



CUSTOMER ANNUAL REPORT

2020

CLICK TO BEGIN



Welcome to your annual report



This report covers the first year of our new corporate plan *Making What Matters Brilliant* which set our focus on delivering real improvements for you.

Our new plan will see us make record investments in the services you rely on, building new affordable homes and creating balanced communities where people not only want to live but can thrive.

We've broken down our performance over the last year into our key pillars to demonstrate how we're delivering on our plan and I'm pleased to say that we've had a great first year, developing our customer app, maintaining our homes to a high standard and providing services to our customers that help them to live fulfilling and independent lives.

We could not have made these improvements without your help in shaping the services we delivered. Over the last year your feedback through over 14,000 surveys has helped to improve the things that matter most to you.

Thank you to everyone who has been involved in shaping our services over the past year, there will continue to be lots of ways for you to get involved and we want to hear from as many of you as possible to make sure we're delivering the services you need.

We're in a strong position to deliver the next year of our corporate plan which ensures that you're at the heart of everything that we do, I'm proud of the progress that we've made so far but know there is much more we can do together.

You can find out more about helping to shape our services in this report and on our website and I look forward to hearing your thoughts about the future of our services.

9MAN

Glenn Harris Chief Executive

Click the relevant area to navigate

PEOPLE FOCUSED

We want to be a truly great place to work and build your career. We will retain and attract the right people by rewarding, recognising and growing our colleagues.

SAFE & STRONG

We will remain financially strong and maintain our focus on safety. We will spend money wisely, investing in the things that matter most to our customers.

INVESTING IN HOMES

Investing in our homes is our customers' number one priority and will sit at the centre of everything we do.

MAKING WHAT MATTERS

GROWTH & PARTNERSHIPS

The Midlands needs more affordable homes. We are committed to building as many as we can over the next five years.

SERVICE FIRST

Our customers have told us they expect a first-class service. We will ensure our services are responsive and we get things right first time.





WEST MIDLANDS

Who are we?

1,074

LOCAL PEOPLE EMPLOYED

33,000

HOMES MANAGED ACROSS THE MIDLANDS 70,000

CUSTOMERS LIVING IN OUR HOMES

91%

OF YOU WERE
SATISFIED WITH OUR
REPAIRS SERVICE

570

NEW HOMES BUILT



CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SCORE 7,100

CUSTOMERS
USING OUR APP

1,000

CUSTOMERS
SUPPORTED TO ACCESS
MONEY ADVICE

1,202

GAS BOILER UPGRADES





The tradesmen that came to my home were hard working, polite and treated my home with respect. It has been a pleasure

You told us that you want us to invest in your homes and as part of the first pillar in our new corporate plan, we're making sure that we spend money where its most needed.

We will spend £100m between now and 2024 on the things that matter most to you and going the extra mile to make sure things are fixed properly so that we can be proud of the job we've done.

In 2019/20 we improved:







763 doors



791 kitchens



90 roofs



248 windows



DID YOU KNOW?



We want to resolve issues before you have a chance to report them so we've developed a new app that makes it easier for our colleagues to report a range of issues. As part this pilot over 1,000 issues were raised and resolved by the end of March 2020.

CASE STUDY



You told us you wanted to see us focus on providing more family homes. As part of this investment we have been reviewing some of our Homes of Multiple Occupancy (HMO's) and converting them back into family homes.

We've recently converted a Handsworth property back into a five bedroom home and a shared eight bed property is being converted back into two, four bedroom homes. We hope to continue this work to help meet the need for larger homes and make the best use of our properties.



Repairs

The guy that came was just so pleasant and helped us out. He took his time and understood my husband has Parkinson's and he was just really nice.

Our **In House Maintenance Team** and contractors work closely with the customer hub to fix the problem and get it right first time.

91% of you told us that you're happy with repairs to your home (90% 18/19).

97% of you also told us that you were happy with the behaviour and attitude of our operatives.

In 2019/20 we completed:



99,965 routine repairs spending **£11,405,026**

1,947 empty homes repaired spending £5,512,218

You've told us that we could do more to get your repairs right first time so we asked our Customer Scrutiny Panel to ask you. 194 of you responded with things we could do to reduce the number of repairs our operatives have to return to a second time.

Based on your feedback we will:

- Improve our systems to capture more of the detail about your repair to help our teams get it right first time.
- Work closely with our teams to ensure you get the same quality service regardless of who attends your repair.

DID YOU KNOW?



You told us that our weekday appointments sometimes clash with your work and family life so we've trialed doing evening and weekend appointments to 4,000 homes across Birmingham. From your feedback, we know Saturday appointments worked for you, so we're looking to offer this service to all of our homes.

