

Our Annual Report 2020-21



Our highlights

300 new homes built

- 99 affordable rent
- 83 social rent
- 2 market rent
- 116 shared ownership

We Won the Housing Heroes "Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team of Year"

£114,327

invested in local community engagement and neighbourhood improvements

£3.4m

received in unclaimed benefits for our customers

86%
of day-to-day repairs completed on time

99%

of emergency repairs completed on time

73%

customer satisfaction

£28.4m

invested in our homes

4minutes 22seconds
average time to answer the phone

357
antisocial behaviour cases dealt with

13
apprentice work placements filled

17,857

customer feedback surveys completed

1,003
complaints received

95,431
phone calls answered

Welcome

It's been a strange, and sometimes challenging, year for many of us because of the Coronavirus pandemic. But, during some of the darker days, especially early on, the thing that resonated with me was the way that people came together to give support to those who were struggling, companionship to those who were lonely, and a voice to those who had none.

You'll read in this report some of the things we did at PA Housing this year to keep neighbourhoods together and help our most vulnerable customers. I'm proud of the activities we did as a business and the way we rallied together to support those who needed it most.

The Board all agree that our customers must remain at the heart of the decisions of PA Housing. I'm an example of how getting your voice heard can lead to wonderful things. I'm a tenant, but I also happen to be a Board member and the Chair of the Customer Services Committee. By getting involved, it has allowed me to make my voice heard and for me to share the voices of others to help make changes that really are improving things for all customers.

You can find out more about how to get involved by visiting the PA Housing website, following us on social media, or by emailing getinvolved@pahousing.co.uk.

The Annual Report this year shows a mixed bag in terms of performance. In some areas, we have continued to excel – for example, our DLO in Northamptonshire continually achieving 100% customer satisfaction with their repairs service. In other areas, we have more to

do, and we're working hard to make changes and improvements so that we can ensure all our customers receive the level of service they deserve. This includes redesigning our complaints process to make it easier for you to tell us if something is wrong.

As I say, it's been a strange and sometimes challenging year, but together we pulled through. We are embracing the new normal and adapting to a changing world. We hope you enjoy this year's report, but – as ever – if you have any feedback, please get in touch.

Kathleen Harris-Leighton
Chair of Customer Services
Committee and PA Housing customer

How have we responded to the pandemic?

We have worked hard to try and ensure customers were informed about the changes being imposed by the government and the impact they had on our services. Also, we were supporting as many of our customers as possible, especially those most vulnerable who may not have been able to access support from elsewhere.

Our Tenancy Sustainment Team have never been busier than during 2020 with so many being affected financially by the pandemic. Furlough, redundancy, and changes to benefits meant that it was a difficult and confusing time for some of our customers, but we were determined to help as many people as we could with our dedicated support.

£3.4 million
in unclaimed welfare benefits
regained for customers



2,213
phone calls to customers to offer financial support

The Tenancy Sustainment Team also manages a Hardship Fund, which is used to help people who are suffering financial hardship and who may be vulnerable to falling into rent arrears. Special emphasis was placed on helping residents who were experiencing a reduction in income due to COVID-19.

In 2020/21, the fund provided **£70,649**
to residents experiencing hardship.

We also made 6,300 welfare phone calls to customers starting with older residents and those we knew would need our help, or even just someone to talk to with so many feeling the effects of social isolation.

During the first lockdown, most Foodbanks closed so we recognised that food poverty would be a considerable issue for many of you. Our Community Fund, which is managed by involved residents and is used to fund community projects, events, or equipment purchases, was restructured to provide most of the funding for care and wellbeing packs we issued to those in need. We delivered:

357
care packs containing mostly
food items



296
care packs containing blankets, toiletries, arts, crafts
and hobby items

We donated £20,000 to the Trussell Trust, the nation's largest foodbank network. Also, we donated a further £30,000, split between 13 individual foodbanks who directly support our residents, including some specific to our BME communities. A further £35,000 was donated to other local charities offering support during the pandemic.

