeting

Housing Officer
Wiltshire, Yate, Wedmore, Rooksbridge, Highbury, Berrow and Bridgwater

FLY TIPPING

When carrying out analysis of our estate health and safety inspections and estate walkabouts, it has become apparent that fly tipping has increased across our stock. **The first 6 months of the 2025/26** financial year, our visiting officers have ordered rubbish removal at a cost of **£4,356.**

If you see items being dumped on WTHP land, please do contact us, call **01934 750780** or email **customerservices@willowtreehousing.org.uk**

It is illegal to drop litter or fly tip

AREAS COVERED BY PROPERTY INSPECTORS

Our property team are responsible for the co-ordination of day-to-day repairs and maintenance work on your homes

Willow Tree Housing Partnership (WTHP) has **1491 properties located in the South West of England.** We have 3 property inspectors who are each allocated properties in those areas:

Cristine Vasquez Tan

Dorset, Mendip, North Somerset, Sedgemoor, South Gloucestershire, South Somerset, Somerset West & Taunton, Wiltshire

Dean Pillar

East Devon, Mid Devon, South Hams, Teignbridge, Torridge, West Devon
Some overlap into Plymouth & Cornwall

Michael Harry

Cornwall, Plymouth

GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION (GDPR) TOOLBOX TALK

GDPR Toolbox Talk

Debbie Johnson, our Tenancy Team Leader attended a toolbox talk of one of our contractors to remind them about the importance of GDPR. Your data and how it is used is important to us at WTHP and must only be used for the specific purpose that it is collected for and in a way that is relevant and necessary.

ENERGY SAVING TIPS

Save money on your energy bills by finding ways to improve your home's energy efficiency

Is your home energy efficient and well ventilated?

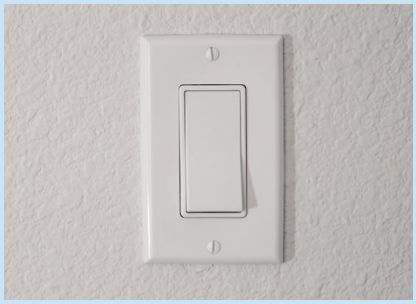
It is crucial to know how much energy you are using within your household, you can make simple changes in your home to reduce your carbon footprint and save money too.

For more suggestions on how to save energy, you could visit any of these helpful websites: **moneysupermarket.com/gas-and-electricity/energy-saving-tips** and **energysavingtrust.org.uk**

Request a smart meter from your gas and electric supplier to digitally track your daily usage

Bring the temperature down on your Thermostat. Reducing just 1 degree can make a difference

Check the energy efficiency rating when buying new appliances



Turn lights off in rooms that are not being used

Do a full load of laundry, don't leave it half full

Invest in energy saving light bulbs

Turn appliances off at the wall when not in use

Ensure furniture isn't blocking your radiators or storage heaters

GUIDE TO REDUCING DAMP AND MOULD IN YOUR HOME

In line with the introduction of Awaab's law 27 October 2025, we thought the following hints and tips would be useful

Damp and mould can cause damage to your property and affect your health. Follow these simple steps to keep your home dry, warm, and well-ventilated

VENTILATE REGULARLY

- Open windows for 10–15 minutes each day, especially after cooking or showering
- Always use extractor fans in the kitchen and bathroom
- Keep trickle vents on windows open and don't block air vents
- Leave interior doors open occasionally to allow air to circulate

MAINTAIN CONSISTENT TEMPERATURE

Where possible

- Keep your home at a steady, comfortable temperature
- In cold weather, use low background heating instead of turning heating off completely
- Avoid sudden temperature drops, which cause condensation to form

CONTROL MOISTURE

- Wipe away condensation from windows and sills each morning
- Dry clothes outside whenever possible
- If drying indoors, use a ventilated room and open a window
- Cover pans when cooking and use lids on kettles
- Avoid leaving wet towels or clothes in piles indoors

ENCOURAGE GOOD AIRFLOW

- Leave small gaps behind furniture to prevent trapped moisture
- Don't block radiators or air bricks
- Move large items slightly away from walls to help air move freely

KEEP YOUR HOME CLEAN AND DRY

- Clean any mould as soon as it appears using a mild detergent or mould cleaner
- Check regularly for leaks around windows, roofs, or pipes - and report them as soon as possible
- Avoid overfilling cupboards and wardrobes; let air circulate

IF YOU NOTICE PERSISTENT DAMP OR MOULD

- Report it to us as soon as possible on **01934 750780** or email **customerservices@willowtreehousing.org.uk**
- Take photos to record the problem and note when it started

Never ignore damp or mould!
It gets worse and harder to treat over time,
and could cause health issues

