



**Yorkshire
Housing**

Customer annual report

2021 - 2022



Hello

Eyup!



Making it possible to have a place you're **proud to call home**

(that's just how we roll y'know)



Foreword

The last few years has provided the opportunity for us all to rethink some long held assumptions.

One of the key things we've all experienced is the importance of our home to our wellbeing. This has led to some changes across Yorkshire Housing, including a review of improvement and maintenance plans for our homes and the areas surrounding them.

Although we're learning to live with Covid, we're still dealing with some of the after effects. This is particularly the case with our repairs service. I appreciate some of you have been waiting longer than we'd like for repairs to be completed as we've been working our way through the backlog.

This year we're making it a priority, not only to get on top of this, but to make our repairs service better than ever. Two customer groups - the Customer Voice and Review Committee and the Complaints Forum - have reviewed the service and put together a number of recommendations about how we can improve the service.

They've told us we need to get better at communicating about repairs, increase our service hours, and do more of the work ourselves (we get more complaints about contractors than our own tradespeople). We've agreed we'll make this happen. Rest assured they'll make sure we keep our word!

“ We’ve a strong track record of investing in our homes ”

We've a strong track record of investing in our homes. During the last year, our focus has been on improving our data and decision-making processes so we can make improvements where they're needed most. This includes the areas around our homes- not just the bricks and mortar. Feeling safe and living somewhere that looks nice can have a big impact on wellbeing.

Foreword

We've also increased our presence in the areas where you live.

There are now more customer facing colleagues delivering the services that matter to you; most notably in tenancy support, environmental services, caretaking/ handyperson services and tenancy management.

The aim is that these changes will make a difference. Right now, customer satisfaction is at 85%. We've set a target to increase it to at least 90%, as we know there's room for improvement.

One of the biggest challenges for the coming year is the cost of living crisis. Everyone reading this will be affected in one way or another. For some of you it could feel overwhelming, and you may even be worried about losing your home. If you're struggling please get in touch, as the sooner we know, the more we can do to help.

We have a wonderful tenancy and money coaching service who've helped hundreds of customers – there are some great examples of how they've turned things round in this report. We're increasing the size of this team as we know this year's there's going to be an even greater demand for their services. Increasing gas and electricity bills are one of the biggest problems. That's why we're improving our least energy-efficient homes, to help you manage the rising costs.

Although 2022 will have its challenges, there's lots to be optimistic about. We'll develop our new Business Strategy. This will include an even stronger focus on you, our customers, significant investment in existing homes and places, as well as setting out how we will revolutionise our customer service offer. The latter will take time to deliver but we're already making good progress.

In a nutshell we want you to have a place you're proud to call home, and we're going to make it happen!



Nick Atkin

Chief Executive of Yorkshire Housing





This year's highlights

Last year started in the middle of a global pandemic. Our challenge was to continue to deliver services while keeping you and our colleagues safe.

This meant we couldn't always deliver our full service and, in particular, restrictions were placed on letting homes. The number of empty homes rose to a peak of 489, compared to pre-pandemic levels of 150. Our focus has been on getting those much-needed homes back into use. By April 2022 we'd reduced the number of empty homes to 221.

Independent living

We continued to support our independent living scheme customers throughout the pandemic. We've now been able to fully re-open all our communal areas and lounges, and it's been great to see them coming to life again.

Customer Voice and Review Committee

A real highlight of the year has been the Customer Voice and Review Committee going from strength to strength. From reviewing our repairs service, to making our services more accessible, you can find out more about what they've been up to on page 12.

New homes

We're pleased to have delivered 700 new homes over the past year, so hundreds more of you now have a place you're proud to call home.



Repairs

We always want to keep our homes in tip-top condition.

It's part of how we make it possible for you to have a place you're proud to call home. We've still been dealing with the knock-on effects of the pandemic and that's meant we've not been able to do non-emergency repairs as quickly as we'd like.

We're working hard to get back to a normal service and we've got exciting plans to improve the way we do things next year. This includes longer opening hours and better communication.

Here's the lowdown on what else we've done this year...

86% 

Customer satisfaction
(88% last year)

£5,700,000 

That's what we spent on repairs
(£5.2m last year)

44,336 

Day-to-day repairs
(39,893 last year)

£5,000,000 

Our repairs budget for the year
(£4.6m last year)

99% 

Gas safety certification
(100% last year)

