#### livin.co.uk



Welcome to our Annual Report to Tenants 2023-2024



### A message from Natalie Wilkinson, Chair of the InsightXChange



# "Improving lives through sustainable homes and places."

Welcome to the 2023/24 Annual Report for you, our tenants. This report reflects on the past year and gives you important information on how we are performing and what we have been doing to continuously improve the services we deliver to you.

Last year, we faced economic uncertainty and cost-of-living challenges. However, this did not prevent us from focussing on our commitment to improving our repairs and maintenance service and introducing a range of innovative and customer-led service improvements. All of these are designed to deliver you the highest service standards and customer experience, whilst also ensuring we meet the new regulatory standards which came into effect on 1 April 2024.

You will find more details of what we have achieved in each section of the report, but my personal highlights of the year include: setting up the InsightXchange tenant forum, to give more of you opportunities to get involved in scrutinising and influencing services; supporting hundreds of you to access unclaimed benefit entitlements, grants and jobs to help you with your finances during the cost-of-living crisis; and increasing our tenancy advisor visits to your homes to learn more about you and your family so we can better consider your needs in delivering our services.

During the year we have implemented many improvements in response to your feedback, which we value greatly. Examples of these are included in this report.

In 2025 we will be launching the next phase of our business strategy, Plan A and we will be using your feedback and inviting your views throughout 2024 to ensure that our plans reflect what matters most to you, our tenants, residents and partner organisations.

Alan Boddy
Chief Executive

Last year was an exciting year as we extended the ways in which we engage with you, our tenants, in scrutinising services, shaping policy and influencing decisions on a range of issues that affect you and your home. I am incredibly proud of the work of the InsightXChange tenant forum which, during the year supported by Tpas (Tenant Participation Advisory Service), reviewed antisocial behaviour and repairs and maintenance, two vital services which were identified as being

I believe our approach to listening to your views and improving services based on these is second to none. To give you all a range of ways to give us your views, we offer a variety of options that are convenient, accessible and be done in a way that suits your needs and time available. This includes filling out online surveys, taking part in short, topic specific reviews, engaging in more detailed scrutiny reviews and attending regular meetings with us.

really important to you.

It's important to me that all of the proposals that are put forward for review are based on facts and customer data, and your experience of our services. This ensures suggestions for service improvements are meaningful to you and make a positive impact at the right time. Reporting back to you the impressive changes we have made based on your views and 'closing the loop' is very satisfying to me. This is an important part of the work we do, and I love hearing the impact of how your ideas are making lasting improvements on services for tenants and residents living in our communities.

I'm very much looking forward to the year ahead including our next task, to review our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

Natalie Wilkinson Chair of the Insight XChange

N. I. Wulman

Annual Report to Tenants 2023 - 2024

#### Performance



Performance was equal to, or higher than our target



Performance was lower than our target



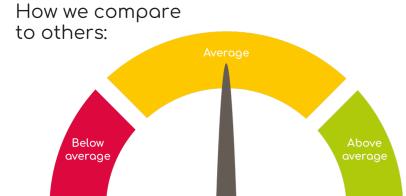
Performance improved on the previous year



Performance was unchanged



Performance was not as good as the previous year



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

#### Lettings Policy



We work with local authorities to allocate our homes. You can bid on our homes through:

- Durhom Key Octions
- Darlington Home Search
- Tees Valley Letting Partnership
- Hartlepool Home Search

Choice Based Lettings

We take part in choice based lettings schemes so that you can bid on homes in areas where you want to live. When we allocate our homes, we consider the needs and requirements of each local authority. There may be some cases when we offer you a home directly, but the local authority's requirements will still apply.

Mutual Exchange

We also offer mutual exchange if you want to move anywhere in

the country. You can swap your social housing tenant. We reco accommodation but have no s

Local Lettings Plan In some cases, we will work with plans. We use these in limited : communities. This letting can b to housing management issues

We set out what requirements i the adverts for our homes. You can view adverts for our h

can apply for a home through

ase let us know if you or so

Neighbourhood and Community Policy

Safer Places

We are responsible for looking after and keeping our shared green spaces safe. If there are any issues with how clean, accessible, or safe any indoor or outdoor spaces are, we can report and fix them. We work together with local authorities, charities, police, and tenant groups to do this for you.

> working with people living in the area and local elp improve our communities most. We will work make sure that our shared spaces are safe, clean, also support partners in achieving their own goals.

anti-social behaviour and Hate incidents or hate incidents seriously. We will handle them SB policy. You can <u>read the full policy</u> online or e sent to you by post by calling us by phone. We will tners such as the Police and the Local Authority eams to help people experiencing ASB.

de our partners and other organisations to tackle will make sure you get the right support and d the full policy online or request a copy to be sent alling us by phone.

d with the way we have managed your I you want to make a complaint, you can do this by back team online, or by calling us on 0800 587 4538.

nd domestic abuse or get in touch by phone Livin app.

