

# livin



Annual Report  
to Tenants  
2022 - 2023

# Welcome

Welcome to the 2022/23 Annual Report for you, our tenants. I am delighted to be able to share the highlights from what has been a challenging time for us all.

The last year has been a momentous year of change. In the housing sector, we have seen inflation soar resulting in a cost-of-living crisis that continues to force us all to prioritise our income on necessities such as energy and food.

During the last year, we have seen a call to arms for social housing landlords to address dampness and mould within their homes and we have ramped up our work to identify, prioritise and resolve works of this nature. Directly related to this is the revision of consumer standards which will set out specific regulations, expectations and outcomes for registered providers. Consultation on safety and quality; transparency, influence and accountability; neighbourhood and community; and tenancy standards will take place from October 2023 and we continue to prepare for the outcome of your feedback and make plans to improve in areas you feel we should be doing better.

These 'sidewinds' have been significant and through them all we have remained focused on adapting to continue to offer the support you rely on us for. Overall satisfaction with our services is comparable with 2021/22.

The Regulator for Social Housing has introduced a new suite of satisfaction performance measures known as Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM's) which are being collected this year.

The TSM's cover six main themes, including repairs, building safety, effective complaint-handling, respectful and helpful tenant engagement, and responsible neighbourhood management. We look forward to the feedback



**Alan Boddy**  
Chief Executive

generated from these surveys to provide us with further insight to learn from and improve our services for you and we will be publishing these results as well as submitting them to the regulator. We will let you know the results of these TSM's and most importantly we will use these results to improve still further in areas that are important to you.

In a year when our communities have faced real hardship, we have invested over £170,000 in providing financial and employment support. This generated over £9 million in social value, supporting over 14,000 people, including the significant work we have done in response to the cost of living challenges.

We have made significant progress on our journey to reducing our carbon footprint with 95% of our homes now performing above energy rating C, helping to make them more affordable to heat and ensuring they keep warm for longer.

We have made a commitment to visit you, in your home at least once every two years to ensuring your voice is heard and that you live in a safe, warm home that meets your needs. We are delivering this commitment through our enhanced tenancy visit programme which has already resulted in us visiting thousands of you to offer our support since we started the programme in January 2023.

I would like to thank you for continuing to help shape our services. In the past year you have taken part in 35 consultations and helped us to implement 67 meaningful service improvements and have included some of these in this report which I hope you enjoy reading.

# Performance Key:



Performance was equal to, or higher than our target



Performance was lower than our target



Performance improved on the previous year



Performance was unchanged



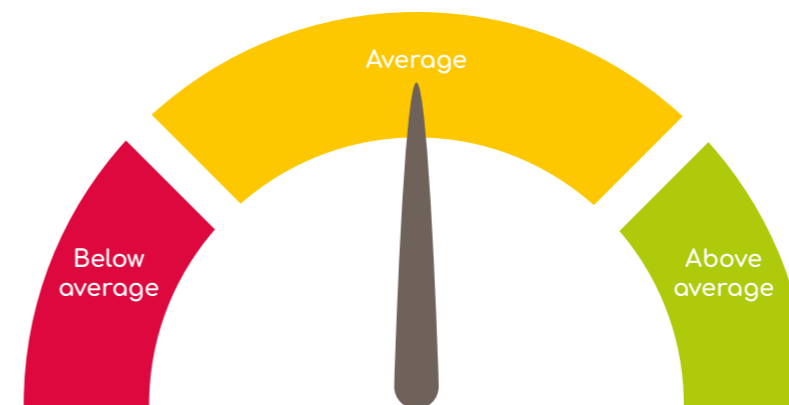
Performance was not as good as the previous year

**Local Offer:**

We will give you information on our performance targets across all of our most important service areas.

[More local offers](#)

## How we compare to others:



We have compared our performance to the latest benchmarking data available for the sector.



