

HOME

The magazine for Acis customers

NEWS



WINTER 2024

Your home, your news



Read about your feedback *page 05*

See our awards ceremony Stars! *page 15*

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion *page 20*

Welcome

Welcome to 2024! In this edition of Home News, we focus on our commitment to providing quality, safe homes and supporting thriving communities. We also share with you an insight into our other services, which include Acis Students in Nottingham and Sheffield, as well as our CLIP and Riverside centres in Lincolnshire.

Our new corporate strategy, outlined on page 3, charts a seven-year vision for Acis as we continue our journey as a charity that provides support through services such as housing, education and skills across South Yorkshire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, and Lincolnshire. This strategic direction highlights our substantial growth and regional impact, setting out our vision to **be there to support you when you need us.**

To all our customers, thank you for your continued support. We are dedicated to offering secure, comfortable housing for you to call home.

Warm regards,

Greg Bacon
CEO, Acis Group

“
Acis Group continues to provide a range of services for our communities...”



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📞 0800 027 2057 ✉ info@acisgroup.co.uk 🌐 acisgroup.co.uk

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Hello. We're Acis Group!

Last year, we decided it was a good time to look at where we are at Acis Group, and think about how we wanted to move forward into the future.

But we couldn't do that on our own. We felt it was vital that you – our customers – had the chance to tell us how you felt about what we do, and how you thought we could help in the future. We asked more than 7,500 people to get involved in some research, so thank you if you got involved and had your say!

Half of you said that there were things we could support you with now. Like helping you to stay in your home for longer, moving to a different property or getting some work done at your home.

The rest of you told us you were doing ok for now, but that you were happy you could get in touch if you needed us.

This shaped a new vision for the future of Acis Group – there to support you when you need us.

So, what does this mean for you?



People first

If you're new to Acis, we're a charity that provides support through services like Housing, Education and Skills.

We've always been an organisation about people, and we put people first in every decision we make. We'll do what's right, even if it's not easy, and we always try to find a solution.

Home

We believe home is more than bricks and mortar. It's a sense of belonging, a community, where the people and services you need come together in the place you need them. We want to create spaces where people can thrive – which means making sure you can stay in the home you love. It also means keeping you safe, making sure your street is welcoming, and that you can meet your neighbours and be an active part of your community, if that's important to you.

You can get involved in how we develop our services and our policies too. We'll aim to talk to you more about what you need from us, and we'd love you to play an active part in how we can meet those needs.

Support

We aim to offer personalised support when you need it, which doesn't have to just be about your tenancy.

Did you know we offer lots of support to boost your skills, help to find work and recognised qualifications too?

We also support with your wellbeing, and we have places in our communities where you can meet local people and learn something new through our CLIP and Riverside Training centres.

One in four of our tenants are already using these services, as well as getting benefits advice, support to adapt their homes, help to settle in new homes and communities and even finding student accommodation!

Quality

We want to make sure we do everything well, and with care. So we're working to industry and regulatory standards in areas like health, safety, building regulations, energy efficiency, education, skills and student accommodation. But we're also creating our own standards that sit above these to ensure we provide the best experience possible for everyone.

We've developed a set of measures which will show us whether we're achieving our vision to **be there to support you when you need us**, and we'll regularly report on these. So keep your eyes peeled in future editions of Home News to see how we're doing!

If you'd like to know more,
you can contact us at
info@acisgroup.co.uk

How are we doing?

Every three months we ask a group of our customers what they think about the service we offer and how satisfied they are. These are known as our Tenant Satisfaction Measures, here are some highlights:



Overall rate of people satisfied with our services.

(target for 2023/2024 83%)



Customers satisfied that the home is well maintained.

(target for 2023/2024 83%)



Customers satisfied that Acis provides a home that is safe.

(target for 2023/2024 90%)



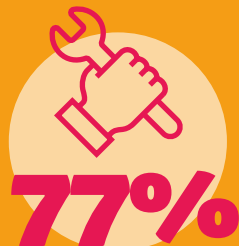
Customers satisfied that Acis makes a positive contribution to the neighbourhood.

(target for 2023/2024 75%)



Customers satisfied with the value for money of services provided.

(target for 2023/2024 90%)



Customers satisfied with their most recent repair.

(target for 2023/2024 85%)



82%

Customers satisfied that Acis keeps them informed about things that matter to them.

