



PA Housing

Annual Report
2018/19



Message from Hattie

Since I joined PA Housing last October, we have successfully integrated our processes and systems following our merger two years ago and finished bringing everything together. We are now very well placed to deliver better services

and build many more new homes. This has been down to a huge team effort and the talent and determination of our board members and colleagues. We have had fantastic support from our stakeholders.



None of our plans and ambitions would be possible without our strong finances, and we aim to spend wisely in all that we do to ensure that it is right for PA Housing and our customers.

We have used some of the efficiency savings created by the merger to invest in more frontline staff - the cover photo shows some of our new recruits who are already out and about in our neighbourhoods. Early signs are that they are making a real difference and have contact with lots of customers.

Our development programme is growing. We have built 327 new homes in the past year, with 600 more on site. The Board is committed to our social responsibility to provide more homes for people in need and keep our rents affordable.

We are very committed to modernising our homes. More technical staff have been taken on in our teams so that we can expand our programme to install new heating systems,

windows, kitchens and bathrooms. Not everything goes to plan and while we have made a lot of progress, the programme is behind where we'd like it to be. We know how important this is to our customers, and we'll be getting back on track this year.

The project that has caught my eye is 'The PA Way'. This new way of working will instil a strong focus on learning from the customer experience and point of view, and make our service delivery really excellent. I see this as key to our future success.

I have spent a lot of time travelling around, meeting customers and our resident groups to discuss with them how we can improve our services. I value our close working relationship and I'm delighted that our involved residents are so active. Our resident scrutiny teams are having a real impact on how we do things.

Hattie Llewelyn-Davies
Chair of PA Housing

Message from Dilip

Welcome to our 2018/19 Annual Report. In last year's report we invited you to get involved and join our various resident activities. Listening to what you say about our services is really important to us. This year's report shows what a difference this help from our customers has made.

The most important thing to me as Chief Executive is to ensure that both the business and our customers reap the benefits of our merger.

We are focused on investing in our homes and providing brilliant services. This will improve the comfort and safety of our customers, and help to keep costs down in these uncertain times.

All of our staff are keen to do the best job they can and many new faces have joined us who bring a wealth of experience in good customer care. It is an absolute pleasure to work with them and I know that there is much more to come.

My thanks in particular go to all of those residents who have given up their time in the past year to work with us.

Dilip Kavi
Chief Executive



Your voice

Our residents have played a major part in shaping our services since the merger. Three residents sit on our Customer Services Committee alongside board members. The Resident Council and Customer Forum are working well – the chairs attend each other's meetings and membership is up. Both have regular meetings, often with guest speakers. They have had a big influence on our new strategy on resident involvement.

There have been lots of local activities, with forum meetings and a number of community days around our estates. Our involved residents now have a national profile - they have met government ministers and taken part in various discussion groups. These include:

- Hackitt review discussion group about the Fire Safety Review following the Grenfell Tower tragedy

- National Housing Federation's Together with Tenants forum to discuss the NHF's new resident involvement strategy
- Presentation on fire safety from a resident's perspective to a joint Chartered Institute of Housing/London Fire conference
- TPAS (Tenant engagement experts) London and South East forums
 - sharing of best practice on scrutiny; and response to the Government's Green Paper.

Our Resident Involvement Manager is a member of the TPAS Board and influences the national picture on resident involvement.

Joan Swift Resident Council Chair



Scrutiny

Our resident scrutiny programme encourages our residents to get involved at a wider level. Volunteers are trained to inspect our services and are supported by an independent advisor. Their recommendations are presented to our Customer Services Committee and an action plan is agreed which the residents monitor.

2018/19 was spent bringing the resident inspectors from our different regions together to undertake scrutiny jointly. The London and Midlands team started the year with a partial scrutiny of fire safety. This involved site visits, interviewing staff and seeing how we conduct a Fire Risk Assessment. They recommended that we clarify whether residents should stay put or evacuate in the event of a fire and that fire safety signage should be made clearer.

