



Annual report to residents 2021/22

Shaping a better tomorrow



Welcome

This report is a transparent record of the year that was March 2021 to April 2022.

Its ambition is to capture our key performance and how what we do day in day out makes a difference to the lives of others.

We sought resident views in what you wanted us to report on and included case studies in your own words along with information on ways to get involved.



Like many organisations, this year was about returning to a new normal.

We worked hard – despite continued Covid-impact – to get back to building and ramping up our repairs and planned maintenance works. This included bringing forward works to improve the energy efficiency of homes in response to rising energy bills.

Our presence in communities also returned. With new, flexible office space and agile working, our teams are now out-and-about locally, supported by volunteer customers who are helping us keep neighbourhoods clean and safe. The value and importance of residents who shape our services has never been more important to us, and so across the year we also commissioned a major project to review how we seek your views and allow you to influence our work.

Thank you to the residents who helped shape this report with their feedback, and to those who give their time, skills and passion to influence our work.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chris" with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Christine Ashton
Executive Director - Housing

The year in numbers

Below are some details of our performance and growth in the year ending 31 March 2022. We use a variety of measures to monitor our progress and we're preparing for the new resident satisfaction measures set to be introduced by the Regulator of Social Housing.

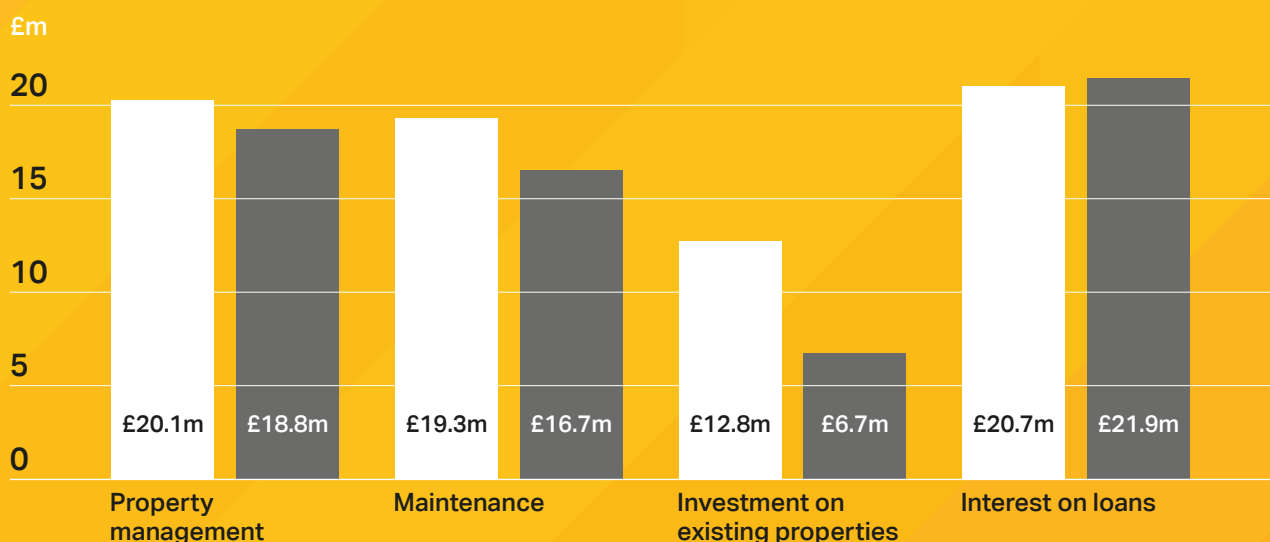
	2021-22	2020-21
Total properties owned and managed	21,411	20,139
Responsive repairs completed within target	85%	90%
Customer satisfaction with repairs	89%	78%
Complaints received	1,937	883
Residents helped to claim extra benefits	1,130	1,190
Investment on existing properties	£12.8m	£6.7m
Average time to re-let vacant homes	33 days	32 days



Rental income spent on homes and services

Key: 2021-22 ■ 2020-21 ■

The Property Services budgets are set by the Board, and are increased annually in line with inflation and business requirements.



Hearing your voice

We want residents to have a direct influence on our work and the decisions we take. In 2021/22 we laid the foundations for a new approach to resident engagement, strengthening your voice and setting a new way of working together.