\*Sample policies, we have 25+ summarised customer policies available to view at Livin.co.uk

Asbestos Policy

It's important to understand that asbestos is safe if left undisturbed.

You will receive a copy of an asbestos report for your home if it was built before 2000. We recommend you read this before you start to carry out any decoration works or hang any pictures etc.

If you report a minor repair in your home, we will always check the asbestos information to make sure we do the work safely

We may need more information about the asbestos if planned improvements or major repairs are needed in your home. When this happens, we will complete a more detailed asbestos survey. Our contractors will take small samples from various areas including walls, floors, or ceilings and test them for asbestos.

If your home requires the removal or sealing of asbestos, this will only be carried out by a qualified proffessional. We will carry out repairs in line with the time frames set out in our repairs and maintenance policy

mergency repairs: We will attend ithin 🚹 hours

Jrgent repairs: We will at vithin 🧲 working days

outine repairs: We will attend

We are committed to protecting you, your family and our staff from asbestos exposure with a robust system to identify dangerous situations quickly.



When an asbestos survey is needed, you must allow us to do this. If we cannot carry out the asbestos survey we will not be able to carry out your repair or improvement works. We will take



If you'd like to view our summarised policies you can do so at Livin.co.uk. To request a copy by post, please call us on 0800 587 4538.

## Transforming Customer Experience and Digital Services

#### **Customer Experience**

We aim to always deliver reliable, convenient and easy to access services and keep you informed about things that matter to you.

Here's how we are doing...

#### Performance measures



87.48%

overall satisfaction with customer experience (target 88%)





91.40%

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





74.29% of transactions completed digitally



(target 75%)



#### Key stats



53.39

Net Promoter Score (target 51)





Over 318,000 customer contacts (digital and nondigital)

68,635 calls resolved at first point of contact

#### Tenant satisfaction measures







83.83%

satisfaction that the landlord keeps tenants informed about things that matter to them (TP07)



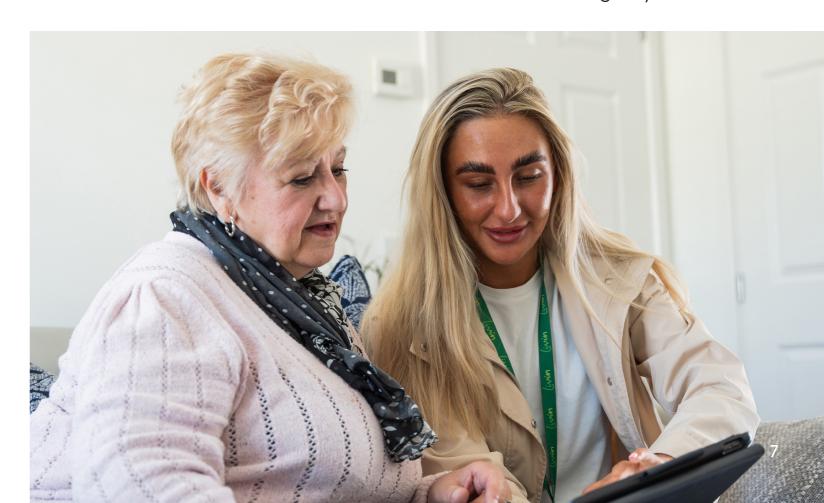


agree that the landlord treats tenants fairly and with respect (TP08)



#### **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 2023/24, we resolved 91.4% of all digital and non-digital customer enquiries at First Point of Contact. Where we could not answer the initial enquiry, we contacted 85.3% of customers back within two working days.



#### Complaints and feedback

We know sometimes things go wrong and when they do, we aim to put them right as quickly as possible and learn from our mistakes so we can do better in the future.

Here's how we are doing...

#### Performance



93.94%

satisfaction with the way complaints were handled (target 91.5%)





100%

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





#### Key stats

77
stage 1 complaints
from tenants

stage 2 complaint reviews

333 service requests

218 compliments received

service improvements (examples throughout the report)

#### Tenant satisfaction measures

48.09% satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling of complaints (TP09)



0.9 stage 2 complaints received per 1,000 units (CH01)



100% stage 2 complaints responded to in target time (CH02)



8./ stage 1 complaints received per 1,000 units (CH01)



100% stage 1 complaints responded to in target time (CH02)



#### We listened, we acted

## We listened (Complaints)

You were unhappy with the lack of information given during the planned works programme about what you can expect during the process and our satisfaction levels were lower than expected.