The teams then joined forces to look at how we manage empty properties so that residents can move into their new homes quickly and we mitigate any rent loss. Their recommendations included linking the value of decoration vouchers

to inflation and allowing more flexibility on choice. They were concerned about utility companies causing delays in getting the properties ready to relet and we have taken action to deal with this.

Two main PA-wide scrutiny events followed - on the new Complaints policy and the delivery of Universal Credit. They said we should:

- set up a complaints panel, to include a resident
- make it easier to report complaints through the website
- be more consistent when dealing with complaints
- continue with Universal Credit drop-in sessions, including helping residents with their applications so that they are accurate and complete
- extend training on Universal Credit to all front-line staff.

We realised that the scrutiny teams were giving up a lot of time just to travel to site visits, so the

last part of the year was spent reviewing how best to reduce this time commitment.

We'd love to hear from you if you'd like to get involved in any way. You'll be given full training and support.



Simon Martin
01932 235 724



Sally Griffith
0116 257 6719



Melissa Lacide
01932 235 887



Rajesh Sharma
0116 204 4061

Success with awards

Entering awards to showcase our innovation and improvements allows us to reflect on our achievements and continue to grow and develop.

Last year we were nominated for 14 awards and won two:

- **2018 UK National Contact Centre Awards**
Our Leicester contact centre won an award for best Contact Centre Support Team.
- **2018 Surrey Antisocial Behaviour (ASB) Award**
Our Case House Tenancy Solutions team won the award for Tackling ASB.



We own **23,059** homes



We invested in **2,000** of our homes



We built **327** new homes



We received **40,000** calls a month

We spent **£42.7m** on our homes



8,983 of you are registered for our online services

How are we doing?



We helped **1,110** of you who were at risk of losing your tenancy



87% said you were satisfied or very satisfied with our service

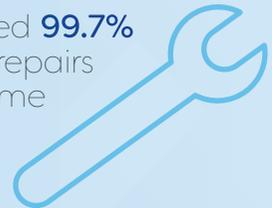
We let **1,400** properties



You received an extra **£3.5m** in benefits and support with our help



We completed **99.7%** of emergency repairs on time



We're working hard to improve our figures for next year.

Customer satisfaction

Paragon and Asra, our heritage organisations, each used their own method of measuring customer satisfaction. We are now using M.E.L, an independent survey company, throughout PA Housing and will be able to provide more comprehensive figures in next year's Annual Report.

Overall satisfaction with PA



Making homes safer

We prioritise whatever resources are necessary to ensure the highest possible standard of health and safety compliance in our homes - including fire safety, gas, electrics, asbestos and emergency lighting. We deal promptly with any issues that may affect residents' safety, such as bulky items left in communal areas.

We have invested over £5 million on fire safety improvements over the last three years. We carried out extra safety reviews, often working with the local fire authorities, to make sure that our buildings are safe.

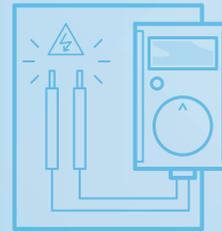
We inspect all fire alarm systems and safety equipment on a weekly or monthly basis as well as other critical safety systems, such as lift emergency lines.

We have a clear focus on fire safety in our new developments. Our dedicated risk and technical assessor works on the fire strategy with our developer and contractor partners.



92.6%

fire safety compliance
(actions completed from Fire Risk Assessments)



£10.4m

spent on health and safety



99.97%

Properties with a valid gas safety certificate

Repairs and maintenance

We deal with around 52,000 responsive repairs and 1,200 voids each year. Our contractors are Fortem Solutions plc (part of the Willmott Dixon Group) and Wates. They are co-located at our Case House office in Surrey and our Leicester office at Bede Island and this enables us to respond to repairs requests quickly and efficiently. We also employ a direct labour force in part of the Midlands.

Our London residents said that they were not receiving the level of repairs service they wanted, so in February we expanded our contract with Fortem to pick up all of our London properties. Fortem achieved 100% satisfaction with their service a month after they took over.

