

Customer Annual Report 2022





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“A huge hello and

the warmest of welcomes

It is an honour to be the new CEO at Places for People especially as I get out into our communities and meet our customers. What I have learned so far is that for all of you, your community – our community – matters.





Most of you don't know me yet so I wanted you to hear a really simple message that I've been delivering to my colleagues since I joined: we exist because of you, our customers.

Those of you I've met so far however, have been very open, honest, and have given valuable feedback. Your views have helped us make positive operational changes — be it renaming our regional affordable housing businesses or investing in new IT systems that give you more ways to get in touch with our team. Your views have also helped me to understand how we need to develop.

The most important work delivered this year though was in supporting customers with first, the legacy of lockdown and second, the growing cost-of-living crisis.

I hope that Places for People colleagues have been there for you during this past 12 months, as they safely got back out into our neighbourhoods, improving our communities, and delivering much-needed new homes and services.

We know that customers are also facing the cost-of-living crisis, and that's why Places for People delivered initiatives like the National Hardship Fund, National Furniture Project, and more local food bank projects this year.

Also during the year, our National Customer Group (NCG) has continued to evolve and has worked to ensure that our focus is maintained on the issues that matter to you. The NCG is made up of customer representatives from across the country and I hope this report will encourage even more customers to join it, or any of our other customer groups. You don't need experience, just a passion for your community, your neighbours, and the desire to have your voice heard.

My colleagues at Places for People believe in our mission. I want to thank them for their work this past year. We haven't always made it easy for them to do the job they want to do for you, but our commitment to them — and to you — is that going forward, we will.



I also want to thank our former Group Executive Director for Affordable Housing, Debi Marriott-Lavery who left her role this summer. Debi was an incredible asset to our business, working with our customers, and ensuring that Places for People maintained its G1/V1 rating from the Regulator for Social Housing this year — the highest regulatory rating a housing association can receive.

It's time now to go forward and build on what's been achieved and tackle the challenges we'll face. I am delighted therefore to be working alongside our newly appointed Chief Operating Officer Scott Black to continue to support our customers — putting people first, listening to those living in our neighbourhoods, and nurturing sustainable, resilient communities that thrive. Because community matters.

Greg Reed
Chief Executive Officer



Our People First approach

People First puts customers, colleagues and clients at the heart of everything we do, and is underpinned by our people promise:

**Places for People puts people first.
We treat everyone honestly,
courteously and fairly.
We listen, we learn, we deliver.**



- 1. We listen to people and treat everyone with respect and politeness.**
- 2. We measure customer satisfaction and take action if we aren't doing as well as expected.**
- 3. We use plain English in our letters, website and emails.**
- 4. We give a main point of contact for questions or problems.**
- 5. We provide services on the web and social media, and customers can get in touch by phone or writing if they prefer.**
- 6. We will always try to give customers a choice of service, home and location.**
- 7. We will have clear service standards and guidelines, so we and our customers know what to expect.**
- 8. We tell our customers what the charges they pay are for.**
- 9. We have a clear complaints process and publish information about complaints (without using customers' names).**
- 10. We treat our colleagues as we do our customers.**

People First is creating a movement that ensures Places for People customers and clients feel valued.

We continue to provide our teams with the skills to support our aims — more than 6,000 colleagues have taken part in training accredited by the Institute of Customer Service (ICS) — all of which makes for a better experience for the people living in our communities.

We will continue to drive, develop and improve People First to deliver positive change across Places for People. This will ensure we can keep listening to our customers, understanding their needs, and tailoring services, homes and places that enable people of all ages and backgrounds to thrive and improve their lives.



Our housing providers



Places for People owns and/or manages homes for 500,000 people across England, Wales and Scotland, helping to build sustainable communities for all.

You can review our performances for 2021/22 on the pages that follow



Places for People – England and Wales

During the course of the last year in England and Wales, we have rolled out a brand name 'Places for People'. This means all customers receive similar messages using the same website, as well as receiving consistent neighbourhood management services for the communities they live in. The Places for People brand covers over 65,000 homes owned and/or managed by four different registered providers across England and Wales:

- Places for People Homes Limited
- Derwent Housing Association
- Chorus Homes Limited
- Cotman Housing Association Limited.

Places for People Scotland

Places for People Scotland is the name we use in Scotland. Places for People Scotland owns and/or manages over 8,600 homes across Scotland. The main company in the Group that owns properties in Scotland is Castle Rock Edinvar Housing Association.

Places for People Living Plus

Places for People Living Plus owns and/or manages over 6,100 homes and is the name for our supported living provider, offering specialist accommodation, support and care services for customers in England. The majority of the accommodation used for these purposes in the Group is owned by Places for People Living+ Limited.

Combined landlord highlights for England



Here are the highlights of the past year...

One name

We wrote to all our customers this year, outlining a change to our business which saw all our homes brought together under one name, Places for People.

This simple name change reflects how we value all our customers equally and highlights how we work together as one team. Our focus is on improving the quality of our services, creating more homes, and making a positive difference in communities.

Customer Taskforce

In 2021, we established the Community Taskforce, helping us to maintain high standards for customers by encouraging colleagues to carry out extra visits to our neighbourhoods across England.

An incredible 6,500 visits were made in the first six months of the initiative, which allowed us to understand each neighbourhood with a refreshed vision. Now the Community Taskforce is supporting our future maintenance plans.

Better connections

We are working hard on a streamlined single channel website for customer access. This means that our communities, customers and colleagues will be able to access a single platform by various means such as customer portal, webchat, email or telephone, that gives faster, more focused and easy to use communication across all areas of the service.



