



Annual Report for Tenants

April 2021 – March 2022



Hello

A message from our Chair



Welcome to our first annual report as Newtide Homes!

As we reflect on another year, one thing that hasn't changed is our ongoing aspiration to get to know our tenants better, to provide a local service. And we know that listening to and involving tenants in what we do has never been more important. Since April 2021, we've had tens of thousands of conversations with our tenants, reviewed thousands of survey responses and learned from hundreds of complaints. Plus, we've increased the number of tenant-facing roles in the team by ten; half of which are now working in your communities and helping to resolve your complaints as quickly as we can.

Through our partnership with Hopestead, we've helped individuals and families moving in from a route of homelessness to access all the help and support they need to set up their new home. We've reached out with acts of kindness, sending flowers following a bereavement or delivering meals when times have been especially tough. And we're proud to have worked with our local authority partners to provide homes to families from Afghanistan via the resettlement scheme, and, as part of Flagship Group, have pledged our support to families fleeing the war in Ukraine.

When it comes to day-to-day operations, our teams have embraced self-management and begun the journey of embedding this new approach to work. The results are showing already, with strong performance from the team, supported by high levels of staff satisfaction. And on that note, I would like to thank our people; their hard work, resilience and proactivity over the past year is certainly something I am grateful to each one of them for.

As we say goodbye to two of our longstanding Board members (Nancy and Diane), whose expertise and contributions will be greatly missed, we've also said hello to new Board members. As a Board, we have four key priorities for the year ahead, and at the forefront of our minds is the cost-of-living crisis. It's something we're all experiencing first-hand, and we know hard

times are ahead. We want to support our staff and tenants through these tough times where we can. Don't be afraid to speak to us if you need help.

Looking forward, we want to make strides to improve our repairs service - and we know there's a long way to go. We need to reduce wait times, and want to make it much easier for you to track your repair online, helping you keep your home in top condition. We also want to build upon the foundations we put in place this year, strengthening the voice of the tenant and evolving how we engage with local communities. Lastly, we want to ensure that we're investing in our homes, keeping them as warm, safe and modern as possible.

I have no doubt next year will bring more opportunities as we continue our talks with bpha and Futures Housing Group; I see this as an exciting opportunity to leverage the financial strength of a new Group to invest in delivering an excellent local service and build even more homes. We look forward to delivering on this year's objectives and making sure our tenants don't just have a roof over their head, but a home and a community they can thrive in.

Cy Edmondson
Chair of Flagship Homes

We want to ensure that we're investing in our homes, keeping them as warm, safe and modern as possible



Adapting to Covid-19

There's no doubt that Covid-19 challenged the way we work. It raised questions about our systems, how we could maintain a good level of customer service and carry out repairs in a difficult and ever-changing environment.

Our Customer Services team worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic to continue speaking with tenants. While the regulations on entering private homes and maintaining social distancing were being updated regularly, being able to talk to someone over the phone became more important than ever.

Between April 2021 and March 2022, June was our busiest month with 8,913 calls answered by our Customer Services team. And throughout the year, we answered just under half of all our calls in under 60 seconds. Overall, we had 261,051 conversations with tenants over the phone and on livechat!

On average,
we spoke to

262

tenants on the
phone each day
last year



More challenges

In February and March of 2022, Storms Eunice and Franklin wreaked havoc in East Anglia. The impact was felt most profoundly by our tenants, who had to deal with damage to their homes and gardens. That's why March was the second busiest month for our Customer Services team, speaking to 8,441 tenants overall. A lot of those calls were requests for repairs and were handed over to Flagship Services - the surge in tree works for the Arborist team and the significant work needed to roofs and fences totalled 1,200 storm damage repairs.



Tenant engagement

Keeping strong relationships with our tenants is hugely important to us, and keeping open and honest two-way communication and engagement is a crucial part of this.

We're proud to say we involve our tenants in big decisions and key policies, and we're continually working on new ways to involve you even more.

Monthly rents

The days when our tenants pay their rent is varied - some monthly, some weekly - so we surveyed 1,200 tenants across Flagship Group to find out if there was an ideal time to pay.

Your feedback led us to introduce a new policy where all new tenancies will be setup with monthly rent payments as standard. We hope this helps tenants manage their household budgets and makes it easier for them to avoid slipping into rent debt.