# Transforming Customer Experience and Digital Services

Rising energy prices and a cost of living crisis meant that the services we delivered to support our customers in 2022/23 were needed more than ever. Throughout these challenging times we continued our journey to deliver a brilliant customer experience in everything we do; listening to our customer feedback and involving tenants to influence how our services could be delivered and improved.

We dealt with almost 267,500 transactions with customers with 192,000 of these through our digital services. We worked with you, to transform and modernise access to our services and, as a result, we rolled out our new, enhanced customer App and online portal ensuring customers can access services anywhere, anytime. Improved service tracking means you are kept informed about things that matter to you such as progress with repairs, rent account balances and contacting us to make an enquiry.



**92%**

overall satisfaction with customer experience (target 91%)



**95%**

satisfaction with the way complaints were handled (target 91%)



**88%**

of queries dealt with at first point of contact (target 84%)



**100%**

of formal complaints responded to within agreed timescales (target 95%)



**72%**

of transactions completed digitally (target 73%)



**54.42**

Net Promoter Score (target 50)



**99%**

Tenants satisfied that their views are being listened to and acted upon (target 98%)



**185**  
service requests

Over  
**267,464**  
contacts

**67**  
service improvements as a result of tenant involvement

**48**  
formal complaints

**955**  
compliments received

The performance for 2022/23 shows that we deliver a highly responsive and convenient customer experience and that you have told us that you would recommend us as a landlord. This is demonstrated by our net promoter scores and satisfaction results.

We are committed to improving the experience all of our customers receive and ensuring that all tenants are treated fairly and with respect. We worked with the Chartered Institute of Housing and a group of tenants and designed our new organisational values. These have been embedded in the behavioural expectations of all of our employees to ensure we build trust with our customers, respect their needs while we carry out service and that we, as a business, work together to innovate, learning when things go wrong and constantly improve the experience we deliver.

From April 2024 the Regulator for Social Housing is set to introduce new requirements landlords will be expected to meet in terms of Transparency, Influence and Accountability. These expectations are aimed at improving the experience tenants receive from landlords by ensuring everyone has fair access to services, and that the service standards you can expect are delivered and that your voice is heard to help us improve services that really matter to you.

[Consumer Standards Consultation](#)

Our policies and procedures ensure that we provide a great customer experience. We have reviewed and improved the accessibility of our policies on our website:

[Our policies](#)



### Local offer

We will always try to answer queries at the first point of contact, and when this is not possible we will let you know who will be dealing with your query and provide updates until the query is resolved. In 2022/23, we resolved 88% of customer enquiries at First Point of Contact. Where we could not answer the initial enquiry, we contacted 85% of customers within two working days to give an update.

[More local offers](#)

### Your voice

We understand that recent years have been difficult and we have had to change the way we do things to help support our customers through these challenging times. We could not have done that without you. We listened to over 8,800 responses you sent us through feedback surveys and held 35 consultation events with tenants to scrutinise specific service reviews. Throughout the year, fifteen Policies have been updated, introduced or developed including Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Tenancy Management, Damp and Mould, Condition of Property, Complaints, Compliments and Feedback, Affordable Home Ownership and Neighbourhood Policies. New improvements to our

service offers have also been developed such as the re-designing of the new tenant app "My Livin" and access to our Complaints service so we can investigate and put things right quickly, where things have gone wrong. We sincerely thank everyone who engaged with us in 2022/23 to help us improve the experience our customers receive.

