


Customer Annual Report



A detailed
breakdown of
our **commitment**
to **you and your home**

2017/18

Welcome

to our Annual Report

I am pleased to report that we have continued to see high levels of customer satisfaction across our key areas, including our repairs service and that our performance remains in the top three when compared to other similar Housing Associations. There has been a slight change in some areas of performance which we will continue to focus on and aim for outstanding landlord services.

Back in June 2017, we were all shocked to see the tragedy of the Grenfell Tower fire unfold and the impact that it had on the families and friends of those involved and also on communities across the country. We know that feeling safe and secure in your home is the most important thing, whoever you are and wherever you live, and we strive to ensure that this is the case for everyone living in a Midland Heart home.

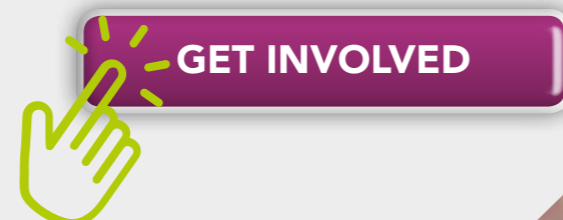
Our housing teams have supported you with many things over the past year. From providing money advice to resolving anti-social behaviour issues, we have worked to make the place you live somewhere to be proud of.

Last year, we built over 300 new homes and we have agreed plans that will see this increase to around 550 each year. We have started building 647 new homes and to stay true to our original aims, the vast majority of these are affordable homes.

Next year will be one where we start to plan what the future holds for Midland Heart beyond 2019. You, our customers, will be the focus and we will be making sure we continue to listen to your feedback and act on it so that we can improve our services. We have exciting

plans for you to be able to access our services online. This will not replace current methods but it will give you the choice and flexibility to contact us and access our services in a way that suits you.

Thank you to all of our customers who have been involved in shaping our services in 2017/18. There are lots of ways for you to get involved in helping us to shape our services to make sure they meet the needs of you and your community. You can find out more on our website.



Glenn Harris
Chief Executive

The year at a glance

2017/18

86.1%



Overall customer satisfaction

↓ 1.1% ***

3rd (out of 12)

92%



Satisfaction with repairs

↓ 0.1% ***

2nd (out of 12)



Average days to re-let properties*

↑ 10.5% ***

21 DAYS

1st (out of 11)

Routine repairs completed on time



95.9%

↓ 1.2% ***

2nd (out of 10)



19 Complaints per 1000 properties*

↓ 34.4% ***

Down 10 from last year

Current rent arrears

4.6%



↑ 0.07% ***

2nd (out of 12)



14 GOOD



1 NEEDS IMPROVEMENT

Ratings for our CQC regulated schemes**

*General needs customers

** We are currently in the process of transferring a number of Retirement Living & Care schemes back into our management, increasing the number of CQC regulated schemes we run.

*** Our ranking is based on how we compared to other larger housing providers as of December 2017 or from internal comparisons we have carried out.

Laying the foundations

To reach our 2022 target

In 2017/18 we set a target to build around **2,400 new homes** by the end of March 2022. **In 2017/18, we built:**



304
New Homes

Top **five** areas where we built new homes:

