



Annual Report 2024



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Welcome

I am pleased to be able to welcome you to our 2023-24 annual report for the first time as the Chair of GSA.



I joined GSA in March 2024 just as we completed year one of our five-year strategy: Simpler, Stronger, Better. It is clear how much progress has been made, which is especially encouraging against a backdrop of continuing uncertainty and challenges being felt across the housing sector and by individuals and families everywhere.

The priorities of our new strategy reflect that we recognise we still have work to do to get the basics right and ensure our homes and services meet the needs and expectations of our customers. That's why this year we placed renewed focus on improving our repairs, complaints and overall customer service offer.

Additional investment in our repairs function allowed our team to clear a backlog of repairs which had developed during the pandemic. Meanwhile, investing in our customers' homes has formed a significant part of our work and I'm pleased to see our new investment programme taking shape and starting to benefit customers. We introduced our Tenancy Sustainment Fund and Community Investment Fund in 2023-24 and these have allowed us to deliver targeted support for individuals alongside a range of grass roots projects which knit communities together.

Meanwhile, our Customer Panel has gone from strength-to-strength this year and is working alongside colleagues in priority areas including complaints and service charges to ensure the customer voice is at the heart of our decision-making.

It is encouraging to see many of our transactional customer satisfaction metrics improve. These show that when customers access our services, they generally rate them very highly. However, when we look at our first Tenant Satisfaction Measure (TSM) results we can see that we still have a significant amount of work to do to improve the perception customers have of our organisation and our services.

We were delighted that the Regulator for Social Housing recognised the huge progress made since our merger and reflected this in an upgrade to our governance rating, which saw us regain our G1 status.

Our focus in year two will be to continue to improve our core services and we will focus on a series of major projects to achieve this. This includes a transformation of our housing management system so that we can deliver services more efficiently and consistently. We will also focus on driving significant improvements in the quality of the data we hold so that we can provide services more responsively and intelligently.

On behalf of everyone at GSA I would like to pay tribute to Robin Bailey, who served as Chair of GreenSquare prior to merger and then steered GSA through its first three years as a new organisation. Having served his six-year term with passion and determination, Robin stepped down in March 2024 and, following a tenacious fight with illness, sadly passed away in May.

Working alongside our Chief Executive, Ruth Cooke, Robin's dedication, leadership and overall contribution to the organisation in some of its most challenging moments has shaped the foundation for our success.

Our colleagues are the heart of GSA and continue to demonstrate their passion for our customers. I would like to thank them on behalf of the Board for their tireless work. Their dedication gives me absolute faith that we will deliver on our promise to become a great social landlord.

We believe passionately that our customer is everything and we're proud of our role in tackling the housing crisis in our localities. In recognition of this and to highlight the impact of social housing, we are giving a voice to our customers by sharing some of their stories in this year's annual report. I hope you enjoy hearing more about the impact of our work.



Colin Dennis
Chair

Improving how we handle customer enquiries

We want to provide a great experience when customers contact us, and we've continued to improve how we handle enquiries.

This has included improving our new starter and induction and training programme to make sure colleagues are better equipped to handle enquiries from day one. We have also focused on improving knowledge within our contact centre and this has enabled us to provide a more consistent, higher quality service for customers.

We're pleased to see these changes have made a positive difference in our performance in 2023-24.

Customer satisfaction with our contact centre increased from 79% to 81% and we were able to reduce our average call waiting time by nearly a minute.

Meanwhile our focus on ensuring we deal with more enquiries the first time a customer contacts us helped us achieve a more than 10% reduction in the total number of calls we dealt with.

Reporting our performance

We believe transparency and openness around our performance is extremely important, so we've committed to sharing our performance every month with our customers.

We set targets for each part of our landlord service and measure our performance against them. Customers have told us that the three most important areas of customer service are:

- Contact centre
- Repairs service
- Complaints resolution

We know there's still more to do, but by being open and transparent about how we're doing, the progress we're making, and what we still need to improve.

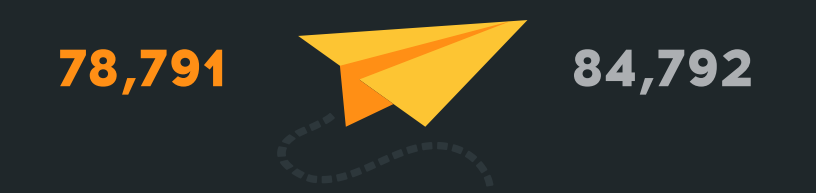
Calls answered



Average waiting time



Emails handled



Transactions on our online portal



Customer satisfaction with Customer Contact Centre





Listening to our customers

The views of our customers are extremely important to us.

We receive feedback through a range of mechanisms, including satisfaction surveys customers complete when they receive a direct service from us, complaints and compliments, events such as our customer roadshows and feedback from our Customer Panel.

A new way to gather feedback

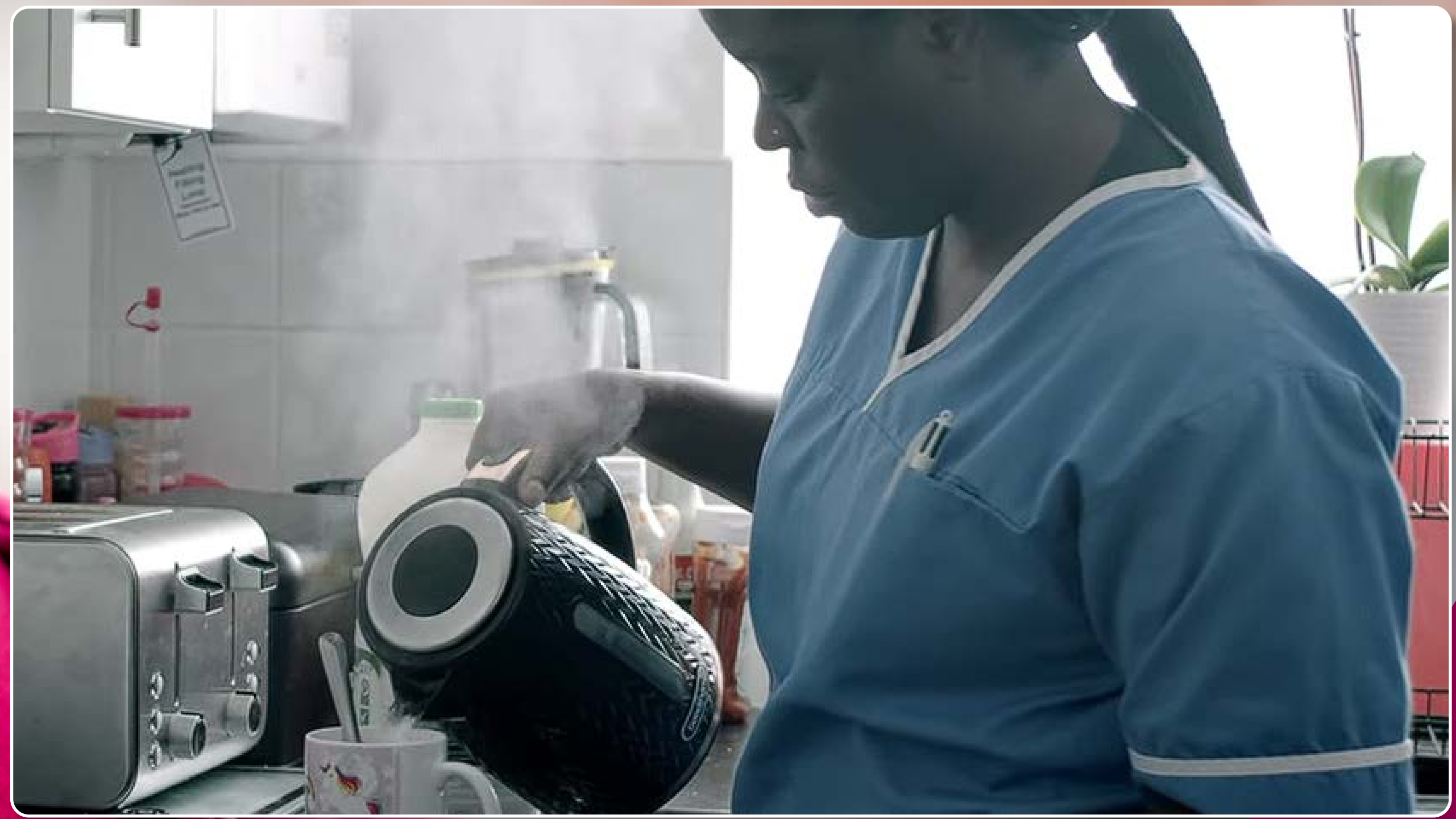
In 2024 we added a new mechanism for customer feedback, by completing our first ever Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) perception survey. All social housing providers are required to complete this survey by the Regulator for Social Housing, to submit the results and publish them.

Over 4,500 customers participated in our 2024 TSM perception survey. This information supplements our other feedback mechanisms and helps us understand how customers feel about us as their landlord.

We are committed to using the TSM survey results together with all the feedback we receive, to help us to keep shaping and improving our services.

