



Annual report.

APRIL 2022 - MARCH 2023

CONTENTS PAGE



6 | Customer service update

An update from our customer service team and our commitments for the next 12 months.



14-15 | Community support

How we supported you to create happy homes and communities.



8-10 | Lettings and new homes

Our lettings performance and how we're working towards our 2024 new homes target.



16 | Dealing with complaints

How we resolved things when we got it wrong.



11-12 | Repairs and maintenance

How we maintained your homes through routine and planned repairs.



17-18 | Customer engagement

How you got involved and helped shape our services and approach.



13 | Health, safety and compliance

How our teams kept you safe in your homes this year.



19 | Money and value

Our financial position and how we invested this year.

2022-23 AT A GLANCE



292
colleagues



40,179
customer calls



253
homes re-let



£1.1m
secured for customers



784
engaged residents



£2.4m
responsive repairs



£898k
planned improvements



£19.3m
annual turnover



THE YEAR IN REVIEW

From Group Chief Executive, Julie Guildford Smith

When I joined Honeycomb Group in December 2022, I was immediately struck by Staffs Housing's strong social purpose and commitment to the local area. It was also easy to see the fantastic connection that you have with our teams.

As residents, you play such a vital role when it comes to helping us deliver quality services. This year over 700 of you had your say, engaging with us through mystery shops, customer panels, live and learn courses and so much more. It's this engagement, which often comes with lots of feedback (both positive and constructive!) that really helps us shape services in a way that works for you, so a huge thank you.

Because of your valued input, we've been able to make lots of improvements over the last year. We've tweaked our complaints procedure, launched community clean ups, held ASB surgeries, continued our garden competition and enjoyed even more resident coffee mornings. A very busy 12 months indeed!

It was also great to meet new residents this year. Despite challenges across the housing sector following the pandemic, coupled with the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, we said hello to two new sites on Waterloo Street and Dividy Road. We're also nearing completion on our Goldenhill site, so we look forward to welcoming residents there too very soon.

As many of you will know, we said goodbye to Tim Sheail, our former Director of Housing Services, in March, after 16 years of service to the Group. Tim left some big shoes to fill, which are currently being worn by Steve Wilson.

Steve, an experienced housing professional, joined us as Director of Asset Management and Compliance in January. He's currently leading our property services, housing, compliance and customer service teams, and has so far played a big role in several projects across the Group. That includes investment into our safety and compliance services.

This additional investment meant that we could expand our team, welcoming experts from each of the six main areas of compliance. The new team have been involved in the creation of a digital safety hub on our website, as well as a campaign across social media, which has so far reached over 20,000 people.

In 22/23 you also told us that you were unhappy with our current repairs provider, so we listened. Steve led on securing a new provider, working with our involved residents at every stage, to make sure we selected one that worked for you.

Before I sign off, I'd like to say a big thank you for your involvement over the last year and ask that you keep this up.

We always want to hear from you, so we'll be sending out feedback questionnaires every quarter. Please do get involved and share your thoughts, no matter how big or small, so you can help us, help you, when it comes to your home.

CELEBRATING 2022 - 23

This annual report has been customer approved by our fantastic volunteers. It shares information on how you're influencing our services, performance updates from our teams and how we're focusing on keeping you safe at home.

7

people staircased their shared ownership home



£476k

generated from shared ownership staircasing



200

tonnes of gardening waste recycled



75

volunteers supported Staffs Housing services



100

new residents supported in Meir



New wellbeing hub launched to support people aged 55+





2022-23



40,179
customer calls



4.02 min
average call wait time



5.30 min
average call time



35,536
customer emails



1 day
average email response

All calls and
emails recorded
for quality and
training purposes

ANOTHER BUSY YEAR FOR OUR customer service team

Although the team faced a number of challenges, on average you awarded them an 8.5 out of 10 customer satisfaction score.

Taking over 40,000 calls and 35,000 emails, the team achieved a 1 day average email response and a 4 minute average call response.

