



South
Yorkshire
Housing
Association



South Yorkshire Housing Association

Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report

2025/26



syha.co.uk

Accessibility Statement

We are committed to ensuring that our information is accessible to all our customers.

If you require this report in a different format, such as large print, an alternative language, audio, or another accessible format, please get in touch with us.

You can contact us by calling 0114 2900 200 or 0800 1380 380, or by emailing enquiries@syha.co.uk.

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Welcome to the

South Yorkshire Housing Association Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report.



This report explains more about the complaints we received this year, what customers told us, and how we are using this feedback to improve our services.

Why do we produce this report?

The **Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code 2024** requires us to publish this report. It also helps us to:

- Understand where our services have not worked as well as they should
- Know when customers are unhappy and put things right where we can
- Listen and learn from customer feedback
- Improve our services

Why should I read this report?

Read this report to see what customers have told us, what we've learned, and the changes we've made as a result. We want you to see that we take complaints seriously and use them to improve our services.

Find out more:

See a more detailed version of this report, our self assessment and complaints information: <https://www.syha.co.uk/who-we-are/how-were-doing/complaints/>

See our SYHA Annual Report: <https://www.syha.co.uk/who-we-are/how-were-doing/annual-reviews/>

Oversight of complaints at SYHA

We believe complaints are one of the most important ways customers tell us what isn't working. That's why this annual complaints report is reviewed at every level of our organisation.

- Our **Customer Committee**, which includes three tenant members, hears directly about complaints, themes and outcomes, bringing challenge and insight from a customer perspective.
- Our **Board of Non-Executive Directors** provides independent oversight to ensure we are learning and improving.
- Our **Chief Executive Officer** ensures complaints learning leads to real change across the organisation.

The Board has reviewed this report and our self-assessment and has shared a response, which you can read [here](#).

“Complaints play a vital role in helping us improve. We take them seriously at every level of the organisation, using customer insight, Board oversight and the people leading our services to understand what matters most and take action when we don't get it right.”

Larry Gold

Chief Executive Officer, SYHA



Our Chief Executive, Larry Gold.



Customer members on our Customer Committee

What is the Housing Ombudsman Service?

- The Housing Ombudsman is a **free and independent service** that helps resolve complaints between customers and social landlords.
- SYHA is a member of the Housing Ombudsman service and follows the **Complaints Handling Code (2024)**. Publishing this annual complaints report is part of that commitment.
- We always aim to put things right through our own complaints process first. However, if you have completed our process and are still unhappy, you can ask the Housing Ombudsman to **investigate your complaint independently**.
- The Ombudsman can require us to take action, such as:
 - Apologising
 - Carrying out repairs
 - Paying compensation.
- The Housing Ombudsman also supports landlords to improve by setting standards, providing guidance and training, and promoting good practice. This includes supporting changes such as **Awaab's Law**, which requires landlords to address serious health hazards like damp and mould quickly.



Photos from our 'Meet the Ombudsman' event in 2024.

How to contact the Housing Ombudsman

- You can contact the Housing Ombudsman **yourself**, or you can ask someone to support you, such as a **family member, friend, support worker or independent advocate**. An advocate can help you explain your complaint and communicate on your behalf.
- The **fastest and easiest way**, if you are able, is to use the online form on the Housing Ombudsman website: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk
- If you cannot use the website, there are other ways to get in touch:
- **By phone**
 - 📞 **0300 111 3000**
 - Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday: **9am to 5pm**
 - Thursday: **9am to 3.30pm**
 - Lines are closed for staff training every Thursday from 3.30pm to 5pm
- **By post**
 - ✉ Housing Ombudsman Service
 - PO Box 1484
 - Unit D
 - Preston
 - PR2 0ET

The Housing Ombudsman service is **free**, and contacting them will not affect your tenancy or the services you receive from SYHA.



How do we handle complaints at SYHA?

We want everyone to have a home where they feel safe, settled and supported. We aim to provide good services, but when things go wrong, we want to put them right.