- Coventry - 119
- Dudley - 52
- Charnwood - 30
- Birmingham - 23
- Blaby - 21



HOMES WITH A DIFFERENCE

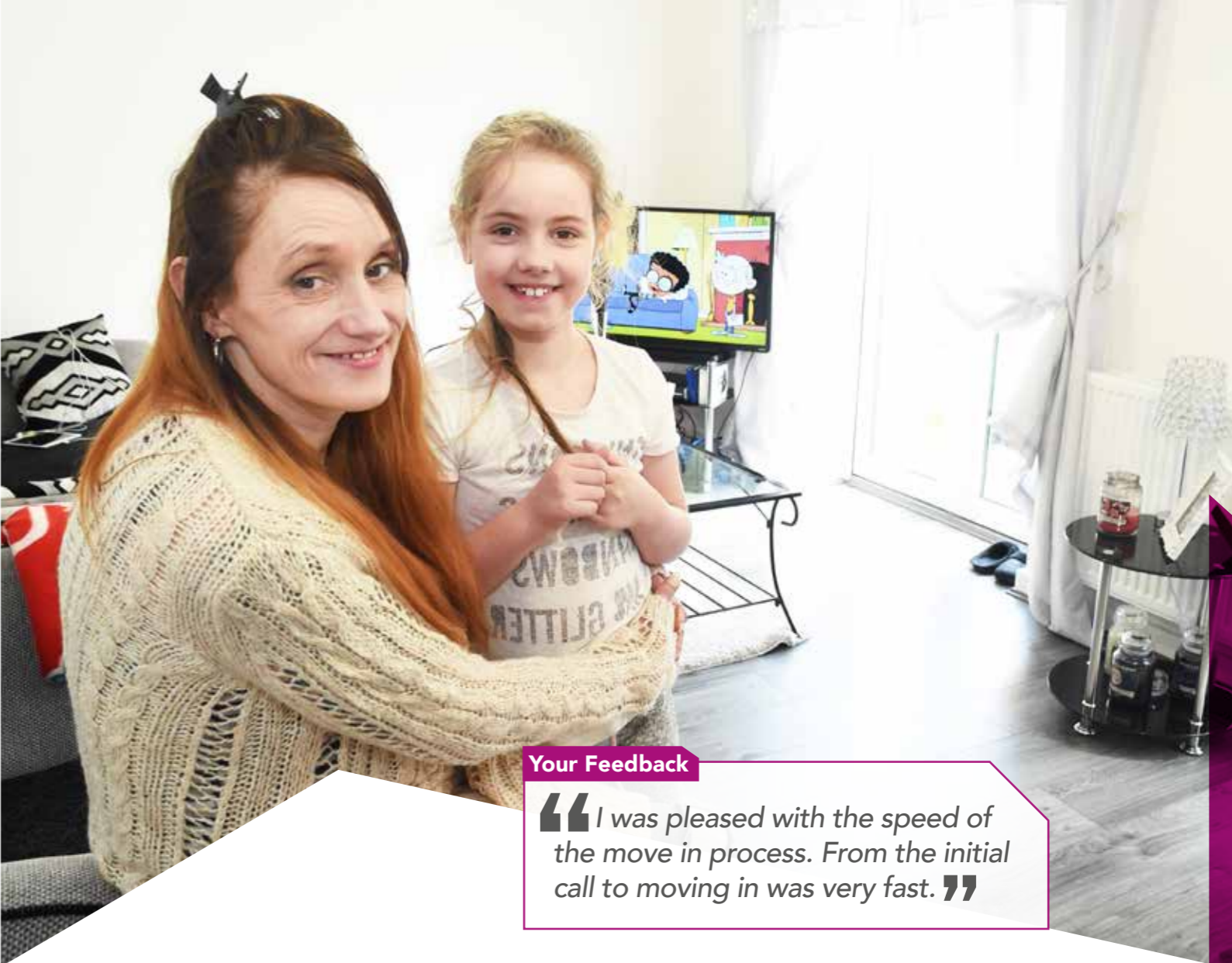
In partnership with developers Central Site and Coventry City Council, we built four three-bedroom properties on Modular Mews, Coventry in just one weekend! These were the first modular homes built by Midland Heart.

Modular homes are homes that are built off site, rather than on site, which means that they can be completed quicker and are not affected by on-site delays such as bad weather.

The homes are built to a high standard of design and environmental sustainability making them cost-effective to run and maintain. They have an outdoor electric car charging port and walls that can be easily removed and adapted to fit different customer's needs. Work on the Foleshill development started towards the end of 2016 and after being built off-site at a factory in Nuneaton, all four homes were craned in.

Your Feedback

“We absolutely love our new fresh and modern home and have all settled in really well. The children are loving their new bedrooms and the garden has been a big hit.”



Your Feedback

“I was pleased with the speed of the move in process. From the initial call to moving in was very fast.”

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION WITH NEW LETTINGS

88% - 2017/18

91.4% - 2016/17

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION WITH NEW HOMES SERVICES

83.7% - 2017/18

95.5% - 2016/17

We know there is some work to do to improve customer satisfaction when you move into one of our homes. The key areas we will be working on this year are ensuring that you have clearer communication from us and that our homes meet the standard we expect before they are let.

Listening to you

Our customers

We have a **diverse range of customers** at Midland Heart and it is important for us to listen to your feedback and take action. Our Customer Scrutiny team is there to make sure we are able to do this by offering you the opportunity to get involved and help us to improve our services each year.

Thank you to everyone who has given us feedback over the past year.

