



CITIZEN

AN UNPRECEDENTED YEAR, AN OUTSTANDING YEAR

Welcome to our 2020-21 annual report.

As we launch this year's report we reflect on a year like no other.

Our customers and colleagues have faced unprecedented challenges during the last 18 months.

During this extraordinary time our focus has been on protecting the safety of our customers and teams as we continue to provide high-quality services.

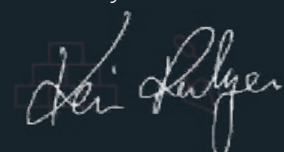
Despite the many challenges that were thrown our way, we are extremely proud to present our performance for 2020-21.

Amazingly, this was one of our best performing years. We slashed our call waiting times, achieved a customer satisfaction average of 4.5 out of 5, achieved our best arrears performance ever, delivered our biggest ever development programme and still managed to move forward our ambitious plans to improve our services in many areas.

As we emerge from the worst effects of the pandemic, we can reflect on a year in which we not only weathered the storm, but excelled within it.

We would like to thank every Citizen customer for their patience and understanding and every colleague who went the extra mile to make the performance we outline in this report possible.

Thank you



Kevin Rodgers,
Chief Executive



Colin Dennis,
Chair



MAKING OUR STRATEGY REALITY

Our 2020-23 business strategy sets out seven priorities to guide our work.

These objectives help to keep us focused so that we can make the biggest difference.

In this report we reveal our performance through this lens to demonstrate our progress against these objectives.



<p>1 WE ARE BUILDING FOUNDATIONS</p>	<p>2 WE ARE LOOKING OUT FOR OUR CITIZENS</p>	<p>3 WE ARE PUTTING OURSELVES ON THE MAP</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the supply of affordable homes in the Midlands Maximise the performance of our existing homes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve our offer to our customers Make our services more efficient Improve our support services and tackle homelessness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be thought leaders in our region and our sector Be an employer of choice



UPPING THE GAME ON CUSTOMER SERVICE

What an extraordinary 12 months to report on.

In a truly unique year, the safety of our customers has been our top priority and our focus has been on maintaining our services, communicating clearly with our customers, and keeping them satisfied in the face of challenges we could never have anticipated.

Bearing this in mind, I am delighted that we were able to achieve our best ever performance in the Customer Service Centre – where despite a complete change to the way advisers work, and the extra pressures added by the pandemic, the team were able to keep this service running and slash customer waiting times along the way.

We were also able to move forward with major projects to help us to drive forward our strategic objective to improve our customer offer.

The implementation of our Customer Experience Platform has transformed our understanding of customer satisfaction with our services, and from more than 48,000 pieces of individual feedback in 2020-21 the average rating we received was 4.5 out of 5.

We are pleased to have made significant progress in our work to involve our customers and give them a voice. We had an incredible response as we recruited our new Customer Assurance Committee, with more than 350 applications, and this passionate and engaged group of customers is already having a real impact on our work. We will be looking to grow this influence in the next year.

Our journey to customer excellence continues, but in a year of unimaginable challenge, we are pleased to have made real strides.

Lourdes Sharpe, Director of Customer Services

IN NUMBERS

Our overall customer satisfaction 2020 - 21



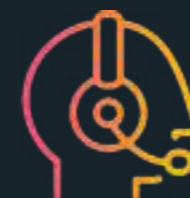
4.5 OUT OF 5

(based on 48,083 pieces of individual feedback)*
*Our new methodology for 2020-21 means this is not comparable with previous years

Average call waiting time

2020/21 **51** secs

2019/20 2 mins 31 secs



Phone calls answered

267,857





UNDERSTANDING WHAT OUR CUSTOMERS THINK ABOUT OUR SERVICES

In May 2020 we launched our Customer Experience Platform.

The system, used by major national customer service providers, gives us detailed insight and feedback from customers which we can analyse in real time.

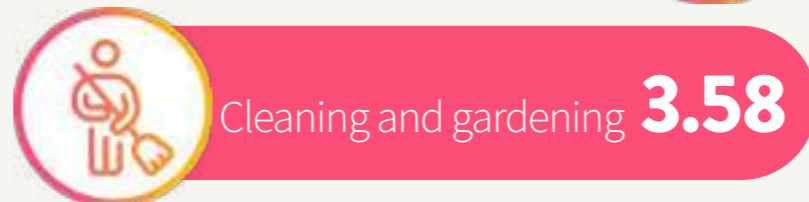
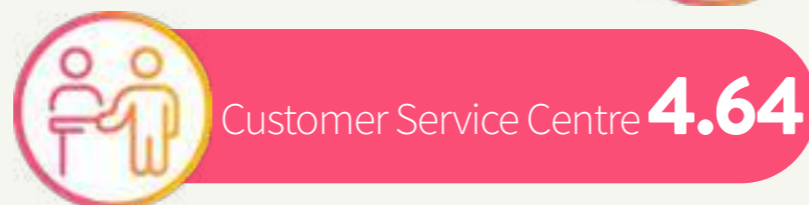
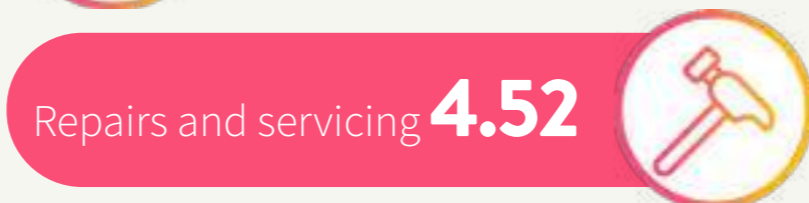
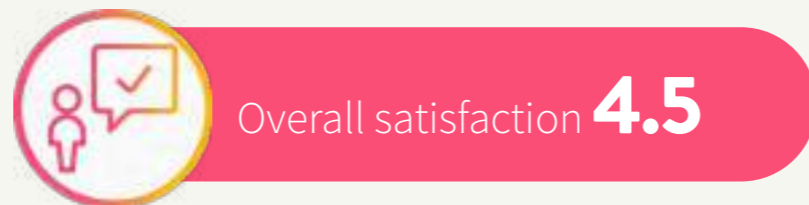
Shortly after receiving a service from us the system sends text messages or emails to customers giving them the chance to rate their experience and highlight what went well and where we can improve.

The platform measures everything from contacts with our Customer Service Centre and repairs to our cleaning service and complaints handling, and allows us to analyse trends and make improvements. We will continue to roll it out across our services in 2021-21.

