



The Local Standard

Designed by customers
for customers



Annual Report 2020

Welcome

Welcome to our 2019-20 Annual Report, looking at how we performed over the last financial year. At North Devon Homes we want to ensure we deliver service excellence, offer good value for money and make sure we continue to work with our customers to set our service standards and performance levels to keep track of how we are doing.

This report outlines our performance from 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020 and highlights key areas where we have achieved, or not achieved, certain benchmarks set out by our customers.

It is important to note that this side of the magazine is purely on data from prior to 31st March and so has been impacted very little on Coronavirus. The other side of this update, "Home News" shows how North Devon Homes has been adapting and delivering since the outbreak.

Governance and Customer Involvement



events held
(including local
conversations)



points of view /
insights collected



C90 (Customer Involvement)
meetings



Customer Scrutiny
meetings



Fresh Ideas (Customer
Involvement) meetings



changes to NDH
services have been
implemented from
customer suggestions

What's next for Customer Involvement?

- Continue to build on our online digital engagement
- Keep customers connected by events
- Working closer with Neighbourhoods to help families and young people
- Help to inform and establish the priorities for the emerging NDH Corporate Plan

Rent change customer consultation

In February, customer members from Scrutiny and C90 attended a meeting with our Exec Team to discuss rent setting and affordability. The Exec Team explained the process of rent setting in detail and explained that for the last four years it has not increased at all. The group had a valuable and challenging discussion on the impact changing rents would have on customers, which supported the Board in making a well informed decision.

It was agreed at the meeting that a leaflet would be co-designed with customers to explain in full why a rent increase is required. Fresh Ideas and Scrutiny worked on the leaflet, so it was clear for all customers to understand.

Generations Together

We held our annual special Christmas lunch in December for 39 older residents at the Whiddon Valley Community Centre. Young people from our youth club and staff served up a full roast turkey lunch and dessert. To help raise money for the youth club there was a raffle, which provided a fun Christmas Party for both youth clubs. Everyone had a great time.



This year we held two games afternoons at The Candar, Ilfracombe with young people and the older generation having fun playing games together. They also enjoyed a game of bingo and some delicious cakes. Residents loved the first event and requested that we came back a second time.

21 customers enjoyed an outdoor picnic at Loverings Court, Barnstaple. The sun was shining and all customers enjoyed outdoor games such as skittles and Connect 4 with some of our young people. We held it in the lovely communal gardens at Loverings.



Customer Journey Mapping events

This year we held two Customer Journey Mapping events and customers have helped us plan for the future. The events have been held at our Community Centre in Barnstaple. Customers gave us very useful feedback on our Independent Living Services and future environmental improvements. All feedback has been gathered and shared with C90 and will help shape the future, especially with being more environmentally friendly.



C90 update



Our C90 Group (comprising of Board Members, Executive Team, customers and staff) meet every 90 days, working together to look at performance information, policy reviews, Health and Safety and different services provided to customers and they identify what is working well and what areas potentially need improving.

After every C90 meeting various customer involvement activities are organised to consult with customers by various events, surveys and meetings to ensure a good representation of customer feedback is carried out to influence decisions.

This year the C90 group scrutinised and worked on:

- Co-designed the digital system sign up strategy
- Reviewed and improved the Customer Involvement Strategy and a C90 Strategy with guidelines
- Approved new Tenant2Tenant guidelines and renamed to Customers2Gether
- A regular look at performance figures and recommended improvements
- Looked at the satisfaction survey (STAR) results to help identify trends and see where we can improve
- Health and Safety and fire safety reports
- Analysed low level complaints and identified improvement
- Working on updating all local offers (previously known as service standards)
- Rent setting and affordability
- Involved customers have also been supported and encouraged to become members of TPAS (Tenant Engagement experts). All customers can register for free access to online forums and information
- Updated Scrutiny and C90 constitutions



Scrutiny Panel Update



Our Scrutiny Panel has been busy carrying out reviews and working with C90 - our customer involvement group:



The Panel has scrutinised and reviewed the repairs and anti-social behaviour policies and suggested customer friendly versions, which were co-designed by Fresh Ideas.



Phasing out cash, cheque and standing order review.



They agreed that the "home alone" age for Home2Home and contractor visits should be 18 years of age.



