





### PA Housing

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### A message from Hattie

Our response to our residents experience only works because of the determination, drive and brilliance of our staff. We are so proud of the way they have responded to the Covid-19 pandemic and continued to provide the best possible service to our residents.

PA's Customer Forum and Resident Council have already.

PA's Customer Forum and Resident Council have already met virtually in order to review the PA approach to Covid-19 so far, and their feedback on the way we have kept in touch with residents, supporting them wherever possible, has been overwhelmingly positive. Moving forward, the Forum and Council – made up of residents from across all our areas – will be monitoring the way we continue to focus on resident wellbeing.

To those residents who haven't engaged with us to-date, please contact us at getinvolved@pahousing.co.uk, and find out how you can help us to carry on improving our homes and services.

Hattie Llewelyn-Davies Chair, PA Housing

### A message from Dilip

For me, the highlight of 2019/20 was the launch of Team Purple, in which we invested £1m, creating 30 new roles, reflecting our Board's view that high quality service delivery is an absolute priority.

Team Purple has already forged stronger day-to-day relationships with our residents and helped us to manage common estate issues more proactively. Over time, we firmly believe that these activities will produce a stronger bond of mutual trust and respect, not only between PA and our residents, but also within our communities.

At PA Housing, we are very proud of our heritage as a BME housing provider, and in 2019/20, we launched our "Everybody is unique" campaign, in order to respect and celebrate our differences as well as the things that bring us together.

2019/20 was also the year that PA completed the alignment of all its services following our merger in 2017, ensuring residents living in all 22,733 of our homes benefit from the same level of service through our digital transformation work and other innovations.

As you'll see later on this report, PA delivered 249 new homes in 2019/20 and invested a total of £132m in building new homes. We know how much our communities need affordable homes, which is why our focus remains firmly on homes for rent and shared ownership. We currently have a further 2,000 new homes either being built, or soon to be on their way – despite considerable challenges arising due to Covid-19.

Our performance in some areas has improved and remains strong, especially around repairs, and we're focusing on the things that matter to you most. You will also see that in some areas we have not performed as well as we would have hoped. This is work in progress and we have plans in place to ensure we do better for you next year.

PA Housing team members from across the organisation made more than 6,000 calls to residents during the lockdown period. Many customers told us they had experienced changes in their personal circumstances as a result of the pandemic, and the team was able to offer support to more than 500 customers via our hardship fund.

Finally, I want to take this opportunity to talk about the importance of resident safety. We realise that lockdown has been incredibly difficult for many of us, but we now increasingly need access to our residents' homes in order to carry out vital gas and electrical checks. Please let us in – we need to carry out this crucial work, and it's also good to see you (while, of course, maintaining a safe distance).

Should you have any queries about the annual gas servicing, please get in touch with us via gas@pahousing.co.uk or on 0300 123 2221

Dilip Kavi

Chief Executive, PA Housing





PA Housing aims to be an inclusive, diverse and all-round great place to work – and that applies to residents who are involved in helping to shape its services as much as it

does to PA's employees.

I'm a PA Housing resident, and I volunteer my time because I believe in championing customers and giving them a voice. During 2019/20 alone, PA's involved residents took part in 125 courses, conferences and briefings – all of these give individuals the insight and information they need to carry out this role.

The Customer Forum (Midlands & London) and Resident Council (the South East)\* are formal groups that challenge PA's performance, hold the organisation to account over customer satisfaction, and agree the scrutiny programme. We're a critical friend to PA, supporting the organisation as it makes improvements to services.

Transparency is a really important aspect of the way PA approaches resident involvement, with senior managers and the Board attending our meetings, and encouraging us all to be open and honest. However, there's always the opportunity to do more, and this is why PA has recently recruited two resident board members – who will further help to ensure residents' input into the organisation's governance.

This report demonstrates all of the hard work PA did during 2019/20, and also highlights areas where more needs to happen. I hope that more residents are inspired to use their experiences and expertise to help PA to achieve even more on behalf of everyone who lives in one of its 22.733 homes.

#### **Kim Francis**

Chair of PA Housing's Customer Forum



It is massively important that residents are part of PA Housing's governance and that's why I've been part of a resident-led team that scrutinises the organisation's

work for more than eight years now.

Each year, the scrutiny team conducts three in-depth examinations of various services. In the last 12 months, for example, we've scrutinised the kitchen and bathroom programme, empty properties management, and community development in the Northampton area.

