



A STRONGER COMMUNITY

Creating places where people thrive



Teign Housing's
ANNUAL REPORT 2020 / 21



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INTRODUCTION

I want to take a moment to pause and reflect on the challenges we have all faced over the last 12 months. A worldwide pandemic which has seriously affected our way of life, but I welcome the signs of an emerging new normal.

For those who have seen loved ones or friends pass on, we as an organisation and group of people are truly sorry for your loss. For those who face ongoing challenges, our thoughts and best wishes are with you.

Throughout the backdrop of the pandemic our teams have been working alongside their own challenges to ensure – where safe to do so – services have largely continued as usual. We very quickly responded to the need for home working for the majority of our staff; investing in hardware and software to ensure our people and services remained accessible. Also, it's a particular credit to our repairs operatives who continued to work safely in homes and to provide emergency repairs despite the challenges of the various lockdowns. I wish to take this opportunity to thank all staff, whether in homes, the community and communal areas or working at home, for their dedication and commitment to maintaining business as usual when the world was anything but. In fact, in many ways we are proud to have delivered more than ever before, offering additional financial support to local food banks, supporting more than 358 residents to access financial help through the Head Start service and making more than 6,000 wellbeing phone calls to our customers.

Across the year we have accelerated our digital offering, handed over 44 keys to new homes, launched a virtual contact centre and made a number of financial donations to three local food banks.

We were also able to retain Investors in People Platinum recognition, demonstrating our commitment to develop and retain excellent colleagues who believe in our mission. We also secured the highest financial viability and governance rating from our Regulator, signifying their belief that we are a robust and well-run organisation.

Hopefully 2021 and beyond will offer us all greater stability, but this year has shown that Teign Housing is here for whatever challenge comes next. Our mission has never felt more relevant, and I look forward to continuing our success across the next year and into the future.

Andy Jones
Chair of the Board



PROVIDING NEW HOMES

Within Teignbridge there are around 1,000 households on the Devon Home Choice register seeking social and affordable rented housing. 96% of those households cannot afford home ownership. Our ambition is to build 248 homes by March 2024 to help plug this gap, developing homes for rent and shared ownership to meet the differing needs of residents.



Teignbridge remains a key area in which we will develop high quality new affordable homes and we aim to continue as a preferred partner of Teignbridge District Council. In recent years we have also delivered new homes in East Devon, Exeter and in the South Hams, where we can manage and maintain them effectively and efficiently from our base in Newton Abbot.

OUR PERFORMANCE

Despite the challenges of COVID-19 during 2020/21 we completed 44 new homes, which were a mix of rent and shared ownership. The new properties were in Malborough (near Kingsbridge), Holcombe, Dawlish, and Newton Abbot. The number of new homes that were completed was affected by delays associated with the pandemic but once the development sites were made 'COVID-secure' progress returned to near normal and the housing market has been surprisingly robust.

The new homes delivered in 2020/21 were mainly purchased from house builders, but the current schemes in progress also include new in-fill developments on our own land in Buckfastleigh, Ashburton and Kingsteignton. There are further house builder schemes under construction in Holcombe, Dawlish, Exmouth, Honiton and Kingsteignton.

HEARING YOUR VOICE



The Government's Charter for Social Housing Residents sets out a clear requirement for landlords such as Teign Housing to listen to customers. We already have ways you can directly influence our work and are always keen for more residents to join. The pandemic has seen us switch to online meetings, enabling people to continue to give their views and shape our services.

If you'd like to find out more, email getinvolved@teignhousing.co.uk

IN 2021/22 WE WILL:

- Continue to develop our own land and create partnerships with others.
- Make progress on the planning approval for eight affordable homes on land that we own in Widecombe in the Moor in Dartmoor National Park and for 20 homes in Starcross.
- Buy 56 affordable homes from Taylor Wimpey in Topsham and 21 from Cavanna in Exeter.

INVOLVED RESIDENT SATISFACTION



It's not enough to give residents the opportunity to influence our work, it's important to us that we do that well and those residents feel valued. We survey all involved residents every year to understand how they feel about their involvement with Teign Housing, and what improvements they would like.

100% of those who returned the survey were satisfied with the way they are consulted, with the training and information provided and the feedback about how their views are taken into account.

Comments from involved members included their desire to show other tenants that their opinion counts, how they feel valued and listened to and how they positively shape services for everyone.



