





Contents

Chair's welcome	2
A challenging year, an improving service	4
Putting customers at the heart of our work	6
Involving our customers	12
Delivering services which reflect your needs	14
Investing in your communities	16
Towards a repairs service we can be proud of	18
Investing in your homes	20
Caring with care	22
Building new homes in your communities	26
Keeping your communities safe	30
Looking to the future	30

Welcome

Welcome to our 2022 annual report; our first as GreenSquareAccord, which covers our performance and activity from 1 April 2021 to the end of March 2022.

It would be fair to say our first year was not the one we expected. Shortly after the merger, and just as we started to embark on our exciting new journey, we discovered significant challenges relating to the safety of some of our homes.

Protecting our customers is our top priority and having found these issues and self-reported them to the Regulator for Social Housing, our focus rightly switched to putting them right as quickly as possible.

I am delighted to see how much progress we have made in making sure all our homes are safe and that they have up-to-date safety records in place; this has involved a huge collective effort, and our teams working very closely together. However, it has also meant the ambitious plans we laid out for GreenSquareAccord have been pushed back significantly and we haven't been able to achieve everything we wanted to in our first year.

We know that some of the decisions we have had to make have impacted our performance and the services our customers receive. I'd like to thank you for your patience and co-operation and assure you that we are committed to working with you to make real improvements to our services in line with your needs and expectations.

I am heartened that despite all the pressures we faced we have made significant progress towards achieving this – including making major changes to improve our customer service and involve customers more closely in our work. You can read about this and much more in this report. One thing which is never in doubt is the dedication of our colleagues at GreenSquareAccord to move forward and make sure



that together we make a meaningful and positive contribution for people in our communities. Home is the foundation for our lives, and in a world which becomes more challenging by the day, we recognise how important it is that we provide quality homes and services for people who need them.

We know our journey is far from over and we need to do much more to improve the experience of our customers. But the future is bright, and I do believe that we have set ourselves up to be simply brilliant together.

I hope you enjoy reading more about our performance and the work we have done during an exceptional and challenging year.



Robin Bailey
Chair of GreenSquareAccord

A challenging year, an improving service

We are committed to delivering the best service we can and during a challenging year we made important steps on the road to achieving this.

We recognise our performance over the last year does not match our long-term ambition. While the merger will deliver long-lasting improvements to the experience of our customers, there was some disruption during our first year as GreenSquareAccord.

The complex process of bringing together two customer contact centres and two sets of systems into one has meant the wait to access our services has been longer than we would have hoped, and we thank you for your patience during this time.

Despite the challenges we faced, we have made real progress and set ourselves up for long-term success. Our contact centres are now fully integrated, meaning we can start to deliver a consistent service and in 2022 we launched our new and improved customer website.

We know the only way we can provide services which meet the expectations of our customers is to work with them, and in 2021 we launched our Voice of the Customer strategy to put customers at the heart of our work. You can read more about this from page 6 and hear from some of the customers who are helping us to move forward.

Customers can look forward to better services with initiatives focussed on improving their experience together with a commitment to deliver the highest standards of customer care.



Julianne Britton
Director of Customer Services



Setting ourselves high standards

We are committed to improving our services in line with the very best customer service providers.

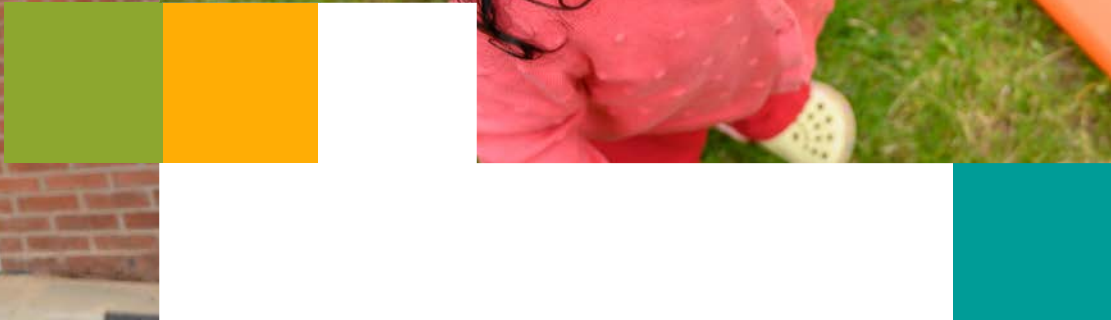
To make sure we achieve this we have pledged to achieve full accreditation with the Institute of Customer Service by 2026. The ICS is the professional body for customer service and rates organisations across every sector.



Our customers and colleagues are surveyed every year to help the ICS assess us as we progress our accreditation.