Following a scrutiny, we put together an action plan for PA to respond to our recommendations and to deliver against them – and we keep a close eye on progress. The best part of being in the scrutiny team is that we are listened to.

From personal experience, I understand it can be difficult to step outside of your comfort zone, but the whole set up at PA is extremely friendly and there are many great ways to have your say in the way PA's services are run. We really can influence things that have a massive impact on the quality of our lives.

The recent Covid-19 crisis has opened up opportunities for involvement, with residents able to join virtual meetings from their own homes. This has made it possible for those with busy lives to get involved, and it has really helped residents from all of PA Housing's areas to talk with one another, and work more closely together.

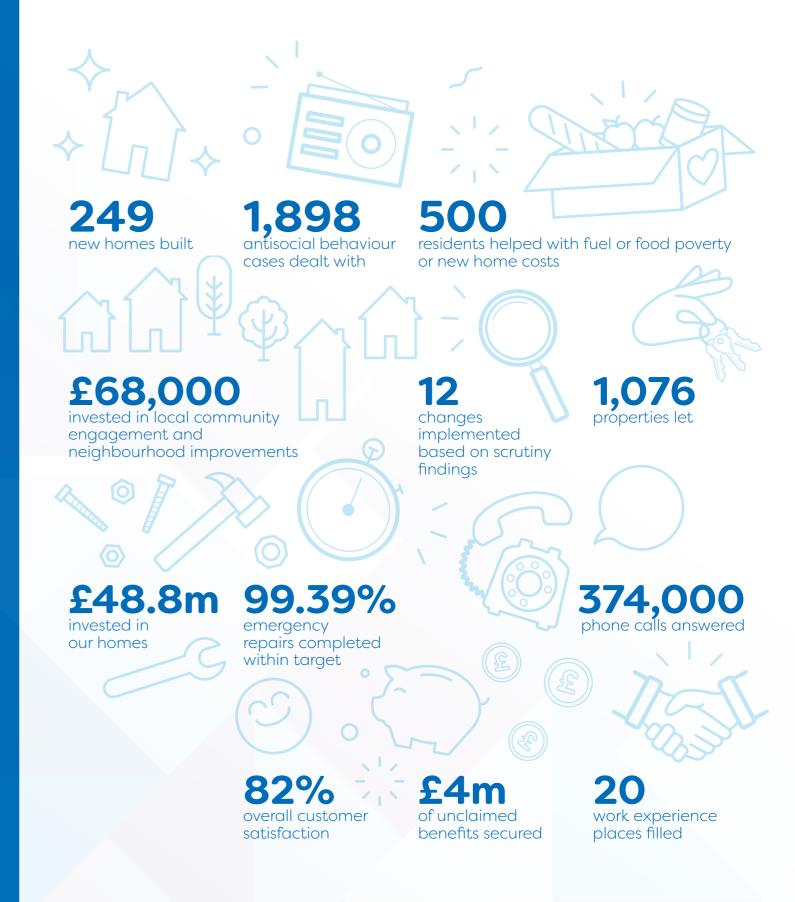
Different points-of-view are always welcome, so please get in touch to find out how resident involvement could work for you. Email us at getinvolved@pahousing.co.uk

#### **Joan Swift**

Chair of PA Housing's Resident Council

\*We are bringing together the Customer Forum and Resident Council into one representative body during the next 12 months.

### Our 2019/20 highlights:



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#### Your voice

At PA Housing, we have several different groups for residents to get involved in to help us to co-regulate our services. Our residents have played a major part in shaping our services.

#### **Scrutiny Group**

Inspects, manages and improves PA Housing's services and works with service managers to take actions based on its recommendations.

"Our recommendations go to the Board via the Customer Services Committee, and they are then acted on," says Mary Harrison, a member of the Scrutiny Group. "We really do get things done."

#### Resident Council (South East) and Customer Forum (Midlands and London)

Made up of around 40 residents, who meet up in a central location at least six times a year, the Resident Council and Customer Forum work with Heads of Service and Directors to look at the quality of PA services, including levels of resident satisfaction and service performance. They also work alongside other housing providers and tenant participation groups.

#### **Service Improvement Panels**

This is a wider group of residents who have identified an interest in various aspects of PA Housing's services and can be called upon to provide insight and feedback for specific projects or issues. In 2019/20, some of these residents assisted us with how we shape our

communication on Rent and Resident Involvement provision.