HOW CUSTOMERS RATED US:

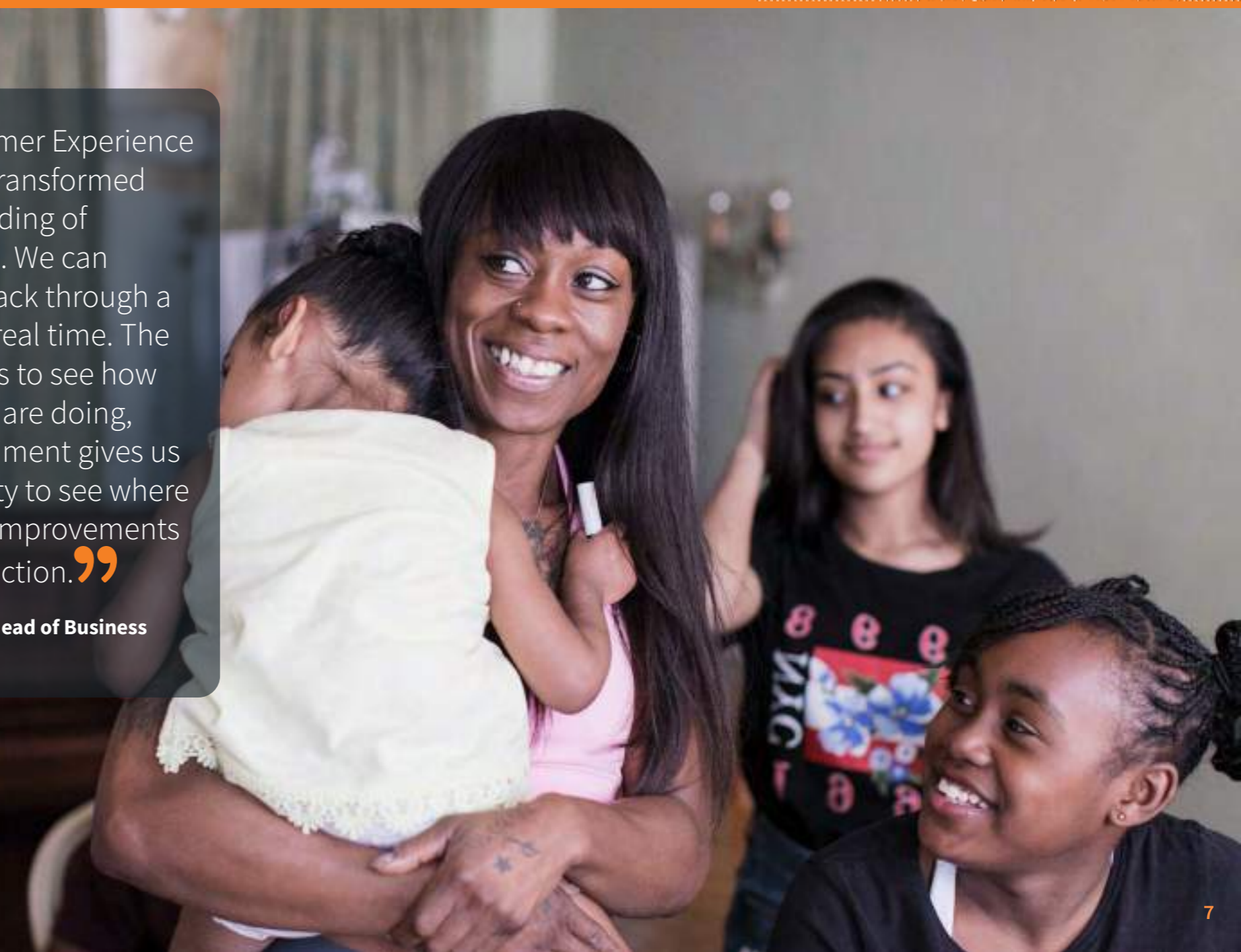
2020-21 in numbers

All scores are out of 5



“The Customer Experience Platform has transformed our understanding of our customers. We can analyse feedback through a dashboard in real time. The scores allow us to see how good a job we are doing, while the sentiment gives us the opportunity to see where we can make improvements to drive satisfaction.”

Sally Underwood, Head of Business Intelligence





DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS

Dealing with complaints quickly and effectively is a priority for us.

We have created a dedicated team who work with our customers to understand where things have gone wrong and where we need to put things right.

Our aim is to make sure that when customers complain, they are listened to and treated with respect.

In 2020/21 we received 308 complaints - here is a breakdown:

SERVICE AREA	NUMBER
Repairs and Maintenance	154
Housing Services	100
Estates Services	22
Asset Management and Safety	13
Central Services	10
Sales and Development	9
TOTAL	308





ACTING ON YOUR FEEDBACK

The detailed insight we receive from our Customer Experience Platform gives us real-time intelligence and allows us to make changes to reflect what our customers are telling us. Here are some examples of changes we made based on feedback from our customers:

YOU SAID



WE DID



REPAIRS

Our response times to emergency work were not acceptable

There were delays and difficulties in us dealing with larger, more complicated repairs

There were delays and a lack of communication when we dealt with follow-up work

We set up a dedicated emergency response team to focus on delivering emergency repairs

We set up a dedicated team to deliver larger and complex repairs

We agreed a new procedure and issued this to staff. We also delivered training and issued new guides to staff

GAS SERVICES

Our contractor was not always able to attend appointments which were scheduled

This was a result of significant resourcing issues caused by the pandemic. A recruitment drive has since taken place and new planning processes put in place to manage workloads more efficiently

YOU SAID



WE DID



CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTRE

You couldn't report issues such as fly-tipping on My Account, our online portal

You couldn't report a repair relating to specific issues like window fans, thermostats and disability aids on My Account

Guidance on repairs which we charge for was not easy to find

We updated My Account to allow for quick and easy reporting of these issues

We added an option to report these things on My Account

We added this to My Account so that it is easily accessible

CLEANING AND GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

The standard of our cleaning and grounds maintenance could be improved

You were unsure of which services were provided where you live

Team leaders and supervisors now carry out regular site audits to check the standard of the work being done

We have created leaflets detailing our cleaning and gardening services and sent these to customers. This project will be rolled out in 2021-22

LETTINGS

Lack of decoration in our homes left you feeling dissatisfied when you moved in

We scaled up the rollout of our Fresh Start project, to improve the minimum standard of our homes when we let them





INVOLVING OUR CUSTOMERS

We are committed to making sure our services and the work that we do reflects what our customers want and need.

In 2021 we recruited our Customer Assurance Committee - a central part of our approach to make sure our customers are involved in our work.

We had an amazing response to our recruitment campaign with more than 350 applications.

This passionate and vibrant group links directly to our board, which means its work directly influences what we do and the services we provide.

Here's what our members had to say about their work:

“The best thing about the committee is the diverse and committed group of customers who have become committee members. The views and ideas they share at each meeting gives us a new outlook and we make progress with every meeting.”