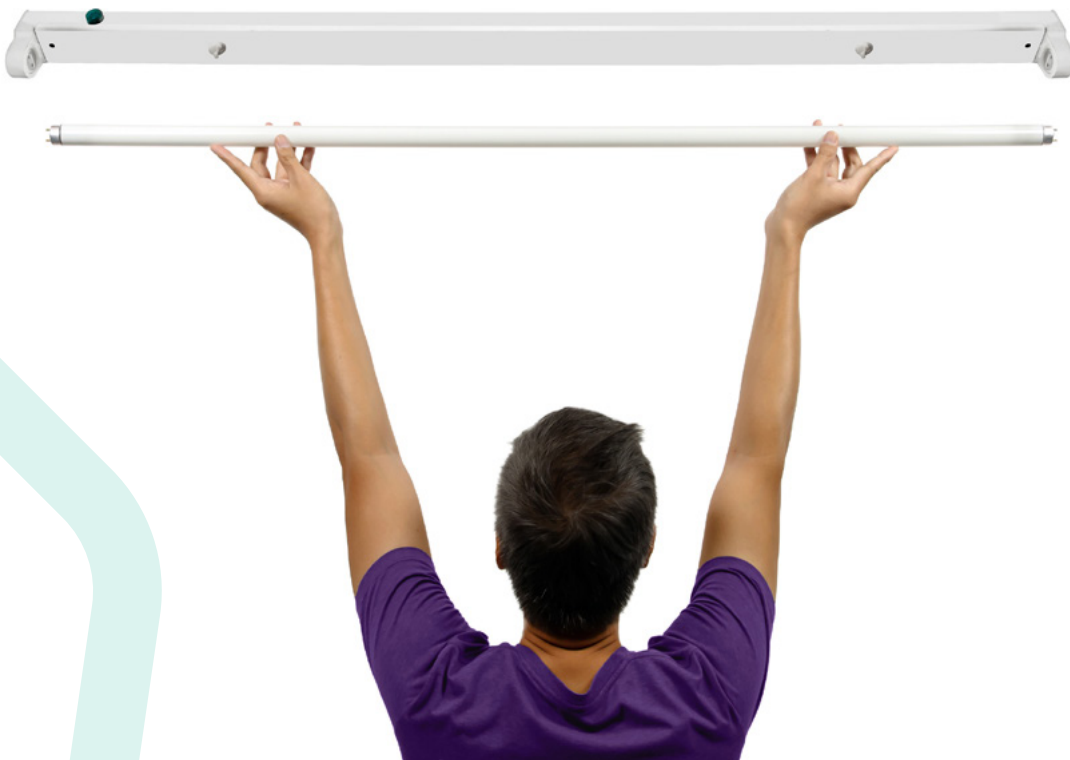
We're working on that last 1%

Melanie's story...

“The job I reported was very basic. I asked for under cupboard kitchen lights and a new strip light in the kitchen. The flickering of the old one was causing me some serious problems.

“Dan from the Yorkshire Housing repairs team came round and discussed with me what was going to be the best solution. He came back and fitted my new lights and was great at keeping me informed about what was happening all the way through. The new lighting meets my specific needs very well.

“I can't speak highly enough of Dan; he's done a great job! He was very knowledgeable and had fantastic customer facing skills!”



Antisocial behaviour

The antisocial behaviour team have been busy helping to keep you safe in your home.

1,578



That's how many new antisocial behaviour cases we've had

(1,835 last year)

42



Court orders to stop antisocial behaviour

(68 last year)

Jo Griffin, Head of Place, said: "We've successfully resolved 1,345 antisocial behaviour problems. And we got 23 court orders to stop violence and serious noise nuisance.

"This year we'll continue to make the most of our digital evidence gathering tools. We can stop antisocial behaviour quicker using noise apps, CCTV doorbells, and by making reporting incidents easier on our new website, which is due to be launched this year. We're also launching a service to combat tenancy fraud, sub-letting and illegal occupation. You play a big part in helping us tackle antisocial behaviour. We award customers who help us in very tough situations with thank you stars, this year we gave out 15."

The right support makes a big difference.

"I can't thank my tenancy enforcement officer enough. It was very frightening being sworn at and threatened. Alice was with me every step of the way, and the quick court injunctions stopped the problems. She's inspired me so much, and I'm now a volunteer on Wakefield Council's antisocial behaviour victim support network"

Sarah, one of our customers in Wakefield.

Your feedback

Things don't always go to plan...

When we get something wrong, we own it and work with you to make it right. We really value your feedback - it helps us learn from our mistakes and do better.

917 

Complaints made
(574 last year)

63% 

Complaints upheld
(64% last year)

121 

Compliments made
(130 last year)

1st 
Complaint type

How long repairs take
(same as last year)

2nd 
Complaint type

Lack of communication
(same as last year)

3rd 
Complaint type

Staff attitude
(same as last year)

8.7 This is the average amount of days we take to handle and resolve a complaint.



Highlights from this year include:

- The Complaints Forum highlighted themes around dissatisfaction with repairs done by some of our contractors. As a result of this, they've worked with the Customer Voice and Review Committee to scrutinise our repairs service. We've now got 13 recommendations which we're using to improve our repairs service!
- They've also been using feedback from customers who've made a complaint to help us improve our process. On our new website, there'll be a complaints area making it even easier for you to give us your feedback!
- We've been making sure we meet the Housing Ombudsman's new set of standards, the complaints handling code. We've completed the annual self-assessment with our customer complaint forum. You can find it [here](#).