#### **Customer Journey Mapping**

There are plenty of other ways we ensure we hear and act on our residents' voice, one of which is customer journey mapping. This enables us to look at our services from a resident's point-of-view, considering their experience of PA's customer services from start to finish, and asking for feedback.

In 2019/20, we listened to 900 customer voices when mapping the customer journey for our planned maintenance and repairs services. The insights we gained have led to around the way we begin to notice during 2020/21.

#### **Community Investment**

In 2019/20, we delivered a number of local projects to help residents into training and employment as well as directly offering work experience placements for 20 young people during the summer holidays.

One of our projects was our "Be Your Own Boss" training course. This helped residents who want to start a business by providing them with the necessary tools and skills.

Joanne was one of the participants. Over the years, Joanne had helped friends and family members to organise parties, and they all thought that she should be doing this for a living. She had started thinking about what it might be like to have her own event planning business, when she received a text from PA's Community Investment Team advertising the next "Be Your Own Boss" course.

Joanne felt it was a sign, so she got in contact. Although she was already working part-time, she was able to juggle her hours so she could attend the eight-week course.

"I loved the course," she says. "It helped me gain the confidence I needed to start planning my business idea. The course teachers went above and beyond to help me with practical ideas."

Next, Joanne took part in one of PA's "Dragons' Days", a Dragons' Den-style event, which involved her pitching her business idea. This was a great experience, during which Joanne revealed that she did not have her own laptop – PA was able to provide her with the money she needed to buy one, so she was able to get on with launching her business.

We plan to ensure residents living in all of our areas benefit from this type of employment and training opportunities. For information about PA Housing's community investment activities, please contact us at interested@pahousing.co.uk

Service Charges and our

service improvements communicate with you, which residents should



#### Tenancy sustainment

When times get tough, our specialist Tenancy Sustainment Team is there to help navigate the benefit system and work with residents to solve problems with claiming what they're entitled to. Throughout 2019/20, they supported more than 1,100 customers to sustain their tenancy, not fall into rent arrears, and receive £4m in unclaimed benefits. The team also referred 246 residents to specialist money management advice services.

Meanwhile, 500 customers were helped via PA Housing's Hardship Fund during 2019/20, with more than £100k of support provided through the year, and more recently more than £12k being used to support those in greatest need during lockdown. This included 81 energy vouchers and 140 food vouchers being distributed.

#### **Universal Credit**

During 2019/20, the PA Universal Credit Hub dealt with an increasing number of enquiries, with a steep rise in the number of residents contacting the team for advice and support when the Covid-19 crisis began to impact on residents' lives.

Our Tenancy Sustainment Team offered a support plan for every resident claiming Universal Credit, helping them to navigate their way through the claim process. They also provided advice on advance payments and other benefits, and organised payment arrangements to help clear any historical rent arrears.

Residents reported **100%** satisfaction after contacting us about sustaining their tenancy

Residents reported **95%** satisfaction after contacting us about Universal Credit



#### Rent arrears

At the end of 2019/20 rent arrears were 4.4%, which was above our 3.6% target. Until March we were on target for a lower arrears level, but Covid-19 hit and we experienced a large increase in the number of residents falling behind on their rent payments.

Rent arrears have increased during the year to 4.4%. We saw a peak in arrears in early 2020 as a result of the increasing numbers of Universal Credit (UC) claimants. We were improving this figure, but following the outbreak of Covid-19 in early March, we refocused our income collection service towards supporting residents rather than taking enforcement action, meaning we ended the year not reaching our target. Our specialist UC Hub supports residents through the transition to UC and we are targeting a reduction in arrears once the immediate Covid-19 issues have been addressed.

## "I don't know how we would have managed"

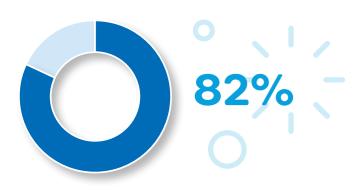
Steven and his family have been our residents for three years. Earlier this year the family's finances were decimated by Covid-19, Steven had lost his job, his partner has a health condition that meant she was unable to go to work during lockdown, and their 21-year-old son had been working as a self-employed sports coach and couldn't claim government assistance.