We also provided our residents with:

433
supermarket food vouchers

291
foodbank vouchers

192
energy vouchers



We also donated 24 laptops and 9 iPads to a local primary school in Leicestershire to allow children to access schooling from home.

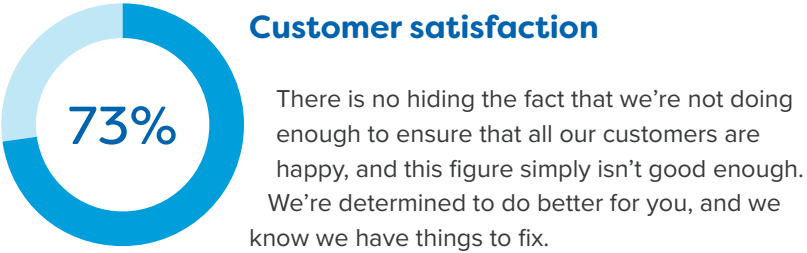
Tracy Withers, Headteacher at Cosby Primary School, said:

“I would like to say a huge thank you to the team at PA Housing for their generous donation...Home learning can be a real challenge for families with multiple school age children and limited devices or where children are relying on a mobile phone to access the online learning. This kind gesture will enable us to help many more of our families with the provision of a device to use at home, something that we could not have done without your help. Thank you from us all!”



How are we doing?

We monitor our performance across all areas of our business to ensure that we are not only running efficiently, but that you are receiving the best level of service from us as possible. Over the next 12 months, we will be working to provide more detailed and transparent reporting that all customers will be able to access on our website.



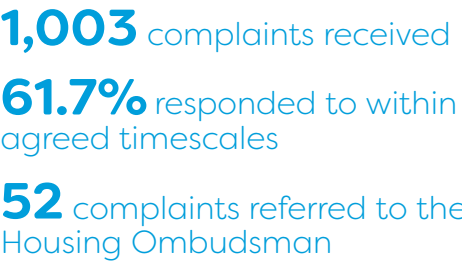
Although in isolation this could paint a poor picture, when we look at customer satisfaction immediately after someone receives one of our services, the scores improve significantly:



This tells us that day-to-day we're doing well, but that our customers' overall perception of PA Housing is not good. Over the coming months, we'll be carrying out work to understand this more, and we will work with residents to make changes that should improve your experience and relationship with us.

Dealing with your complaints

You told us that making a complaint was over-complicated and took too long for you to get a resolution, so, last year, we spent time reviewing how we handle them. From 1 April 2021, we have had a new, simpler process in place which we're confident will make things much easier for you.



“PA Housing and the co-op committee work towards continuous improvement and make sure they respond proactively to the needs of the community. It's important to feel heard and have a sense that the things that are troubling you are going to be tackled. We get that here.”

Mr & Mrs Gupta
PA Housing customers



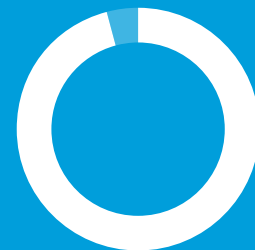
99.09% emergency repairs completed on time



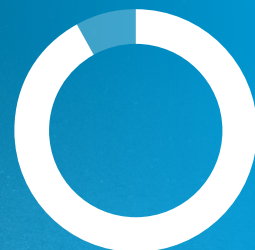
85.99% routine repairs completed on time



90.28% appointments kept



96% customer satisfaction with the service provided by our contractors



92% customer satisfaction with the quality to the repair

Repairs

You'll remember that at the start of the pandemic, the government's rules meant we were unable to enter your homes to complete non-emergency repairs. As a result, we had some difficult decisions to make, but thanks to your continued understanding, we were able to pull through and return to some normality later in 2020.

By the time we were able to restart our repairs service, we had a backlog to work our way through, which means some of you had to wait longer than you would have normally.

We're still working on reducing this backlog though and are pleased to report it has reduced from more than 700 repairs down to 450 repairs across all areas.

