



Celebrating
50
years of impact



**Black Country
Housing Group**

Customer Annual Report

2023-2024

Welcome to your annual report which highlights the services we delivered to you, our performance and learning, and look ahead at service improvements.

We recognise this is on the backdrop of the challenges faced by so many with the impact of the cost of living and understand the primary role we play to support and help our customers and communities.



Ramesh Malhan, Head of Customer Voice



We not me



We do what we say we will



We care



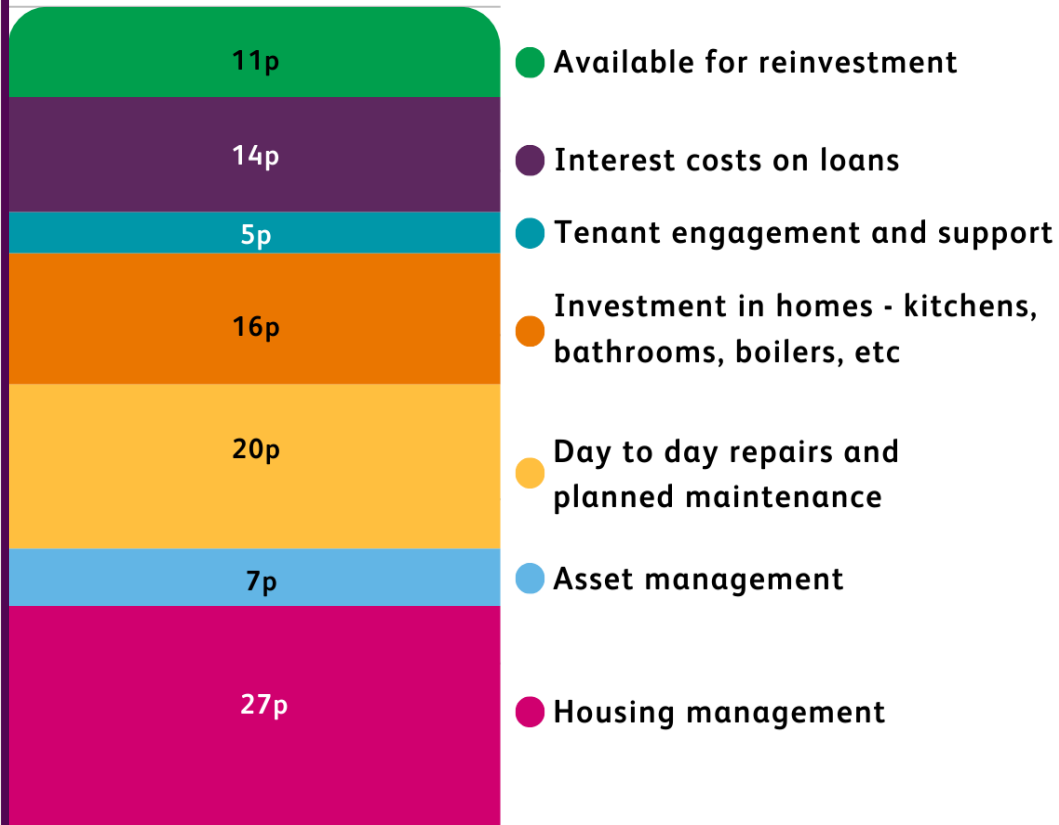
We do the right thing



We love to learn

How we invest

What did we spend your rental income and grant support in 2023/2024?



Supporting your tenancy

Our targeted Tenancy Support Programme helped **197 customers**, this included: welfare benefit support, cost of living tips, budgeting and saving money on food and bills, access to grants and foodbanks. We also helped customers obtain a better deal by moving to cheaper tariffs for utilities, water, and broadband.

Monetary value:

- Council tax reduction - £4,810
- Grants - £640
- Reduced Water Tariff - £14,276
- Universal Credit awards - £12,300
- Foodbank Value - £2,950



Building homes that you need

Between April 2023 and March 2024, we built 54 brand new homes for Affordable Rent in Dudley and Sandwell. We have plans to build a further 132 new homes before March 2028.

Completed schemes

To minimise BCHG's carbon footprint and help reduce running costs the heating and hot water at Payne Street (Rowley Regis), Earl Street (West Bromwich) and Darkhouse Lane (Dudley) are provided by electricity, have solar panels with battery backup and electric vehicle charging points.



Payne Street, Rowley Regis

Nine, 2- and 3-bedroom homes, completed in March 2024. Constructed off site in a factory in Walsall using Modern Methods of Construction (MMC).



Earl Street, West Bromwich

Four, 2-bedroom houses were completed in November 2023. They are well located for the extensive amenities and transport connections of West Bromwich and have large spacious family gardens.



Siviter Court, Rowley Regis

This scheme will provide forty-two 1- and 2-bedroom apartments that is ready for occupation in summer 2024. The development has two lifts, landscaped communal gardens and is close to the shops and facilities of Blackheath.

A total of **148 homes** were let, 54 of which were first time lettings for new homes.