#### We acted

We developed a Frequently Asked Questions sheet which is provided to you at the start of the work, which includes what you can expect and gives information for the teams you need to contact. Shortly afterwards we have seen a significant rise of 11% in satisfaction from 84% to 95% and this has been maintained for the rest of the financial year.

## We listened (Complaints)

You told us that you were unhappy that it was difficult to get accurate updates and information about repairs and defects reported on new build homes.



#### We acted

We improved our customer contact system and process to ensure that all information regarding repairs to a new build home can be seen by our call centre and we can now give you accurate updates and progress on your repairs at first point of contact.

We have not received any complaints regarding this issue since this system improvement.

#### Customer Experience, Complaints and Feedback The year in review...

Putting our customers at the heart of what we do and during the year we have continued to invest in improving processes so we continue to deliver reliable, convenient and easy to access services that you can influence and trust us to deliver to your satisfaction.

In July 2023, over 1,100 of you took part in our first TSM perception survey via an independent research company. The survey covered six main themes, including repairs, building safety, effective complaint-handling, respectful and helpful tenant engagement, and responsible neighbourhood management. The results were overwhelmingly positive and mirrored the aspirations we had hoped for when developing our business strategy. An encouraging 89.69% of you said you were satisfied with our services as a landlord. Full details of the survey are published on our website and are available in a non-digital format on request. This annual report also includes all TSM results by theme.

The Housing Ombudsman published a new Complaint Handling Code during the year, to support tenants to have their complaint resolved fairly and promptly. In response to this we have updated our complaints policy and procedures and

invested in the resources of the complaints team, to ensure tenants receive a full and prompt response to their complaint. We also published our first annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report.

We have widely shared our complaints process on social media, on our website and via a leaflet drop to our customers without access to the internet. If you would like to know more about how to make a complaint, or any of the documents mentioned on this page visit livin.co.uk or telephone us on **0800 587 4538** for more information.

#### Housing Ombudsman Service

You can contact the Housing Ombudsman at any stage of the complaints process for advice and guidance. You can contact them in the following ways:

Email:

info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Telephone: 0300 111 3000

Write:

Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 152, Liverpool, L33 7WQ

#### **Customer Voice**

We encourage customer feedback, place listening to our customers at the heart of what we do and ensure our arrangements enable tenants to engage and influence in a meaningful way to continuously improve services.

Here's how we are doing...

Performance



96%

Involved tenants satisfied that their views are being listened to and acted upon (target 95.5%)



Tenant satisfaction measures



83.04%

satisfaction that the landlord listens to tenant views and acts upon them (TP06)



Key stats

23

customer voice activities were completed using tenants' insights

9,337
customer satisfaction surveys gathered

1,278

customers engaged through amplified surveys, focus groups and scrutiny

2

scrutiny reviews completed by InsightXchange (Anti-Social Behaviour and Repairs and Maintenance)

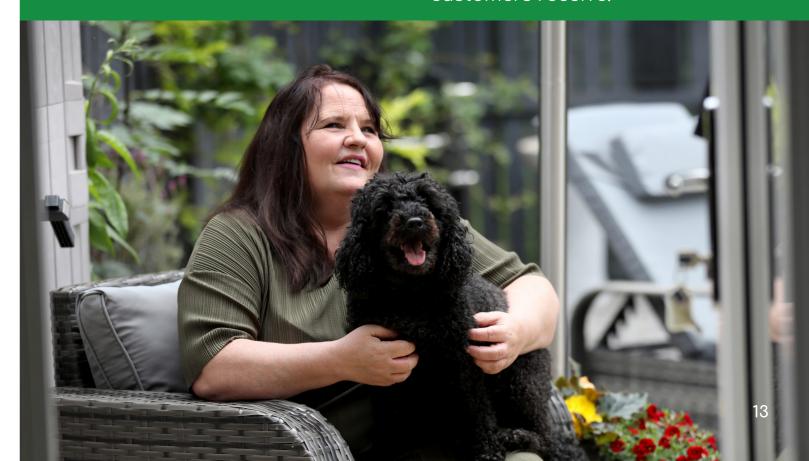
#### Your Voice The year in review

We have increased the opportunities you have to influence how services are delivered by introducing the "InsightXchange" our new tenant scrutiny forum, in October 2023. Our InsightXchange forum meets with us several times throughout the year to scrutinise our services, using insight from what you, our tenants are telling us. Together we decide what can be done to improve our services.

We also listen and act on feedback you send us through satisfaction surveys and your contacts with us. We received over 9,000 survey responses and have held 13 focus group events with tenants to review services and

policies across a range of service areas including repairs and maintenance, community funding grants and aids and adaptations. We have used our customer voice to influence the development/ revision of 14 policies in the year including a new Customer Vulnerability Policy, which sets out how we aim to provide services that are accessible for everyone and that you are treated fairly and with respect. We have also improved the cleaning contract for communal areas based on your feedback to keep your communal areas clean and safe.