£10k Travis Perkins investment

In December 2021, we received £10,000 from Travis Perkins to uplift our communities. Narrowing down lots of different ideas on how to use the money, we decided to split it between three causes:

- **We'll spend £5,000** to improve communal recreation and play space at Beavans Court in Great Yarmouth
- **We donated £4,000** to Thin Ice, a charity who provide hot meals to people who can't afford to eat. This money provided all the meals for 20 people a day in January.
- Finally, **we donated £1,000** to DIAL. They used the money to provide £50 food vouchers to 20 families who couldn't afford meals around Christmas time.



Marram Green sheltered scheme

To get a better understanding of the concerns faced by our tenants at Marram Green, we began attending their monthly forum. It's been a great way to understand how our tenants there are feeling and to answer their questions. Following these initial conversations, we've also been joined by colleagues from Flagship Services, Gasway and the Service Charge team to answer tenant questions directly.

Out and about in Great Yarmouth

Our data showed us that tenants in some of our Great Yarmouth neighbourhoods were struggling with rent debt and were reporting more repairs than others. Similarly, the area had a high turnover of tenants. To find out why this might be happening, we carried out informal face-to-face visits at our tenants' homes.

We visited 112 households altogether and spoke to tenants about how they felt about their home, their community and how they managed their rent accounts. Since then, we've seen a reduction in rent debt and in referrals to our Tenancy Sustainment team, as well as an increase in Direct Debits for rent payments.

"Listen to my voice and understand me"

Following our review of our Tenant Voice service in 2020, we held a collaborative session with our Local Housing Board and 'involved tenants'. Some of the lessons we learned included that we:

- ...**need to engage** in different ways so that we hear the voice of all tenants
- ...must **offer a range of options** including digital and face-to-face
- ...**provide training** to support tenants to participate
- ...**take prompt action** when issues or complaints are raised
- ...give the Boards **more opportunity** to hear the tenant voice

We've used this feedback to design a new framework to help us listen to your voice and understand you, and it has three levels:

Personal Allow tenants to express their views and thoughts on the service they receive throughout the customer journey, right from the sign-up process.

Local Encourage tenants to get involved with their local community and shape where they live. From our communal areas to estate issues and designing out crime – we want to work with our tenants to improve the areas that need it.

Group Local Boards are responsible for holding local service provision to account, and all have tenant members. We are now providing reports to these Boards, so they can make sure we're always learning and improving.

Our three involved tenant groups:

Complaints Appeal Panel (CAP): tenants who are trained in complaint resolution who are committed to supporting tenants to resolve complaints.

Digital Experience Group (DEG): tenants who test and experience new digital solutions.

Tenant Overview Panel (TOP): tenants who support Local Housing Boards with their decision making by discussing policy and strategy.

In 2021/22,
we received

19,167
responses to
our surveys



Satisfaction with our service

As a Group, tenant satisfaction levels are a good indication of how effective our services are, and where we need to make improvements.

We listen carefully to what tenants tell us through real-time feedback. Similarly to last year, tenants praised our staff but were unhappy with our repairs and the time it took to complete them.

We continue to use Net Promoter Score (NPS) to provide us with a snapshot of how our tenants feel about our service. This year, our NPS dropped considerably from +28 down to +5. We know that one of the main reasons behind this is due to Covid-19 and the impact it had on some of our services, especially repairs.

Overall, we have an
82%
satisfaction rate



Involving our tenants

As a Group, we carried out seven unique surveys this year and received 593 individual responses on topics like energy, communal areas and internet connectivity. Your feedback is crucial in our decision making and helps us plan the policies and action plans of the future.

We also engaged with our Digital Experience Group (DEG) to collect feedback on our new websites, which we launched in July 2021. DEG provided us with their insights on the look & feel of the sites, self-service options and live chat. Overall, this feedback led to 15 new features, improvements and fixes.



Making a complaint

We agree with local authorities when they say they want to ensure all our tenants have the security of a safe and well-maintained home which they're proud to live in. And, as outlined in the Social Housing Charter, a home should always be more than just four walls and a roof.

In the Social Housing White Paper, you can see seven key principles that you can expect and are entitled to as a social housing tenant, and they are:

1. To be safe in your home.
2. To know how your landlord is performing.
3. To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly.
4. To be treated with respect.
5. To have your voice heard by your landlord.
6. To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in.
7. To be supported to take your first step to ownership.