### Want to get involved?

We want to build on the work we do with our customers, but we need your help! If you want to find out more about how you can get involved:

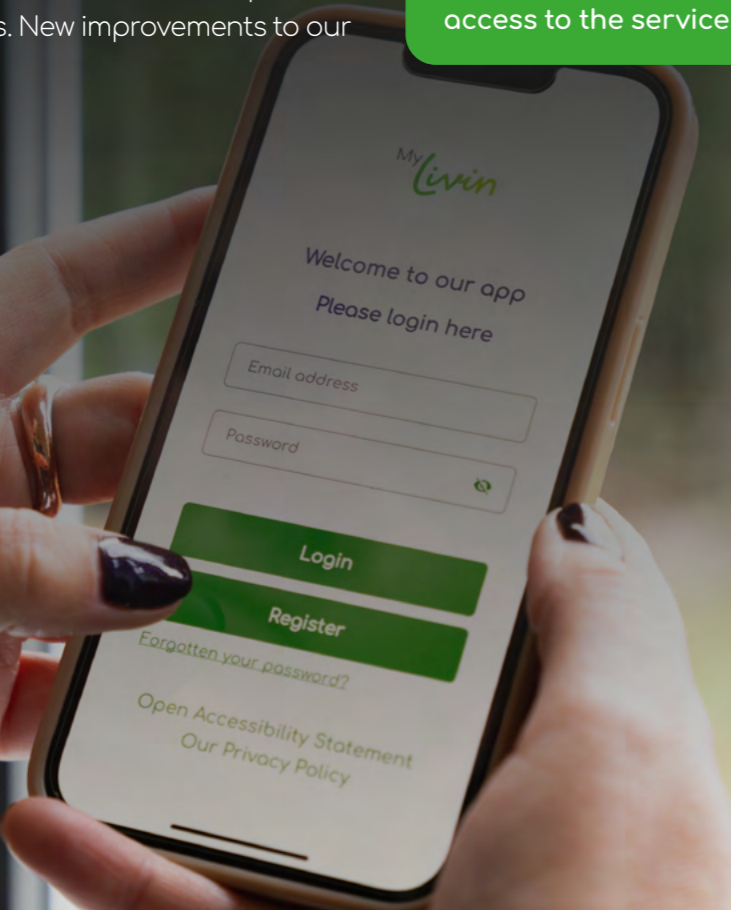
[Getting involved](#)

### We listened

You said you wanted an app that was easy to sign in to and contained information that was relevant and important to you about your tenancy.

### We acted

We launched My Livin, a new re-designed app and portal co created with you, our tenants focusing on giving you more access to the services you need the most.



## Complaints and Compliments

In 2022/23 the Housing Ombudsman released a new complaints handling code. We worked with you to revise our policies, procedures and accessibility to our complaints service.

We are required by the regulator to complete a self-assessment against the Code each year and have included a link to our latest review.

You also have the right to contact the housing ombudsman if you are not happy with a response from us. To find out more about this or our complaints process.

[Read our self assessment](#)

[Customer feedback and complaints](#)



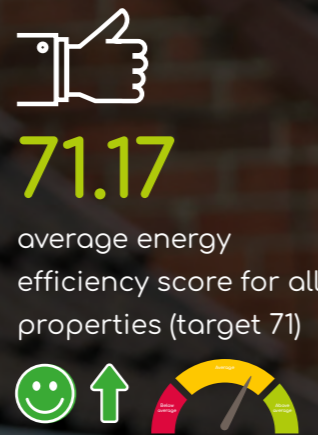


# Planet A

This year we worked with a consortium of partners in the North East and Yorkshire and bid successfully for £1.1m of Government funding, through the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero which we matched to support improvements to the energy efficiency of our tenants homes. This funding (Social Housing Decarbonisation Funding) combined with our own investment has enabled us to improve energy efficiency to 349 homes over the next two years.

We have made improvements to 882 homes increasing average energy efficiency to 71.17.

Using the data held on our homes we have identified and targeted the work to where energy efficiency works will provide you the most benefit. We are currently working on this year's programme and aim to deliver improvements to 1500 properties.



## We listened

You wanted us to review the information available to you on our website so you could find out more about what we are doing to improve sustainability and how tenants can do the same.

## We acted

We developed a dedicated web page to keep you informed about our sustainability projects and included information about how to live greener as part of our moving in information for all new tenants.

