



Livingin

Annual Report
to Tenants
2020 - 2021

Welcome

Welcome to the 2020/21 annual report to you, our tenants. It has been an unparalleled year with challenges around every corner as the coronavirus pandemic swept the nation. We are very pleased to be able to share highlights of how we have supported you through the difficult times and how we adapted to deliver our key services safely.



Colin Steel
Chief Executive

We focused our efforts on keeping you safe, listening to you and providing support throughout whilst continuing our repairs, essential servicing and safety compliance checks. We mobilised an emergency support service and helped those of you who needed to access vital supplies, services and welfare. Expanding our employment, training and money support meant we could help and support those whose work and financial circumstances were impacted by the pandemic.

Working with our trusted and reliable partners based in the heart of our communities we supported the delivery of vital lifeline services. We shared our thanks during the winter period to those who worked tirelessly to help others and again would like to share how proud we are to have such dedication and commitment to helping others in our communities.

As we look to next year and we recover from the pandemic, we aim to progress our emerging priorities from Plan A including enabling you, our tenants and customers to be in control, shaping our communities to be places where you can live happily and making our homes sustainable and energy efficient while we work towards achieving net zero by 2050.

We launched our first tenant e-bulletin, Life@Livin last April. Designed to keep you updated on what's been going on over the last year with key highlights, news items and great examples of how your feedback has helped us to improve the way we do things, please look out for our next edition in October 2021.

I am pleased to say that we remain in a strong place to continue meeting the principles set out in the Government's Charter for Social Housing Residents published in 2020 and we have delivered our most ambitious Customer Voice programme ever. Also, last year we received the news from the Regulator of Social Housing that we had retained the highest rating for Governance and Viability (G1, V1).

Within this report we share how we have performed during this turbulent year and how this compared to how we expected to perform in comparison to our targets and the previous year.

I hope you enjoy reading this and we look forward to continuing to work closely with you.