Steven got in contact with us to see what help might be available to support the family during this very worrying time. Within a week, Molly from our Tenancy Sustainment Team helped the family make a claim for Universal Credit, which sees them just about managing until they can all return to employment.

Steven said: "Without Molly's help I don't know how we would have managed; our claim wasn't straightforward as there was an initial query with how much rent we were paying that we couldn't seem to tally with the figures Universal Credit had. But Molly stepped in, just like all the staff I've spoken to at the local office, she really listened. It is very reassuring to be dealt with in such a professional and compassionate way."

If you need help and support from the PA team, text SUPPORT to 07903 008 003

#### Customer satisfaction



This did not meet our target of 85% for overall customer satisfaction, so we know we need to do better to meet our customers' expectations. The satisfaction scores for our individual services was higher, in particular our repair services at 86% and our maintenance contractors being in the 90s, with our internal repairs service receiving 99% customer satisfaction.

The grounds maintenance service across the business has improved with residents reporting an overall satisfaction rate of 87%. However, while our cleaning service in the South East is good, our cleaning service in Midlands and London is not performing as we would like it to be, and we are currently working closely with our contractors on the ground to make the improvements our residents rightly expect.

We have a robust plan in place for 2021 to look at how we engage and communicate with our customers to make sure we give a positive experience at all points of contact, take ownership of issues and work with customers to listen and resolve their concerns.

### Customer Complaints and Compliments

In 2019/20, we received 1,146 complaints from residents and 211 enquiries from MPs and Councillors on residents' behalf. This is an increase of 370 from last year; however, we have changed the way we work and have improved both encouraging and capturing complaints.

On average, it took us one working day to acknowledge a complaint, and 18 working days to reply to a resident with a detailed response. 62% of our detailed replies were within our response time of 10 days – we know this is an area we need to improve on.

Our repairs service accounted for more than half of complaints. This is to be expected due to the volume of repairs carried out and it being one of our key service areas. Estate management and heating and hot water services were also the reasons behind a significant number of complaints made.

#### 93%

complaints resolved at the earliest possible stage

#### 62%

justified or part-justified complaints

PA Housing works closely with the Housing Ombudsman, to whom 54 complaints were referred during 2019/20. The Ombudsman went on to make 26 determinations, 14 of which were upheld.

PA Housing also recorded **94** formal compliments during 2019/20, each of which applauded the good work of the team and its contractors.

#### Lessons learned

From January 2020, we have an updated complaints process ensuring we have an improved 'lessons learnt' approach. This means we consistently review the steps that need to be taken to prevent similar complaints being raised again in the future and use the insight to improve services.

### You said, we did

We know that when something goes wrong, how we handle it can make a huge difference to you, our residents. These are the lessons learnt from our customer feedback.

#### You said:

There was sometimes a lack of communication from PA after you first got in touch with us about a issue; for example, when reporting a repair

We did: Provided
further training
for staff in
our customer
contact centre,
as well as
information
sheets to help
team members
to better identify
issues so they can
fixed first-time. We

also focused on communicating with you at every critical point, providing training to team members around the importance of accountability and ownership in relation to keeping you informed. We are now also looking at making more specialised advisors available, to answer your queries and help ge issues dealt with more quickly.

#### We did:

dedicated complex repair owners who ensure you are kept informed about what needs to be done, and our progress along the way

#### You said:

Problems with complex repairs escalate quickly if not dealt with effectively

#### We did:

Increased
our planned
works team
to include
two additional
resident liaison
officer roles to work
with residents while

improvements are taking place in their homes. This dedicated point of contact is on hand to answer any questions residents may have, and to work between them and the contractors to help resolve any issues that arise.

You said: That

#### You said:

Better allocation
of complaint owners
is needed to oversee
complaints. Response
timescales are not adhered
to, which leads to
avoidable escalation
and negative
experiences

#### We did:

new complaints system, which was fully implemented in January 2020. It focusses

on outcomes and feedback from an earlier resident scrutiny. Everyone involved in complaints has received training, and furthe weekly drop-in sessions have taken place.

We have also introduced a satisfaction survey of residents after they have made a complaint in order to find out how they felt about the experience and whether they found the process fair. This information will be used to enhance our customer feedback service further during 2020/21.

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 a form on our website.