In numbers:





Putting customers at the heart of our work

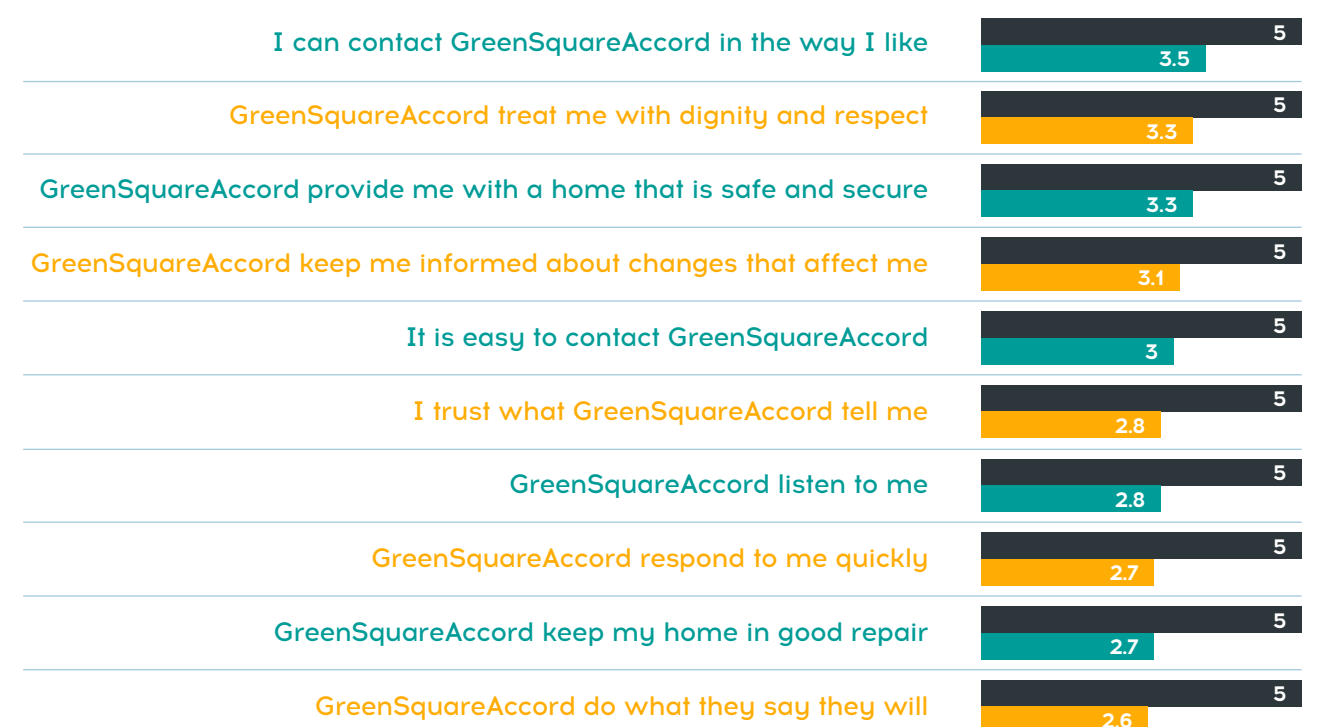
We are committed to delivering great services and we recognise the only way we can achieve this is by working in partnership with our customers.

In 2021 we launched our Voice of the Customer strategy which includes a new set of commitments to make sure we put customers at the heart of our work. You can read more about our Voice of the Customer strategy by clicking the logo below:



Listening to our customers

We send a range of surveys to customers to see what they think about the services they receive. Here is a summary of the responses we received this year.



New satisfaction measures for the housing sector

The Social Housing Regulator, the Government body which regulates all social housing landlords, is creating a new system for assessing how well landlords are doing when it comes to providing quality homes and services.

The Tenant Satisfaction Measures are set to be introduced in April 2023 and will require all landlords to survey customers. We took part in the regulator’s consultation, and we are working to make sure we are ready to implement them.

You said, we did

The insight we receive from our customers through our surveys, panels, and feedback shape real improvements. Here are just a few examples of changes we made in response to our customers.

You Said	We Did
Some customers told us they were not satisfied with their experience when they called our contact centre	We now call anyone who rates us one or two out of five to understand where things went wrong. Their feedback shapes our ongoing training
Customers were getting worried when they missed a call from our Customer Care Team or we left a voicemail	We now email first to say we will be calling and what the call will be about
Customers said they didn’t like the tone of letters they received about their complaints	We have reviewed the wording of our complaints letters and our approach to writing them
Customers told us they didn’t appreciate finding out about decisions by our surveyors via an email	Surveyors are now encouraged to call customers to explain their decision

“The challenges we faced in our first year as GreenSquareAccord meant we couldn’t meet the standards of customer experience we wanted to. We are committed to working with our customers to significantly improve these scores next year and we can already see signs of improvement.”

