

PA Housing Annual Report 2017-2018

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 pahousing.co.uk

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 residents@pahousing.co.uk

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Introduction

It has been a year since the formation of PA Housing, and we have had an exciting and productive 12 months. Inevitably we have been internally-focused since the merger, concentrating on the successful transfer of our back-office to Leicester, and bringing together our internal systems.

Our hard work has been well-rewarded. We have already made over £3m in savings to our operating costs and we have received the top rating (G1:V1) from the Regulator of Social Housing. This rating is for the way that we govern PA Housing and our financial capacity to deal with adverse situations – which is an invaluable quality in the unpredictable climate of social housing.

We have now started to make big improvements to our customer services and our properties and this is what we will focus on over the next twelve months.

The brilliant news is that our Board has agreed to spend £50m over the next five years on work to our properties. This means that we have been able to set aside money for this year alone to install 1,500 new bathrooms and kitchens. Over 500 properties will have new windows.

We shall also increase our staff numbers, and this means that we can put more people on the ground. You will soon see more of us out and



about in our neighbourhoods and you will be able to find out about your neighbourhood team on our website. We are also putting more staff into managing our property improvement programmes, so that our customers have a positive experience when they receive their new windows, kitchens or bathrooms, and to support the considerable investment being made.

We have ambitious development plans – in addition to the 364 properties built in 2017/18, we plan to build at least another 350 this year. Most of our homes are let on social rents. It's only been in recent years that affordable rents have applied to a small proportion of our homes, in line with government policy. Going forward 50% of our new build development programme will be to rent.

We can't make this happen on our own. Many of our residents play a major part in helping us to make improvements. Some join our scrutiny teams and recommend how we can do things better, for example on fire safety and how we manage our empty properties. Others help us by joining panels to select contractors, such as for cleaning and grounds maintenance.

The purpose of this annual report is to inform you of our performance and progress. We are also using the report this year to show the benefits to individual residents if they become involved in some way with our work, as well as being of considerable help to PA Housing and its future.

If you have any feedback on this report or on PA Housing as an organisation, we would be keen to hear your thoughts.

Dilip Kavi, Chief Executive

Get involved!

Scrutiny success

In the past the scrutiny teams have looked at a wide range of services that we provide for our residents and they have won national awards.

Residents play a big part in scrutiny – resident inspectors look in-depth at a service to see how well it is working and their suggestions on how the service can be improved are considered by senior managers. In response senior managers produce an action plan. The improvements arising from scrutiny have included the 0300 phone number, the introduction of the Handyman service and improvements on how we deal with antisocial behaviour.

This year the main focus of scrutiny is on fire safety and how we manage our empty properties.



Customer conference

On Saturday 21 April 2018 sixty residents joined us for our first conference, in Tring. It was a great socialising event as the fantastic photo on the front page shows. It was also very productive and we're hoping to make this a regular event.



Hattie Llewelyn-Davies OBE is the new Chair of PA Housing from 1 October 2018. Hattie will be taking over from Aman Dalvi OBE, who has served his full six year term as Chair and is stepping down having achieved the top rating of G1:V1 for PA Housing from the Regulator of Social Housing.

Hattie has worked in housing and homelessness for her whole career. She particularly likes working with residents, developing their skills to help to improve their landlord's services. Hattie worked with the Elmbridge tenants in the run up to the transfer to Elmbridge Housing Trust, one of PA Housing's founding bodies, and was an interim CEO of asra many years ago. This gives her a real respect for the legacy of PA Housing as well as admiration for the excellent work done since the merger. She is the Sunday Times 'Non Executive of the Year' for the public and not for profit sector.

The Resident Council and the Customer Forum

The Resident Council is a group of 15 residents who work with senior managers to monitor the quality of customer services - and how satisfied you are with those services. The Council oversees the work of the resident inspectors.

The Customer Forum comprises 19 residents who meet to discuss various topics in order to make improvements to services and they also oversee the work of the local forums.

Both the Customer Forum and the Resident Council report back to the Customer Services Committee. Their members bring their knowledge and experience to make sure that the residents' voice is at the heart of all that PA Housing does.