SCRUTINY PANEL

The Scrutiny Panel originally carried out a review of Teign Housing's management of garages in 2017, and in early 2021 they completed a follow-up review to ensure their recommendations had been implemented. As a result of the initial review, the Scrutiny Panel was pleased to learn that a substantial amount of change to the service had been made with more planned and were satisfied that the majority of actions were completed as planned and still remain in place.

The Panel also completed an annual assessment of Teign Housing's compliance with the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards.



ONLINE CONSULTATION

We know not everyone has the time or mobility to attend meetings at our office, so we're looking at new ways to allow customers to take part in consultation and our involved groups from the comfort of their home. Since July 2020 our Tenants' Forum, Scrutiny Panel and Service Board meetings have been held on Zoom. We supported residents with training and equipment to ensure that they could participate and were confident with this new video conferencing technology.



COMMUNICATING WELL

This year we did a successful pilot to train some of our team to improve our written communication. We will now roll this out to all colleagues to help ensure the content of our letters and emails is clear and accessible. We included feedback from residents in the design of the training so staff could learn from the experiences of those they had previously written to.

STOPPING FIXED TERM TENANCIES

Across the year we sought residents' views on fixed term tenancies. In 2011, following the Localism Act, we had introduced five-year fixed term tenancies. Our consultation told us that most residents on such tenancies don't really understand them and that others were experiencing feelings of insecurity and anxiety that their tenancy would end, and they'd have to move before they were ready.

Having listened to those views, our Board has decided to scrap such tenancies. All existing tenants on fixed term tenancies will move across to an assured lifetime tenancy at the end of their current fixed term period as they become due for renewal.

Assured tenancies will make our properties more attractive to customers, simplify the lettings process, support the development of sustainable communities and offer residents greater security.

IN 2021/22 WE WILL:

- Purchase and implement an engagement platform to encourage online engagement from more residents.
- Consult our involved residents about the format of meetings to ensure they can continue to be involved.
- Develop a menu of options for customers' voices to be heard on issues affecting their neighbourhoods and tenancies.

IMPROVING SERVICES



NEW VIRTUAL CONTACT CENTRE

The Business Support Team went live with the virtual contact centre on 1 October 2020. To make this happen, we provided each Business Support Advisor with a laptop and internet headset, invested in new modern software and carried out extensive designing, testing and training. From the initial project meeting in mid-September to its successful launch just over two weeks' later, it was a busy time. The new set-up means we have more information at our fingertips and also that all staff can operate without physical phones and seamlessly from home or the office.

COMPLAINTS HANDLING

During the year we received 64 complaints, 46 of which were about repairs. This was a decrease from the 2019/20 period where we had 97 complaints. A key area of improvement was communication rather than the work done or attitude, so we have since trained staff in this area.

	Target	Actual 2020/21	Actual 2019/20	Actual 2018/19	Actual 2017/18
Complaints answered on time	100%	98%	97%	91%	96%

We also created a new post of Resolutions Manager to focus on complaints and listening to residents. The post was named following consultation with our involved residents. Our Resolutions Manager has extensive experience of our repairs service, so is able to bring this understanding to the role. An updated Complaints Policy and Procedure, will be written to meet the new Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code.

Complaints Performance

	2019/20	2020/21 Q1	2020/21 Q2	2020/21 Q3	2020/21 Q4	2020/21
Number of complaints received	97	2	20	13	29	64
Average time (days) to issue response to "Let's Sort It" complaints	1.33	1.5	1.11	1.15	0.97	1.18
Percentage of "Let's Sort It" complaints responded to on time - Target 100%	96.9%	100%	100%	92%	100%	98%
Percentage of all complaints resolved at "Let's Sort It"	80%	100%	75%	92%	90%	89%
% Customers satisfied with how the complaint was dealt with (number of surveys) - Target 90%	76% (21)	-	50% (2)	-	50% (2)	50% (4)
% Customers satisfied with complaint outcome	67%	-	50%	-	50%	50%