KERRY ANN'S STORY

"I will always be grateful to GSA for giving me the opportunity to have a forever home."



When Kerry Ann's private rented accommodation in Gloucester became too expensive, she and her daughter ended up in emergency accommodation. Kerry Ann tells her story about how GSA helped her find a forever home.

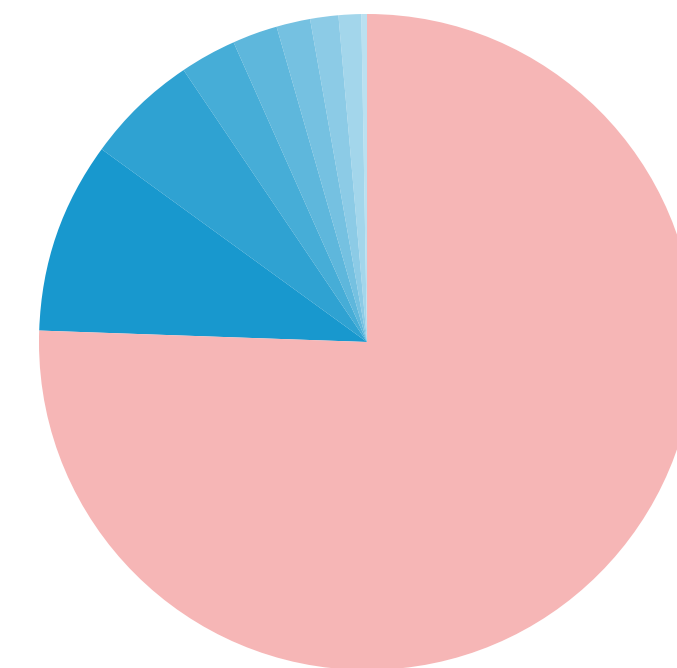
Learning from complaints

We 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 2023-24 we received 2,061 complaints. Most of these (1,797) were resolved at the first stage of our process with 264 complaints escalated to the final stage of our process, to be reviewed by a director, giving an opportunity to review if the complaint was handled fairly and reasonably.

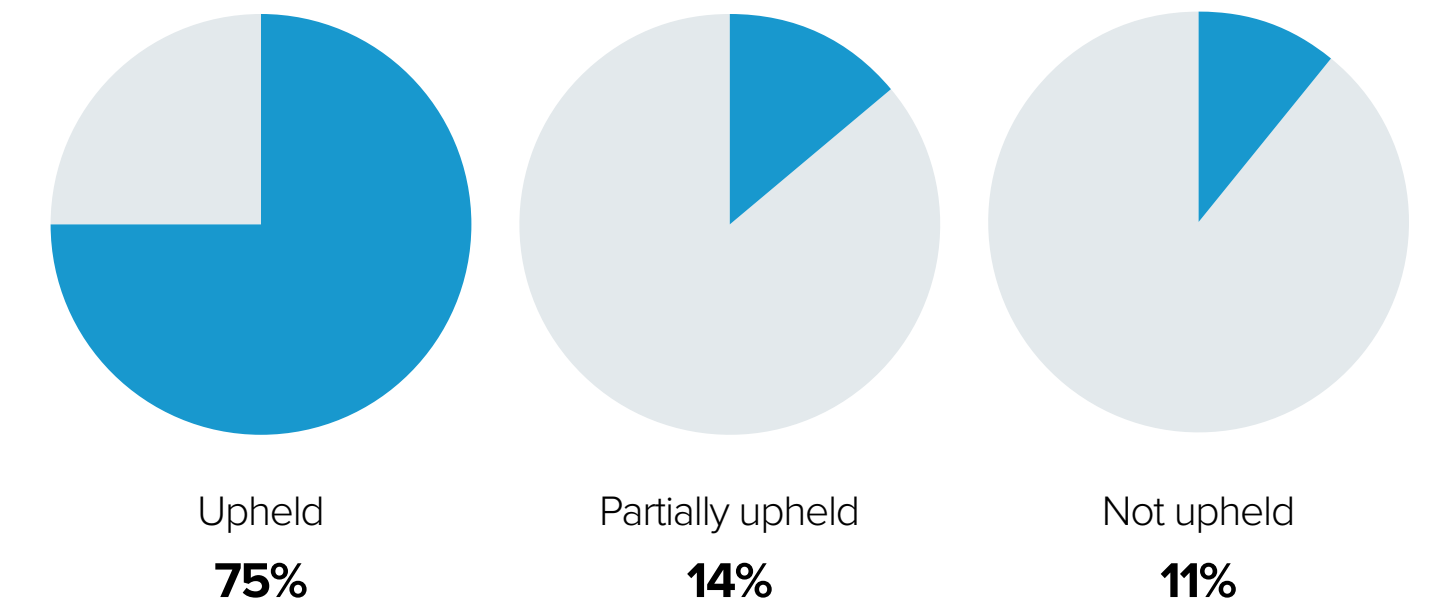
We do all we can to resolve complaints at each step of our internal process. If these are all followed, and customers are still unhappy with the outcome, we advise them to refer their complaint to the Housing Ombudsman. In 2023-24 the Housing Ombudsman made 36 determinations with 94 findings.

Here is a breakdown of the complaints we received about our landlord services:



Delay / service failure	1,561 / 2,061
Communication / information	193 / 2,061
Incomplete action	113 / 2,061
Workmanship	57 / 2,061
Staff attitude / behaviour	49 / 2,061
Unknown at outset	34 / 2,061
Product quality	29 / 2,061
Application of a policy/procedure	23 / 2,061
Suggestion/feedback	2 / 2,061

Here is a summary of the outcome of these complaints:



A simpler approach

In response to the launch of the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, we have updated our complaints procedure and now operate a two-stage complaints process, focused on resolving the issue as soon as possible.

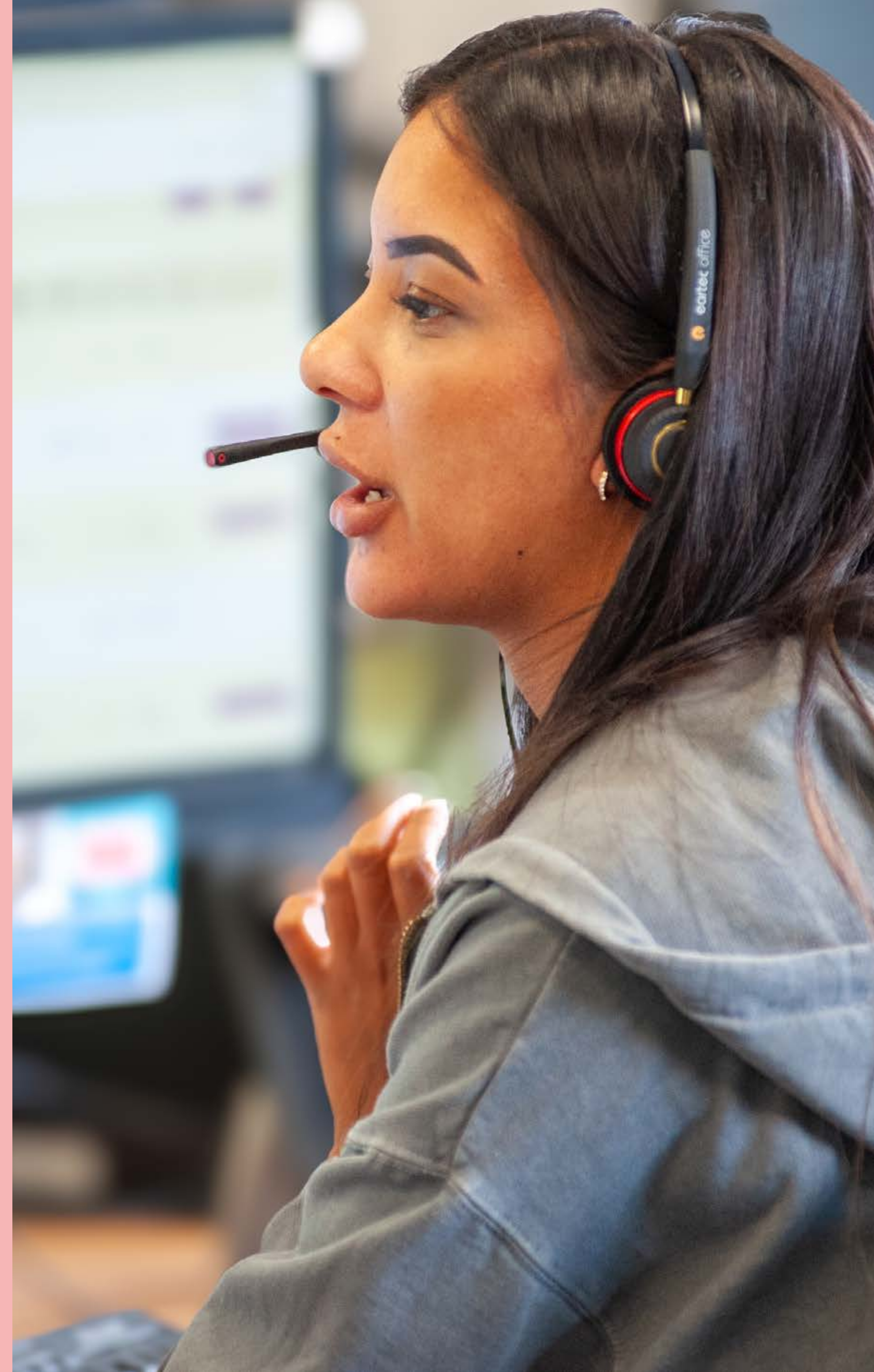
We have removed our former 'resolve' stage as we recognised this was causing confusion.