We thank everyone who engaged with us in 2023/24 to help us improve the experience our customers receive.



#### Planet A

We aim to make a positive contribution to creating environmentally sustainable futures for generations to come, with tenants thriving in low energy homes and greener places.

Here's how we are doing...

#### Performance



7,710

number of properties achieving SAP Band C (target 8,160)





72.38

average SAP score of all properties (target 72.50)





#### **Key stats**

1,260
homes received energy efficiency works

Over

1400m<sup>2</sup>
of open space
used for re-wilding
including wild-flower
meadow planning
and tree planting

46
new trees planted across our communities working with partners



#### Your Voice The year in review

Following our successful bid with a consortium of partners in the Northeast and Yorkshire for £1.1m of Government funding, we have completed 100 installations of energy efficiency improvements to homes. In total, this funding (Social Housing Decarbonisation Funding) combined with our own investment of £1.65 million, will enable us to improve energy efficiency to 349 homes between 2023-2025.

Through the energy efficiency improvements carried out, we have increased the average energy efficiency to 72.38 which is in the top quartile performance of social housing providers.

Using the data held on our homes we have targeted our energy efficiency improvement work to the homes where this will be of most benefit. In total we carried out energy efficiency to 1,260 homes but over 500 tenants partially or fully omitted from the energy efficiency works.

The total energy saved by completing energy efficiency improvement works to homes is more than 3 million KW hours. The works have also reduced the carbon emissions by 888 tonnes.

#### We listened, we acted

#### We listened (Customer Voice – satisfaction surveys)

You told us that we needed to improve communication in terms of how we keep you engaged and informed during the planning and delivery of energy efficiency works.



#### We acted

We now hold customer engagement events for when you are due to receive energy efficiency improvements in your home, to keep you updated prior to works starting and to better understand any specific needs you have.

Since implementation, we have held four customer engagement events with a total of over 40 tenants attending.
Satisfaction that we keep you informed has increased by 6% following these changes.

#### We listened (Customer Voice – Energy efficiency works event)

You told us that you were concerned that you would lose valuable storage space when we planned to install equipment for solar PV panels in your cupboards.



#### We acted

We changed the specification and developed a way of installing the equipment to the outside of your homes to ensure that you benefited from the energy efficiency works without losing your storage space.

# Supporting Sustainable Places

We aim to support beautiful, sustainable and thriving places that meet your aspirations and nurture a sense of pride and belonging.

Here's how we are doing...

#### Performance



74.69%

percentage of customers satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live (target 87.5%)





64.91%

percentage of tenants satisfied with the way their ASB case was handled (target 81%)





98.17%

percentage of site visits completed against schedule (target 95%)







#### Tenant satisfaction measures

77.22%

satisfaction that the landlord keeps communal areas clean and well-maintained (TP10)





80.25%

satisfaction that the landlord makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods (TP11)





74.53%

satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling anti-social behaviour (TP12)





108
estate inspections completed

450 fly-tipping incidents resolved Tenancy action taken to improve the condition of **82** gardens

394
anti-social
behaviour cases
managed

435
customers used our communal lounges each week

Supported partners to access

£825,990 in funding

£29,685,014 overall social value achieved

1,094

inspections carried out on communal areas and lounges, community buildings, garages and open spaces.

As a result 162 corrective actions were completed in 2023/24



44.4

anti-social behaviour cases received per 1,000 units (NM01)





0.2

hate crimes reported per 1,000 units (NM01)







## Supporting Sustainable Places

#### The year in review

In Jubilee Fields Estate, Shildon, we continued to make significant progress in delivering our £9m ongoing investment in the physical regeneration of the estate, which will be completed in 2024. The regeneration is transforming homes, meeting housing need by increasing family and older persons housing options, as well as improving the estate environment. Through partnerships we also secured £300,000 of funding to support financial and health related projects.

As part of our regeneration works to Jubilee Fields Estate, energy efficiency works to homes included the installation of solar PV with battery storage providing a sustainable source of free electricity, triple glazed windows and additional loft insulation,

improving the EPC rating of homes from a C to a high B or A rating.

We know that tackling antisocial behaviour is important to you. Working in partnership with the Police and Crime Commissioner for County Durham and Darlington we combined resources allocating £20,000 to six projects across Ferryhill, Newton Aycliffe West, Sedgefield, Shildon, Spennymoor and the Trimdon's. Projects included detached youth work, Friday night football, video doorbells and addressing environmental ASB. In total 286 people were engaged and supported.

This year we have expanded our work to help you, our tenants and residents, into sustainable employment, supporting 352 people (227 tenants) into employment.