Developed the digital system sign-up strategy for the DB2020 project and recommended how we can work with customers through online services in future.

Fresh Ideas Meetings

Our customer Fresh Ideas working group has been extremely busy this year. It is a very friendly social group which meet on average twice a month in the informal setting of the local community centre.

Based on recommendations from our customer Scrutiny Panel and C90 the group has co-designed customer friendly leaflets (all of which can be found on our website), created customer friendly Repairs and Anti-Social Behaviour Policies, co-designed the new on-boarding digital strategy and Customer Involvement Strategy, gave feedback on the rent increase leaflet and looked at the current website content.

In preparation for NDH's new digital system the group has reviewed all our standard letters to make sure they are customer friendly. Fresh Ideas members worked closely with staff and looked / commented on and improved an impressive 254 letters.



Customers2Gether

Previously known as Tenant2Tenant, the group renamed themselves this year as Customers2Gether to move more in line with the community landlord message of NDH. They have been busy this year helping customers with downsizing and more housing queries.



Local Conversations



This year staff, customer volunteers and young people from our youth clubs have been visiting customers in their homes at Local Conversation events. This year we visited the Frankmarsh area in Barnstaple and Beacon Rise in Chulmleigh. We really enjoy listening and finding out what is important to customers.

Customer Care Team



calls answered



**customer
satisfaction with
call handling**



**response repairs
telephone surveys
carried out**



**letters responded
to within 10
working days**

What we did

Cash and cheque phase out

We worked with all customers likely to be affected by this change as well as customer groups in readiness for the phase out in September 2019. Many customers did not realise that there were more convenient payment methods available to them and so by removing cash and cheque payments and talking to them directly we gave them more convenience.

Better ways to access services

We have ramped up our customers' access to online solutions via email and our website. It has become even more apparent in the last few months during the lockdown as many customers have chosen to contact the team via our online channels.

Opening hours

Monday: **8.30 - 17.00**

Tuesday: **8.30 - 17.00**

Wednesday: **8.30 - 17.00**

Thursday: **8.30 - 17.00**

Friday: **8.30 - 17.00**

Closed on **Bank Holidays**

w: **www.ndh-ltd.co.uk**

e: enquiries@ndh-ltd.co.uk

Head Office: **01271 312500**

Emergency Out of Hours: **0800 9170 619**

OPEN

What's next for the Customer Care Team?

- Our work towards a new housing management system is continuing, and this will expand the scope of the NDH online offer considerably. Watch this space! We are also looking at other options such as web chat which will give customers more choice about how they contact us.
- Review the Out of Hours service to make use of the new system – this should make reporting repairs outside office hours much quicker and simpler. A much better customer experience.

Income



current customer
rent arrears



former customer
rent arrears



properties let at
affordable rent level



financial inclusion / welfare
support officer referrals



properties let at
social rent level



evictions for
rent arrears

Money Matters

Over the last year we have helped **442** households with welfare and finance cases, which in turn has gained **£140,823** in income for people in North Devon.

What's next for the Income Team?

- Supporting customers through the financial impact of Coronavirus – by helping customers to pay rent and sustain tenancies
- Improving online access to customer accounts
- Promote the financial wellbeing of all customers
- Provide extra help to those experiencing the greatest hardship

Compliments and Complaints

70



Compliments received

19

Response Repairs

5

Independent Living

16

General

4

Planned Maintenance

11

Neighbourhoods

1

Development and Regeneration

10

Customer Care Team

62



Stage Zero complaints

22

Response Repairs

4

Planned Maintenance

16

General

4

Development and Regeneration

8

Neighbourhoods

2

Independent Living

6

Customer Care Team

43



formal complaints of which 23 were upheld

Response Repairs:

19

Received

11

Upheld

General NDH:

9

Received

4

Upheld

Neighbourhoods:

6

Received

2

Upheld

Customer Care Team:

4

Received

3

Upheld

Planned Maintenance:

3

Received

2

Upheld

Income:

1

Received

0

Upheld

Development and Regeneration:

1

Received

1

Upheld

In 2019, the benchmark for formal complaints for other social landlords was 22 complaints per 1,000 homes managed. This would equate to around 77 complaints if our performance were at the average, or nearly twice as many formal complaints as we have received and investigated.