At the first stage of the complaints process, we now identify which complaints can be resolved quickly within our newly established Early Resolution Team who are dedicated to responding and resolving complaints as they are received.

More complex or sensitive complaints at stage 1, will continue to be managed within our Customer Care stage 1 team.

At stage 2, complaints are now handled by a dedicated team within the Customer Care Team. This ensures a thorough and objective review at the final stage of the internal process.

We have also increased the number of colleagues in our complaint handling teams to help reduce response times with our customers.



Working with the Housing Ombudsman

In September 2023, the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) initiated a special investigation into our complaint handling process.

Most of the cases the Housing Ombudsman has dealt with reflect the ongoing challenges we faced following our merger in April 2021, when we were still agreeing a single process for handling complaints and bringing together a complex set of policies and procedures across our operational services.

We now have a much more robust complaints handling process and many of the challenges identified in these cases are now either resolved or are in the process of being resolved.

In 2023-24 we conducted an internal investigation into all cases handled by the Housing Ombudsman with a fresh pair of eyes to review what we would do differently today and test whether the changes we have made go far enough.

We continually review and learn from complaints, and we now run regular sessions to share detailed learnings from all complaints with colleagues to help to avoid cases like this in the future.

We welcome the opportunity to share with the Housing Ombudsman the progress we have made to address the issues highlighted in these cases and the wider progress we have made since our merger.

We are committed to acting on the recommendations from the Housing Ombudsman investigation and will update customers through our website.

Involving our customers

We know we can only provide great services
by actively involving our customers.



Our customer involvement and empowerment strategy outlines how we will achieve our commitment to improve our customer offer. The strategy has been shaped by our customers and includes a set of guiding principles which will provide the foundation for more effective and meaningful engagement and involvement.

Working in partnership: our Customer Panel

Our Customer Panel is a group of involved customers who work in partnership with us to influence and drive improvements in our services. The panel provides assurance that we are working in an open, transparent, and accountable way.

In late 2023 we ran a recruitment campaign for the panel and recruited four new members. Our panel members are reflective of the diverse customers and communities we serve and play a crucial role at GSA.



Sarah Mason, Chair

Sarah Mason lives just outside Chippenham and has been a GSA customer for five years. Sarah is passionate about how customers feel about the services they receive. As the Chair of the Customer Panel Sarah wants to help get the best value for money and really listen to what customers need.



Anthony Gorman

Anthony lives in Birmingham and has been a GSA customer for three years. Anthony is committed to the values of inclusion, equality and diversity and representing the voice of GSA customers.



Dee Murphy

Dee lives in Oldbury and became a GSA customer in June 2023. Dee wants to represent the customer voice and help drive positive change. She wanted to invest some of her free time in helping the panel and GSA make things better for all customers.



Donna French

Donna lives in Great Wyrley and has been a GSA customer for 12 years. Donna has 20 years nursing care experience and was also a supported housing officer for a social housing provider for six years. As a panel member, Donna is keen to establish a stronger partnership relationship between customers and GSA.



Jai Chauhan

Jai lives in a sheltered housing scheme in Northampton and has been a GSA customer for 11 years. Jai wants to contribute towards developing a shared understanding of what matters most to customers so that effective solutions and improvements can be made.



Julian Ellis

Julian lives in Clyffe Pypard and has been a GSA customer for 20 years. As a panel member Julian wants to make a difference by helping drive up performance and customer satisfaction.



Kerry-Ann Francis

Kerry lives in Gloucester and has been a GSA customer for two years. Kerry wants to be the voice for other customers and to work with the panel and GSA to find solutions together.



Lorraine Payne

Lorraine lives with her husband and adult son with special needs in a small village outside of Chippenham and has been a GSA customer for 44 years. Lorraine wants to work with the panel to make a positive difference.



Selina Joseph

Selina lives in Coseley and has been a GSA customer for six years. Having gone through the experience of a home swap and relocating from London to the Midlands, Selina would like to draw on her own experiences and insight to help drive improvements that will benefit all customers.

Sonia Carr

Sonia lives in Wiltshire and has been a GSA customer for 21 years. With experience of sitting on legacy customer panels over the last eight years, Sonia feels she can represent the silent voice of those customers who do not feel able to speak up.



Stephen Amoah

Stephen lives in Wiltshire with his young family and has been a GSA customer for 13 years. Stephen is committed to promoting inclusivity and understands the importance and value of delivering culturally sensitive services and ensuring the panel is representative of GSA's diverse customer base.



Susan Ozbicak

Susan lives in a scheme for residents aged 55 and over in Bilston, Wolverhampton and has been a GSA customer for 11 years. Susan is committed to speaking up on behalf of other customers and wanting to make things better for everyone.



Walatta Robinson

Walatta lives in Birmingham and has been a GSA customer for 10 years. Walatta has an interest in housing and believes everyone should have access to a decent and affordable home. She joined the panel to ensure customers are at the forefront of everything we do, and things are done right first time.



Making a difference: highlights

Our Customer Panel have made a big difference in the last year. Here are some of the highlights of their work:



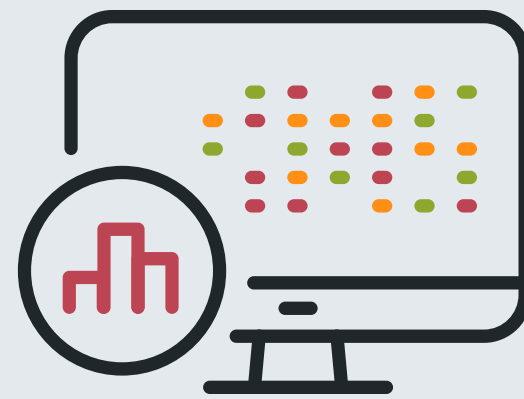
Reviewed **27 grant applications** and **awarded 13 grants** to the value of **£8,079** to support local community projects that directly benefit our customers



Introduced a **new Recruitment Assessment Workshop** which resulted in the recruitment of **four new members**



Reviewed **policies and procedures** to help make them **more customer focused**



Taken part in the testing of the **new damp and mould app** pilot



Worked with leaders to identify **five key projects** to work on in small panel groups (complaints, data, consumer standards, single housing management system and service charge review)



Assessed GSA performance and quality reports and given **feedback and recommendations** to drive service standards

Getting out into our localities

During summer 2023 we held a three-month long series of engagement events across our four localities.

Our teams, along with our Customer Panel members, hosted ten events. Customers had the opportunity to meet our colleagues and customer panel members and talk about what matters most to them regarding their homes and communities.

The events took place in Cradley Heath, Corsham, Oxford, Coventry, Calne, Wolverhampton, Bilston, Chippenham, Purton and Brierley Hill.

Over 140 customers attended, and some common themes emerged revealing that customers were concerned about getting in touch with GSA, being kept updated about repairs and planned improvements and the maintenance of shared spaces and grassed areas.

Here are the main themes of the feedback we received and the actions we have taken or are taking to address them:



Customer contact

You are frustrated at not being able to get through to the Contact Centre and having to chase for progress and updates. We have put in place a number of things to improve our Contact Centre including:

- We are changing the way that we recruit Customer Service Officers and we're working on ways to drive engagement to improve our retention rates.
- We are improving the culture in our Contact Centre, providing more opportunities for progression and making sure more support is available to new starters.
- We have changed our approach to training and cross-skilling our team members, improving the efficiency we can achieve from the same levels of resource.

You don't know your Housing Officer because everything has to go through our Contact Centre.

- We receive around 1,000 calls a day, many of which are related to our Housing Officers. Our operating model is for our Contact Centre to deal with basic tasks and when the expertise of a Housing Officer is required, a case is logged. If calls were routed directly to Housing Officers, then this would prevent them from being able to manage their time as they'd be required to be available between their entire shift to answer inbound calls.
- When a customer calls our Contact Centre, we encourage them to self-serve if they are able to do so, but we are aware that our self-serve portals need to improve.
- We are currently working on an important IT project which will allow us to start investing in our self-serve offer.



Estates

You are concerned about the maintenance and upkeep of communal indoor and outdoor spaces.

- We are re-introducing regular walk-about in some of our communities. Customers will be able to come and talk to us about any service delivery issues with the maintenance of communal indoor and outdoor spaces. We will promote these in advance.
- We plan to make information on our cleaning and grounds specifications more accessible. We will be displaying them on our noticeboards, and we will make them available on our website.
- All supervisors now carry out site audits to check standards and our Estate Operatives are asked, when possible, to take before and after photographs when they visit a site.
- As part of the *Keep Britain Tidy Great British Spring Clean*, we held a Spring clean-up and rubbish amnesty in some of our communities in March. The events were a success and we filled three 20-yard skips and seven 12-yard skips over the week, equivalent to 1,500 black bin bags in capacity.
- We have a new neighbourhood and community policy that sets out our service expectations and responsibilities. To find out more about this please visit our website.
- We have increased resources in our Estates Team to enable us to deal with issues of fly tipping faster and ensure we can deliver a great service.



