



# Customer Annual Report 2018/19

# Welcome

## to your Annual Report

The last year has been a busy one for all those involved with our work and I'm pleased to say we've seen positive performance across our range of services.

We know what we do matters to people's everyday lives; your home is not something that you should lose sleep over. That's why we want to respond to you quickly and at a time that suits you. We've listened to all of your feedback to help us build our plans for the next five years.

While we successfully maintained high levels of customer and colleague satisfaction, we know there are areas we can improve.

Towards the end of the year, we began our digital journey with the launch of our app. This was developed and tested, with a number of our involved customers, to make sure it performed as expected. We will develop the app, to give you more flexibility to request services and keep track of them. The good news is that our app is built as an additional option, increasing the number of ways you can get in touch with us.

Over the next five years, we're planning a record investment to improve our homes; swiftly responding to issues raised, replacing kitchens and bathrooms more often and offering a repairs service that fits around the work and family commitments of people living in our homes.

We also know that you want more help in supporting the kind of communities you want to live in, where people want to share and invest too. We will be working with our partners in local government to do our bit in creating more balanced and sustainable communities, both in our existing areas and where we build new homes in the future.

We've got a great team of committed colleagues and customers who want to build on what we already do well. If you have enjoyed good service with us we will look to maintain and improve on that. For those that feel they have not had such a good experience, we will do all we can to address your problems and together look forward to making things brilliant for you.

**Glenn Harris**  
Chief Executive Officer

## The year at a glance

### 2018/19

**84%** overall customer satisfaction

86% 17/18

**90%** repairs satisfaction

92% 17/18

**84%** new lettings customer satisfaction

89% 17/18

**18** days to re-let an empty home, our lowest ever and sector leading performance

21 days 17/18

**91%** new homes customer satisfaction

84% 17/18

**100%** gas safety and fire risk assessment compliance

**450** new primarily affordable homes, an increase of 50% on last year

304 17/18

**All 22** of our CQC registered Retirement Living services were rated 'Good'

**9** complaints per 1000 properties

19 17/18

**5%** rent debt remains consistent despite challenges of welfare reform

5% 17/18

2018/2019 is the start of our new five year corporate plan. Our plan is focused on the things you have told us matter to you.

#### Every day we will:

- Make sure people are safe
- Do what we say we will
- Ensure you tell your story only once
- Get the basics right, every time
- Take pride in what we do
- Create a great place to build a career

We will do this through investing in our homes, putting your service first, growth and partnerships, being people focused and safe and strong. If you want to read more about our corporate plan, visit [midlandheart.org.uk/about-us](http://midlandheart.org.uk/about-us)

# Retirement Living



Whatever happens as we get older we all want to remain independent and live life on our own terms.

Over the last year, we have been working on a new retirement living offer that helps you continue to enjoy your freedom and independence, whilst making sure there is extra support available when you need it.