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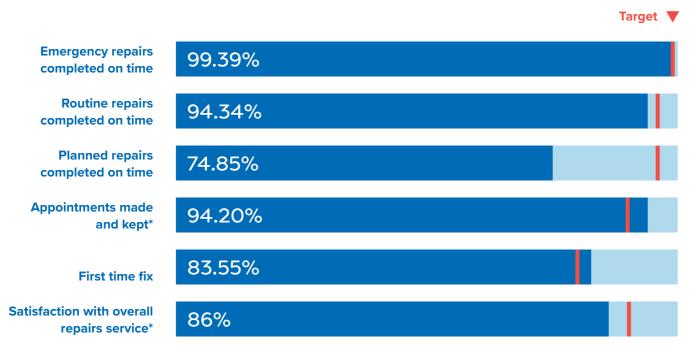
### Investing in our homes

£17.3m on updating our homes

£13.2m on making our homes safe

£18.3m on repairs and empty homes

We're continuing to invest in our homes with a total of £48.8m



\* Information taken from telephone surveys

	2019/20	2018/19
Roofs	45	3
Bathrooms	378	151
Kitchens	498	190
Windows and doors	841	533
Heating and boilers	956	719

\*Table shows the volume of component replacements PA Housing delivered

This year is the first year for our new full repairs service across London and the South East. The service has embedded well. Overall, we're achieving good results in our day to day repairs. In particular, our satisfaction levels are high, especially in London. We know we need to improve our performance with our planned repairs so we are focusing on procurement of contractors who can help us achieve this.



"I am there to provide reassurance"

Throughout most of 2019/20, Michelle Janes, one of PA Housing's Resident Liaison Officers, worked across Surrey and London to support residents and work with external contractors in order to ensure the installation of every new kitchen or bathroom was progressing as it should be.

"A good Resident Liaison Officer is the go-between the resident and the contractor - they ensure the resident has a voice," explains Michelle.

"I work with residents on their design choices, and then go back to see how they're getting on when our contractors are actually in their homes. If there are any problems, I'll work on their behalf to get them sorted," she says.

"I am there to provide PA's residents with reassurance during what can be an unsettling time - it's not easy having people in and out of your house and living without a kitchen or bathroom while work is done," adds Michelle.

"But seeing the transformation - from what the kitchen or bathroom looked like before the work was done, and then revisiting to see the finished result - is the best part of my job, because I know the massive impact it will have on our residents' quality of life."



#### Investing in safety

The safety of our customers is extremely important and we will continue to prioritise work to make sure homes are safe and secure.

The Covid-19 crisis has made gaining access to some properties increasingly difficult, and this is reflected in our statistics for March 2020, right at the end of the reporting period. We urge residents to provide access to their homes so we can carry out our important priority services and return our safety performance to 100%.

Should you have any queries about the annual gas servicing / electrical checks, please get in touch with us via gas@pahousing.co.uk or on 0300 123 2221.

#### 99.64%

of properties with a valid gas safety certificates

#### 100%

fire risk assessments in place

#### 92%

of properties with Electrical Installation Condition Reports

£4.4m ) © © © © ©





# "I want to raise awareness of electrical safety"

Jamie Brockman is an Electrical Supervisor, based in Surrey. He's part of a small, relatively new, in-house team that delivers PA's Electrical Installation Condition Reports, which have to be conducted in each and every property every five years.

"The electrical testing work we do can take a long time – anywhere between two hours and a day – so it's vital that we take the time to speak with residents and explain what we're doing and why."

Legally, gas inspections have to take place every year, so gas safety rightfully will be at the forefront of customers' minds. But electricity can be no less dangerous, and has the potential to be a huge fire risk.

"Residents will tend to think that if their electrical appliances are working, then their electrics are okay, but that's not always the case," says Jamie. "So many people try to fix electrics themselves – but unless you are qualified you shouldn't attempt this, residents should contact our repairs team instead and let us fix it."

"When you have a role like this, you are relied upon to ensure the safety of the people who live in the home you're working in. It's a big responsibility."

#### Delivering new homes

249
new homes provided

£132m invested in new development

53 (new homes sold





PA Housing is committed to delivering genuinely affordable homes in our communities. We had a boost in 2019/20 through a £25m allocation of grant funding from the Greater London Authority, and this is enabling us to build a greater number of homes for social rent.

During the year we fell short of our 400 homes delivery target, in part due to Covid-19; however, we continue to be committed to provide safe and quality homes, and we are adapting to the new ways of working to help us achieve our ambition.