Planned Works

You want to know if your property is part of any planned programme and you want access to more information and timelines.

- We will share our 2024 Capital Works Programme with customers.
- Our procedures for kitchen and bathrooms now include the Disabled Facilities Grant. As part of surveying for kitchens and bathrooms we will discuss the needs of the customer to determine if they would be better having an Occupational Therapist assessment before going ahead with a new kitchen or bathroom.
- We have reviewed and standardised our customer letters and we've spoken with our print company to see if we can badge the back of the envelopes to make these letters stand out.



Repairs

You are concerned about short term fixes, multiple appointments, repairs taking too long, cancellations and us sending the wrong operative.

- Our Repairs Team have worked hard to significantly reduce by almost 50% our work in progress (WIP), which are the jobs we have which are outstanding.
- Collaborative efforts with the Contact Centre have resulted in a streamlined approach, ensuring the vast majority of emergencies, urgent, and routine repairs are appointed at the first point of contact.
- Daily tracking of further works is in place to ensure all follow the correct protocol. Area/Regional Managers monitor and execute further works, keeping customers thoroughly informed.
- Customer satisfaction results are shared with teams, and proactive measures are taken for negative comments, including follow-up calls to address concerns.
- Complaint enquiries are proactively managed through an internal tracker, with a dedicated person overseeing data input.
- We are working with an external supplier to ensure that we effectively manage and track our complaints.



Communication

You want to be updated about what is happening with customer issues.

- We have committed to running annual locality roadshows – visiting communities in our localities and talking to customers about our work at GSA and what we are doing to drive service improvements and customer satisfaction.
- We will be undertaking regular estate walk-about as another way of communicating directly to our customers.
- We regularly update our website and Facebook page with what is happening at GSA, including useful information.



Community safety

You are concerned about local nuisance and drugs. You sometimes feel unsafe.

- We have reviewed and updated our anti-social behaviour (ASB) policy and procedures. These reviews happen frequently, and you can view them on our website.
- We will be launching a Community Safety Customer Campaign. As part of this, there will be a customer leaflet which will incorporate guidance on drug use/laws/impacts.
- We are currently exploring co-location with community safety partners such as the Police to have locality hubs in our communities.
- We will be focusing on our Housing First programme, which provides people who have experienced homelessness, chronic health problems and social care needs a stable home and ongoing support to help them rebuild their lives. We will focus on the transition of Housing First customers that will reside in tenancies after the end of their contract. This is so we can address needs on a case-by-case basis.

Repairs: an improving picture

Customers consistently tell us our repairs service is the most important service we provide, and we're pleased to have made further improvements.

We've continued to reduce our backlog of repairs – something which all housing associations have been tackling in recent years. We started the financial year with 11,630 repair jobs in our work in progress and finished it with 6,971 jobs. This has been a key factor in enabling us to drive further improvements in our repairs service.

We are particularly pleased to have significantly increase the number of repairs we completed right first time to 90% compared to 81% in the previous year and 73% in 2021-22.

Meanwhile we were able to complete more repairs within our target times with 100% of urgent repairs completed within our target of 24 hours in 2023-24.

We are also pleased to have sustained customer satisfaction with repairs at 88% and we look forward to driving further improvements to this service in the coming months and years.

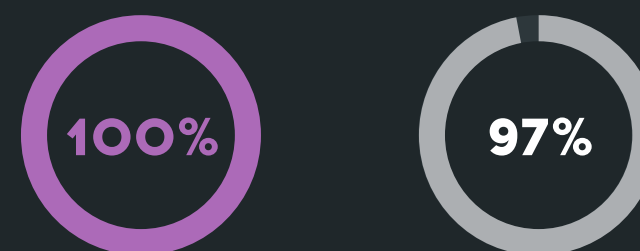
Total repairs completed



Completed within target



Emergencies completed within target



Completed right first time



Customer satisfaction with repairs



Bringing all repairs in house

We've brought all gas and electrical repairs in house to make sure we can provide a consistent service for customers.

October 2023 marked the end of our contract with PH Jones for heating and hot water services in our Midlands localities. These vital services have now been brought in house under the supervision of one manager.

This means that we now provide heating and hot water services to customers across our entire geography. This will bring benefits to customers in terms of efficiency and consistency.

ANDY'S STORY

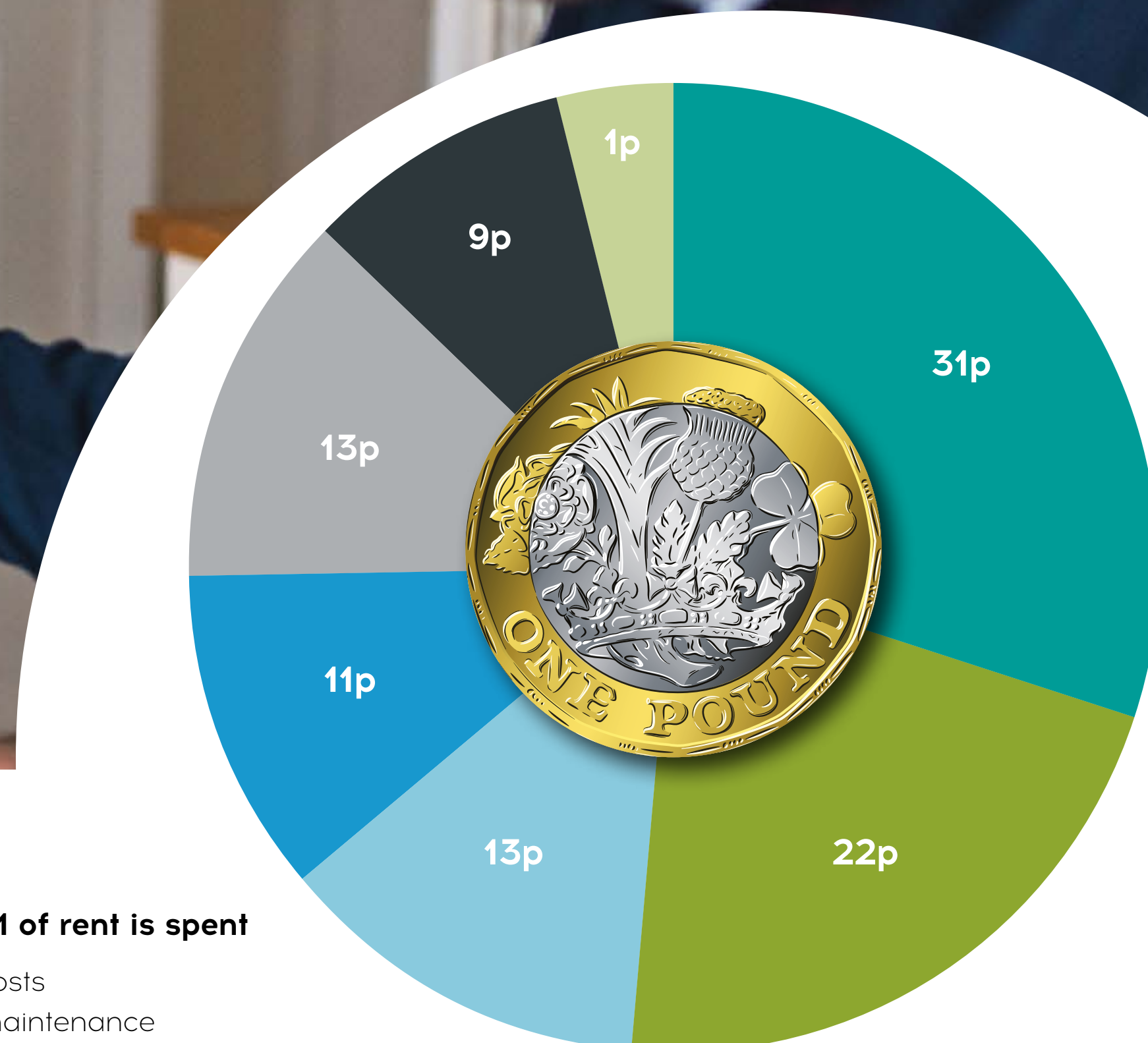
**“Having a home is important
– it’s an achievement.”**



When Andy's marriage broke up and he lost his brother he felt his life was falling apart. From sofa-surfing after returning to the Midlands to finding an apartment at Furlong House and turning his life around with the support of GSA – Andy tells his story.

Living well in challenging circumstances

We know that continuing financial pressures are making life more challenging than usual for people in our communities, and we want to do all we can to support customers to thrive in their homes.



We continued to ramp up our work to help customers to sustain their tenancies and deal with the impact of the cost-of-living crisis. In 2023-24 our Financial Skills and Tenancy Sustainment Team supported more than 1,600 people with proactive support.

We were also able to provide support through our Tenancy Sustainment Fund, which allows us to make targeted interventions for customers, and our Community Impact Fund, which supports individuals and groups in our localities with grants of up to £500.