Julianne Britton, Director of Customer Services



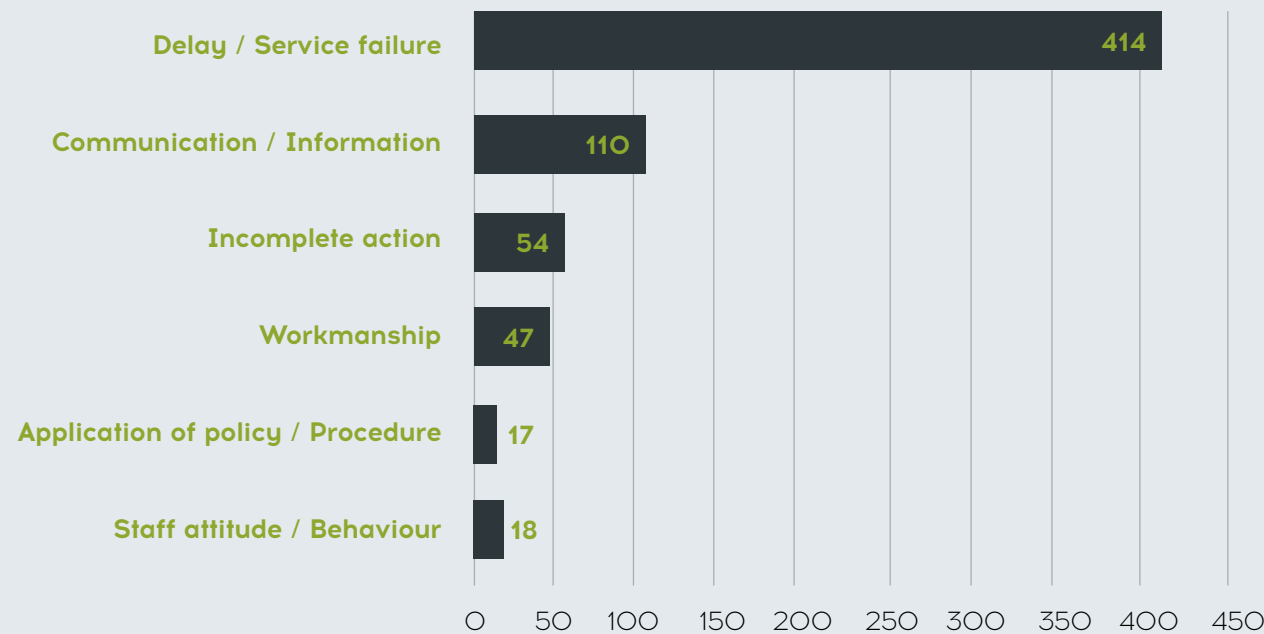
Learning from complaints

We always strive to get things right first time and when things go wrong we are committed to putting them right and learning from our mistakes.

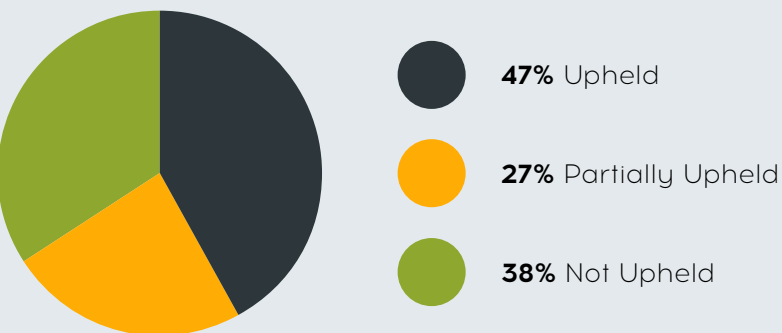
In 2021-22 we received 4,843 complaints. Most of these - 4,097 - were resolved when the customer first contacted us when we were able to put the problem right straight away; step 1 of our complaints process.

674 of the complaints were escalated to step 2 and were investigated and responded to by our dedicated Customer Care Team.

Here is a breakdown of what the complaints were about:



Here is a summary of the outcome of these complaints:



A fair approach

We comply with the Housing Ombudsman complaint handling code to make sure we respond to all complaints fairly and effectively.

A total of 72 complaints were reviewed by a director at step 3 of our process following a customer request to ensure the complaint was handled fairly and reasonably at step 2.

We do all we can to resolve complaints at each step of our internal process. If these are all followed and customers are still unhappy with the outcome we advise them to refer their complaint to the Housing Ombudsman. In 2021-22 the Housing Ombudsman reviewed six complaints relating to our services.

Making improvements

Every complaint we receive is given a learning theme to help us identify issues which consistently arise to ensure we prioritise tackling the root cause of them.

Lessons from complaints are always shared with the teams involved in delivering the service and more complex cases are reviewed together. The learning and service improvements which follow are shared with all colleagues.