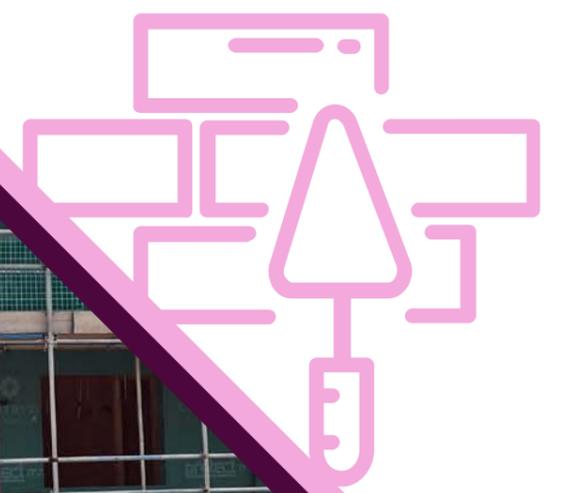
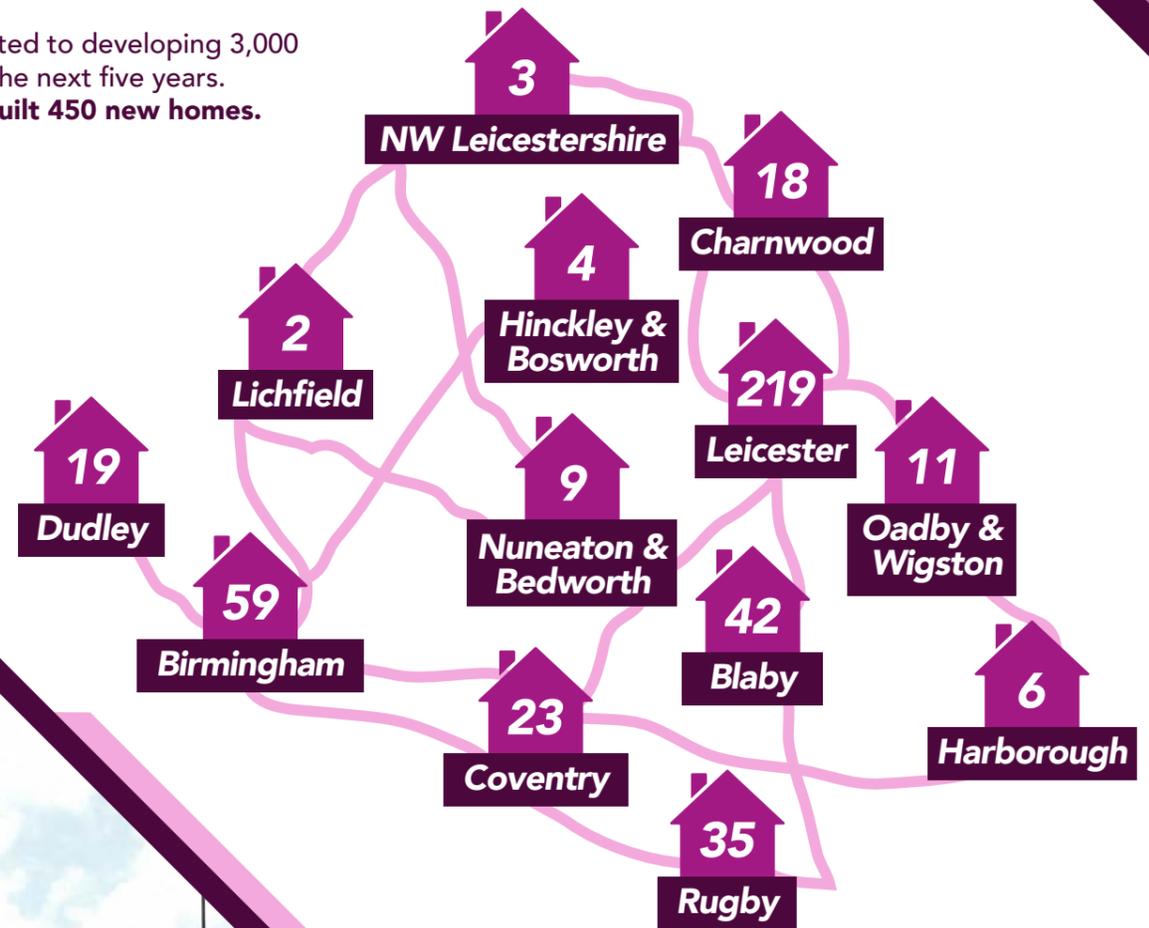
Over the next few years we will be focusing on delivering quality accommodation in a community setting. We will continue to offer access to care and support services, that can be tailored to your needs, from an independent, on-site care provider.