Independence

We want all of our customers to live safe, healthy and independent lives in a home they're proud of.

Our colleagues have been working with you to help you stay independent in a whole bunch of different ways. Here's what we've been doing this year:

9,897 

Help at Hand customer visits we've done

(12,669 last year)

17,444 

Help at Hand hours of customer support we've provided

(16,307 last year)

379 

Safeguarding concerns have been raised

(482 last year)

958 

Money coaching customers have been supported by our colleagues

(1,264 last year)

£442,789 

Money coaching income for YH

(£361,980 last year)

£1,147,818 

Money coaching income for customers

(£891,778 last year)

Wow, that's a lot of people helped!

Independence

And here are some more ways we've been helping our communities:

Charity work

We've been supporting IDAS, a local domestic abuse charity. We built them a new outbuilding so they can store the donations they get from the public safely. This year we're refurbishing the communal living room and garden space at one of their hostels, as well as sponsoring their charity ball in October.

Volunteering

Our volunteers have been making a big impact running successful lunch and social clubs, and exercise sessions in our independent living schemes and community centres. We're busy getting more volunteers on board to train as digital champions to support customers who want to get online.

Bringing people together

We've brought businesses and schools together to get young people excited about their future. We're making this happen with Positive Footprints, an education charity, who're running a three-year project across 10 primary schools in Yorkshire Housing communities.

Toby's story...

Ex-soldier Toby signed up for one of our homes. He used all his benefits to pay for rent in advance. After eight days he contacted us to hand back his keys, he had no money for food or furniture and was struggling to cope.

Rather than take the keys back we put him in touch with one of our money coaches. They managed to get food, furniture, and kitchen appliances for Toby by applying for grants and charity support. They were also able to increase his income because he wasn't claiming all the benefits he was entitled to.

This support meant Toby could stay in his house, which now felt like a home. He said: "I'd given up hope but the support I got from Yorkshire Housing made me realise there was light at the end of the tunnel."

How we spend your rent



Investment in customer homes:

The money we spend on things like repairs and improvements in your homes.

36%



Costs of providing our services:

Covers the cost of our services in your homes and neighbourhoods.

30%



Interests on loans: We borrow money to invest in your homes and build new ones. We use some of your rent to pay back the interest on these loans.

21%



Service charge costs:

Depending on where you live, we might provide extra services. We cover these costs with service charges.

6%



Improvement projects:

We spend this on making big improvements to your homes.

3%



Surplus for reinvestment:

We use this money to reinvest in your homes and offer new ones.

3%



Bad debt:

We set money aside to cover any rent or service charges we don't get.

1%



How to get involved

We need you on board to help us understand what we're doing well, and where we need to work harder! Over the past year:

529 

Customers
involved

8 

Customer
surveys

37 

Customer
meetings

354 

Hours of
engagement

Your feedback has led to some big improvements...



Members of the Customer Voice and Review Committee and Complaints Forum carried out a **full review of our repairs service** and we're making some big changes in response to their recommendations



Six customers took part in the award-winning tenants' climate jury project with the Northern Housing Consortium, leading the way in how housing associations respond to climate change.



We **used customer feedback** to redesign our call monitoring to improve your experience when you ring us.



You **helped design our new website**, which we're launching this year, so it's easy for everyone to access.



You **helped us develop** a new access to homes policy and empty homes standard, to make it easier to move into one of our homes.



Through the **complaints forum**, you've told us to improve our handling of anti social behaviour cases. We are now reviewing the policy and doing a piece of scrutiny to help shape those improvements.

If you'd like to get involved and have your say, please drop us an email customerengagement@yorkshirehousing.co.uk We'd love to hear from you!

Join our committee

“Hi, I’m Tracey, Chair of the Customer Voice and Review Committee (CVRC) at Yorkshire Housing.

“We’ve now got 13 members and they’re a real mix of people, from different backgrounds, with different experiences to bring to the table.

“We’ve introduced customer champions in climate change, complaints, equality, diversity and inclusion, and disability awareness. This has really strengthened our voice and helped members focus on areas they’re passionate about.

“We reviewed the repairs service and put together 13 recommendations for improvements. You can expect to see some big changes, including longer service hours and better communication. Watch this space!

“Our climate change champion Steve Mackenzie celebrated the Tenant’s Climate Jury winning a Northern Housing Award for the best resident engagement initiative. He was involved, along with six other Yorkshire Housing customers, in putting together recommendations about how housing associations can work with customers to tackle climate change.