Environmental sustainability



# Supporting Sustainable places

We are determined to level up our places. We strive to support and deliver strong and sustainable places, that are greener and that support people and partners to thrive.

Jubilee Fields Estate, Shildon residents have worked with us to identify the need to improve and diversify our housing offer to enable older and vulnerable residents and their families to remain in a home they love and a place they are proud to live. We invested £9M to regenerate two key areas of the estate. Our transformational approach to the Courts will provide a mixture of two, three and four bed homes with gardens and private parking, increasing energy efficiency and offering accessible accommodation

for larger families and those with mobility issues. Within the wider estate we are in the process of replacing low demand one-bedroom flats with 15 new energy efficient bungalows which have private parking and gardens.

Working with our partners we supported the Whitworth Park Academy in Spennymoor to secure over £1.7M of investment to enable the construction of a new 3G 11-a-side Football training facility within the grounds of the school giving hundreds of local residents to access high quality sustainable facilities all year round improving their health, wellbeing and social inclusion.

Also, through our strong partnership networks we have collectively supported over 3,000 of you, our tenants to help sustain your tenancy whilst struggling with the 'cost of living' crisis. We have delivered and enabled a variety of interventions including access to early years benefits and equipment, small household good loans, energy saving advice, support to get to work through the wheels to work scooter scheme as well as supporting people into work.

## Local offer

Carry out regular inspections of estates in our communities to make sure our homes and properties are maintained to a suitable standard.

[More local offers](#)



89%

of customers satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live (target 91%)



83%

of customers satisfied with the way their ASB complaint was handled (target 85%)



99%

of site visits completed on schedule (target 95%)



## Local Offer

We will carry out regular inspections of estates in our communities to make sure the outside of our homes and the surrounding areas are clean and tidy.

[More local offers](#)





Over  
**100**  
estate inspections  
completed resolving over  
**390**  
cases of fly-tipping and  
tenancy action taken to  
improve the condition of  
**130**  
gardens.

**£12,830,011**  
of social value achieved  
through employment,  
economic, social  
and environmental  
interventions.

**£6,178,150**  
of social value achieved  
through investment  
in financial inclusion  
interventions.

Supported internal and  
external partners to  
access

**£722,770**  
without needing to  
provide matched funding.

**Note:** Social Value is a financial measurement of the benefits of the work we do, the services we provide and the programmes we deliver for people and communities.

We supported internal and external partners to access £1,836,730 by providing £247,000 matched funding through our community regeneration budget. 53 projects were supported ranging from debt support to improving open spaces and from warm spaces to school holiday support.

**We listened**

100 households on the Western Estate in Newton Aycliffe engaged in a customer conversation, commissioned through the Western Community Partnership and seeking feedback on residents' quality of life on the estate.

**We acted**

The key outcomes have been agreed with the community and have formed the 2023/25 Western Community Partnership Action Plan which we Chair.

**We listened**

We worked with a group of young people from Approach Too and Ferryhill School Pupil Voice who told us they were concerned about litter and fly-tipping in Ferryhill. They went on to highlight a solution which would include young people doing monthly litter picks.

**We acted**

We loved the enthusiasm and commitment from this group and through our Community Regeneration Fund have resourced the group to deliver this across a twelve-month period with support from Livin Futures, Durham County Council's Civic Pride and Ferryhill Town Council.





# Supporting Sustainable Tenancies

We are determined to enable and deliver strong and sustainable places and to deliver this our tenancies must be sustainable. We want you to feel happy living in comfortable and manageable homes.

To deliver this we enhanced our tenancy visit programme with a commitment to ensure every tenant receives a visit from us at least once every two years.

The new tenancy visit programme commenced in January 2023 and by the end of March 2023, we had visited over 1,200 homes, speaking to tenants

and helping them with advice and support for a wide range of their tenancy needs. These visits enable us to talk with our tenants and assess whether they need our, or our partners support moving forward and as a result we made over 120 referrals for our tenants to receive financial advice and 100 requests for aids or adaptations to be fitted to enable tenants to continue to live independently in their home. We referred over 20 tenants into employment support services and worked with over 70 tenants to help them live safely by improving the condition of their home.