The team also launched a brand new portal so you can get in touch 24/7. You can track repairs, view tenancy information and read our latest news, all at a time and from a place that suits you. Frontdoor will help you get in touch in an easier and more efficient way.

We're aiming to have 20% of customers signed up by December 2023 and 60% by December 2024.

"The person that took my call was exceptional. She talked to me in length and with a very calming voice. Really helped me."

- Staffs Housing resident

WE TAKE OUR COMMITMENTS SERIOUSLY

our promises to you

2023 - 24

1

We will create and share a series of customer videos to explain our lettings process. We want to make sure that you, as residents, know what is needed to maintain your tenancy.

2

We will achieve the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation. In 22/23 our Housing Officers received training from local domestic abuse charity Glow. Now they're able to understand and recognise the impact of abuse, and know how to handle disclosures.

3

We will host an ASB workshop with the local police. This will help us to develop strong working relationships with them, and improve our ability to respond to issues. We'll also launch an updated version of our noise app to enable you to record videos and submit photos easily as part of ASB investigations.

4

We will reduce the time it takes to let our homes to less than 21 days.



Maria
Independent Living
Officer

Drew

Resident



CREATING NEW HOMES you can be proud of 2022-23

In 2022-23 the whole construction sector faced huge challenges. This included inflation, supply issues, labour shortages and economic instability in the UK. Despite this, we've seen some real success at Staffs Housing, with 21 new affordable homes created in the last year. This means we can continue to create happy homes for people across Staffordshire, like Drew and Harley...

Resident Drew moved into her Cecilly Mills home in 2022. She was living in an apartment with her young son and ex-partner. She decided to join the local council waiting list when her relationship with her ex-partner became strained.

After signing up, Drew was contacted by Staffs Housing. She was offered a two-bed semi detached home within the brand-new development in Cheadle.

Drew moved into her affordable rent home last September. She was later joined by five more families who purchased a shared ownership home on the site. She and son Harley now have a space of their own, with their favourite part being the secure garden where Harley can play.

"Staffs Housing were really helpful and made the move in process as smooth as possible. I'm now excited for what the future holds."

- Drew, Staffs Housing resident

21
new homes
built in 22-23

 **17**
two or three
bed houses

 **4**
one-bed
apartments

 **5**
sold through
shared ownership

100
homes
transferred
in 22-23

 **23**
two-bed
bungalows

 **72**
two, three, or
four-bed houses

 **5**
two-bed
apartments

CREATING NEW HOMES
you can be proud of
2023-24



22
HOMES
in Goldenhill

9 one-bed apartments
6 three-bed houses
6 two-bed houses
1 three-bed bungalow



10
HOMES
in Hanley

10 one-bed apartments



5
HOMES
in Bentilee

5 two-bed houses



37 TOTAL
HOMES



Golden Hill
Stoke-on-Trent
development

Graham

Resident



HOW WE'RE PERFORMING house and home

new homes, lettings, sales and customer satisfaction

↓ **253**

homes re-let
(last year 261)



↑ **96%**

lettings satisfaction score
(last year was 88%)



↑ **£1.1m**

additional income generated for
tenants by the money advice team
(last year was £1m)



↔ **6**



number of shared ownership
homes sold (last year was 6)

↓ **1.37%**

of our total income was lost
because of empty homes
(last year was 1.7%)



↑ **45**



number of tenants transferred
homes (last year was 38)

↔ **69 days**

average re-let time
(last year was 69 days)



↓ **6**



number of mutual exchanges
completed (last year was 9)

AN UPDATE

routine repairs.

This year you told us you were unhappy with our repairs service, with 35% of you saying you felt dissatisfied with the quality of the service.

After listening to your feedback we decided to change our repairs provider with the hope of having a new one in place in August 2023.

We'll be working closely with our involved customers to choose a new provider, who reflects the values of Staffs Housing and Honeycomb Group.

Getting the service running will be a main priority in 2023-24 and will involve us going back to basics to improve issues you raised like customer communication.

Damp and mould was also vitally important for us this year, following the tragic death of Awaab Ishak in Rochdale.

