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WHITE PAPER · SHARED OWNERSHIP

The shared ownership satisfaction gap

Why shared owners are housing providers' least satisfied customers, and what to do about it

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Shared ownership is one of the fastest-growing tenures in England. There are now around 252,000 shared owner households, up from 161,000 in 2019/20. For many housing associations it is a central part of their development programme and their business plan.

Yet shared owners are consistently the least satisfied customers housing providers have. Fewer than half are satisfied with their landlord's overall service. That is around 24 points below social rent tenants, and the gap has barely moved since the Tenant Satisfaction Measures began.

This paper looks at what the data says, why the gap exists, what housebuilders already know about home buyers, and how providers can measure and improve the shared owner experience, rather than treating it as a smaller version of the tenant experience.

The gap in numbers

The 2024/25 TSM results show a gap on every measure that applies to both groups.

Measure	Social rent tenants	Shared owners	Gap
Overall satisfaction (TP01)	71.8%	47.9%	**-23.9**
Home is safe (TP05)	77.6%	72.5%	**-5.1**
Listens to views and acts on them (TP06)	61.6%	38.4%	**-23.2**
Kept informed (TP07)	72.0%	55.8%	**-16.2**
Treated fairly and with respect (TP08)	77.9%	60.0%	**-17.9**
Complaint handling (TP09)	35.5%	23.4%	**-12.1**
Communal areas clean and well maintained (TP10)	66.7%	46.8%	**-19.9**
Anti-social behaviour handling (TP12)	59.5%	38.0%	**-21.5**

Landlord medians, Regulator of Social Housing, 2024/25.

Shared owners feel almost as safe in their homes as tenants do. The gap is widest on the measures about the relationship: being listened to, being kept informed, being treated with respect, and the condition of shared spaces they pay for.

The English Housing Survey adds more detail:

61%

of shared owners say their service charge is too high (46% of other leaseholders)

43%

considered complaining about their management in the past year (24% of other leaseholders)

78%

of shared owners' complaints were about repairs

82%

of those who complained were unhappy with the response

Why the gap exists

1

They pay for a service they can't always see

Shared owners pay rent on the share they don't own, plus a service charge, plus their mortgage. For many, the service charge is the most visible part of their relationship with their landlord, and it is the part they most often feel is poor value. When a charge rises with little explanation, or communal areas look neglected, the link between what they pay and what they get breaks down.

2

An owner's responsibilities, without an owner's control

Under most leases, shared owners are responsible for 100% of repairs and maintenance in their home, even if they own a 25% share. The Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee called this out in its 2024 report on shared ownership, alongside uncapped service charges and complex leases. Newer leases from April 2021 include an initial repair period of up to 10 years, with up to £500 a year towards certain repairs. That creates a two-tier experience, with owners on older leases getting less support for the same problems.

3

They are homeowners, and they feel like it

Shared owners don't think of themselves as tenants. Most have put their life savings into a deposit, taken on a mortgage and, often, bought a brand-new home. For many it is their first step onto the housing ladder, after years of renting and saving.

Buying a home is rarely just a transaction. It often comes at a significant moment in someone's life: a new relationship, a growing family, a separation, a new job, a move to be closer to family. These moments are already stressful before the keys are handed over. When something then goes wrong, such as a defect that isn't fixed, a service charge that rises without explanation, or a letter written as if to a tenant, it lands on someone with a great deal invested, financially and emotionally.

Yet many providers serve shared owners through processes, letters and contact centres designed for renters. The low scores for being kept informed (55.8%) and treated with respect (60.0%) suggest the tone and content of communication often misses the mark. Shared owners expect to be treated as homeowners, because that is what they are.

4

Shared spaces and building issues fall on them

Many shared owners live in flats with communal areas managed by their provider or a managing agent. Satisfaction with communal areas is 46.8%, against 66.7% for tenants. Where buildings have safety or remediation issues, the committee found shared owners could become "trapped", unable to sell or staircase.

5

Their voice gets lost

Shared owners are usually a small proportion of a provider's customers: just under 35,000 of almost 500,000 TSM responses in 2024/25. In many organisations their feedback is blended into overall results, reported in a single line or not reported to the board at all. Only 38.4% feel their landlord listens to their views and acts on them.

What housebuilders already know

Private housebuilders have spent years learning how to measure and improve the experience of people buying a new home. Many of the lessons apply directly to shared ownership. Many shared ownership homes are new builds, sold, handed over and looked after in much the same way.

In our work with housebuilders and developers across the country, three lessons stand out.