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

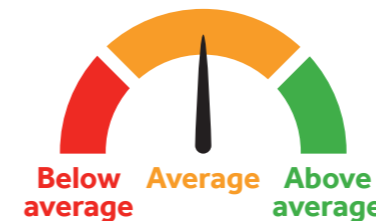


Performance was not as good as the previous year



Areas of focus agreed with tenants

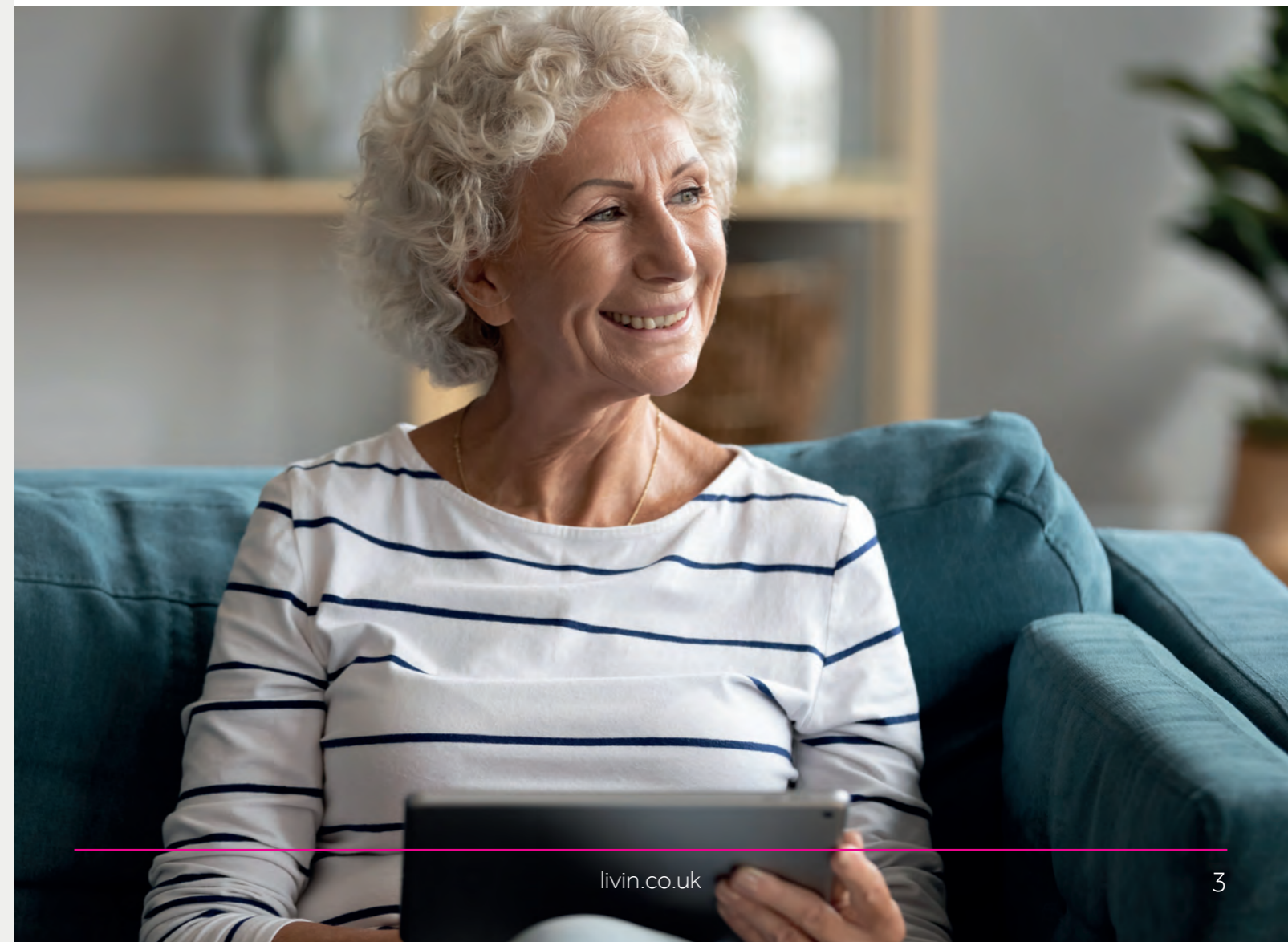
How we compare to others



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

Local offer

We will give you information about our performance targets across all of our most important service areas. You asked us to show you information on repairs, home improvement works and anti-social behaviour.



Delivering a brilliant customer service

We are committed to making sure you can access our services in a place, and at a time that suits you.

Despite periods where coronavirus affected our services, we continued to be available 24/7 and dealt with almost 206,000 customer transactions across all services. As face to face visits were not always possible, we changed our main methods of supporting you to ensure safe ways of working and this change helped us maintain customer satisfaction.

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.

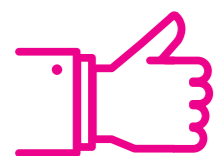
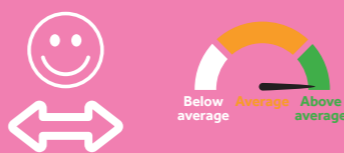
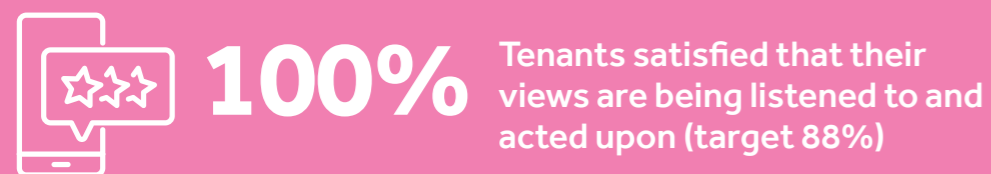
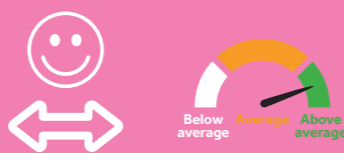
We listened

You asked us to give you more information on how to use our Livin app during the coronavirus pandemic so that you could access our services easily.



We acted

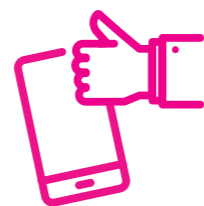
We provided a video showing step by step how to download and use the app to contact us, report your repair and check your rent balance.



98% satisfaction with the way complaints were handled (target 91%)



28% of repairs reported using our Livin app (target 17%)



80% of queries dealt with at first point of contact (target 83%)



68% of transactions completed digitally (target 65%)



234
Complaints

275
Compliments

207
Complaints dealt with within 4 days

16
Formal complaints

206,000
Contacts

108
Service improvements

Putting in safe ways of working meant we could continue to deliver our vital services and we provided you with more ways to speak with us using video calls and direct team LiveChat. We accelerated our transformation plans to digitise more of our services, including digital lettings meaning we could still provide homes throughout the year.

To help you use digital services for the first time we made easy to follow videos meaning you could manage your tenancy from the safety of your own home.