In these pages you can read more about how our initiatives have supported people and groups in our localities.

How every £1 of rent is spent

- 31p** Interest costs
- 22p** Routine maintenance
- 13p** Depreciation of housing properties
- 11p** Planned and major repairs expenditure
- 13p** Management costs
- 9p** Supported Housing and care
- 1p** Void loss

Supporting customers to sustain their tenancies

Our Financial Skills and Tenancy Sustainment Team provide a range of support to enable customers to live well in their homes. In 2023 to 2024 the team:



Supported **1,636** customers



Prevented **189** court actions or evictions



Secured **£559,515** of backdated extra benefit through support and applications



Secured charitable grants from partners including Glasspool, Baron Davenport, League of Helping Hands, WED, Family Fund and Children In Need totalling **£62,507** for essential white goods and other household items such as beds and sofas



Secured **£34,861** of extra weekly benefit for customers



Secured **£25,000** from Wolverhampton Council's Household Support Fund for our customers living in the Wolverhampton area affected by the cost of living. This helped **165** households who needed help with food, gas and electricity, essential household items (white goods, small appliances) and other essentials such as warm clothing and bedding.



Targeted support for our customers

Our Tenancy Sustainment Fund supports customers that may be experiencing hardship as a result of the cost-of-living crisis and have been struggling to pay their rent. The fund enables those that may have accrued rent arrears to either significantly decrease these arrears or clear them completely, lifting the burden of debt.

This year 280 households have benefited from our Tenancy Sustainment Fund, and we helped these customers clear £199,577.56 of debt - an average of £712.82 per household.



Luke's story

Luke lives in a one-bedroom flat and was recently awarded custody for his eight-year-old son. He was self-employed but now he has to provide full time care to his son. His only income is Universal Credit, but due to not attending the Jobcentre he was sanctioned and receiving no money. He was struggling and could not afford to buy food or pay for his gas and electricity. Luke was quite desperate for help.

We advised Luke about the options available to him and helped him explain to the Jobcentre why he was unable to attend his sessions. With our support Luke has benefited from:

- A payment of £633.74 from the Jobcentre.
- A home loss payment of over £6,000 which had been held up in the system.
- Automated rent payments paid directly from his benefits.

Luke is very grateful for our help and has agreed to attend his future Jobcentre appointments. We continue to support Luke regularly.

Mohammed's story

A Customer Accounts Officer flagged that no housing benefits were being paid to our customer Mohammed, which had left his rent account in a high level of arrears.

Mohammed had no idea why his Housing Benefit had stopped and was unaware of the arrears that were on his account, which stood at just under £8,000.

We worked with Housing Benefit directly on Mohammed's behalf and sent over all of the information that they needed. We also noticed that there were a number of monthly back dated payments due to Mohammed that were missing.

We helped Mohammed to secure a back payment of £5,307.28.

Mohammed was pleased and very thankful for our help. He has agreed to set up a payment arrangement to help clear the remaining arrears.

Support programmes

We also run a range of support programmes in our communities with our partners.

Early Help Team

Our Early Help Team work with children, families and professionals supporting families. In 2023-24 we have helped 2,200 families across the Hall Green and Selly Oak constituencies in Birmingham access family support before a problem becomes a crisis and achieve sustainable whole family outcomes. As part of this service, we coordinated the Household Support Fund (HSF) Programme. Last year we co-ordinated the delivery of over 6,021 household hardship grants across Hall Green valued at £1,204,150. We work through strong collaborative community partnerships and engage with an extensive stakeholder network of almost 3,000 professionals from local schools, communities, food, health, faith and statutory partners. Through this network the team deliver support, training and outreach opportunities to 1,800 professionals and families that include drop-in surgeries, family fun days and thematic support workshops.

SCZ

For Balsall Heath, Sparkbrook and Sparkhill Wards we have the additional offer of the Sparkbrook Children's Zone (SCZ). As the programme management lead, GSA are working with Birmingham Children's Hospital doctors and a local network of GPs to pilot an NHS England-funded transformation programme to deliver clinical and community outreach interventions to address acute child health inequalities. Since 2022 SCZ Doctors and Early Help team have supported 370 children through direct integrated health and social care intervention.

Neighbourhood Network Scheme

We co-ordinate the Neighbourhood Network Scheme in Hall Green, Birmingham on behalf of Birmingham City Council. We work with social services and local organisations to connect older people and adults with a long-term disability to activities/services to help them stay living at home independently for as long as possible. During 2023-24 we awarded £166,315 to 16 projects via the NNS grants programme and invested £32,090 in training for community groups and organisations.

Planning for Real

We also have Planning for Real, the nationally renowned community planning process as part of our team. Planning for Real has led the community engagement activities at our locality roadshows and works externally with developers, agencies and residents to gather community feedback and develop action plans.



Investing in your communities

Creating places where customers want to live means investing in services which are broader than our landlord service. We work with partner organisations to deliver projects which provide a range of support to people living in our communities.

Community Impact Fund

Our Community Impact Fund offers grants to community groups and organisations whose projects benefit our customers and their local communities. The fund is aimed at supporting the work of tenant and resident groups, local charities, voluntary and community groups, and organisations who operate in our areas to develop projects that deliver outcomes that benefit our customers and the communities we work in. This year we increased the grant allowance from £500 to £1,000, allowing customer and community groups to access more funding.



In 2023-24 we awarded £8,079 to 13 projects through our Community Impact Fund. We are seeing partnerships strengthen and flourish as a direct result.

In 2024-25 the size of our funding pot will increase significantly thanks to social value contributions from some of our supply chain partners, including Jewson's. We will be reviewing the size of grants we can offer and may be able to increase this so we can allocate more funding to community groups and organisations in GSA areas. Here are some of the projects we have supported:



Glass Decorating at The Wychwoods Day Centre

The Wychwoods Day Centre in Shipton under Wychwood, Gloucestershire was awarded £1,000 to run a glass decorating project.

The centre provides a day care facility for 22 elderly people from the three Wychwood villages in West Oxfordshire each week. They are transported to the hall by volunteer drivers, cared for by volunteer helpers and enjoy a range of activities from crafts to singing.

This project involves the delivery of eight, two-hour, glass decorating sessions, delivered weekly by two project leaders. The suggestion for glass decorating came from the service users who enjoy craft activities. The sessions help with socialisation and manual dexterity and have tangible outcomes, something participants have made and can be proud of.

A small number of residents from The Paddocks (a nearby GSA extra care scheme) were attending the day centre at the time of the application. Our house manager at The Paddocks is now working in partnership with the day centre to make our customers more aware of the local services they can access. This renewed partnership working has come about as a direct result of the Community Impact Fund.

Northway Community Gardening Oxford

Northway Community Gardening were awarded £400 towards creating a forest garden and encouraging members of the community to get involved.

They have monthly gardening together sessions with everyone welcome, beginner gardeners, young and old.

With the funding they have opened the social area for hot drinks and refreshments and improved the outside garden area. They have purchased tools, compost, seeds and bulbs.

Many of the local residents come along to the sessions, or benefit from the herbs, vegetables and flowers.

This project has also helped bring in volunteers from around the area, with people wanting to get involved in many ways including washing up or helping with carpentry.

From the success of this project, they have now secured funding from Oxfordshire Community Foundation and OCVA and have started a community kitchen every week.





Our internal micro fund

Launched in autumn 2024, GSA colleagues can apply for up to £250 to deliver small scale community investment projects in our localities.

During 2023-24 we awarded £999 to six projects including:

- Purchasing a jet wash for the communal patio at Aethelred Court in Wolverhampton.
- Craft supplies for a knitting group at Holton House in Corsham.
- Funding for planters and bulbs in the communal garden at Heantun Rise, Wolverhampton. Previously residents had been planting flowers in pots at their own expense.
- A small financial contribution towards coffee/cake for a Christmas gathering at Cherry Tree Court in Birmingham.

Supply chain support

Our Community Involvement and Investment Team works with our Procurement colleagues to link social value commitments made by our supply chain partners to community investment activity that benefits our customers and communities. This can include partners offering volunteering time, running training sessions for residents, offering free meeting spaces to community groups and contributing materials, labour or financial support to community projects.

Examples this year have included Travis Perkins providing financial support for running a six-month programme of physical activity sessions at Walsall Community Engagement Centre and providing materials and volunteers to build raised planters at Hambury Court, a scheme for adults with learning disabilities in Birmingham.



Investing in your homes

We are committed to making sure all our homes are of good quality, energy efficient and safe.

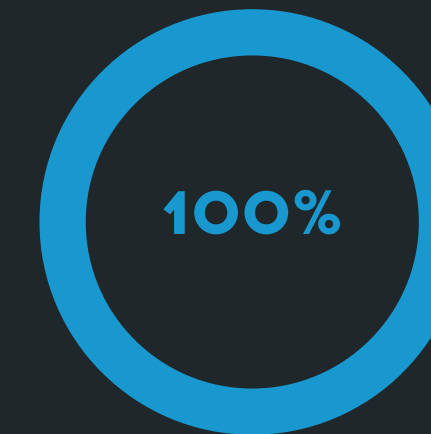
Our recent stock condition survey means we have accurate and up to date information about our homes. This helps us to make informed decisions about where and how we invest. In 2023-24 we invested £22.1m in our existing homes in the form of proactive, planned investment.