If we're being honest, the overall performance across our repairs service has been mixed and, in some areas, we need to do better. In others, we're excelling, like our DLO currently operating across Northamptonshire who have continued to perform exceedingly well with 100% of emergency orders completed within timescale.

Our finances

PA Housing's operating surplus for this year was £41.4m, a fall on the figure of £54.6m from the previous year. Our turnover was £157m; we owned or managed 23,020 homes, and our housing assets totalled £1.83bn. PA Housing remains in a financially stable position, which meant we were able to weather the storm and the impact of COVID-19.

For more details about this, our published Financial Statements for 2020-2021 can be found on our website.

Antisocial behaviour

With many of us spending more time at home than usual due to the restrictions of lockdown, it's perhaps not surprising that during 2020-2021, we saw an increase in the number of antisocial behaviour cases being reported to us.

10,666 recordings were submitted using the Noise App.

This is a **60%** increase on the previous year.



We take all reports of antisocial behaviour extremely seriously, and where possible, we will take action to deal with the perpetrators by working closely with the local police, environmental health, or other partner agencies.

During 2020-2021, 3 key themes emerged about the types of antisocial behaviour that were being dealt with by our Tenancy Solutions Team: an increase in mental health related cases, reports of hoarding, and customers requesting to move because of antisocial behaviour.



“I would personally recommend gardening as a new pastime, it’s good for you – both mentally and physically. You get satisfaction for the work that you do and I’m grateful that PA Housing provides a space where I can continue doing the thing I love.”

Cynthia
PA Housing customer

How are we listening to our customers?

Without you, our customers, we would not be here, so it’s important that we listen and hear your feedback and then use it to make real changes to the way we do things.

Scrutinising our services

The main aim of this group of involved residents is to inspect, manage, and improve PA Housing’s services. They also work with service managers to agree actions based on their recommendations.

Despite the lockdown, resident scrutiny has continued by using technology and during 2020/21, the group has:

- Reviewed previous scrutiny work to ensure that PA Housing has met its promises. Over 80% of their recommendations had been met, and it highlighted where future work may be necessary around compliancy.
- Completed a comprehensive Health Check designed to ensure that our scrutiny process was robust and fit for a changing environment. This generated over 50 recommendations for future work.

The Health Check involved 6 residents interviewing several managers at various levels across PA Housing and reviewed how our scrutiny is working.

- It highlighted the commitment of PA and residents.
- Recommended improving Board accountability and highlighted the need for a transparent golden thread.
- That we should adopt shorter newer types of Scrutiny.

- Gave the team an opportunity to meet a wide variety of staff across PA Housing.
- Invited the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny to examine and approve our process.

The scrutiny team is currently comprised of 6 fully involved residents – we are always looking for new recruits!

Funding our communities

During 2020/21, the fund provided £114,327 to 118 different neighbourhoods or schemes. Items provided included noticeboards to aid communication, bike shelters, garden clearances, communal benches, gates, fencing, parking bays and lines, lighting, and many other items that have proved to be a great benefit to all.

We also spent £35,000 on welfare packs to residents who needed support during the pandemic. This included food, homewares, toiletries, and other smaller items.

If you have any ideas about how to benefit your neighbourhood, speak to your Neighbourhood Coordinator.

The importance of Neighbourhood Champions

Neighbourhood Champions are residents who are passionate about where they live and who want to help to make a difference in how PA Housing provides services in their areas. They work closely with PA Housing staff to help improve things and will meet with them on a regular basis to:

- Take part in estate inspections.
- Report any communal repairs or issues of concern.
- Suggest improvements for the local area.
- Provide feedback on our contractors.
- Get involved with 'Neighbourhood on Tour' events throughout the year.
- Help to organise community events such as gardening, litter pickups, or other events that would bring the Local area together.

In 2020/21 Neighbourhood Coordinators carried out 11,737 estate inspections. Over the same period, 87 Inspections have been carried out by our 42 Neighbourhood Champions.

257 virtual Neighbourhood on Tour events held

2,827 residents contacted and engaged by Neighbourhood Coordinators We are always recruiting new Champions.