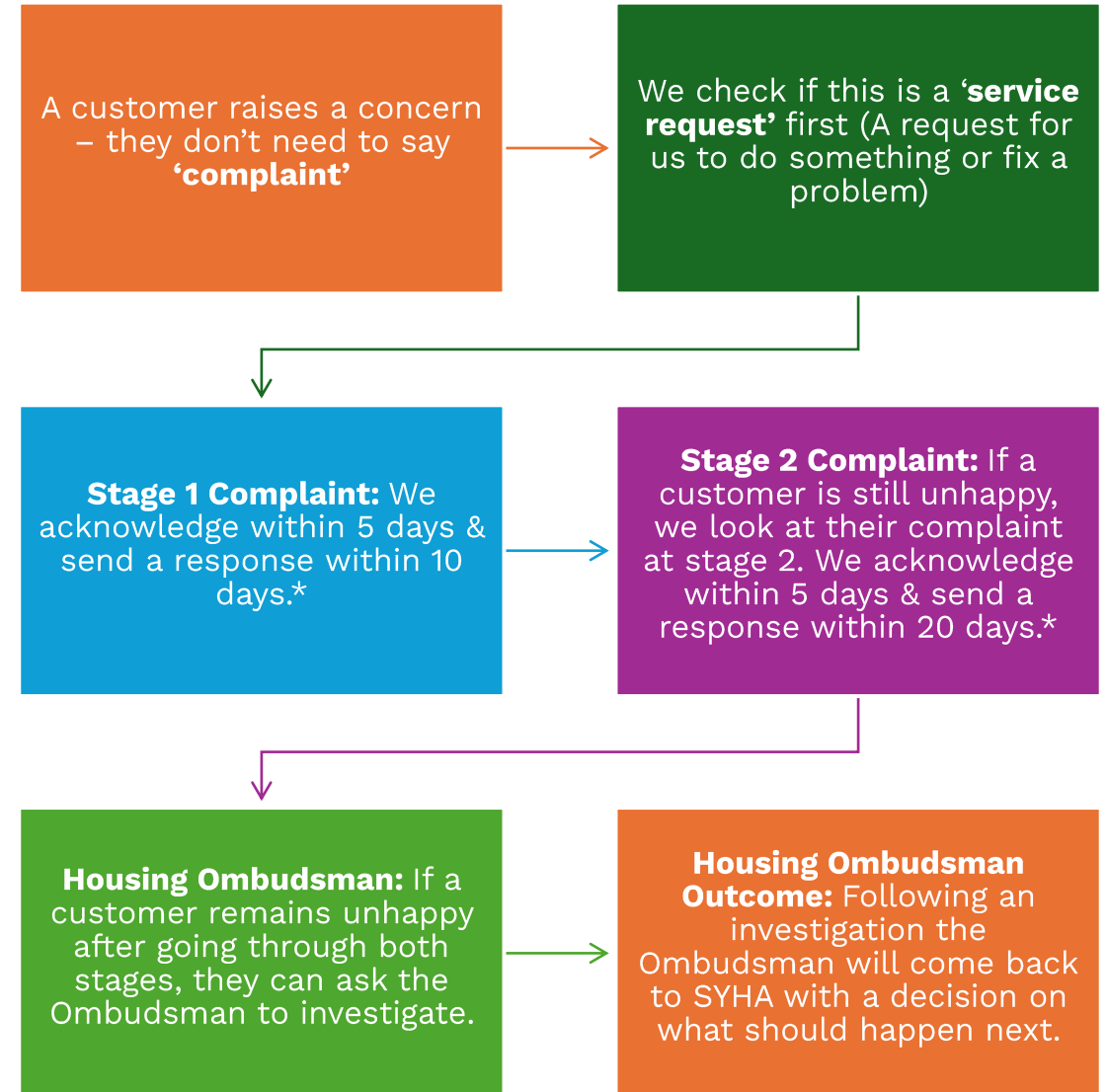
Your feedback – good or bad – helps us understand what is working and where we need to improve.

We have a **simple, two-stage complaints process**, shown in the flowchart.

Most complaints are resolved at **Stage 1**, but if you are not satisfied, you can ask for your complaint to be reviewed at **Stage 2**.

You can contact us **in person, by phone, email, letter or through our website**.

You do not need to use the word ‘*Complaint*’ for us to treat your concern as one.



*All days are working days & sometimes we will need a little bit more time – but will always let you know about this.

Who handles your complaints at SYHA?