Involving our customers

Our customer panels play a crucial role in helping us to improve our services. Panel members work together to scrutinise our services and help us to identify where we can make things better.

We spoke to **Louise Pettinger** and **Wellington Chiwara** to find out more about their role, what they enjoy about it and what they'd like to see improve.

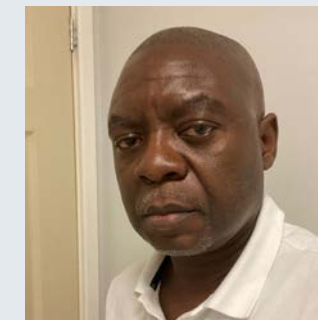
How long have you been involved with the customer panel and what are your main duties?

Louise: I have been on the panel since March 2020, and I have also been involved on the scrutiny panel and other forums over the years. My role includes checking the agenda and liaising with staff at GSA, as well as attending every working group meeting. I make sure all panel members get the information they ask for and need. I then have debrief meetings with teams at GSA to make sure everything in the meeting was recorded properly and that actions are understood.

Wellington: I have been involved with the customer panel since its inception, since around 2018. I try to make sure everybody who is on the panel has the opportunity to air their views, working closely with the team at GSA to set our work for the year and owning the agenda. My main objective is to make sure the panel helps to influence quality performance and service delivery by scrutinising the work GSA does in order to drive continuous improvement.

What do you enjoy most about being an involved customer?

Wellington: I enjoy participating in joint discussions and workshops. Highlights include giving feedback on the new company brand and logo and a session feeding into the Voice of the Customer strategy.



Louise and Wellington

Louise: I enjoy being involved as I would like to make a difference to how people live and make sure their homes are safe, secure and happy.

Where do you think we need to improve?

Louise: I think GSA needs to be more transparent when it comes to customers concerns. If as a company, we can't do something – we need to let the customer know so there is no false hope.

Wellington: I think GreenSquareAccord needs to improve on communication with customers, from the time it takes to answer calls to timely feedback on queries.

Why do you think it is important for organisations like GSA to involve customers?

Wellington: I think it is important that customers are involved so that the services GSA creates and delivers meet their needs and to make sure that performance continually improves.

Louise: It is important for customers to be involved and know and understand things as this is our home and we offer ideas that could benefit us and the organisation.

Moving things forward

In 2022 we will bring together our two legacy customer panels into a single panel to bring new focus and consistency to how we involve customers.

Delivering services which reflect your needs

We want to make sure the services we provide meet your needs. The 25,000 homes we own and manage spread from the Midlands to the South West and cover a range of communities, each with unique challenges.

To make sure we can provide services which respond to the needs of people in our communities, in 2022 we launched our locality model. The model focuses our work around four localities and brings together colleagues from our operational teams to make sure we can identify local issues and service challenges so we can respond.

The cost-of-living crisis continues to escalate, and we want to do all we can to support our customers through this. In 2021-22 our Financial Skills Team supported 778 customers, gaining the equivalent of £437,000 in extra income in the form of benefit, grant applications and other support. We are committed to doing all we can to support customers through one of the most difficult periods in recent history.

We continue to work with partners across our localities to support customers with everything from training opportunities to accessing community grants.



Ross Kuklinski

Director of Homes and Communities



How every £1 of rent is spent

- 28p** Interest costs
- 19p** Routine maintenance
- 16p** Depreciation of housing properties
- 15p** Planned and major repairs expenditure
- 11p** Management costs
- 9p** Supported housing and care
- 2p** Void loss

Our focus on being local

One of the themes that came out loud and clear when we consulted with customers about the merger is that being local is really important. This is why we made it one of our merger promises, and why in 2022 we introduced our locality model. The model focuses our work around four localities – allowing us to provide housing services in a focused way that meets the needs of our customers.

Watch this video to find out more:





Investing in your communities

We work with partner organisations to deliver projects which provide a range of support to people living in our localities.

Supporting young people and families

Our **Hall Green Families Team** coordinates help for children and families in Birmingham on behalf of Birmingham's Children's Partnership. In 2021-22 we supported thousands of households to help them access food, training and range of other support. As part of this service, we coordinate government hardship grants for households. This includes food and fuel payments, shopping vouchers and the Household Support Fund, which supported more than 6,000 people in 2021-22.

We partner with **Rose Hill Junior Youth Club** to provide activities and mental health support for children and young people aged five to 17, including a weekly youth group. This project is part of our regeneration of Rose Hill, in Oxford.

In Wiltshire we partner with the **Rise Trust** to support the delivery of a youth group on the Hill Rise estate in Chippenham, Wiltshire. The Rise Trust deliver 11 sessions of youth engagement a week across North Wiltshire.

