



**Black Country
Housing Group**

Residents' Annual Report 2017 - 2018

A Social Business Investing in
People and Communities



Welcome from the Chief Executive

Providing Great Homes is what Black Country Housing Group wants to achieve, making your homes safe and secure, being responsive to you, listening to you to improve our services further, giving you value-for-money and supporting you to get involved if you want to.

We believe our Customer First programme is key to ensuring our services to you are the best they can be, and over the last year we reshaped our Operations Team by creating Customer Relations Managers, whom many, if not all of you, will know in person by now. The response to this approach has been overwhelmingly positive, as you now have someone who will take personal responsibility for you and your home.

You will see later in this report how much we have invested in your homes over the last year, upgrading kitchens, bathrooms, windows, rewires etc, as well as putting even more money into fire safety, an area that we know is really important to you. We have achieved this despite falling rents, so providing you with more value-for-money.

Working in partnership with tenants has been a key theme during the year – allowing us access to your home to do those vital gas and electrical inspections is really important; giving a critical look at the way we deliver services has been done well by the Resident Scrutiny Panel; paying your rent on time; giving us your views so we can address our failings in service. Our new Customer Engagement Strategy sets out further ways in which we want to develop our relationship with you, using your knowledge and experience to hold us to account, and to work with us to do even better and attain even greater levels of customer satisfaction.

Lastly I'm really pleased to say that we have been playing our part in addressing the housing crisis in the Black Country, continuing to invest our surpluses in building new affordable homes. We plan to build many more during this and the coming few years, supporting people of all ages who are struggling to find suitable and affordable living accommodation.

Thank you for your ongoing support of Black Country Housing Group.



Amanda Tomlinson

Chief Executive

Summary of the year

Overall satisfaction

89.8%

Previous year: 87.5%

You are happy with our new approach and is making a difference.



Net Promoter Score

58.8%

"Would you recommend friends and family", increased from 54.6% to 58.8%.

Satisfaction with repairs

88.2%

Previous year 81%



Complaints

14

Compliments

20

Homes let and number of empty property at year end

Total number of properties re-let: **151**

Total number of properties vacant and available to let at year end: **23**

New homes developed

28



Rent collected

100.36%

Target 100%



999 tenants pay by direct debit.

Fire risk assessments and actions

Completed 100% of fire risk assessments



What we did:

- Fire risk assessments were displayed on noticeboards for the first time in all blocks
- Electrical and automatic gates were linked to the fire panels in buildings that have those systems
- Reduced all risks to prevent spread of fire and smoke

Gas safety checks

We serviced over 1,600 boilers and gas installations

115 interventions to gain access into properties.

Electrical testing

We completed the electrical safety testing programme of 290 dwellings as part of a five year programme.

We carried out electrical safety testing of all void properties before they were let and communal laundry rooms in schemes and care homes.

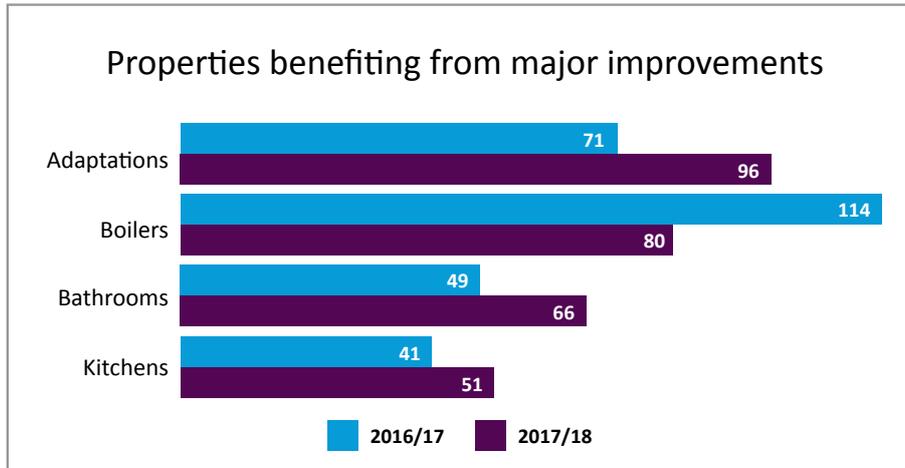
Legionella

We carried out a water hygiene testing regime at 18 sites.