We have a dedicated Complaints Team at SYHA who manage the complaints process.

They make sure we respond quickly, fairly and learn from what customers tell us.

If you're unhappy with any SYHA service, you can speak to any employee, and they will explain what happens next.

We also have a **Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC)**, a role required by the Housing Ombudsman. The MRC oversees how we handle complaints and helps make sure customers are treated fairly.

Our MRC is Pam Hankinson, a SYHA tenant and Board member. Pam is passionate about representing customers and is part of the 'Stop Social Housing Stigma' campaign - you can be assured that Pam really understands how important her role is.

What does the MRC do?

- Encourages a positive approach to complaints
- Keeps the Board updated on complaint handling
- Helps us improve by challenging and supporting us



Our Complaints Team



Pam Hankinson, SYHA tenant & MRC

A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide featuring several speech bubbles of various colors (green, orange, yellow, red, blue) and shapes, some overlapping, arranged in a cluster.

Why have customers complained?

We always look into the reasons or 'root causes' of why our customers have made complaints.

This year the top three reasons why a complaint was made are:

Responsiveness

- This makes up 33% of all our complaints and includes issues such as how quickly we respond to repairs and keep you updated about the progress of repairs.

Customer Care & Customer Service

- This makes up 31% of all our complaints, and includes issues such as cancelled or late appointments, and poor or unclear communication.

Quality of Housing

- This makes up 21% of all our complaints and includes issues such as damp, mould and condensation problems in homes.

Complaints about responsiveness have increased this year, especially around repair timescales. We have more information about this later in the report.

What do our customers complain about?

- We receive complaints for all different areas of our business.
- The area that receives the most complaints is **Property Services with 84% of all our complaints**. This is the team that carries out repairs and includes all contractors who work for SYHA.
- We expect this, as it's also the main area of work for us. However, we know that there are improvements we can make.

Area of SYHA business	What does this area do?	% of Complaints Received
Property Services	Carries out repairs and maintenance on homes.	84%
Landlord Services	Supports customers with rent payments, their neighbourhoods & dealing with any Anti-social Behaviour	8%
LiveWell Services	A range of services and schemes that support customers with their physical and mental health needs, independence and wellbeing.	5%
Customer Connect	Dealing with customer contact to SYHA, including reporting repairs and making a complaint.	2%
Development	Building & managing new homes.	1%

Property Services – Listening and Improving

This year, we've seen an increase in complaints about **Property Services**, which looks after repairs, maintenance and planned improvements.

- Some customers have told us they are unhappy with **longer waits for repairs, not getting clear updates, and having to chase us for information**. We understand how frustrating this can be, and we are not happy with this either.
- Most customers continue to be satisfied with repairs, with around **90% telling us they are happy with the service**. However, complaints help us understand where things haven't worked well for everyone, and they show us where we need to improve.
- This year, we've had to focus more on urgent issues **like damp, mould and condensation**. This has sometimes meant that more routine repairs have taken longer than we would like. We have also seen problems such as leaking roofs being repaired reactively instead of through planned programmes.
- To address this, we are **increasing budgets and planning for improvement work** in areas that need it, for example Auckley in Doncaster, and working closely with our contractors to improve communication and delivery. Our aim is to complete repairs faster, keep customers better informed, and reduce the need for customers to chase us.

We know there is more to do, and we are committed to using complaints and feedback to improve for our customers.



How do we deal with complaints about our partners?

We often work with partners or ‘contractors’ to make sure we can deliver our repairs services across the region.

It is important that our customers experience the same high standards of customer service no matter who is carrying out the work.

If we receive complaints about a contractor's work, we deal with that complaint in the same way as all our other complaints.

However, we work closely with our partners to monitor work and talk about any challenges, making sure they deliver work to our required standards

Who do we work with?

Here are the details of the contractors we usually work with and what they do.

Ashley and McDonough	Day to day repairs Out of hours repairs for heating and hot water Gas Servicing Planned Works (*Sometimes called Stock Improvement Programme)
Burngreave Building Company (BBC)	Day to day repairs Out of hours repairs Works on empty properties (*Sometimes called Void Works)
Other contractors	Asbestos surveys Fixed electrical tests Damp, Mould & Condensation work Legionella testing Fire works (e.g. alarms, emergency lighting)

How many complaints do we receive?

