



# Customer Annual Report





## Intro from CEO

Midland Heart is as committed as ever to providing high quality housing and care and support to our customers. This year we celebrate our 90th birthday, and I'm proud to say we have continued to work hard to ensure our services improve year on year.

### **The areas we have focused on this year are:**

- Improving the customer experience
- Sustaining our Care & Support services; and
- Providing greater and easier access to services through online capability

In order to continue to improve our repairs service, we have expanded our internal maintenance team, Property Care so that it now provides a responsive maintenance service to our customers across Birmingham. We have continued to deliver a very significant

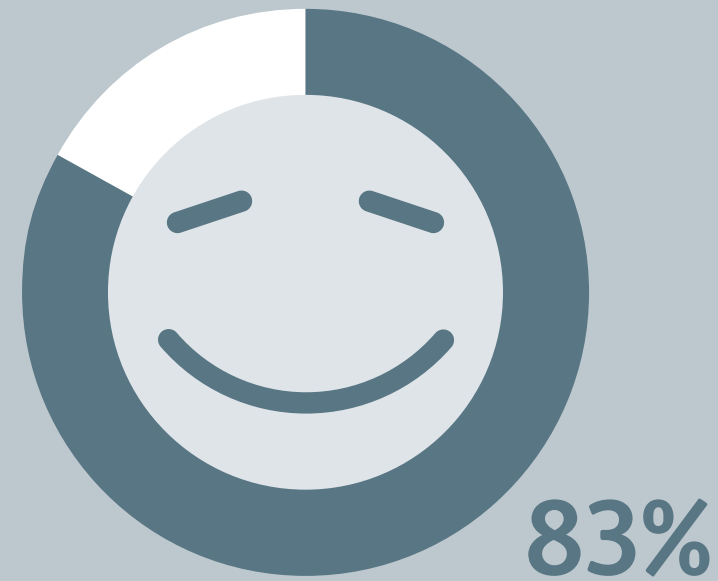
programme of planned improvements to our existing homes and have built 790 new homes, including; Barley Mow in Washwood Heath, extra care scheme Lime Gardens in Cradley and Saltbrook Place in Stourbridge.

This year, we have continued to make significant improvements and the recent budget announcements will no doubt challenge us more than ever, but we will work to ensure our services continue to make a real difference to the lives of our customers.

**Ruth Cooke,**  
**Chief Executive Officer**



# Summary of the year



Overall customer satisfaction



Satisfaction with repairs



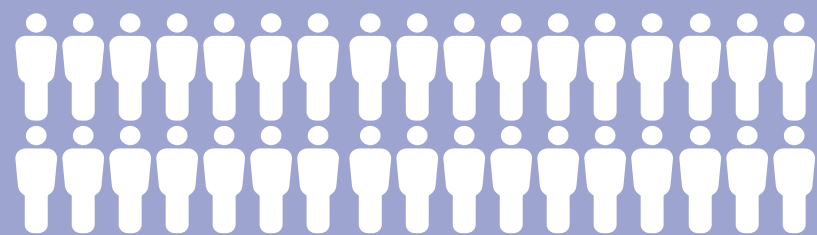
Satisfaction with  
complaint handling



Routine repairs  
completed on time

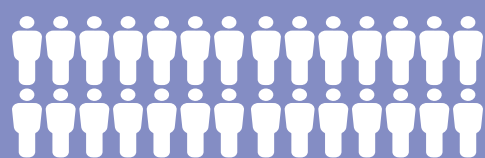


Average days to  
re-let properties



13,108

Customers engaged



400  
Customers

Roadshows

## Customer Involvement and Empowerment

We spoke to and worked with 13,108 of our customers throughout 2014–2015. You gave us some really useful feedback through satisfaction surveys, face to face discussions, joint projects and more formal meetings. You've highlighted where our services need to improve and how we can change them.

Have you seen the new Midland Heart website? Our customers were heavily involved in helping to design and test this. We're really proud of it and we're sure you will be too!