Local offer

We value what you have to say to us and we will always be polite to you. We will give you clear information about what to do if you are not happy with our services, and use your feedback to make improvements.

[Click here to give feedback](#)

Customer Voice

Due to lockdown restrictions, while we could not meet with you face to face we made it possible to hear your voice in other ways. We offered 56 online opportunities to get involved in shaping a variety of services and listened to the views from over 6,000 responses. As a result, you helped us to introduce 51 significant improvements including services that are easier for you to use, new and reviewed policies and better ways of communicating with you.

Tenants from your scrutiny volunteer group attended 15 different training events, including meeting the Regulator of Social Housing and the Housing Ombudsman. This helped them with their skills, knowledge and confidence to influence and develop new policies and services.

Want to get involved?

New tenants are always welcome to get involved with us in helping review and improve our services, please visit our dedicated website page to find out the ways you can get involved at times that suit you.

[Click here to get involved](#)



We listened

You wanted us to clarify what is a complaint

We acted

We worked with you to revise our Customer Feedback Policy to ensure it reflected the expectations of our tenants, it was written in plain English and now includes a clear definition of a complaint. A complaint is defined as:

"Any expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service provided by Livin, the actions or lack of actions of Livin, its employees, or including anyone acting on behalf of Livin, affecting an individual resident or groups of residents."

Improving your home

We work hard to provide you with safe, warm, high-quality homes that meet your current and future needs and aspirations.

Your health and wellbeing are a key priority which is why we introduced safe ways of working to continue to complete emergency/urgent repairs, essential gas, electrical and stairlift safety checks making sure your homes were safely maintained.

We continued to offer our repairs service throughout the year investing £7.9 million in repairing your homes. We spent a further £2.4 million in improving homes, including kitchens and bathrooms and improving the energy efficiency of 187 homes.

Local offer

We will provide you with safe, warm, and energy efficient homes. You asked us to focus on ensuring your home is well maintained, secure and well insulated.



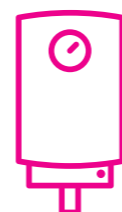
89%

Satisfaction with repairs (target 91%)



98%

Satisfaction with gas servicing (target 97.5%)



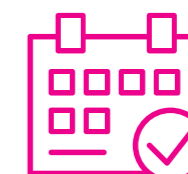
99.9%

of homes with a valid gas safety certificate (target 100%)



94%

Satisfaction with home improvement work (target 96%)



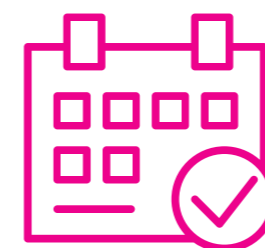
12 days

to complete repairs on average (target 19)



89%

of repairs completed right first time (target 93%)



96%

of repairs appointments made and kept (target 98%)



5,243

out of a target of 5,500 homes achieving good energy efficiency





We listened

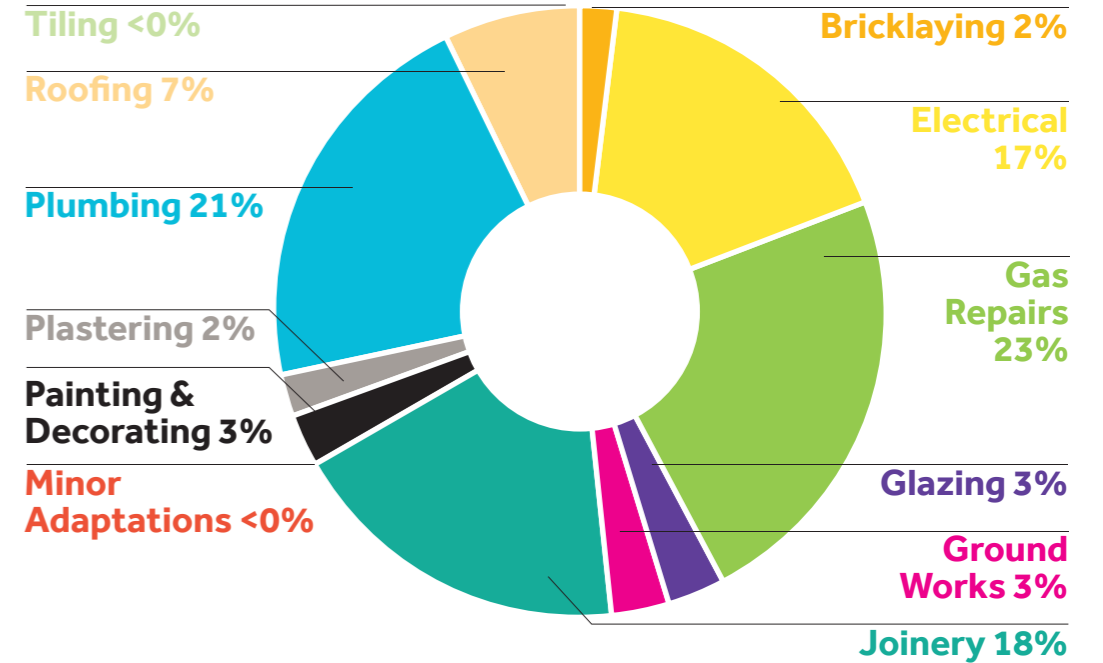
You asked us for reassurance about how we would carry out repairs and gas servicing safely in your home during lockdown.