£15 million will be invested over the next five years to enhance your experience and deliver on these improvements. This includes:

- Refreshing the lounges, dining rooms and communal areas
- Focusing on cleaning, grass cutting and repairs, which will help to create a place where you want to spend time with your friends and family
- Offering a restaurant style service with a better dining experience for you and those you invite over for dinner
- Developing new lifestyle activities tailored to your needs. This will include cookery classes, dancing, bingo, quiz nights and learning other languages. How much you want to get involved will be up to you

# Development

We are committed to developing 3,000 new homes in the next five years. This year we built 450 new homes.



## Investing in your home

The teams within our Assets department undertake activities associated with your home and communal areas, focusing on its safety, planned investment, repairs and maintenance. They work together across all departments to deliver services that improve the buildings you live in. In 2018/19 we delivered significant safety and home replacement improvements and we will use your feedback to set our strategies going forward.

### Improving your home



**286**

electric storage heating



**839**

kitchens



**463**

bathrooms



**156**

windows



**262**

doors

### Repairing your home

Routine maintenance  
(day-to-day / voids / gas):



**£19,695,445**

Investing in your homes  
(windows, roofs, doors and lifts)



**£20,948,347**

Total spend  
on repairs

**£40,643,792**



We know investing in your homes is important to you, so this year we have spent an extra **£2.5 million** in this area.

### Safety satisfaction

**92%**

gas repairs satisfaction  
(93%, 17/18)

**97%**

gas servicing satisfaction  
(97%, 17/18)

### Keeping you safe

**1550**

gas upgrades  
1482 boiler upgrades and  
68 new full heating systems

**4157**

electrical installation  
condition reports completed

**8841**

safety checks  
completed every 6 months

**3544**

asbestos surveys completed

### Adapting your home

Total spend on aids  
and adaptations

**£213,449**

Number of customers supported  
with aids and adaptations

**120**



## Working with the community



### Our staff and contractors regularly work in the community to help with things such as local clean ups.

To mark World Environment Day, our partners, Fortem, came up with a great idea to litter pick in a nominated Midland Heart community. Gary Dulson, Operations Manager, welcomed the idea and was keen for us to support the good cause.

The Howat Road area in Coventry had a lot of fly tipping at the communal bins so the team saw the chance to help get the area tidy again for our customers and prevent the mess from affecting the neighborhood.

A team of people from across the business collaborated with Fortem and were involved in the litter pick. Our staff told us about their day:

Carly Louise Winch, Contract Delivery Surveyor Trainee, said: "I really enjoyed going litter picking and helping to clean up and making the community a nice place for our customers to be living."

Sophie Allcock, Customer Services Officer, said: "In the short space of time we were there, everyone involved put a lot of effort in. The common goal of 'making it better' meant that it didn't matter what position anyone held within the company we all worked together to get the job done. It was shocking to see the amount of rubbish we had collected and what sorts of things people throw away without any regard for the effect it has on their neighborhood as well as the environment as a whole. Personally, I will never just drop a cigarette end into the gutter ever again!"

Finally, Irene Wanjiru, Sales and Disposal Officer, said: "Overall, it was a great team effort and enjoyable at the same time!"

Great work from the team in taking pride in our communities and ensuring that our customers have a better environment to live in.

## Managing your home and environment

Our teams work together to resolve housing management issues, help customers to sustain their tenancies and work hard to make our estates places where people want to live.

### Customer Hub

225,138



calls received

82%

call satisfaction



# 72% satisfaction with communal services

Your satisfaction feedback told us our gardening, window cleaning and cleaning services were not performing as well as previous years.

Taking on board your comments about estate management, we reviewed and re-wrote the grounds maintenance specification from 1 July 2019.

We have increased the number of visits from 16 to 22 per year and including the maintenance of shrub and flower beds all year, as needed.



## Rangers

**13,629**  
inspections



**343**  
tonnes of  
waste removed



**756**  
warnings  
issued



## Managing your neighbourhoods

The team deal with anti-social behaviour through early intervention or legal action and address other tenancy breaches. A tenancy breach could be when we can't get access to carry out important repairs, hoarding and poor property conditions. The team also tackle tenancy fraud such as subletting and customers who get their properties by providing false information.