Our Disability Standards and Advisory Group of customers gave up a combined total of 249 hours between them to help us ensure that our services consider and meet the needs of those with disabilities.

We ran **21 Customer Road Shows** across the regions and provided advice to over **400 customers** on a range of issues that affect them including; Universal Credit and Money Advice.

We delivered or supported over 60 projects within our communities, with a variety of partners, including: local police teams, health services, our contractors, other housing providers, voluntary groups and places of worship.





86% of customers  
were overall satisfied  
with the Customer  
Involvement Service

# Customer Involvement and Empowerment

## Care & Support (C&S)

The C&S Excellence Panel have continued to make recommendations to improve services for C&S customers. Through the involvement of customers on the Excellence Panel, we have rolled out further customer engagement activities.

## Breaking Myths

Customers with different individual needs such as; homelessness, mental health and physical disabilities were brought together to help break down perceptions of each other. Customers were able to challenge their own limitations and to learn new skills through a wide range of activities. The programme has been a massive success in helping customers to find their independence.

# 360

Care & Support customers  
joined our Breaking Myths  
programme in 2014–2015.





94.2% of customers were satisfied with the person they spoke to who took their repair request



Customers rated the Customer Contact Centre 8.7/10 for service quality

## Communication & Complaints

One of our main objectives for next year is the Customer Access Strategy;

**The Customer Access Strategy will:**

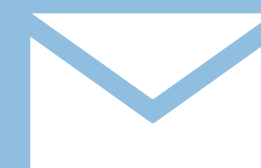
- Improve the quality and effectiveness of customer service delivery including a major review of complaints and through the new Midland Heart website, providing greater access to services through online capability
- Deliver increased value and efficiency
- Develop meaningful customer information so that the business can continually improve its services and STOP waste

Over 60 of our Customer Panel members have been helping to review information in relation to complaints to further support the work of the Customer Access Strategy.

This is extremely important to Midland Heart as customers are helping us moderate and scrutinise our performance relating to how we respond to service failure, learn from it and improve.



367,266  
Answered calls



37,785  
Responded to emails

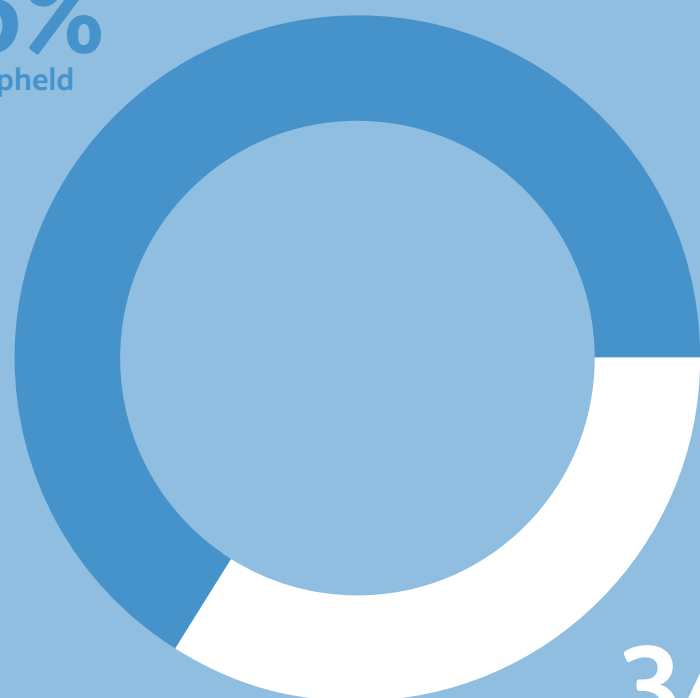


5,241  
Face-to-face meetings



Grand Total: 2,323  
 Upheld: 1,390  
 Not Upheld: 719  
 Carried over  
 to 2015–2016: 214

66%  
 1,390 Upheld



34%  
 719 Not Upheld

# Complaints 2014–2015

In 2014–2015 you told us that some services were not meeting the standards we promised.