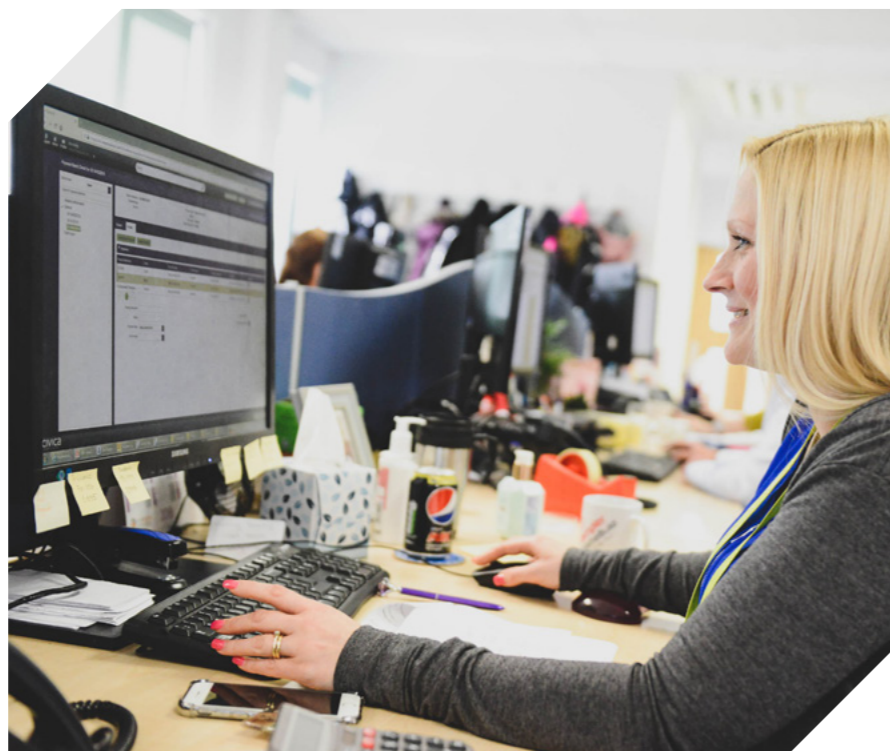
To ensure we learn from complaints we monitor what they are about to find any common themes.

Service Area	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18
Allocations	0	0	0	2
Anti-Social Behaviour	0	0	0	3
Estate services	0	0	0	0
Tenancy management	10	6	9	1
Rents and service charges	1	1	0	7
Repairs and maintenance	53	82	36	50
Staff and customer services	0	4	2	0
Development	0	2	0	0
Other	0	2	2	2
TOTAL	64	97	49	65

INVESTING IN OUR STAFF

Retaining good staff who understand our residents and believe in our values, is one way we ensure you get a good service. We were delighted that we once again secured Platinum Investors In People. This is the highest possible award available and puts us as one of the best employers in the country.

According to 90% of Teign Housing's employees, people's behaviour reflects the organisation's values. 89% of people believe the organisation has a plan for the future and 88% of people consider the organisation to have clear values.



VALUE FOR MONEY

Across 2020, the Executive team worked on securing a new loan facility. In simple terms, this is the amount we borrow against our housing stock, to enable us to build new homes and deliver our Corporate Plan.

In the Autumn, as part of a virtual roadshow, eight potential funders were identified. All eight came back with offers which demonstrates our financial stability and our attractiveness as an organisation to invest in.

The Executive and the Board selected a product from the eight which offered competitive rates. It's a great result for us as it improves our value for money and is a long-term deal which allows us to plan resources and projects across the next 30 years.

The increase in financial capacity will allow us to implement the new Corporate Plan, and predominantly, will enable us to invest in our development programme. This will mean that we now have the finances to build over 380 homes in the next five years. As well as these new homes, we can invest in our existing homes and with the de-carbonisation agenda firmly on the map, the additional financial capacity will enable us to plan effectively for the future.

Every year we will publish a Value for Money assessment. You can find it [here](#)





RENTS TEAM

Part of delivering great services is ensuring we have the rental income which is then invested back into services. Rental income is what makes it possible to complete repairs, maintain services and build new homes.

We know it's been a hard year for many households financially. We did not evict or take court action against any resident to recognise this hardship. Instead, we worked with everyone to budget, secure extra income if they were entitled to it and offer payment plans. This saved on our legal fees and also ensured residents remained in their homes.

We actively promoted Teignbridge's COVID-19 Hardship Fund and other schemes available to help tenants with their finances, whilst working with our Head Start colleagues to support those most in need.

We became more flexible to complete out of hours calls to call tenants who we struggled to contact within working hours.