Helping young people into work

We have been working with **Youth Action Wiltshire** for more than a decade. The project provides support for young people facing a range of challenges – including victims of crime and carers. The focused support helps young people face and overcome these challenges and develop their confidence and skills. We supported 79 people through this project in 2021-22.

In the Black Country we are one of the lead partners for **Black Country Click Start** – a Big Lottery Fund and European Social Fund project to help tackle poverty and social exclusion. Since 2017 this project has supported 3,363 people with tailored support on everything from applying for jobs and helping people become more confident using computers and the internet.

Supporting people to live independently

We lead the **Neighbourhood Network Scheme** in Hall Green, in Birmingham. This project supports people who are over 50 in a range of important ways to help them live independently. In 2021-22 the team:

- ◆ Funded 12 community projects with grants totalling £93,000. These projects were targeted at increasing social participation, helping people to live healthier lifestyles, maximising income and more
- ◆ Invested £8,000 in training opportunities for Hall Green groups and organisations – including training on bid writing, fundraising strategies, and volunteer management
- ◆ Commissioned a local organisation to deliver a programme of digital inclusion courses which 127 people attended
- ◆ Built up a network of community groups and organisations in Hall Green to increase awareness and partnership working.

Towards a repairs service we can be proud of

We know repairs are hugely important to our customers and this year we made progress on our journey to provide an excellent service.

We completed more than 50,000 reactive repairs in 2021-22 - which represented a £10.5m investment - this is on top of our planned investment in our homes.

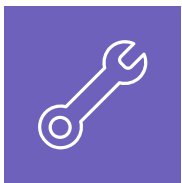
We are pleased we were able to complete most repairs within our target timeframes and we want to put ourselves in a position to be able to do this for all repairs in the future.

We know it's important to our customers we can get their repair done right first time. To make sure we can achieve this we are reviewing our processes to see where we can make them slicker. We're delighted to have partnered with Jewson to become the first housing provider in the UK to use innovative smart lockers for our repairs. You can read more about how this is improving our service and leading the way in the housing sector across the page.



Andrew Rossiter
Director of Repairs and Maintenance

In numbers:



Total repairs completed
51,158



Total investment in repairs
£10.5m



Repairs completed within target
71%



Emergency repairs completed within target
95%

Completing repairs the smart way

In 2022 we launched our smart repair lockers - a pioneering, customer-centred innovation. This partnership with Jewson; a first in the UK, harnesses technology to make our repairs service more efficient and improve customer experience and satisfaction.

Many of us will be familiar with the bright yellow lockers at supermarkets which Amazon and other providers have been using for years to make it easier for customers to get hold of products at their convenience. Smart lockers embrace this technology to give repairs operatives easy and secure access to the parts and tools they need to complete their jobs - eliminating unnecessary and lengthy trips to supplier warehouses, allowing them to attend more appointments and complete repairs for our customers the first time.

We will continue to make improvements to this crucial part of our service.



Investing in your homes

For a home to feel like home it needs to be safe, secure and of good quality.

In 2021, following our merger, we discovered we didn't have up-to-date safety records in place for all our homes. Fixing this became our top priority and over the last year we have been working to put it right.

To deal with these issues we put in place our Building Safety Recovery Plan and we have now completed all priority safety checks and any work that was identified to make them safe. We proactively invested an additional £6.6m into our homes in 2021-22 and rolled back some of our other work to make this happen.

This has meant delaying some elements of our planned investment into our homes – for example replacing windows and kitchens and bathrooms. We thank our customers for their patience while we continue to prioritise safety and security.

We are completing detailed inspections on all our properties which are known as stock condition surveys. This will give us an up-to-date picture of the condition of our homes to allow us to make proactive, long-term decisions about how and where we invest.

We regret the safety issues with our homes was ever allowed to happen and we apologise to our customers for any distress caused by this. However, our proactive response has put us in an excellent position to make sure all our customers can feel safe in their homes and nothing like this ever happens again. It has also set us up to keep our homes in good shape long into the future.



Michelle Newman
Director of Asset Strategy and Investment

In numbers:



Total proactive investment in our homes in 21-22

£10.7m



Extra invested on safety measures

£6.6m



Gas compliance

99.8%

A safer future

The Fire Safety Act and Building Safety Act received royal assent in April and landlords are now being given a timeline to implement a raft of new responsibilities and duties to make sure their buildings are safe and people living in them are informed and involved. The act will also see the introduction of a new dedicated Building Safety Regulator, which will oversee safety and standards in buildings of all heights. Like all landlords, we are now working through changes we will have to make to meet these new requirements.

An energy efficient future

The government has legislated that the UK will reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050. This will have an impact on the whole of society – including social housing. Our stock condition surveys are helping us to identify where we need to make homes more energy efficient and we continue to invest in our homes to improve their energy performance.

In 2021 we completed a pioneering transformation of 22 homes in Darlaston, in the West Midlands.