#### **Local Offer**

Working with the communities in Jubilee Fields, Shildon and Western, Newton Aycliffe we supported:



85 tenants into employment



Worked with partners and the community to help reduce reported antisocial behaviour by

46%



We delivered 114
new parking spaces and improved the estate environment through planting new trees.



We also worked with 117 tenants to help them access additional financial support of

£167,000



#### We listened, we acted

#### We listened (Customer Voice – focus group)

You told us that we needed to make some aspects of the community regeneration fund easier to understand. You told us we should have funding available for smaller grants and promote the scheme to increase awareness.

#### We listened, we acted

#### We listened (Customer Voice – resident survey)

Residents of Jubilee Fields estate told us that they wanted to use the community centre more and see an increase in different activities offered, especially for children with additional needs.

## + +

#### We acted

We updated the grant scheme, to strengthen its focus on supporting Greener, Safer, Healthier and Financially Stronger places, added an additional £5,000 and created a small grants scheme for community cohesion projects. In 2023/24 we supported 26 projects including working with vulnerable tenants to improve access to their gardens, an environmental ASB scheme for Ferryhill to reduce fly-tipping and litter, working with eight partners to deliver school holiday programmes for over 700 children and supporting 2,400 customers financially to access early years equipment, clothing, hygiene products and school uniforms.

#### We acted

Working with the community and the management committee we helped increase the number of Trustees and volunteers for the centre. Through our partner Mears and other funders, the Centre installed energy efficiency measures to reduce energy bills whilst the new committee worked with a local business to invest volunteer time and materials into redecorating the building. Working with local parents, a regular session for families with children with additional needs has been delivered, along with introducing other activities such as community events and men's and women's clubs which increased weekly attendance by 25%.

#### We listened, we acted

#### We listened (InsightXchange -Scrutiny Review)

Following an increase in complaints about the handling of reports of antisocial behaviour, our InsightXchange group scrutinised the overall service and experience. They told us that we were not clear on what customers could expect when reporting neighbourhood issues and that sometimes we did not consider individual communication needs or keep people updated on their case.

#### We acted

We used our data and tenant feedback to transform our processes for managing antisocial behaviour. The scrutiny review resulted in changes to our policy and a clear set of service standards which include details of how we will tailor our contacts to meet your needs, keep you updated about your case and work with other agencies that can help. You can read our updated policy and approach to tackling anti-social behaviour by visiting livin.co.uk or give us a call on 0800 587 4538.



# Supporting Sustainable Tenancies

We aim to offer services and support so that our tenants are happy, empowered and living in comfortable and manageable homes in sustainable places and we are committed to helping tenants sustain their tenancy.

Here's how we are doing...

#### Performance



352

customers into employment (target 350)







87.69%

satisfaction with the overall quality of their home (target 92%)







2.94%

rent arrears as a % of the rent due (target 3.04%)







93.81%

satisfaction with aids andadaptationsservice (target 94%)





93.72%

satisfaction with the

allocations and

lettings service

(target 94%)

7.51%

tenancy turnover

(target 8.05%)



26.34

days to re-let a property (that did not need major improvement works) (target 28 days)



#### Key stats

4,142
housing applications processed

52,885

bids for homes received from prospective and existing tenants 875

homes let with 86.1% of being let to those with the highest housing need

85%

adapted homes let to applicants who needed adaptations to help them live independently £1.43m

in financial gains for tenants including welfare benefits, grant funding and affordable credit 139

safeguarding reports dealt with

4,671 tenancy visits completed

644

support interventions delivered to help tenants sustain their tenancies





## Sustainable Tenancies The year in review

During the year we completed over 4,500 tenancy visits to homes. Our tenancy visit programme helps us to ensure homes are safe and in good condition, and helps us understand whether you or those living in your home need any support. Our Housing Advisors have updated over 3,500 records helping us to understand and better respond to your needs, vulnerabilities and contact preferences.

We are committed to supporting you when you need it most and, in a year when our communities continued to face real hardship, we have set up a hub on our website so you know what support is available to help you save and manage your money. Our team of advisors have also been on hand to offer practical guidance and support. In the last year they have helped over 400 tenants and generated £1.43m in financial gains, including welfare benefits,

grant funding, and affordable credit. Our Livin Futures advisors have also supported 352 customers into work and training reaching a total of 3,000 customers in the lifetime of our Livin Futures programme.

As the housing crisis continues, we are always looking for new ways to provide the homes you need in the areas you are proud to call home. We are very pleased to have developed over 260 homes this year despite the challenges the construction industry is experiencing. We are working with local authorities. partners and developers to create more homes in the local area to reduce the number of people on housing waiting lists. In addition to this we are adapting our homes and looking at home swap arrangements, to ensure you can live in a home suitable for your needs.