You've also told us that it takes too long to get your repair completed so we've worked to reduce the time you have to wait once you've reported a repair from 28 days to a maximum of 14. This trial was also successful and we're in the process of rolling this approach out to everyone.

Aids and adaptations





We know that being able to adapt your home to suit your family's needs is important. This year we spent £310,622 completing 117 aids or adaptations to make your home more comfortable.

97 (83%) of you who had an adaptation last year told us that they made your life easier and helped you remain in your home.

DID YOU KNOW?



Last year you told us that we could've made the process a little quicker when applying for this support. We've taken your feedback on board and changed our approvals process to speed things up, decisions can now be made faster and work in your home can be completed more quickly for you.









This pillar is all about delivering brilliant customer service year on year. We want to develop digital channels that make managing your home easier and want to support our colleagues to work together to solve issues before you have a chance to report them to us.





COMMUNICATING WITH YOU

We received over 247,533 contacts into our customer hub.

The team have responded to:







In a survey completed in December 2019, 88.6% of you were satisfied with how your enquiry was handled but to make sure we're providing a great service to you we're rolling out new customer service training certified by one of the world's leading customer service training providers for our team in the hub.

Going online





DID YOU KNOW?



We're developing our app so you can do more, this will include a pilot which will allow you to report repairs to us online.

If you'd like to be involved in the next stage of development you can find out more by contacting the Customer Scrutiny Team in the <u>Getting Involved</u> section.

Last year we successfully launched the first phase of our app and 7,100 of you signed up to view and manage your rent account online up until 31 March 2020.

We have worked with our involved customers to develop and launch our new lettings portal. Midland Heart Homes launched in February 2020 and by the end of March we had over 9,000 active applicants on our site. By the end of March we'd advertised 108 properties with almost 5,000 applications for these homes.

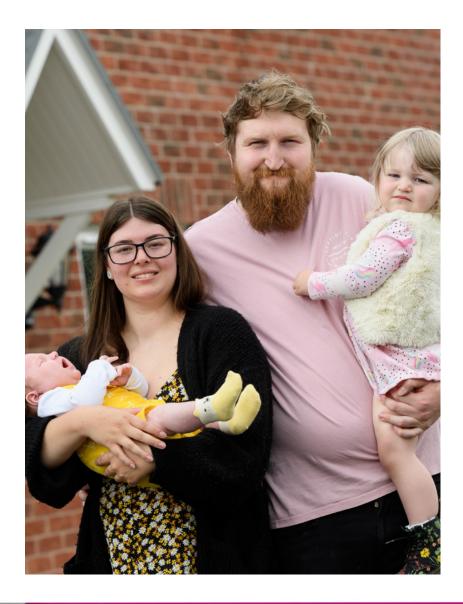
It is good because I know how much rent I have to pay. It is easy for me and it saves my time. It is a good service

CASE STUDY



"I have helped work on the customer app and the Midland Heart Homes website. My experience with the team was great, many of the changes I suggested were included in the designs that the Technology team came up with, from little things like making it clearer whether an account is in credit or debt at a glance. I have made occasional use of the app myself since its release too and it's nice to be able to see how much rent is paid as part of my benefits without digging through paperwork or using up hub time unnecessarily." – Involved customer, John.

Your new home



We want to create an environment where you feel safe, and see your new property as a long-term home rather than a short-term solution.

Highlights

- 90% of customers were satisfied with our lettings process
- 94% satisfied with their new home
- 81 average bids on our homes
- 97% bids made online
- 35,341 individuals on our register

It's just so positive. I was living with the council before and it was completely different. Just the way they communicate with you. The portal you use is so user friendly and it's fair

DID YOU KNOW?



Following your feedback changes have been made to our allocations policy and we have launched a new lettings portal to make finding a new home easier for you. Find out more at homes.midlandheart.org.uk.





Housing management

Our frontline teams understand just how much our services matter to you and as part of making what matters brilliant, we hold ourselves and our partners to high standards.

Our teams go the extra mile to understand what we can do to improve our homes and your experience living in them.

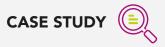
Last year, as part of a pilot, we carried out a wide range of improvements to some of our blocks, to help you feel at home there, to improve safety and security and address any ongoing issues.

This work involved improvements to communal areas such as:

- new door entry systems
- new lighting or flooring
- CCTV
- working in partnership with the police to tackle anti-social behaviour
- increasing patrols by staff or Safetynet

Where we've done improvement works you've told us that you're happier and feel safer in your home and we'll continue to invest in our blocks throughout our making what matters brilliant corporate plan.