Some of the things you have helped us to improve include:

- Checking we comply with the **consumer standards** set by our regulators Homes England
- Making sure your feedback was listened to when looking at our **key business priorities** for 2018/19
- Identifying ways we can **better support** rough sleepers and customers who have been homeless
- Reviewing the impact of the changes to our **catering service** on customers in our retirement living and care service
- Working with us to **inspect your local areas**, checking the quality of the environmental services you receive such as gardening
- Ensuring our **recharges process** was more flexible and supportive
- Giving us new ideas on how we can **communicate with you** and what information is important to you

Over **500** customers who are regularly involved in consultations and online surveys

Telephone survey completed by over **12,000** customers

31 customers involved in customer ambassador programmes and other ad-hoc activities

5 customers involved in supporting the board through membership of the Operations Committee

15 regularly involved customers who support with in depth scrutiny projects, stage three complaints panels and service standards/ policy reviews

If you want to get involved and help to shape our services, you can find out more on **our website**

“Being an involved customer gives me a better understanding of Midland Heart and what they are trying to achieve. We can help shape the way that Midland Heart delivers its services from a customer’s point of view.”

Midland Heart Customer

When things don’t quite go as expected we try to put things right as soon as we can. Because of your feedback, the number of customer complaints we receive is now at its lowest level ever at **19 complaints per 1000 properties**.

COMPLAINTS

2017/18 **468** **54% UPHELD**
19 PER 1000 PROPERTIES

2016/17 **731** **59% UPHELD**
29 PER 1000 PROPERTIES

TOP CAUSES OF UPHELD COMPLAINTS

71 Quality of work	67 Dissatisfaction with staff	57 Appointment issues	45 Dissatisfaction with contractors	10 Follow-on appointment/work issues
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The way we use your feedback to shape our services has also been externally recognised. This year we were awarded the Customer Service Excellence accreditation. The Customer Service Excellence Standard is the UK Government’s national standard for excellence in customer service. It has a particular focus on delivery, timeliness, information, professionalism and staff attitude. Although we have achieved this award for a number of years, this year was the first year it included our Extra Care, Retirement and Supported Living services.

Improving your services

Giving you the best possible service at all times

We want to make sure you get the **best possible service** from us at all times. To do this we created a customer first strategy which aims to:

- Make it as **easy as possible** for you to contact us, whether that's online, by email or phone.
- Resolve as many **enquires** as possible at first point of contact
- **Getting things right** so you don't have to contact us more than you need to
- **Develop highly skilled staff** with **specialist knowledge** and understanding of the service area they work in
- Empower staff in all job roles to understand **what our customers need** and to provide appropriate advice or assistance
- **Reduce the risk** of harm to our customers
- Reduce the risk of tenancy failure by **helping you to live independently**

In the past year, regular reviews of our calls have allowed us to **deliver service improvements** in many different areas including:

- The automation of **password recovery** for customers of our choice based letting service
- The introduction of a **noise app** to help with complaints of noise nuisance
- The review of the communal service contracts for **cleaning and grounds maintenance** to address concerns raised
- Ensuring we **support** the customers who contact us the most. By focusing on getting it right first time and resolving the underlying issues, we have seen an **80% reduction** in some customers needing to contact us

“I was particularly pleased with how the query was dealt with and the fact that I wasn't passed around from person to person.”

Customer using the Customer Hub

“Midland Heart contacted me back to inform me of the progress of the case and of what was going.”

Customer supported through ASB by Midland Heart

“I was pleased that Midland Heart took smaller steps first to try to settle on an agreement before escalating the situation by asking if I wanted to have reconciliation with neighbours.”

Customer supported by Midland Heart's People Team

Key achievements

↓ Customer complaints have dropped from
90 per 1000 in 2015/16 to
19 per 1000 in 2017/18



Customer satisfaction with our Customer Hub is increasing, currently at
86%
(ahead of our target of 85% for 2017/18)



The Customer Hub achieve first contact resolution in
94% of cases



Customer satisfaction when resolved at first contact is
93%

More customers are contacting us electronically in preparation for our customer digital access project. We have seen a reduction of



49,114 telephone contacts

Your homes and communities

It's much more than a house

We know that your home is much more than a house and it is important that it is suitable for you and your family. Our Homes Direct service offers a one stop portal for customers to find the right home in an area that suits them.