We upgraded water systems to eradicate all stored water from our commercial boiler systems.

Investing in your home

We have an annual programme of improvements of kitchens, bathrooms and boilers to ensure your homes are warm, modern and comfortable.



35%

Adaptations
Increased by 35% during 2017/18.

Boilers
A substantial amount of investment in a new modern Plant room at Stambermill House in excess of £65,000.

36%

Bathrooms
Increased by 36% during 2017/18.

20%

Kitchens
Increased by 20% during 2017/18.

Other investments



Spend on day to day repairs and maintenance:

Responsive: £1.16m

Cyclical: £62.2k

Planned: £159k

The tenant voice



Feedback from residents told us we could improve visibility and presence on estates as well as improving ownership and responsibility for resident issues. We analysed these findings and worked through changes we could make. In October 2017 we restructured our front line housing and property repair services creating a single point of contact. We now have 8 Customer Relations Manager's covering 1,718 properties plus sheltered schemes.

What our customers are saying to us:



You said

The wording on the service charge letters was abrupt.



We did

We apologised and revised the letter for 2018.



We will

Review the tone of all our communications we send to tenants.



You said

Calls were not getting through to the right department and also telephone messages were unhelpful.



We did

We changed the options back to what customer were used to and this resolved the issue.



We will

Reduce the need for the phone through direct chat and online services and give you the ability to self-serve.



You said

Fire safety info needs to be made more accessible and service offer clear for shared owners.



We did

We have a current fire risk assessment and are following its recommendations. Improved information at all schemes.



We will

Provide fire information through our website. Introduce a new fire risk assessment process.



You said

We want improvements in how you deal with issues with anti-social behaviour dealt with.



We did

We have Customer Relations Managers in place as specific points of contact to take reasonable and responsive action.



We will

Work with you through the Tenant Sounding board on issues that matter to you.



You said

Grounds maintenance is not delivering a good service, we are not getting value for money.



We did

Supported our tenant scrutiny panel to review the grounds maintenance and accepted their recommendations.



We will

Implement tenant scrutiny recommendations to recruit a new contractor.

Working towards your priorities



We received 14 complaints:

The root cause for complaints:

- Poor communication – not getting back to residents in a timely manner
- Staff attitude - lack of empathy

What we did:

- Put in place training for staff
- We apologised where we got it wrong and changed our process



We received 20 compliments:

Compliments to staff and services:

- Going over and above customer expectation
- Living the values

What we did:

- Recognised our staff through Gem awards
- Encouraged more of the same behaviour

Involvement

26 customers have been formally involved with BCHG as well as many others on an informal basis. We received views from 400 residents through telephone surveys.



This involvement:

- Helped shape the new grounds maintenance contract selection
- Helped retirement scheme residents organise trips and social activities to reduce isolation
- Monitored the performance of the Responsive Repair service
- Recruited key BCHG colleagues

Garden competition

3 winners receiving gardening vouchers:

Third - Moundsley Grove



First - Hodgetts Close winning
£150 in gardening vouchers



Second - Hamblett's Road



Working in our communities

We have continued to support Blackheath Community Together. They hosted the arts and yarnstorming exhibition on Black Country Day.

We hold regular advice surgeries at the Jubilee Centre in Tipton giving housing advice to our residents and the wider community.

We dealt with 120 incidents that relate to noise, property condition and environment. We worked with other agencies to ensure we keep your neighbourhoods safe and clean.



2018/2019 priorities



Enhancing our offer to residents – to give residents choice to self-serve and communicate with us on social media. Improve transparency about their home and personal data.



Partnership work with residents to bring our repairs in-house – to give tenants opportunity to influence the service specification and monitor performance, every home will have a dedicated repairs operative as well as a customer relations manager.



Upgrade telecare services – to give residents independence and flexibility in our service offer.



New gas contract – to book your own service and improve the customer experience.

Customer engagement strategy



- Gain a wider representation of our tenants voice through the use of digital platforms
- Set up a Repairs Partnership Forum as we bring repairs in-house to influence service specification and monitor performance
- Involve leaseholders and give them a voice to influence services that impact them



“They’ve been understanding with my needs. I’d recommend them to family and friends, they’ve been excellent. I’m over the moon.”

Tenant’s comments



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