WINTER BUDGETING IDEAS

Some ideas on how to reduce costs over winter and beyond

PLAN EARLY

Create a seasonal budget: Include heating costs, food, travel, and Christmas gifts

List all expected expenses: Break down essentials vs. extras

PRIORITISE ESSENTIALS

Rent first: Always ensure rent is paid on time to avoid arrears

Utilities: Budget for higher energy bills - winter usage tends to spike

CUT COSTS

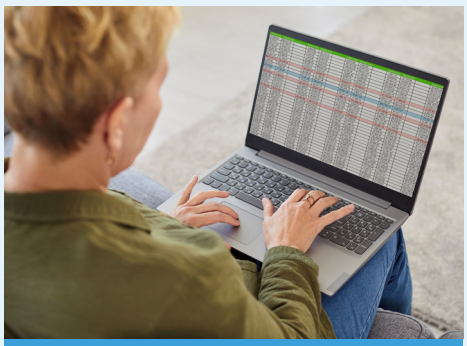
Energy saving: Use draft excluders, wear layers, and only heat rooms in use

Food shopping: Plan meals, use loyalty schemes, and buy in bulk where practical

USE SUPPORT SERVICES

Check for grants or benefits: Winter Fuel Payment, Warm Home Discount, or local council support

Speak to your Housing Officer: If you're struggling, early communication can help avoid escalation



AVOID DEBT TRAPS

Be cautious with credit: Buy-now-pay-later schemes can lead to long-term debt

Use budgeting tools: Apps like MoneyHelper or budgeting spreadsheets can help track spending

PLAN FOR JANUARY

Post-holiday costs: Avoid overspending in December to prevent a financial hangover in January

Set aside a small emergency fund: Even £5–£10 a week can help cushion unexpected costs

COMPLAINTS

We take residents' feedback seriously. Our complaints process is designed to be transparent, fair, and efficient, following the Housing Ombudsman's Code.

Complaints help us understand what's working well and where we can improve, ensuring we provide the best possible service to all our residents.

Willow Tree Housing Partnership (WTHP) Complaints Process

We have a nominated Complaints Officer who coordinates all complaints and ensures that responses are provided within the published timescales set by the Housing Ombudsman.

On receipt of a complaint, we first review it to determine whether it falls within the scope of our Complaints Policy or if it is something we handle as a request for service, such as anti-social behaviour or a routine repair issue. Complaints that fall outside the policy are directed to the appropriate service team, and we inform residents of the next steps and expected resolution times.

We have a two-stage complaints process; we aim to resolve complaints promptly at **Stage 1**, but if a resident is not satisfied with the outcome, they can request an escalation to **Stage 2**.

STAGE 1

- Acknowledged within 5 working days
- Full response within 10 working days
- In exceptional circumstances, an extension of up to 10 working days may be needed. We will always inform the resident and provide the Housing Ombudsman's contact details if they wish to challenge this extension

STAGE 2

- If a Stage 1 complaint is not resolved to a resident's satisfaction, it can be escalated
- Acknowledged within 5 working days of escalation
- Full response within 20 working days
- In exceptional circumstances, an extension of up to 20 working days may be required, with the resident informed and Housing Ombudsman details provided

Using Complaints to Improve Services

Every complaint is reviewed to identify trends and areas for improvement. This helps WTHP continually improve the services we provide to our residents.

Need to make a complaint?

For more information or to view our full Complaints Policy and Procedure, please see
www.willowtreehousing.org.uk/make-a-complaint1/

Contacting the Housing Ombudsman

Residents can contact the Housing Ombudsman at any stage of the complaints process for advice. However, the Ombudsman generally expects that complaints are raised with us first so we have the opportunity to address the issue directly. Following our complaints process can often resolve matters more quickly, and the Ombudsman will usually only become involved if the issue cannot be resolved internally or if there has been an unreasonable delay.

www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/contact-us
info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk
0300 111 3000

PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Below is a snapshot of how well we are performing. Please visit our website for further updates

RESPONSIVE REPAIRS	REPAIRS COMPLETED	AVERAGE TURNAROUND TIME	% COMPLETED WITHIN 28 DAYS
Q2 JULY - SEPTEMBER PERFORMANCE	939	29 DAYS	65%

As at the end of quarter 2, 30 September 2025, current tenant rent arrears as a % of rent charged:

INCOME COLLECTION	TARGET	ACTUAL	AMOUNT
GENERAL NEEDS RENTED	4%	4.7%	£361,982
RENTPLUS HOMES	3%	3.4%	£55,450
SHARED OWNERSHIP	2.5%	1.3%	£4,897