**230**

customers supported into employment (target 300)



**96%**

satisfaction with lettings service (target 98%)



**3.02%**

rent arrears as a % of the rent due (target 2.21%)



**8%**

tenancy turnover (target 8.10%)



**29**

days to re-let a property (that did not need major improvement works) (target 29 days)



**91%**

satisfaction with the quality of their home (target 96%)



**93%**

of tenants satisfied with the aids and adaptations service (target 97%)



**3,565**

processed housing applications

**1,476**

tenants supported with over £1 million in additional benefits

**90%**

housing applications received online

**848**

aids and adaptation interventions delivered in our homes applications



**Performance commentary**

Performance has been mixed with the after effects of the covid pandemic and the current cost of living crisis impacting both positively and negatively on our measures. Positively, demand for our homes and re-let times are improving whilst against this, our rent arrears and numbers of people seeking employment are rising. We are working hard, in partnership with our repairs contractors, with our statutory partners in the local authority and with the wide range of supporting agencies we work with and have developed strong partnerships with these agencies over a number of years to support our tenants, always with the aim to improve the services we offer, in challenging times. We acknowledge

the financial difficulties some of our customers have faced and during the months leading up to Christmas 2022 we surveyed all of our tenants to ask their concerns about the cost of living. We received over 1,800 responses and, with the help of our partners, immediately acted to support those in the most critical need. We were able to provide 170 tenants with emergency access to foodbank provision, family and early years packs, toys for Christmas, help with gas and electric, food parcels, and white goods vouchers. The survey has provided a valuable insight and any key concerns will be used along-side our tenancy visit data, to help us offer more support.

**We listened**

In 2022/23 we let over 750 homes and you told us you wanted more information available about what to expect once you've moved into your new home.

**We listened**

We asked you how we could help you with support and advice regarding your financial wellbeing.

**We acted**

We reviewed our tenancy sign up information and created a dedicated web page to inform new or potential customers about the standards to expect when accepting a tenancy with us which was visited by over 400 customers in 2022/23.

[Our lettable standard](#)

**We acted**

Your feedback led to the creation of a new webpage, a financial wellbeing toolkit and a social media campaign to promote and emphasise our support offer regarding money and we improved our links to a variety of support partners who may also be able to assist We funded Durham Christian Partnership to provide independent, confidential money advice through a priority service that ensured our tenants were usually contacted within 24 hours. We also worked with Advice in County Durham to ensure a seamless referral process for tenants in need of energy and debt advice and access to grants.

Through listening to you and your concerns about how the impact financial concerns can have on you, we revised our rent arrears recovery processes and strengthened our approach to arrears prevention and support that will be provided before any legal action is taken.





# Providing Quality Sustainable Homes

We aim to provide you with safe, warm, high-quality, and sustainable homes.

In 2022/23 we invested over £9m in our repairs service enabling us to respond to and carry out over 30,000 repairs for our customers.

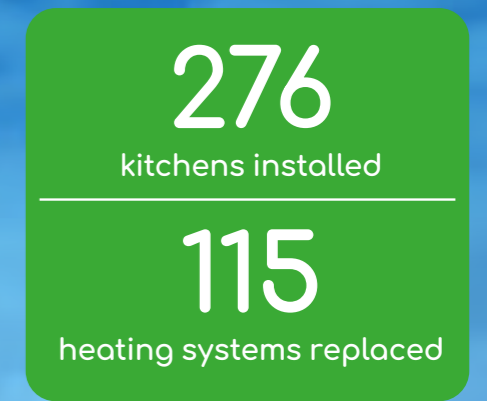
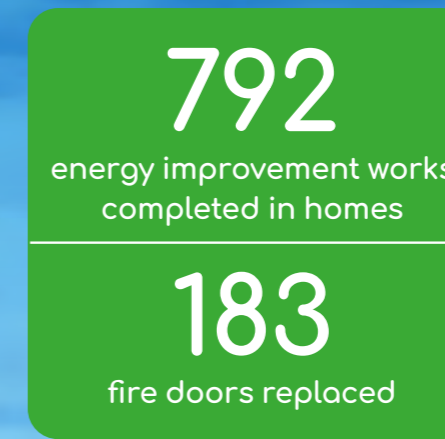
In partnership with the government and social housing decarbonisation fund we have invested over £1.4 million to super insulate 109 properties