Compensation

On occasion we have reimbursed customers who have incurred costs as a result of works or activities we have undertaken and where things have gone wrong. Our customer groups oversee this to make sure that things are fair to all parties involved. The total amount of compensation paid to customers during 2019/20 was just under £4,000.

38

complaints resolved at Stage 1

2

complaints resolved at Stage 2

3

complaints went to Stage 3

36

complaints acknowledged within 3 working days (84%)

22

Stage 1 complaints responded to within 10 working days (51%)

13

days to respond to Stage 1 complaints, on average (target 15 days).

Listening to our customers at all times

Hello, my name is Natalie and I am the Service Improvement Coordinator for North Devon Homes. Before this role I worked in the Customer Care Team at North Devon Homes for five years and enjoy speaking to customers and helping to sort out problems and queries.



If you have any compliments (regarding North Devon Homes' staff or one of our contractors) or you feel you need to raise a complaint, please do get in touch. I will be happy to explore this with you.

Reviewing our complaints process

The Housing Ombudsman – which oversees the complaints process for Housing Associations – has recently released a new Complaint Handling Code. We will be looking at that to see how we can further improve our service to resolve customer complaints and use the learning from these situations to drive service improvements.

How to make a complaint and what to expect

We know that sometimes things go wrong with our services, and customers can be unhappy and wish to make a complaint. Our complaints process focuses on resolving the issue as quickly as we can, and we use the learning from when things go wrong to improve our services in the future.

Customers can make a complaint using our online form, via email, by telephone or in person. Our Service Improvement Coordinator, Natalie Wyeth, will liaise with customers making complaints to understand the issues and investigate what has happened. The full complaints process is outlined on our website or a copy can be sent to you upon request.

We only use our complaints process when our service has failed in some way. So, in some cases we deal with the issue in a different way. For example, where a customer is unhappy with a decision we have made in line with our policies, a senior manager would review the decision to ensure it's been made correctly in line with policy; where a customer is complaining about the behaviour of a neighbour, that would be dealt with by our Neighbourhood Officers.

Repairs and Maintenance

9,578



repairs completed

144



planned home improvements delivered

100%



properties with a valid gas certificate

96.8%



customer satisfaction with response repairs

70



average energy performance of dwellings (SAP rating)

100%



of blocks with fire alarm system having been tested within 3 months

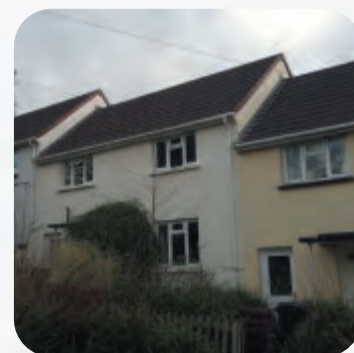


Electrical Inspections

We are still working towards our target of ensuring that all homes have an electrical inspection every five years to ensure our customers' safety. We initially aimed to complete this by 2023 but have been working hard to beat this goal. We are currently at 84% of homes that comply with this and whilst we had to put this work on hold at the start of lockdown we now continue our work. Please help us by allowing access to your home to complete the works.

Home2Home

We have expanded the team further during 2019/20 and took on the planned improvement works to replace roofs. Following a successful year, we will continue to deliver the roofing programme.



Gas Safety

We are pleased to say that our gas safety record has been the best to date and we have managed to achieve 100% compliance throughout the whole year. We try our hardest to keep our customers safe and are really thankful that we have been allowed access to all properties with gas which has helped us to deliver this fantastic performance. This success story is a real safety partnership at work between NDH, our contractor and our customers. Thank you.

Energy Improvements

We have delivered a couple of additional schemes to trial new technology to improve the energy efficiency of our homes. One was a project in Burrington where properties were clad in an insulation material and had more energy efficient heating systems installed. The second scheme involved the use of batteries to store the cheaper night-time energy rates to be used during the day. We are looking to see what funding is available from the Government to fund wider projects across our communities

Independent Living Services



1150

**community
alarms to keep
people safe in
their homes**



250

**homes receiving
additional
support through
NDH**



100%

**customer
satisfaction with
the service**



Communal activities

In 2019/20 we ramped up our use of communal facilities and ran a series of events in all schemes for residents and non-residents. This ranged from bingo and coffee mornings, to digital workshops and memory cafes. There were a range of talks and presentations and all worked to help reduce social isolation and educate in certain areas, such as new technologies. Whilst we have had to suspend some activities during Coronavirus for safety reasons, we are working with our customers to see when and how we can begin to resume some activities safely.