We acted

We changed our services to keep you safe and provided digital information flyers that were regularly updated throughout the pandemic to keep you fully informed.

This chart shows the type of repairs completed in 2020/21

Bricklaying	635
Electrical	5071
Gas Repairs	6752
Glazing	792
Ground Works	837
Joinery	5226
Minor Adaptations	122
Painting & Decorating	806
Plastering	535
Plumbing	6135
Roofing	2077
Tiling	51
Grand Total	29,039



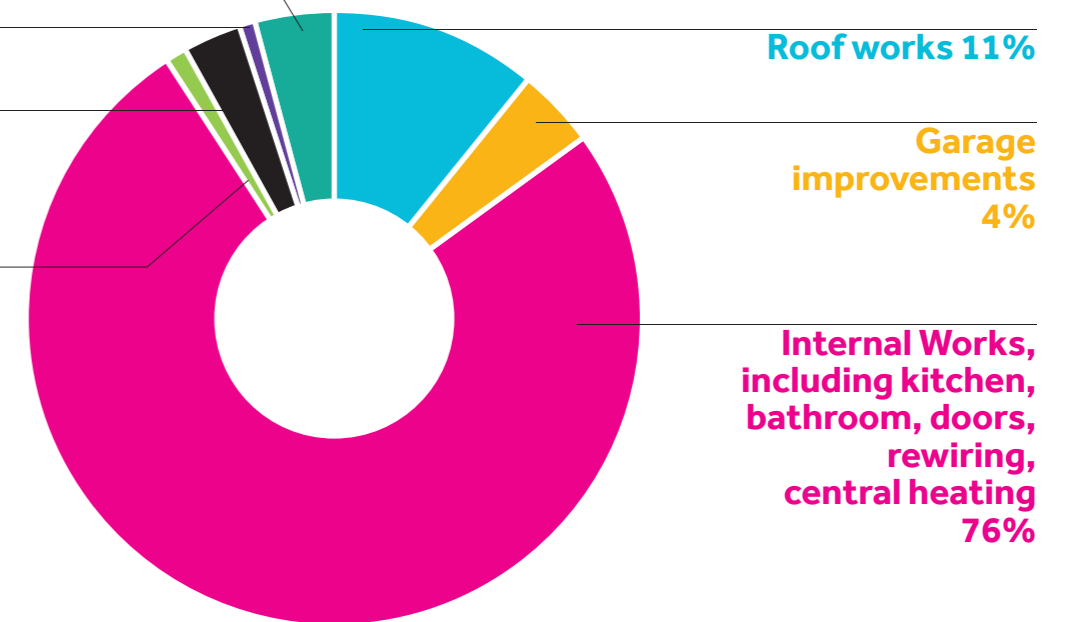
The chart shows the type of improvement works (excluding repairs) completed in 2020/21

Conversions 4%

Landscaping 1%

Improvement works to communal areas 3%

External works including doors 1%



We listened

You told us through feedback and satisfaction surveys that our home improvement works arrangements could be better.

We acted

We worked with your scrutiny group to look at the services. We introduced five service improvements including better face to face care and improved information for customers.