providing customers with homes that are much more efficient providing greater degrees of thermal comfort and savings on energy bills.

### Local offer

We will provide you with safe, warm, high-quality and energy efficient homes

[More local offers](#)



In 2021/22 you worked with us to scrutinise and improve our damp and mould repairs service, and we worked with you again this year to review our policies and procedures in relation to damp and mould to improve them still further. In 2022/23, we ramped up our commitment to ensuring our

customers are safe in their homes and took a proactive, zero tolerance, approach to reports of any level of damp and mould in our homes. We carried out treatment or improvement works to 532 homes to minimise the risk of damp or mould, with the work continuing into 2023/24.





### We listened

You told us that our choice of wet rooms was dated and that you wanted more choice about the type of wet rooms that we would install in your homes.

### We acted

We consulted with you to review the design specification of our wet rooms. You helped us to identify modern styles that have a longer life cycle that were both more practical and appealing so we could develop and roll out an improved service offer for tenants in need of a wet room.

### We listened

Ensuring your home is safe for you to live in is a key priority for us. We invited you to be involved with influencing and shaping our policies relating to health and safety in the home, to make sure they meet your needs whilst also meet the legal framework that governs health and safety in the home (for example, annual gas servicing, checks on electrical wiring etc).

### We acted

We reviewed all of our key health and safety policies with you to ensure they remained within health and safety guidelines while also meeting your needs. As a result we implemented new policies for Asbestos, Electrical Testing, Fire Risk Assessment, Gas and Heating, Lift Safety and Water Hygiene.

### We listened

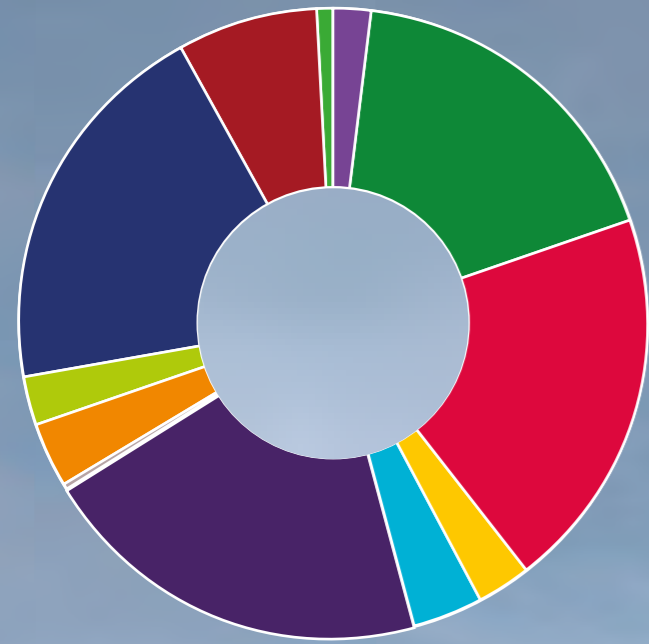
You told us through feedback and satisfaction surveys that our process for handling repairs for damp and mould overall could be better.