Listening to customers

A big part of our learning is listening, and we continued to listen this year. We have established a number of new customer scrutiny groups, with representation from more than 200 customers. This includes our National Customer Group, which meets quarterly with our Places for People Chair and representatives from our Board.

The groups help us listen closely to our customers' voices, whilst offering opportunities for them to shape and improve our services. This enables Places for People to make decisions that better support the lives of the people in our communities.

The groups are supported by a robust customer feedback process; we survey our customers after repairs, visits, and new lettings, ensuring they have a consistent voice within our organisation.

Cost-of-living crisis support

We have established new lifeline funds which help to support our customers through the current cost-of-living crisis. We have a Hardship Fund, a Homelessness Prevention Fund and access to a network of foodbanks — all aimed at helping customers manage through challenging times.

Celebrating good neighbours

Our annual Good Neighbour Awards celebrate the incredible work that our customers do in the local community.

2021 saw many heart-warming nominations for people who had gone above and beyond for their neighbours, with winners awarded for their amazing efforts. We look forward to celebrating more great community endeavours this year.

Combined landlord performance for England

Places for People Homes Limited,
Derwent Living, Chorus Homes Limited
Cotman Housing Association Limited.



Customer contact

Number of formal complaints received Stage 1

1,221

% Responded to in timeframe/extension as agreed with the customer

90%

Number of formal complaints received Stage 2

174

% Responded to in timeframe/extension as agreed with the customer

90%

Number of Stage 2 complaints upheld

68

Stage 2 complaints upheld

39%

Number of Housing Ombudsman requests

29



Your tenancy

Total losses from empty homes

1%

Target 1.5%

The average number of days it takes to re-let an empty home from the time a tenancy is terminated through to a new tenancy starting

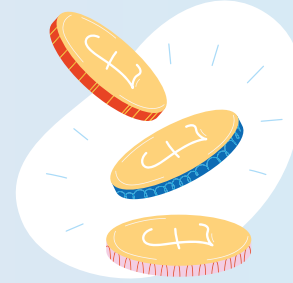
Current customer arrears

3%

Target 4%

31 days

Target 25 days



Why we are below some of our targets and what we are doing about it

We have had a number of homes stay empty as customers moved out but we were not able to advertise the home for let. This delay impacted our average days to re-let.





Customer satisfaction

Net Promoter Score

45

Target 47

New customer satisfaction

93%

Target 85%

Satisfaction with gas servicing

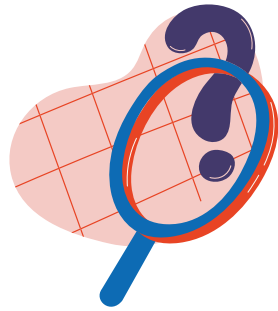
97%

Target 90%

Satisfaction with repairs

94%

Target 90%



Satisfaction with grounds maintenance

75%

Target 75%

Satisfaction with communal internal cleaning services

76%

Target 75%

Your community

Customers who were surveyed and were happy with the way their anti-social behaviour (ASB) cases were dealt with

85%

Target 82%

Serious ASB cases that were responded to in one working day

99%

Target 100%

Number of serious cases managed

273

Number of serious cases responded to in one working day

271

Why we are below some of our targets and what we are doing about it

Our Net Promoter Score has been impacted by challenges faced in service delivery across repairs and grounds maintenance. We are continuing to work on improving the services delivered to our customers.

We have also identified a number of learning outcomes from the way we manage ASB. This has led to ASB management moving into our Tenancy Sustainment and Community team to provide a consistent service which supports our customers when they need us. Improvements have been made to how customers report matters to us with our Customer Contact Centre and how they are recorded with the team.





Maintenance and repairs



Repairs completed right first time

89%

Target 90%

Routine repairs responded to in time

53%

Target 90%

Emergency repairs completed within target time

98%

Target 100%

Homes with gas safety certificates

99.96%

Target 100%

Communal areas with a fire risk assessment

99.81%

Target 100%

Invested in maintaining our homes

£103,874,203

Invested in repairs to the outside of your home/building and major works: £50,712,631

Invested in managing homes and maintenance: £53,161,572

All our homes meet the Decent Homes Standard.

Why we are below some of our targets and what we are doing about it

There was an increase in the number of repairs, both new repairs and completing repairs that were previously delayed. There were also challenges sourcing materials, parts and equipment, and recruiting more construction trade colleagues. These challenges impacted our response rates on repairs.



Places for People performance



Customer contact

Number of formal complaints received Stage 1

805

% Responded to in timeframe/extension as agreed with the customer

91%

Number of formal complaints received Stage 2

103

% Responded to in timeframe/extension as agreed with the customer

87%

Number of Stage 2 complaints upheld

35

Stage 2 complaints upheld

34%

Number of Housing Ombudsman requests

20



Your tenancy

Total losses from empty homes

1%

Target 2%

The average number of days it takes to re-let an empty home from the time a tenancy is terminated through to a new tenancy starting

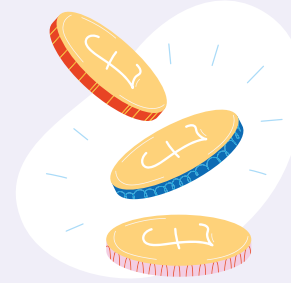
Current customer arrears

3%

Target 4%

28 days

Target 25 days



Why we are below some of our targets and what we are doing about it

We have had a number of homes stay empty as customers moved out but we were not able to advertise the home for let. This delay impacted our average days to re-let.