Helen Scarrett, Customer Assurance Committee Chair

“Being part of the Customer Assurance Committee has made it possible to see an insight into the other parts of Citizen. The difficulties and challenges that Citizen and customers face in these uncertain times. It is a very important part of the committee's function to be involved in policy and future developments.”

Chris Maitland, Customer Assurance Committee member

“I feel a great sense of pride and respect to be involved. I am moved by the fact that I as a tenant, I am given an insight into how Citizen works as an organisation, I can scrutinise, challenge and be given the opportunity to work with members of staff to influence and shape services that can lead to improvements in our homes and in our communities.”

Joan Allen, Customer Assurance Committee member

“Being part of the committee has enabled me to be involved in discussions relating to decisions taken for the good of all Citizen customers, share experiences and be a voice of the community which I feel is an incredibly important part to help in some small way to ensure customers are happy and comfortable in their living environment.”

Caroline Wilson, Customer Assurance Committee member

“The committee is fundamental to improving Citizen's services to their customers. The best services are delivered by organisations that involve those customers in the design of services being offered to them. It makes customers feel heard and improves relationships. It's a win-win for everyone.”

Emma Brown, Customer Assurance Committee member

“The best part of being a member of the committee is knowing that my voice is heard and it counts. I am confident that we speak on behalf of other customers and every contribution and suggestion is taken into consideration and no question or suggestion is silly. The diversity in the committee is laudable.”

Chichi Ogbonnaya, Customer Assurance Committee member

“Citizen staff involved with the Customer Assurance Committee have been very open and transparent in their approach and have provided all the information needed to gain an in-depth working knowledge of the issues impacting on customers of Citizen. Sessions have been pleasant yet constructive to elicit ideas, opinions on how things can be improved for the customer.”

Elley Aiyedofe, Customer Assurance Committee member



BEING CLEAR ABOUT OUR SERVICES

We want to be transparent about the services we offer and this year we launched a series of flipbooks to make our offer more accessible.

This included a new Citizen Offer booklet and a Leaseholder Handbook. The online flipbooks set out the services we offer and other important information about services.





KEEPING OUR CUSTOMERS' HOMES IN SHAPE: OUR REPAIRS PERFORMANCE

Little could we have known what lay in store for us when 2020 began.

This has been our most challenging year in terms of maintaining our delivery of this crucial service for our customers with their help and patience.

For two months Government guidance meant we couldn't go into our customers' homes unless it was an emergency. Since then our teams have worked extremely hard to get through a huge backlog.

Meanwhile, our cleaning and gardening services have faced significant pressures and we've had to adapt to provide services differently over the last year.

I'd like to pay tribute to my teams for continuing to provide this service during the uncertain and worrying times. And I would like to thank our customers for bearing with us and working with us to keep their homes in shape.

Given all of this we are delighted to have maintained an outstanding performance in the circumstances. The pace of our work didn't drop as we completed a total of 126,389 repairs in 2020-21 compared to 121,134 the previous year. This represented a total investment of

£32m, compared to £29.6m the previous year.

We kept 95.4% of our appointments, which was only very slightly down on the previous year, despite the pressures placed on us by the pandemic.

During all of this we were also able to maintain an average customer satisfaction rating of 4.52 out of 5 for our services based on nearly 30,000 pieces of feedback.

Meanwhile, we were still able to progress projects to continue to drive up the standard of our repairs service and our homes. This included our Fresh Start project, which saw us invest in another 70 properties. We will continue to scale up this sector-leading project in 2021-22.

We thank all our customers for their patience with us during an exceptional year and we look forward to continuing to improve our services as we emerge from the pandemic.

Steve Kirk, Director of Maintenance Operations



IN NUMBERS

Customer satisfaction with our repairs and servicing 2020 - 21



4.25 OUT OF 5*

*Our new method for 2020-21 means this is not comparable with previous years

Appointments kept

2020/21 **95.4%**
2019/20 96.07%



Repair spend per home

2020/21 **£536.99**
2019/20 £457.11



Total spent on repairs

2020/21 **£32m**
2019/20 £29.6m

Emergency repairs attended within 24 hours

2020/21 **98.8%**
2019/20 97.2%





A FRESH START CONTINUED

Following the success of our Fresh Start pilot in 2019-20, we ramped up the project.

The sector-leading project aims to create a new re-let standard based on what matters to our customers. We worked with our Fresh Start customers to get feedback and conducted research to inform the next phases of the project. Despite the pandemic, we were able to invest a further £255,000 to offer the Fresh Start standard at 70 more homes this year. All homes were given new flooring and fresh decoration and half were fitted with

white goods, to help us to establish which elements of the standard are most important to customers.

We will ramp the project up further in 2021-22 by investing £750,000 to re-let 250 homes at Fresh Start standard, giving our new customers a more solid foundation for life.





OUR RENT PERFORMANCE

We are committed to making sure every penny of rent we receive is invested back into the work that we do.

We are also determined to offer all the support we can to our customers, and this has never been more important than in the last year; when so many people faced financial hardship as a result of the pandemic.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, we supported more customers than ever, receiving a total of 3,046 referrals for money advice. This was more than 1,200 more than in 2019-20. Through phone and in-person support we helped customers gain the equivalent of nearly £2m worth of additional income.

We also saw hundreds of our customers access advice through our free, confidential 24/7 Tenant Support and Wellbeing Service – which every Citizen tenant has access to. Welfare challenges continue to impact our customers and record numbers claimed Universal Credit during the pandemic.

We continued to improve our rent collection this year, introducing a more proactive approach so that we can build meaningful relationships with customers. This has included the rollout of a new automated phone system which helps to inform customers when they have entered arrears and offers support at an early stage.

This proactive work helped us to significantly improve our arrears position from £5.45m last year to £4.19m. This is a quite outstanding performance considering the impact of the pandemic and it matters, because every penny of rent we receive goes back into improving our services for customers.

Our message to our customers is clear – if you need help, we are here to support you.