(target for 2023/2024 83%)

CLIP and



community
learning in
partnership

river^oside

Riverside Training

Discover a world of possibilities at our four learning and training centres across Lincolnshire. With three CLIP centres in Mablethorpe, Gainsborough, and Market Rasen, along with Riverside Training in Gainsborough, we are committed to providing a range of courses and sessions that appeal to everyone.

At CLIP we offer a range of courses including GCSE English and Maths, which can be great building blocks for academic and professional success. Our unique Flare programme, designed for 16 to 19 year-olds, offers a supportive educational experience that goes beyond a traditional learning setting. We also provide a number of craft and hands-on sessions like gardening for all ages.

Riverside Training, located in Gainsborough, is more than just a training provider. It's a welcoming hub for life skills and employment training, supporting personal and professional growth. Riverside hosts family engagement sessions, somewhere the whole family can enjoy and learn together.

In Mablethorpe and Gainsborough, we also provide Wellbeing Hubs designed to support mental health and personal wellbeing. You can join our community-based sessions such as Song and Sandwich or Seated Yoga, including personalised one-to-one sessions that aim to boost confidence and resilience.

We understand that accessibility is key to learning. That's why we offer a variety of online courses, allowing you to benefit from the expertise of our team no matter where you are. Explore the full range of courses on our website, easily accessible through the QR code or by typing the following web address into your browser acisgroup.co.uk/skills.

Whether you're aiming for academic success, personal development, or improved mental health, our learning and training centres are here to unlock your potential. Many of our sessions are FREE, depending on your circumstances, so join us this year and discover the opportunities we have waiting for you.





Acis Students



Acis Students has purpose-built student accommodation in Nottingham and Sheffield, for those seeking a home away from home whilst studying at university. We understand the unique needs of students, and our facilities reflect our commitment to providing a comfortable and supportive living environment.

Our accommodation features a mix of rooms with en-suite and shared bathrooms, along with shared kitchen and living areas, fostering a sense of community among students. It's been a transformative year for both — The Trigon in Sheffield and Raleigh Park in Nottingham— with a real focus on enhancing the overall student experience.

Throughout the academic year, we welcomed a total of 977 students and organised a variety of events to ensure they had the best possible stay. We committed to providing more than just a roof over their heads; we made sure their wellbeing was one of our top priorities and offered support with budgeting to make their academic journey more enjoyable and stress-free.

Acis Students is proud to be an affordable and friendly housing option, with support on hand to help

to help with concerns about moving away from home and acknowledge how overwhelming that might be especially with high costs associated with some university accommodation. Our aim is to create a welcoming atmosphere that supports students in their new home, so they can focus on their studies and achieve success.

For more information about Acis Students and the wonderful opportunities it offers, scan the QR code provided. Take a look at the success of our student community and the supportive environment we've built address: acisgroup.co.uk/students



Something new is coming this Spring!

focus on
your voice



Your Voice is transforming.

We're committed to continually improving our homes and the services that we offer. But we don't just make changes for the sake of it. We want to hear exactly what you think.

At the end of the day, who knows the place you live better than you?

There are currently **six** different ways you can have your say on what matters to you – whether that's our performance, reviewing our processes and policies, or just giving us your views.

Over the years Your Voice has seen us organise community days, afternoon teas, litter picks, and hold focus groups about repairs, complaints and specific local concerns. We've also sat with our Customer Voice Panel, who are a focus group of Acis tenants, discussing our performance and where we can improve.

In 2024 we're taking that a step further!





Alongside our customer digital champions group, we're creating an online community that's all about hearing your voice and sharing ideas 24/7.

Your Voice is going digital.

There will be online areas specific areas specific to your neighbourhood, and more general places to share your thoughts and get involved, we'll be working together to shape our communities and improve our services.

But don't worry, we'll still be out and about in our communities doing everything we've done before, from community days, to walkabouts with your Area Service Manager. You'll be able to get involved on your phone, computer, or tablet as well, in lots more ways than ever before.

Your Voice is there to share ideas and have your say. It won't affect your MyAcis account.

Keep your eyes peeled for more updates about Your Voice coming this spring.

Want to be involved in the customer digital champions group? Get in touch at **yourvoice@acisgroup.co.uk**



Engagement days

Last year saw our teams getting out and about in our communities to support you. From painting auction sheds in Market Rasen to building benches and planting wildflowers, 2023 was a busy year.