#### Home moves

In total, **1,076** households moved into a PA Housing home during the year.

There were also **156** mutual exchanges between residents.

The average time to relet our properties was **56** days.

Our performance on the relet of properties has fallen well below target. We recognise this is an area that requires improvement, so we are developing a new 'move in – move on' approach to help reverse this trend, despite the continued challenges of Covid-19.

### "We love our home"

"I'd been looking at properties for a while, but nothing I had seen was as big or spacious," recalls Sakshi, who moved into her PA Housing shared ownership property in October 2019. "When I saw this flat, it was perfect – there was nothing I needed to compromise on."

The application process for shared ownership with PA was straightforward, says Sakshi. "The team explained everything I needed to know. They were helpful and supportive."

Sakshi's also discovered there are lots of things to do with her children in her local area. "Everything is around us – shops, the library, a cinema – I hadn't realised just how close everything was," she says.

"Our location is lovely; our balcony looks out over a park, and the quality of the finish of the property itself is very high," she says. "We love our home."

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### Value for money

We have a responsibility to spend our income wisely, and we aim to provide the best possible balance between cost and quality in all that we do. Our residents expect good quality services from us at a fair price, represented by the rent and service charges they pay. We aim to manage our finances and services efficiently and prudently while still achieving great service standards.

### "Thinking long-term"

For PA Housing resident Stephen Cunningham, value for money is about balance. "It's about how much it costs versus how long it is going to last," he explains.

Stephen carries out scrutiny work on behalf of PA, and this always involves looking for value for money. "Whatever the product or service being purchased, it has to be fit for purpose. Anything used in or around residents' homes needs to have longevity – it needs to stay looking good," he explains.

Value for money is also about making services more efficient. For example, when Stephen and a group of fellow residents were scrutinising PA's work they discovered some sensible ways to speed up the reletting of properties.

"We found out staff and contractors were having problems with utilities when working on empty properties. Homes were often run via pre-paid meters, which meant there could be no power when teams went in to conduct essential repairs and maintenance," recalls Stephen. "Things were being delayed by something incredibly basic – so we made a suggestion on how to maintain a supply of electricity to homes, which was acted upon."

Resident scrutiny is all about residents looking at our services from the point-of-view of the customer, and that can really steer the team in the right direction.

"For me, this is essential, because value for money is about gathering information and thinking long-term," says Stephen.



# performance

Performance against our targets and ambitions was mixed this year. Great progress was made in some areas; for example, with our repairs services and customer satisfaction on individual services. However, it was disappointing in others, such as our relet performance and overall customer satisfaction. There is much to improve on in 2020/21, and despite the pandemic we have a strong drive to achieve results with robust plans in place. We remain committed to delivering brilliant services to our residents.

#### In 2020/21, we are:

- Providing additional financial support to our residents throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, including an additional hardship fund of £50,000
- Delivering intensive tenancy sustainment quidance to those faced with changes in their financial circumstances
- Learning from new ways of working that have come about as a result of Covid-19
- Working to further improve customer experience. building on the lessons we've learned and making our services easier to use
- Enhancing our employment offer for residents by helping residents into work or enhancing their opportunities to do different types of work
- Expanding our work around homelessness, particularly through the Naumann Initiative, PA Housing's new partnership with Kingdom Housing Association, which will lead to the direct recruitment of people who have experienced homelessness
- Launching our new sustainability strategy, through which PA Housing will be working to help achieve the government's climate change ambitions
- Continuing our 'Everybody is unique' approach to celebrating diversity and inclusion
- Increasing the delivery of new homes

#### And we will work to:

- Reduce rent arrears
- Re-let empty properties more quickly
- Improve services and increasing overall customer satisfaction

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### Our numbers

PA Housing's operating surplus for this year was £54.6m, a slight fall on the figure of £62m from the previous year. Our turnover was nearly £150m; we owned or managed 22,733 homes, and our housing assets totalled £1.74bn.

PA Housing remains in a financially stable position, which saw us in the best possible position to face the current impact of Covid-19.

Group statement of comprehensive income (£m)	2020	2019	2018
Turnover	149.6	159.6	164.7
Operating surplus	54.6	62.0	65.1
Net interest payable	27.3	29.9	33.5
Net surplus	28.5	38.8	32.9
Net surplus excluding property sales	10.0	27.0	17.2

### How we spend every penny