You can see from the graph that our maintenance, gas and neighbourhood services need to improve. To ensure this gets better and you receive what you pay for we have worked closely with contractors and staff to improve the current services.

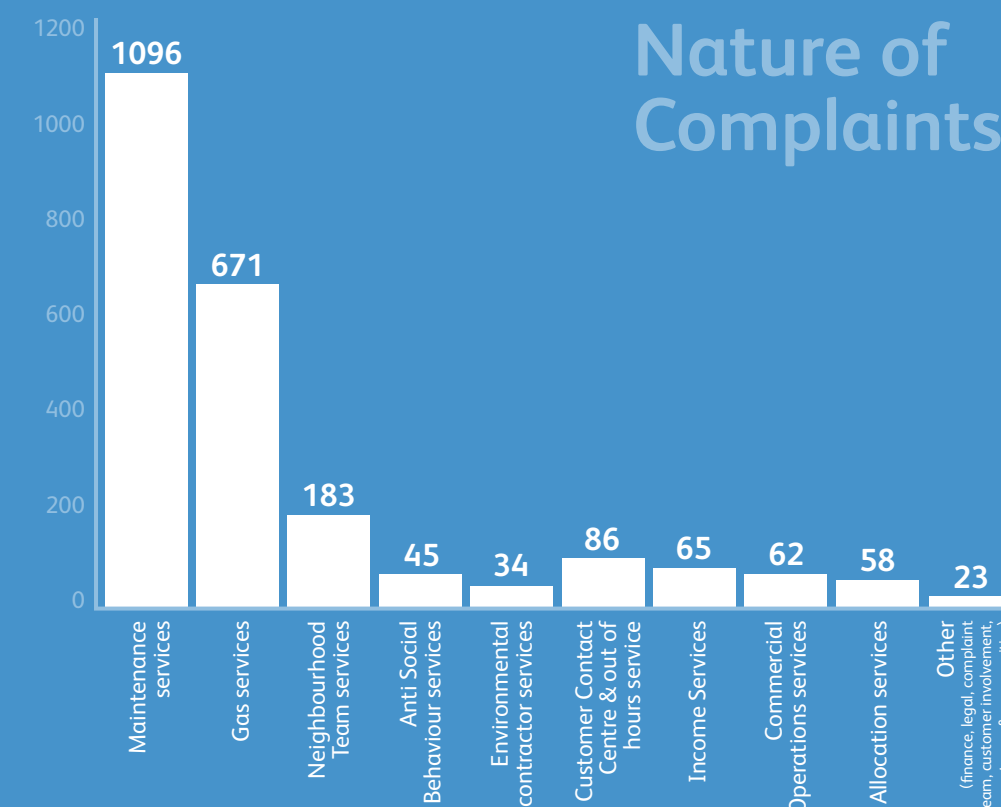
We have also set up our “Customer First” project that will ensure you never go away after contacting us without either:

- Your enquiry being completed in full
- Knowing what will happen next and when to expect completion

This work is continuing into 2015–2016 and we look forward to giving you more information about how it has changed your experience next year.



## Nature of Complaints





# What are our customers saying?



“I contacted Midland Heart because I needed to do my applications for disability benefit and housing benefit as they had run out after three years and I wanted to renew them. I have trouble reading and writing and Midland Heart were very helpful – they were great. I could not have asked for anything better. They keep following up to check everything is ok with me.”

General Needs tenant.