When deciding which homes to invest in we must also consider the requirements of new and changing legislation or regulations. As part of this we have allocated a significant budget to improving fire safety and the energy performance of our customers' homes.

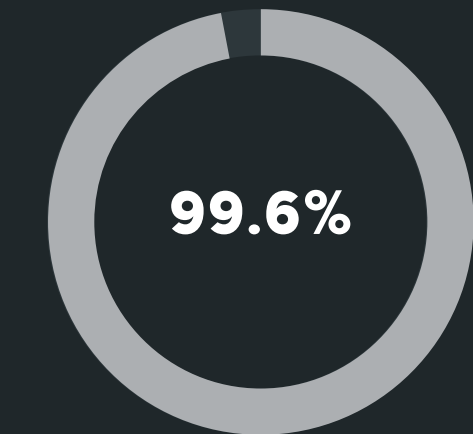
We completed the priority work we identified and improved our compliance in all core safety areas.

Gas safety compliance

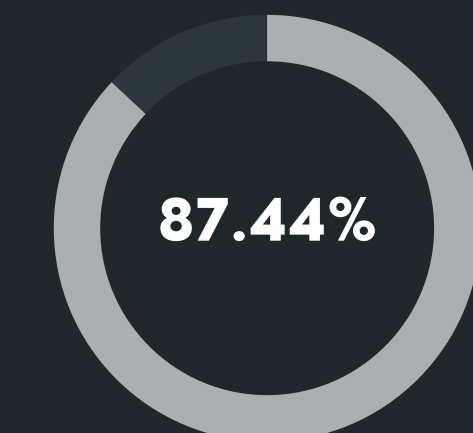
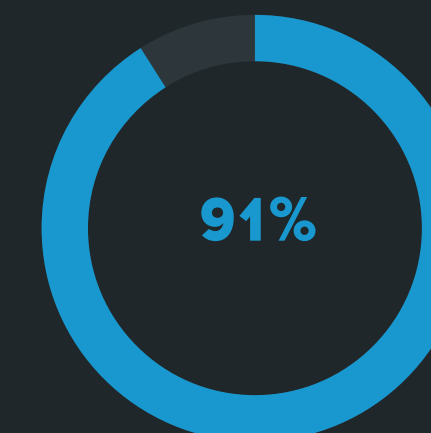
2023 - 2024



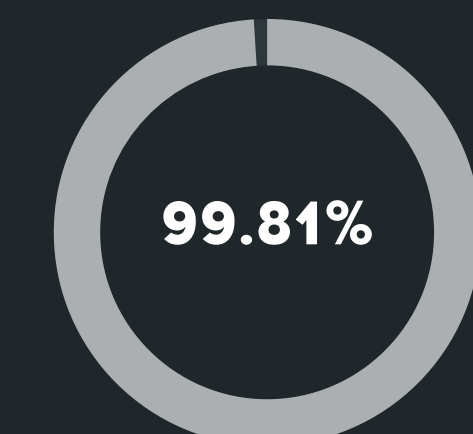
2022 - 2023



Electrical safety compliance



Fire safety compliance



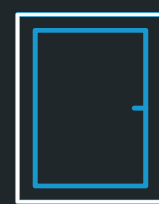


£23m invested
in our existing homes in **2024-25**

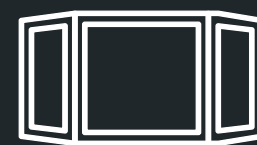


£22.1m invested
in our existing homes in **2023-24**

Our investment this year in numbers:



405
doors



227
windows



90
bathrooms



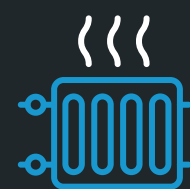
324
kitchens



45
wiring upgrades



8
roofs



220
heating upgrades

Ensuring our homes are warm and energy efficient

In 2023 we secured government funding to help improve the energy efficiency of our homes following a successful bid to the Government's Social Homes Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF).

We led the bid alongside the six other housing associations in the Matrix Housing Partnership and secured £12m of funding.

In 2023-24 we started the delivery of a variety of regeneration works including cavity wall insulation, installing new windows and doors, loft insulation, and measures to improve ventilation. The works are targeted to upgrade older homes owned by the partnership so that they have an EPC rating of at least C.

So far, we have:

- Installed 38 heat pumps with an aim of fitting a further 74 by the end of the year.
- Upgraded the loft insulation for 116 homes across the West Midlands and South West.
- Installed roof-top solar panels on 39 bungalows in Chippenham.

By the end of the project 273 of our homes will have received energy efficiency upgrades.

Tackling damp and mould

In 2023-24 we made further changes to help us deal with cases of damp and mould in our homes. Here are some of the measures we have introduced:

- Creating a new dedicated team of Healthy Homes Advisors focused on supporting customers and advising them on how to prevent and deal with issues of damp and mould in their homes.
- Implementing a new case management system to help us handle and prioritise cases more efficiently from start to finish.
- A trial which will see sensors placed in customers' homes to provide insights into temperature and humidity so that we can more effectively deal with issues.
- A video inspection service which will allow our surveyors to conduct an inspection of homes remotely so that we can deliver advice and support more conveniently for customers and manage our resource more effectively.



Helping our customers to stay safe

A campaign ensured we shared crucial fire safety information with customers who live in our shared buildings.

The communication was shared with 18,000 customers and outlines the evacuation procedure in the unlikely event there is a fire in their building and provides other important fire safety information. It included:

- A new fire safety section on our website with the ability to access the information using translation and other accessibility tools.
- A high-quality tailored, mailed personalised booklet explaining the evacuation procedure in their building with QR code/links to the new fire safety section of our website.
- Engaging animations for each evacuation policy with the ability to use translated captions.
- A new search facility so customers can easily find the relevant evacuation procedure for their building on our website.

**“In my view now, we
have a perfect life.”**



When a terrifying fire ripped through Zoe and her son Stanley's static caravan she didn't know where to turn. She tells her story of the impact of getting a new home and how support from GSA colleagues helped her and Stan thrive in it.

Caring into the future

We provide care and support across a wide range of settings to help people in our communities live independently.



We were delighted to support tens of thousands of people through our services in 2023-24 and that customer satisfaction with our services increased from 93.4% to 93.9%. We were also pleased to achieve a Good rating from the CQC and Care Regulator - resulting in 100% compliance. This compares to 88% last year and against a national position of 79% for adult social care.

Our customer satisfaction score remained very high at 93.9%, an improvement compared to 93.4% in 2022-23. There has also been an improvement in how likely customers are to recommend our service, with an average score of 9 out of 10.

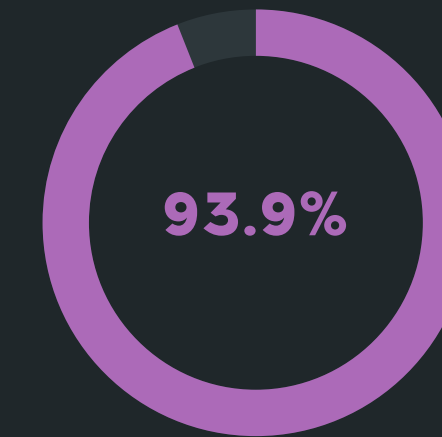
We are particularly proud that our highest scores related to people feeling they had been treated as an individual (95.2%) and with dignity and respect (95.2%), which has been the highest scoring area for the last eight consecutive years.

Of the diverse range of services we offer, highlights included our Housing First and Criminal Justice Services, where we achieved a non-reoffending rate of over 90% for our customers for the second consecutive year.

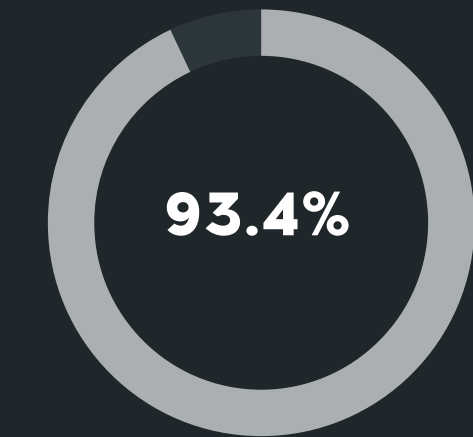
Our long-term business strategy includes a commitment to improve the financial resilience of our care and support services so that we can continue to provide services sustainably and where we can make the biggest impact.