Scotts House in Stafford is among the first four schemes to be complete. The block had some issues with anti-social behaviour, a concentration of young and/or vulnerable customers from out-of-area and poor communal areas.

We're pleased to report that thanks to collaborative working between teams, Scotts House has significantly improved. It's much more modern and attractive and our residents say they're happy with the new look and feel safe. Now, feedback is that it's a calm and peaceful scheme to live at.



Managing ASB

Our teams have been tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB) in our neighbourhoods. Last year, we had 623 new cases of ASB and as a last resort we took the following legal interventions:

- 1 suspended possession order
- 17 outright possession orders
- 16 injunctions (interim and final)
- 1 committal proceeding

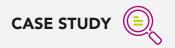
We managed 98 of these cases through our dedicated Restorative Justice (RJ) service. Our team have used restorative Justice to support individuals to think more about the impact their actions can have on their neighbours, helping you through difficult situations such as family breakdown, neighbour disputes, noise nuisance and harassment.

This service makes us a bit different and is a real example of how we respond quickly to meet your needs.

Restorative justice meetings

Resolved during initial contact 14

0 21





Neighbours *Sarah and Rosie have been having trouble communicating. Rosie felt that Sarah's son was deliberately disruptive and targeting his behaviour toward her. When the pair agreed to sit down with our RJ co-ordinator and talk about the noise from one of their homes, both began to understand the other's frustrations.

Sarah explained her son suffered with ADHD and how she had become very stressed and anxious about him and the effect his behaviour was having on her neighbours. By sharing her situation Rosie could better understand as she also had a relative with similar disabilities and knew the pressure this was causing. The neighbours now have a new respect for each other and have developed an excellent relationship supporting one another.

*Customers annoymised

Environmental Services

The largest increase in your satisfaction with our services came from our communal services (communal cleaning, grounds maintenance and window cleaning) which jumped from 72% to 84%.



Percentage

You told us that the grounds maintenance service needed to improve, so we worked with a group of our involved customers to understand your concerns. We've now made changes to the frequency of the service provided. As a result your satisfaction with grounds maintenance has increased from 69% to 83%.



Percentage

This is a great example of the impact your feedback can have. We hope to continue to increase your satisfaction in this area by working closely with you through our Estate Champion scheme.

Our Rangers team also completed:

- **13,738** inspections
- 5,128 fly tipping and bulk waste visits
- The removal of **207** tonnes of waste



SUPPORTING YOU:

Money advice service

We know that money worries can cause anxiety and stress so our award winning money advice service is here to help you. Please make us your first point of contact if you're struggling financially, you can, contact us or <u>self-refer online</u>.

The number of referrals to our money advice team have continued to increase but we have continued to offer appointments face to face or over the phone wherever possible.

The team were able to give me the advice I needed fast, and without making me feel that I was a problem. I recommend them to anyone who needs support.

DID YOU KNOW?



Our rent payment officers are specially trained to support you with queries about welfare reform and benefits - your first point of contact if you have money worries.

2019/2020 highlights

245

TELEPHONE ADVICE SESSIONS

779

FACE-TO-FACE ADVICE SESSIONS

99%

OF THOSE SUPPORTED KEPT THEIR TENANCY WITH US £418,516

AWARDED IN UNIVERSAL CREDIT

£56,205

IN DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENT (DHP) £271,791

CLAIMED IN HOUSING BENEFIT £50,529

ATTENDANCE
ALLOWANCE
OBTAINED FOR THOSE
AGED 65 AND OVER

£1,850,173

TOTAL VALUE OF DEBT DEALT WITH BY THE TEAM £53,973

PAYMENTS SECURED FROM CHARITIES AND TRUST FUNDS

£1,560

WORTH OF SHOPPING VOUCHERS ISSUED

50

TRAVEL TICKETS
ISSUED

99

FOOD BANK VOUCHERS ISSUED 46

EMERGENCY FUEL TOP UPS

£430

WORTH OF VOUCHERS PURCHASED AND DISTRIBUTED TO YOU AT CHRISTMAS

(FUNDS RAISED BY TEAM VIA SALE OF RAFFLE TICKETS)

MONEY ADVICE
SESSIONS IN SUPPORTED
LIVING SCHEMES

PENSION WEEK TALKS
AT RETIREMENT LIVING
SCHEMES

90

APPLICATIONS TO THE TENANT HARDSHIP AND CUSTOMER WELFARE FUND

Retirement living

We're focusing on the services you receive from us as your landlord.