Supporting those in need

We are also a major provider of short-term accommodation to those who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Our supported living services are located across the Midlands, in Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Rushden, Northampton, Sandwell, Stafford and Wolverhampton. During the year we worked closely with local authorities, charities and other support providers to provide temporary homes with support to people who may otherwise have found themselves homeless. We also provide support to people to prevent them from becoming homeless and our outreach team help those who find themselves sleeping rough.

We provide these vital services to around 2,000 people at any one time and are proud that during the year over 3,500 people have left to move on to a more settled home.

Your Feedback

“Thank you for everything that you are doing. The service that you have provided so far not only is outstanding but should be embraced and shared across boroughs. People like yourself who are understanding, helpful and outstanding within their role make what is a unbearable situation somewhat bearable.”

Money advice service

Finding solutions to problems with debt

Our experienced **Money Advice team** supports customers to find solutions to problems with debt, unpaid bills, benefits and budgeting. This helps to make sure our customers have the best chance of managing and sustaining their homes with us.


Money advice service in numbers

1675
referrals received


Provided face-to-face money advice to **686** customers and telephone advice to **200** customers

Of those customers seen, **99%** sustained their tenancy


67
food bank vouchers issued



33 travel tickets issued to enable customers to attend appointments



Provided advice sessions at **12** older person schemes


Obtained **£53,888** discretionary housing payment (DHP) for tenants struggling to meet their rent shortfall due to financial hardship and the effects of welfare reforms


£2,359,311 in income maximisation for customers

£486,636
housing benefit

£33,075 attendance allowance obtained for customers aged 65 and over


Dealt with a total of **£1,833,605** worth of debt


£49,358 worth of payments secured from charities and trust funds

£1,730 worth of supermarket vouchers issued to customers in financial hardship


“[you are] a star, a lifesaver, a gem, and a treasure”

Midland Heart customer giving feedback to a Money Advice team member after they supported her to win a personal independence payment appeal after she was diagnosed with cancer.



Housing management

Our approach has changed

Last year, our housing management approach changed. Now when you contact us, we have three specialist teams who can offer support:

> **Customer Hub** > **People team** > **Place team**

This means our frontline staff have the knowledge that they need to help resolve your queries at the first point of contact. Our People and Place teams have specialist knowledge in their service areas and deliver a clear case management model to resolve more complex issues and help customers maintain their tenancies. By working together, our housing management teams are able to work with communities to restore pride in the areas where you live.

49,114

calls received



Satisfaction with anti-social behaviour handling

55.2%



Satisfaction with communal services

80.1%



People team

The People team deal with issues with customer's behaviour such as anti-social behaviour, safeguarding and wellbeing concerns and tenancy fraud.

In cases managed by this team, we are seeing 9 out of 10 tenancies being sustained following their work to address the behaviour that was putting the person at risk of harm and/or their tenancy at risk of failing.

16 Injunctions
13 Evictions
3 Possession Orders

Place team

The Place team provide proactive tenancy and estate management services. The team launched a new Rangers service in April 2017 to enhance fire safety and to improve the general appearance of schemes.

The team regularly inspect flats to remove fire hazards and ensure fire safety instructions are being followed, clearing fly-tipped rubbish and carrying out minor repairs to communal areas.

During their first twelve months the Rangers have:



Carried out **13,356** safety inspections

Removed **425 tonnes** of waste and rubbish



Issued **732** warnings on fire hazards

Partnership working

In December 2017, the Place team together with the People team, the Rangers, Property Care team, the Fire Service and the Police came together for an event to help revitalise Reeves Court, Burslem, Stoke-On-Trent.

Over a number of months there were various issues with drugs, anti-social behaviour, fire setting and people gaining access to rough sleep in the meter cupboards and on communal landings.

The People and Place team worked together to tackle individual issues and help customers engage with action plans to bring their tenancies back on track. Relationships were built with the Police and Fire Service to increase visibility of both services and instil confidence in residents to report issues.

Representatives from the Property Care and Rangers teams also noted an increase in calls

for responsive repairs and removal of fly tipping so these teams welcomed the action to address some of the on-going issues.

The Place team arranged for works to be carried out to section off the meter cupboards and install locks so that residents can access their meters without the space being misused. The fob system was also reset and tenant's fobs were reprogrammed to ensure that tenants can only access their own floors.

The Police and Fire Service took part in a tour of the block where they spoke with a number of customers to discuss on-going issues. The Police were able to progress matters they were investigating, reassuring residents they were keen to step in and help. The Fire service promoted the work they were able to do to help prevent fires from being set whilst promoting fire safety in homes.