If at any point you feel like we have broken any of these principles, you can make a formal complaint. You can do this online at **newtide-homes.co.uk/make-a-complaint**, where you can also learn about our complaints process, or you can call us on **0808 168 4555**.

To find out more about our complaints policy, head to **newtide-homes.co.uk/policies**.

Maintaining your home

The main priority for Flagship Services during the pandemic was to keep everyone safe.

This meant adapting quickly to new guidelines as they were published, maintaining safe working environments and acting responsibly around anyone with a vulnerability. Even with these extra measures, our teams were able to deliver a full programme of work.

21,307
repairs



68,000
Gasway callouts



Repairs and maintenance

We know we still have a way to go, but as a Group we have continued to invest in our existing homes. In 2021/22 we invested £35.5m into responsive repairs and £40m in capital improvements, including kitchens, bathrooms, windows and doors.

The programme started the year slowly but, in accordance with the government's 'roadmap out of lockdown', we finished the year by completing 91% of the work we'd planned on kitchens, bathrooms, windows, doors and roofs.

We managed to complete over 37,000 jobs in 2021/22 and improved 1,100 empty homes, enabling us to re-let to another family in need of a home. We also completed our extensive external redecoration programme in the year.

1,025 kitchens

694 bathrooms

400 electrical re-wires

1,113 external doors

593 fire doors

584 windows

161 roof replacements

604 electrical consumer units

12 other capital projects, including communal entrances

PLUS

729 fire risk assessments

3,031 fire remedial actions



Property Investment

Asset Management

During the last year we invested £400,000 in initiatives to promote safety in communal areas and create more functional entrance spaces.

To ensure your safety, we have invested over £1.3m in fire safety upgrade programmes, enhancing fire stopping and detection systems, as well as entrance door replacements and lighting upgrades.

Our focus on de-carbonisation saw us invest £12m in energy efficiency measures which include insulation, heat pumps, solar panels, window and door replacements and high retention storage heaters.

As a Group, we continue to focus on bringing all our homes up to an EPC rating C or above and are progressing with our ambitious retrofit programme to improve the efficiency of 1,250 homes per year.

We plan to invest £65m over the next five years to improve the energy performance of our homes, and our Energy team continues to review damp and mould across the Group to ensure our investment goes to the homes that need it most.



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Hopestead

The Group's charity Hopestead supports our tenants when they first move into their new home, and sets them up to help them thrive. We have a range of initiatives available to you through Hopestead – from money saving schemes, to free courses in budgeting and managing your tenancy.

Since November 2021, Hopestead has provided furniture and white goods packages to 26 households moving into their first tenancy following a period of homelessness and has made sure that 100 households at risk of experiencing homelessness have a place to call home.

Hopestead has also supported the Afghan resettlement scheme with moving in and training support. It has raised over £20,000 directly to further support individuals experiencing domestic abuse and has donated over £200,000 to local charities and social enterprises working hard to end homelessness in the East of England.

You can find out more
by visiting hopestead.org



Hopestead has raised over
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social enterprises in the
East of England



**HOPE
STEAD**



Assuring you of value for money



Value for Money (VfM) is an important part of our culture. It sets the tone for doing the best for our tenants and is one of our fundamental values - to spend money wisely.



We use a colour coding system to highlight our VfM performance:

● Good ● Okay ● Requires improvement

	2022 Actual	2021 Actual	2021 Peer Group	2022 Actual	2021 Peer Group
Re-investment percentage	7.1%	5.9%	6.1%	●	●
New supply delivered (Social housing units) New social homes etc.	1.8%	1.5%	1.2%	●	●
New supply delivered (Non-social housing units)	0.3%	0.1%	0.2%	●	●
Headline social housing cost per unit	£3,637	£2,817	£3,730	●	●
Operating margin (overall)	28.4%	30.0%	23.0%	●	●
Operating margin (social housing lettings only)	33.3%	35.4%	28.0%	●	●

Re-investment percentage highlights how much money we are investing in our homes.

New supply delivered percentage highlights how many new homes we are building compared to the number of existing homes we own.

Headline social housing cost per unit is an indication of the cost to manage, maintain and improve your home.

Operating margin measures how efficiently we are delivering our services.

Part of the



In fond memory of Henry Knights,
our dear friend and colleague who sadly
passed away in February 2022.

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