22 recommendations by
our Scrutiny Panel



300 residents invited
to a jobs fair



1,581 involved
residents

Hayley's story



Hayley White is one of our Estate Inspectors. She kindly gives her time each month to let us know about any changes needed in her small estate in Northampton.

"I moved to the area around two years ago and had previously been involved with my former housing landlord. As a leaseholder, I wasn't sure if I could get involved but after a chat with Anne at emh I agreed to help.

"I just keep an eye on the area when I'm out and about. We all have our phones on us these days, so if I spot something, I just snap a quick photo and provide the details. I have a background in security and health and safety, so that perhaps helps me spot things that others might not immediately.

"We have Zoom calls and I always know Anne will help if I need it. In the last year we've been able to sort out bigger bins to stop some fly-tipping and identified that emh owns a patch of land that wasn't on the grass cutting schedule. The weeds have been chopped down as a short-term measure, and I'm now hoping it will be properly sorted out.

"It's a way of looking after my community and I do feel I'm making a difference."



Together with tenants

In 2021/22, the Together with tenants panel, made up of residents from the Scrutiny Panel, Co-ordinating Committee, and Special Interest Groups, continued to work with staff to identify where we were performing less well against the National Housing Federation's Together with tenants charter.

As part of the exercise for 21/22 the panel also undertook a review of the 61 actions that were developed in 2019/20, effectively challenging emh where it had not met its targets. A new action plan was developed for us to implement with 12 new targets to achieve.

Some examples include:

Relationships

Action: Develop method to gather feedback about ezine from residents

Solution: Online survey sent to all engaged residents

Accountability

Action: Communicate *Let's Engage* action plan to engaged residents

Solution: Updated action plan and training opportunities published in the resident ezine

Partnership working

Following the opening in March 2021 of the careers and enterprise hub in Loughborough marketplace, emh worked closely with the hub Careers and Employability Manager David Drewry on an employability project, which was fully supported by Jane Hunt MP for Loughborough.

The hub, based in the heart of Loughborough, was formed in partnership with Loughborough College and Loughborough University. In August 2021, over 300 local emh residents were invited to a jobs fair.

Scrutiny Panel

During this year, the Scrutiny Panel carried out an investigation of emh's Aids and Adaptations service. The panel worked closely with the Asset Management team, carried out a mystery shopper exercise, conducted interviews with staff and ran resident surveys which enabled them to develop 22 recommendations for improvement. We will check back in 2023 to ensure these are addressed.



Engagement, Estate Champions and Consultations

The Customer Voice team continued to deliver its quarterly ezine, updating engaged residents with news from the Scrutiny Panel, Service Improvement, local groups and updates from emh. The team also provided training in data protection, equality, diversity & inclusion and conflict management for engaged residents.

Our Estate Champions continued to work across our regions, monitoring the grounds maintenance and communal cleaning in their areas and reporting their findings via online surveys every two months.

Our Estate Champions work in partnership with emh to help us provide good quality services that residents want.

We also developed a clear process for how residents feedback on policies – and how

we feedback to them and demonstrate how their views have shaped the final document. It's important to us that residents are aware of the difference their input makes.

Through 2021-22 approximately 18,650 residents have been invited to take part in surveys via e-mail, post and telephone as well as consultations helping to create our Starter Tenancy policy, Asbestos in the Home guidance and much more.

We're now proud to have 1,581 involved residents consistently helping to shape the services we deliver.

The Future - Tpas Re-engineering Project

In October 2021 we commissioned national resident engagement experts Tpas to look at how we manage resident engagement. The team at Tpas worked closely with current engaged residents, residents who had never been involved with us before and staff from across all departments. Their report in March 2021 included recommendations on how to increase resident influence on the services we deliver. We have now started work to make this happen.



To find out more about our online groups and Estate Champions, please contact our Customer Voice Officers: anne.phillips@emh.co.uk jackie.sykes@emh.co.uk

Supporting you

The cost-of-living crisis is being felt in households across our region. Our Money Matters team is here to help.



1,130 residents offered support by the Money Matters team



We have helped to claim £2.46m in grants and additional benefits



To find out more about the Money Matters service, call us on 0300 123 6000.