Customer satisfaction

Net Promoter Score

45

Target 47

New customer satisfaction

93%

Target 85%

Satisfaction with gas servicing

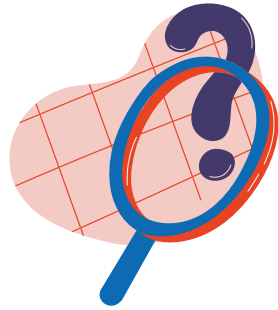
98%

Target 90%

Satisfaction with repairs

94%

Target 90%



Satisfaction with grounds maintenance

75%

Target 75%

Satisfaction with communal internal cleaning services

77%

Target 75%

Your community

Customers who were surveyed and were happy with the way their anti-social behaviour (ASB) cases were dealt with

79%

Target 82%

Serious ASB cases that were responded to in one working day

95%

Target 100%

Number of serious cases managed

152

Number of serious cases responded to in one working day

150



Why we are below some of our targets and what we are doing about it

Our Net Promoter Score has been impacted by challenges faced in service delivery across repairs and grounds maintenance. We are continuing to work on improving the services delivered to our customers.

Customer satisfaction is key to understanding how we operate well and what we can do better. Not only have we made significant changes to how we manage and resolve ASB, we are also transforming our satisfaction gathering process to make key improvements for our customers.

We have also identified a number of learning outcomes from the way we manage ASB. This has led to ASB management moving into our Tenancy Sustainment and Community team to provide a consistent service which supports our customers when they need us. Improvements have been made to how customers report matters to us with our Customer Contact Centre and how they are recorded with the team.



Maintenance and repairs



Repairs completed right first time

88%

Target 90%

Routine repairs responded to in time

52%

Target 90%

Emergency repairs completed within target time

98%

Target 100%

Homes with gas safety certificates

99.92%

Target 100%

Communal areas with a fire risk assessment

100%

Target 100%

Invested in maintaining our homes

£78,468,727

Invested in repairs to the outside of your home/building and major works: £40,875,714

Invested in managing homes and maintenance: £37,593,013

All our homes meet the Decent Homes Standard.

Why we are below some of our targets and what we are doing about it

There was an increase in the number of repairs, both new repairs and completing repairs that were previously delayed. There were also challenges sourcing materials, parts and equipment, and recruiting more construction trade colleagues. These challenges impacted our response rates on repairs.



Cotman performance



Customer contact

Number of formal complaints received Stage 1

100

% Responded to in timeframe/extension as agreed with the customer

79%

Number of formal complaints received Stage 2

19

% Responded to in timeframe/extension as agreed with the customer

89%

Number of Stage 2 complaints upheld

10

Stage 2 complaints upheld

53%

Number of Housing Ombudsman requests

0



Your tenancy

Total losses from empty homes

2%

Target 2%

The average number of days it takes to re-let an empty home from the time a tenancy is terminated through to a new tenancy starting

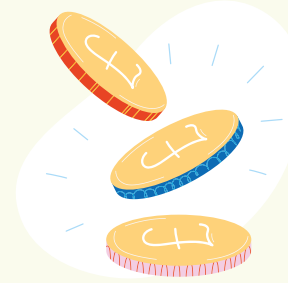
Current customer arrears

2%

Target 4%

30 days

Target 25 days



Why we are below some of our targets and what we are doing about it

We have had a number of homes stay empty as customers moved out but we were not able to advertise the home for let. This delay impacted our average days to re-let.





Customer satisfaction

Net Promoter Score

41

Target 47

New customer satisfaction

89%

Target 85%

Satisfaction with gas servicing

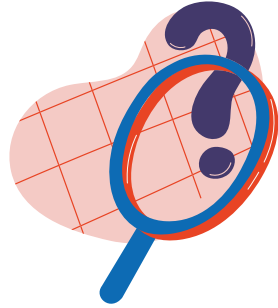
95%

Target 90%

Satisfaction with repairs

93%

Target 90%



Satisfaction with grounds maintenance

83%

Target 75%

Satisfaction with communal internal cleaning services

93%

Target 75%

Why we are below some of our targets and what we are doing about it

Our Net Promoter Score has been impacted by challenges faced in service delivery across repairs and grounds maintenance. We are continuing to work on improving the services delivered to our customers.

Your community

Customers who were surveyed and were happy with the way their anti-social behaviour (ASB) cases were dealt with

90%

Target 82%

Serious ASB cases that were responded to in one working day

100%

Target 100%

Number of serious cases managed

2

Number of serious cases responded to in one working day

2





Maintenance and repairs



Repairs completed right first time

84%

Target 90%

Routine repairs responded to in time

44%

Target 90%

Emergency repairs completed within target time

98%

Target 100%

Homes with gas safety certificates

100%

Target 100%

Communal areas with a fire risk assessment

100%

Target 100%

Invested in maintaining our homes

£4,465,561

Invested in repairs to the outside of your home/building and major works: £1,810,002

Invested in managing homes and maintenance: £2,655,559

All our homes meet the Decent Homes Standard.

Why we are below some of our targets and what we are doing about it

There was an increase in the number of repairs, both new repairs and completing repairs that were previously delayed. There were also challenges sourcing materials, parts and equipment, and recruiting more construction trade colleagues. These challenges impacted our response rates on repairs.