Measure the journey in stages. A buyer's view of their home changes over time. Shortly after completion, it is shaped by the sales process, the move and the first contact with customer care. Six to twelve months later, it is shaped by how defects were handled and what living there is really like. Asking at both points shows which teams and which moments make the difference.

The emotional moments matter most. Buyers remember how they were treated at reservation, at handover and when they first reported a problem. A defect handled quickly and warmly can build loyalty. One left unresolved, with no updates, can turn a delighted buyer into a vocal critic. Recommendation, whether a buyer would recommend their builder to a friend, is one of the clearest measures of how that journey felt.

Join the teams together. In a housebuilder, sales, construction, customer care and aftercare all shape one customer's experience. When they see the same feedback, they stop working in silos. For a housing provider, sales, development, leasehold services, the managing agent and the repairs team play the same roles for a shared owner, but they rarely see a single, joined-up view of that customer.

Shared owners are buying a home, not renting one. Measuring their experience as a home buyer, alongside the TSMs, gives providers a far clearer picture of what drives satisfaction, and where it is lost.

What is changing

Expectations of providers are rising:

- **Leasehold reform.** In July 2026 the government confirmed new protections under the Leasehold and Freehold Reform Act 2024. These include annual reports to leaseholders and shared owners on building condition, management and service charges, standardised service charge demands and accounts, and rights to request information going back six years. Changes are expected from 2027.
- **Consumer regulation.** The regulator's consumer standards apply to how providers treat shared owners as well as tenants, including transparency and listening to customers.
- **Growth.** As shared ownership grows, so does its weight in providers' reputations, in complaints to the Housing Ombudsman and in sales of new homes.

Closing the gap: six steps

1. Listen to shared owners in their own right

Run a separate shared owner survey, or at least a separate module, with questions designed for owners, not tenants. Alongside the TSMs, ask about the clarity and value of service charges, the quality of communal areas and managing agents, communication, and how easy it is to staircase or sell.

2. Break the results down

Report by scheme or block, lease type (before or after April 2021), share owned, managing agent and length of ownership. The overall figure hides big differences between a well-run new development and an older block with remediation issues.

3. Measure the moments that matter to owners, as a housebuilder would

Shared owners have their own customer journey: reserving and buying, moving in, the first year of defects, service charge statements, staircasing, resales and lease extensions. Borrow the housebuilder approach. Run a short survey shortly after completion covering the sales journey, handover and first contact with customer care, then follow up six to twelve months later on defects, aftercare and living in the home. Add short surveys at later moments such as staircasing and resales. Telephone interviewing works particularly well here: buyers are usually happy to talk about their new home, and response rates are typically far higher than online.

4. Make service charges understandable

Ask shared owners whether they understand their service charge and whether they feel it is good value, then test changes to statements and explanations. Clearer communication is one of the cheapest ways to improve trust, and it will soon be expected under leasehold reform anyway.

5. Read the comments and close the loop

Shared owners tend to give detailed, specific feedback. Use text analytics to theme comments by scheme and topic. Make sure issues in communal areas reach the managing agent or estate team quickly, and tell owners what you've done.

6. Give the board a shared ownership view

Report shared owner results separately, with their own trends, drivers and actions. If the board only sees blended results, it can't see the gap, and can't be assured it is closing.

Questions every board should ask

1. What is our shared owner satisfaction, and how does it compare with our tenants and with the sector?
2. Which schemes, lease types or managing agents have the lowest satisfaction?
3. Do shared owners understand their service charge, and do they think it is fair?
4. How do shared owners rate the buying and moving-in experience, and the first year in their home?
5. How easy is it for our shared owners to staircase or sell, and how do we know?
6. What have we changed because of what shared owners told us?

Conclusion

Shared ownership asks customers to commit to a home, a mortgage and a long-term relationship with their provider. Too often, the service they get feels like it was designed for someone else.

Closing the gap starts with listening to shared owners as owners: asking the right questions, at the right moments, and reporting the results in their own right. Because we work with both housing providers and private housebuilders, we see both sides of this every day: what tenants need from their landlord, and what home buyers need from the company that sold them their home. Shared owners need both. Providers that recognise this will improve satisfaction, reduce complaints and strengthen the reputation of the homes they sell.

Sources

- Regulator of Social Housing, Tenant Satisfaction Measures 2024/25 headline report
- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, English Housing Survey 2024 to 2025: shared owners fact sheet
- House of Commons Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee, Shared Ownership (March 2024)
- The Leasehold Advisory Service, If your lease has an initial repair period
- Devonshires, Government confirms major leasehold reforms (July 2026)

Understand your shared owners

We'll help you hear shared owners as homeowners, from buying and moving in to staircasing and resales.

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