The Chairs of the Resident Council and the Customer Forum attend each others' meetings and have similar agendas. We are looking to harmonise this structure over the next few months, in order to develop a team which can be very effective on your behalf.

Get involved – make a difference

Join one of our local area or specialist forums, e.g. Independent Living; write for the magazine; or go along to your local tenants' group meeting or a one-off focus group; take part in resident-led green groups, such as making courtyard improvements; or wellbeing projects; join our team of mystery shoppers; or come along to an inclusion project, e.g. the Strive Partnership, aimed at helping people set up their own businesses.

Why not take part in PA in Bloom if you're a gardener? This recognises residents who have used their gardening skills to brighten up an area. We get more applicants each year, showing how much our residents take pride in their neighbourhoods and gardens. ►

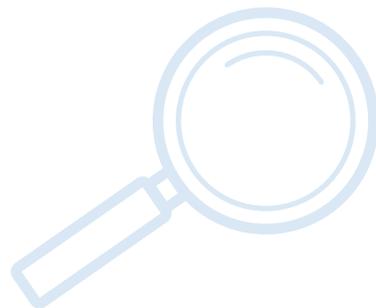
Did you know that we run a community allotment in Walton-on-Thames in partnership with Walton Charities? It won a silver medal at the Hampton Court Flower Show last year.

Our residents come together to grow food, share and learn new skills, enjoy the outdoors and make new friends.

If you're passionate about great customer service and would like to have a say in how services are delivered, why not join the scrutiny panel or our team of resident inspectors? It's hugely rewarding and you'll have a real impact on how PA Housing is run and you'll help to improve services for the benefit of all residents. Anyone can get involved and you'll be given full training and support.

Email: residents@pahousing.co.uk

We'd love to hear from you.



Success at awards

Entering awards keeps us on our toes and showcases our skills and achievements. In our first year three of our involved residents, Malcolm Mees, Ann Netts and Joan Swift have been shortlisted for awards, for the way that they make sure the resident voice is heard at PA Housing.

Our Customer Experience and Insight Team at Bede Island won Bronze Contact Centre Support Team category at the UK National Contact Centre Awards and our Tenancy Solutions Team at Case House won the Resolve National Antisocial Behaviour Award. We were also shortlisted for several other awards.

Your feedback

We are working hard to look at reasons behind our customer satisfaction figures. Part of this is monitoring our complaints performance and using feedback from complaints to improve our services. Bede Island has now adopted the Case House system of managing and analysing complaints so that we are consistent in both offices.

We also have a new Complaints policy which shortens the process and encourages our senior managers to resolve all complaints at stage 1 or 2.

There were just 23 complaints to the Housing Ombudsman during the year and none were upheld.

Surrey and West London

There were 265 complaints in 2017/18 (similar to the previous year) and 91% received a response at stage 1 within 10 working days, above the sector average of 89.9%. The average response time was 7 days. 92% of complaints were resolved at stage 1 and only 24, mostly more complex complaints, went to stage 2.

23% of complaints were found to be justified, 36% partially justified and 40% not justified.

For the first time there were more complaints (159) about housing services than repairs. A common theme was poor communication, and it's clear that we need to explain more clearly how our housing service operates. We can also improve how we come across both in person and over the phone. The work we are doing around the PA Way will build on this.

Our repairs and gas services received just 115 (31%) complaints, way below the 70% sector average.

Feedback from complaints about cleaning, grounds maintenance and neighbourhoods shows that we need to explain more about the type of service we provide and what residents can expect from this service. We aim to communicate more clearly about this in future.



Midlands and London

There were 414 complaints in 2017/18. Up to January 2018, when the new complaints process was introduced, 68% of complaints were resolved at stage 1. This increased to 88% after the process was changed, but the average response time was 29 days due to the volume and complexity of the complaints. The positive effect of the new process is evident, and we will be able to provide a better analysis for 2018/19.

The big change to our services due to feedback is the action we are taking to improve our repairs service in London.



What people have said

If you have feedback about our services, good or bad, we want to hear from you. You can phone, email us or fill in the form in our 'Complaints and Compliments' leaflet.