Chorus Homes performance



Customer contact

Number of formal complaints received Stage 1

161

% Responded to in timeframe/extension as agreed with the customer

81%

Number of formal complaints received Stage 2

26

% Responded to in timeframe/extension as agreed with the customer

92%

Number of Stage 2 complaints upheld

12

Stage 2 complaints upheld

46%

Number of Housing Ombudsman requests

2

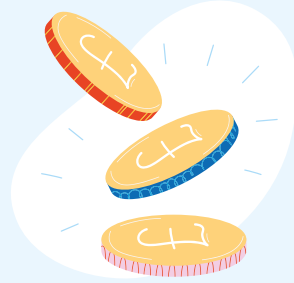


Your tenancy

Total losses from empty homes

2%

Target 2%



Current customer arrears. These are partial year figures (1 April 2021 – 21 Feb 2022) due to a change in reporting.

4%

Target 4%

The average number of days it takes to re-let an empty home from the time a tenancy is terminated through to a new tenancy starting

69 days

Target 25 days

Why we are below some of our targets and what we are doing about it

We have had a number of homes stay empty as customers moved out but we were not able to advertise the home for let. This delay impacted our average days to re-let.





Customer satisfaction

Net Promoter Score

45

Target 47

New customer satisfaction

100%

Target 85%

Satisfaction with gas servicing

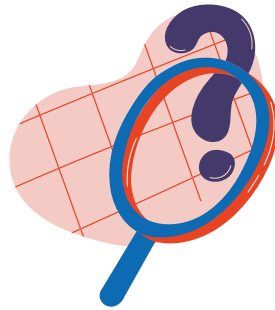
100%

Target 90%

Satisfaction with repairs

92%

Target 90%



Satisfaction with grounds maintenance

91%

Target 75%

Satisfaction with communal internal cleaning services

83%

Target 75%

Why we are below some of our targets and what we are doing about it

Our Net Promoter Score has been impacted by challenges faced in service delivery across repairs and grounds maintenance. We are continuing to work on improving the services delivered to our customers.

Your community

Customers who were surveyed and were happy with the way their anti-social behaviour (ASB) cases were dealt with

94%

Target 82%

Serious ASB cases that were responded to in one working day. These are partial year figures (July 2021 – March 2022) due to a change in reporting.

100%

Target 100%

Number of serious cases managed

43

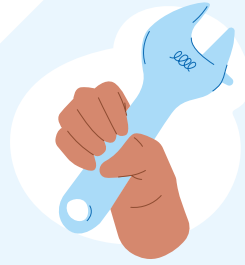
Number of serious cases responded to in one working day

43





Maintenance and repairs



Repairs completed right first time

91%

Target 90%

Routine repairs responded to in time

43%

Target 90%

Emergency repairs completed within target time

98%

Target 100%

Homes with gas safety certificates

100%

Target 100%

Communal areas with a fire risk assessment

100%

Target 100%

Invested in maintaining our homes

£10,700,063

Invested in repairs to the outside of your home/building and major works: £3,906,263

Invested in managing homes and maintenance: £6,793,800

All our homes meet the Decent Homes Standard.

Why we are below some of our targets and what we are doing about it

There was an increase in the number of repairs, both new repairs and completing repairs that were previously delayed. There were also challenges sourcing materials, parts and equipment, and recruiting more construction trade colleagues. These challenges impacted our response rates on repairs.



Derwent Living performance



Customer contact

Number of formal complaints received Stage 1

155

% Responded to in timeframe/extension as agreed with the customer

100%

Number of formal complaints received Stage 2

26

% Responded to in timeframe/extension as agreed with the customer

100%

Number of Stage 2 complaints upheld

11

Stage 2 complaints upheld

41%

Number of Housing Ombudsman requests

7

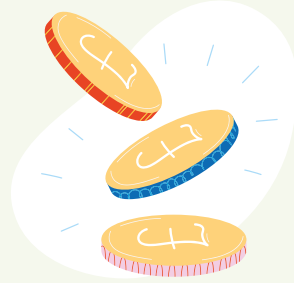


Your tenancy

Total losses from empty homes

1%

Target 2%



Current customer arrears. These are partial year figures (1 April 2021 – 21 Feb 2022) due to a change in reporting.

3%

Target 4%

The average number of days it takes to re-let an empty home from the time a tenancy is terminated through to a new tenancy starting

28 days

Target 25 days

Why we are below some of our targets and what we are doing about it

We have had a number of homes stay empty as customers moved out but we were not able to advertise the home for let. This delay impacted our average days to re-let.





Customer satisfaction

Net Promoter Score

41

Target 47

New customer satisfaction

96%

Target 85%

Satisfaction with gas servicing

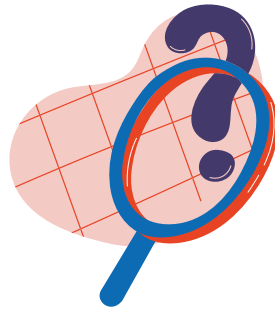
96%

Target 90%

Satisfaction with repairs

96%

Target 90%



Satisfaction with grounds maintenance

52%

Target 75%

Satisfaction with communal internal cleaning services

44%

Target 75%

Your community



Customers who were surveyed and were happy with the way their anti-social behaviour (ASB) cases were dealt with

73%

Target 82%

Serious ASB cases that were responded to in one working day. These are partial year figures (July 2021 – March 2022) due to a change in reporting.

100%

Target 100%

Number of serious cases managed

76

Number of serious cases responded to in one working day

76

Why we are below some of our targets and what we are doing about it

Our Net Promoter Score has been impacted by challenges faced in service delivery across repairs and grounds maintenance. We are continuing to work on improving the services delivered to our customers.

The satisfaction score with grounds maintenance reflects the need for greater focus in our open spaces. We have found solutions to improve efficiency, which include new machinery and improved work scheduling to enable more productive visits.