The apartment block was upgraded through the installation of a whole house wrap of timber framed panels, dramatically improving the insulation and appearance of the property. The upgraded properties also benefit from the installation of solar photovoltaic panels which along with the extra insulation, help to reduce electricity bills for the residents.



Caring with care

During another extraordinary year for the care sector, we once again demonstrated our commitment to this fundamental part of our work.

In 2021-22 the pandemic continued to have a severe impact on our work – causing ongoing staffing challenges, visitor restrictions for our customers and regular outbreaks for us to manage.

We are pleased that we were able to maintain the highest standards of infection, prevention, and control during this time – noted in audits of our schemes.

We are also pleased we were able to maintain the confidence and satisfaction of our customers during this time. In our annual care and support survey we scored an average of 8.9 out of 10 from customers when they were asked how happy they were with how we supported them and communicated with them.

Managing COVID-19 has now become a standard part of our work and we continue to manage this risk.

From older adults and children to people who have experienced challenging life experiences such as homelessness, mental health, the criminal justice system or domestic abuse - we have 60 years' experience providing care and support to some of the most vulnerable people in society and we're proud to continue this work.

Meanwhile we continued to progress our digital journey. By the end of March 2022, 10 out of 16 care homes had moved to digital care planning and we are on track for all remaining residential settings to be digital by the end of 2022.

I was delighted to be awarded an MBE for my 30 years in the sector in the 2022 New Year's Honours List. Though the award has my name on it, for me this is an award which recognises the huge contribution that our carers and care staff everywhere make each day.



Maxine Espley
Executive Director of Care and Support

In numbers:



Hours of care provided
1,448,634



Customers supported
12,126



Local authority areas we provided services in
36



Jean finds her feet with our support

The experience of our customer Jean gives an indication into the difference we can make to the lives of people we support.

Jean arrived at one of our care homes for a respite stay after previously being cared for in bed, unable to walk or even sit out onto her chair. Jean wanted rehabilitation so she could return to her home in the community. Her family members were understandably concerned about whether this would be possible again.

The GreenSquareAccord care team got straight to work with Jean setting objectives and filling her with positivity and motivation. Jean improved significantly and with the support of her carers she became strong enough to be able to walk again and have the level of independence needed to return home after just three months.

“Our mother arrived needing assistance of a hoist for movement and was otherwise bedridden following a fall. Three months later she was able to walk and return home to living independently. This has been our first experience of a care home and we cannot praise the care and attention of the staff enough. We will be forever grateful for their expertise and guidance.”

Pioneering scheme helps 100 people off the streets

Our work to support people affected by homelessness includes a project in Walsall which has helped more than 100 people off the streets.

Backed by £9.6m government funding the pilot gives people who have experienced rough sleeping a home with intensive support for problems such as mental, psychological, or emotional ill health, drug or alcohol dependency, or experience of domestic violence and abuse. Our specialist support team in Walsall has played a key part in the success of the programme.

Andy Street, Mayor for the West Midlands, and Eddie Hughes MP, Minister for Housing and Rough Sleeping, took the opportunity to meet with some of the Housing First clients who have been supported through the scheme, as well as hear from support workers and staff who have worked on the pilot scheme.



Building new homes in your communities

We're proud of the role we play to build new homes across our localities. The UK is in the midst of a housing crisis which shows no signs of improving and our communities are among the worst hit.

We are proud that in 2021-22 we built 722 new homes, which puts us firmly inside the top 25 biggest building housing associations in the UK.

Most of these homes; 527, were built for social and affordable rents. Meanwhile a sizeable proportion of the remaining homes were built for a combination of low-cost shared ownership to help people get their first step onto the housing ladder while the rest were sold for outright market sale with all profits being reinvested back into our core work.

Building homes is not just a numbers game and some of our development work is truly innovative and sector leading. Among the homes we completed this year was Bowbrook, a state-of-the-art dementia-specialist residential care home. We also built 63 high-performance, low carbon homes using timber frames which are constructed at our pioneering LoCaL Homes factory and transported to site. And in 2022 we will complete Europe's first development of virtually plastic-free homes.

While we are absolutely committed to the customers who live in our existing homes, we are proud of the role we play. And our successful bid for funding from Homes England will help us to meet our long-term ambitions to provide quality homes for people in our communities who need them.