When you receive a service from us, we want to know whether you were happy with the outcome or if you feel that we should have done things differently. Your feedback helps us to learn from our mistakes and continually improve the service we provide you. It's also a real boost for our staff to hear when you think that they've done a good job.



Here are some of the great stories that have come out of the last 12 months:

"I would like to thank your company for helping me have a through-lift put into my home. You have no idea how much you have changed my life; for the last 7 years I've slept in my living room as I'm wheelchair-bound due to a stroke and have no feeling from the waist down. What you have done for me is amazing. It's nice to know that there are people that will go out of their way for people like me."

"Thank you! For all your help and support through the fitting of the kitchen and afterwards. You have been amazing! And I don't know what we would have done without you!"

"I rang enquiring about how to pay my rent and to work out how much I should be paying as I am in receipt of housing benefits. She was extremely patient with me as I suffer from high anxiety and find phone calls setting up direct debits very difficult. She was amazing and very helpful to me. We need more people like her in this world!"

Better homes

We want your home to be safe and pleasant to live in, so we have a full programme of improvements as well as routine maintenance.

We have spent £10.6m on upgrading our homes in our first year – by fitting new kitchens and bathrooms, replacing windows and roofs, installing boilers and redecorating externally and in communal areas.

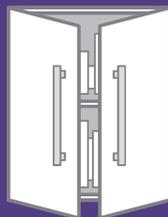
We are doing even more work to our properties over the next 12 months, by installing 650 kitchens, 464 bathrooms and 349 windows in the Midlands and 168 kitchens, 212 bathrooms, and 160 windows in London and the South-East. The kitchens will be of good quality and the resident will have a choice of design and colour.

We will continue to install large volumes of kitchens, bathrooms, windows and doors and make other improvements over the next 5 years. This will cost £50m. £37m of this will be used to ring all our kitchen and bathroom programmes into line.



536
New UPVC
windows

635
New
kitchens



256
New
bathrooms

872
New
boilers



Potlidgate Court, Warwickshire



£50 million to be spent over 5 years on better homes

About our homes

We own and manage 23,500 homes, in the Midlands, London and the South-East. Our varied housing stock provides homes for first time buyers, keyworkers, older people and those in general housing need.

- Berkshire - 128
- Buckinghamshire - 24
- Derbyshire - 121
- Hertfordshire - 56
- Leicestershire - 4856
- London - 7925
- Northamptonshire - 1375
- Nottinghamshire - 2552
- Surrey - 5683
- West Midlands - 617
- Sussex - 18
- Oxfordshire - 45

Keeping you safe

During the year we made great strides in improving fire safety and we are spending £1m in 2018/19 on items such as sprinklers, servicing fire alarms and emergency lighting. We also undertook large programmes of electrical testing work, water risk assessment and asbestos inspections. We will continue with all of this safety work in 2018/19.

Gas safety compliance	99.97%
6 gas safety checks not completed due to access denied by resident.	
Fire risk safety compliance	100%



Pretoria Road, Chertsey

More new homes

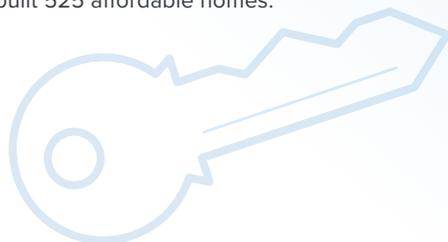
We have an active development programme and plan to build more than 5,500 good quality new homes over the next ten years. At the moment our activity is concentrated in London and the South-East, but we want to re-establish our development programme in the Midlands over the next two years.

We are working on projects with Taylor Wimpey, Berkeley Homes, Cala Homes and Bellway Homes.

We had a very successful start to development after the merger – in 2017/18 we built 364 new

homes comprising 239 rented and 125 shared ownership, costing £65.3m and started the construction of another 653 homes at 24 sites across Greater London and Surrey.

The project which symbolises our growth in London is the One Woolwich Partnership with Lovell and L.B. Greenwich. We completed the first phase of 121 homes in 2017/18 and when completed we will have built 525 affordable homes.