The satisfaction score for communal internal cleaning services reflects a reduced presence in the building and some regular cleaning visits that were missed. We have now recruited more colleagues to improve this.

Customer satisfaction is key to understanding how we operate well and what we can do better. Not only have we made significant changes to how we manage and resolve ASB, we are also transforming our satisfaction gathering process to make key improvements for our customers.



Maintenance and repairs



Repairs completed right first time

90%

Target 90%

Routine repairs responded to in time

63%

Target 90%

Emergency repairs completed within target time

99%

Target 100%

Homes with gas safety certificates

99.95%

Target 100%

Communal areas with a fire risk assessment

99.70%

Target 100%

Invested in maintaining our homes

£10,239,852

Invested in repairs to the outside of your home/building and major works: £4,120,652

Invested in managing homes and maintenance: £6,119,200

All our homes meet the Decent Homes Standard.

Why we are below some of our targets and what we are doing about it

There was an increase in the number of repairs, both new repairs and completing repairs that were previously delayed. There were also challenges sourcing materials, parts and equipment, and recruiting more construction trade colleagues. These challenges impacted our response rates on repairs.



Places for People Scotland highlights



Tom Norris
Managing Director — Scotland

Tom Norris, our Managing Director for Scotland, is helping customers across the country with a programme to transform our existing homes, whilst creating more homes and communities. Here, he talks through the highlights of an affordability-focused year...

Affordability

As customers look to cope with the cost-of-living crisis, we have prioritised improving affordability across all our rents following guidance from the Scottish Housing Regulator and by using the Scottish Federation of Housing Association's Affordability Tool. This tests if our rents meet the recommended affordability level of 30% of all income — including benefits.

The move has seen us take a different approach to rent setting, where we varied the increase for different households to improve affordability and fairness. This has improved our average affordability this year from 30.7% to 29.4%.

Helping people

We continue to help our customers and local communities, extending initiatives that we launched during the pandemic to ensure that they benefit people for the long-term.

The Craigmillar Hub was such a programme, established during Covid. It helped people express themselves and learn new skills — and we've now extended it to help more customers.

We have continued to grow other initiatives like our Furniture Project which aims to get unwanted furniture to customers in need. The project has been very successful and now, thanks to funding, we are establishing this as permanent offering for our customers. We have an inventory of furniture and other items to make a house a home, and a local transport option meaning that we can send items out to customers quicker than before.

Changing our name

This year we told customers that we were changing our name to Places for People Scotland to ensure our name reflects all of our communities in Scotland.

With the Places for People Scotland name, we are re-establishing and growing our presence across Scotland. We are collaborating with organisations across the country, including other housing associations, to help our customers and the communities in which they live.

Places for People Scotland performance



Customer contact

Number of formal complaints received Stage 1

569

% Stage 1 responded to within timescale

91%

Target 95%

Number of formal complaints received Stage 2

79

% Stage 2 responded to within timescale

87%

Target 95%

Stage 2 complaints upheld

45%

Why we are below some of our targets and what we are doing about it

There was an increase in the number of repairs, both new repairs and completing repairs that were previously delayed. There were also challenges sourcing materials, parts and equipment, and recruiting more construction trade colleagues. These challenges impacted our response rates on repairs.

The challenges with the repairs service and resourcing within our customer-facing teams had a knock-on effect in our ability to respond to all complaints within our published timescales. Where complaints go beyond our timescales, we contacted customers to explain the delay and agree an extension.



Your tenancy

Total losses from empty homes

2%

Target 1%

The average number of days it takes to re-let an empty home from the time a tenancy is terminated through to a new tenancy starting

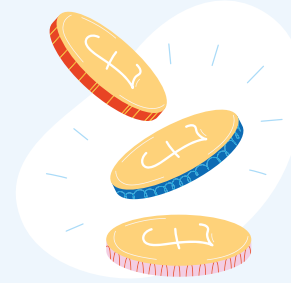
Current customer arrears

5%

Target 5%

86 days

Target 23 days



Why we are below some of our targets and what we are doing about it

We have had a number of homes stay empty as customers moved out but we were not able to advertise the home for let. This delay caused our void loss to exceed target and impacted our average days to re-let.

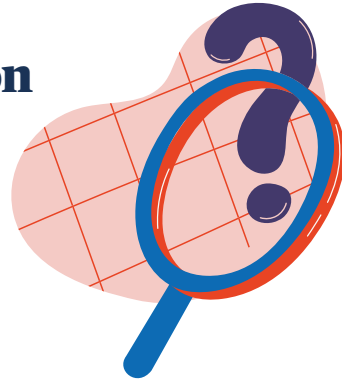


Customer satisfaction

Overall Customer Satisfaction

96%

Target 95%



Your community

Serious anti-social behaviour (ASB) cases that were responded to in one working day

100%

Target 95%

Number of ASB cases

120





Maintenance and repairs



Repairs completed right first time

96%

Target 89%

Average time for non-emergency repairs

12 days

Target 28 days

Average time for emergency repairs

10 hours

Target 24 hours

Appointments made and kept

100%

Target 92%

Homes with gas safety certificates

99.98%

Target 100%

Homes meeting Energy Efficiency Standard for Scotland (EESH)

92%

Target 100%

£s invested in maintaining our homes

£18,359,900

Invested in repairs to the outside of your home/building and major works: £8,633,000

Invested in managing homes and maintenance: £9,726,900

73% of our homes meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS).

Why we are below some of our targets and what we are doing about it

Where our homes can meet SHQS standards we are working to get upgrades arranged. There have been changes to the definitions for SHQS this year and have a plan in place to complete the outstanding work this year to meet the new legislation. We have some homes where we are not able to meet SHQS, these homes are classed as an exemption or abeyance, and these affect our performance.