Safeguarding

As part of our promise to customers, we have been training all staff with the basics of safeguarding via an online training package. This is backed up with an intensive one day course for all front-line staff, which is then refreshed every three years.

Fire safety

We completed an Individual Fire Risk Assessment for every single home in our sheltered stock to ensure all customers would receive a bespoke plan in the event of a fire on a scheme.

New scheme – Sellick Court

Our development Sellick Court launched in February 2020, offering new independent living homes for over 55s. The scheme has been well received with some great feedback around the design and quality of the scheme.



What's next for the Independent Living Service?

- Additional 800 households receiving welfare calls from the team in response to the Covid-19 outbreak. This is ongoing where required and linked to the Government alert level.
- All services and procedures are being reviewed for Covid-19 recovery and how this looks in a new world.
- Looking into how and when we can reopen certain services and communal activities and to regenerate our services on schemes.

Neighbourhoods



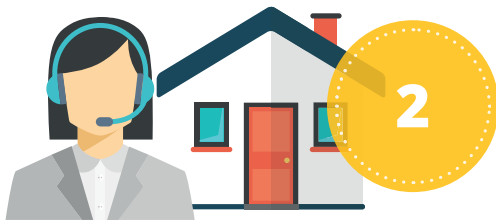
properties re-let
during the year



neighbourhoods related Stage 1
complaints received



mutual exchanges
facilitated



neighbourhoods related Stage 1
complaints fully or partially
upheld following investigation

Downsizing Project

We have been working hard with a few of our customer volunteers to help customers who are looking to downsize. This both assists the customers to be able to move to more convenient homes in better locations, but also helps us to free up larger homes for families that need them.

What's next for the Neighbourhoods Team?

- Virtual viewings – we are working on new ways of working and improving our digital offer. Helping customers to see what is on offer before having to physically visit the property.
- Re-tender of our cleaning and grounds maintenance contracts – both contracts are coming up for renewal this year. We will be making sure we get the best value for money and service for our customers.
- Estate inspections – We are increasing the amount of time we spend out in our communities. We will be looking into more detail on local health and safety, tree and area risks and ways we can improve areas.
- New Housing Management System – as part of our DB2020 project we will be implementing new ways to record and monitor cases, helping to improve our efficiency and the customer journey.
- Revisiting our clear up days – after Covid-19 cancelled all our planned events for 2020 we are going to revisit these and put in new dates for cleaning up our communities.



Developments and Regeneration



5
sites
developed



59
total units
delivered



12
social
rented
units



32
affordable
rented
units



15
shared
ownership
units

Sellick Court

Back in February we had the anticipated launch of our newest over 55s development, Sellick Court. Located on the old Lamaton Park site in South Molton the development has been rebuilt to a high standard and offers state-of-the-art facilities. The site has a range of one and two-bed properties and even offered some Shared Ownership opportunities for people aspiring to own their own home.

Each block has a number of special design features such as coloured walls that help people living with Dementia to easily locate their homes, accessible lifts and digital notice boards. The site has two communal rooms – a community hub where events will be held regularly on site such as Bingo, and a Pavilion with views over the countryside.

Sellick Court is named after Miles Sellick, our Head of Neighbourhood Services, who sadly passed away in June 2019 without getting the chance to see the project through to opening. Miles was a much-loved character at NDH and within the community, having worked for us and the North Devon Council prior to NDH being formed 20 years ago. We are extremely pleased to have launched the development with Miles' family this year.



Taw Wharf – Phase 1

August 2019 saw the completion of the first five shared ownership homes on our Taw Wharf development, with all being sold successfully. There are a further eight affordable homes in phase two for rent and shared ownership due in 2020-21, and 24 rented homes in phase three due in 2021-22.



Penhill View, Bickington

January 2020 saw the acquisition of the last homes in Bickington, with a total of 16 for rent and shared ownership completed across the site. This marks the third project we have worked on with Wainhomes in as many years, and we are pleased to have worked with them to deliver these high-quality homes for local people.