Repairs and maintenance

Always delivering the services you need

Customer satisfaction

The Property Care team, our in house maintenance service, continued to grow this year. This service now covers the whole of the Birmingham, Staffordshire and the Black Country. Changing contractors can be challenging, however we are pleased to have maintained high levels of customer satisfaction during this period.

New ways of working

Since we introduced our new look Customer Hub, we have been working hard to make sure we give you the right information. A big part of this is to provide helpful information on our website so that you can correctly identify whether you are responsible for the repair or not.. This means you can get your repair done as quickly as possible.

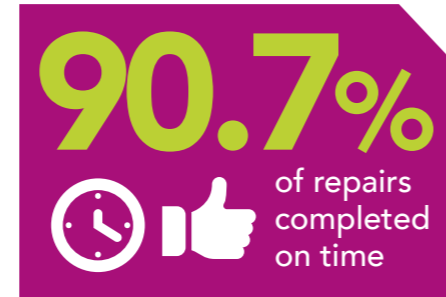
We have also worked to ensure we have a better understanding of what is needed for each repair. This means that 9 out of 10 repairs are now fixed first time, meaning that you don't have to wait for a follow up appointment.

Investing for you

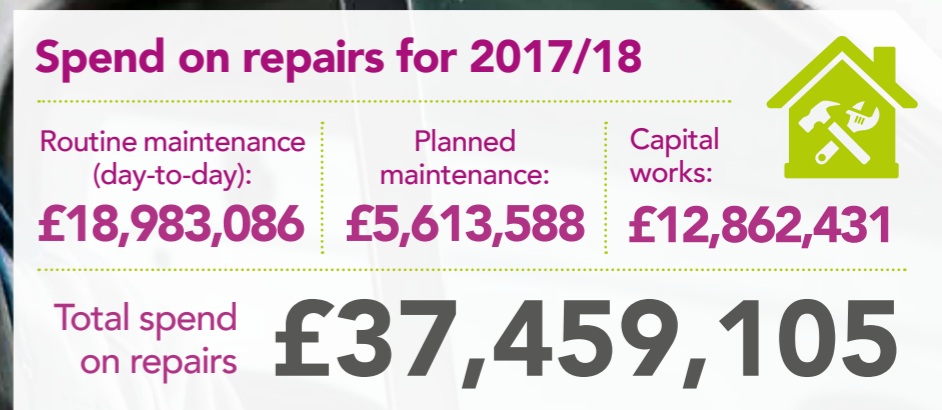
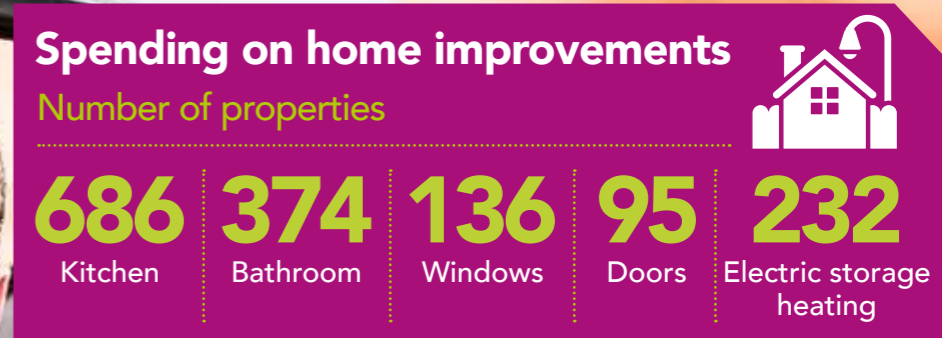
Over the last year we have invested in training for our Property Care team. Our operatives have all worked towards achieving an NVQ level two in multi-skilling. This means our staff are able to complete more jobs when they first visit you.

We are now three years into working with our two external contractors as well as our in house contractor. This means we have a strong supply chain to make sure we can always deliver the services you need.

Customer Hub (repairs) highlights:



"The advisor gave me a bit of advice that saved me having to wait for someone to come out to repair it.... it resulted in me being able to quickly do my own repair."



Your Feedback

“The tradesman explained what they were doing and what the problem was, and how to avoid the problem re-occurring.”

Your Feedback

“The Customer Hub staff were nice when I reported the repair, they were friendly and helpful.”

Over the next year we will be working on a new approach to how we improve the quality of our homes. This will include looking at how we make best use of our communal areas and Retirement Living services.