To demonstrate our commitment to your safety, we reviewed our damp and mould policy to ensure we take an open-minded approach when dealing with reports and recognising the impact fuel poverty can have on condensation.

We've also been proactive in providing support and advice. We did this through a damp and mould awareness campaign that explained more about the issues you might face in your home, why they happen and what to do to resolve them.

Jon Parkes

Head of Assets and Property Services



Sharon and Simon

Property Surveyors



PLANNED IMPROVEMENT COMMITMENTS 2023-24

£1.7m

on component
replacements



£1.1m

on compliance



£419k

on planned repairs
heating and window replacements



REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE **the numbers**

£3.81m

spent on maintaining our buildings



£2.4m

spent on responsive repairs
last year £1.5m



£520k

spent returning empty properties to use
last year £257k



£114k

preventative maintenance cost
last year £367k



£898k

spent on planned maintenance
last year £1.6m



94 kitchen replacements



24 bathroom replacements



62 boiler replacements



76 window replacements



15 storage heater installations



466 smoke or CO detector replacements

AN UPDATE health, safety and compliance.

In 2022-23 we increased our commitment to health, safety and compliance to make sure you remain safe and happy in your home.

We undertook several projects and activities in our homes like annual gas safety inspections, water monitoring and other various risk assessments and inspections.

Water safety was a big focus this year. To keep your supply healthy we carried out legionella assessments and water safety tests in

schemes with shared water systems.

We also looked at our lift safety process and carried out inspections to passenger lifts in our schemes.

Fire safety was also a big focus with us completing new fire risk assessments across all schemes with communal areas. While also installing and upgrading carbon monoxide and smoke detectors. We began replacing fire doors to make sure they comply with new fire safety laws, which will continue into 2023-24 too.

Kathryn Ing

Head of Compliance



1,578
gas safety
checks
completed



41
water safety
checks
completed



122
fire risk
assessments
completed



72
lift safety
checks
completed

YOUR community.

This year was a huge one for community support and resident engagement. As residents, we want you to feel our presence across your community, and we want you to feel like you have a say and can help us shape our services.

CATCHING UP

We hosted seven coffee mornings and arranged various 'clean up' days including one with local councillor Lillian Dodd and a whole community clean up week, the Big Green Summer Clean.

SUPPORTING YOU

We also launched our ASB surgeries. These activities give you more opportunities to speak to us about any issues you're facing like money or anti-social behaviour worries.

CELEBRATING YOU

In the summer, our garden competition was back for the second year running, to recognise our green fingered residents who go the extra mile to enhance their outdoor spaces. We wanted to highlight their hard work and acknowledge all the benefits, including on our wellbeing, that come with gardening.

We also had lots of successful community grant applications. These have already begun to help improve the lives of residents through projects that improve wellbeing or address social issues.

THE BIG GREEN SUMMER CLEAN

July 2022 saw the first ever Big Green Summer Clean. A week of action dedicated to environmental action, that helped to improve communities across schemes in Stoke-on-Trent.

The week brought together over 40 staff from across the Group, customers and

our partners. All chipping in to litter pick surrounding streets, create green spaces, and overhauling a community room too.

Throughout the week the team collected 60 bags of rubbish and filled three skips full of unwanted items or clutter.

"It was a fab week. Thanks to Staffs Housing my home feels so much cleaner and brighter. I'm proud to call it my home."








Nic Recine
Neighbourhoods Officer

HOW WE PERFORMED

142 new cases of ASB (57 reported last year)

-  **0** evictions due to ASB (2 last year)
-  **5** injunctions obtained (5 last year)
-  **8** people were given notice because of ASB (1 last year)

OUR RESPONSE TO **anti-social behaviour**

We understand the devastating effects anti-social behaviour can have on communities. If you experience it, we want you to know that we're here for you and that we'll take reports seriously.

We also want to make reporting incidents of ASB as easy as possible.

It's why in March 2023 we launched brand-new ASB surgeries, inviting residents from across our schemes to attend drop in sessions with our housing officers.

Our teams are trained to deal with disclosures and can handle them discretely and professionally working with local agencies like the police to help resolve issues.