We continue to provide a Handyperson service in Surrey and South West London. They do work such as fitting curtain poles, blinds and shelves

for older or disabled residents without any family or other support, free of charge. The service is very popular and we hope to extend it to the rest of PA Housing.

We completed a programme of maintenance action days, where we visit a scheme and carry out any on the spot and communal repairs and get feedback on our services.

We provide aids and adaptations to enable our customers to continue to live in their homes independently. We spent £220,000 on adaptations in 2018/19. This included 143 minor adaptations in properties across the Midlands, mostly hand and grab rails. In partnership with local authorities we completed more than 50 major adaptations. These included installing level access showers, stairlifts, and even building extensions in some cases.

Satisfaction with repairs: **85%**

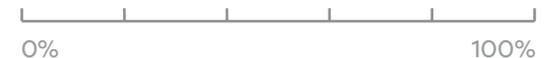


Repairs completed on target:

2017/18 **92.7%**
2018/19 **95%**

Emergency repairs within target:

2017/18 **99.5%**
2018/19 **99.7%**



Modern living standards

We want our residents to be comfortable in their homes and benefit from modern living standards. Last year we started an ambitious modernisation programme, with plans to install large numbers of kitchens and bathrooms, as well as more energy efficient windows, doors and boilers. We improved 2,000 homes, but ended the year £6 million behind schedule, due to delays and the performance of some of the contractors. Action has been taken to get the programme back on track during 2019/20.

Our target was to upgrade homes with the highest energy bills. We installed 'A' rated gas boiler systems in 225 properties across the Midlands with inefficient electric heaters. This should save the residents as much as £800 a year in fuel bills. We used £518,778 grant funding from the National Fuel Efficiency Improvement Programme for these upgrades.

Our in-house teams of technical staff oversee the design and installation of this work, to make sure that kitchen and bathroom layouts are improved and customers have a good experience. Our Resident Liaison Officers assist so that the kitchen and bathroom design and fittings meet customers' mobility or other requirements. They also help older residents pack away and then unpack the contents of their kitchens.



	2017/18	2018/19
Total money spent on our homes:	£38.6m	£42.7m
Money spent upgrading homes:	£10.6m	£13.7m
Number of kitchens replaced:	635	264
Number of bathrooms replaced:	256	208
Number of homes with new energy efficient windows:	536	608
Number of homes with cyclical maintenance:	-	1,957
Number of homes with new efficient boilers:	872	1,148

A modern business – digital innovation

We want our digital service to make life easier for users. My PA was launched last year. It is being used by residents in their daily lives to report repairs, schedule appointments and pay rent all in one place, at any time. Due to its ease of use, our customers used it to pay over £5 million in rent last year.

Our new website was launched in February and our web chat facility and social media have all been designed around our customers.

We continue to help less confident or less able residents

use these services. Our Digital team visits schemes for digital days, and our partners such as Age UK help us give one to one training through 'We Are Digital'. We have also trained resident volunteers as 'Digital Champions' so that they can help others.

We will continue to invest in our digital services, but we also offer a choice of other ways to keep in touch, whatever works best for the customer. We recognise the value of personal relationships and face to face conversations through our Neighbourhood Coordinators.

David Steede Digital Champion

Tenancy fraud

Tenancy fraud is growing, and London is a hot spot. We have relied on our local authority partners to carry out investigations so far but sometimes these can be lengthy. We now have specialists in tenancy fraud in our teams. Our aim is to keep down rent arrears while we deal with these cases and save money on legal fees.

80 cases were raised and investigated

21 discretionary cases were investigated

7 properties were recovered and relet

5 properties were recovered where succession was not granted

Home moves

Our Home Moves team delivers lettings, transfers, mutual exchanges and decants. This one-team approach introduced across PA last year has enabled us to share best practice. It also provides a better customer experience, especially with large decant programmes, which we aim to be as stress free and positive as possible for residents.