Places for People Living Plus highlights



Andy Lomas
Managing Director — Communities

In a year of growth, our Managing Director for Communities, Andy Lomas, reflects on the changes Places for People has made to expand its supported housing offering across the country.

Creating more supported housing

Following the completion of Burchester Court last year, an Extra Care community in Grimsby, we handed over another new Extra Care community in Romsey. Known as Nightingale Lodge, it offers mixed tenure homes, with customers able to rent and purchase through Shared Ownership.

We are also progressing two additional communities in Hampshire; Spinnaker View in Gosport and Wooldridge View in New Milton. These are well underway and due for completion in 2023. They will provide 60 and 50 brand new one and two bedroom affordable-rent apartments respectively.

Working strategically with the Government

We have a strategic partnership with the Government's housing agency Homes England, through which we have successfully secured funding for 420 homes of supported housing over the next five years. Most of the new homes we create with this funding will be Extra Care.

Enhancing services

We formed a new partnership with the UK's most innovative alarms provider Appello. Appello runs its alarms on a digital system, giving our customers a much better service, and quicker response times should they be in distress.



Helping people who are homeless

We helped create six new homes for people who are homeless at Jubilee Place in Wisbech, Cambridgeshire, working in partnership with Fenland District Council, charities Allia, The Ferry Project, and New Meaning Foundation — a local social enterprise which employs people who have previously been homeless, to create homes using Modern Methods of Construction (MMC).

We are now onsite with the new homes following a successful application to the Government's Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP) — a £433m programme which aims to deliver up to 6,000 units of supported move-on accommodation for rough sleepers over the course of the current parliament.

We also established a new service for young people who are homeless at Trafford Street in Preston, creating nine homes for those aged 16–25. We worked on the project with Preston City Council, creating the homes within two terraced properties — all of which are now occupied.

Supported homes in the community

In the past year, we have invested in our supported housing offering, finding ways to help more people, who are vulnerable, live independently outside of institutional care.

This has been achieved thanks to a robust strategy of buying suitable homes and capital investment of £7.6m which we've spent on 39 services — including Salford Foyer where accommodation has been expanded for young single homeless people with support needs, and young single mothers.

We've also created 82 other homes for single people, families, ex-offenders and the Gypsy and Traveller community — increasing the outcomes and opportunities for these individuals.

Places for People Living Plus performance



Customer contact

Number of formal complaints received Stage 1

34

% Responded to in timeframe/extension as agreed with the customer

97%

Number of formal complaints received Stage 2

2

% Responded to in timeframe/extension as agreed with the customer

50%

Stage 2 complaints upheld

100%



Your tenancy

Total losses from empty homes

3%

Target 2%

The average number of days it takes to re-let an operational void from tenancy termination to new tenancy commencement – Retirement living

The average number of days it takes to re-let an operational void from tenancy termination to new tenancy commencement – Supported housing

Current customer arrears

2%

Target 4%

43 days

Target 28 days

20 days

Target 11 days



Why we are below some of our targets and what we are doing about it

We have had a number of homes stay empty as customers moved out but we were not able to advertise the home for let. This delay caused our void loss to exceed target and impacted our average days to re-let.



Customer satisfaction

Net Promoter Score

49

Target 47

New customer satisfaction

88%

Target 85%

Satisfaction with gas servicing

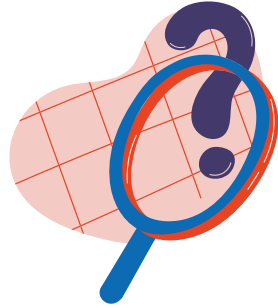
99%

Target 90%

Satisfaction with repairs

95%

Target 90%



Satisfaction with grounds maintenance

84%

Target 75%

Satisfaction with communal internal cleaning services

94%

Target 75%

Your community

Customers who were surveyed and were happy with the way their anti-social behaviour (ASB) cases were dealt with

100%

Target 82%

Serious ASB cases that were responded to in one working day

100%

Target 100%

Number of serious cases managed

11

Number of serious cases responded to in one working day

11





Maintenance and repairs



Repairs completed right first time

91%

Target 90%

Routine repairs responded to in time

47%

Target 90%

Emergency repairs completed within target time

98%

Target 100%

Homes with gas safety certificates

99.92%

Target 100%

Communal areas with a fire risk assessment

99%

Target 100%

£s invested in maintaining our homes

£9,042,742

Invested in repairs to the outside of your home/building and major works: £5,359,888

Invested in managing homes and maintenance: £3,682,854

All our homes meet the Decent Homes Standard.

Why we are below some of our targets and what we are doing about it

There was an increase in the number of repairs, both new repairs and completing repairs that were previously delayed. There were also challenges sourcing materials, parts and equipment, and recruiting more construction trade colleagues. These challenges impacted our response rates on repairs.





Customer voice



Customer voice



We put people first and are passionate about involving our customers at every opportunity. We actively listen, carry out regular surveys and give you the opportunity to have your say, so that we can learn and do more. This year, we have created new ways for our customers to get involved in the key issues that matter. We have given our customers more opportunities to have their say on our services, policies and processes.



We set up a Service Improvement Group which meets monthly to consider changes we can make to improve services for our customers; we updated our website with new information to support customers; we changed our complaints procedure to be in line with the Housing Ombudsman Service Code and Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, and we are now asking our new customers what they think as they go through the experience of finding a new home with us and moving in.

Each change has helped improve customer experiences; here are some of the other initiatives we have introduced and enhanced over the past 12 months.