#### We listened, we acted

## We listened (Complaints)

You told us that we did not keep you up to date while you were waiting for aids and adaptations to your homes.



#### We acted

We created a monitoring process for better oversight of outstanding cases to keep you updated. We worked with our partners at Durham County Council to receive monthly progress reports to allow our cases to be updated and so updates can be given at first point of contact. As a result of actions we have implemented, satisfaction levels have increased by 15% from 83.3% to 98.2% within the year.

# How to contact contactus@livin.co.uk www.durhamkeyoptions.co.uk 0800 587 4538

#### We listened (Customer Voice – Cost of Living survey)

You told us that you would like more information to be available about the support we offer for financial hardship.



#### We acted

We created a new webpage, a financial wellbeing toolkit and a social media campaign to promote our support offer. We revised our rent arrears procedure to strengthen our approach to arrears prevention and the support we provide.

As a result of our campaign, we have helped 958 tenants to access £1.43m in grant funding, welfare benefits and affordable credit.

An example of this is that we have been able to assist one of our tenants to increase housing benefit entitlement and drastically reduce care costs. This resulted in her improving her financial situation by £23K in 12 months.

# Providing Quality Sustainable Homes

We aim to ensure our tenants are living in warm, safe, high quality, sustainable homes in a place they are proud to live.

Here's how we are doing...

#### Performance

number of properties achieving SAP Band C (target 8,160)



72.38

average SAP score of all properties (target 75.50)











84.89%

of tenants satisfied with repairs (target



97.24%

of jobs completed at

first visit (target 95%)





88.30%

of tenants satisfied

with planned works

(target 92%)

16.32

days average time taken to complete repairs (calendar days) (target 12)







96.98%

of tenants satisfied with gas servicing (target 94%)





homes maintained to comply with Decent Homes Standard





47.30%

of damp and mould cases closed within 33 days (target 100%) Service Standard





days to carry out damp inspection (target 8 days) Service Standard





26.61

days to carry out repairs following damp and mould inspection (target 25 days) Service Standard





100%

of damp cases requiring a follow up which has been completed (target 100%)





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#### Tenant satisfaction measures



87.89%

satisfaction with overall repairs service (TP02)





85.80%

satisfaction with time taken to complete most recent repair (TP03)





86.74%

satisfaction that the home is wellmaintained (TP04)







89.07% satisfaction that the





homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard



98.9%

emergency repairs completed within target timescale (RP02)







non-emergency repairs completed within target timescale (RP02)





99.98% gas safety checks (BS01)





100% fire safety checks







water safety checks (BS04)



**Key stats** 

homes had improvements to ensure your homes meet the Decent Homes Guidance

responsive repairs completed to homes

kitchens installed

251 heating systems replaced

191 homes had windows replaced

damp and mould cases raised

repairs completed to homes to resolve damp and mould

#### **Local Offer**

We are committed to providing you with safe, warm, high-quality and energy-efficient homes. To meet this commitment, 1,260 homes have received energy efficiency improvements during 2023/24.

## Providing Quality Sustainable Homes

#### The year in review

Demand for our repairs service continued to increase from the previous year with 37,262 responsive repairs completed in total to homes. Despite this increase in demand, our commitment to providing you with convenient and reliable services has meant that 97.24% of repairs were completed right first time and 94.70% of emergencies were attended to within four hours and completed within 24 hours.

You, our tenants, have engaged with us regularly to provide feedback on the repairs service via satisfaction surveys. We know that most of you are happy with the service provided and we have used feedback received from you to improve. We have also worked with our InsightXchange to scrutinise the service, taking your feedback into consideration. This work resulted in us introducing new service standards and a revised repairs and maintenance policy in June 2024.

We have continued our proactive work to identify damp and mould in homes through our damp and mould campaign. A new damp and mould policy was approved by our Board during the year. This set a service standard to inspect and carry out mould treatments to all homes within 33 days of damp or mould being identified.

Gas servicing and other safety checks help to keep you safe in your home. At the end of 2023/24, 99.42% of all our homes had received all the required checks such as gas safety tests and electrical wiring inspections. We completed all fire safety inspections in our residential blocks of flats ahead of target, making sure that any issues were identified and addressed to maintain the safety of customers living in those homes.

During the year we continued to invest in reducing our carbon footprint with 86% of our homes now performing above energy rating C, ensuring new homes are built to be highly energy efficient. We invested energy improvement works to 1,260 homes, improving the thermal efficiency and making them cheaper to run.

Works are progressing on installing solar PV and smart air bricks to 199 homes to provide increased energy efficiency and thermal comfort, as well as savings on energy bills. This innovative method of reducing the energy required to heat homes and the generation of free electricity is partially funded by the government social housing decarbonisation fund but will see us investing over £1.65m.