In 2025/26 we received the following complaints:

- **316** complaints at **Stage 1** of our complaints process (329 were made in 2024/25 showing a small 4% reduction)
- **41** complaints progressed to **Stage 2** of our complaints process, this is a 41% increase from last year (2024/25) when 29 were progressed.
- We didn't accept 48 complaints, known as 'exclusions'. This usually happens when the issue is actually a service request, or about a decision made by another organisation, not SYHA. We will always explain to you if we can't take a complaint and give advice on the next steps.
- We received the highest number of complaints in February. We tend to receive more complaints during the winter months, when issues such as heating, hot water and leaks are more likely to occur. This period was also exceptionally wet, which may have contributed to an increase in reports of leaks and damp.
- While it is difficult to predict exactly when issues will arise, **we plan for increased demand during the winter months and do** our best to respond as quickly as possible.



87% of complaints were resolved at Stage 1



We received 64 complaints for every 1000 homes (at Stage 1)



We had a 41% increase in Stage 2 complaints this year

How quickly do we respond to complaints?

We have timescales that we aim to meet when responding to complaints. Sometimes we need more time, and this is called an 'extension' and we monitor these carefully.

Stage 1 Complaints: We aim to respond within **10 working days**. This year:

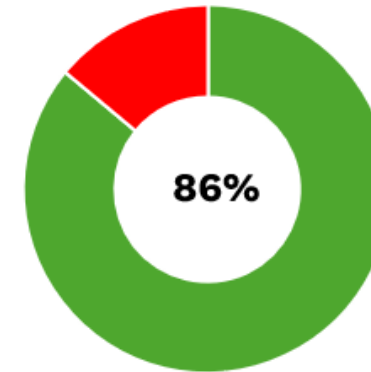
- We responded to **86%** within 10 working days
- 96% were responded to within the agreed extension times.

Stage 2 Complaints: We aim to respond within **20 working days**. This year:

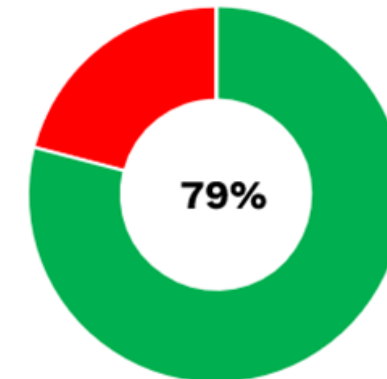
- We responded to **79%** within 20 working days
- 100% were responded to within the agreed extension times.

We have improved our response times compared to last year, particularly at Stage 2. In 2023/24, only 52% of Stage 2 complaints were responded to within 20 working days. This year's performance shows a significant improvement in how quickly we review and respond to complex complaints.

Percentage of Stage 1 Complaints responded to within 10 working days



Percentage of Stage 2 Complaints responded to within 20 working days





How satisfied are our customers?

We regularly ask customers how we handled their complaint because their feedback matters to us.

Everyone who makes a complaint is invited to complete a survey.

This year, 76% of customers surveyed said they were satisfied with how we handled their complaint—just above our 75% target.

“It was very easy to make the complaint”

“I had follow-on calls and the customer care has been very good”

Some customers were frustrated that they had to complain in the first place:

“I felt like I shouldn’t have to complain to get a response”

“The repair has now been done but I waited too long”

Each year, we ask customers about complaints through our Tenant Satisfaction Survey. This year, 52% of customers who made a complaint were satisfied with how we handled it — a 13% improvement on last year.

Customers told us it is now easier to make a complaint, that we keep them better informed, and that we respond more quickly. However, we know we still need to improve how quickly agreed actions are carried out once a complaint response has been issued.