Paul's story



Paul was put in touch with our Money Matters team having contacted emh about his concerns about paying his rent. Having worked the majority of his life, a routine eye appointment led to repeated eye surgeries and sadly the loss of his job. For the first time, he found himself worried about rent and basic bills.

"I had laser surgery, not to improve my eyesight, but to try and maintain it. It meant for the first time in my life I needed to sign off sick, and ultimately, I couldn't carry on with my job due to my lack of vision," he said.

"I was worried how I was going to afford my rent, so I phoned emh and was offered help by Imran (pictured) from the Money Matters team. He was a lifesaver. He always had time for me and he couldn't help me enough.

"I'd applied for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) before and been turned down twice. Imran helped me appeal and I was awarded two lump sums of around £6k plus ongoing support I didn't know I was entitled to. He helped me with the forms and even attended the tribunal with me.

"I'd never been in this position before I didn't know emh could help like this or what help I could get. I'd probably be in a right mess without it, and I'd absolutely recommend it to others who are worried about paying their rent."

The Money Matters team offer an important service, providing support, guidance and signposting to help customers in financial hardship.

Money Matters service can support customers to:

1. Claim the benefits they are entitled to, such as Universal Credit, housing benefit, discretionary housing payments, health related benefits, pensions and more.
2. Provide customers with advice on maximising their income.
3. Help customers with budgeting on a low-income including referrals to foodbanks and household support fund.
4. Support customers with debts.
5. Help customers to contact creditors to reduce payments.
6. Support customers with more serious financial difficulties such as debt relief orders and bankruptcy.



MONEY MATTERS



Following the lifting of the eviction ban that was put in place during the pandemic, the Income team has maintained the supportive approach to arrears collection and are only using eviction as a last resort when residents do not engage with us to agree a payment plan.



£81.1m total rent income collected (99.75%)



£221k arrears collected from former residents (target £250k)



Through 2021 – 22 there has been 3 evictions

Creating community

No home sits in isolation. So, we want to support safe and healthy communities that thrive.



20 estate action days held



277 new Estate Champions



84% satisfaction with neighbourhood as a place to live



Estate Action Days

We completed 20 estate action days across 2021/2. Actions from these included several repair related works, for example the completion of reactive repairs, brighter street lighting, security door systems repaired. Communal areas were litter picked, gardening works completed and teams identified improvements to communal areas. Estate management issues such as dog fouling and parking concerns were reviewed and actions agreed.

Tackling ASB

Our core approach is to try where possible to help neighbours live together well. We continue to focus on non-legal remedies, such as self-help, guidance and early contact to help each neighbour understand behaviours reported and the impact that these may have. We work with our independent mediation companies to help both parties agree a way forward ensuring that we all live side by side harmoniously.

In 2021 we carried out two evictions for anti-social behaviour due to drug related offences. We obtained 12 injunction orders over a 12 month period, these were in relation to high risk anti-social behaviour issues, where all other options have failed. In total this year we've handled 1,107 ASB reports.

We sometimes receive reports regarding estate nuisance including large items left in communal areas, and the obstructive parking of cars and motor bikes. In these types of cases, we have spoken to or written to those involved reminding them to remove the item from the communal area. Cars and bikes should always be parked in designated parking bays, away from the buildings. We have taken a partnership approach in dealing with these matters, working closely with street wardens and the police.

Letting homes

Afghan Relocations and Assistance Programme

Over the last year we have continued to work with several local authorities to provide accommodation for the Afghan Refugees programme, with two families successfully placed.



Neighbourhood and Community Standard

Between October 2021 and July 2022, **289 Estate Champion Surveys** were completed identifying communal issues and corrective actions around gardening, repairs and cleaning. We have registered **277 Estate Service Champions** as part of the project and the involved resident groups are now considering how we can strengthen this project using a task and finish approach.

Improving sheltered schemes

Over the year we have completed a number of sheltered scheme refurbishments improving the look and feel of our communal areas. We have worked in partnership with residents regarding the colour schemes, pictures and finishes. We are proud of our new look facilities as shown here at Aston Court, Ilkeston and Turton Court, Sutton-in-Ashfield.



Supporting people out of homelessness

During the year, a main achievement was the development of a new service in Coalville. We now offer a three-bed shared house with on-site office which reduces the need the local authority to find Bed and Breakfast placements for single homeless people in priority need.