Our engagement activities are all part of the Your Voice programme, which is about hearing your feedback and putting it into action.

Engagement day at Oaklands, Saxilby

On 29 June as part of Your Voice month we headed to Oaklands in Saxilby to spruce up their courtyard and garden space.

Your Voice month ran throughout June and was focused on shining a light on your feedback and thoughts, to help us support you through the services we provide.

The Oaklands engagement day was one of a number of events based on tenant's feedback. The courtyard went from overgrown and unloved, to a much-needed space to relax in throughout the summer. Adding a lick of paint to the benches and planters, uprooting old plants, and putting in new ones gave the space a new lease of life.





Market Rasen engagement day

In the summer, teams from across Acis Group headed to Market Rasen to engage the local community and give back.

At Fletcher Court we worked with our tenants to clear out space in their communal area, whilst also giving their courtyard a refresh. We re-painted the old benches bright blue and cleaned the courtyard so that people could enjoy the long summer days.

Back in the town centre our engineers were hard at work repainting the town's auction shed. From sanding down the old, flaking paint to getting out paint brushes, and reaching up high to paint the entire shed.

And let's not forget that we've also had goats, mice and owls all take part in our engagement day at Market Rasen House, as part of our plans for the area.

Newlands engagement day

On Wednesday 18 October we headed to Newlands in Gainsborough to see how we could transform the courtyard. It sits in the middle of Newlands, providing a sun trap throughout the year, and the perfect place to relax and unwind.

After listening to feedback from tenants about not being able to use this space, our neighbourhood and engagement teams got together to help change that.

Alongside our ground's maintenance contractor, Continental Landscapes, we gave the courtyard a fresh look.

Teams from across Acis Group, with some help from our customers too, sanded down planters, painted benches and re-filled the rockery to create a space that could be used throughout the year.





Our neighbourhood team embarks on rewilding at Deerlands, Beckingham

In October our neighbourhood team headed to Deerlands, with Beckingham Primary School, and got their green fingers to work.

Initially the land next to Deerlands, faced setbacks as wildflower seeds failed to flourish, resulting in the space feeling somewhat neglected. But despite unpredictable weather conditions, the team pressed on with smiles and determination, covering a large area near the Deerlands development.

Listening to the community's desire to revive the area and promote biodiversity, we joined forces with Joan Sanger from the local Parish Council. Together, we sought the expertise of Meadow Makers, renowned wildflower specialists, to guide the replanting process. A number of children from Beckingham Primary School joined the day, rolling up their sleeves and getting their hands muddy for a good cause.

On the day, we successfully planted over 500 wildflower



plugs, complemented by carefully chosen seeds with the hope of a blossoming and thriving wildflower meadow in the spring.

Taylor Gibson, Neighbourhoods Manager from Acis, talks about the importance of community engagement events, "Working together to enhance and revive our local environments is really important to us. The Deerlands project will add some colour to our surroundings, but this also gives a sense of shared responsibility for our shared spaces. This is a great example of how together, we can positively impact our environment."

We would like to share a heartfelt thanks to everyone involved for their hard work, dedication, and their green thumbs! Anticipation is high as the community eagerly look forward to witnessing the meadow bloom and thrive in the new year.



Annual report for tenants

Each year we report on our achievements and how we are working to improve our communities. Here's what we achieved in 2022/2023:

Our growth

Acis Students and CLIP joined the Group.



£14.2m invested in new homes.



Generated a total of external funding of **£1,285,956** within the year to deliver services to over 3,502 people.



100 new homes developed.

Our efficiency



100% of new homes have EPC rating B.

We carried out loft insulation and cavity wall insulation to improve energy efficiency.



On average we have reduced completion of our non-priority repairs to just 7 days.

All our homes with gas have been marked Gas Safe.

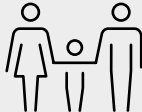


Our partnerships



Working with **26** local authorities.

4 community action days held.



Our customers

82% of our tenants were satisfied with the quality of their home.