Alongside this we've also set up an ASB hub on our website that provides helpful advice on who to contact at what stage.

"No one should feel like they have no other option than to move to get away from ASB"

Dealing with complaints.

Formal complaints are used as a valuable form of customer feedback.
We don't set targets, but we do aim to resolve complaints as early as possible.

INFORMAL COMPLAINTS

In 2021-22 we made it easier to share your thoughts by introducing a new complaints form on our website. This year we received 260 queries through the function, with 170 relating directly to repairs and 36 escalated as formal complaints.

LESSONS LEARNED

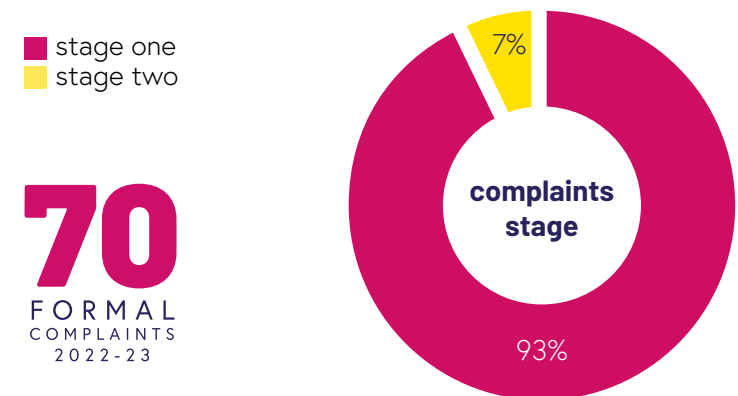
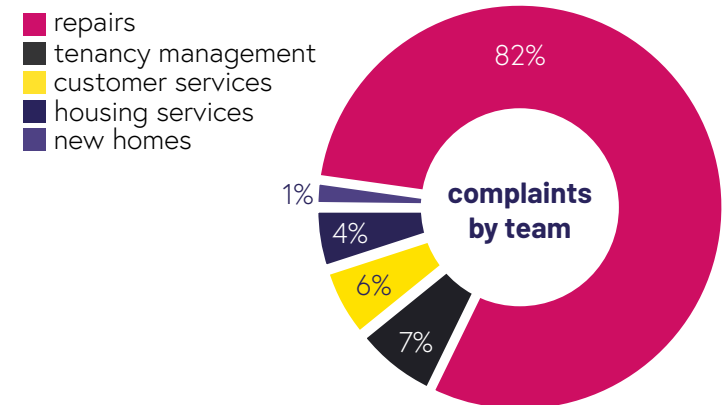
Most complaints this year related to the repairs service. You reported a poor quality service, poor communication about jobs and repairs not being delivered on time. While we'd rather have 0 complaints, we really appreciate you reaching out to tell us when something isn't quite right, so we can put steps in place to improve things.

RESOLUTIONS

We're proud to say that when you told us things weren't right, we made changes. To address issues raised about the repairs service, we've been working closely with involved customers to change repair providers, aiming to have a new provider in place by August 2023. We'll be working to resolve issues raised around our service quality, all while keeping you in the loop too.

FUTURE PLANS

From July 2023 we'll be sending out quarterly tenant satisfaction surveys. We want to measure how well the repairs provider changes are working, but this will also help us to spot any new trends and respond to any new issues quicker.



70
FORMAL
COMPLAINTS
2022-23

Customer engagement and you.

WHAT IS CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT?

For social housing providers like us, customer engagement is a way of making sure our services work for you, our residents.

You have vital first hand experience and you know where services work well, or where there are areas for improvement.

At Staffs Housing we have a dedicated team that makes sure your voice is heard. It's the team's responsibility to make sure there are various ways for you to do this.

The team have also set up dedicated groups of customers who review our services and homes. This includes: mystery shoppers, the customer scrutiny panel, the customer assurances group and more recently the my home group.

As well as this, they also work with other teams from across our organisation to visit schemes and communities too.

ANNE'S JOURNEY

"Getting involved has helped me to gain a better understanding of the organisation."

"It's also given me the opportunity to meet new people and take on new challenges."

In 2015 Anne joined our Customer Scrutiny Panel, shortly after moving into her current home. There she met fellow resident Marjorie and the two quickly became friends. Eight years later Anne says they rarely go a day without talking. The pair spend

their time getting involved to help influence and improve services and are part of several involvement groups and committees. Over the years their involvement has had them attend events, activities and allowed them to meet with housing ministers too.

"If you want to get involved, just speak to the team!"

01782 743854

involve@honeycombgroupp.org.uk





**Katie
and Jo**

Customer Involvement Team

CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT **how we performed**

 **784**
customers engaged

67 
customer activities


118 courses completed
47 hobbies, 27 wellbeing, 7 computer, and 37 vocational

our 2022-23 focus

A priority for our customer engagement team in 2022-23 was working with our involved customers to help us select a new repairs provider.

helped us to review fire risk assessments, evaluate our complaints policy and make sure our tenant satisfaction surveys are accessible and easily understood by all.

Over the year, customers within our involvement groups also

money and value



61p		Rent
14p		Other income
11p		Property sales
9p		Service charges
5p		Other social income

24p		repairs and improvements
17p		staffing, offices, equipment
16p		depreciation of homes
15p		interest charges
13p		social housing costs
8p		building new homes
7p		other general costs



£19.3m
total income
£18.7m last year



£14.3m
rents and service charges
£14.6m last year



3.09%
rent due outstanding
2.36% last year



1.37%
income lost to empty homes
2.02% last year



40%
pay rent by direct debit
38% last year



1

What we said: *'We'll create a new customer group, 'My Home Group', to involve more customers and help them shape our services'*

WHAT WE DID

We introduced the new group, which gives you the chance to have a say about some of our key policies and procedures. It's a space for feedback, both positive and constructive, with customers encouraged to challenge our housing management services in order to improve them.

2

What we said: *'We'll run a community environment week to bring staff, customers and partners together to improve local spaces'*

WHAT WE DID

In July we held our first Big Green Summer Clean! It was an amazing week, with staff working with partner agencies and customers to improve our local environment. We litter picked, tidied up gardens and redecorated community rooms. We had some great feedback from our customers, with many of you saying how pleased you were to have staff helping improve neighbourhoods.

3

What we said: *'We'll create a Housing Officer specialism trial'*

WHAT WE DID

In 2022 we reorganised our team of Housing Officers to help them focus on areas that matter to you. They're now specialism based, rather than location, which means that we now have a dedicated Housing Officer for lettings, ASB and estate management. For us, it's been a positive change and led to improvements in the delivery of our services, but we'll continue to consult with residents to make sure it carries on working for you.

4

What we said: *'We're going to strengthen our focus on health and safety'*

WHAT WE DID

We successfully recruited a new compliance team, complete with a new head of service, two compliance surveyors and six compliance administrators. As a team, they're responsible for keeping you safe in your home and making sure regular checks are completed in the six key compliance areas for the sector. We've also completed a full review of our compliance processes – we want to make sure that our services continue to be high-quality and good value for money. We've upgraded smoke detectors, introduced a new asbestos management plan and even launched a campaign to raise awareness of resident safety.

A photograph of a woman and a man in an office setting. The woman, on the left, has dark hair and is wearing a black top with a patterned scarf. The man, on the right, has short brown hair and is wearing a dark green shirt. They are both smiling and looking towards the right side of the frame, where a computer monitor is partially visible. The background is slightly blurred, showing office equipment and a colorful wall.

**what we
said and did**



If you have difficulties reading this document, please let us know and we will look at alternative ways of providing the information.

Contact us.

Online staffshousing.org.uk

Email hello@staffshousing.org.uk

Customer Services 01782 744533

Head Office 308 London Road, ST4 5AB

Staffs Housing is a part of the Honeycomb family:



VAT Reg. No 687901881. A society registered under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 - Reg. No 17093R.
Member of the National Housing Federation. HCA Reg. No. LH2162.
Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FRN 1000707)