What's next for Regeneration and Development?

- We continue to have a strong development and regeneration programme.
- We are working hard with our partners to deliver much needed homes for rent, shared ownership and sale through the acquisition of new affordable homes, regeneration of our estates and refurbishment and conversion of existing assets.
- Our flagship Taw Wharf site will deliver further shared ownership and rented property, providing high quality, desirable homes for the local communities we serve.
- We are also working hard to support our rural communities and are currently working with partners on opportunities to provide much needed new housing in these areas.
- We are happy to confirm that we will have secured 25 additional new affordable homes in this financial year (2020/21) in the Instow and Braunton areas. The first of these at Shepherds Way in Instow will be completed by August providing high quality affordable housing for local people.
- We have played a key role in the Zero Energy Building's Catalyst Project, a retrofit pilot project demonstrating the Energiesprong approach in the UK across several sites including two of our own homes in North Devon. The project is supported by the European Regional Development Fund and is nearing completion, transforming homes with poor energy performance into warm, comfortable homes which deliver net-zero energy efficiency.

Value for Money

As a community landlord, Value for Money (VfM) is a key driver and is integral to our culture and everything that we do. We work closely with our C90 and Scrutiny groups to deliver VfM targets to meet the objectives in our Corporate Plan. We aim to deliver a high-quality service as efficiently and effectively as we can.

The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) has identified seven key measures to see how well we are performing. We have set ourselves targets against these measures, and against three other VfM measures that the NDH Board has selected.

Our performance against these is below.

A full VfM statement is published within our Financial Statements on our website which can be found at www.ndh-ltd.co.uk.

The VfM performance for 2019/20 is based on the draft financial statements at the time of going to print and is subject to further change.

Seven RSH measures

1. **Headline Social Housing Cost per unit**

How much it costs to manage and maintain one property.

2018/2019 Sector median: **£3,690**

2018/2019 NDH **£2,672**

2019/2020 NDH Target: **£2,753**

2019/2020 NDH Actual: **2,820**

Target achieved?  **No**

2. **New Supply** The number of new properties we delivered as a % of all our properties – split into social housing, and non-social housing.

Social housing:

2018/2019 Sector median: **1.4%**

2019/2020 NDH Target: **2.2%**

2019/2020 NDH Actual: **1.8%**

Target achieved?  **No**

Social housing targets were not achieved due to a delay in completing six new builds.

Non-social housing:

2018/2019 Sector median: **0%**

2019/2020 NDH Target: **1.0%**

2019/2020 NDH Actual: **1.3%**


Target achieved?  **Yes**

3. **Reinvestment** How much we spent on building new homes and investing in current homes, as a % of the value of all the homes we own.

2018/2019 Sector median: **6.2%**

2019/2020 NDH Target: **2.2%**

2019/2020 NDH Actual: **3.25%**

Target achieved?  **Yes**

4. **Gearing** How much debt we have; the higher the figure, the more debt compared to our assets.

2018/2019 Sector median: **43%**

2019/2020 NDH Target: **59%**

2019/2020 NDH Actual: **58%**


Target achieved?  **Yes**

5. **Earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation – Major Repairs Included (EBITDA MRI)** How much finance we have available and how much we can invest; the higher the % the more capacity we have.

2018/2019 Sector median: **184%**

2019/2020 NDH Target: **182%**

2019/2020 NDH Actual: **166%**

Target achieved?  **No**


6. Operating Margin Surplus made overall before exceptional expenses are taken into account.

Overall:

2018/2019 Sector median: **25.8%**

2019/2020 NDH Target: **22.5%**

2019/2020 NDH Actual: **34.9%**


Target achieved?  **Yes**

Social housing:

2018/2019 Sector median: **29.2%**

2019/2020 NDH Target: **27.9%**

2019/2020 NDH Actual: **26.8%**

Target achieved?  **No**


7. Return on Capital Employed

This measures how efficiently we are investing our capital resources.

2018/2019 Sector median: **3.8%**

2019/2020 NDH Target: **3.6%**

2019/2020 NDH Actual: **3.9%**

Target achieved?  **Yes**

Other Measures

1. Changes as a result of customer feedback Every change we made directly as a result of what customers have said through our C90 customer involvement structure.