	2017/18	2018/19
Number of homes let during the year	1,686	1,400
Number of households moved through mutual exchange	168	178
Current rent arrears	3.6%	3.7%
Average time taken to relet empty properties	29.8 days	28.7 days
Rent loss from empty properties	0.9%	1%



Universal Credit (UC) Hub

We are experts on UC and welfare reforms. Our specialist team aims to make the move to UC as smooth as possible for our customers and ensure their wellbeing by helping them to claim all the benefits they are entitled to.

We give personalised support to set up a claim, access the benefits the resident is entitled to and keep their rent arrears as low as possible. We can advise anyone being turned down for UC of their rights.

We work with anyone having problems with their claim. We have excellent working relationships with local job centres. This means that we know within 24 hours of a new UC claim being made by one of our residents.

We also sit on the National Housing Federation's UC working group, to take part in best practice and help to influence any changes to UC.

	2018/19
Cases supported by our Tenancy Sustainment and Financial Inclusion teams	2,350
Total benefits claimed back for customers	£3,586,000
Number of customers helped into employment	70
Satisfaction with Tenancy Sustainment and Financial Inclusion service	89%

Our Neighbourhood approach



Our Resident Scrutiny team in Surrey previously worked alongside us to design our housing services structure, and last year we reviewed this model and introduced it across PA Housing. This gives a consistent way of working and we can

share best practice across our offices. Last year we invested £1 million of the savings we made from the merger to recruit 32 staff and build up these teams. The teams are supported by new specialist teams, spread across PA Housing.

Customer Contact Centres

Customers can get in touch using our low cost phone number **0300 123 2221**, or by email, webchat or the website. Having two joined-up contact centres means that they can share the workload during busy times and answer phone calls more quickly.

We deal with a wide range of enquiries 8am - 5pm, after which Service 24, our out of hours team, takes emergency repairs calls and monitors our lifeline services. We are regulated under the code of practice for the Telecare Standards Association, to ensure we offer a high quality service.

On the doorstep

Our Neighbourhood Coordinator teams carry out neighbourhood inspections, keeping an eye on cleaning and grounds maintenance and dealing with any issues in communal areas.

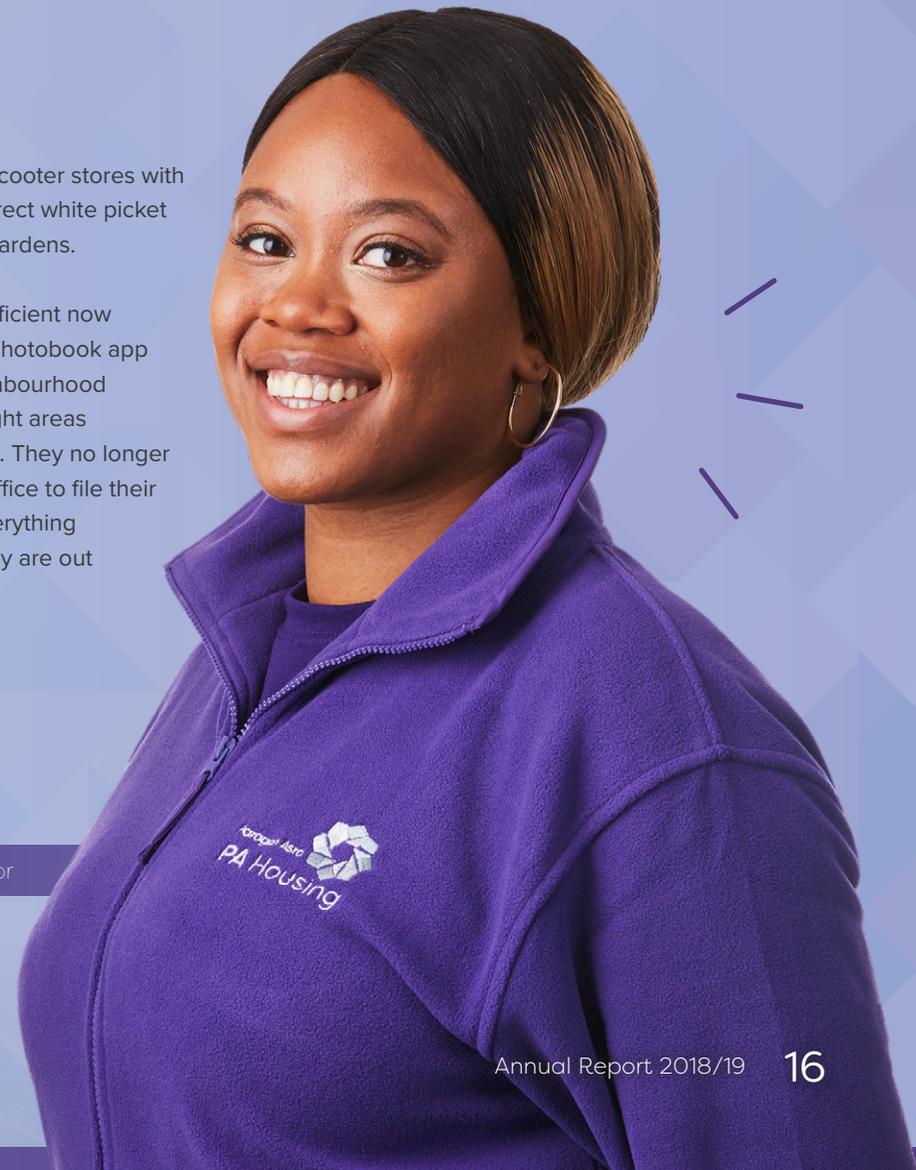
They organise neighbourhood action days, surgeries and community events and carry out new customer sign ups and first year visits.