Housing Ombudsman Investigations

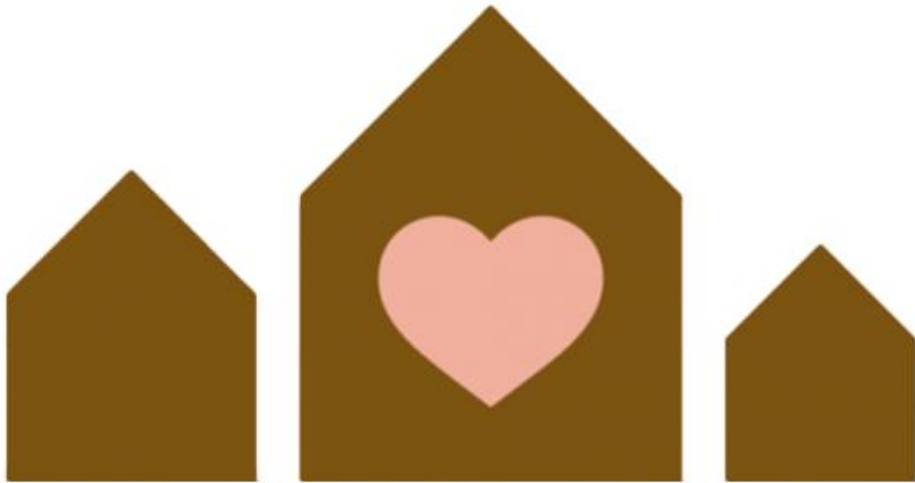
If a customer is still unhappy with how we have handled their complaint after receiving a Stage 2 response, they can ask the Housing Ombudsman to look into it.

During this year, **one** customer asked the Housing Ombudsman to investigate their complaint. The Housing Ombudsman currently has a backlog of cases, so we are still waiting for the outcomes of four investigations. Three of these cases were raised in previous years.

The Housing Ombudsman also published a **Performance Report for 2024/25**. This report related to three cases that the Ombudsman completed during that period. In all three cases, the Ombudsman found maladministration. This means they identified failings in our service that had a negative impact on customers.

We reported on these cases in last year's annual report and continue to focus on learning from them. The findings have been discussed by our Board, senior leaders, and the teams involved. We are sorry that we did not meet our standards and recognise the impact this had on customers.

The learning from these cases has helped shape the improvements we are making, which are set out on page 20 & 21.



Customer Case Studies

We want to share some real examples of complaints customers have raised, what we did to put things right, and what we have learned.

All of these are based on real cases, but we have removed any details that could identify individuals.

What have we learned?

These cases have helped us understand how our services affect people in their daily lives. We've learned that delays or uncertainty can be especially hard for customers who are unwell or managing ongoing health conditions. We also know that clear, timely communication makes a big difference.

While not every repair or request will be simple, we are committed to keeping customers informed, being more proactive, and responding with care when extra support is needed.

Case Study 1: Understanding Individual Circumstances

- A customer asked us to install a shower. While we provide showers in many homes, they are not included in every property, and we are not required to install them under our policy or the Decent Homes Standard. As the bathroom was not due for replacement, we initially said no.
- The customer then told us more about their situation, including health needs in the household, the difficulty and cost of using a bath, and issues installing a shower themselves due to the older boiler.
- After taking a closer look and understanding how this was affecting them, we reviewed our decision. We agreed to replace the boiler and install a shower.
- The customer was happy with the outcome.

Case Study 2: Communication with Repairs Contractors

- A customer told us about a problem with repairs to their ensuite bathroom. We had agreed what work needed to be done, but it didn't happen as expected, and the customer had to contact us again to escalate their complaint.
- When we looked into it, we found that differences between our systems and our contractor's systems meant we thought the repairs were in progress, when they had only been accepted. This led to poor communication and delays.
- We apologised for this, prioritised the repairs so they could be completed as quickly as possible, and paid compensation.
- We are now reviewing how our systems and processes work together to help prevent this from happening again.

Case Study 3: Waiting for Parts

- A household was left without heating while waiting for a replacement part for a solid fuel fire that had been classed as unsafe. The part was specialised and took time to source, which led the customer to make a complaint.
- During this time, someone in the household was recovering from a serious medical condition. This made being without heating and facing delays to other work that was needed even more difficult.
- After the complaint, we prioritised the repair, sped up the adaptations that were needed, and paid compensation to recognise the impact on the household.
- We know some specialist parts can take longer to get, but this case showed us we need to act more quickly and keep in closer contact, especially when a customer has health needs or may need extra support.

How we are learning & improving

Complaints help us understand what needs to change, and below we show what we’ve learned and what we’re doing about it.