Final year end figure for **arrears** as a percentage of annual debt was

1.57%

This is a significant improvement on 2019-2020 which was

1.92%

Our collection rate finished at

100.93%

which is again an improvement on 2019-2020 which was

99.64%

LETTINGS

This year we introduced a smooth and safe digital process for residents moving into one of our homes. More than 90% of viewings were virtual, which has reduced our carbon footprint and improved our customer experience. We've introduced a new affordability appointment with our Head Start team, to ensure all new residents can afford their new home and have budgeted for its running costs.

GOVERNANCE

Late in 2020 we were inspected by the Regulator of Social Housing as part of the regular check-in of all housing providers.

We are delighted to have kept our V1 and G1 status. These are the highest standards, with 'G' standing for Governance and 'V' for viability.

The two measures capture how well the Regulator thinks we are managed as an organisation and whether we are financially stable.

It means you can have confidence that we are well-run and have the skills and money to continue to improve homes, provide quality services and build new properties.

IN 2021/22 WE WILL:

- Adopt the National Housing Federation's 2020 Code of Governance.
- Review the success of year one of our new approach to complaints and publish the results to Board and residents.
- Ensure Financial / Affordability assessments are undertaken on 100% of new tenants.
- Introduce video calling when investigating complaints.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Teign Housing continues to promote equality, diversity and inclusion at the heart of everything it does as a social landlord and employer. The **Respect for People Group** continues to do some great work to bring equality and diversity to life throughout the organisation and to the benefit of both our tenants and our staff. Most recently, the group has devised and launched a new Equality Impact Assessment form, which encourages us to think about the equality, diversity and inclusiveness of our policies, procedures, projects and strategies, and this has been well received by staff. The group has continued to meet virtually throughout the pandemic and participated in some interactive LGBTQ+ training via Zoom which was delivered by a local charity 'Proud2Be'.

Throughout the pandemic, we have continued to keep in touch with all our colleagues whilst working remotely by carrying out regular 'welfare calls' to check in with our people and to make sure everyone has felt supported throughout this challenging time. We hope that the launch of our new agile working policy this summer will continue to support colleagues' work-life balance whilst ensuring a continuity of service to our residents when they need us most. Equality and diversity is an ongoing priority, and we are set to roll-out many more initiatives and campaigns moving forward as we emerge from the pandemic and into the 'new normal'.

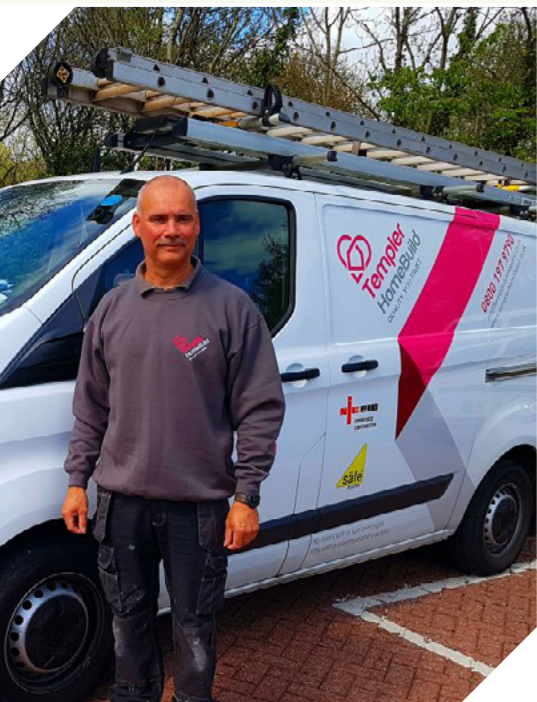


MAINTAINING HOMES



We carried out more than 10,000 repairs in 2020/21 and spent over £4 million on planned works such as new kitchens, roof replacements, window installations and heating systems.

COVID-19 had a significant impact on our work, with the first lockdown meaning we could only complete emergency repairs for a few months. We have worked hard to catch-up and to ensure the service continued as normally as possible.



REPAIRS

We maintained the emergency response services throughout the pandemic ensuring that customers remained safe in their homes.

Other repairs were by appointment only and customers were provided with the opportunity to stay in a separate part of their home while operatives completed repairs so that social distancing could be maintained.

Satisfaction with our repairs service for the year was 96.1%, this is a slight decrease from the previous year when it was 96.4%.

In 2020/21 the surplus generated by Templer HomeBuild was £41,000 and has been donated to Teign Housing by a Gift Aid payment for ongoing stock investment.