National Customer Group

We established our National Customer Group (NCG) in 2020, bringing together a group of diverse people, working in harmony to represent the lives of all customers wherever and wherever they may be.

The National Customer Group has a strategic governance overview and influence on critical issues, policies and strategic priorities affecting all our customers.

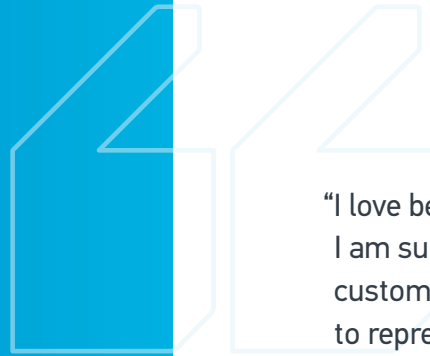
The Group represents our customers' voices, working with local involvement groups, such as scrutiny teams and ensuring there is a two-way communication between the Places for People Board and customers.

The Group will help shape and improve services, while sharing best practice.

Have your say

Having established the NCG in 2020, this year we have formalised the organisation, putting systems in place that will see the Group work more closely with the Places for People Group Board.

Janet Boston has been elected as the first Chair. Here, she tells us why she wants more customers to join the NCG, and why there's a role for everyone – no matter their experience or time constraints.



“I love being a part of the NCG; I am surrounded by likeminded customers working together to represent Places for People communities in regions all over the country. We are over a year into our journey and already making a positive change to the lives of those living in Places for People homes.

“Places for People is our housing provider, and we are lucky that they are engaged, with a Board of Directors who genuinely want to hear what we as customers have to say.

“We are a year old now, and just getting started as we further engage the Board, telling them what we want as customers. But we can achieve even more if more passionate, ambitious people get involved.

“Every single customer is welcome to join the National Customer Group; it doesn't matter what experience you have or haven't got, everyone has a skill set that can be applied to make our group even better. Trust me, I've been a teacher, worked on the railways and been a local councilor, and I always find there's something from my past experience that helps me in this role!



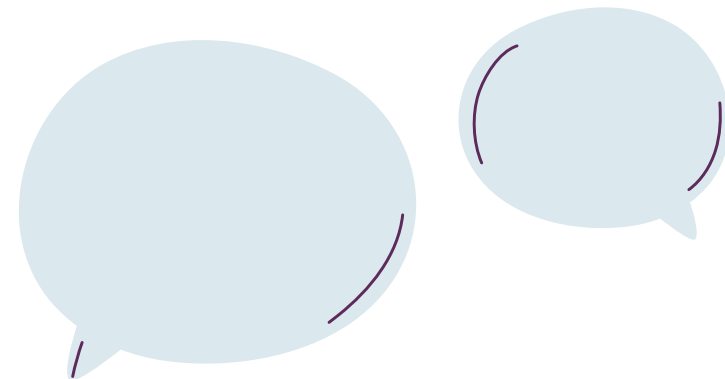


“And whether you’ve plenty of time to give, or you’re a busy parent, grandparent or worker who wants to contribute around a busy life — that’s fine too as you can either join in all, or some of our meetings, or you can do something from a distance, such as joining our reading group, meaning you can read and feedback on Places for People policies.

“The most rewarding part of all this is seeing our recommendations become a reality. In one short year, we have already met with the Places for People Board to directly tell them what we want to see expanded and improved; there aren’t too many organisations who’d give you the chance to sit and tell the Chief Executive what you think!

“Conversations so far have led to changes being made to the Places for People Customer Involvement Policy, and we have seen the Tenant Participation Strategy now expanded to cover the whole country, having previously only been available in Scotland. We’re now also starting to encourage change on the ground, and our Group will soon be heading out across the country to visit communities and meet other customers. We would love to meet with you on those visits and you can find out more about our planned trips by emailing getinvolved@placesforpeople.co.uk

“That’s the great thing about this role, we get to go out and meet other customers, likeminded people who, like us, want to continue to live in great places — and to ensure that their voice is heard as those places are enhanced. I volunteer out of passion and love for my own community, and for Places for People communities across the country. There’s no better reward than having our voices heard and seeing a positive outcome for customers. I’d encourage anyone interested to join us on this journey.”



National Customer Group member:

“I’m delighted that I, along with other members of the National Customer Group have been involved in the design and content of this year’s Customer Annual Report. Places for People is really involving us at every opportunity to understand what we as customers need, but also to balance the business requirements.”



Other customer groups

There are so many ways you can get involved with Places for People and, in addition to our National Customer Group we also have:

- Local scrutiny groups
- National Building Safety Group
- Resident associations
- Youth Voice Group
- Independent Complaints Panel
- And many more...

Volunteering in this way is a fantastic opportunity for anyone who wants to have their voice heard. It’s a chance to broaden your horizons, meeting other customers from across the country.

For more information on how to get involved, please visit placesforpeople.co.uk/customervoice

Making a difference



Making a difference

We make a positive difference in our communities, improving the lives of our customers by investing in local groups and initiatives.

This past year, we have expanded the reach of our social value work with programmes that help more people. This change came after we consulted 10,000 customers to find out what was most needed in their local community.



The result is a range of accessible projects throughout the country, providing support across a variety of areas such as energy and tenancy support, a rent relief fund and our small grants fund. Here we look at more of them in detail.



The Community Investment Fund

The Community Investment Fund has now supported 19 projects which cover a mix of local and national activities across themes, including health and wellbeing, digital inclusion, employment and training, and sustaining tenancies. This year, 10 national projects were made available to all our customers which were the Fund's key focus.