#### We listened, we acted

## We listened (Complaints)

You told us that we needed to improve the way we manage complex and multi-trade repairs.



#### We acted

We introduced new internal processes to monitor complex repairs while these are in progress and introduced trackable repairs within the My Livin App to allow customers to be kept informed about ongoing repairs and reduce the need to chase up appointments.

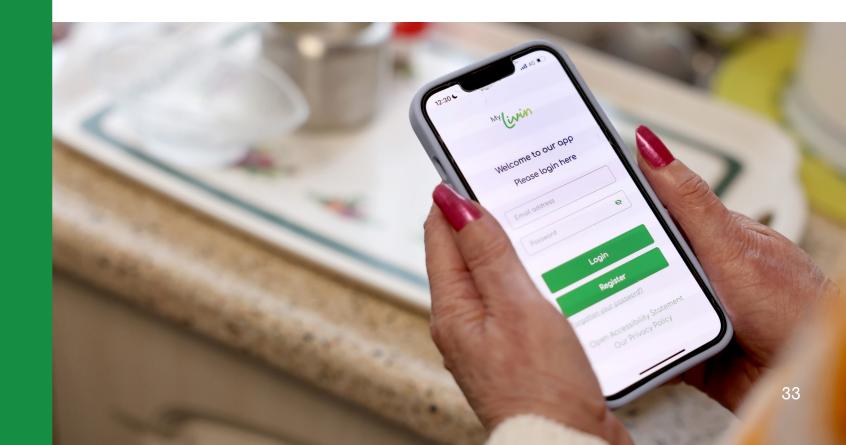
#### We listened (Customer Voice – amplified survey)

Tenants and leaseholders living in flat blocks with a communal area were asked how frequently they would like the communal areas to be cleaned. 60% responded fortnightly would be their preference.



## We acted

We have awarded a cleaning contract, which means that we will clean communal areas fortnightly rather than monthly.



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#### Repairs communication

#### We listened Repairs communication (Scrutiny Review)

The InsightXchange conducted a review of the Repairs and Maintenance policy. They were provided with all relevant data on complaints, satisfaction levels, and regulatory requirements. The group told us that we needed to improve communication about appointments and where there may be delays and that we needed to improve the quality of works.

#### We acted

We revised our Repairs and Maintenance Policy to include a range of service standards agreed with the group which focus on providing flexible appointments outside of our normal timescales, regular updates to customers where repairs are delayed, a commitment to tailoring the service and contacts about the service to meet the needs of our vulnerable tenants. and understanding and addressing the root cause of repairs not being completed to the expected quality standard.



## **Building and Acquiring** Sustainable Homes

We aim to build and acquire additional high quality, sustainable homes, which meet the needs and aspirations of tenants, in places where they are proud to live.

Here's how we are doing...

#### Performance



units developed and acquired (excludings ESPs) (target 239)





of units secured against business plan targets over a threeyear period (target 85%)





new supply delivered (development

acquisitions) – Social Housing (VFM Metric 2) (target 2.68%)









8,949 total stock number

(target 8,932)



new build homes developed and acquired, cumulative over 3 years (target 338)





85.07

average SAP rating of land-led homes completed (target 86)







#### Performance



completed (target 84)





average SAP rating of acquisitions of new homes approved which are suitable for older persons and/or disabled people (target 24%)





£39.4 million invested in the creation of new homes





#### **Building and Acquiring** Sustainable Homes

#### The year in review

Increasing the number of attractive, affordable and energy efficient homes has been an important area of focus for the year. With over 11,010 people registered on Durham Key Options, we recognise how important our role is in meeting housing need. To help meet this need, during the year we built or purchased 233 much needed new homes for social rent, affordable rent and Rent to Buy for families, older and disabled people. We also bought nine homes for affordable rent that were previously sold under the Rent to Buy scheme.

We completed new developments at Laburnum Grove, St Helen Auckland; High Grove, Wynyard;

Middlestone Meadows, Spennymoor; Elwick Gardens, Hartlepool; Bracks Farm, Bishop Auckland; West Park, Darlington; Burdon Green, Coxhoe; Maple Avenue and Firtree, Shildon; Elizabeth Gardens, Spennymoor; and Elder Gardens, Newton Aycliffe.

We are continuing to invest and learn from new technologies, reducing the carbon emissions of our new homes and improving the thermal insulation and fabric efficiency. We have invested in new low carbon technologies, with 16% of our completed homes during the year fitted with air source heat pumps, and 12% of completed homes fitted with Solar PV.

#### We listened, we acted

## We listened (Complaints)

You wanted to be better informed on the use of air source heat pumps at the start of your tenancy, and for our operatives to be better trained.