### We acted

We worked with tenants to help us develop our Damp and Mould Policy and improved our supporting procedures. We agreed timescales with tenants that we would work towards to ensure homes are promptly inspected when damp or mould is reported. Our inspectors now have specialist equipment to help identify and diagnose damp. We are ensuring that urgent/serious cases are dealt with as a priority and in a timely manner as well as reviewing these cases to learn what we can improve to help prevent serious damp and mould issues. We introduced our tenancy visit programme to ensure you receive a visit at least once every two years and included a damp and mould check within the visit so we can keep you safe in your home.

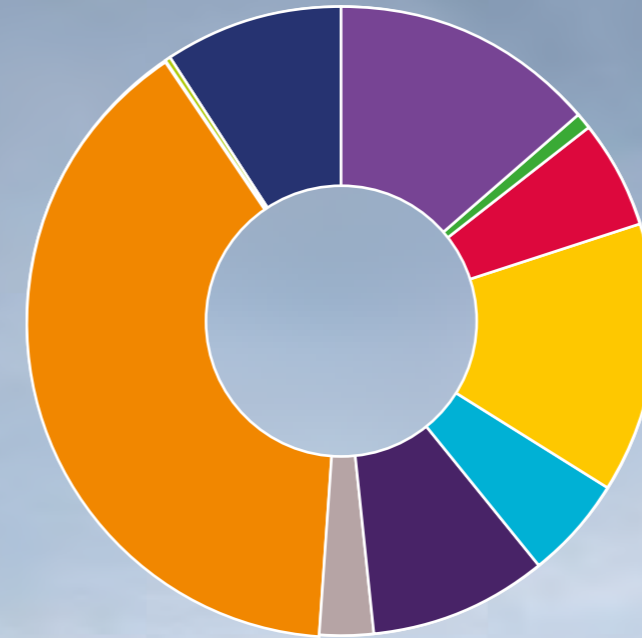


This chart shows the type of repairs completed in 2022/23



Type of repair	Number of repairs completed	% breakdown
Bricklaying	738	2.21
Electrical	5875	17.66
Gas Repairs	6557	19.71
Glazing	959	2.88
Ground Works	1156	3.47
Joinery	6788	20.4
Minor Adaptations	89	0.27
Painting & Decorating	1128	3.39
Plastering	825	2.48
Plumbing	6557	19.71
Roofing	2406	7.23
Tiling	196	0.59
<b>Total</b>	<b>33,274</b>	<b>100%</b>
Previous year total (from annual report)	31,548	

The chart shows percentage improvement works (excluding repairs) completed in 2022/23



Improvement	Number	%
Kitchens	276	13.7
Bathrooms	17	0.8
Heating replacements	115	5.7
Electrical rewires	276	13.7
Windows (Properties)	108	5.4
Fire Doors	183	9.1
Roof replacements	59	2.9
Energy efficiency works	792	39.3
Conversions / Demolitions	6	0.3
Communal refurbishment	183	9.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>100</b>





# Building and acquiring sustainable homes

We aim to build and buy new homes in the right locations within our local area to ensure a mix of much needed homes that are designed to suit a range of needs.

During the year we invested £17 million in 99 new affordable homes for rent and rent to buy for families and older persons in housing need. We also bought 11 homes for affordable rent that were previously sold under the Right to Buy scheme.

We completed new developments at Travellers Green and Canopus Close, Newton Aycliffe;

Hamminkeln Place and Eden Gardens, Sedgefield; Burton Woods and Barnfield Road, Spennymoor; Castle Croft, Barnard Castle and Bracks Farm, Bishop Auckland.

We are continuing to invest in and learn from new technologies, reducing the carbon emissions of our new homes and improving the thermal insulation and fabric efficiency. Of the new homes completed during the year, 14% of them were installed with low carbon air source heat pumps providing both heating and hot water via a hot water tank.