“I made the shortlist for committee member of the year at the Women in Housing Awards. It was a real honour, and it shows just how far we’ve come.

“If you’d like to get involved, we’re on the lookout for new members and we’ve just appointed Jo Foster as vice chair! She’s passionate about improving services for customers and I’m confident she’ll do a great job. As well as the chance to make things better for customers, it’s also a great opportunity to boost your CV. We’ve all done some useful training and there’s lots of support to help you develop new skills.”

Now is a great time to join, to find out more email:
customerengagement@yorkshirehousing.co.uk



Energy efficiency

Energy efficiency is a big part of creating homes and places to be proud of.

Like many other housing associations across the UK, sustainability is high on our agenda. When we're planning new homes, the target of net zero carbon emissions by 2050 is at the front of our minds. And we're also looking at how we can make sure existing homes are more energy efficient (a minimum of Energy Performance Certificate Band C) by 2030.

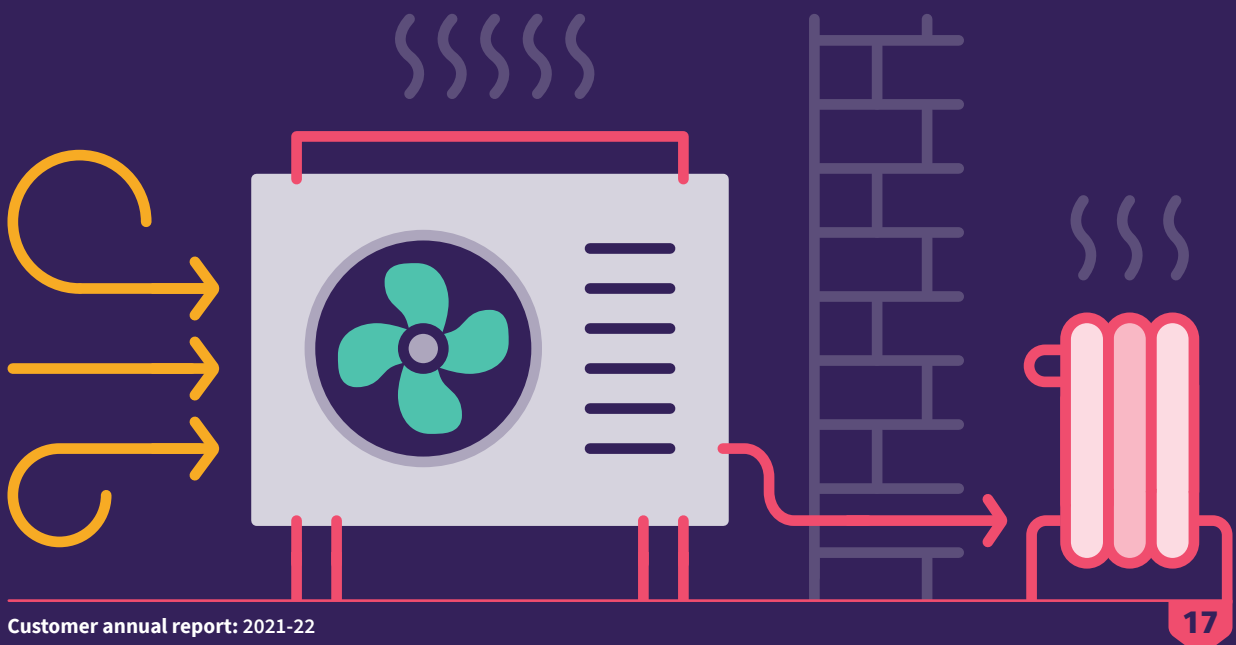
But what does this mean for you, our customers?

For some of you who live in Staxton, near Scarborough, it means some big changes such as air source heat pumps, external insulation and solar panels. We've secured funding for this project from the Social Housing Decarbonisation fund and will be starting work soon.

But big changes aren't always needed to make a big difference. With most of the 5,000 homes that we plan to make more energy efficient by 2030 we'll be making smaller improvements.

We're investing £8m to make these changes. Not only will the improvements benefit the environment, they'll also bring down energy bills for thousands of customers, at a time when it's needed more than ever. We'll start with the poorest performing homes, which means those of you with the highest bills will see savings sooner.

**We're
investing
£8m**



What's next?

We're going to focus even more on putting you, our customers, at the heart of what we do. This means better services, centred around your needs. We're going to:



Improve communication

So you have a better experience when you contact us.



Make a difference

To your homes and neighbourhoods. As well as improving our repairs service we'll make the area you live in look better and feel safer.



Listen to you!

We'll carry on the work we've started with Customer Voice and Review Committee and other customer groups so you can make sure we keep our promises!



Review our services

To make sure everyone knows how to access them and what to expect from us. We don't want anyone to feel excluded because of badly worded policies or problems getting in touch with us.





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