82%

of Livin Works waste recycled and not sent to landfill

100%

of properties fitted with smoke detectors

12,015

Safety checks completed

Converted
8

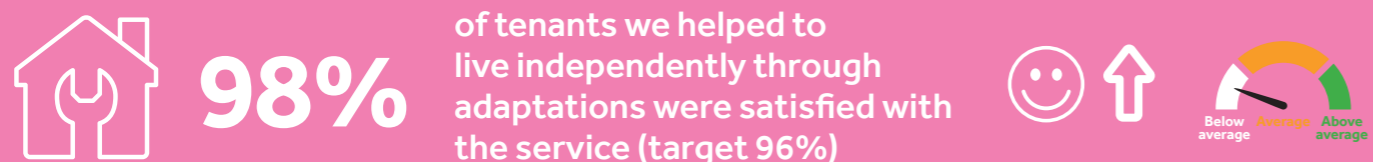
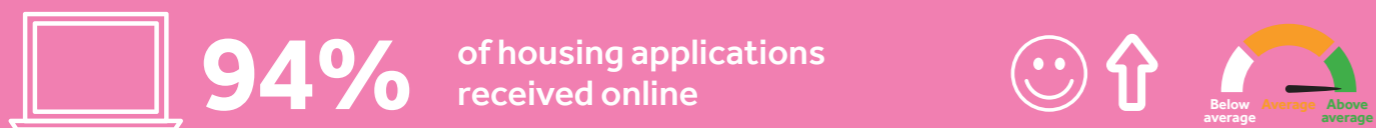
low demand properties to provide large, modern family homes

Supporting your tenancy

We make it easy to rent a home from us and ensure that once you move into your home we are on hand to provide the advice and support you might need to be able to continue to manage your home and to live happily in it.

We processed 3,400 new housing applications and let 800 new homes to tenants in 2020/21. With demand for housing remaining high during the pandemic we developed a digital lettings process, complete with digital sign up and virtual viewings, so you could still rent a home from us.

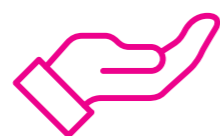
We expanded our employment, training and money support and offers meaning we could help those whose work and financial circumstances were impacted by the pandemic.



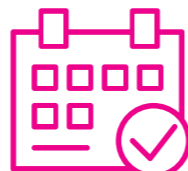
£993k
Additional welfare benefits secured for tenants (target 1.2M)



96%
Satisfaction with the home you moved into (target 97.5%)