99

new homes developed and acquired (target 150)



11

homes purchased for affordable rent through our buyback of former Right to Buy homes initiative (Target 11)



100%

of customers satisfied with the overall quality of their new home (target 92.5%)



100%

customers satisfied with the overall condition of their new home when moving in (target 92.5%)



83.74

average SAP rating of new homes developed and acquired (target 83)



## Local Offer

We will carry out regular inspections of estates in our communities to make sure the outside of our homes and the surrounding areas are clean and tidy.

[More local offers](#)

## We listened

You wanted to be informed of any outstanding landscape work related to seasonal planting at the start of your tenancy.

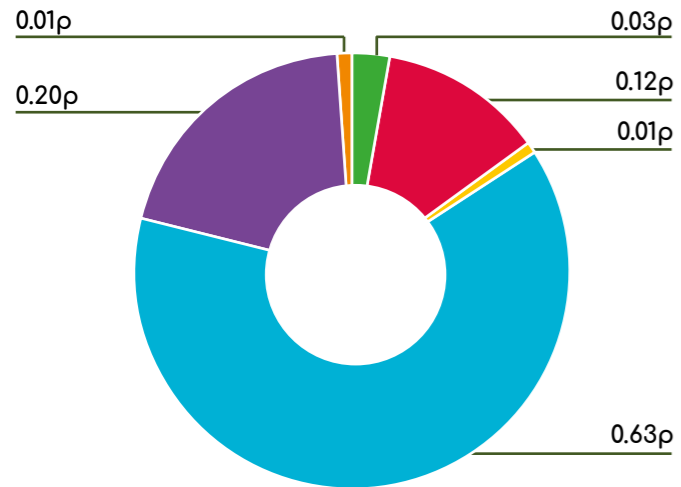
## We acted

We provide our staff with the right information to pass on to new tenants so they are aware of any outstanding landscaping works that may affect their home.

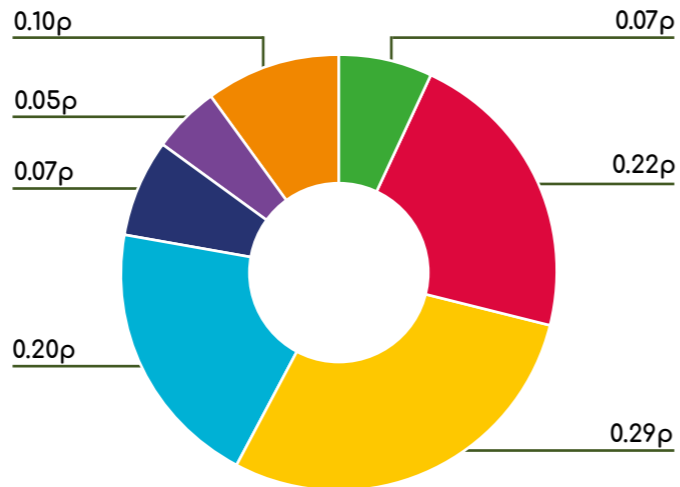


# Finance

Where does each £1 come from?



Where does each £1 go?



Asset sales in RTB/RTA & Shared Ownership	3p
Other income & interest	<0p
Services Charges	<0p
Grants (inc developments)	12p
Garage rent	1p
Rent	63p
Commercial rents	<0p
New loans taken out	20p
Other income (water commission & misc.)	1p

Interest paid	7p
Improving your home and community	22p
Creating new homes	29p
Improving your homes (repairs)	20p
Supporting your tenant	7p
Service charges	<0p
Other costs	5p
Staff costs	10p

Income	
Asset sales inc RTB/RTA & Shared Ownership	1,861
Other income & interest	66
Service Charges	82
Grants (inc developments)	7,055
Garage rent	639
Rent	37,222
Commercial rents	247
New loans taken out	12,000
Other income (water commission & misc.)	577

Expenditure	
Interest paid	3,813
Improving your home and community	12,648
Creating new homes	17,020
Improving your homes (repairs)	11,494
Supporting your tenant	4,089
Service charges	182
Other costs	2,737
Staff costs	6,677





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