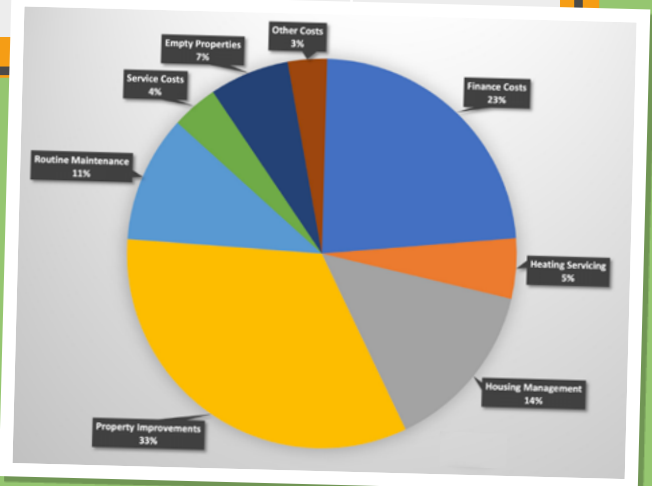
76% overall tenant satisfaction.

10% of tenants engaged in Your Voice activities

95% of our tenants sustain their tenancy for over 12 months.

How your rent is spent

- Finance Costs
- Heating Servicing
- Housing Management
- Property Improvements
- Routine Maintenance
- Service Costs
- Empty Properties
- Other Costs



Celebrating our Stars of 2023!

On Thursday 30 November we brought together some of our tenants, learners, and students, along with local councillors, partner organisations and some people from Acis Group to celebrate community contribution.

We asked both our housing, and education and skills teams to nominate the customers they knew were helping their neighbours, supporting their communities, or doing amazing things to improve their own situation.

The Showroom in Lincoln played host for our festive-themed celebration. We looked back over what we'd achieved in 2023 and talked about our new vision for Acis Group, which you can read more about on page 3. Then we delved into our nominees' stories.

We heard about people who:

- give up their Sundays to give people a warm space to go to.
- pick up shopping for others who can't do their own.
- helped organise a funeral for a neighbour to help them during a difficult time.
- help new students to feel welcome in their new accommodation.
- overcome different challenges to achieve a qualification or improve their skills.



We also celebrated some of our Acis Group colleagues who do a great job to support our customers and communities every day, and the partners and funders who help to make it all possible.

Our Stars of 2023 are:



Customer Star award winner
Claire Moore



Customer Star runner up
Christine Knowlson

Acis Group Rockstar award winner
Jean Warrington



Acis Group Superstar award winner
The Corporate Strategy Working Group



Acis Group Rockstar runners up
Gillian Macias and Lindsey Moulds



Acis Group Superstar runner up Ben Croft



Well done to all our winners and runners up! We presented each person with a certificate award, as well as some vouchers to celebrate their achievements. We also recognised our other nominees who joined us on the day too. And everyone did a brilliant job getting crafty to help us think about the ways we can support all the people we work with.

Thanks to everyone who came along and got involved, it was a thoroughly enjoyable day.



Our Star partner West Lindsey District Council

**DIRECT
DEBIT
DRAW**

Every six months one of our customers who has agreed to pay their rent through Direct Debit is entered into a prize draw. If you would like to sign up to pay your rent in this way, you can do so on MyAcis, or call and speak with our Customer Service Centre on **0800 027 2057**.

Jessica Harte from Gringley on the Hill is our winner this time! Congratulations Jessica, who has won £150 of High Street vouchers.

Quiz corner

This edition sees some home themed quizzes to get you thinking!

Riddle

It doesn't bark, it doesn't bite but still won't let you in a house. **What is it?**

Answer: A lock

Wordsearch competition!

Try to find the words below in the wordsearch

- ☐ Apartment
- ☐ Street
- ☐ House
- ☐ Bungalow
- ☐ School
- ☐ Window
- ☐ Key
- ☐ Office
- ☐ Home

Win a
£20
high street
voucher

Find all 10 words in the wordsearch. Words can go in any direction, and letters can be shared between words. Return both puzzle and entry form by 1 March 2024 for a chance of winning a £20 high street voucher:

Marketing and Communications, Freepost RTSH-THEK-SRRJ, Acis House, Bridge Street, Gainsborough, DN21 1GG

Name

Telephone

Address

Join us as a tenant representative



We are looking for people to join our Board. We need a mix of people who have a range of skills to help us support our customers.

- ✓ Are you an Acis tenant?
- ✓ Do you want to make a difference in our communities?
- ✓ Is having your voice heard important to you?

