Birmingham City Council

ANNUAL REPORT TO TENANTS
2022-2023

Working in partnership to improve services
for tenants and leaseholders

BE BOLD BE BIRMINGHAM

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Welcome and Foreword

Welcome to our Annual Report to Tenants which sets out how Birmingham City Council has performed as your landlord during 2022-2023 against the National Housing Standards for Social Landlords.

The Annual Report to Tenants is our opportunity to explain to you how well the services we provide are performing and celebrate our achievements. We have also highlighted our priorities for the year ahead to help achieve our aim of providing great homes and the best services for all our tenants and leaseholders.

Foreword

This year we set out our bold vision for City Housing to deliver the best-in-class housing services for the tenants and leaseholders of Birmingham City Council.

We want to proactively reshape and improve our services to move the focus from crisis to prevention, we want to radically improve our engagement with tenants and take positive action to energise communities and improve neighbourhoods, we want to build more affordable homes and work with partners to eliminate homelessness.

We aim to provide the residents of Birmingham with the best housing offer in the country and be recognised for delivering courageous, innovative, and creative solutions that put the tenant voice at the heart of everything we do.

To make this bold vision a reality, we commissioned a review of our whole housing service, which concluded a step change in service delivery was needed to meet the enormous challenges faced in City Housing and prepare us for the implementation of the Social Housing Bill. In preparation over the last year we have been working hard to deliver a housing service that prioritises our tenants and wider communities whilst still focusing on moving forward to deliver a first-class housing service.

Below are some of our key achievements towards our bolder purpose:

- Developing the Housing Strategy, which takes a whole city view on our housing priorities.
- We have completed an internal self-assessment against the Social Housing Regulation Bill, supporting the development of a robust action plan to achieve compliance.
- We have continued to work with TPAS to review and modernise our tenant engagement offer, working with tenants to co-design our future model which will be implemented in 2024.

Foreword (continued)...

- We have continued to work closely with our partners to provide advice and support services to help residents with the unprecedented cost of living crisis, which included our "Help in Brum' initiative and rolling out of the warm welcome spaces.
- We completed 249,189 responsive and gas repairs. This is nearly 7% more than in 2021/22.
- The Whole House Retrofit pilot programme has now reached the delivery stage. This will provide newly designed and improved EPC rated properties of B+ or better, to provide tenants with warmer homes and reduced energy costs.
- We have set up an Affordable Housing Delivery Board with the aim of strengthening partnerships across the city to deliver more affordable housing.
- We have opened Oscott Gardens, the largest family homeless centre in the country, offering over 400 rooms to vulnerable families, while they secure more permanent accommodation.
- We successfully prevented 1,064 households from becoming homeless. We also supported 1,154 households with our duty to access secure accommodation and the new Accommodation Finding Team has secured 207 homes for homeless households.
- We implemented a new Housing Allocations Policy in January 2023. The new policy aims to ensure the housing register is made up only of people with an identified housing need.

We are proud of what we have achieved so far. However we still have a long way to go and key to this will be the continuation of the Housing Transformation Programme which is focused on developing and delivering service improvements for the Directorate and our new Housing Strategy 2022-2027. This document sets out City Housings strategic direction and priorities over the next 5 years. This delivers our response to the Social Housing Bill and our commitment to work in partnership to drive forward important opportunities for change and improvements which are desired for the tenants and leaseholders of Birmingham.

At the centre of the Housing Strategy is the commitment to drive up the quality of our housing stock to ensure we provide warm, safe, and good quality affordable homes and services for all our tenants. Within the Housing Strategy you will see our ambition and determination to deliver fully on the range of new priorities contained in the Social Housing Bill. These will give tenants a greater voice in scrutinising services and make housing decisions that will have

a positive impact upon their homes and neighbourhoods. These are vital steps in our bold vision for housing services. The Housing Strategy will be a driving force in the step change to improve housing conditions for tenants in Birmingham. However City Housing can't do this alone. Collaboration and working with partners in the wider public, private, and voluntary sectors is essential. We have made some great and lasting partnerships already and we look forward to strengthening these and building many more in the future.

A strong priority evident in the Social Housing Bill will be to refresh our strategy for tenant engagement. This will be to ensure our tenants have an active role in making housing decisions and monitoring how we perform in delivering the agreed actions. Following the review of the Tenant Engagement Service last year by TPAS we are now drawing together an action plan to provide all our tenants with the best possible opportunities to be meaningfully engaged in service delivery. We will continue to build on our local engagement networks to strengthen the connections between communities and at the same time work to implement the action plan for the provisions of the Social Housing Bill.

We continue to give top priority to the repair, maintenance, and improvement of our housing stock so that our tenants can live in good quality, well-maintained homes. We take the safety of our tenants very seriously and have worked tirelessly to understanding and addressing the service issues highlighted by the Housing Ombudsman, which did not meet the expected standards our tenants deserve.

To improve our service, we have developed a robust action plan to monitor and track progress to ensure we effectively and efficiently respond to the concerns or complaints raised by all our tenants in future in a proactive and responsive manner. Furthermore, we want to reassure all our tenants that acting quickly to improving the quality of the service, making sure our properties are safe to live in and free from damp and mould is and always will be our top priority.

As well as improving our repairs service, we will also continue our programmes to make tenants homes warmer and more energy efficient to help reduce their energy costs and increase thermal comfort. City Housing will also continue to build new affordable homes with its housing partners to help the most vulnerable with their housing needs and work to prevent and eliminate homelessness. The cost-of-living crisis is seriously affecting the lives and wellbeing of many of our tenants. Consequently we will continue to support and prioritise help to those struggling with energy, food, rent and transport costs. We will continue to work with the Fuel Poverty Alliance and promote the 'Warm Brum' and warm spaces initiative.

We hope you enjoy reading this report and like us you are excited about the future direction of City Housing. Providing consistent, high-quality, and timely services is central to our goals for the coming year and where we face challenges, we will be dynamic, flexible, and responsive, to create and deliver solutions to make Birmingham the best-in-class housing service that places the tenant voice at its very heart.

Paul Langford
Strategic Director of City Housing

Cllr Jayne Francis
Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness

Tenant involvement and empowerment

This standard sets out how we communicate and involve tenants.

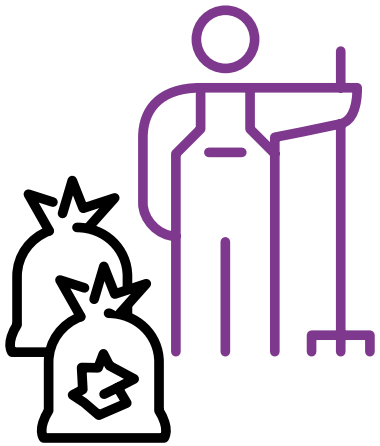
Our Tenant Participation Officers (TPOs)* carried out 429 city-wide projects in 2022/23. Highlights include:

East Quadrant

In Stechford the TPO* consulted tenants for the 'Cross Wall Retrofit' project to install energy efficient measures to improve the warmth of their properties and to lower energy costs. The TPO* has led a scheme with residents in Yardley, Sparkbrook and Balsall Heath to install bollards to prevent cars parking on grass verges. Tenants and residents have welcomed these works.

In Hodge Hill the TPO* has worked with residents to replace flooring in some low and medium rise blocks. A separate scheme in some low-rise blocks provided a designated bin store for the tenants to combat local antisocial behaviour. Following consultation, residents in Bromford were provided with match funding from the HLB** to purchase planters to use on communal land which they have agreed to maintain. Equans, our housing repairs contractors provided the soil. The project is a good example of successful cooperation between neighbours.

The monthly 'Love your Environment' events held in Hodge Hill were well supported by residents and hundreds of bags of litter and other household items were picked up from the streets for disposal by Housing Support Teams.



Central North Quadrant

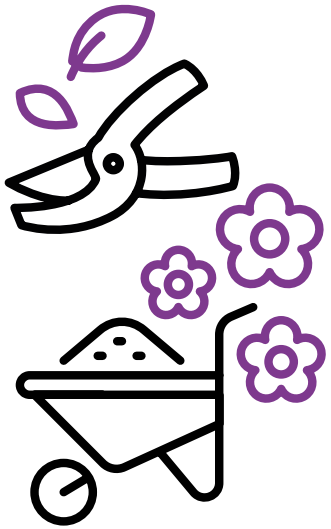
In Kingstanding the TPO* has worked with residents at Rushden Croft Sheltered Scheme to have a hardstanding installed for bins. This helps our elderly and more vulnerable tenants manage their bins and improves fire safety. To combat anti-social behaviour the TPO* has worked with the manager and residents of Hurstway Sheltered Scheme to provide anti-climb fencing. Since then no further incidents of ASB have been reported.

In Sutton the TPO* worked with residents and local councillors to provide hardstandings for bin areas throughout Falcon Lodge paid for by Sutton Town Council. As a result the TPO* now works on resident involvement opportunities with the Falcon Lodge Forum.

In Ladywood, a number of residents on the St Marks Estate identified issues and concerns on their estate. The residents collaborated with the City Housing, TPO*, Councillors and the Love Your Streets programme to set up a residents group called The St Marks Cleaner, Greener Volunteer Group who have done fantastic work in promoting tenant and resident cooperation to bring pride to their neighbourhood. Recently as an example of their efforts the St Marks group have worked in partnership with various agencies and have established a small community orchard. The Group continues to grow in membership and build strong supportive relationships. The TPO* has also supported the Civic Close Gardening group who won the Birmingham In Bloom prize for best communal garden in 2022. They have increased their membership and continue to

make a positive improvement to their neighbourhood.

In North Edgbaston a local resident worked with the TPO* to support tenants and residents experiencing financial hardship. During the winter months care packages were put together with the generosity and support of agencies and supermarkets for individuals living within Barrow House and the surrounding estate.



South Quadrant

In Selly Oak the TPO* worked with BCC and external partners to increase tenant involvement by organising activities for residents including Family Fun Days, Community litter picks, Fire Assessment events, Billesley Fire Station Open Day and Green Doctor Roadshows. A special event was the Happy Valley Festival which was held on Saturday 9th July 2022 at Daisy Farm Road. This was a major success and more than a 1,000 people attended. Money was raised for a local foodbank, and financial advice was available to visitors. Another successful event was held at Billesley Fire Station in September 2022. The various activities raised awareness of partnership working. Representatives from public sector organisations including BCC and voluntary groups held advice forums.

In Edgbaston the TPO* organised a series of 'Green Doctor' roadshows to ensure residents received advice and information on energy efficiency measures to help tackle fuel poverty. The Green Doctor is a service run by Groundwork who provide trained advisors on a range of subjects. The Green Doctor Roadshows also helped to identify any other vulnerabilities and make referrals to relevant services on behalf of these clients.

In Bartley Green the TPO* in partnership with HLB** members organised a Cultural Day Event at Barley Green Secondary School. This was the culmination of a 10-week programme carried out by West Midlands Police and Early Years to support young people in building resilience and developing positive future ambitions. The Interactive workshops provided by Fortem, Windrush 75 and the Albanian Community Group aimed to bridge the gap between younger and older generations of communities' and encouraged community cohesion.

In Northfield the TPO* has supported HLB** walkabouts and litter picks with residents from the Weoley Middlepark and Bournville estates working with the local housing team to clean up estates and improve the appearance of neighbourhoods. The TPO* has also helped the 'Rubery Rednal Wombles' obtain a grant from the Commonwealth fund to develop a neglected area at Deelands Hall and turn it into a Community Garden.

Another TPO* led project with residents on the Weoley Estate brought back into use as gardens neglected communal grounds around the blocks of flats. The soil and plants were supplied by Cofton Nurseries, and residents have agreed to adopt and maintain these areas.

Cornerway Sheltered Scheme has also benefited from community funding to install an outside water pipe for the residents to water their communal garden; plants were supplied and five seating benches were replaced around the communal grounds. The TPO* has also supported tree planting projects at Bath Courts and on Merrits Brook to improve the environment and prevent flooding. Local tenants and residents have welcomed the improvements to their neighbourhoods.

*Tenant Participation Officers
**Housing Liaison Board

Looking back...

Tenant Involvement and Empowerment

- We have started to take forward the recommendations of the 2021 Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) review of City Housing Tenant Engagement Service. The TPAS Report concluded that City Housing should adopt a new organisational model to widen the scope of resident involvement, placing the Tenant Voice at its heart and making it the foundation for improving the design and delivery of housing services. With the continued support of TPAS a behavioural insight project was carried out in partnership with key stakeholders to review our present participation structures.
- 143 residents entered the relaunched Birmingham in Bloom competition which celebrated the achievements of tenants and leaseholders coming together to improve their neighbourhoods and making them a cleaner, greener, and better place to live. The competition recognised the 108 winners and runners up and 80 tenants and leaseholders attended the annual award ceremony on the 9th February 2023 at the Council House Banqueting Suite. Once again, the awards were kindly sponsored by BCC Repairs Contractors; Equans and Fortem.
- We have completed the successful development of a Communications (Comms) Module within the Northgate housing system. This will allow for better and faster communication with tenants and leaseholders regarding tenant engagement activity.
- To improve communication with tenants we have produced two issues of our 'Tenant Focus' newsletter which contains information and advice that we hope will be of interest and benefit to residents. Tenant Focus will be emailed out quarterly to tenants and leaseholders via the Comms module.
- We have completed the Annual Report to Tenants for 2021/22 which has been uploaded to the BCC website and distributed to tenants via the new Communications (Comms) Module.
- We have continued to support members of the City Housing Liaison Board with regular updates and consultation on important housing topics. These included the review of Tenant Engagement, the introduction of the Social Housing Regulation Bill, the new Tenant Satisfaction Measures, and the review of the Housing Management Service.
- All HLBs have been awarded a one-year Kitemark. Whilst there was no formal Kitemark assessment of HLB practices, desk top monitoring of HLB activities has continued and agreed actions have been included in their improvement plans.
- In preparation for the Social Housing Regulation Bill City Housing completed a tenant perception survey pilot to compile baseline data on the proposed 12 Tenant Satisfaction Measures. They received a response rate of 10% across all tenancy types and these results will support the development of a full customer experience action plan.
- We have continued to support the tenant led Performance Monitoring Group, enabling members to monitor and scrutinise the performance of housing

management and our repairs contractors. As part of their scrutiny role the PMG has 'called in' representatives from the Housing Allocations Team, Rent Service, Grass Cutting Service, Careline and the Repairs Capital Programme to bring about improvements in services for tenants and leaseholders.

- We continued to attend Financial Inclusion Partnership Network meetings and provided feedback for residents.
- TPOs have continued to work in partnership with residents, councillors, and voluntary and community groups to deliver ward plan priorities.
- TPOs have supported the 'Great British Spring Clean' activities involving local volunteers.
- We have set up a task and finish group to review and update the HLB and CHLB Constitutions and disciplinary process.

Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs)

- We have drafted 5 Year Review and Annual Review Reports for Tenant Management Organisations (TMO), in compliance with the requirement of the Modular Management Agreements and reports will be approved in the financial year 2023/24.
- We have carried out Liaison Meetings in line with the Modular Management Agreement and Tenant Management Organisations monitoring framework.
- We have continued to ensure that the daily and monthly block inspections have been carried out by the Tenant Management Organisations and evidence (inspection forms) have been submitted to the TMO Support Team.
- We have ensured that two TMOs had carried out their 5-year continuation ballot and the outcome was successful.
- We have ensured the TMOs have carried out their Annual General Meetings (AGM).

Tenant Halls

- To continue to support the Tenant Hall Management Committee Group.
- We completed a programme of capacity building initiatives for our Tenant Hall Management Committees. This included income generation, fundraising, governance support, health and safety and other relevant activities identified by each organisation.
- Each Tenant Hall Management Committee has carried out the required annual statutory checks to comply with their Property Logbook.
- All annual statutory health and safety checks were carried out to ensure each Tenant Hall was fit for purpose.
- We continued to carry out all repair jobs that are the responsibility of Birmingham City Council for each Tenant Hall.
- We ensured that each Tenant Hall fulfilled its responsibility to BCC for repairs standards and use of approved contractors.

Looking forward...

Tenant Involvement and Engagement

- To develop an action plan to deliver the key recommendations of the Tenant Engagement Behavioural Insight Report.
- To review the scrutiny function to ensure good quality and meaningful reports are produced and communicated to tenants to enable service users to better monitor key landlord services and drive service improvements.
- To look at ways we can evaluate the impact of engagement within our central and local participation structures and use customer insight, opinion, and feedback as a springboard for service improvements.
- To develop a wide range of digital and informal engagement mechanisms which increase tenant influence and ensure the Tenant Voice is central to service re-design and brings about continuous improvement.
- We will work with our Web Development Team to upload new content to the Resident Involvement pages on the City Housing website, including a new "landing map" to improve the navigation of information on the Resident Involvement section and increase users.
- The next 'Birmingham in Bloom' competition will now be called the **'2023 Birmingham in Bloom and Housing Heroes Awards'**. We have also launched two new categories: These are:
  - **Most Improved Garden** (Birmingham City Council tenants and leaseholders only) for all tenants who have improved their front or back garden. Entrants will need to demonstrate the success of their improvements.
  - **Housing Hero Award** (Birmingham City Council tenants and leaseholders only). This is a new award for 2023 to recognise tenants and leaseholders who have championed housing or other residents in their neighbourhood to improve participation in their community.
  - As part of the review we have also renamed the best balcony, window box, basket, and box category to **'Best Mini Marvel'**.

A key priority for 2023 is to increase the number of entries. To achieve this, we will look at ways we can use out partnership networks to better promote and communicate the event; working with teams across City Housing Directorates, BCC contractors and external partners for example, Radio WM to encourage greater participation from tenants and the wider community.

- We will produce the Annual Report to Tenants 2022/23.
- Continue to develop an improved approach to the monitoring and management of customer complaints.
- To use the Comms Module to improve our communications with tenants via customer perception surveys and 'Tenant Focus' a quarterly digital newsletter for tenants and leaseholders.
- To put the Tenant Voice at the centre of everything we do by increasing the amount of tenant engagement across each quadrant area. For

example by recruiting more block inspectors, encouraging new issue or service specific focus groups, developing questionnaires and perception surveys and projects to improve the local environment such as walkabouts and litter picks.

- TPOs will work with Housing Managers and Housing Officers to develop a Housing Action Plan for each ward. This will include projects identified using their HLB, Aerial and Environmental Capital Budget which will respond to priorities identified by tenants and BCCH.
- The TPOs will continue to support the hard work of tenant and resident groups and inspiring residents who have bought communities together, breaking down barriers, and paving the way to building better communities.
- TPOs will build strong relationships with local communities to support tenant engagement at a local level, by effectively communicating and managing budgets, responding to requests for information, signposting tenants to the appropriate service areas to deal with queries, as well as identifying skills gaps and working with partners to develop knowledge and experience.

Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs)

- To ensure the Five-Year Review and Annual Review Reports for Tenant Management Organisations (TMO) are completed (in compliance with the requirement of the Modular Management Agreements).
- To carry out Liaison Meetings in line with the Modular Management Agreement and Tenant Management Organisations monitoring framework.
- Continue to ensure that the daily and monthly block inspections are carried out by the Tenant Management Organisations and evidence (inspection forms) is submitted to the TMO Support Team.
- To ensure TMOs hold their Annual General Meetings.

Tenant Halls

- To develop a comprehensive plan which reminds tenants of their health & safety responsibilities and makes clear those responsible for compliance within the Tenant Hall.
- To ensure we have the electronic tools in place to share information with tenants in a quick, efficient, and cost-effective manner.
- To ensure the information provided to Tenant Halls is clear and understandable, using a range of formats and methods which are inclusive and accessible to all.
- We will ensure that before any ad-hoc or specifically focussed tenant engagement activity takes place that the key information is communicated and agreed in advance with the Tenant Hall.
- We will continue to follow methods of good practice to ensure continuous improvement in how we engage with each Tenants Hall Management Committee.
- We will provide a range of opportunities to engage with the appropriate support systems to produce a more meaningful outcome.

Tenancy standard

This standard looks at how we allocate our properties and support our tenants.

SUPPORT

1,064 HOUSEHOLDS prevented from becoming homeless.

£0.9M DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENT AWARDED

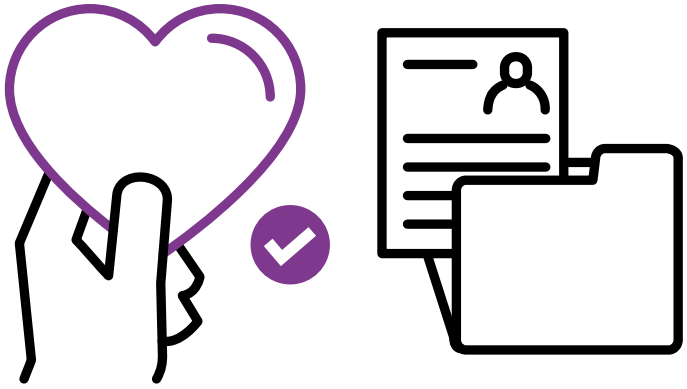
2,098 LA households subject to the SSSC*.

1,154 HOUSEHOLDS supported with our duty to access secure accommodation.

£0.186M DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENT AWARDED

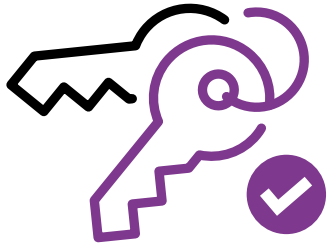
196 LA households subject to the Benefit Cap**.

THE BENEFITS ADVICE TEAM (BAT) HELPED SECURE £282,578.50 IN UNCLAIMED BENEFITS FOR VULNERABLE RESIDENTS



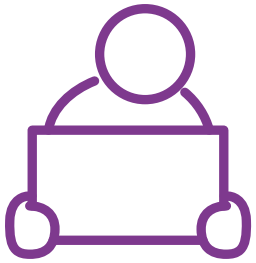
THE LETTINGS SERVICE

2,611
LETTINGS



total lettings for 2022/2023.

1,291
ROUGH SLEEPERS AND CARE LEAVERS



total lettings needed additional support, advice, and guidance.

98% **TENANCIES SUSTAINED OVER FIRST 12 WEEKS**

92% **TENANCIES SUSTAINED OVER FIRST 12 MONTHS**

contributing to the overall sustainability of new council tenancies.

ACHIEVEMENTS

THE RENT TEAM COLLECTED 96.78% OF RENT DUE

exceeding the council target of 94.6%.

£913,290
was collected from former tenants.

*Social Sector Size Criteria
**Discretionary Housing Payment
***Neighbourhood Advice & Information Service
****Benefit Advice Team

Looking back...

Rents and council administered benefits and support

- To support our tenants, the 'average days to award benefit' has been 16.67 days for new claims and 5.57 days for changes of circumstances.
- We have maximised the benefit received by vulnerable residents through the work of the Benefit Advice Team.
- We have helped people, who may never have found themselves claiming welfare benefits before, to claim Universal Credit and apply for discretionary payments.
- We continued to look for additional housing benefit entitlement and referred some of our tenants for specialist debt advice.
- More officers have been employed to work directly with work coaches and tenants to maximise entitlement to Universal Credit.
- The Rent Team has continued to support tenants through the "Cost of Living" crisis by offering debt advice and sustainable payment arrangements.
- The Rent Service has successfully introduced text messaging together with emails to improve contact with our tenants.
- A new staffing structure has successfully been implemented in the rent service which has given ownership and responsibility to our teams to improve and extend our service for tenants.

Lettings Suites

- We have implemented new processes and systems to ensure a full-service continues to be undertaken and offering a mix of telephone and face to face lettings.
- We continue to complete a full benefit check for all our customers and supporting them to move on to Universal Credit.
- The lettings service continues to be an 'end to end' service for the whole of the city.
- The Housing First Programme came to an end in 2022. We are now supporting a new "Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme" in partnership with our external partners Cranstoun. Cranstoun deliver a range of housing services to help people avoid homelessness by securing, settling into and sustaining their own accommodation. Tailoring support to meet individual needs as everyone's housing situation is different.
- We continue to support our most vulnerable tenants at risk of not managing their tenancy.
- We reviewed our Care Leaver offer and approach to provide a more focused service to care leavers for a period of 6 months.
- We worked in partnership with Birmingham Children's Trust on their Care Leaver Housing and Accommodation Panel.
- We have reviewed and refreshed the Pre-Tenancy Workshops which were relaunched in October 2022 and include targeted workshops for General Housing, Birmingham Municipal Housing Trust, and Care leavers.

City Housing Solutions and Support Service

- The annual rough sleepers count took place in November 2022. 39 individuals were found to be rough sleeping. This is an increase from 31 found last year but reflects the national picture. Despite this, rates of rough sleeping in Birmingham remain low at 3.4/100,000 population. 25% of individuals found rough sleeping on the night of the count had accommodation that they could return to that night.
- We have continued to support and commission services with a range of partners to help specific households – St Basil's for young people, Sifa-Fireside for vulnerable adults, Spring Housing for offenders and Birmingham & Solihull Women's Aid for women fleeing domestic violence.
- Birmingham City Council implemented a new Housing Allocations Policy in January 2023. The new policy aims to ensure the housing register is made up only of people with an identified housing need. We want to make sure this prioritises those most in need of

social housing.

- The Accommodation Finding Team (AFT) have successfully supported 207 families to move from Temporary Accommodation into long term Assured Shorthold Tenancies, making them no longer homeless. The AFT has secured 133 homes within Birmingham, 74 out of Birmingham and prevented 10 families from becoming homeless.
- In May 2022, City Housing opened its largest homeless centre in Birmingham, Oscott Gardens. The centre has over 400 rooms which are used to provide accommodation to vulnerable families, while they secure more permanent accommodation. The site is staffed with officers working in partnership with agencies such as the NHS and Birmingham Children's Trust's early help teams to provide support and safeguarding to the families.
- We are committed to providing more self-contained temporary accommodation to support homeless families. In February 2022 the Cabinet approved the provision of £60 million capital funding for a Property Acquisition Programme which will acquire up to 230 family-sized residential properties for Temporary Accommodation. Following approval, the Council undertook a formal procurement process and commissioned professional services to support the implementation of the programme. To date, the Council has acquired a quarter of the programmes allocation of family- sized residential properties which are currently undergoing void works, furnishing, allocations and lettings. Work continues to acquire the remaining properties across the City. The programme is supporting the Temporary Accommodation Strategy addressing the growing demand on the Housing Solutions and Support service in placing homeless families in suitable temporary accommodation. The properties acquired are to be retained as Council owned stock.
- We will continue to support the Rough Sleepers Outreach service which operates 7 days a week, day, and night to identify and support anyone who is rough sleeping. If you are concerned about a rough sleeper, please notify the Outreach team using www.streetlink.org.uk. All streetlink referrals in Birmingham are responded to and there is accommodation and support available for everyone who is rough sleeping. The Outreach services aim to support individuals as soon as they are rough sleeping. On the annual count, which is reflective of a typical night, 69% of individuals had been rough sleeping for less than 1 week. Therefore, time spent rough sleeping is brief. However, 66% of individuals had previously been in contact with Outreach services.
- We have developed a Temporary Accommodation Strategy, setting out how we will reduce the use of B&B accommodation and how we will ensure our temporary accommodation options are suitable and of high-quality. This draws together learning from our citizens experiences, as well as looking to deliver against statutory targets to eliminate B&B for families over 6 weeks. The strategy includes a £400m property acquisitions programme - bringing family homes back into Council use.
- A service redesign of City Housing Solutions and Support Services has resulted in improved prevention outcomes, recent figures are consistently 50% or higher which is in line with the national average of 53%. This is a significant increase on the previous year.
- City Housing Solutions and Support Services have taken over responsibility for the implementation of the Homelessness Prevention Strategy. The strategy will demonstrate a clear focus on delivering key initiatives that continue to support families and migrants across the city.

Looking forward...

Rents and council administered benefits and support

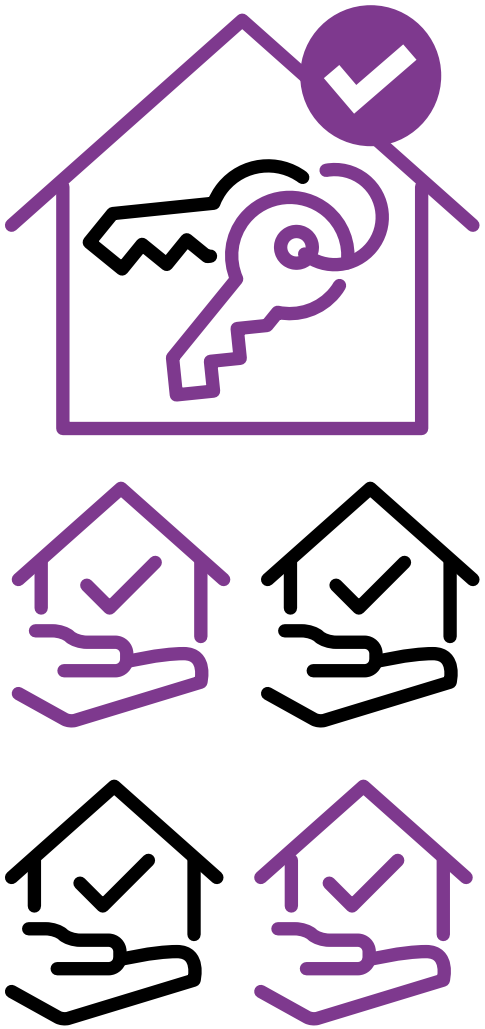
- To award benefit promptly and accurately whilst recovering the maximum amount of overpayments.
- To ensure the Benefit Service has a robust assessment regime in place whilst making efficient and accurate decisions.
- Maximise government benefit received by the council and safeguard against reductions in subsidy for local authority errors and penalties.
- Continued participation in the Verification of Earnings and Pensions (VEP) and the Housing Benefit Award Accuracy (HBAA) schemes to ensure benefit payments are accurate, whilst identifying fraud and error.
- The Rent Service continues to implement new ways of working, including improvements to the way we communicate with residents and how information is accessed by staff.

Lettings Suites

- We will review and implement changes to our processes and working arrangements including better use of technology.
- We will further develop our early intervention approach to support tenancy sustainability and prevent homelessness and continue to improve our working partnerships with the Void and Local Housing teams.
- We will continue to support the most vulnerable tenants who are at risk of not managing their tenancy including Rough Sleepers and Care Leavers.
- We will continue to provide early intervention to support tenants moving into their new homes.
- We will continue to identify the take up of State Benefits and support tenants making applications to support sustainability by early intervention.
- We will continue to work in partnership with other agencies to support our most vulnerable tenants including the Birmingham Children's Trust, Cranstoun and Neighbourhood Advice and Information Services.

City Housing Solutions and Support Service

- The development of a B&B Reduction Plan - embedding a programme of ongoing work specifically focused on reducing and eventually ending the use of B&B as temporary accommodation, aiming to make sure families with dependent children do not remain in B&B for over 6 weeks.
- Implementation of our Temporary Accommodation Strategy which aims to improve supply and quality of temporary accommodation and increase options for permanent accommodation.
- Embed the new allocation policy including meeting our Key Performance Indicators for assessing applications to the Housing Register.
- Increase the number of households able to access the Private Rented Sector as an alternative to homelessness.



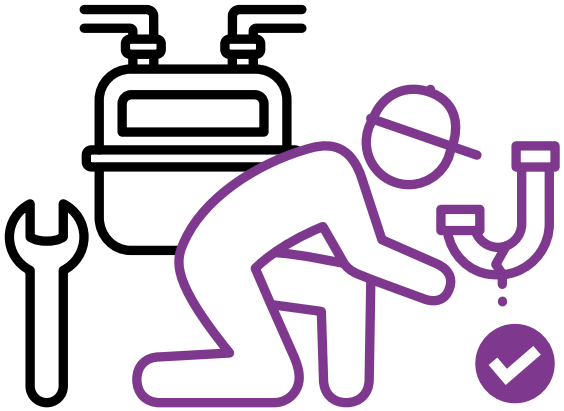
Home standard

This standard looks at the number of new homes we provide and what we do to maintain and improve your homes

REPAIRS

249,189
RESPONSIVE & GAS REPAIR JOBS COMPLETED

This is nearly 7% more than in 2021/22.

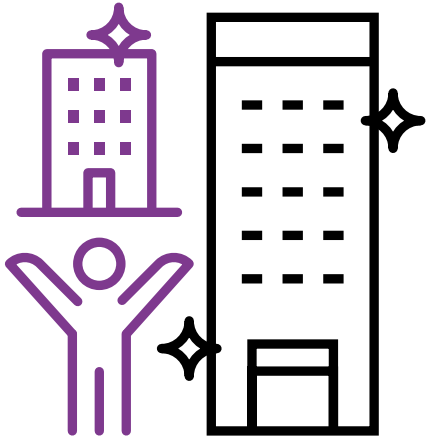


99.8%
POSITIVE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

who have received a service by the repairs and maintenance contractors.

FIRE SAFETY

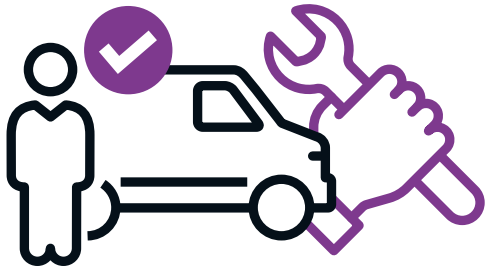
3,767 HIGH RISE FLATS BENEFITED FROM INSTALLED "Q MARK" APPROVED FIRE DOORS



We reroofed 2 tower blocks in Druids Heath to current thermal standards which benefits tenants in 100 flats. Another 3 schemes in the city will benefit tenants in 23/34.

GAS SERVICING

100%
OF GAS SAFETY CHECKS SUCCESSFULLY CARRIED OUT



ENVIRONMENT

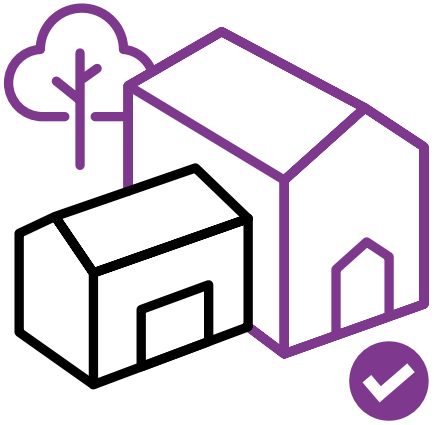
288

ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS COMPLETED

in partnership with our Housing Liaison Boards to improve their local neighbourhoods.

HOUSING

3,051 VOID REFURBISHMENTS MADE AVAILABLE FOR RE-LETTING



This is 12% less than in 2021/22.

330 AIDS & ADAPTIONS COMPLETED

to help our vulnerable and elderly tenants.

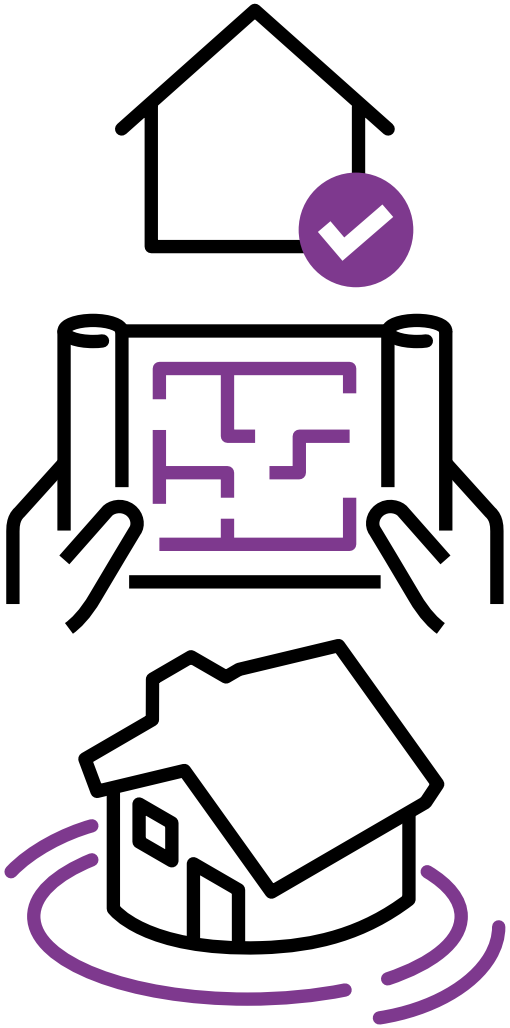
149 NEW HOMES FOR RENT

109 HOMES FOR SALE

3 BLOCKS

COMMUNAL REDECORATION COMPLETED IMPROVING SURROUNDINGS FOR 102 INDIVIDUAL FLATS

Looking back...



Provision of Affordable Homes

- We completed the final phase of the Abbeyfields development in Erdington, which provided 19 more homes for rent.
- The new joint project with the Environment Agency on the Bromford Estate delivered 14 more homes for rent.
- Work continued at Monmouth Road to develop a mixed housing scheme of 68 new homes. To date 24 new homes for rent have been completed.
- The Farnborough Road development is progressing well. To date we have completed 24 homes built for the Pioneer Housing Group (Registered Provider). We have also completed all of the 40 new BCC homes for rent.
- Work has started on site at a further three schemes. These include our development on Gressel Lane for 36 new energy saving homes for rent.
- We have now set up a cross-sector, citywide Affordable Housing Board to further increase the supply of new affordable homes.

Repairs and Maintenance

- Equans has successfully taken over contracts from Wates in the west, central and east service areas.
- We are working closely with the Housing Ombudsman to deliver against the actions and recommendations set out in Paragraph 49 of the Housing Ombudsman Report, this work is due to be completed at the end of April 2023.
- We have undertaken several focus groups with tenants who have raised complaints regarding their property; their feedback will inform the content of our Asset Management Strategy.
- We have produced a clear and transparent damp and mould policy which sets out how BCC will work to prevent, identify and prioritise damp and mould. This also includes timescales to responding quickly and effectively to customers concerns and complaints.
- We have devised the Capital Programme for 2023/2024 in partnership with industry experts ARK, this has unlocked an additional £40m towards achieving Decent Homes Standards and will continue to focus work on improving our decent homes position.
- We are working with partner organisations to develop a robust 30-year investment plan, setting out a refreshed approach to stock investment, focusing on Building/ Fire Safety, Decent Homes and Route to Zero work.
- The Whole House Retrofit pilot programme has now reached the delivery stage. This will provide newly designed and improved EPC rated properties of B+ or better, to provide tenants with warmer homes and reduced energy costs.
- We have been successful in securing £23m in funding from the Government's Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund which will be used throughout the city to deliver warmer and more energy efficient homes. It will bring 2000 plus homes up to an EPC C rating, in addition to our 300-home whole house retrofit pilot. This supports the Council in its objective to achieve route to zero by 2030 and

will be supported by an overarching Decarbonisation Strategy, setting out a robust approach to retrofit across all tenures, all over the city.

- As part of our ongoing programme to improve energy efficiency measures in BCC homes 570 Mixergy energy efficient hot water tanks were fitted. This article highlights the saving one of our tenants made following installation which cut down her daily spend on hot water from £2.24 to 16p. https://mixergy.co.uk/news-and-insights/tenants-to-save-thousands-in-hot-water-bills-with-mixergy-birmingham-city-council-retrofit-programme/
- 196 out of 199 high-rise blocks now have a fully commissioned sprinkler system fitted. The remaining 3 blocks will be completed in 2023/24.
- We have continued our programme of high-rise block refurbishments. Projects have started on Beech Hill, Kempsey, Jordan and Sorrel Houses. In addition, after long negotiations with occupiers of the retail premises, work has now finally commenced on Inkerman House.
- About 6,000 properties were tested for legionella which is a take up of about 75% of our annual programme to test 8,000 properties.
- Shelforce, is our window and door manufacturing business unit for our city-wide housing projects. Shelforce places great importance on leading the way in supporting those with a disability into employment, and actively recruits and trains a workforce where 75% are registered as having a disability. This year we are proud to announce Shelforce was awarded the 'Great British Business of the Year' and the Kings award for 'Enterprise in Promoting Opportunity through Social Mobility, which is a fantastic achievement.

Looking forward...

Provision of Affordable Housing

- Our target is to provide 108 new homes for rent, and 27 homes for sale.
- We aim to start 'on site' with 16 new development schemes which will phase in over future years a total of 690 new homes. This includes:
  - Yardley Brook a brownfield site which we have secured funding from Homes England and the West Midlands Combined Authority to build 298 new homes.
  - The final phase on the Kings Norton Primrose Estate providing 82 new homes.
  - Long Nuke Road, providing 65 new homes and improvements to local play and leisure facilities.
- We will continue to work with the Environment Agency and the local community to bring forward plans for further sites on the Bromford Estate, to provide another 180 homes.
- We will continue to work with residents and stakeholders to develop the Action Plan for the regeneration of the Druids Heath estate. The aim is to accelerate the delivery of new homes at Druids Heath by identifying 'early win' sites which can be more quickly developed.

Repairs and Maintenance

- To ensure all services are compliant and meet regulatory standards we have initiated a robust Regulatory Compliance Programme - which includes the development of a Compliance Board - to provide assurance to senior leaders in relation to several areas of landlord compliance.
- To implement the Whole House Retrofit programme. This important programme will start to make improvements to our least energy efficient homes. As part of this programme we will make a priority the commitment to achieving our Net Zero targets with the housing stock to reach EPC C.
- Continue to develop our stock condition data to support intelligence led improvements and our commitment to the decent homes standard using targeted investment through our Capital works programme.
- We will develop a comprehensive Asset Management Strategy. This will include a clear focus on what is important to tenants, using information from recent focus groups and satisfaction pilot surveys
- An important policy priority is to address the problems of damp and mould in council properties quickly and effectively – working positively with key stakeholders to overcome issues related to the age and design of homes, overcrowding and poverty.
- The Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund will continue to be used in multiple programmes throughout the city to significantly improve the energy efficiency of homes.
- Additional funding has been allocated for use in programmes to address Decent Homes issues throughout the city that will focus on the key areas of roofing, windows and doors, kitchens, and bathrooms.
- We will intensify our engagement with tenants to increase the level of customer satisfaction with the councils housing repairs service, looking to better understand the impact of tenants lived experiences with the aim to rebuild the loss of confidence and trust in our present service.
- To continue to work with our contractors to implement the added value and additional social value elements included within their contracts.
- Work to improve compliance is a key service priority for the Repairs Service to ensure we meet our full statutory inspection and testing obligations under housing legislation, including fire protection, legionella, electrical, gas servicing, heating and hot water.
- Continue to provide aids and adaptations to assist residents to live more independently at home.
- To work with Shelforce to deliver a programme of 35,000 replacement fire doors and support their feasibility study into manufacturing kitchen replacements.

Neighbourhood and community standard

This standard sets out how we work in partnership to manage our estates and combat anti-social behaviour.

TENANCY ESTATE MANAGEMENT

23,648 ENQUIRIES were made to Tenancy Estate Management.

2,936 INVESTIGATIONS INTO ALLEGED BREACHES OF TENANCY CONDITIONS

654 MUTUAL EXCHANGES TOOK PLACE

656 REPORTS OF ABANDONED PROPERTIES

267 INVESTIGATIONS INTO UNLAWFUL OCCUPIERS

10,316 TENANCY MANAGEMENT VISITS COMPLETED

149 WALKABOUTS CARRIED OUT WITH HLB MEMBERS, OFFICERS & TENANTS

THINK FAMILY

142 EARLY INTERVENTION REFERRALS TO OUR 'THINK FAMILY TEAM' to help and support families.

FIRE SAFETY

1,400 CITY WIDE FIRE SAFETY VISITS CONDUCTED BY LOCAL HOUSING TEAMS

CLEANER ENVIRONMENT

1,707 TONNES OF DUMPED RUBBISH COLLECTED

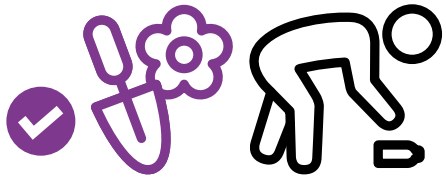
and disposed of by our City Housing, Neighbourhood Services Team.

29 RESIDENTS SIGNED-UP TO GOOD NEIGHBOUR AGREEMENTS

to help keep neighbourhoods clean and tidy.

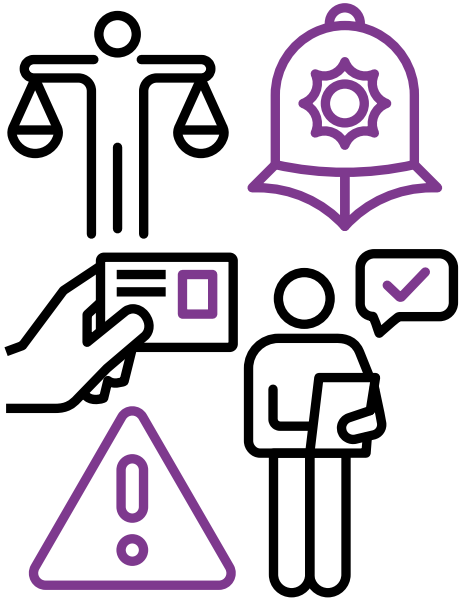
40 TENANTS SIGNED-UP TO GOOD NEIGHBOUR AGREEMENTS

to maintain their gardens.



ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

5,472 CASES OF ANTI-SOCIAL CASES CLOSED:



1,264	were due to domestic noise.
1,153	intimidating, threatening or aggressive behaviour.
674	were due to harassment.
386	due to the use of drugs.
610	other reasons.
3064	pre-investigation checks completed.
2,831	action plans completed.
4,724	supervisor case reviews completed.
441	warnings were issued to tenants.
37	notices were issued to tenants.
1,892	intervention measures incl. referrals to partner orgs.
93	cases were sent to legal.
145	legal orders were obtained.

Looking back...

Tenancy Estate Management

- The security service control room answered over 0.6million calls from tenants, their visitors, emergency services, and partner organisations.
- The mobile patrol officers completed 28,362 patrols across service-charged high-rise blocks to carry out health and safety checks, tackle anti-social behaviour, assist rough sleepers and removal of fly tipping and rubbish.
- The security service managed 2,352 incidents at high-rise blocks responding to fires, floods, tenancy breaches and ant-social behaviour.
- Careline responded to 211,863 alarm calls for help including calls to the fire service, and medical assistance from the emergency services.
- Careline maintained accreditation to the TSA Quality Standards Framework for the 14th year running.
- Careline responded to 24,989 service enquiries for Careline needs and Out of Hours Temporary Accommodation.
- To support and extend the service Careline installed 947 pieces of Technology Enabled Care equipment and made 434 repair/ maintenance visits.
- Careline monitor 204 High rise sprinkler systems to provide direct reporting of fire alarms to West Midlands Fire Service.

Neighbourhood Services

- 73 tenants in high-rise accommodation used the BCC chargeable bulky waste collection service to dispose of large unwanted items.
- We have designed and developed an estate caretaker traineeship programme and are pleased to report that 6 trainees successfully completed their traineeship in 2022/23 and have gained full time employment with City Housing Management.
- We have taken on a further 9 estate caretaker trainees in 2022/23. Those that successfully complete the traineeship will be employed as full-time estate caretakers with City Housing Management in 2023/24.

Anti-Social Behaviour

- We have been increasing the use of data to drive performance on key indicators throughout our ASB^ Service. The use of data to drive performance enables interactive data visualisations from multiple data sources and allows service managers to share important business insights that will drive the improvement of the ASB^ service.
- The Noise Application is now in its second year and has been successful in improving response times to assess the level and type of noise which is

our highest demand category.
- We have increased the number of visits on our estates, responding to interviews with Alleged Perpetrators and Complainants.
- Through partnership and integrated working, we are increasingly using resources with the Police and Adult Services to provide more support to combat ASB^.
- We have been working to strengthen our response to Neighbourhood Community Safety.
- City wide we took an active part in ASB^ Awareness Week during July 2022 when Local Housing Teams held events and consultations with residents and partners to raise awareness of ASB^ services.
- We are increasing our use of Communal Notice Boards and shared areas in our High- and Low-Rise blocks to encourage residents to report ASB^.
- We continue to work closely with residents through HLBs and with Ward Members to create safer neighbourhoods by using Environmental and HLB Funding on target measures to create safer, greener, cleaner neighbourhoods.
- To prepare for the new consumer standards and tenant satisfaction measures in the Social Housing Regulation Bill we conducted an online baseline survey using the draft ASB^ Tenant Satisfaction Measure questions contained in the new bill. A link to the survey was sent to all residents for whom we hold email addresses. We have so far received over 2,700 responses.
- We continued to work in partnership with the tenant led Performance Management Group to monitor and improve our ASB^ Performance.

^Anti-Social Behaviour

Think Family Service

- We have continued to work with the Early Help locality Hubs, increasing our offer to manage cases as well as offering weekly housing surgeries and attending weekly conversation meetings (multi-agency meetings to discuss and advise on cases). This has led to some good outcomes from the housing surgeries and from the cases held by our team.
- We have continued to offer intensive support for families with complex needs and housing issues. These cases are referred by our own internal Housing teams. This route was created to encourage referrals and has resulted in a substantial increase in the numbers of families being supported.
- We are supporting a pilot scheme in partnership with the Care Leavers Team to lighten their caseloads. To achieve this we are accepting cases with a Care Leaver that has their own child or may be pregnant. They are usually in the process of applying for a Birmingham City Council property so need support with their tenancy.
- We are very pleased to report that the Think Family Team were in the top 3 for the City Housing Celebrating Success awards. Our Think Family Manager won an award for outstanding innovation and transformation.

Domestic Abuse Service

- We have improved the case management system for domestic abuse cases.
- We organised and supported a 'National Women's Day' event in Birmingham.
- We have set up a new partnership with Cranstoun.
- We have developed new community links with Pantry, Longbridge Extra Care and Project. Project are an outstanding accredited advice charity that support residents in South Birmingham. They offer a one stop shop for all age groups offering housing and benefit advice, clothing grants for young people, a place for people to use computers, food bank services and access to a cooker to ensure people can warm up food.
- We have built a successful partnership with Viola who kindly donate a £100 voucher every other month to victims of domestic abuse to enable them to furnish a new home.
- We have continued to support the 'Early Help' hubs.
- We organised a Christmas party for domestic abuse survivors and their children.
- We are a victim led service and prioritise visiting the survivors of domestic abuse at least once throughout the lifetime of the case, if they so wish.
- We continue to foster a good working relationship with the West Midlands Police Service, who work in partnership with City Housing to support victims of domestic abuse.

Looking forward...

Tenancy Estate Management

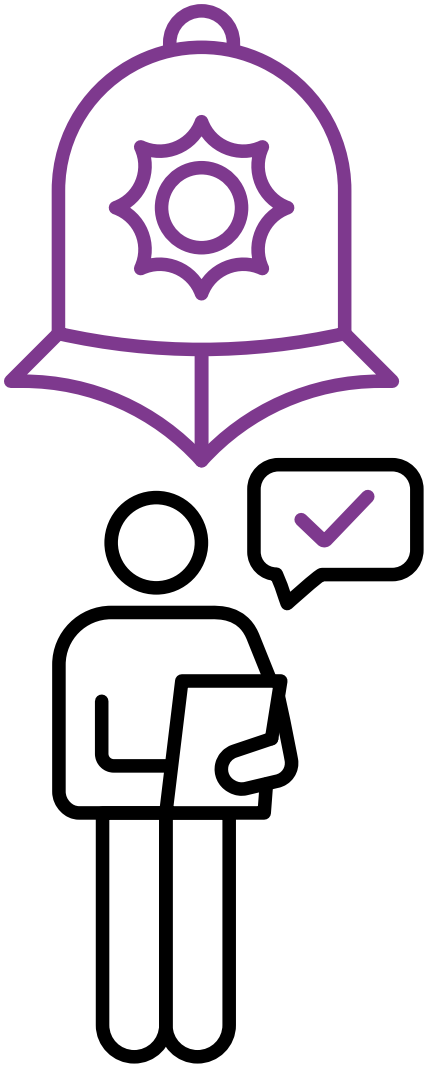
- To continue to provide a technology-based care service which provides for independence and achieving positive outcomes for older and vulnerable people.
- Continue to prepare for British Telecom's transition from an analogue telephone network to a new digital IP (internet) infrastructure by 2025. Our call handling platform has been upgraded to be digitally compatible with IP technology. We are also exploring a move to a fully cloud based call handling solution which will allow the team to call handle any type of technology from anywhere.
- To continue to provide a full security service providing access to a 24 hour, 7 days a week control room and out of hours mobile patrol team for service charged high rise blocks.
- The mobile patrol officers will continue to provide up to three weekly patrols for every block for all service charged high-rise blocks, working with our partners including West Midlands Police and Fire Service to ensure our tenants feel safe and secure in their homes.

Neighbourhood Services

- We will continue to support residents who responsibly dispose of their waste and take enforcement action where we can against those who dump rubbish.
- Our estate-based teams will continue to maintain the cleanliness and appearance of our neighbourhoods.
- We will be appointing a further 10 trainees who we want to successfully complete traineeships and become full time Estate Caretakers with BCC.
- We will join tenants and residents in walkabouts of our neighbourhoods and work together to achieve positive outcomes for improvements.
- We will continue to encourage and support residents who want to help maintain the cleanliness and appearance of housing neighbourhoods.

Anti-Social Behaviour

- A key service priority is to reduce anti-social behaviour (ASB) and associated hate crime. We will therefore aim to maximise our contribution to neighbourhood working with other agencies including the Police, registered social housing providers, victim support organisations and youth agencies, such as the Youth Offending Service (YOS).
- We will improve the way we communicate with residents on issues affecting their neighbourhood using new technology.
- To implement the main recommendations of the Social



Housing Bill that relate to the ASB service, in particular to improve the way we measure Tenant Satisfaction on their overall experience of the ASB Service.

- Work with Performance Monitoring Group and utilise Local Performance Data to pro-actively work in our neighbourhoods to make residents feel safer.
- Continue to support officers by investing in workforce training to ensure a professional and customer-centred approach to ASB management.

Think Family

- To reinforce and update the offer to Early Help and continue to improve our service.

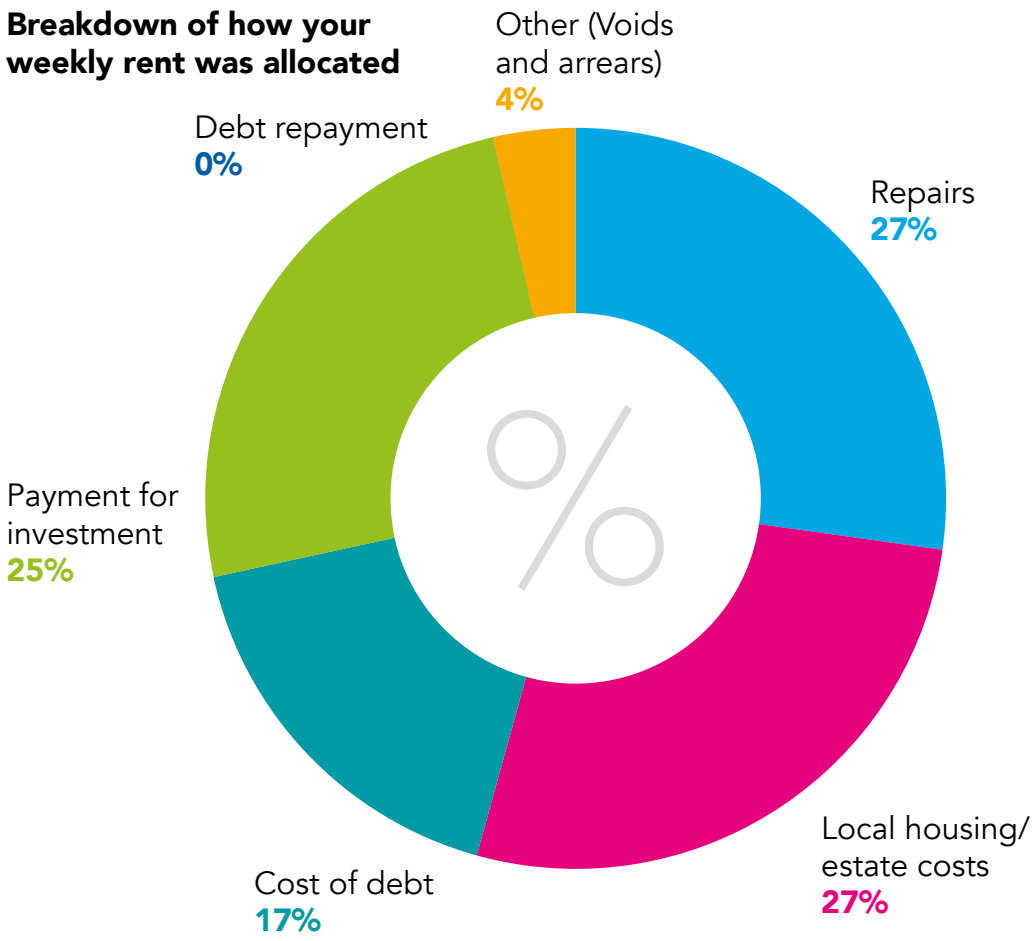
Domestic Abuse Service

- Over the next 12 months City Housing will continue working towards achieving the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance Accreditation (DAHA).
- We are using the DAHA framework to ensure housing embed a domestic abuse response at every level of the organisation so that all residents experiencing domestic abuse receive an effective, consistent, and supportive housing response. We will achieve this by working collaboratively with Strategic and Operational groups, attending the Cross Directorate and Domestic Abuse Strategy meetings and Early Intervention group.
- Every housing service area will be involved in the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) process with training being provided to ensure all staff have an awareness and understanding of recognising and reporting domestic abuse.

Value for money

This standard looks at how we spend money collected in rent.

Breakdown of how your weekly rent was allocated



Breakdown of average weekly rent

	Budget 2021/22 per week	Actual 2022/23 per week	Change	% Change	Proportion
Repairs	£20.34	£23.50	£3.16	15.54%	**27%**
Local Housing/ Estate Costs	£22.86	£23.38	£0.52	2.27%	**27%**
Cost of Debt	£16.15	£14.93	-£1.22	-7.55%	**17%**
Payment for Investment	£19.37	£21.43	£2.06	10.64%	**25%**
Debt Repayment	£1.13	£0.00	-£1.13	-100%	**0%**
Other (Voids and Arrears)	£3.82	£3.10	-£0.72	-18.85%	**4%**
Total	**£83.67**	**£86.34**	**£2.67**	**3.19%**	**100%**

Feedback

How to give us your views

We would like you to tell us what you think of our services. It's always useful for us to hear about when things have gone right – and when they've gone wrong. There are several ways in which you can give us your comments, complaints or compliments about any aspect of the housing service. Visit the website at **birmingham.gov.uk/yourviews**

Annual Report to Tenants

We would really appreciate your feedback on the Annual Report by going to **birmingham.gov.uk/info/50008/tenants_groups_associations_and_boards/2331/annual_report_to_tenants** and completing the Microsoft Survey Form. Your views will be very useful to us when we are producing future reports.

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