Peter Gill, Director of Housing

IN NUMBERS



Rent arrears

2020/21 **£4.192m**

2019/20 £5.450m



Average tenant's rent arrears

2020/21 **£516**

2019/20 £484

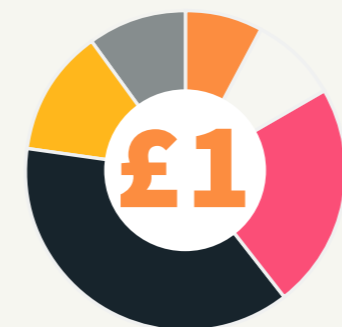


Equivalent income gained by customers with our help

2020/21 **£1.960m**

2019/20 £2.283m

How we spend your rent
– a breakdown of £1



- Other costs **10p**
- Interest costs **13p**
- Buy and improve properties **38p**
- Day-to-day repairs **23p**
- Service charge costs **9p**
- Management **8p**

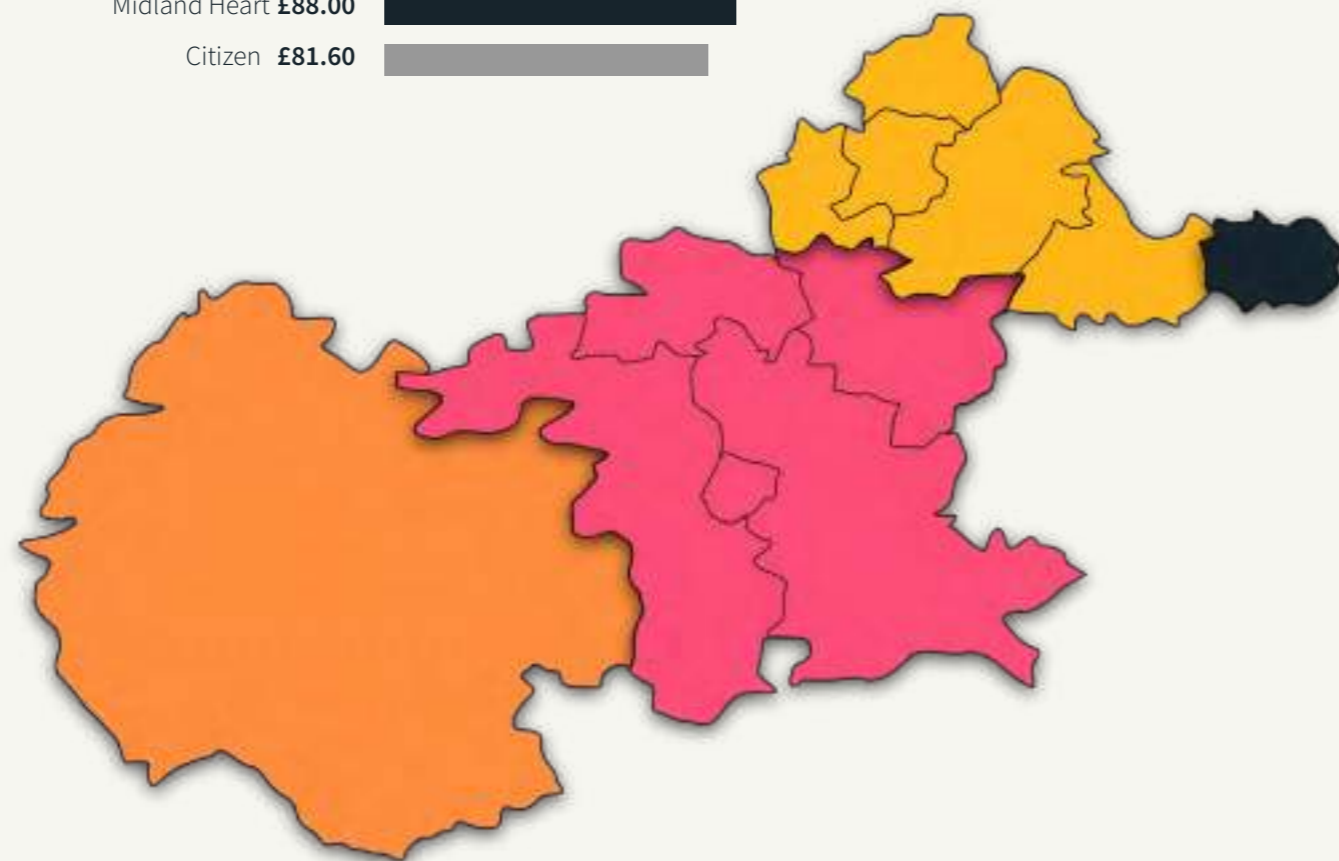
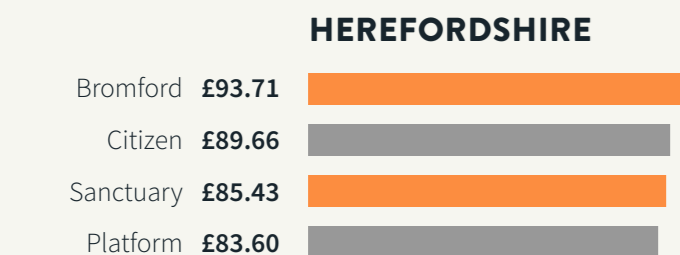
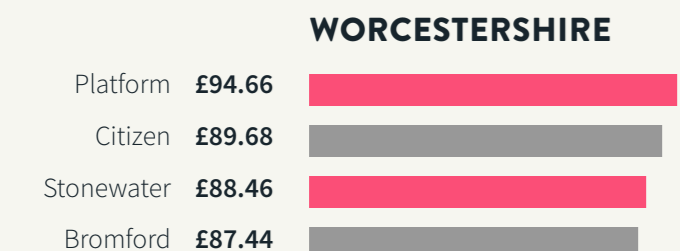
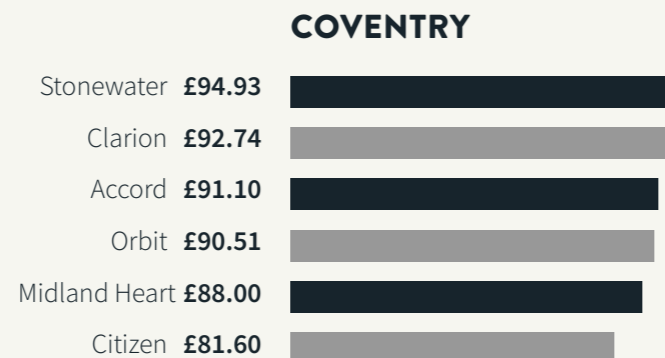
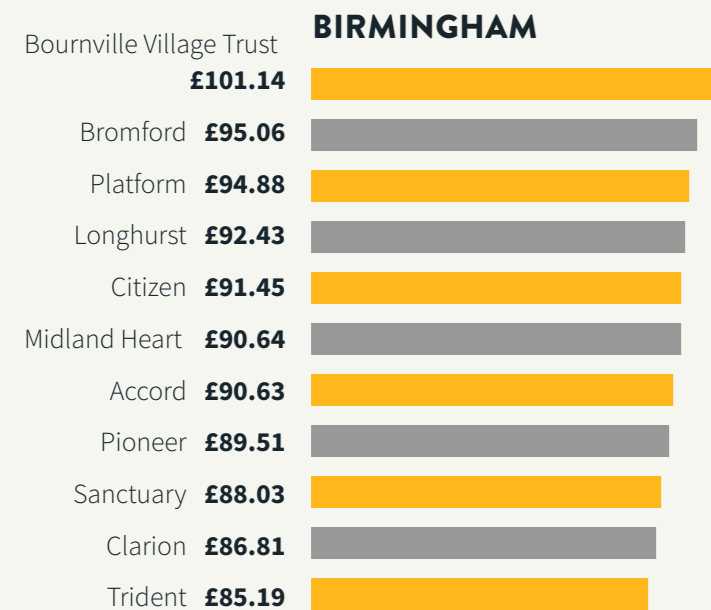
“I can't thank the Money Advice Team enough for their time. Following a fire in my home I found myself with rent arrears. The team were fantastic in helping me get financial support to resolve my rent arrears and securing funding to help me move home.”