If your answer is **YES**, then this role is tailor-made for **YOU!**



What will you do?

Your contribution involves taking part in a minimum of four meetings per year, either at our Head Office in Gainsborough or a mix of in-person and online, sharing your views and helping to shape future decisions.

Who are we looking for?

- We're on the lookout for potential tenant representatives with a **personal view of the Social Housing world**.
- Being a **team player** is essential, as working with fellow Acis team members and Trustees is at the heart of this role.
- **Engaging in constructive debate** and **respecting differing opinions** are crucial attributes.



If you're interested, have any questions, or need further information, please get in touch with us at **Legal@acisgroup.co.uk**

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (ED&I)

ED&I is about embracing people's differences, including their beliefs, abilities, preferences, backgrounds, values, and identities. Inclusion is an extension of equality and diversity. It means that all people, without exception, have the right to be included, respected, and appreciated as valuable members of the community.

ED&I is important to us and this report provides details of some of the actions that we have taken over the last year to deliver our commitments.

Our commitments

Information about our customers

Actions completed against our commitments

We have continued to update information to assist us in knowing about our customers and their needs - please see ED&I and our customers heading below.

Communication

Customers have been involved in the redesign of our website.



Service delivery

Equality Impact Assessments are being undertaken for all new or revised policies and strategies.

Services have been co-designed with customers, for example our repairs on demand service and MyAcis.

Engagement and involvement

Customers are involved in co-designing our new Your Voice digital platform.



Our people

Gender pay gap information has been collated and analysed.

Job advertisements have included a statement demonstrating our intent to positively recruit from under-represented groups.

Interviews have been guaranteed for those with disabilities who demonstrate minimum competence levels for opportunities available.



Our board



A programme of development opportunities is in place supported by the Housing Diversity Network.

Diversity of thought has been a consideration of recruitment campaigns.

Please see more about our Board on page 23.

Our premises and workplaces

Workplace audits are being undertaken that accord with ISO45001 requirements.

Role-based risk assessments and occupational health-based adjustments are being undertaken where required.

Awareness raising



Equality in Our Workplace course has been undertaken by Acis people.

ED&I is a standard team meeting agenda item.

Awareness questionnaire has been completed by 185 Acis people.

Board member awareness session was delivered by the Housing Diversity Network.

Investment in homes

In 2023 we completed 117 adaptation jobs and approved 84 DFG applications with different local authorities.

Contractors and suppliers

Our revised Procurement Strategy commits to enabling Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, including supplier diversity.



Harassment, victimisation and discrimination

Reported instances (harassment 17, hate crime three) have been recorded, investigated, and resolutions sought.

Network of information and support

We have participated in the Housing Quality Network Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Network.

Measuring and reporting

There has been a six monthly report to the board, including our ED&I measures.



ED&I and our customers

We have continued to update information to assist us in knowing about our customers and their needs. However, there is still a lot that we don't know, and we're asking you to tell us more.



Why?

We understand that the sharing of personal information can be a matter of sensitivity but, if customers share their details, it enables us to consider actions we may need to take to make our services work better for everyone. We are not being nosey and we will only ask for personal information to help improve our service.

How?

We can assure you that your personal information is handled with care and always stored securely.

What?