Craig Currie
Executive Director of Development

In numbers:



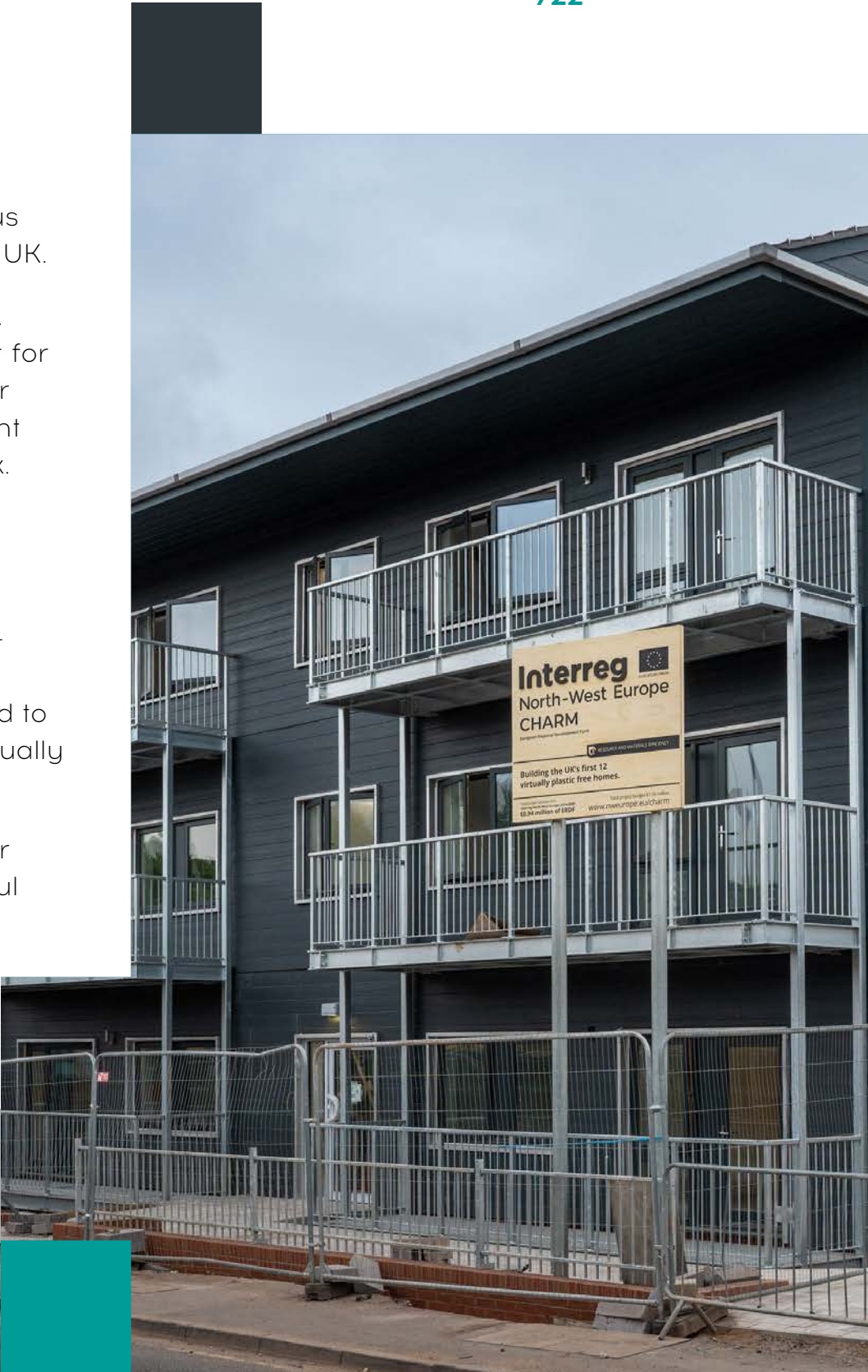
Homes completed
in 21-22
722



Homes we expect to
complete in 22-23
932



Homes we expect to
complete in the
next five years
4,066



Setting the standard for sustainable construction

We are close to completing Europe and the UK's first development of virtually plastic free homes. Based in Redditch, the project will provide 12 affordable homes built using plastic free alternatives to minimise the impact on the environment. The development is transforming the site of a former factory carpark into one-bedroom affordable apartments. The project has received £1.2m EU funding from the Interreg North-West Europe funding partnership, allowing us to research the reduction and removal of plastic in a large-scale construction project and potentially paving the way for a future of plastic free construction.

Meanwhile our LoCaL Homes factory continues to provide high performance, low carbon housing solutions for us and organisations across the UK.