Kelly, Citizen customer





OUR WEEKLY RENT COMPARED TO OTHER LANDLORDS





INVESTING IN OUR HOMES AND KEEPING OUR CUSTOMERS SAFE

In an unprecedented year our biggest challenge has been to protect our customers and teams from the impact of the pandemic while we make sure their homes remain safe.

Working closely with our contractors and customers we have been able to maintain our gas servicing and wider compliance testing, and we are extremely proud to have maintained very high compliance. Behind this number sits a huge amount of hard work by our teams and perseverance from our customers as we continued to complete these crucial tests during lockdown.

Each year we complete a programme of planned work to make sure that our customers' homes are kept in good shape.

This year we spent £22.5m making improvements – this included installing bathrooms, kitchens and boilers and making our customers' homes warmer. To achieve our target level of investment is a real achievement and has

meant we could keep up the pace of our proactive work to keep our homes in shape despite the challenges we faced during the pandemic.

Meanwhile building safety remains a top priority for us. We work closely with West Midlands Fire Service to make sure our homes are safe and this year we launched a new, pioneering digital fire safety campaign for customers who live in our high-rise buildings.

Over the next year we will continue our work to prepare to meet the requirements set out in the Government's Building Safety Bill.

Paul Baker, Director of Asset Management and Safety



IN NUMBERS



Total spent on improvement work on our homes

£22.5m

Kitchens installed



192



Energy improvement works (including new doors and windows)

107



Gas safety compliance

99.73%

279



Fire door replacements

597

Boilers installed



120

Bathrooms installed



99.05%

Electrical tests completed



A BILL OF HEALTH

The Government's Building Safety Bill comes in the wake of the Grenfell Tragedy and the inquiries which followed.

It will fundamentally change how we manage our high-rise buildings and influence almost every area of our business. It will give customers more say over the management of their building and help them to raise any concerns more easily.

The bill will affect everything from our lettings process to how we deal with anti-social behaviour.

We are already working through what we need to do in response to the bill.

ENGAGING OUR CUSTOMERS ON FIRE SAFETY

This year we launched a new campaign to engage every customer in our high-rise blocks with crucial fire safety advice.

A mailout with guidance and a QR code linking to a new animation was sent to all our customers in our high-rise blocks. All new high-rise customers receive this information when they move in.

The animation and advice are voiced over and translated into seven different languages to reflect the diverse makeup of customers in our blocks.

We worked with West Midlands Fire Service to create the guidance around this very important message.

Watch the animation.

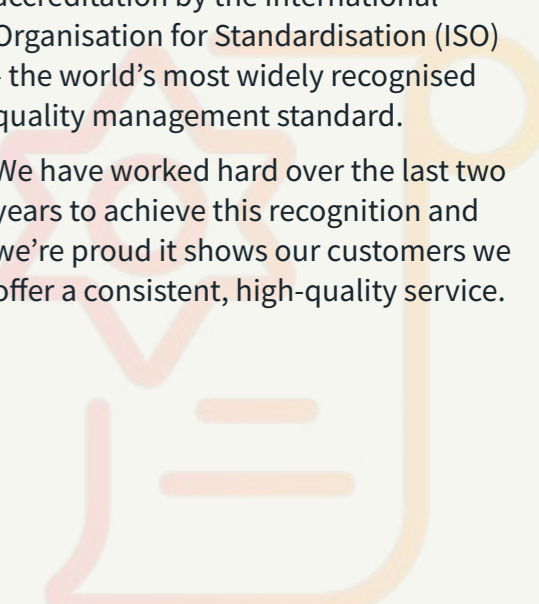


THE SEAL OF APPROVAL

Our Programmed Works Team, responsible for delivering our proactive investment work, were awarded a prestigious accreditation this year.

The team was awarded ISO 9001:2015 accreditation by the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) - the world's most widely recognised quality management standard.

We have worked hard over the last two years to achieve this recognition and we're proud it shows our customers we offer a consistent, high-quality service.





SUPPORTING CUSTOMERS WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS

During an extraordinary year we are especially proud of the role we have played to support customers who need extra help to live independently.

The last year has hit some of the most vulnerable people in our communities hard and we have worked hard to step in to support them.

In 2020-21 we helped more than 1,000 people across the West Midlands escape homelessness. In the early stages of the pandemic we worked closely with Coventry City Council to offer at-risk people sleeping on the streets somewhere to live.

We have since opened a new temporary accommodation facility for families in the city and successful funding bids will allow us to provide more supported housing for people across the region.

In a difficult year, we continued to make great progress against our objective to improve our support services and tackle homelessness.

Martyn Hale, Director of Care and Supported Housing

A CHANGE OF PLAN TO HELP PEOPLE HIT BY THE PANDEMIC

In March 2020 our plans to launch a new facility to support families in Coventry were well underway.

Then the pandemic hit, and we worked with Coventry City Council to make a rapid adjustment to our plan to provide housing for people who were at most risk.

We quickly refitted the scheme to cater for single people who were in the shielding group. Residents arrived from hotels, shared homes or rough sleeping on the street.

When it was safe to do so, we worked with everyone to find them somewhere safe to live and in September 2020 families started to move in.

A lively communal lounge is the heart of this scheme, which is at the site of our former housing with care scheme called Frank Walsh House.





THE END OF AN ERA

Our Citizen Young People Service came to an end in February 2021.

Previously known as SHYPP (Supported Housing for Young People Project), it provided support for hundreds of 16 to 25-year-old people affected by homelessness from three foyers in Hereford, Leominster and Ross-on-Wye.

Since the service first opened over 800 young people have benefitted from both accommodation, counselling and support to help them maintain a tenancy and then move on to live independently.

The service is commissioned by Herefordshire Council and in October last year we were informed that the council was awarding the future contract to provide the crucial support services to Connexus Housing.