Customer satisfaction

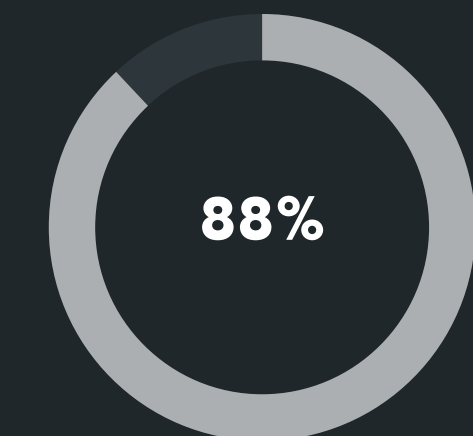
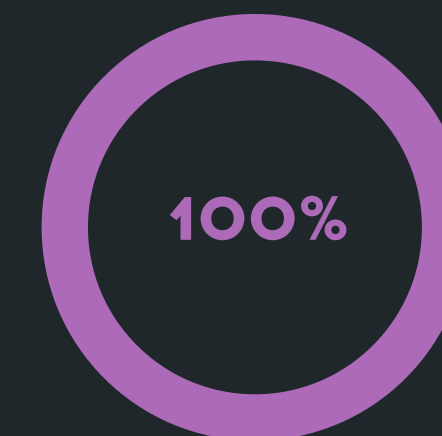
2023 - 2024



2022 - 2023



CQC compliance



Complaints



44

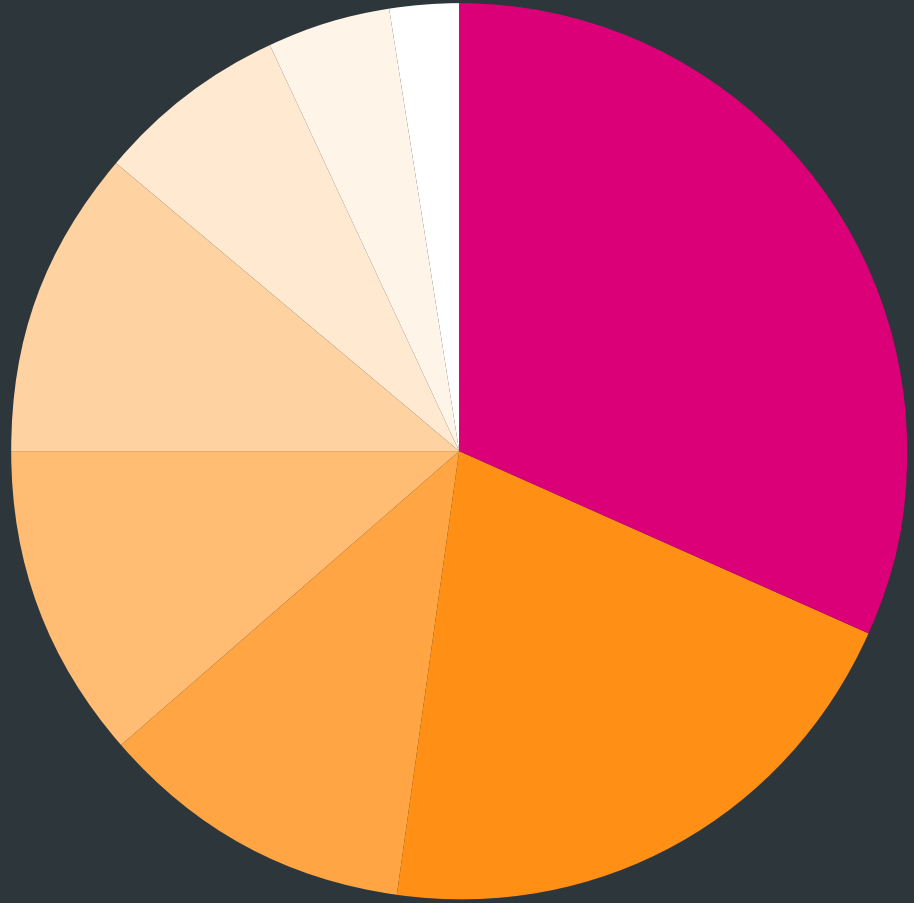


53

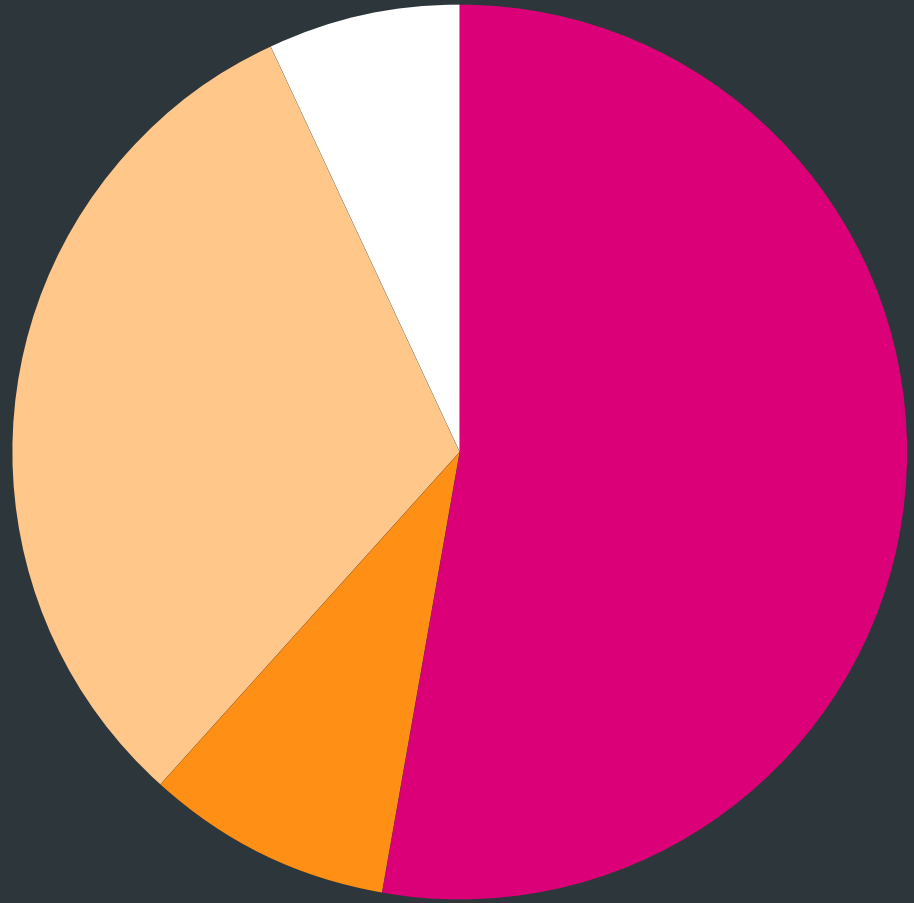


Learning from complaints

Given the nature of the services, we deal with complaints about our care and support services separately. We received 44 complaints for our care and support services in 2023-24 compared to 53 in 2022-23, and the majority, 81.8%, were closed at the first stage. Here is a breakdown of the results of complaints and what they were about:



Poor attitude/behaviour	14 / 44
Quality of service	9 / 44
Poor communication	5 / 44
Taking too long to respond	5 / 44
Application of a policy	5 / 44
Failure to deliver service	3 / 44
Poor customer care	2 / 44
Claim for compensation	1 / 44



Partially upheld	52%
Upheld	9%
Not upheld	32%
Withdrawn	7%

A glimpse inside our care and support

We provide a wide range of care and support, including residential care, supported living, extra care schemes, community support and care in the home. Here are some highlights from the last year.



Supporting research into dementia care

Arden Grove, one of our specialist housing care services for people with dementia located in Coventry, participated in a University of Worcester research project to explore various extra care housing models and their potential to enhance the wellbeing of individuals living with dementia.

Colleagues, customers and their families took part in the study, funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research School for Social Care, to provide vital insight into the functions of a dementia care setting.

The researchers have now developed booklets for individuals and families affected by dementia, organisations engaged in providing extra care housing for people living with dementia, and adult social care commissioners and professionals.



Expanding our support for domestic abuse survivors

A successful bid will allow us to increase the support we offer to domestic abuse survivors.

We currently provide 12 Places of Safety, reserved for survivors of domestic abuse who are homeless, within Gloucestershire. Following our successful bid to Gloucestershire Strategic Housing Partnership, we will initially double the number of Places of Safety they provide across the county with scope to increase the provision further.



Jenni's House receives royal visit

Swindon Domestic Abuse Support Service (SDASS) welcomed Her Majesty Queen Camilla on a visit to the town's refuge to mark the charity's 50th anniversary year and highlight the lifesaving work it does through the refuge and in the community to support women, men and children.

Describing the charity as "something very special", the Queen also officially unveiled the new name of the refuge building, Jenni's House, chosen by current residents in honour of the charity's founder, Jenni Manners. Managed by us on behalf of SDASS, Jenni's House is one of the first purpose-built refuges in the UK and provides a safe home for up to 22 women and their children.

Building new homes in your communities

The effects of the housing crisis are felt across our localities and providing new, affordable homes for people who need them is a central GSA commitment.

In 2023-24 we were pleased to complete 510 new homes and you can read about some of our developments here. We have also started building on a number of sites and over the course of the next year we expect to complete a further 438 homes.

We are committed to building new homes but given the financial pressures on our sector, like many housing associations we have had to reconsider our long-term investments to reflect the need to invest significantly in our existing homes.

We remain committed to building new homes and campaigning with our partners for a long-term strategy and greater Government support for social housing organisations.