We also successfully supported Leicester City Council to transition out of the Government *Everybody in* (Covid initiative) into high quality supported accommodation. This involved 14 units of accommodation in, mainly, one bed flats for vulnerable homeless people.

Working in partnership with our local authority partners plus Homes England and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, we developed a successful bid for *Rough Sleeper Accommodation Project* funding with the

aim of providing a further six units of Housing First Accommodation.

We also, in partnership with IKEA, transformed the look of our MYST Lodge Hostel to improve the living environment and help us meet Trauma Informed Design principles. Co-workers from the Nottingham store volunteered their time to transform a total of 33 bedrooms and 15 living rooms over 12 months, using furniture donated by IKEA. The rooms provide temporary housing for young people who have lost their homes - this includes those fleeing domestic abuse, issues with finances, or being asked to leave home. Customers can stay in the accommodation for up to two years, where they are also given support and training through other services enlisted by a team of trained key workers.



Improving services

We don't always get things right first time. But when things do go wrong, we have a fair and transparent process and do share lessons learnt.

Concerns raised

(resolved at first point of contact without having to go through a formal investigation)

2021-22: 6,886

2020-21: 4,536



Complaints received

2021-22: 1,937

2020-21: 883



A simple guide to our complaints process

Immediate resolution

We will ask you for details of your concerns and discuss what you would like us to do to resolve them.

We will aim to resolve your issue(s) during your initial contact with us. If this is not possible, we will progress your complaint to the next step.

Formal complaint

Stage 1 resolution

We will investigate your complaint and keep in touch with you throughout the process. We will provide you with a response within 10 working days of your complaint being raised.

Our response will summarise your initial complaint and outline what we have done or plan to do to resolve your complaint.

If you are not happy with our proposed resolution, you can ask us to progress your complaint to the next step.

If we have not heard back from you within 6 months of our Stage 1 response, we will close your complaint.

Formal complaint

Stage 2 panel hearing

We will acknowledge your request for a Stage 2 escalation.

We will ask you to clarify why you believe your complaint wasn't fully addressed in Stage 1 and what outcome you would like.

Your complaint will then be investigated by a head of service or director. We will write to you within 20 working days of your request to escalate your complaint, detailing the final decision.



This year, we have updated our complaints policy in line with the Housing Ombudsman Reviewed Complaint Handling Code April 2022. As part of our new approach, we have made it easier to complain, and actively encouraged residents to share their experiences with us so we can improve things for all.

We have increased the size and role of our Complaints Resolution Team, changing things so the advisors manage cases from beginning to end. We expect this will help resolve complaints more quickly and efficiently.

Issue

Lack of contact in updating residents throughout a repair – especially when waiting for the door to come into stock.

Pest control.

Delays in emergency repairs that are raised by the Out Of Hours service (OOH).

Root

No process in place on the system to identify when jobs are going out of target.

Conversations that operatives were having with residents that were potentially giving the wrong impression.

Volume of calls experienced during the cold weather.

Action taken

Process put in place on the system to identify when jobs are reaching end of target and ensuring the resident is contacted to update on the situation at that point.

Guidance put in place so operatives know to signpost to the local authority.

Agreement that the OOH service will provide full details on the description for the job raised.

Safe, well-maintained homes

This year we invested more than £13m in improving your homes, from new kitchens and bathrooms to minor repairs to energy-efficient works. Keeping you warm, and well.



583 new kitchens



£1.5m secured to improve the energy efficiency of our homes



194 roof replacements

Tracy's and David's story



Tracy and David Smith have lived in their home in Linney Road, Leicester, for 44 years. When they moved in the house had just been built and everything was brand new.

However, over the years the kitchen and bathroom had become dated and despite their best efforts to keep the rooms looking fresh they really needed replacing. The couple had a new kitchen fitted by our maintenance team last year and their bathroom was replaced in August.

"We kept the old bathroom clean but over the years it had got a bit discoloured and we never had a proper shower just an over bath attachment. So, when we heard we were getting a new bathroom fitted we were absolutely over the moon.

"It's gorgeous now and the whole suite is pure white with sparkly white tiles. I got to choose the flooring and tiles, and was able to match the flooring to the wooden effect we have in the kitchen. We have a proper shower and screen over the bath, which my husband loves because he has a shower most of the time and I love the bath.