Keeping you safe

is our top priority

Fire safety

Following the tragedy of Grenfell Tower, we want to reassure customers that our top priority is to keep you safe. We take fire safety very seriously and have a dedicated team that specialises in fire risk assessments. All members of the team are fully trained and come from fire safety backgrounds, with some previously working for local fire services. We also provide training to other staff such as Scheme Managers, Rangers and Caretakers so that the responsibility is on us all.

Some of the things we do to help prevent fires and keep you safe include:

- **Fire safety checks** in all properties before we let them. This includes testing the electrical wiring and ensuring all doors and means of escape are working
- Providing a **smoke alarm system** in all flats in converted blocks and fitting smoke alarms in our new build properties
- Installing **smoke alarms** when homes are being upgraded or become empty
- Ensuring that **communal areas** and general building facilities are **well maintained** and meet **fire safety standards**
- Checking fire alarms and **emergency lighting** in communal areas on a regular basis and make sure all fire escape routes are **free from obstructions** so that you can escape in an emergency

100%

compliance with fire risk assessments



5,561

fire risk assessment actions were successfully completed



Over the next year, our Customer Scrutiny team will gathering your feedback on fire safety to ensure you and your family are kept safe.

Gas safety

We have a legal duty to carry out a safety check every year on the gas appliances in your home. This service makes sure that the appliances are completely safe for you and your family.

Customer satisfaction has increased year on year for gas services, with **94.9%** of customers telling us that they were satisfied with the replacement or upgrade of their gas system. This demonstrates our commitment to maintaining excellent customer service levels and overall compliance.

Your Feedback

“[I was pleased with] all of it, the operative checked the boiler, checked the radiator, made sure there were no leaks, he went and got some parts and then went round the whole house checking it.”

Your Feedback

“Everything was great throughout: The communication, the worker turning up on time, the worker cleaning up after himself.”

Key achievements

Achieved our target of

100%



compliance to gas servicing legal requirements

Invested

£2.8m



in upgrading 1,518 domestic boilers

Completed gas system upgrades in

1,400



homes

Achieved

92.6%

satisfaction for gas repairs

Achieved

96.6%

satisfaction for gas servicing

7,293



safety checks on thermostatic mixing valves to prevent scalding

100%

asbestos compliance



3427



Electrical safety checks completed

Value for money

Providing high quality services to you

2017/18 was the second year of our *Fit for the Future* corporate plan. During the year, **we made £13m of value for money savings**. This puts us in a strong position to make sure we can keep providing high quality services to you.



Key achievements

- Embedding **new ways of working** and bringing together teams under one operations directorate
- Bringing back 14 retirement living schemes from Extra Care Charitable Trust. This will mean around **1,000** more homes will be directly managed by us
- Reducing our use of temporary and agency staff and **developing a high quality, cost effective catering service** in retirement living
- Working closely with Birmingham local authority to **re-shape supported living services** following significant cuts to their budget. This safeguards services for our customers
- Expanded our **Property Care services** which now cover over **17,600 properties** across the whole of Birmingham and the North region. Satisfaction with our repairs services remains very strong at **92%**.

AVERAGE COST TO MAINTAIN A HOME

 **£2,947** - 2017/18

 **£3,067** - 2016/17

Our aim is to ensure that the average cost to maintain one of our homes was around £3,000 by 2020. We achieved this target in 2017/18 with a cost per home of £2,947. It is important for us to keep this cost low as it means we can continually improve the services you receive and invest more money in building new homes for those in need.

Focus for the year ahead

2018/19

We have been looking at our key priorities for **2018/19** and have asked you what matters most. As a result of these conversations, we will be focussing on:



Some of the key projects we will be working on are:

Customer digital access

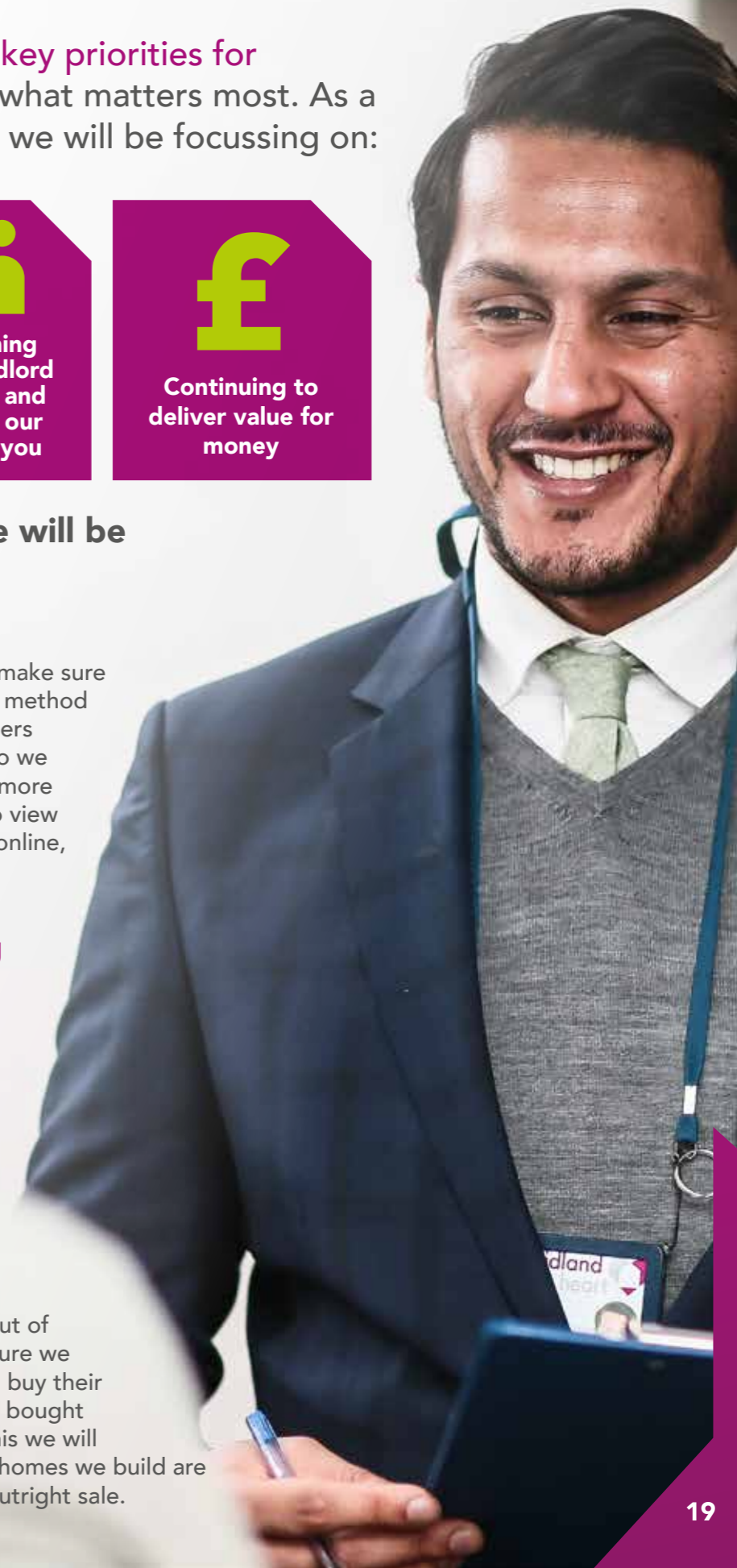
One of our key priorities for 2018/19 is to make sure that you can get in touch with us using the method that suits you best. We know many customers prefer to contact us through our website so we will be working to create the option to do more online. This includes plans to enable you to view your rent statements and make payments online, without having to call us.

Expansion of retirement living

We will be continuing with our aim to be a major provider of retirement living accommodation in the Midlands. To do this we will be transferring the remaining eight of 14 extra care schemes into our retirement living and care services. These buildings are owned by Midland Heart but are currently managed by other providers.

Voluntary Right to Buy

We want to take a leading role in the roll out of the Midlands right to buy pilot and make sure we are able to support customers who wish to buy their homes, but also make sure that any homes bought through this scheme are replaced. To do this we will make sure as many as possible of the new homes we build are for affordable and social rent rather than outright sale.



Where your money goes

A breakdown

Where each £ comes from (%)
income **£159,559,629**



78%

Rent



11%

Service charge



6%

Supporting people



5%

Grant and other income

Where each £ is spent (%)



28%

Pay



22%

Housing management overheads



21%

Repairs and planned investment



5%

Environmental



22%

Loan interest



2%

Rent/service charge loss due to voids

*These figures are for Midland Heart managed general needs and care and support properties

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Got a question? Get in touch

 midlandheart.org.uk

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