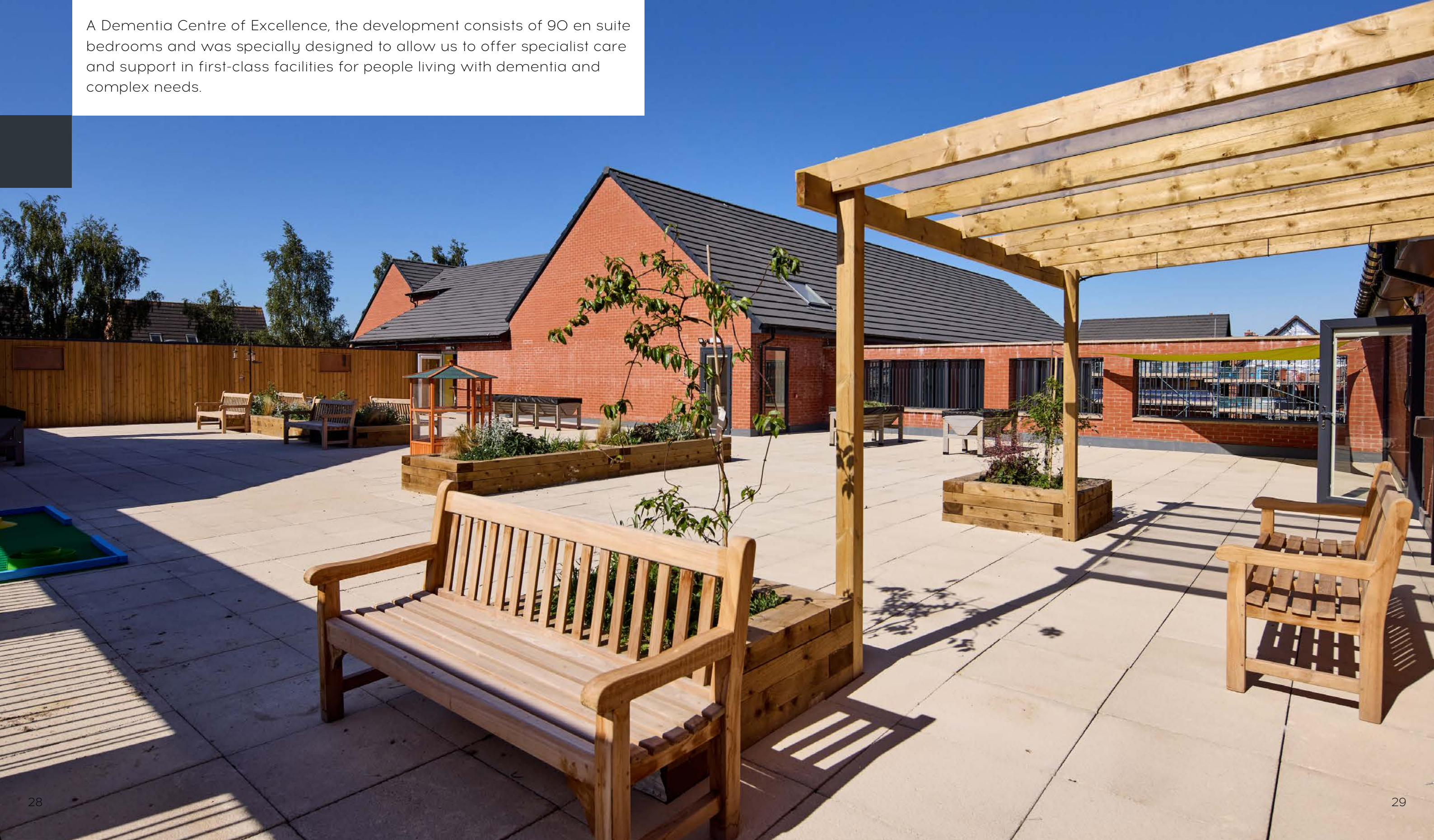
To find out more about LoCaL Homes, visit www.localhomes.co.uk



Building a better future

In 2021 we completed Bowbrook - a state of the art dementia-specialist residential care home in Staffordshire.

A Dementia Centre of Excellence, the development consists of 90 en suite bedrooms and was specially designed to allow us to offer specialist care and support in first-class facilities for people living with dementia and complex needs.



Keeping your communities safe

We believe everyone deserves to feel safe and secure where they live and we work with our partners to keep our communities safe. We do not tolerate anti-social behaviour and in 2021-22 we handled a total of 699 cases. The most common cases we deal with are:



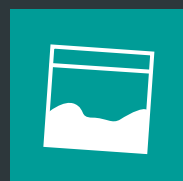
Noise
nuisance

248



Intimidating
behaviour

156



Drug-related
incidents

104

Working with our partners

We work closely with local authority and emergency service partners across our localities to help to keep our communities safe. For example, in 2022 we signed up to Gloucestershire County Council's new pledge which brings organisations which work in the area together in a new commitment to tackle anti-social behaviour.

Looking to the future

We remain committed to improving our services and meeting our long-term ambition to be **Simply Brilliant Together**. Simply Brilliant Together is our corporate strategy which sets out our plans up to 2026. It focuses on four key objectives: to provide great homes and care; in a great neighbourhood; with great service; built on strong foundations. To hear more about our plans click the logo to read the strategy.





Call 0300 111 7000

Visit greensquareaccord.co.uk

Like facebook.com/greensquareaccord

Tweet twitter.com/greensqaccord

Tag instagram.com/greensqaccord