Our Neighbourhood Improvement fund can be used by the Neighbourhood Coordinators. They work with residents to identify projects which will improve the environment and solve practical problems. The fund has been used to install secure letterboxes in communal areas, convert

garages into mobility scooter stores with charging points, and erect white picket fencing in communal gardens.

Our teams are more efficient now that they can use the Photobook app to report on their neighbourhood inspections and highlight areas requiring improvement. They no longer have to return to the office to file their reports and can do everything electronically while they are out and about.

Nadine Charlemagne Neighbourhood Coordinator



Antisocial behaviour

Our Tenancy Solutions teams combine support and enforcement. They have been very successful at intervening early and dealing with antisocial behaviour and hate crime. Given the

disruption this can have on the quality of life of those nearby, it remains a top priority and we have worked with the police and local authorities to enforce the law where appropriate.

Examples of successful outcomes:

We received reports of serious drug dealing from a property next to a parade of shops in Sunbury. We applied for a court injunction and a warrant to take possession of the property. This enabled the police to obtain a full closure order while we waited for the court hearing. We were successful and have taken possession of the property.

A tenant in central London became fixated with another tenant, who was so concerned about this behaviour that they moved to temporary

accommodation while we took legal action. We applied for a without notice injunction, which is now in place and the tenant has been able to move back to their property.

Our customers now receive the same consistent service regardless of where they live and our new approach has already saved money - £300,000 a year has been saved in court costs and the cost of failed tenancies.



Tenancy sustainment

When times get tough, our specialist Financial Inclusion and Tenancy Sustainment teams are there to work with residents to solve problems. We dealt with 1,110 cases last year, as well as dealing with enquiries and undertaking affordability checks.

Our wider welfare benefits work helps customers navigate the benefits system, claim the benefits they are entitled to and challenge incorrect decisions. We attend hearings as well as doing outreach work.

When we let properties we check if the nominee can afford to live there and if they have any financial problems, so we can offer support from the start.

We offer overall support, rather than a short-term fix. If you have a large debt and are in danger of having utilities cut off, we will refer you to our money advice partner to help manage the debt. We made 150 debt advice referrals in 2018/19 and spent £93,000 from our Hardship fund, on

things such as emergency utility payments. The fund can also be used to buy basic appliances.

We will work tirelessly to help. We can access local charities like furniture recycling services and foodbanks, and we can even provide you with a bus pass to get there.