This year we found...	So we...
Our Complaints Policy and Compensation Policy needed updating to reflect the latest guidance and customer feedback.	We have updated both policies, following guidance from Tpas (Tenant Participation Advisory Service) and the Housing Ombudsman, to make it clearer how to complain, what the complaint stages are, and how we can offer fair and consistent compensation.
In some serious complaints, we followed policy but did not fully consider the impact on customers with vulnerabilities (for example health conditions).	We have launched a new Vulnerability Policy to give staff clearer guidance on what to check, what questions to ask, and how to better consider individual circumstances. We know there is more to do to embed this fully. https://www.syha.co.uk/homes/vulnerabilities/vulnerability-policy/
Customers told us that responsiveness matters , and that at times this year we have not got this right. This includes how quickly we respond to repairs and how well we keep customers updated about the progress of repairs.	We are listening carefully to this feedback and taking it seriously. As set out in this report, improving our Property Services department is a key focus, and we are committed to improving responsiveness and communication in this area.
Damp, mould and condensation (DMC) problems in homes can be complex and may need more than one approach to fully resolve the problem.	We have changed how we have managed DMC problems following the introduction of the first phase of Awaab’s Law, including new processes, IT changes, staff awareness and clearer communication so customers understand what is happening and why. This work continues as we keep improving.
Fencing is important to customers, but it isn’t always clear whether a repair is our responsibility or the customer’s. When it is our responsibility, we prioritise fencing repairs based on health and safety risks.	We know customers want clearer information about fencing repairs. We are reviewing how we explain responsibility, how we assess safety risks, and how we keep customers informed about when we may be able to carry out any fencing work.
Customers were unclear about who is responsible for dealing with pests (e.g. Rats, Mice, Bedbugs) in the home or in communal areas.	We have updated our website to clearly explain when we will take action, what customers are responsible for, who is responsible for treatment, and provide advice on how to prevent pests. https://www.syha.co.uk/homes/my-home/pests/

This year we found...	So we...
Our ‘Decant’ process (when a customer needs to move temporarily) would benefit from being updated with clearer information for customers experiencing this.	We are currently reviewing and improving the ‘decant policy’ so customers receive clearer information and better contact if they need to move home on a temporary basis. This work is ongoing.
Customers wanted clearer information about how anti-social behaviour (ASB) cases are handled and how often they would be contacted.	We have continued our ASB improvement plans, including clearer website information, case studies, and earlier questions about vulnerability and impact (risk assessment). https://www.syha.co.uk/anti-social-behaviour/
Some neighbourhood and estates issues, particularly issues around the use of CCTV , was not always clear.	We have updated our neighbourhood and estates policies, including clearer CCTV guidance for customers. https://www.syha.co.uk/homes/neighbourhoods/
A heating failure in an Extra Care scheme showed we could improve how quickly we identify and respond to major incidents .	We have updated and re-circulated our major incident guidelines so staff are clearer about when an issue should be treated as a major incident and escalated quickly.
That our residents in Extra Care schemes appreciate having time in person to tell us more about their experiences.	We have visited two Extra Care schemes with our CEO, having wider conversations with customers, and resolving issues before they turn into complaints, (for example, being clearer about winter gritting).
That our new approach of having dedicated team members to handle repair-related complaints has worked well.	We have made permanent changes to the team to continue this approach, and this has also improved how quickly we have been responding to complaints.
Many complaints highlight small issues that could make a big difference if addressed early.	We are committing to reviewing these ‘small issues’ through our Complaints Working Group and making quick practical changes where we can. For example, we have already made some small IT changes to improve how we monitor cases.

Thank you for taking the time to read this report

We hope this report has helped you understand more about our complaints policy and how we have performed this year.

We would also like to thank our involved customers who took the time to share their feedback on last year's report. Your comments have helped us make improvements and shape this year's report — **thank you for your time and input.**

If you would like to find out more, please visit [our website](#)

If you have any feedback or questions about this report, please contact:

- **Email:** enquiries@syha.co.uk
- **Call:** 0114 2900 200 or 0800 1380 380

You can also visit our website to find out more about being involved in SYHA services

www.syha.co.uk/our-customer-opportunities



syha.co.uk