Most of our Citizen Young People team transferred to Connexus Housing and some of the young people in our service moved into new accommodation and received support directly or through a floating support service.

We did not make any of our customers homeless and we worked to source alternative accommodation either in the new service in Hereford or elsewhere.

We are continuing to work on plans to help people affected by homelessness in Hereford and Worcester.





BUILDING FOUNDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

We are delighted to have been able to deliver our biggest development programme ever in 2020-21; a real achievement in a year which presented challenges that none of us could have predicted.

In the early stages of the pandemic construction ground to a halt and when it resumed there were challenges for our teams to deal with to be able to do their work safely and efficiently.

Despite all of this we completed 506 homes across the West Midlands – 334 for affordable rent, 123 for shared ownership and 49 for market sale – our best year.

In 2020-21 we were able to make significant progress as we strive to achieve our objective to increase the supply of affordable homes in our region. This included extending our modular pilot and starting work on a number of major development projects, including our biggest ever development at Lea Castle, in Kidderminster, which will see us build 600 homes in the coming years.

Meanwhile, a new partnership with the West Midlands Combined Authority and four other housing providers in our region will help us to collectively contribute to easing the region's housing crisis.

Nick Byrne, Executive Director of Development

IN NUMBERS

Homes
completed

506



Homes
started

407

£1m



from profits
on market sale
activity which is
reinvested into
our core services

MOVING MODULAR FORWARD

After an initial pilot we are extending our modular programme and will now build 24 homes on eight former garage sites in Coventry.

The multi-million-pound extension to the pilot will provide family homes and bungalows.

We are working with Totally Modular on the homes, which are built in a factory and transported to the city by truck.

Our initial pilot won the Offsite Award at the Constructing Excellence Midlands awards in December. The award recognises projects that are new and innovative as well as illustrating the benefits of offsite approaches compared to traditional build.

There are many benefits for modular including high energy efficiency and reduced fuel bills.





1,000 REASONS TO CELEBRATE

Our work with development partner Vistry Partnerships reached a major landmark in 2020-21 with our new scheme at Lea Castle pushing us past the 1,000-home mark.

Our partnership will see a total of £194.4m invested across the West Midlands.

This includes:

- Lea Castle – 600 homes built on the former hospital site in Kidderminster, including 240 affordable, 360 outright sale
- Churchfields – 246 homes also in Kidderminster, including 100 outright sale for our Signature brand and 146 affordable homes
- York Road – 88 affordable homes built in Hall Green, Birmingham
- Hall Green – a development of 210 homes at the former greyhound track, including 109 affordable and 101 private sale



“ I used to drive past and look at the site thinking the transformation from dog-track to housing development is amazing. Just the three of us living here is perfect. ”

Kirstie moved into one of the new flats at Hall Green with her two sons – their first family home.

HARNESSING THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS

We have committed to a new collaboration with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and four other housing associations which will boost affordable housing in our region.

An agreement was signed between each organisation to develop a business case for driving affordable housing developments, economic activity and housing policy objects.

The priorities of the partnership will be:

- More affordable homes built in the region
- A broader range, mix and supply of available homes
- Addressing market failure to unlock dormant sites
- Maximising construction on brownfield land
- A collaborative regional approach – maximising local expertise, assets, networks and partnerships

Other housing associations involved in the memorandum of understanding are Midland Heart, Bromford, Accord and whg.





REGENERATING OUR COMMUNITIES

In a difficult year we are pleased to have progressed our plans to regenerate our communities.

Despite the pandemic we were able to progress with the rehousing phases of our major schemes in Wyken and Spon End in Coventry.

The pandemic posed significant challenges for our customers and for us and we had to adjust quickly to how we engaged with and supported customers in moving to their new homes.

Meanwhile, our Spirit Quarters regeneration in North East Coventry continued to progress with agreements being reached with our developer partner, Keepmoat, on delivery of Phase 5 of the project.

Kevin Roach, Director of Regeneration

“It was important to us that during a time of uncertainty and anxiety customers felt safe to move home and that momentum was maintained in delivering the promises we have made to our communities.”

Kevin Roach, Director of Regeneration

TRANSFORMING COVENTRY

This year we announced plans to demolish three blocks of flats in Spon End and replace them with new homes as part of a major regeneration project.

Our plans will see Kerry House, Milestone House and Trafalgar House, which include 158 flats, replaced by a mix of new homes.

We started the rehousing process in September 2020 and aim to have this complete by September 2022. We will be consulting with the community on the regeneration plans for the area in 2022 and hope to start development in 2023.

In Wyken, our transformation includes the refurbishment of William Malcolm House, demolition of Vincent Wyles House and building new homes in its place.

We hosted virtual workshops this year to share our initial designs for William Malcolm House and to get our customer's feedback. We're also forming a customer steering group for the project and will be

submitting a planning application early next financial year.

The refurbishment works we will be carrying out at William Malcolm House include:

- Making our homes warmer and energy efficient by fitting external wall insulation
- Fitting new windows and doors
- Fitting a new front entrance and security doors
- Refurbishing all communal areas
- Installing a new bin chute
- Installing a new roof

We hope to complete our regeneration project in Wyken in 2024.





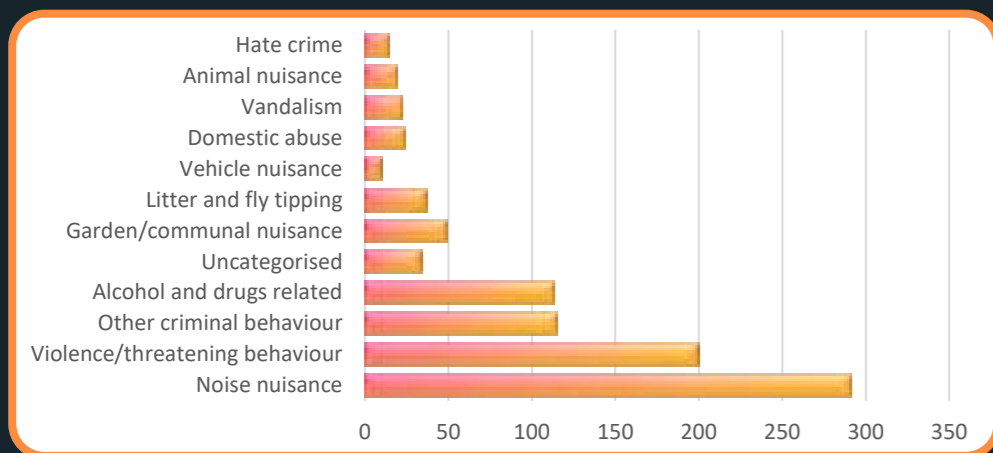
KEEPING OUR COMMUNITIES SAFE

We are committed to doing all we can to keep people in our communities safe and we work closely with police and local authority partners across the West Midlands.