We secured £14,000 backdated Housing Benefit for a resident living in Brent. £7,000 of this cleared an overpayment and £5,000 went into the rent account, putting the resident in credit.

Another resident who had a Housing Benefit backdate said 'If you multiplied how I feel by 100 times you still wouldn't be able to touch on how ecstatic I am. The help and support I have been given has turned my life around and I would not have been able to do this without the support of the Tenancy Sustainability Officer. This has changed my life and taken a huge amount of worry away from me. If there were more people like this the world would be a calmer and better place.'

A single mother with a large family was in arrears and only receiving minimal Housing Benefit. She found it too stressful to claim UC. She was referred by our Income team because she was facing eviction. With our help, the local authority awarded a lump sum to clear the arrears. She has now received other benefits due and her rent account is four weeks in credit.

A single mother resigned to being evicted for £3,000 rent arrears and facing a Housing Benefit overpayment claim of £6,000 was referred by the Income team. She was struggling to provide evidence to claim Housing Benefit because she was self-employed and also worked for an employer part-time.

This was a complex case, but we were able to get the overpayment cancelled and Housing Benefit backdated for four years. £2,000 in Child Benefit was paid immediately and a further backdated payment was made later. The rent account is now in credit by over £3,000 and the total gain for the customer was over £20,000.

Social value and community investment

The wellbeing of our residents is at the heart of what we do and we develop the skills they need to get into sustainable work.

We helped 70 residents get back into work or start up their own business last year. In the

South East we can refer you to ETHOS, a local employment project (of which we are founding members), to improve your interview skills or for advice on writing a CV. We are planning to provide similar help in the Midlands and London by next April.

Residents who want to start their own business in the South East can join an 8-week course run by Vitalsix called 'Be your own boss'. This covers financial matters, market research, advertising and sales. We had 7 residents graduate the course this year.

We aim to develop the life chances of our younger residents by making sure they have the skills, knowledge and attitude to get a job or continue with their education. We organise activities in areas where there is little for them to do. We support youth clubs and other activities - we can award grants of up to £2,500 for local initiatives.

As a result of requests from residents at Beaumont Leys in Leicester we set up free fun activities during the half term holidays for children aged 4 to 12. We used an experienced events company, who organise activities to help





children learn about the world while developing their physical coordination and independence.

We now offer work experience placements for young people aged 16-24 during the summer holidays. These are for the benefit of the families of our residents and staff and are intended to help them understand the world of work and the job opportunities in the housing sector.

We also try to bring local people together by providing activities where residents can take part. We address local issues such as vandalism and litter and the use of green space. We encourage gardening and other projects to improve health.

We have developed a bespoke social value mapping tool to measure the social value generated by our work. This gives a monetary value to social activities that are difficult to quantify. We have shared the results with our community partners and hope to promote the use of this tool more widely.

We have built the concept of social value into our repairs and planned maintenance contracts,

using employment and skills plans. We expect our contractors to employ apprentices and make value added contributions, such as offering training in home maintenance or taster days for specific trades and employment opportunities.

Fortem's contract includes employment of local labour, apprenticeships and a management trainee programme. They have supported career events at a local school and college, providing mock interviews and work experience placements.

Initiatives by our other contractors include:

- refurbishment of a training room in a hospice by Axis Europe
- Enterprise Cube - a 12 week course on starting your own business and Dragons' Den event with Axis Europe and AD Construction (our planned maintenance contractors) – partnered by Thames Valley HAL; Axis also paid £15,000 for this year's course
- Axis and AD Construction each gave £2,500 towards landscaping works in a communal garden sanctuary.



The PA Way

We introduced our staff to 'The PA Way' last year. This is how we will do our best to give a great service and it is linked to our company values of:

- **always doing the right thing**
- **being there when you need us**
- **never giving up.**

We used the feedback from our residents' event in April 2018 to start to really understand what our residents want and to develop The PA Way with our staff, which is guided by the following principles:

- **Doing the right thing** - do we listen to what our customers want?
- **Never forgetting our impact** - are we working together towards a common goal?
- **Being in this together** - are we building the relationships we need to succeed?
- **Looking at the bigger picture** - are we considering how our part affects the whole?
- **Never stop learning** - are we always learning and finding better ways?