**350**

closed anti-social  
behaviour cases with  
a successful outcome

**2** suspended  
possession orders

**25** injunctions

**12** outright possession  
orders / evictions

**2**

undertakings  
to the court



Following the success of our Restorative Justice project in Birmingham, we now have an in-house Restorative Justice Co-ordinator. This means that customers across all of our areas can benefit from the service, as a means of resolving anti-social behaviour issues. Last year, we used restorative justice in 59 cases. To find out more about Restorative Justice click the 'Find out more' button below.

**FIND OUT MORE**

## Working together

In autumn 2018, we started a pilot with Crimestoppers, West Midlands Police and Wolverhampton Homes to address problems with crime and anti-social behaviour in Wolverhampton.

By working together with colleagues and contractors, it was clear that some of our properties were being damaged. Littering, fly-tipping and illegal activity caused by some tenants and their visitors was also found in some homes. We were spending a lot of time and resources dealing with these problems but neighbours were not reporting the issues which made them even harder to tackle.

Working closely with our internal teams and partners, we ran a campaign to promote Crimestoppers as a means of reporting crime and anti-social behaviour. Using the anonymous reports, we worked together to address concerns.

We increased our presence in the area by carrying out joint visits with the police to investigate crime and anti-social behaviour and used Safetynet, our mobile security service, who patrolled the area out of office hours to stop unwanted behaviour and gather information. We also carried out home checks to understand concerns and provide advice and support to ensure tenancies were

being conducted satisfactorily. To promote the work we were doing, we attended community events with our partners.

Our partnership has strengthened as a result of this work and it has already led to the successful resolution of several cases, making a positive difference for our customers and communities.



# Money advice service

Our experienced team provide you with ongoing advice and support to reduce debt, pay unpaid bills, assist with benefits and budgeting. We continue to help you find solutions and give you the best chance of managing and sustaining your tenancy, allowing you more time to enjoy your home.

## 2018/19 summary



**223** customers received telephone advice



**635** customers received face-to-face advice

**99%**

of customers they supported sustained their tenancy



**£2,182,258.04** in income maximisation for customers.



**£500,830.98** claimed in Housing Benefit.



**£364,280.85** awarded in Universal Credit, **£64,701.76** Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) obtained.



**£76,228.60** Attendance Allowance obtained for customers aged 65 and over

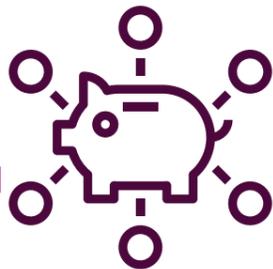


Total value of debt dealt with

**£1,903,075.05**

**£44,173.58**

worth of payments secured from charities and trust funds to pay reduced debt, bankruptcy fees and purchase essential items



**£2930**

worth of Tesco/Asda vouchers issued to customers in financial hardship (£2000 funded by Kwest Research)

**31** travel tickets issued to enable customers to attend appointments



**14** customers received emergency fuel top ups



**71**

food bank vouchers issued



**80** applications made to the Tenant Hardship and Customer Welfare Fund for assistance. Items include; fridges, beds and bedding, council tax fees, cookers, washing machines, wardrobes, moving costs, fees and travel to assist customers with tenancy sustainment, anti-social behaviour issues, emergencies, safeguarding and to support employment

“

I really appreciate your help. I feel so much better in myself already, and I'm so excited that my debts are now clearing up”

Customer feedback on our Money Advice service



# Finding your home

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 you to find the right home in an area that suits you. Our Homes Direct team have provided the following information for the past year



# Listening to you

We try to provide the best possible service to you, however sometimes things don't quite go as expected. Our Customer Hub and Customer Experience teams have been listening to you and used your feedback to improve your experience.