Most people in our communities live peacefully and respectfully but our teams work to tackle a range of anti-social behaviour ranging from noise nuisance and fly-tipping to criminal gang activity, drug dealing and illegal occupiers.

During the pandemic our teams have had to respond to a growing number of reports of anti-social behaviour, including some serious cases requiring colleagues to attend court. West Midlands Police have acknowledged and commended our teams for their hard work and commitment in progressing these cases.

In 2020-21 our team dealt with 928 cases of anti-social behaviour.



TACKLING FLY-TIPPING



During the pandemic we have seen a significant increase in the amount we have spent on fly tipping – rising from £953,000 to £1.15m.

We are trialing a new smart camera to help tackle fly tipping in Coventry and it is already catching people in the act.

The smart camera is a mobile high-grade camera which transmits images to any device, 24/7, and sends alerts when a trigger event has happened.

A NEW PROCESS FOR DEALING WITH ASB

This year we reviewed and revamped our process for dealing with anti-social behaviour to make it more efficient and customer focused.

We introduced a new triage system to assess reports from customers to support decision making, inform our customers and advise them what will happen next.

Our new approach will direct resources to tackle high-level cases of ASB and customers will be supported to manage low-level issues themselves to reduce escalation.

We also created the Good Citizen guide which gives advice and guidance on how to be a good neighbour and how to avoid ending up in a disagreement.



MAKING COVENTRY SAFER

A new project to fight crime in Hillfields, in Coventry, was initiated this year after we were successful in gaining a £550,000 Safer Streets Fund grant.

The fund will see us working closely with Coventry City Council and West Midlands Police to improve community safety in Hillfields.

Work includes upgrading the existing street lighting, upgrading existing and installing new CCTV, work to reduce the height of the trees to make people feel safer and allow for more natural light and security packs to improve the security of their homes.

The fund also helped to transform Hillfields Square into a floor painted play area.



HELPING PEOPLE INTO WORK

Finding work remains a challenge for people in our communities and the pandemic has created fresh employment challenges. We're passionate about our work to help customers into work.

MOVING INTO WORK

During the pandemic we supported 69 people through our Building Better Opportunities project.

We have two Fusion Job Coaches who work with individuals on a one-to-one basis across Worcestershire.

Each person has a personal package of support based on their own individual circumstances and needs.

The scheme made the final of the UK Housing Awards after it was shortlisted for the Resident Employment and Training Award (for over 15,000 homes).

David Pagett is one of the people we helped to secure employment.

He is now working as a bus driver and has been able to take his family on holiday.

“ Soon after I started on the Building Better Opportunities scheme things started to look up. I had a job coach to support me and it gave me the confidence to start believing in myself again. Suddenly there was a light at the end of the tunnel and together we started working on job searches. ”

BRINGING THROUGH THE NEXT GENERATION OF TALENT

We are proud of our work to give young people opportunities to get into work.

We have six apprentices working with us and we've committed to recruiting another 12 apprentices over the next year.

The new programme will encourage the progression of more young people to support talent development and succession planning in our organisation.

This is an important part of our objective in our 2020-23 business strategy to become an employer of choice.

“ My experience as an apprentice was great. Citizen has been so supportive throughout my apprenticeship, allowing me to gain the experience needed to do a CIPD Level 3 Human Resources Qualification. ”

Alice Sale, HR Assistant.





SUPPORTING OUR CUSTOMERS' WELLBEING

The pandemic has made life tougher for many people and we are committed to doing all we can to support the physical and mental wellbeing of our customers.

Our Tenant Support and Wellbeing Service is a free, confidential and independent service which gives all customers access to a 24/7 confidential telephone counselling, advice and support service.

In the last year 291 people used the Tenant Support and Wellbeing Service, which generated 442 contacts. Anonymous feedback allows us to see any trends in the challenges people face.

From March 2021 customers will have access to six telephone counselling sessions as part of this service. Previously the telephone counselling sessions were only available for short-term 'in the moment' issues.

Peter Gill, Director of Housing



“Investing in services to support our customers' wellbeing has never been more important and we are delighted that we will be able to offer extra support through our dedicated Tenant Support and Wellbeing Service.”

Peter Gill, Director of Housing

ACCESS THE TENANT
SUPPORT AND
WELLBEING SERVICE HERE





EMPOWERING GROUPS IN OUR COMMUNITIES

We launched our Citizen Local Fund this year – a £50,000 fund available for groups, projects and initiatives which support the wellbeing of people in our communities.

The aim of the fund is to support our residents and communities to thrive. We support ideas and projects that promote mental and physical wellbeing, reduce social isolation, bring communities together and enhance local areas.

Here are the projects we are funding:

- **Attwood Community Enrichment** - the project called A.C.E Tunnel Gardens will see a former allotment brought back into use. Once landscaping is completed the community will then plant, develop and maintain the gardens bringing them back into full use. This will improve the environment and help to reduce social isolation.
- **BME Mental Health Association** - a Birmingham-based organisation will be funded for a project called Single Parent Care Package. This will provide essential items - including toiletries, household items, baby items and secondhand clothes - to single parents across the city as well as counselling for those who need it.



- **Enterprise Club for Disabled People** -The Keep in Contact Project is a telephone buddy system for 150 disabled members of the Enterprise Club, many of whom have been badly isolated by the coronavirus pandemic, which will see them receive regular phone calls from their buddy.
- **The Living Room** - a Hereford-based community hub providing support for people in the town will use our funding to support its work. The Living Room is in central Hereford and includes a café, community larder and training and community spaces. Its team of volunteers provide a range of support to people in Hereford from food parcels and help for people who are homeless, to safeguarding and counselling.
- **Love Coventry** - a Coventry-based charity run by volunteers from the city will use our funding for its work to upcycle furniture and provide it at a very low cost to people in the city who need it. The organisation works closely with community groups and charities in the area to make sure it acquires furniture and once upcycled it goes to a home that needs it.
- **Stoke Aldermoor Community Association** – The project called Lift Me Up will improve the environment and the health and wellbeing of people in the community through organised community clearings of fly-tipping and litter picks, awareness raising and a campaign to tackle littering and fly-tipping. It will also help to turn disused spaces into places people can enjoy.
- **Stoke Heath Community Centre** – the funding will go towards a Vulnerable Adults Support Group. The project will see volunteers recruited to become a buddy to vulnerable adults in the community and their families. The volunteers will make sure crucial support reaches them including access to essential items and food and signposting support available.





ENGAGING, INSPIRING AND INVESTING IN OUR PEOPLE

We know the services we provide are a direct reflection of how we engage and support our teams.