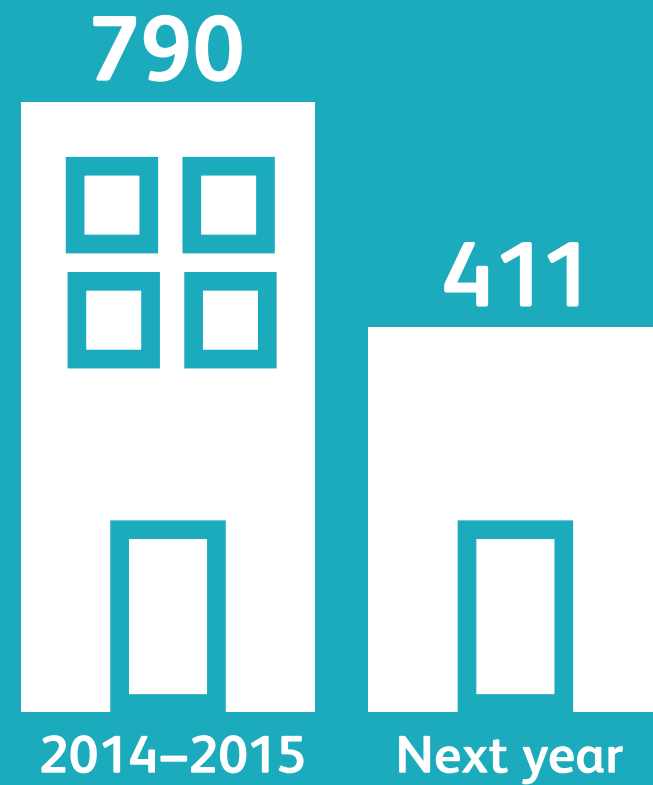


“I was getting letters all the time from companies saying I owed them money from years and years ago. I got in touch with Mandy (Midland Heart money advisor) and she has really helped. She has helped me to sort the debts out – I can sleep at night now – Mandy has given me a new life. I was too worried to open my post before but now I can see daylight.”

Customer residing in  
Midland Heart's homeless hostel.







## New Homes

Last year we saw over 100 applications for each of our properties that became available. We have been working hard to ensure we build as many new homes as we possibly can.

Our developments also bring a mixture of homes together, with low cost home ownership homes next to rented properties and those for outright sale. This approach means that our customers experience a positive, mixed community, living in environments that can really enrich their lives.

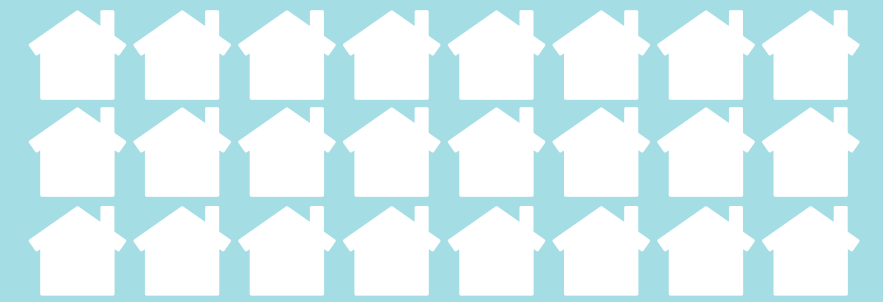
The top three types were:

- Affordable Rent Tenancies
- Social Rent Tenancies
- Shared Ownership

New proposals also mean that many of our customers will be able to apply to buy their rented home at a discount and our Leaseholder and Shared Ownership Team are developing a plan for this.



96.7% of customers were satisfied with the New Homes service



We aim to deliver a further 1900 homes during 2015-2020

Our top 5 areas where we built homes were:

- Dudley
- Nuneaton & Bedworth
- Coventry
- Leicester
- Birmingham
- Sandwell





How each £ is spent on repairs

		Actual Spend
Routine Maintenance (Day to Day)	66p	£22,612,000
Planned Maintenance	17p	£5,842,000
Major Works Expenditure	17p	£5,623,000
Total Spent on Repairs		£34,077,000



88.2% of customers were overall satisfied with the repairs service



GAS SAFE

# Repairs & Maintenance

We’re always working hard to improve our repairs service and this year is no different.

Last year, with the help of our customers, we expanded our in-house maintenance team, Property Care, to increase the number of repairs we deliver direct to customers. We’re continuing to explore ways in which we can make the repairs service even better.