"We keep it immaculate and couldn't wish for it to be any better. I would rate the work 15 out of 10. All the staff were brilliant from start to finish, they were polite, worked well, kept everything tidy and completed it on time."

Planned maintenance

The planned works programme significantly increased for 2021/22 to reflect our commitment to investing in your homes. We spent £12.8m on replacement boilers, kitchens, roofs, bathrooms, doors and windows, external painting and upgraded door entry systems. This work included external painting of 1,310 properties and 424 new bathrooms.

Covid-19 restrictions were lifting however, the early part of 2021 did impact on the ability of our teams and contractors to work to full capacity. But we worked hard with partners, and by the end of the year more than 99% of the available budget for planned works was spent within the financial year, with customer experience feedback levels of 89% overall satisfaction with the works completed.

With some invaluable customer involvement, we've drawn up a new Asset Management Strategy linked to the group's 30-year business plan. This has a detailed action plan for the next five years, including updated stock condition surveys of around 5,500 homes per year.



Responsive repairs

During the year we launched the Transformation BIG project to improve customers' experience of reactive repairs. As part of this, chosen with residents, two new local contractors will start in October 2022.

We have also moved our repairs planners so that team and our customer contact centre now work closely together in the same building.

Despite Covid-19 impacting on staff and residents, we completed almost 60,000 repairs. Of these 85% were within target timescales.

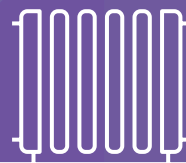
The 1% rebate built into our materials partnership with Travis Perkins has supported projects like a permanent gazebo for outdoor events at Kirk Hallam Community Centre and garden benches for care and support schemes.



57,278 repairs in total,
85% completed
on time



89% of customers are
satisfied with repairs



658 new heating systems
installed, including 76 air
source heat pumps

Improving energy efficiency

With energy bills rising, we know replacing inefficient heating systems and boilers is a priority. So, we've continued our programme of air source heat pump installations throughout the year. This has included carrying out works as part of Local Authority Delivery Phase 2 (LAD 2) - an initiative funded by the Government via Blaby District Council and Erewash Borough Council. The LAD scheme aims to raise the energy efficiency of low income and low energy performance homes with a focus on energy performance certificate (EPC ratings of E, F or G).



In addition to this, we have also successfully bid for additional funding via the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Phase 1 (SHDF). This will see us install external wall insulation to around 70 properties to increase their energy efficiency performance.



New homes

The rising cost of living means more people are seeking affordable housing. As a key Government-backed developer, we are committed to building quality homes that meet the needs of the region.



321 total homes developed



42 modular and 7 Passivhaus homes built



Across 14 local authority areas

Gallows Inn



Gallows Inn is a new 22-home affordable housing development built during 2021/22. The two-and-three-bedroom homes and a bespoke four-bedroom adapted, extended property were made possible thanks to a partnership with Erewash Borough Council and funding from Homes England who provided a grant of £913,000 towards the £3.9m scheme. The homes, for affordable rent, were allocated by Erewash Borough Council in line with its local letting policy.

New resident Miss Jones-Moody said: "I love that the house backs onto the canal and it's a small and quiet estate. I love the size of the rooms and house layout and I'm really impressed with the size of the garden as they can usually be quite small with new builds."

"I'm really pleased with the layout of the property and the lovely garden size and area. I've settled in well."

Miss Benniston, resident





Highlights of 2021/22 included opening our latest extra care housing scheme, Springfields in Ashby-de-la-Zouch which is fully occupied, and completion of our first development using modern methods of construction at Beeston, in partnership with sustainable modular specialists Ilke Homes.

With local authority support we were also pleased to be able to make special provision of homes and language support for people fleeing the upheaval in Afghanistan.

The key challenges and constraints we face are rapidly rising costs, staff and materials shortages and planning delays, but we are working hard to overcome these.



Thank you to the residents who contributed to this report.
We hope that you have found it useful and we welcome your suggestions to help us improve it for next year.

Ways to contact us:

Text us on: 07860 024 523

Text the word 'Bal' or 'Balance' and your account balance will be automatically sent back to you.

Text the word 'Callback' and a member of our Customer Services team will ring you back.

E. customerservices@emh.co.uk

T. 0300 123 6000