HEALTH AND SAFETY	TARGET	Q1 JUNE 25	Q2 SEPT 25	Q3 DEC 25	Q4 MAR 26
GAS SAFETY COMPLIANCE	100%	99.9%	99.7%		
10 YEAR ELECTRICAL SAFETY COMPLIANCE	100%	97.1%	97.7%		
FIRE SAFETY IN COMMUNAL AREAS	100%	98%	98%		

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR, SAFEGUARDING AND DOMESTIC ABUSE

Between 1 July 2025 and 30 September 2025 we have managed:

- 13 anti-social behaviour cases
- 1 safeguarding concerns
- 0 domestic abuse concerns

ASB TYPE	CASES
ANIMAL RELATED NUISANCE	1
CRIMINAL DAMAGE/VANDALISM	0
INTIMIDATION/HARASSMENT	3
ILLEGAL USE OF PROPERTY	0
NOISE	5
NUISANCE BEHAVIOUR	0
SUBSTANCE MISUSE	4
VIOLENCE	0
TOTAL	13

HOME IMPROVEMENT WORKS

In Q2, to 30 September 2025, we have completed:

- 7 new bathrooms
- 4 new kitchens
- 6 replacement gas boilers
- 1 replacement renewable heating system
- 1 replacement solar & PV panels
- 1 new communal door entry system

TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES AND SATISFACTION SURVEYS

This year, we are collecting more tenant satisfaction information from customers to enable us to target improvement work where it matters most to you

Acuity Research are carrying out the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) surveys on our behalf, every quarter by telephone. The full reports for quarters 1 and 2 can be found on our website under Our Performance, here you can see a brief summary of the findings compared with our 2024/25 TSMs.

In addition to the TSMs, Willow Tree Housing Partnership (WTHP) are also collecting transactional satisfaction information from customers who have had repairs completed, recently moved into a WTHP home or who have made a complaint. These surveys are also being carried out by Acuity by phone.

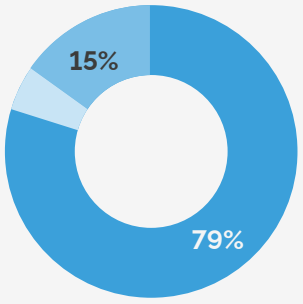
TSM	24/25	25/26 Q1	25/26 Q2
TP01 OVERALL SATISFACTION	64%	56%	59%
TP02 REPAIRS IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS	57%	70%	52%
TP03 REPAIRS TIME TAKEN	56%	57%	60%
TP04 WELL MAINTAINED HOME	59%	67%	58%
TP05 SAFE HOME	74%	79%	74%
TP06 LISTENS AND ACTS	54%	52%	36%
TP07 KEPT INFORMED	69%	69%	58%
TP08 TREATS FAIRLY AND WITH RESPECT	74%	78%	68%
TP09 COMPLAINT HANDLING	26%	28%	33%
TP10 COMMUNAL AREAS	66%	61%	62%
TP11 NEIGHBOURHOOD CONTRIBUTION	56%	51%	43%
TP12 APPROACH TO ASB	56%	65%	29%

Satisfaction with the handling of anti-social behaviour cases is being collected slightly differently and we will share more on this in the next newsletter and on our website.

The most recent surveys carried out between April and September 2025 have measured your satisfaction as follows:

REPAIRS

Satisfied | Neither | Dissatisfied

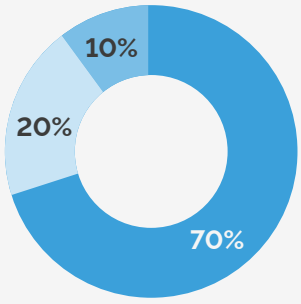


Overall 79%

- Easy to report **79%**
- Kept informed **73%**
- Attitude, treatment and tidying of the home **85%**
- Quality of work **79%**
- Easy to deal with **77%**

LETTINGS

Satisfied | Neither | Dissatisfied

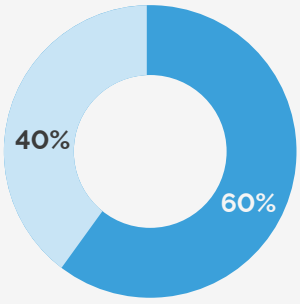


Overall 70%

- Easy to deal with **90%**
- Repairs satisfaction **45%**
- Property condition at letting **52%**
- Kept informed **90%**
- Information and advice provided **86%**

COMPLAINTS

Satisfied | Neither | Dissatisfied



Overall 60%

- Easy to deal with **60%**
- Ease of reporting **80%**
- Complaint outcome **60%**
- Kept informed **60%**
- Time taken to resolve **60%**

We are working hard to listen to your views and increase your satisfaction with our services and will continue to keep you updated on the changes and improvements we put in place. Improvements currently under way include:

- Repairs service - embedding customer service training, better contractor performance management and a new team structure with more internal resources to manage these services more efficiently
- Communication and complaints – see page 8 for information around the formal and informal complaints process including response times and possible outcomes
- Neighbourhoods – customers are invited to get involved with cleaning and grounds maintenance contract procurement, see page 2 for further details.