2019/2020 NDH Target: **22.5%**

2019/2020 NDH Actual: **34.9%**

Target achieved?  **Yes**

2. Financial welfare referrals having a positive impact for customers

This measures referrals and financial benefits for customers.

442 welfare referrals

£141,000 additional income raised for customers via additional benefit entitlement

3. Staff volunteer days linked to customers and community

Target: **50**

Actual: **88**

Value for Money: Adding more for customers

The social value that North Devon Homes provides to its customers includes a social return to communities. We continue to invest in our Independent Living Service to support older customers in their homes and are additionally using staff from the service out in the community to identify and resolve wider issues that vulnerable customers may have (for example repairs, planned works, neighbourhood issues).

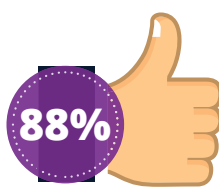
Our youth project continues to deliver significant value for young people and their communities. The team has carried out family intervention and support, supported young people of school leaving age into college or paid employment, and are continuing to evaluate outcomes to demonstrate the benefits and VfM offered by the programme.



invested in the delivery of new homes



invested into our existing homes as part of our planned, cyclical and major works programme



overall customer satisfaction with our service



satisfaction with response repairs carried out

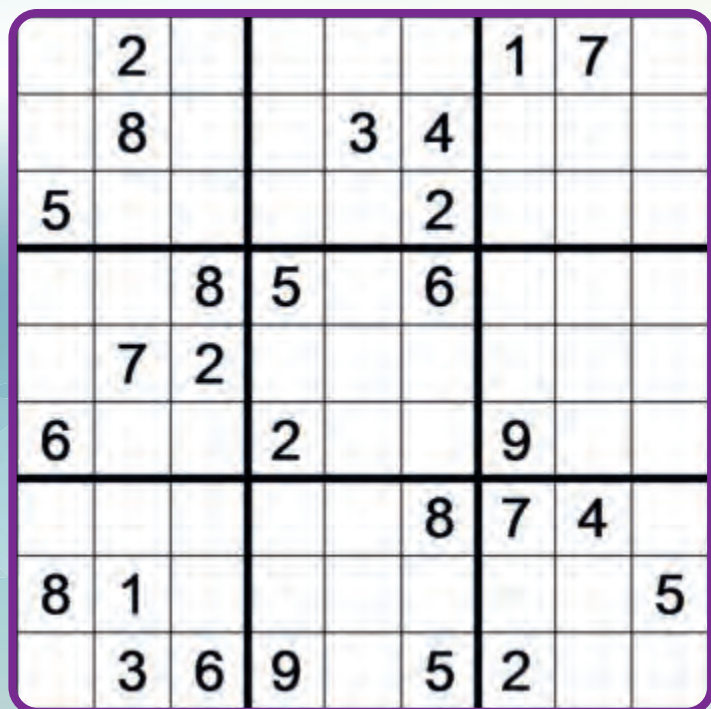


satisfaction with planned maintenance works carried out

Just for fun

Sudoku

Sudoku is a logic-based, number-placement puzzle. In classic sudoku, the objective is to fill a 9×9 grid with digits so that each column, each row, and each of the nine 3×3 subgrids that compose the grid contain all of the digits from 1 to 9



Quiz

1. What does Au stand for in the periodic table?
2. Name the current Foreign Secretary?
3. Who won the Best Actress Award at the most recent Oscar?
4. Which artist sings the latest Bond theme for No Time To Die?
5. Who is the main character in Catcher in the Rye?
6. In what US State is the city Nashville?
7. What is the capital city of Iceland?
8. Who is the CEO of Twitter?
9. What is seven cubed?

Where in the world?

Do you know your geography?...

see if you can circle all the countries listed



- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Argentina | <input type="checkbox"/> France |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Australia | <input type="checkbox"/> Iceland |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Barbados | <input type="checkbox"/> Japan |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Belgium | <input type="checkbox"/> Mexico |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Canada | <input type="checkbox"/> North Korea |
| <input type="checkbox"/> China | <input type="checkbox"/> Seychelles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Denmark | <input type="checkbox"/> England |

Bonus

Can you tick the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans