

Customer Annual Review. 2022



Bromford.

Introduction



Welcome to the latest issue of our Customer Annual Review covering our performance in 2021-2022. Back in April 2021 we were only just starting to come out of lockdown, and although the pandemic has had a lasting impact we have continued to deliver services to you, keeping you safe in your home and investing in building relationships with you and your community.

Throughout the year our colleagues have been working hard to respond to all your requests for repairs or alterations. During the lockdowns we were committed to protecting customers by following government guidance on staying safe. This meant there was a build-up of customer requests in some areas and in April 2021 we had more than 12,000 repairs waiting to be completed but have reduced this to 8,800 by March 2022 and we have reduced it even further in the months since then. We've also invested in improving our homes, spending £42m to make them more energy efficient, as well as fitting new kitchens, bathrooms, windows and doors. We've remained focused on keeping customers safe and by the end of the year we had completed all electrical and gas safety checks in our homes. This is something we can only achieve with your support, so thank you for making the time to allow us to carry out these important inspections.

We have also continued to invest in building new homes because we know there are still many households who are in need of affordable housing. We're proud to once again announce we were the largest builder of social rent homes in England completing 1,224 new homes, of which 444 were for social rent, enabling hundreds of new customers to thrive in a Bromford home

We are fortunate to have colleagues with outstanding levels of professionalism, skill and leadership throughout Bromford. During the year we have continued to invest in our colleagues by improving our leadership capability and increasing our ability to collaborate effectively as teams so we deliver on our purpose on investing in customers and communities. We have created additional roles, like our income advisors, to ensure we are always providing customers with the best possible service.

This has strengthened the foundations on which we will be building in the months and years ahead to provide you with the services you expect and to allow us to meet the challenges of the future. For the year ahead we hope this will enable us to improve our customer satisfaction score which fell to 79% for the full year. We're confident the measures we've put in place will have an impact and that satisfaction with our services will rise over the next year and have already seen this increase in the first few months of 2022.

Throughout the year we've been making great progress on our transformation project to provide a consistent way of working for all our colleagues, enabling us to work more efficiently and allowing our customer-facing colleagues to spend more time to spend building relationships in our communities. We know how much you value the face-to-face contact you have with our colleagues, but we also want to provide you with the flexibility to get in touch with us whenever you want. Our new customer portal allows you to easily view your rent account, make payments and request repairs at your convenience. We'll continue to provide you with updates to our services, as well as hints and tips around money-saving issues, through our monthly emails to you.

Kevin Bennett

Director of localities and customer contact

Our performance

Number of homes:

45,658

Repairs completed:

109,045

Repairs outstanding:

8,817

2021: 11,994

Number of customer contacts:

409,505

Number of new homes built:

↑ 1,224

Customers would recommend us:

79%

Target: 85%

Customers agree our services are easy to use:

77%

Target: 85%

Customers satisfied with repairs to their home:

77%

Target: 80%

Customer contacts resolved first time:

86%

Investing in our homes.

The past two years have really shown us the importance of having a safe, secure place to call home and we know that when customers have this it can help them to thrive.

Despite the challenges caused by the impact of the pandemic, we have remained committed to investing in customers' homes, investing in improvements as well as putting things right when they need fixing. Over the year we increased our investment in our existing homes, spending £42m in improvements. This included fitting modern kitchens in 898 homes and 477 new bathrooms, as well as fitting new windows in 721 homes and doors in 1,175.

One of the challenges over the year has been the increased cost of living and we've supported customers through this by installing 1,783 energy efficient heating systems. We've also helped to keep homes warmer by fitting cavity insulation in 493 homes, external or internal wall insulation in 335 homes and loft insulation in 559. All of these measures are designed to keep homes warmer for longer and reduce the amount of energy customers need to heat their homes. As a result 86% of our homes now have an energy efficiency rating of C or above.

We also know that some of our homes have issues with condensation, damp and mould. During the year we set up a dedicated task force to investigate issues in some of the worst affected properties. Work to tackle these issues was completed to more than 200 homes, but we know this is an issue that won't go away, so are committed to continue investigating and tackling these issues.

The pandemic has had a noticeable impact on our repairs performance over the past two years. We know that some customers understandably did not want our colleagues entering their homes to complete repairs while the pandemic was at its worst and delayed reporting things to us until lockdowns were lifted. Combined with the impact that Covid has had on our own workforce, this has meant that backlogs of repairs have built up. The figure was at its worst in April 2021 when we had more than 13,000 outstanding repairs but over the year, despite the challenges caused by further outbreaks, such as the Omicron variant, we had brought this figure down to under 9,000 by March 2022 and have continued to reduce it further in the months since. In total, we completed 109,045 repairs in homes over the year.

Investment in existing homes:

£42m

Homes without a gas safety certificate:

● 0

Homes without a fire safety certificate:

● 0

Homes without electrical safety certificate:

● 0

Asbestos compliance:

● 100%

Water safety compliance:

● 100%

Satisfaction with repairs:

↓ 77%

Target: 80%

Customers who say their home is affordable to live in and run:

↓ 63%

Target: 88%

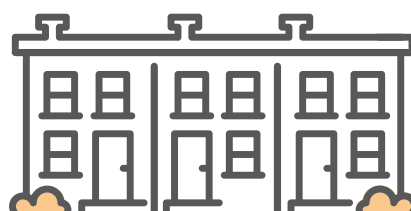
Homes with an energy rating of C or above:

↑ 86%

Target: 85%

Homes meeting the Decent Homes Standard:

● 100%





Homes and communities.

Building a great relationship with customers is at the heart of our approach to neighbourhood coaching, which we believe sets us apart from other housing associations.

Throughout the year our team of more than 200 neighbourhood coaches have been working in communities and we're pleased that so many of you are happy that you get everything you need from your coach. Over the past 12 months 2,312 households started a new tenancy by moving into one of our homes. Of these around a third didn't have a permanent place to live before moving in, and reaffirms that we are providing homes to those that need it the most. Nearly 90% of customers are happy with the quality of their home when they move in, which whilst good is a slight fall from last year. Over the year we've been working to create a new lettable standard to ensure all customers get the best possible start when they move into their new home. We know the importance of this, which is why our new standard will include fitting showers as standard, as well as new extractor fans in bathrooms and kitchens, as well as ensuring homes are painted to a consistent standard throughout, providing customers who want to redecorate with a blank canvas on which to make their home their own, whilst still providing a high standard of decoration for those who do not or cannot redecorate after they move in.

As well as building relationships with customers, we have also been working with local charities and organisations to help them secure more than £1m in funding to support the work they do in their communities. Among the many organisations to benefit was Brockworth library in Gloucestershire, which we helped to secure £160,000 to help refurbish their building and create a modern, flexible space for all users.

While the goal for all our neighbourhood coaches is to help create thriving, sustainable communities, we know that sometimes disagreements can take place between neighbours. When this happens they will coach customers on the best ways to resolve these differences amicably. Unfortunately, there are times when this is not successful and on these cases we will open an anti-social behaviour case to investigate what's been happening. We recorded a small increase in the number of anti-social behaviour cases opened during the year, up eight to 602. Of these, 105 were related to domestic abuse and seven to hate crime. We have taken 74 cases to court over the year, up from 44 the previous year.

Customers feel they get what they need from their neighbourhood coach:

⬆️ 82%

Customers rate their neighbourhood as a place to live:

⬇️ 66%

Number of anti-social behaviour cases taken to court:

⬆️ 74

Number of anti-social behaviour cases opened:

⬆️ 602

Satisfaction with our handling of anti-social behaviour:

⬇️ 60%

Target: 80%

Customers who are happy with the quality of the home they've moved into:

⬇️ 89.7%

Target: 93%

Customers satisfied with our lettings service:

⬆️ 96%

Target: 85%

Anti-social behaviour cases relative to the number of households:

1.3%

How do we spend our money?

The increase in the cost of living has been one of a few stories over the past year that have knocked the pandemic off of the front pages. And we know that it is a very real issue for many of our customers, which is why it's important to clearly set out where our money comes from and how we are spending it.

Most of our income comes from the rent that customers pay to live in our homes, but we also raise money from the sale of some of the homes that we built and a small amount from the rent from garages and shops that we own. All of the money that we receive is spent on providing services to customers, like our team of neighbourhood coaches who are out working in our communities every day building relationships with customers. During the year we invested more to support our customers by recruiting additional colleagues to our income management team to work alongside our neighbourhood coaches to work with customers who have been faced financial difficulties during the year. We have introduced this new way of working in phases, beginning in our southern localities and continuing in the other two localities from April.

This has meant that by the end of the year most of our customers had a clear rent account and our overall level of arrears was just 1.9%, well below our target of 2.5%. Building relationships with customers, providing support and coaching them to find solutions that work for them has allowed us to continue to keep evictions low. We know the importance of continuing this work and the value you place in it, and will be continuing to prioritise this work over the coming year.

The money we receive also allows us to pay for repairs to our homes and to carry out planned improvements, such as fitting new heating systems or installing new insulation. Over the past year we have increased our spending on repairs and maintenance, as well as in our investment in our new homes programme, providing even more homes for people to live in.

At the end of every year we ask independent auditors to check the way we have spent our money over the past year and produce a full financial report which goes into more detail about our spending. You can read this year's report on our website.

Current arrears:

→ **1.9%**

Target: **2.5%**

Number of households on Universal Credit:

↓ **13,597**

Overall number of evictions:

↑ **25**





Giving customers a voice

To improve our services and ensure we are providing customers with what they need to thrive in their homes its vital that we listen to our customers.

Throughout the year our Customer and Communities Influence Network (CCIN) and four Locality Influence Networks (LINs) have met regularly to review our performance and challenge us to do better when they think we have not met the standards that customers expect. During the year, our core group of 28 customers who sit on these groups have been involved in a variety of projects to help us improve our services.

One of the key piece of work has been holding us to account when customers complain about the service they have received, especially around improving understanding of why the complaints are happening and what we can learn from them. A member of the CCIN is involved in the resolution of every stage 2 complaint (learn more in the next section).

Customers have also been involved in monitoring the work we have been doing to reduce the backlog of repairs and supporting customers who have been experiencing condensation, damp and mould in their homes. They have also been taking a keen interest in the work we are doing around sustainability and our move to reducing our carbon

emissions and improving energy efficiency in our homes. From May 2022 we will have a new chair of our CCIN, as former Refuge chief executive Sandra Horley will be taking over.

Whilst we have been working with customers on our LINs and CCIN closely throughout the year, at the same time the number of customers who think we listen and act on their views has fallen significantly over the year to just 64.3%. We know we need to do more to improve this and to show that when you tell us something, you're aware of our response.

During the past two years many of us have adapted to new ways of living and working. The pandemic has made face-to-face contact more challenging and as a result we have seen an increase in the number of customers using our online resources. Over the past year, the number of transactions customers made online increased to 27%, while nearly a million people visited our websites. In summer 2022 we will be launching our customer portal which will make things easier for customers to interact with us online, from viewing your rent account and making a payment, to seeing all your upcoming appointments and reporting a repair.

Customers think we listen and act on their views:

↓ **64%**

Target: 70%

Transactions made online:

↑ **27%**

Target: 22%

Number of customers giving us feedback:

↑ **11,806**

Visits to our website:

955,337



Dealing with complaints

Whilst we want all our customers to thrive, we know that there are barriers that prevent some of them from achieving this. If we have become one of those barriers because we haven't got things right, we always want you to tell us to help us rectify the issue and understand why it happened. So, we listen carefully to the feedback we receive and take steps to not only resolve the issues faced by that customer but learn from it to ensure that other customers benefit from the changes we make.

In January 2021 the Housing Ombudsman launched a new Complaint Handling Code which has resulted in an increased number of complaints being recorded by housing associations across the country. Over the year we saw complaints rise to 3,033 compared to 1,466 the previous year. The vast majority of these were resolved at the first instance, but we had 42 complaints escalate to stage 2.

Large numbers of complaints have stemmed from our repairs service which has been impacted by the pandemic over the past two years, due to us scaling back our service to only provide emergency repairs at times. The backlog of repairs has led to complaints but we have listened to customers and taken steps to reduce this such as extending the times for us to carry out repairs appointments and appointing contractors to help us complete outstanding repairs.

If a customer is unhappy with the outcome of our investigation into their complaint, they can refer it to the Housing Ombudsman. In the last year we received 15 determinations of complaints, of which eight found no maladministration or fell outside the jurisdiction of the ombudsman. There were six findings of service failure and one finding of maladministration. We have complied with the ombudsman's findings in all of these cases and put measures in place to ensure they do not occur again.

Number of complaints received:

↑ 3,033

Complaints resolved at stage 1:

98.2%

Complaints resolved at stage 2:

1.8%

Main reasons for complaints:

Day-to-day repairs:

40%

Repairs appointments:

11%

Condensation and damp:

9%





Annual report - Growing the business to enable more customers to thrive

With house prices rising at their fastest rate for more than a decade, the numbers of people in need of good quality, affordable homes continues to grow. And we remain committed to playing our part in easing this demand through our new homes programme.

Despite a year which was once again impacted by the ongoing effects of the pandemic and the challenges around the supply of materials and labour, we exceeded our housebuilding target for the year and built 1,224 new homes. We also increased the number of homes for social rent we built from 377, which was the highest in England in 2021 to 444. This commitment to building new homes for social rent reaffirms our purpose of providing homes to those who are unable to access market housing and importantly, it means that hundreds of families have moved into a modern, affordable home.

In addition to this we also built 392 shared ownership homes during the year and regularly exceeded our target of selling 50% of these within a month of their completion, selling just under 400 during the year.

Our goal for 22-23 is to complete 1,300 homes and to increase this further year-on-year until we are building 1,800 homes, providing modern, affordable homes, to hundreds of families every year. Some of these will be built using modern methods of construction (MMC) and we have appointed two partners to help us increase the supply of homes using environmentally-friendly construction methods.

Shared ownership homes built:
392

Sales of new homes:
380

Shared ownership customers who bought a greater share in their home:
392

New homes built:
↑ 1,224
Target: 1,220

Customer satisfaction with new home:
↑ 97%
Target: 93%

Spending on new homes:
↑ £210m



Get involved and make a difference

If you're interested in helping us improve our services there are different ways for you to get involved. It could be just a case of answering a simple electronic survey we send you, or taking the time to answer some questions about how we're performing over the phone.

But if you have the time and drive to help us shape our services you could join one of our influence networks. Our Customer and Community and Locality Influence Networks aim to give customers a say by scrutinising our services and have a real influence on the way we introduce changes to our services. If you're interested in finding out more please contact our customer involvement officer Delphine Guillemoteau at delphine.guillemoteau@bromford.co.uk

You can also:

Message us on Facebook or Instagram
[@ThisisBromford](#)

Tweet us at
[@Bromford](#)

Or just visit the How we're doing pages at
bromford.co.uk



Bromford.