- **182,412** lunches and **55,379** dinners served in our restaurants
- **12,074** occasions where residents took part in activities, events or classes

We've captured your feedback on our catering and lifestyle services and will be using this to improve your dining experience and provide a variety of lifestyle activities that suit your needs. If you have any ideas our Lifestyle Coaches would love to hear your ideas!



You told us that you wanted our repairs service to resolve issues faster so we have developed a local offer, where a designated repairs operative visits each scheme once a week to complete any minor repairs.

Customers also recently helped us to review our retirement living services to understand how we can make them more accessible to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) individuals. Over 90 of you completed our questionnaire and your feedback has been used to make changes to the way we promote this service to new customers and the type of activities we do to make schemes and villages more inclusive.

As a result of the changes we have made so far, satisfaction with your homes in this service area increased to 86% from 76% last year. We plan to invest £10m in these services from now until 2024 to make sure they continue to meet your needs.

The gardens are beautiful, I love to look out the window at the birds it is so peaceful.

We've made improvements to our retirement living and extra care services so that they are great places to live and somewhere families can enjoy spending time with their loved ones.

Last year we successfully moved the provision of care services in our 23 schemes and villages to five dedicated care providers who are experts in their field. We're now working in partnership and playing to both our strengths to bring you a first class landlord service with the option of a first class care package when you need it.







Working with Advance Healthcare

"We've worked really closely to support customers to make sure that they understand the new arrangements and who was responsible for what. We recognised that working together and resolving issues early was critical to providing a brilliant service to customers. We've worked hard to keep our schemes Covid-19 free during the pandemic but the strong partnership we have has enabled us to work closely to deliver for our residents.

"We told our customers that these changes would mean they got a first class landlord service from us and a quality care service from a specialist care provider - Advance Healthcare have helped us to achieve this ambition and customer feedback has been excellent."

Hannah Boyd, Head of Retirement Living



Supported living





We supported 1,216 new customers between April 2019 and March 2020 in our supported living schemes.

We've teamed up with the charity Trident Reach, to deliver homelessness accommodation and services across Birmingham, providing the best support to those experiencing homelessness at every stage of their journey.

As part of our partnership we'll be using our expertise to work with customers who are preparing for independent living and providing support to help them manage a tenancy, become work ready and receive the expert housing advice they need.

Trident Reach will provide support to customers who need a little extra help as a result of Rough Sleeping or more complex needs such as addiction or mental ill health.





CASE STUDY



We're investing in our supported living offer to improve the quality and outcomes for customers and the amount of accommodation we offer. Work to build five new additional units of homeless accommodation at Oasis House in Northampton will be completed this year.





Building new homes

The Midlands needs more affordable homes and, as part of our third pillar, we're playing our part to build as many as we can over the next five years.

We continue to build new homes for social and affordable rent whilst supporting those who aspire to move into home ownership.

From April 2019 to March 2020 we built a total of **570** new affordable homes, **120** more than in 18/19 (450).

As part of our new corporate plan we're committed to developing 3,000 new homes in the next five years.

We go the extra mile to make sure our homes meet the decent home standard. You've been very complimentary of the standard of our new build homes and the process that we use to carry out quality assurance checks.

Our involved customers were impressed by the level of transparency shown and the evidence that was provided for review.







Our fourth pillar sets out our commitment to staying financially strong and spending money wisely but most importantly we are focused on keeping you safe.

In 2019/2020 we had a turnover of

£219.3m

We have maintained a

G1/V1 rating

from The Regulator of Social Housing, the highest possible score for governance and financial viability which means we're well run and financially strong, which will help us achieve our future plans.

Keeping you safe

Your safety is our priority and we want you and your family to feel safe in your home.

We completed:

- 2337 asbestos surveys
- **685** fire risk assessments
- 3733 individual actions
- **167** fire prevention works costing £13,200

We spent a total of £3,317,695 on fire safety:

- £837,352 on fire door upgrades
- **£298,031** on fire door and frame replacements
- **£1,471,000** to add separation to buildings (compartmentation)
- £711,312 fire alarm installations and emergency lighting

Our gas team carried out:

- 1202 gas boiler upgrades
- **85** new full heating systems (boiler and radiators)
- **386** storage heater installations
- 3322 electrical safety checks

Each year we service the boilers and fires in your home to ensure they are in working order and 98% of you told us that you were happy with this service.

You told us that you wanted our fire risk experts to speak directly to you so we started holding customer engagement sessions in our retirement and supported living accommodation. These started in June 2019 and are used to talk through significant findings of fire risk assessments with you.





CASE STUDY



We've been working with West Midlands Fire Service to help improve fire safety awareness and provide 'Safe and Well' checks to many of our most vulnerable customers.