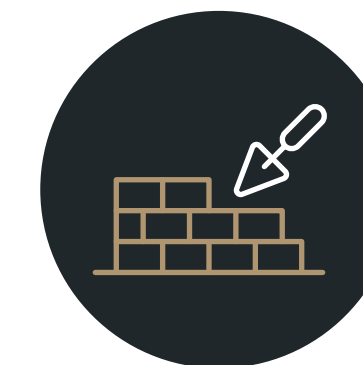
In numbers

Homes completed in 2023-24:



510

Homes we expect to complete 2024-25:



438

Homes complete in the next five years:



1,000

A voice for change

We are passionate about our role in providing affordable homes in our localities and we are leading members of partnerships which work together to tackle the housing crisis and campaign for change.

In the South West we are a member of Homes for the South West (H4SW), a leading group of 12 housing associations. The group, whose members own more than 250,000 homes and house half a million people, is calling on the Government to take urgent action to address this and drive investment and the building of new homes across the South West. The call is made in H4SW's manifesto, titled *Building the Affordable Homes the South West Needs*.

In the West Midlands we are part of the West Midlands Housing Association Partnership. WMHAP is a group of 17 social landlords which collectively own and manage 200,000 homes for around one million people in the West Midlands, employ 7,000 local people and contribute over £1.2bn to the regional economy. We launched manifestos ahead of the mayoral and general elections calling for action to tackle the region's housing crisis and outlining how together housing associations can be a major part of the solution.

[Read about WMHAP and the manifesto here](#)



Working in partnership

The Matrix Housing Partnership, a consortium of seven social landlords led by GSA, celebrated the 200th home delivered through a strategic partnership with Homes England. The Swan Lane development will transform a former gas works into 41 two and 24 three-bedroom houses and 17 one and 65 two-bedroom apartments. Homes England, a government body which provides funding for new homes, awarded the Matrix Housing Partnership £84.5million in 2018 to support the delivery of 2,124 social and affordable homes across the Midlands and South West. The new homes at Swan Lane will be constructed using prefabricated open-panel timber frames supplied by LoCaL Homes – our award winning, low carbon manufacturing facility based in Walsall.





Our developments

Here are some of the projects we've been working on over the last year to provide new homes in our localities.



Charfield Gardens, South Gloucestershire

In partnership with Barratt Homes, we have delivered 42 affordable new homes, 31 of them reserved for a social rent and another 11 available under a low-cost home ownership scheme. The new affordable homes are part of the larger Charfield Gardens development.

The affordable homes are situated in the charming South Gloucestershire village of Charfield which boasts two pubs, an independent café, post office, cricket ground and village hall. All of the homes come with their own parking space.



Lightmoor Road, Telford

We have worked in partnership to transform a former industrial site into 52 new affordable homes in Little Dawley, Telford.

The new development, Lightmoor Road, is named after the road it adjoins and is built on a four-and-a-half-acre plot where a concrete works once stood.

Our new homes on Lightmoor Road have been constructed using prefabricated open-panel timber frames supplied by LoCaL Homes.

Badbury Park, Swindon

We have delivered 48 new affordable homes in an attractive new development less than four miles away from Swindon town centre.

The new homes are located in the Badbury Park development built by Persimmon Homes and we are providing 29 homes for affordable rent and a further 19 homes through a shared ownership scheme.

Our new homes at Badbury Park cater to a variety of local housing need by providing one bed apartments alongside two, three and four-bedroom houses.



Passingham Place, Redditch

We've transformed the former site of the Redditch Trades and Labour Club, near the town centre, into 40 new high-quality apartments all available for a social rent and reserved for local residents.

The new development has been named Passingham Place in honour of two late Redditch Councillors: Betty and Ron Passingham.

Sustainability has been planned into this development with ample cycle storage and 23 communal parking spaces, each fitted with electric charging points.



Stirchley Cooperative Building, Birmingham

Works have resumed for a community-owned development which will provide 39 new homes and three retail units in the heart of Stirchley, South Birmingham, following our in-house construction team taking over the contract.

The £10.4 million development which will be owned and managed by Stirchley Co-operative Development (SCD) will provide:

- 39 affordable rental homes with laundries and common garden spaces.
- Fit-for-purpose premises for three existing co-operative businesses that are currently renting privately in Stirchley.
- A new community space including a pedestrian walkway, seating, a shared garden and cycle parking.



Springvale, Wolverhampton

Construction is well underway on 57 new, energy efficient affordable homes, transforming the now demolished Springvale Sports and Social Club on Millfields Road, Bilston.

Our new homes are comprised of one and two-bedroom flats all of which will be available for an affordable rent and have been designed and built by our in-house construction services team.

The homes in Bilston will be constructed using sustainable timber frames manufactured and supplied by our LoCaL Homes facility in Walsall.

River Meadow, Oxfordshire

Handovers are now complete at our homes in the tranquil village of Stanford in the Vale, Oxfordshire.

We have provided 35 new, high-quality affordable homes located within the larger River Meadow development built by David Wilson Homes.

The new homes are helping to meet a variety of local housing need by providing 28 homes for affordable rent and making another seven available under a shared ownership scheme.

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 have a zero-tolerance approach to anti-social behaviour (ASB) and in 2023-24 we handled a total of 686 cases. We use preventative measures, early intervention, partnership working, support and legal action to tackle ASB; our objective is to act quickly delivering a swift, proportionate and flexible response which is victim centred.



Harassment / threats
156



Noise
105



Drug-related
77

Improving our approach

Here are some changes we have made to improve our approach:

- We now use the same system to handle cases across all localities. This has helped us to deal with enquiries and cases more effectively and consistently.
- We updated our anti-social behaviour policy and procedure. This was reviewed and revised and has been rolled out across all localities. We have trained front-line housing staff on anti-social behaviour case management, reinforcing our early intervention approach to tackling issues.
- Training housing officers and introduced a new review process. Following the update of our policy and procedure, cases are reviewed by locality managers on a regular basis. This is to ensure compliance with the procedure and to ensure a proactive and customer-centred approach is being taken with every case. This work is reinforced with tracking and monitoring progress resulting from referrals to our Tenancy Enforcement Team.

ANTHONY'S STORY

"GSA are the difference between happiness and misery for so many people."



When the coronavirus pandemic forced Anthony to leave his partner and return to the UK he had nowhere to go. He tells his story about how GSA supported him to find a home and shares his thoughts on the importance of social housing.

Investing in our people to ensure we provide great services



Green
Square
Accord



We recognise that to deliver great services we need motivated, engaged colleagues. As a major employer we also recognise our role in giving people in our communities the opportunity to gain employment and develop their skills.

In 2023-24 we made further changes to empower our colleagues to do the right thing for customers.

Leaders who drive us forward

Recognising the crucial role of managers in our business, we have developed our GSA Leadership Development Programme. Our first groups of leaders have been through the programme and every manager will complete it over the next two years. The GSA Leadership Development Programme is a great opportunity for our leaders to build their skills, knowledge and expertise to deliver our plans.

Supporting people into work

At GSA we have over 50 apprenticeship programmes available for new starters and current employees who are looking to develop. We have 27 new apprentices working for us in teams across Care and Support, Repairs and Digital Services. Whether someone is starting out in their career or embarking on a new path, apprenticeships can lead to great career opportunities.

Our Product Owner within the Digital Services Team, **Dan Warren**, is currently studying for a degree apprenticeship in Digital and Technology Solutions.

I am already starting to see the benefits of my apprenticeship. I've been able to apply the areas I've learnt more about to my role and bring fresh knowledge and new ideas into the workplace. I've also found learning more about the theory behind these functions really valuable to help enhance my expertise.

Our Associate HR Advisor **Sarah Gilbert** is studying a HR Support Level 3 apprenticeship. Once completed, she will be CIPD Level 3 qualified.

Personally, being on this apprenticeship has really helped to build my confidence. The learning it has provided me, combined with the hands-on experience I am gaining in my job, have been invaluable. I would definitely recommend apprenticeships; you can put your learning into practice instantly and get the satisfaction that you're using the knowledge that you've gained, and you get an industry recognised qualification at the end of it.



Recognising our colleagues

We believe recognising colleagues for their work is hugely important to ensure we reward great examples of going the extra mile for our customers and living and breathing our culture and behaviours.

In 2023-24 we hosted our first-ever Gold Star Awards (GSAs) for colleagues. This new colleague recognition scheme is a chance for colleagues to put forward a person or team they think has gone above and beyond.

This helped us to see significant improvements in how colleagues perceive we recognise their work.

A long-term journey to becoming a great social landlord



Our 2023-28 business strategy sets out a renewed approach with three core pledges at its heart: to make ourselves Simpler, Stronger and Better. Under these pledges sit four focused objectives and a range of projects which will make sure we deliver on our promise. We believe passionately in our purpose to be a great social landlord, and our duty to be an organisation which can deliver the biggest impact for people in our communities long into the future. The plans outlined here will empower us to achieve this.



Progress check

Our Progress Check report gives an overview of our progress in year one: outlining everything we achieved in 2023-24 against our objectives. It also explains what we'll be focusing on in year two. As we look to year two, we will continue to move forward with transformational projects we set in motion this year and start some new projects which will drive improvements in our homes and services.