#### We acted

We have trained our Housing Advisors on how to operate air source heat pumps and to better understand the environmental benefits of low carbon heating systems.

We have trained Livin Works operatives on the repair issues associated with air source heat pumps.

We have added a FAQs section on air source heat pumps to our website, where you can also download user guides on your air source heat pump.

Since no further complaints have been made in relation to this issue.

#### We listened (Customer Voice – Development policy survey)

You told us that moving into a new build home is exciting but can also be overwhelming when trying to find answers to common queries you may have.



#### We acted

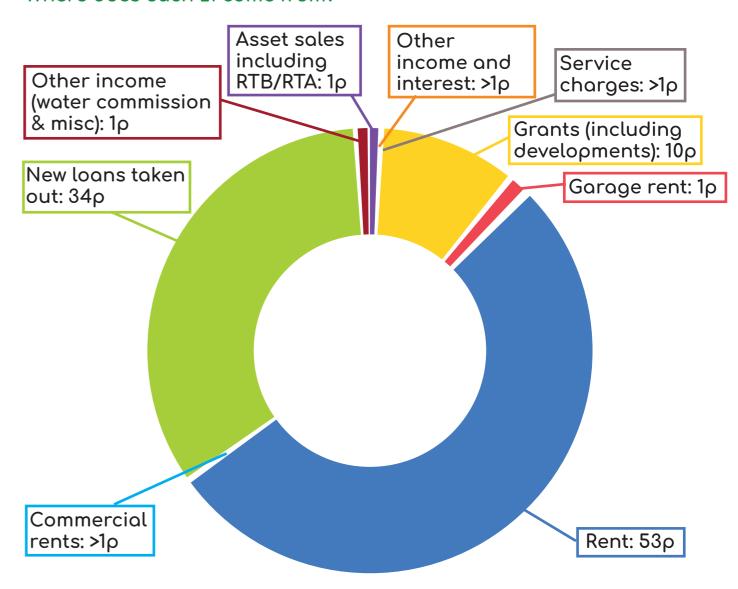
We developed a set of Frequently Asked Questions on our website to help answer some of the most common questions we receive from tenants in new build homes and make your move into your new home as easy as possible.

For example, utility and internet connections, caring for your new garden, reporting repairs and arranging refuse collection.

Since the introduction of the new web page we have allocated 117 newly built homes and this page has been viewed 167 times.

## Finance -How We Spend Your Rent

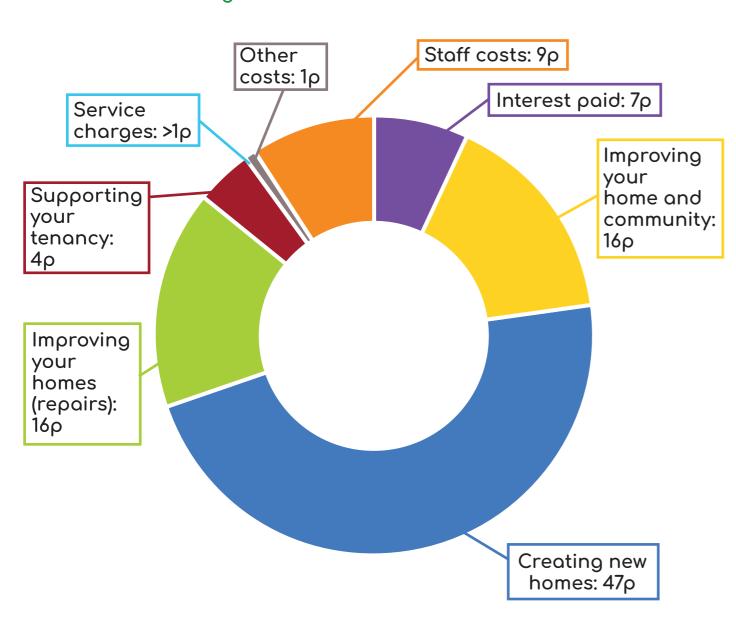
#### Where does each £1 come from?



## Finance -How We Spend Your Rent

## Want to get involved?

Where does each £1 go?



You can read our value for money assessment by visiting livin.co.uk or alternatively paper copies are available by calling **0800 587 4538**.

If you have some time to spare and would like to be involved in the development of our services, we would love to hear from you. We have lots of ways for you to influence and improve our services, from taking five minutes to complete a survey, telling us what you think of our policies, spending time having a discussion with other tenants or by scrutinising our services as part of our InsightXchange.

You can take part in person, over the phone, in a video call or by email or text if you wish. We can even help with transport if needed. We will always try to adapt to meet your needs.

To find out more, give us a call on 0800 587 4538 or visit livin.co.uk

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