190
Tenants supported into work (438 participating) (target 300)

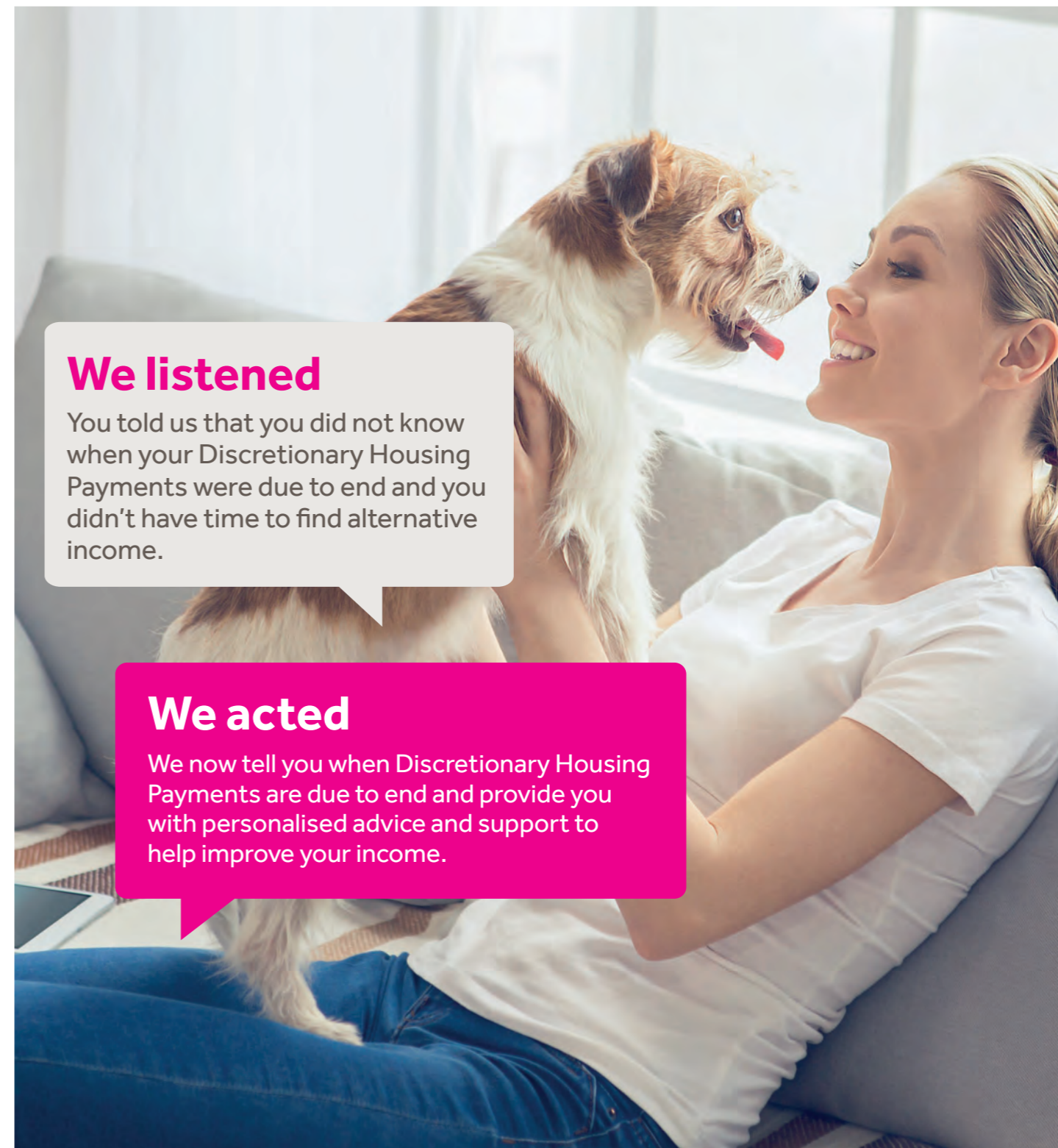


50 days
to re-let a property on average (target 60 days)



For our young tenants and residents, we secured funding for over 40 fully paid Kickstart placements from the Department of Work and Pensions to help them gain employment by developing experience and work skills.

We helped 541 vulnerable tenants with enhanced support to remain independent in their homes and in the early part of the first national lockdown launched a tenant emergency support service with our community partners to help tenants in crisis.



We listened

You told us that you did not know when your Discretionary Housing Payments were due to end and you didn't have time to find alternative income.

We acted

We now tell you when Discretionary Housing Payments are due to end and provide you with personalised advice and support to help improve your income.

363

tenants supported to remain independent through home adaptations

3,400

processed housing applications

Improving your community

We work with you, residents and our partner organisations to improve communities so they continue to be places where you want to live. We invested £280,000 in 101 community projects across our locality and secured a further £575,000 funding for communities.

Our community projects ranged from supporting the distribution of supplies to foodbanks, youth and school holiday activities, gardening and "grow your own" initiatives and fuel energy advice. We have worked with over 70 community partners and talk to resident groups throughout our local communities over the year.

Local offer

Carry out regular inspections of estates in our communities to make sure our homes and properties are maintained to a suitable standard.



Satisfaction with your neighbourhood as a place to live (target 90%)



72%

Satisfaction with our grounds maintenance service (target 92%)



We listened

During lockdown we contacted 4,685 tenants to ask what support services would be most helpful. You told us that we could help by providing food parcels to the most isolated and vulnerable people in our communities.

We acted

We provided financial support to 25 local community organisations and they delivered over 8,300 food parcels and hot meals to vulnerable households during the year.

71

New anti-social behaviour cases per 1,000 properties. The top two reasons for anti-social behaviour are fly tipping and noise

£283,384

Invested in communities through the community regeneration fund

£574,410

More funding secured from other community investors

£10.5m

Generated in social value within our communities

101

Community projects supported this year

77

Tenants provided with financial support which helped them to gain jobs and go into further education

113

Households supported to reduce fuel bills amounting to £35,454

850

Children provided with free activities and meals during school holidays

Building and acquiring new homes

We build and buy the right new homes in the right locations in our local area to ensure we provide a mix of much needed homes designed for a range of households. During the year, we invested over £22 million on the provision of new homes and acquired 79 new affordable rental homes for families in housing need.

While our building sites were closed for part of the year, since re-opening we have delivered the first phase of our largest development of new homes at Salters Lane, Sedgfield and the first three phases at Travellers Green, Newton Aycliffe.



We are excited to learn from our two eco homes located at Travellers Green. They offer an air source heat pump to provide heating and hot water via a hot water tank, mechanical ventilation with heat recovery, solar PV and increased thermal insulation / fabric efficiencies, helping us on our decarbonisation journey.