Team Purple

Paragon Area
PA Housing

Find out more and how to apply at:
www.pahousing.co.uk/neighbourhoodchampions

The Naumann Initiative

In September 2020, we became the first housing association in England to adopt the Naumann Initiative, which aims to break the vicious circle of homelessness and unemployment by simultaneously giving a homeless individual a home, a job, and support with any complex needs or barriers to sustaining their tenancy.

We launched the initiative by offering recruitment to 2 full-time roles. The recruitment was so successful, that we ended up hiring 4 individuals, all of whom were incredibly strong candidates. We estimate that for every pound we spent on the Naumann Initiative, we generated £10 in social value or value to our communities.

We are incredibly proud of the first year of our Naumann Initiative. It has:

- Helped 4 people and their families benefit from a secure home and job.
- Inspired PA colleagues, knowing the positive difference their efforts can make.
- Increased our expertise through first-hand experience of accessing homelessness support services.
- Ensures we become more representative of the people in our communities, helping to shape our wider thinking as an organisation.
- Led to several other housing providers contacting us for information on how they could launch their own Naumann Initiative.
- Clearly demonstrated to investors and other stakeholders the positive social impact our community investment work can have.

“There are few things more important than a safe and secure home, and a permanent job with opportunities to start building a career. By providing both as a package, we’re giving people who have experienced homelessness the chance to get back on their feet and show what they can do.”

Simon Hatchman
Executive Director - Resources

How are we providing opportunities for customers?

We know that truly supporting our customers means more than just providing a roof over their head and that issues such as unemployment, digital isolation, and supporting young people all play a part in helping our neighbourhoods and their occupants thrive. Despite the pandemic, we were able to make some brilliant steps forward with our community investment work.

Be your own boss

We knew that many residents would have experienced a devastating loss of employment and job opportunities this year, so knew we needed to help.

We've run face-to-face courses in the past called Be Your Own Boss (BYOB) that helped residents who were budding entrepreneurs to overcome barriers to fulfil their dream of starting their own businesses. So, this year we approached our BYOB delivery partner, Enterprise CUBE – a social enterprise that supports disadvantaged people to set up their own business – to discuss creating an online version of the course.

The first of its kind to be delivered by a housing association, the new virtual course launched just two-and-a-half months later, in October 2020.

Having initially attracted 110 applicants for 30 places on the first virtual course, the programme produced 20 graduates at first. But, with 80 residents on the waiting list, we invited the next 30 to join us for the

second online course. This was even more successful, with increased interaction from participants and another 23 graduates. We still have people waiting, so we will be running more courses soon.

Resulting start-up businesses have included food outlets, childcare, photography, cleaning services, beauty consultancy, scented candle-making, and interior design.

One participant's comments perfectly sum up how important the course is:

“I really don't know how I could ever thank you enough for your advice, help, and kind words. I haven't even finished the course, but it has already made a huge impact on me and a change in how I see myself. It has boosted my confidence so I know I can do this. For me, it came at the right time in my life.”

To find out more about this work, visit:
www.pahousing.co.uk/accesswork

A survey of participants across all of Enterprise CUBE's courses revealed that:

72%

went on to start their own business, with a further...

16%

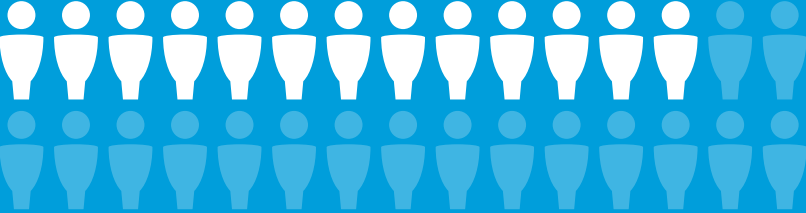
planning to do so

24%

have come off all or some benefits, and...

87%

reported that the course had changed their lives for the better!



13 of the 30 residents who participated in the most recent programme, earlier this year, have already set up businesses that are ready to trade.

How are we investing in our homes?