Here are some examples of other things we have been doing to improve services;

### The Aids & Adaptations Review Board

In 2014–2015 we established a review board to help assess and prioritise a large backlog of Aids & Adaptations in our customers’ homes. We are very proud to say that through the involvement of staff, customers and our contractors we successfully removed the entire backlog.

### Property MOTs

We have introduced an MOT style of preventative repair service to reduce the number of emergency repairs over time. Following a successful pilot project with our contractor Willmott Dixon, we are looking at replicating this approach in other regions.

### Keeping our customers safe

We are very pleased to announce that our compliance with legislation for Gas Servicing, Asbestos and Legionnaires Disease is at **100%**. Keeping our customers safe in their homes is our number one priority.

### Improved communication in repairs

We have relocated some of our maintenance contractors to Midland Heart Offices. As a result, response times to customer enquiries have improved which has led to increased customer satisfaction.





# Tenancy

We understand that the option of owning a home is a key goal for many of our customers, so we encourage housing options such as private rental and low cost home ownership wherever possible.

Over 30,000 people are registered on our choice based letting scheme, known as Homes Direct. Homes Direct, was created based on direct feedback from our customers. They wanted the process of moving to a preferred location quicker and easier.

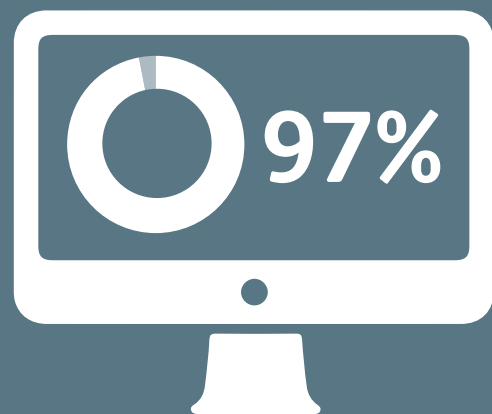
A number of housing organisations now use Homes Direct, which has increased the choice of properties and areas available.

Homes Direct has housed 6,010 customers since being set up.

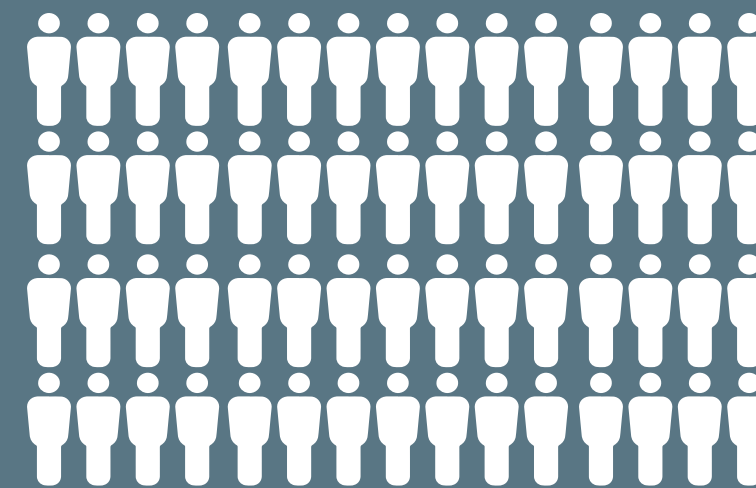
In 2014–2015 we have:  
— Received approx 303 application per week  
— Housed 1,785 customers of the 22,071 that registered this year



Average bids for MH properties



Of bids are made online



34,230  
No. Customers on register



49%  
Families with young children



34%  
Single people



Since August 2014, 74 cases were taken through the full Restorative Justice process

\*  
**90%**

Average ASB Satisfaction for Restorative Justice cases

## Neighbourhood Management

Midland Heart has been working with West Midlands Police, to look at a new innovative way to deal with anti social behaviour (ASB) by setting up a multidisciplinary team.

Over the last 10 months we have piloted in the Birmingham area, a technique known as Restorative Justice. This allows victims the chance to tell perpetrators the real impact of ASB, to get answers to their questions and to receive an apology. Restorative Justice holds people directly accountable for their actions and can help victims move on with their lives.