We listened

You said we needed to be clear about how we decide on the type and size properties we will build or buy and how we will ensure these investments provide value for money.

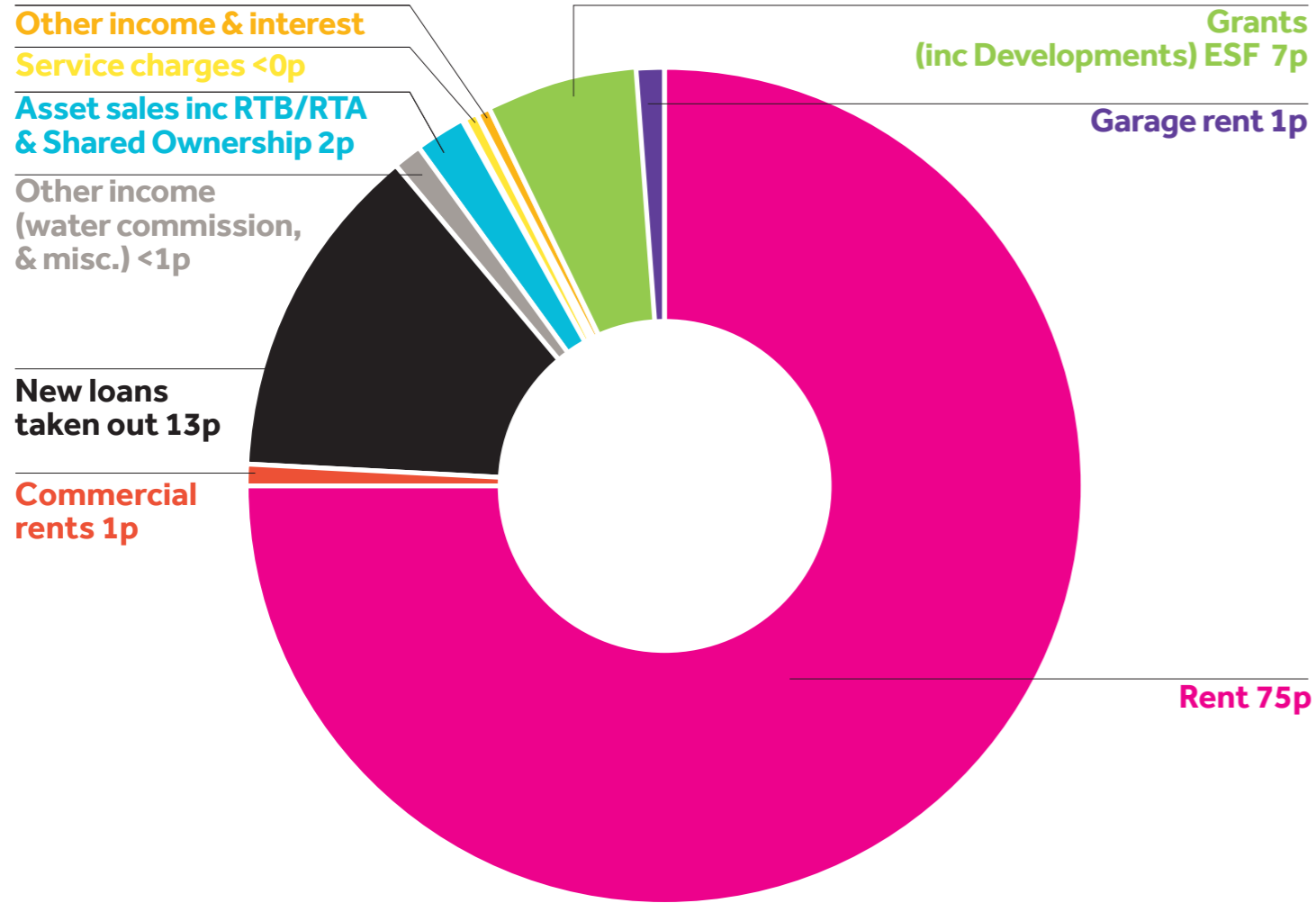
We acted

With your help we produced a new Development Policy and published on our website a new Development Policy which provides the clarity you asked for.