HEALTH AND SAFETY COMPLIANCE

We maintained our performance for Health and Safety compliance throughout the year, ensuring we carried out 100% of our gas safety checks, water testing, lift inspections, electrical testing and more.

We put in place very comprehensive measures to ensure that customers were reassured and kept safe to allow essential inspections to take place. We produced a video to reassure residents and reinforce to our teams what they needed to do and also ensured that 100% of operatives had access to free, quality PPE and sanitisation equipment to ensure they were 'COVID-19 secure' at all times.

CLEANING AND CARETAKING

COVID-19 caused some initial disruption to cleaning and caretaking services in communal areas. However, to protect our most vulnerable residents, we continued work to disinfect communal spaces at our schemes for older people.

VOID STANDARD

Our Board agreed a new improved void standard in November 2019, along with an increased budget to deliver this standard from April 2020. In order to meet this new standard it now takes us longer to work on homes between one resident moving out and another moving in.

The approved enhancements to the void standard includes the decoration of all properties and fitting carpets in flats, along with good quality underlay to improve sound proofing.

For 2020-21 the customer satisfaction with the standard of property at relet was 91%.

PLANNED

External planned maintenance such as redecoration, roofing and replacement windows continued after the first lockdown as the risk to residents and staff was low. We replaced eight roofs, installed windows in 100 homes and completed external redecoration to more than 130 homes.

ROWAN BLOCK, KINGSWAY

This year we completed the £900k regeneration project of Rowan block, Kingsway in Teignmouth.

Works done include a new roof, new gutters and downpipes, installing a fire curtain in the loft space, new high-performance windows, insulating and rendering all external walls, replacing the door entry system to each flat, putting new Quantum heaters in some flats, replacing and decorating the garage doors and cleaning and painting all the balcony surrounds and improving the glass panels.

The regeneration (pictured on page 5) not only improves the look of the block but is also safer for residents and should reduce energy bills.

GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

Following consultation with the Tenant Scrutiny Panel, it was agreed that from April 2020 all grounds maintenance would be carried out fully in-house. We now have three teams, working to a fortnightly schedule between April and September, the main grass cutting season. COVID-19 did impact on the 2020/21 grass cutting season, but this is now all back on track.

This year we have invested in new equipment to collect and bag leaves, clear paths of moss and Hand Arm Vibration (HAV) monitors for our Grounds Maintenance team to wear on their wrists while using machinery. This digitally monitors the vibration of the equipment and how long they should use it for.

IN 2021/22 WE WILL:

- Introduce new battery hand blowers and strimmers within some of our areas. This will reduce the vibrations for our team and is a lot better for the environment. It will also eliminate the need for petrol on site.
- Re-launch the Grounds Maintenance Panel and introduce more ways for residents to give feedback.
- Continue the regeneration works at Kingsway, Teignmouth.
- Achieve 100% in all health and safety compliance areas.

CREATING COMMUNITIES



COMMUNITY CHEST AWARDS

Since the Community Chest scheme was introduced in 2008/9, £57,414.95 has been awarded to local projects. This scheme allows local groups to apply for funding, with members of the Tenants' Forum deciding which grants to approve and the value.

In 2020/21, £2,547 was granted and a further £900 was donated to support three local COVID-19 community response groups. Community projects that benefitted included the Pow Wow Café in Kingsway, Teignmouth, who used their funds to purchase soft play equipment for local children and The Beehive, which is a before-school club at South Dartmoor Community College in Ashburton.

REDUCING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR (ASB)

We went live with our new ASB Policy & Procedure during this year and introduced a new system to monitor reports. This means we can pull up information more quickly and understand patterns. We were instrumental in re-shaping the Vulnerable Persons and ASB Forum which sees us work with other local partners to tackle ASB.

We also successfully launched "The Noise App" which enables residents to report and capture noise as it occurs and to provide updates throughout the investigation process.

The Noise App will also reduce the amount of time spent investigating noise complaints by approximately 70% and also reduce carbon emissions as we won't need to travel to witness the behaviour. This gives us more time to support residents in other ways, whilst still ensuring noise nuisance is recorded.

ASSISTED LETTINGS SCHEME (ALS)

At Teign Housing, we want people to have an affordable, safe and quality home in a community they feel part of. To get people off to the best start to their tenancy, we know the importance of white goods and carpets.

For some residents who get their first home with us, having paid their rent in advance, the cost of buying such items can be difficult. The temptation to use loan sharks or expensive weekly rental services is at its highest.