As a result of your feedback, the number of complaints we have is now at the lowest level ever at 9 complaints per 1000 properties, meaning you have had to raise your complaints to us less and less over the last few years.

Through our new corporate plan we want this to continue and our mission is to get the basics right, every time.

We work with our customers to develop local service offers. Find out more on our website.



## Formal complaints raised

2018/19 **299** | 61% were upheld  
9 per 1000 properties

2017/18 **468** | 54% upheld  
19 per 1000 properties

2016/17 **731** | 59% upheld  
29 per 1000 properties

## Top causes of upheld complaints



## Total 2018/19

**183**

# Value for money

Our new corporate plan for 2019-24 helped us to review our value for money strategy and it will reflect the new standard and metrics which came into force in April 2018.

We have three key drivers, our corporate plan, continuous improvement and regulation and three pillars:

- Strong governance, scrutiny and performance management
- Ensuring we maximise the return on assets
- Clear measures, evidence and comparisons, including understanding of costs and outcomes

In order to deliver social value, we need to be financially strong and make the most of our resources to deliver the services that you need. We also need to provide assurance to our lenders and funders.

## Value for money

The money you pay to us is used to invest back into your homes.

## Where each £ comes from

Income **£181,548,000**



**75%**  
rent



**13%**  
service charge



**12%**  
supporting people

## Where each £ is spent

Costs **£148,228,000**



**20%**  
managing your home



**15%**  
looking after your scheme and neighbourhood



**12%**  
supporting people



**34%**  
repairs and planned investment



**3%**  
major repairs



**16%**  
loan costs for new developments

We use any surplus income to invest back in to your homes and meet the aims of our corporate plan, including building more homes.

Our Financial Statements include more details of our income and costs. You can view the full version online.

# Getting involved

You have been working with us closely over the last year to shape and improve our services. Over the last year, you helped us oversee the delivery of the Customer Engagement Framework by:

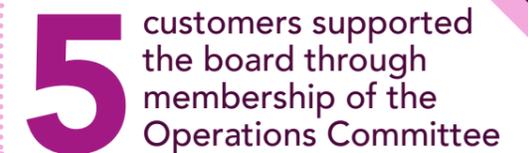
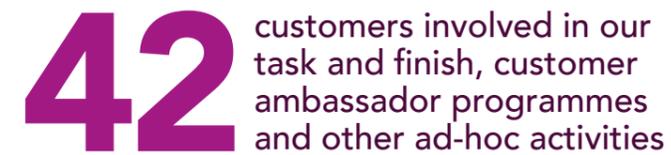
- Providing feedback to improve catering services, service charges and fire safety
- Ensuring we have our best ever performance against the Consumer Standards we are regulated against
- Shaping the future of social housing by attending the Houses of Parliament to meet the Housing Minister

## Key successes

Our project on grounds maintenance was completed after you raised your concerns with us. Your feedback was that you wanted more frequent visits and for the contractor to attend every visit scheduled. From 2019/20 the number of visits will increase from 16 to 22 for general needs customers.

You also helped us design and test our new customer app. So far, over **1800** of you are using it to check your rent account and view your statements online. This year more of you are working on testing the next update which will be looking at how you can rent a home from the app.

“It’s a great app particularly to keep an eye on my rent”



We need your help to shape and influence the services you receive.

We are looking for more customers to get involved with us. There are lots of different ways you can do this depending on your interests and time commitment.

The Customer Scrutiny team can help you choose the best group or activity for you. Contact them via the Customer Hub or visit [midlandheart.org.uk/getinvolved](https://midlandheart.org.uk/getinvolved).

You can also complete an expression of interest form here: [bit.ly/ScrutinyApp](https://bit.ly/ScrutinyApp).





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## Got a question? Get in touch

 [midlandheart.org.uk](http://midlandheart.org.uk)

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