We worked hard to improve the level of information we hold on our homes, so we have carried out 4,758 full stock condition surveys and 2,558 external surveys in 2020-2021. These will then be used to decide how we invest further in the future.

Stock investment

Some of our planned maintenance programmes suffered a delay due to COVID-19 restrictions, so we will ensure that customers whose improvements had to be delayed are prioritised once restrictions allow.

we've replaced or installed:

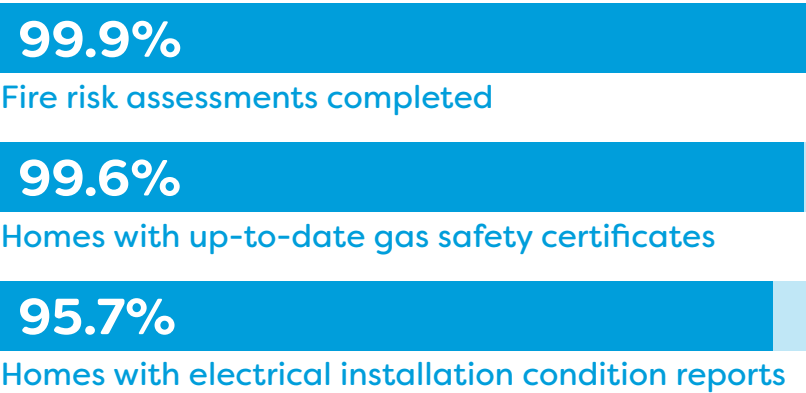
- 108 roofs
- 530 windows and doors
- 149 bathrooms
- 163 kitchens
- 10 lifts
- 1,001 heating systems and boilers

We also invested £200,000 on adaptations to meet the needs of our residents.

Investing in safety

We take the safety of our customers extremely seriously and we will continue to prioritise work to make sure your homes are safe and secure. Our Board closely monitors our health and safety performance and during the year, we commissioned an audit to ensure continued best practice and compliance.

Although we've made some great strides this year, the pandemic has again played its part with some customers, understandably, being reluctant to let us into their homes, which has affected our performance in this area. We know we have work to do to get us back on track.



£3million
spent on fire
safety improvements

£28.4million
updating our homes

£3.1 million
in cyclical decorations of communal areas

Looking to the future

As Kathleen mentions in her welcome message, it's been a strange year and one that you will see from reading this report has brought with it a mixed bag in terms of our performance.

The way our staff responded to the pandemic and the level of support we were able to put in place for our customers, in some instances overnight, makes me exceptionally proud and I would like to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues for their ongoing efforts to keep our customers safe and supported. I'd also like to thank you, our customers, for your understanding and patience over the past 12 months when we needed your support the most.

Although we've seen some great successes this year with the continued work of Team Purple, the performance of some of our repairs teams, and our work around equality and diversity, it's also clear that in some instances we have not met some customers' expectations. Quite simply, we must do better.

In 2020, we launched our Corporate Plan 2020-2023. This sets out our commitment to you for the next three years (and beyond) and explains how we're going to continue to improve the services we provide, how we'll listen and hear your feedback, and how we'll be providing more homes to help the ongoing housing crisis.

Another key part of the Corporate Plan is our commitment to sustainability across all areas of the business with the aim to deliver net zero carbon homes and emissions before the government deadline in 2050. Not only does this mean that any new homes we build will need to be to the highest environmental standards –

including Passivhaus accreditation – but the focus also needs to be on our existing customers' homes. So, we'll be looking at retrofitting options and how we can improve the efficiency of some of our older properties. In addition, we want to modernise our everyday activities to reduce our environmental impact and deliver better outcomes for our customers.

The future is looking exciting, and as we continue to return to some form of 'new normal', we're confident that we can continue to do better and provide the level of service you deserve.

We're always keen to hear your feedback though and we're always on the lookout for more customers who want to get involved. If you'd like to know more, please get in touch with us at **getinvolved@pahousing.co.uk**, or check out the information on our website at **www.pahousing.co.uk**.

Wishing you all the best for the coming year.

Dilip Kavi
Chief Executive



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