To help those most in need, in June 2020 we set aside a fund to enable residents to settle into their new place as soon as possible by providing one or more of the following free of charge; electric freestanding cooker, under worktop fridge, washing machine, carpets.

We have a limited amount of funding for this project, so have a scoring system to identify those who are most in need of support. This year 73 residents benefitted from this project.

COMMUNITY CHARTERS

Even during the pandemic, we held five Community Charter Days. We listened to residents' views, and either held these virtually or in person depending on each community's preference. We hold these events to help residents moving into new developments create a new community and to understand their responsibilities as a tenant and neighbour, and the promises we make in return.



WELFARE CALLS

Throughout the lockdown we made more than 6,000 calls to residents to make sure they were ok and provide them with information on relevant support and help if it was needed.

MEETING YOU

More than 2,000 participants took part in community events, charter days and surveys across 2020/21. We held skip days, supported Christmas tree events at Kingsway and Malborough, completed surveys to re-shape the independent living service, consulted resident on tenancy types and much more.

We also achieved our target of visiting each of our estates quarterly throughout the year and have completed 1,340 Keeping in Touch visits.

FIRE SAFETY

Your safety is our highest priority.

In November & December we combined three exercises in one visit to each of our Kingsway blocks to complete Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs). These are plans which outline what residents should do in the case of a fire.

We are now completing PEEPs at all Keeping in Touch Visits so we can identify who needs extra help in the case of a fire and can share this information with the fire service if ever needed.

Across the year we also worked with Devon & Somerset Fire Rescue Service. They delivered awareness sessions to all our Housing Team to increase the number of residents having home safety visits. The visits are free and tell you the best way to survive a fire in your home. Eligible residents can also access additional free smoke detectors. Visit their [website](#) to book.



HALDON RIDGE

The Neighbourhood Services Advisor held the first Haldon Action Group (HAG) residents' meeting via Zoom. Other activities included a skip day in June 2020 and a Christmas card competition and craft day.

We also attended the National Advisory Gypsy and Travellers Meeting in Bristol and were part of a campaign to promote better housing for this group.

We are partners in the South West Gypsy and Traveller Group and now meet regularly with Teignbridge District Council, the local police and others to co-ordinate support to Gypsy and Traveller communities.



HEAD START

In 2020/21 we received 358 referrals for Head Start assistance. We helped residents claim £114,342.17 in additional income that they didn't realise they were eligible for. Our partnership with the local credit union, Westcountry Savings and Loans, has seen around 60 residents join. We also made 105 food bank referrals including securing gas and electric vouchers for residents.

LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP

We worked closely with Dawlish College, Teignmouth Community College and Teign School. We offered support to help students choose their future careers and prepare for interviews. A colleague created a YouTube video after questions were sent in from the students wanting to know more about Tenancy Enforcement and Sustainability and about working in housing.

OVER 60s PROJECT

Before lockdown, we started a project to support older residents. This continued socially distanced across the year. As part of the Over 60s project, we made 500 calls, completed 100 Keeping in Touch visits and arranged for food parcels, gas and electric top ups. We also supported residents to raise repairs, advised on downsizing and our TeignCare alarm service and made 13 grant applications on behalf of residents.

MAKE A STAND PLEDGE

In January 2021 we celebrated our one-year anniversary of the 'Make a Stand' pledge. This pledge outlines our commitment to supporting victims of domestic abuse. We produced a stand-alone policy on domestic abuse to support both our customers and colleagues who might experience domestic abuse. We also created a referral platform online, and a webpage with resources and information for victims.



IN 2021/22 WE WILL:

- Open our Drop-Down Zones and launch our Patch Pod Promises. We were unable to do this in 2020/21 due to COVID-19 restrictions.
- Evolve and update our existing Neighbourhood Strategy so it fully reflects the requirements of The Charter for Social Housing Residents.

PERFORMANCE AT A GLANCE

Here are our key performance statistics for **2020/21**



96.1%
of residents were satisfied with our repairs services
(a slight decrease from 96.4% last year)



100%
of emergency repairs were completed on time
(2019/20 performance was also 100%)



7%
of calls to our contact centre went unanswered
(compared to 9% last year)



99% of repairs appointments made were kept
(98.9% in 2019/20)



100%
of properties had their annual gas safety check



£114,342.17
additional income secured for residents, via our Head Start service



6,000
welfare calls made



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