Over our pilot period we have discovered that this approach has led to ASB problems being resolved far more quickly. There has been reduced stress for victims and there has been less need for enforcement action leading to reduced cost.

### The benefits include:

- Restorative Justice interventions have halved the average time spent investigating and resourcing ASB cases thus impacting on cost of officer time
- Since August 2014, 74 cases were taken through the full Restorative Justice process, only 2 housing cases have been referred back to the Housing Team requiring further intervention
- **Satisfaction for those taken through the Restorative Justice process has been 80–100%\*** compared to 60–70% for standard ASB management cases

Over the next year we will roll Restorative Justice out to all our areas, so customers can feel safe and happy within their homes. The West Midlands Police Crime Commissioner has funded an extension to the initial pilot to gain more insight into the benefits of this model. West Midlands Police have also expanded their resources into this partnership approach due to its success to date.



# £1.6m

in benefit gains for customers obtained with the help of the Money Advice team.

# 43%

of which was housing benefit.

## How we support our customers

### Money Advice

Our money advice team has been changing its services to make sure our customers can get the help they need. This ensures that the 3,000 customers affected by welfare changes are able to receive debt and money advice.

In addition, we have a Money Advice offering within our Care and Support services which provided advice to 412 customers during the last year.

### Last year our service helped customers across the board with:

- £101k of Discretionary Housing Payments for customers struggling with the changes to benefits

### Key successes for C&S customers included:

- £388k in benefit gains

### Triumphs for individuals included:

- £3,518 of backdated benefits awarded to a Midland Heart customer at an Independent Appeal Tribunal
- £2,929 for the clearance of electricity and gas arrears for a customer

 x600

Providing Advice  
& Guidance to over  
600 customers



## How we support our customers

In 2014–2015 we increased the  
Employment & Skills Team at Midland Heart.

**Our successes include:**

- The Venture Project, an in-house employment gateway programme where customers are offered 12 weeks of supported work experience
- Midland Heart Apprenticeship Programme
- The delivery of over 131 job clubs to our customers

In 2014–2015, 12 apprentices gained an NVQ Level 2 with 9 customers securing employment with Midland Heart.

  
this way  
to employment  
and skills

 x80

Individuals have  
successfully gained  
employment through  
our support



# 92.2%

## Customer satisfaction with new lettings in March 2015



### How each £ is spent

Bad Debts	1p
Environmental Services	3p
Loan Interest	18p
Repairs and Planned Investment	19p
Staff Costs	32p
Housing Management and Delivery Costs	27p



### Where each £ comes from

Grants and Other Income	15p
Rental Income	72p
Service Charge Income	9p
Supporting People Income	4p

## Where does your Money go

Every £1 of your rent money is used to provide services to keep your home in good repair and keep you safe and secure within it.

However we do make some surplus money and last year this was 29.4 million pounds. The majority of this means we can build the new homes we mentioned previously and invest in the way we do things so everything is quick and easy for you. We want to give you some examples of how we have invested this surplus to improve our service.

### Empty Properties:

The average number of days it takes to re-let a property to our customers has reduced from 29 days to 25. This means properties are available earlier for the next customer! This has benefited customers on the waiting list who can now access decent, affordable housing on average 4 days faster.

Because of this we have saved £50,000 and we predict we will further reduce this by £240,00 during 2015–2016. The re-let days are also forecast to improve to 23.3 days!

### Adaptations:

We carry out numerous modifications to our properties on behalf of our customers who need their homes to be adapted to their physical needs. As at 31st March 2014 over £550k had been spent on aids and adaptations with £330k of additional work already commissioned. We are carrying out more work for our customers, for a lot less money, and managing customer expectations, whilst drastically reducing waiting times.

### Get WWWise

We have invested some of this money in improving our website allowing you to access services online. To make sure all customers can use the web we also support people by offering advice and support to help them build their online skills. Getting online can help boost your employment and learning opportunities, save money, and make sure you don't miss out on digital only services.