HELP, ADVICE AND SUPPORT

These are difficult times financially for everyone, with higher everyday bills. Remember, whatever your situation, there are useful resources to help keep you warm and well this winter

Give yourself a financial health check
See if there are any benefits you may be entitled to using this free calculator **www.entitledto.co.uk** and check what other support is available from your local council **www.gov.uk/find-local-council**

If you have bills or owe money that you can't afford get some free, independent debt advice from a regulated service such as those below.

- Citizens Advice **www.citizensadvice.org.uk**
- Christians Against Poverty **www.capuk.org/get-help/cap-debt-help**
- Step Change **www.stepchange.org**

Avoid loan sharks
Loan sharks take advantage of people when they are struggling and feel they have nowhere else to turn. If you are offered money with little paperwork but high charges, say no and report it to **www.stoploansharks.co.uk**

Help with energy bills

- Warm Home Discount Scheme – a one-off discount of £150 off your electricity bill. Visit this website for more information **www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme**
- Winter Fuel Payment – an automatic payment of up to £300 if you were born before 22 September 1959. See **www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment**
- Cold Weather Payments – paid for periods of very cold weather lasting 7 days or more between 1 November and 31 March for people on certain benefits. See **www.gov.uk/cold-weather-payment** for more information.
- Energy supplier grants – some energy suppliers have their own funds to support households in arrears with their energy bills. The British Gas Energy Trust gives grants to anyone, not just their customers. For more information contact your local Citizens Advice **www.citizensadvice.org.uk**

Additional help for Homeowners is available through the Government's Help to Heat schemes which help low income homeowners receive help with boiler upgrades, insulation and warm home grants. **www.gov.uk/government/collections/find-energy-grants-for-you-home-help-to-heat**

Reduced tariffs are available for your water, broadband and phone contracts.
More information can be found at **www.ofwat.gov.uk/households/your-water-company/contact-companies** and **www.ofcom.org.uk/phones-and-broadband/saving-money/social-tariffs**

Warm Welcome Spaces provide a warm and safe place you can go on your own or with a friend, and talk to others over a hot drink and maybe a slice of cake. Run in partnership with other local organisations, each Space offers different facilities including access to free WiFi, training, advice and support **www.warmwelcome.uk**

Warm Welcome Spaces

How we can help you
Our team here at Willow Tree Housing Partnership are always here to help you, whatever your situation. If you are worried about money or have any questions you want to ask, please call us on **01934 750780** or email **customerservices@willowtreehousing.org.uk.**

OPENING TIMES OVER THE CHRISTMAS PERIOD

Monday 22 December	**9AM - 5PM**
Tuesday 23 December	**9AM - 5PM**
Wednesday 24 December - Christmas Eve	**9AM - 4:30PM**
Thursday 25 December - Christmas Day	CLOSED
Friday 26 December - Boxing Day	CLOSED
Saturday 27 December	CLOSED
Sunday 28 December	CLOSED
Monday 29 December	CLOSED
Tuesday 30 December	CLOSED
Wednesday 31 December - New Year's Eve	CLOSED
Thursday 1 January - New Year's Day	CLOSED
Friday 2 January - Normal office hours resume	**9AM - 5PM**

REPAIRS OVER THE CHRISTMAS PERIOD

If you have a maintenance emergency while the office is closed, please use the out of hours telephone numbers below.

TYPE OF EMERGENCY	CONTRACTOR TO CALL
Gas emergency heating and renewable heating or gas hot water repairs	Gregor Heating **01179 352 400** *Select the Out of Hours Option*

All other emergency repairs, including electric heating and electric hot water repairs or Health & Safety issues.

For Cornwall, Plymouth, West Devon, South Hams, Torridge & Teignbridge	MSB Property Services **01752 228 266**
All other areas	MD Property Group **01392 449 991**

Please remember, if your call is deemed not to be an emergency you may be charged for any callout that you request. If your property is less than a year old and you have an emergency or urgent repair, please refer to your **Home User Guide** for contact information for the developer.

Head Office
Eastbridge House
Pill Road
Rooksbridge
Somerset
BS26 2TN

Devon Office
Studio 5-11
Millbay Road
Plymouth
Devon
PL1 3LF

www.willowtreehousing.org.uk

01934 750 780

DELIVER & GROW

We are active on social media, with updates on the work we do and regular posts with hints and tips on resident safety #maintenancemonday, #wellbeingwednesday and #safetysaturday

Willow Tree Housing Partnership

@willowtreehousing

Willow Tree Housing Partnership