How we keep your home safe

During 2023/24 our compliance team made sure that our tenants' homes are kept in a safe, compliant state with the completion of over 5000 'compliance actions'. A few examples of those are:



1,647 gas services



84 fire risk assessments



660 emergency light tests



204 water hygiene inspections and tests

**99.9%
compliant with
gas servicing**

**99.8%
compliant
with electrical
safety**

**98.8%
compliant
on fire risk
assessment**

**100%
compliant with
lift safety**

**100%
compliant with
water safety**

**100%
compliant for
asbestos**

BCHG is improving underperforming homes where energy efficiency is poor. Using the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating, we aim for C and above.

We are targeting older homes with solid brick walls that perform less well. For ten homes at Crowther Road, Wolverhampton, ratings were D or E, with funding obtained through grants and BCHG investment, external wall insulation was installed with additional loft insulation, improved ventilation, new doors and windows has seen the EPC improve to a band C.

These changes will make an impact on customers living in these homes and reducing energy bills.



How we keep your home in good repair

Homeforce are our dedicated in-house Repairs Service since 2017. This team carries out your repairs, which is more than just maintaining appearance, it includes your safety by preventing accidents, reducing health risks and maintaining a secure living environment.

- Customer satisfaction on responsive repairs 92%
- Homes meeting decent standard 100%
- Repairs within timescale (non-emergency) 94%
- Satisfaction that the home is well maintained 85.3%
- Satisfaction with time taken to complete most recent repair 84.7%

If you want further detail on our performance via our website here -
<https://www.bchg.co.uk/information-and-publications>



How we keep your community safe and clean

We serve as a community anchor, which means we have a long-term relationship to your area no matter what the size. With our customers we develop neighbourhood plans and include local partners such as the police and council. This helps us to identify what matters to you most and how together we can improve your area.

Each year we aim to visit you at your home for a conversation to understand how you are and whether there are any issues we need to work at together or put right. Last year we achieved 70% completion of these visits.

- Customers satisfied that BCHG makes a positive contribution to your neighbourhood 74%

Our grounds maintenance team was brought in-house in 2020.

- Customers satisfied with BCHG cleaning and maintaining communal areas were at 82%.

We are committed to addressing domestic abuse issues and are members of the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) and working toward their accreditation. This is to demonstrate our commitment, to know we will do our best to help and for customers to be confident when disclosing to our colleagues.

We have undergone training with Stop Hate UK to deal with the challenges of hate crimes. We are working together with customers a new policy in this area and promote zero tolerance to any form of hate.

- In the year we dealt with 53 incidents of ASB
- Satisfaction in dealing with ASB is 71%

How we put things right

We dealt with 75 complaints. The satisfaction on complaint handling is low 36%, and a key theme for a conversation with you at our Customer Scrutiny Conference in September 2024.

It is pleasing there were no Housing Ombudsman maladministration cases found against BCHG. The key learning from complaints includes reviewing our approach to gas servicing, further training for colleagues, new policies on reasonable adjustments, remedies and resolution, and reviewing how we can improve our complaint handling.

You will find detailed self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code and our Service Improvement Report on the page here: <https://www.bchg.co.uk/information-and-publications/transparency-policy-and-other-key-policies/>

Our Supported Living service



Our Supported Living service enables adults with support needs to live in their own home with the help they need to be independent. We asked tenants and advocates for feedback:

Everyone said they were happy with their care and support.



Everyone said they are treated with dignity.



How are we managed and checked

Accountability is important, so how does it happen at BCHG.

This report aims to show we are accountable to you as our customers. Your feedback and that of customers actively involved in reviewing services all goes to scrutinising what we do and how we can improve.

- BCHG Board and Executive Team are together responsible for setting a direction, priorities making sure what we do runs safely, we comply with rules and regulations.
- The Regulator of Social Housing is there to make sure that registered providers of social housing like BCHG and Councils meet standards that are expected of them. They must be well governed, spending money sensibly, look after their homes and be respectful. They take appropriate action if the outcomes of the standards are not being delivered.
- Auditors – To help gain assurance we are delivering what we say we will, and the right results we need we have external auditors that provide assurance to residents and the BCHG Board that finances are soundly managed, and the annual accounts present a true and fair view of the income and expenditure and its assets and liabilities.
- Housing Ombudsman - investigate complaints from residents about landlord's housing management – for example, property condition and repairs, charges, complaint handling and how a landlord is responding to antisocial behaviour that is affecting a resident in their home. They can issue landlords who do not treat tenants fairly with orders to put things right.

It's all about keeping you safe and meeting the needs of customers today and in the future.



What we have learned and are doing

We will review with you the way we deliver our gas service.

We will agree with you a new approach on how we handle complaints.

How can you contact us or find out more

- Social Media
 - Facebook - @BCHGLtd
 - Instagram - @blackcountryhousinggroup
- Website – <https://www.bchg.co.uk>
- Customer Portal - <https://myhome.bchg.co.uk>
- Telephone - 0121 561 1969

Housing Ombudsman Service - <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/contact-us/>