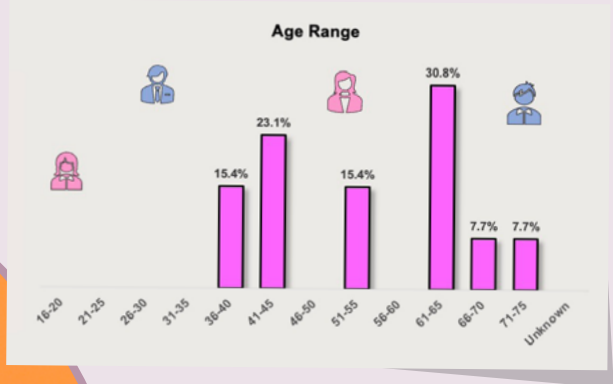
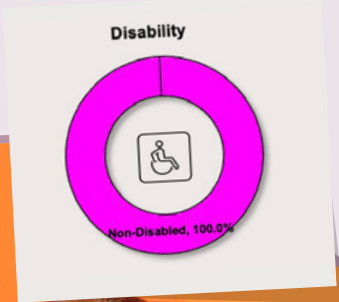
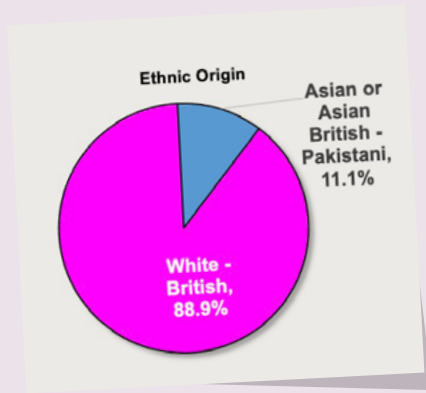
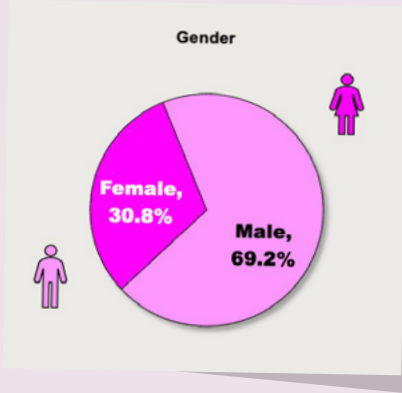
The personal information sought is relatively basic – gender, ethnicity, age group, disability, maybe your sexuality. It's not unusual for service providers like Acis to want to know this information and use it positively.



If you have any questions then please get in today through MyAcis, over the phone **0800 027 2057**, or via email: **info@acisgroup.co.uk**

ED&I and our Board

Three new Board members were appointed in 2023, and the current profile of the Board is shown below.



Acis is a complex and changing organisation and all Board members are appointed after consideration of how they can meet governance requirements and demands. The Board has skills, attributes, and experience in the following areas: accountancy and financial management, asset management, audit, education and training, community enterprise and investment, housing and property management, procurement, and project management.

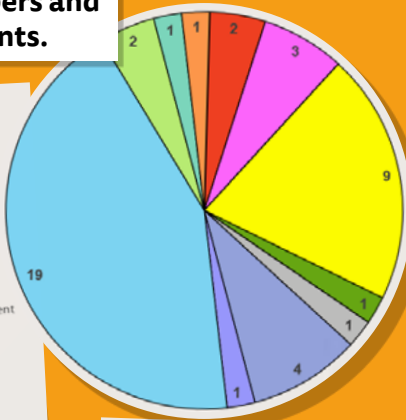
You can get involved with our board too, head to page 19.

Customer feedback:

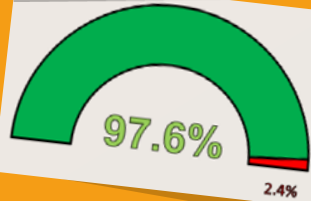
Your complaints throughout 2023

Complaint numbers and types of complaints.

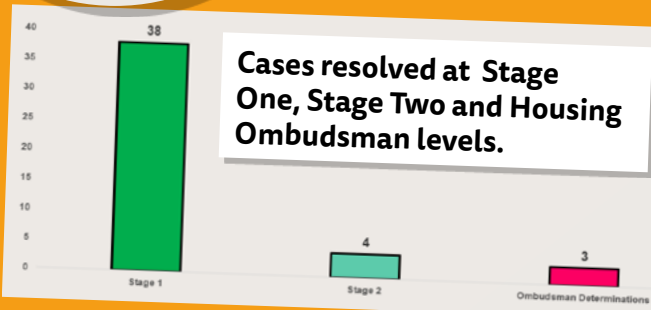
- Allocations and new tenancies/leases
- Anti social behaviour handling
- Asset Management
- Customer service
- Education and Training
- Employee behaviour / attitude
- HomePlus
- Neighbourhood and estate management
- Other
- Out of hours service
- Planned works
- Property condition
- Rents
- Repairs
- Service charges
- Servicing / testing
- Shared ownership / sales
- Tenancy issues



The percentage of complaints responded to in the target timescales.



Cases resolved at Stage One, Stage Two and Housing Ombudsman levels.



Learning from complaints has led us to:



Remind our people of the importance of good communication with anyone making a complaint.



Improve the content and consistency of complaint response letters.

Track repairs to be undertaken in response to a complaint to ensure they are completed as promised.



Ensure that clear information is provided to explain any awards of compensation.