Homes designed with people in mind

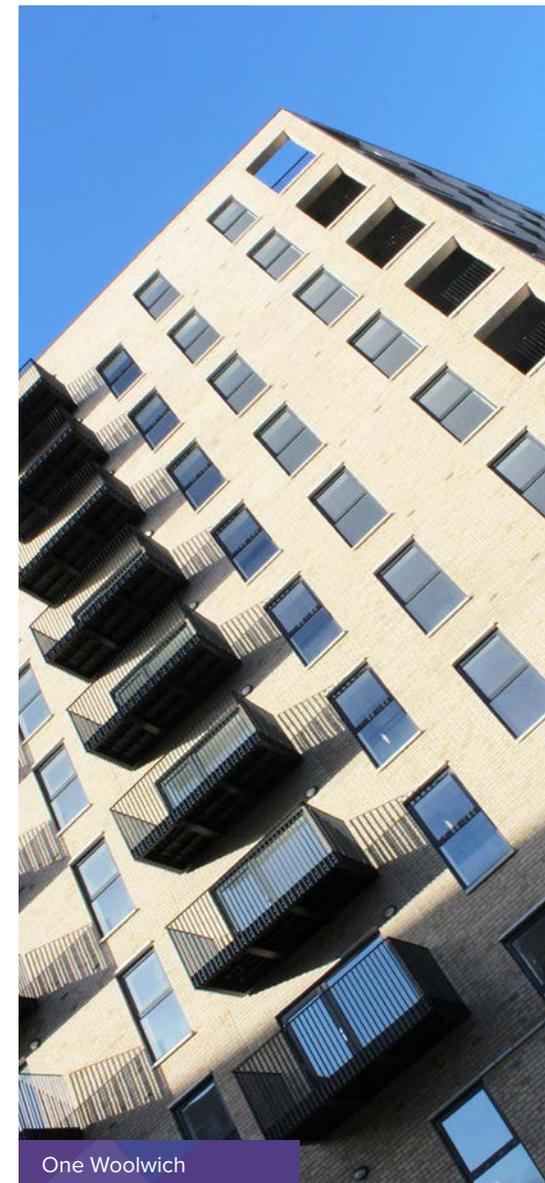
There were 379 affordable rent lettings during the year. Affordable rents have an upper limit of either 80% of the market rent, or at the Local Housing Allowance, whichever is lower, and are subject to PA Housing's own 'affordability' review. They apply to some re-lets and to newly-built homes, according to the number set by the government. Sheltered and supported housing properties are not normally let at affordable rents.

We remain absolutely committed to providing genuinely affordable homes for those who cannot access housing (either for rent or sale) on the open market.

Our neighbourhoods

We don't just want to provide you with a decent home, we also want to make your neighbourhood clean, safe and great to live in. We have a neighbourhood approach to housing management in Surrey and parts of London, designed in workshops with residents. We now plan to roll out this approach across all of our areas. This will mean more staff on the ground and they will be out in our neighbourhoods most of the time. They will:

- Carry out estate inspections and follow-up on action
- Monitor work carried out by our contractors
- Carry out new tenant sign-ups and follow-up tenancy visits
- Support and develop community initiatives and resident groups



One Woolwich

Home moves

Number of all lets (new homes and re-lets)	1,686
Average re-let days	29.8
Voids rent loss	0.91%
Number of households moved through mutual exchange	168
Number of homes sold through the Right to Buy and Right to Acquire	11

Mutual exchange (swapping homes with another tenant) - is now the best way for a family to find a more suitable home for their circumstances and 168 households used this method to move house this year.

We can help you find a mutual exchange and support you through the process.

Support and advice

This year we have focused our efforts on helping customers deal with the impact of welfare reform and supporting them into work. We want to make sure that our customers access the benefits that they're entitled to, with the help of our Tenancy Sustainment and Financial Inclusion Teams. We can find you the right support from our partners who can help you tackle the root cause of your difficulties.

Number of customers supported by our teams	2,350
Total benefits claimed back for customers	£2,943,000

Independent living (sheltered housing)

The loss of Supporting People Grant which funded our support service to residents in our independent living schemes has led to a review of our services in Surrey and West London. Our residents said that their top priorities are repairs, grounds maintenance and cleaning of communal areas, and we have changed our service as a result. Our staff will still be visible in our schemes, but their main concerns will be ensuring that high standards of estate services are maintained, managing the communal areas and improving communication and satisfaction with these services.