These visits are carried out by a trained officer and aim to give you advice and guidance to reduce or remove risks presented by the health, wellbeing and lifestyle choices that can pose a fire risk in your home.

By helping to prevent fires in the first place and improving your knowledge of what to do if there is an incident, we hope to help make your homes much safer.

You may receive a text message asking if you would like to take part in one of these checks, or hear about it as part of the information you receive when moving into one of our homes. You can also find out more about how to keep your homes safe by visiting the fire safety pages of our website.

DID YOU KNOW?



New posters have been created following your feedback to keep you up to date with the latest fire safety information for your home. If you have any communal areas in your scheme or block look out for these coming soon!

Our dedicated fire risk assessment team have reviewed our approach to all fire safety processes. This review was presented to our involved customers who have been impressed with the focus given to fire safety across our organisation and the important role customer feedback plays.





Value for money

As a profit for purpose organisation, every £1 that is paid to us in rent is reinvested into our homes and the things that matter most to you, our customers.

Where each £ comes from

Income £179,012,000

• **Rent:** £136,855,000 (76%)

• **Service charges:** £24,316,000 (14%)

• Supporting people: £17,841,000 (10%)

Where each **f** is spent

Costs £147,971,000

• Managing your home: £29,214,000 (20%)

Looking after your scheme and neighbourhood: £25,534,000 (17%)





Your voice

You gave our customer experience team 90% overall satisfaction this year compared with 84% in 18/19.

As part of our aim to deliver a first class service to you we've improved the way we resolve issues for you as soon as you report them. As a result we've received our lowest number of formal complaints last year, a total of 190 complaints, compared to 299 in 18/19. This works out at 6 complaints per 1000 properties (9, 18/19).

Where we didn't get it quite right and you raised a formal complaint with us, 73% of those complaints were upheld (61%, 18/19) and we are reviewing these cases to understand how we can improve services in these areas.

The root causes of upheld complaints were:

- 50% unhappy with customer service 70/138
- **20%** quality of work 28/138
- 15% unhappy with services 20/138
- 15% appointment issues 20/138

When you've told us you're unhappy with our staff you've told us that we could be better at keeping you informed and updated.

We are continually improving the way we communicate with you through systems like text message reminders about appointments and making your rent account available to you online. We're also working on further developments to our app to enable you to book and view the progress of your repair at a time that works for you.

Year	Number	% Upheld	/ 1000
19/20	190	73%	6
18/19	299	61%	9



Getting involved

Your feedback is invaluable to us. It helps us make sure we're on the right track and highlights areas where there is room for improvement.

IN 2019/20

13,056

604

FIVE

FACE TO FACE INTERVIEWS

CUSTOMERS
SUPPORTED THE
BOARD THROUGH
MEMBERSHIP OF
THE OPERATIONS

COMMITTEE

22

CUSTOMERS REGULARLY INVOLVED IN OUR OVERSIGHT AND SCRUTINY GROUPS 103

CUSTOMERS TOOK PART IN INFORMAL INVOLVEMENT GROUPS

We also followed up responses to 1,184 surveys to talk through your feedback to find out what we could do better and make changes to the way we deliver our services.

Every year you rate us against the Consumer Standards set for Housing Associations by our regulator. This year you awarded us the highest mark possible in 36 areas, rising from 13 since 2018, which demonstrates that we are always trying to improve our service to you.



GET INVOLVED

Depending on what you're interested in and the amount of time you can commit, there are a number of different ways you can get involved. You may not even have to travel as we've been holding virtual customer meetings so that you can be involved from the comfort of your own home!

You can contact the team by calling the hub on 0345 60 20 540 or you can visit our <u>website</u> for more information about joining one of our customer groups, becoming one of our Estate Champions or taking part in surveys and consultations.

You can complete an <u>expression of interest</u> form to let the team know more about you and your interests <u>if you're not quite sure how you'd like to support.</u>

We're looking forward to hearing from you!

Being an involved customer enables me to help shape Midland Hearts policies around customer issues. I have also made a number of new friends with other involved customers.





Your Feedback



The opportunities offered by group involvement by all participants provides a platform to deliver on behalf of others. The groups offer the chance to share and reiterate how much Midland Heart really do care!

large organisation that is willing to listen, and to be held accountable by its customers

It is refreshing to find a

We work hard, but we have fun as well It feels good to have our voice heard right to the very top

I actually feel the work we do makes a difference

We get to use our skills, and also learn new skills as well



Midland Heart, 20 Bath Row, Birmingham, B15 1LZ

Got a question?

Get in touch 0345 60 40 540

@MidlandHeart

@MidHeartHelp

midlandheart.org.ul



MAKING WHAT MATTERS

Brilliant