Everyone at PA Housing is asked to use The PA Way in their daily work, especially to improve communication and take ownership of problems. We acknowledge that it is not only what we do that matters, but whether our customers have a positive experience during the process.

One of the main principles of The PA Way is listening to what our customers want. We want to know what matters so that we can explain how and what we do. It's early days yet, but we've received many 'shout outs' from residents which show that we are doing the right thing.



Complaints

If you have feedback about our services, good or bad, we want to hear from you. You can email, phone or write to us or fill in the form on the website. Our new system for dealing with complaints across PA has settled down well but we know we need to do more to deal with complaints quickly and effectively.

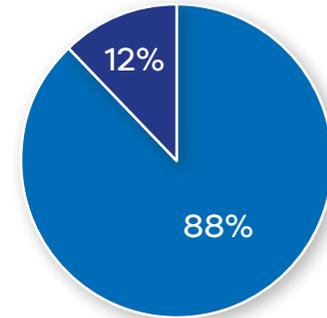
The average response time at stage 1 was 17 working days, with 54% within our target of 10 working days. There was a steady improvement over the year, so that in the last three months we averaged 8 working days. The number of Housing Ombudsman cases increased, resulting in one adjudication of maladministration and 10 of service failure. We find that complaints about repairs have the most impact on customer satisfaction. There were 476 complaints about repairs and gas and the standard of relets, which amounted to over half of all complaints.

Our extensive kitchens and bathrooms replacement programme this year should start to reduce repairs complaints and the expansion of

the Fortem contract in February is already reducing complaints in London. There were 260 complaints about housing management and the common theme was poor staff communication, such as how long we took to deal with issues; giving incorrect advice and not responding to emails and phone calls about tenancy and neighbourhood issues.

These complaints should reduce now that our Neighbourhood Coordinators are able to deal with issues on the spot. Our target is to reduce housing management complaints by 10% this year.

Proportion of complaints handled at Stage 1 or Stage 2



■ Stage 1 ■ Stage 2

	2017/18	2018/19
Customer complaints during the year	265 in Surrey & West London. 414 to January 2018 in Midlands & London	776
Complaints resolved at stage 1	92% Surrey & West London. 88% Midlands & London	88%
Housing Ombudsman cases	23 (None upheld)	32 (11 upheld)
Complaints found to be justified, or part-justified	60%	56%

Meeting housing need

	2017/18	2018/19
New homes built:	239 rented 125 shared ownership 364 total	237 rented 90 shared ownership 327 total
Number of homes sold through the Right to Buy and Right to Acquire:	11	3

We have a very experienced development department led by a chartered builder. We continue to build a range of well designed and genuinely affordable homes in some of the most challenging housing markets in the country.

Over 1,000 new homes are in the pipeline. We aim to build 5,700 new homes over the 10 year period starting from 2017/18, with 90% being in London and the South East. Over £30m will be invested in the Woolwich regeneration scheme.

Property sales

We want to focus on providing better and more efficient services in our main operating areas, so during the year we sold 664 homes outside these areas to other housing associations. This means that the residents in those homes will benefit from the service provided by local

landlords who are better equipped to meet their needs. We also have a small annual sales programme of vacant properties where a sale is the most viable option. This programme yielded 19 sales in 2018/19.



Our 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.

Affordable rents apply to under 2,000 of our 23,000 homes. These rents have an upper limit of either 80% of the market rent or the Local

Housing Allowance, whichever is lower, and are subject to PA Housing's own 'affordability' review. They are charged on some newly built homes according to the number set by the government.

In all our other homes, our rents are two thirds of the market rate in the Midlands, and in London and the South East they are under half.

How we spend every penny



2018/19

Contact us:



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0300 123 2221



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