Support and advice

We award grants of up to £2,500 to individuals and groups of residents. Projects we've funded include the KT12 Football Club, an after-school activity for young people.

Cake making for Julie

We have run a 12 week course called Strive to help residents with the drive and passion to start their own business. This has been in partnership with a company called Enterprise CUBE. The course helps our residents with all aspects of running a business including financial issues, market research, advertising and sales.

Julie (not her real name) is a wonderful cake maker. After completing the course she is now well on her way to making a success of her business and said "I honestly do not have the 'right words' to explain how amazing Strive has been. The team have been an inspiration, I will be sad to miss them every Thursday here on."

This is just one of the ways we help our residents to realise their ambitions.

Helping a vulnerable resident claim HB

We recently worked with a resident in rent arrears with mental ill health, physical disabilities and addiction issues. We helped him complete a Housing Benefit (HB) application form and helped his support worker get the supporting evidence in place. We also offered to be an intermediary with the local authority, to avoid any undue stress for him. The result was that he received a full

HB payment which covered his rent arrears. Without our support for this vulnerable resident his high level of rent arrears might have led to legal action.

Helping a resident back into work

We support two pre-schools in Walton-on-Thames which provide childcare for working parents and support our efforts to help residents get back into work. This September one resident will not only be using our facilities for her children, but she will be starting work as a pre-school apprentice at our Thamesview pre-school.

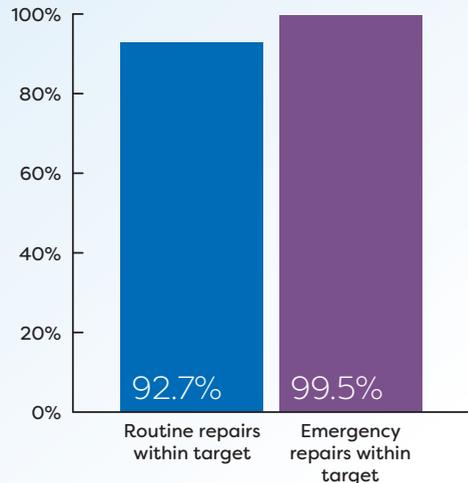
Helping John get a home

We helped 82 year old John, who had a cardiac arrest and lost everything due to his illness. He was due for discharge from hospital and had nowhere to go, so we found him a flat and furnished it with everything from a bed and bedding to a cooker, fridge, table and chairs.

Looking after your home - Repairs

We have achieved high repairs standards in most of our operational areas, but we want to further improve our customer satisfaction ratings and are taking steps to address concerns about the quality of our service elsewhere. We are working with our main repairs contractors to put improved working arrangements in place. To make sure that we give you the best service we can we've also brought in a new Maintenance policy and a new Lettable standard, harmonising these across the organisation.

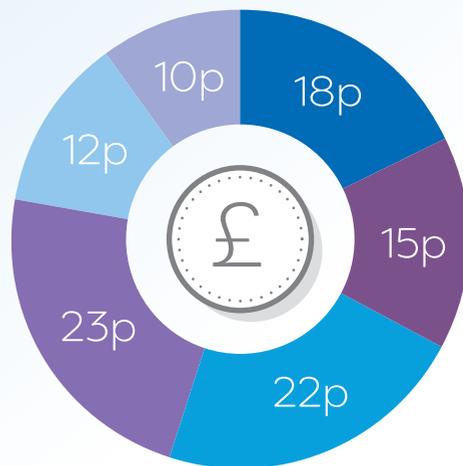
Our very popular free Handyman service in Surrey and West London continues to have very high customer satisfaction.



Jobs completed by Handyman service **2,798**

How we've spent your rent money

As a PA Housing resident, you get a rent set below the market rate, saving money and benefiting from the support we can provide if you need it. Through our planned works programmes, you also benefit from ongoing improvements to your home, such as new windows, kitchens and bathrooms. What we spend is targeted to ensure value for money.



- Planned maintenance (e.g. new kitchens)
- Responsive maintenance
- Management of your homes
- Loan payments
- Service costs
- Office support and other costs