An unprecedented year has tested the resolve of our colleagues to the limit, with massive changes to the way we work happening almost overnight.

Every colleague has had to adjust to new challenges in their work and personal lives and we know we have a crucial role in supporting them.

During the pandemic we have prioritised the safety and wellbeing of staff alongside our customers. We put in place robust safety procedures for colleagues working out in our communities and we have supported staff members who have been working from home since the pandemic started.

In a year when colleagues have felt further apart than ever, we have worked to keep everyone connected – launching a wide range of wellbeing initiatives and continuing to recognise staff through a digital Excellence Awards ceremony; a fantastic celebration of what colleagues have contributed in the most difficult circumstances.

As this report demonstrates, changes to our working practices did not disrupt our ability to provide great services to customers and we had one of our most successful years in terms of performance. This has opened new possibilities for us when it comes to supporting our teams to work more flexibly to deliver great services for our customers and we intend to embrace this.

Gary Booth, Chief Financial Officer



SUPPORT OUR COLLEAGUES TO LIVE WORK BETTER

While we had already been considering how we move forward with our workplace, the last year has demonstrated possibilities we could never have imagined.

Live Work Better is our new approach to how we work at Citizen.

It sets out principles, which are aligned with our values and behaviours, that guide how we work to achieve the best results for our colleagues and customers.

Watch our animation to find out more about our new approach to work.





RECOGNISING EXCELLENCE

Our Employee Excellence awards have always been special and this year was no different.

After such a strange and challenging year, we saw a record-breaking 185 staff nominate their colleagues – nearly double the nominations we had last year.

Our ceremony took place virtually and included our new Citizen of the Year category.

Watch our Citizen of the Year video to find out more about the contribution of our colleagues.



SUPPORTING THE WELLBEING OF OUR PEOPLE

This year we launched a virtual Wellbeing Week for colleagues – filled with a host of virtual sessions, including everything from Pilates and Yoga to webinars on stress-busting and healthy eating.

We now host a Wellbeing Wednesday session every month, featuring experts talking about everything from stress busting to healthy eating.

This year we also signed up to the Mental Health at Work Commitment, demonstrating our pledge to continue improving the emotional wellbeing of our staff.

INVESTING IN OUR COLLEAGUES

We are committed to investing in our teams to make sure they have the knowledge and skills they need to deliver the very best services.

Our training partnership with the Chartered Institute of Housing, our professional body, will see 250 of our staff gain a level 3 qualification in housing practice.

Every member of our Housing and Care and Supported Housing Teams will complete a bespoke training programme.

“ The course gave me the opportunity to work with different colleagues across the business and share ideas. I have learnt so much about all the different areas of housing which is really helping me do the best job. The course has opened my eyes to so many different ways of doing things. ”

Neighbourhood Officer Clare Walford, who recently completed her level 3 qualification.





OUR COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

We believe every Citizen customer and staff member should be treated with dignity and respect.

Events across the globe have reminded us how much progress we still have to make towards becoming an inclusive society and we want to play our part.

In 2020-21 we stepped up our activity to make sure we represent our diverse communities in our work by setting up our Equality Diversity and Inclusion Forum.

The group has been set up to make real decisions and drive our work forward. Our Chief Executive, Kevin Rodgers, is the chair and a member of our board is also represented.

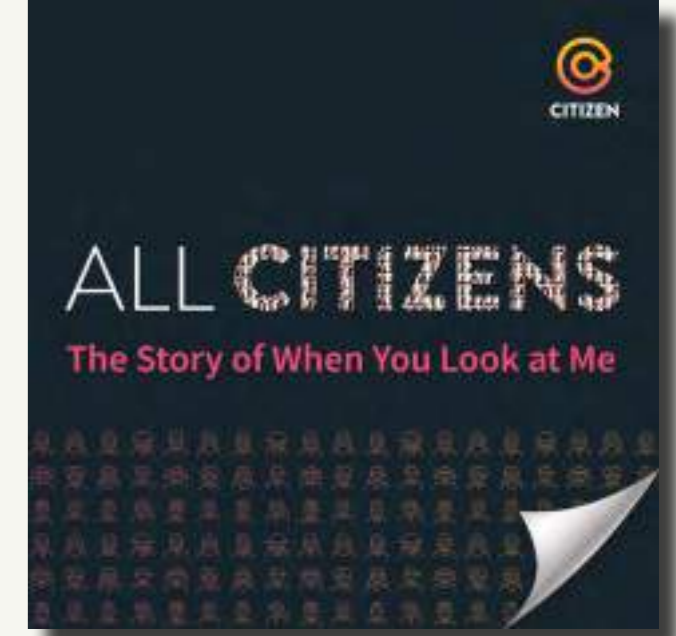
Most importantly, the forum has created a direct link between the representation of our colleagues and customer and the actions we take to address the challenges we face.

We have developed an action plan which we are now working through and we will communicate our progress as we work through this.

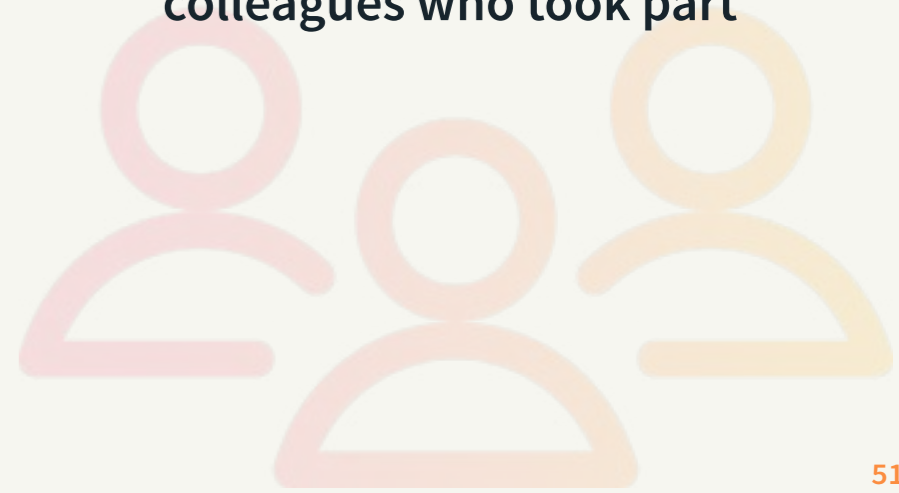


A BOLD STATEMENT

Colleagues on our EDI Forum were clear from the outset that they wanted us to make a clear statement of intent on equality, diversity and inclusion. **When You Look at Me** is the product of a collective effort by our colleagues to challenge people to think about what they can do every day to make a difference.



Read more about the colleagues who took part



www.citizenhousing.org.uk