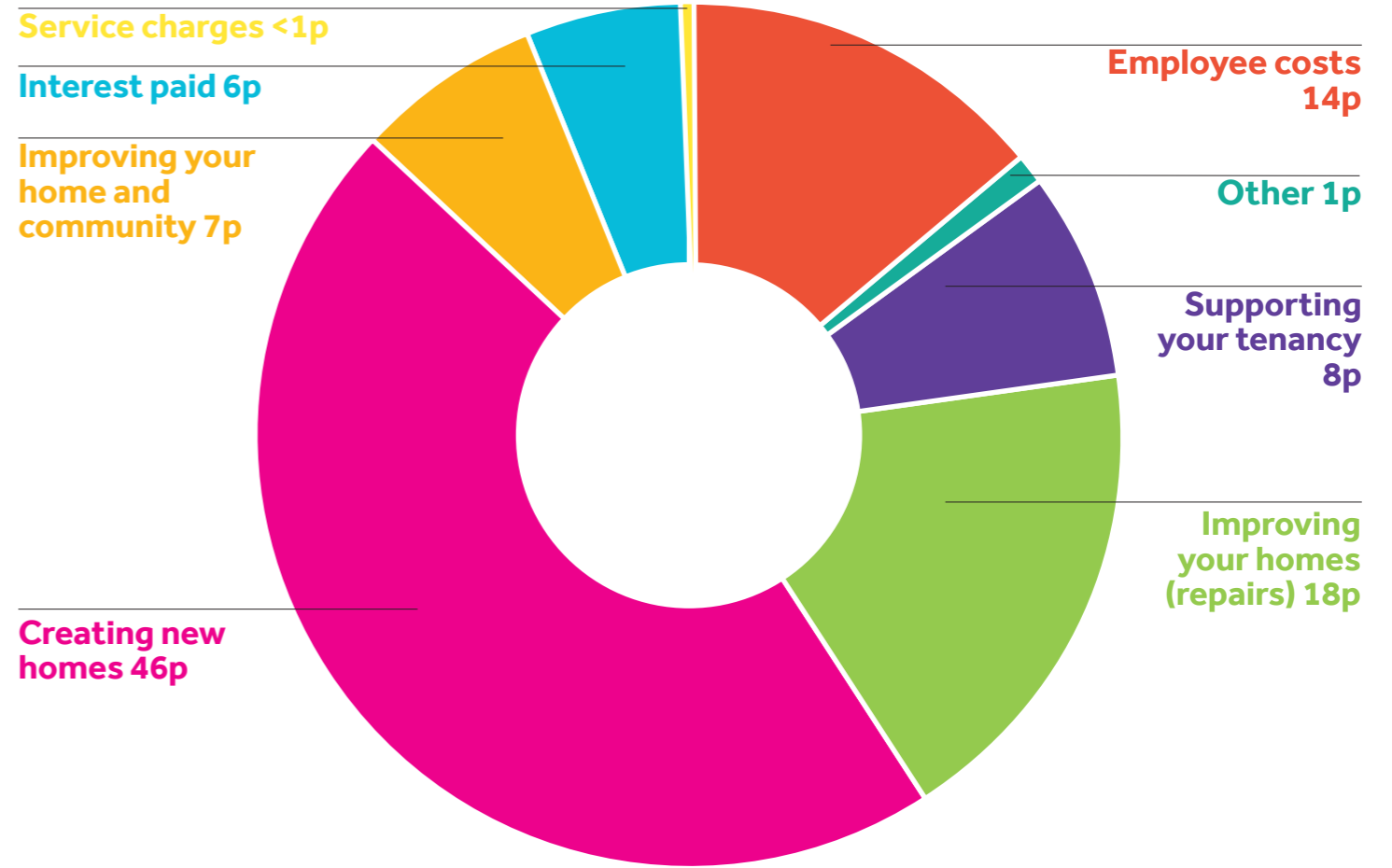


Finance

Where does each £1 come from?



Where does each £1 go?



Income

	£'000	
Asset sales inc RTB/RTA & Shared Ownership	929	↓
Other income & interest	21	↓
Service charges	71	↑
Grants (inc Developments) ESF	3,332	↓
Garage rent	642	↓
Rent	33,950	↑
Commercial rents	239	↓
New loans taken out	6,000	↑
Other income (water commission & misc.)	453	↓
Total	45,647	

↑ Increased from previous year
 — No change
 ↓ Decreased from previous year

Expenditure

	£'000	
Interest paid	3,118	↑
Improving your home and community	3,583	↓
Creating new homes	22,034	↑
Improving your homes (repairs)	8,591	↓
Supporting your tenancy	3,751	↓
Service charges	74	↓
Other	635	↓
Employee costs	6,364	↑
Total	48,150	

↑ Increased from previous year
 — No change
 ↓ Decreased from previous year

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