The Hardship Fund

The Hardship Fund offers customers the support they need, as we continue to battle the growing cost-of-living crisis.

To date, the Fund has helped 92 customers who have received support such as energy or shopping vouchers. One customer who received support said that help from the Fund was “non-judgemental, kind, empathic and definitely supportive.”

The Homelessness Prevention Fund

Supported by our Community Investment Fund, this initiative offers customers at risk of eviction essential financial support that will in turn help them sustain their tenancies.

The programme has been positively received, with one customer recently stating that the Fund's support had changed their life and given them a fresh start after they had been struggling to keep their head above water. We are growing our resources for the Fund this year to help more customers through the current cost-of-living crisis.

Enhancing skills

We help get people into work and have increased our offering in this area this year with a nationwide initiative that has seen 1,500 people supported into work, education or training.

We have done this through initiatives such as offering online courses through Places Academy, and by working with the Positive Transformation Group to offer over 40 free Level 2 qualifications to customers — something that is supported by the Government, helping customers gain accredited qualifications to help them into employment.

Sustaining tenancies

We are committed to supporting our customers to help resolve issues and sustain their tenancies during the cost-of-living crisis, with a number of initiatives to help customers stay in their homes.

Most recently we have funded a project offering mediation training for colleagues and customers, helping to increase our capacity in this area and support more people in our communities.

Digital Empowerment Project

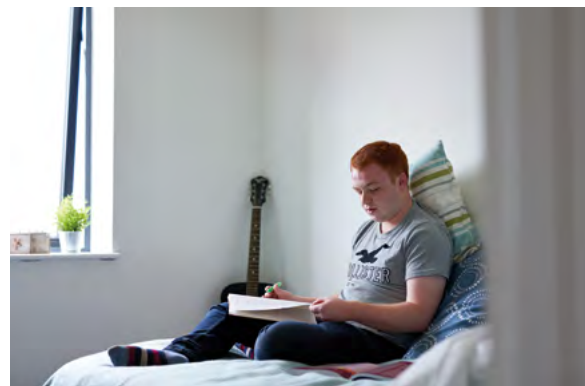
The Digital Empowerment Project has supported 281 customers this year, with a range of universal services including digital access points which allow customers and local people to access the internet for free. This created a lifeline during the pandemic as people strived to stay connected.

For customers who need help to use digital and online technology, we rolled out in person digital skills training sessions in our over 55s and supported housing communities, and distributed 98 pieces of equipment to those in need — including tablets and basic smart phones.

Pilot furniture initiative

In Scotland, we launched our pilot furniture initiative, donating furniture from our development show homes, and transporting it to customers. Our team created an inventory of available furniture, aligned with the customers who needed support.

The programme has already made a difference with 50 large furniture items and soft furnishings distributed. Customers to benefit include an individual who had lost her sofa after a fire, a family with four young children who were gifted a table and chairs, and a customer who was moving from a homeless shelter into their first home and was given a starter pack of a bed, sofa, cushions, bedding, coffee table, TV unit, bedside tables and more to settle them into their new home.



Doorstep sports

Continuing to listen to our customers, we consulted with 200 people across seven communities in Bristol, Hounslow, Nottingham, Derby, Haringey, Sheffield and Newcastle ahead of the launch of a new initiative with Street Games.

The resulting project will deliver doorstep sports in neighbourhoods across England, addressing local needs of the people living in our communities, and will launch in Autumn 2022.



Customer decision making

Our customers play a vital role in shaping our social value activities. In March and April 2021, we carried out online and face-to-face surveys with our customers to capture demographic information and benchmark against the Government's National Wellbeing Dashboard.

This research, which involved responses from 10,000 customers, has helped us to identify priorities for our Community Investment Fund. We have also launched a dedicated group for our customers to discuss and influence our social value activities.

“I was feeling stuck and alone, panicking about what I was going to do to feed my family. The voucher we received from the National Hardship Fund literally saved us. It was such a big help, gave me relief and reduced the feeling I was alone with no help or support.”



In the past year, all of these activities have seen £131.5m generated in social value and an additional £150m social value has been achieved by our leisure centres. A total of £945,000 of funding was given to projects that support customers and communities. We also helped 8,500 people who were homeless or at risk of being homeless, supported 1,200 people to get online or use the internet, and helped 1,500 people into education, employment and training. Our efforts also generated 17,000 opportunities for young people.

Our community projects



Our community projects

We run projects in communities across the country – each of them aims to make a positive difference to the lives of our customers and their local environment. Here, we run through some of them.



National initiatives

As you will have read earlier in this report, we have extended our Community Investment Fund to provide customers with a more accessible range of opportunities to help them improve their lives and the wellbeing of their local community. Other national initiatives which have made an impact this year include:



National Befriending Service

Our National Befriending Service is run by Shape Linc Line and provides weekly telephone calls to customers — be it for a friendly chat, or for finding support on a range of practical or wellbeing issues if and when advice is needed.

Digital inclusion

As we continue to expand on our successful Digital Empowerment Project, through which we have built public digital access points, digital support, and courses for our affordable housing customers, we have also launched an initiative to recruit and train volunteer digital champions to support customers across the country.

National Furniture and White Goods Project

Our National Furniture and White Goods Project helps customers who are struggling to afford furniture and white goods. This project has supported many customers with the increased cost-of-living crisis.

Long Covid support

We helped customers in areas close to our Places Leisure centres by offering them free support for long Covid.

We used government data to find areas across the country with the greatest need for such a service and are now delivering health programmes in multiple locations including Sheffield, Rotherham, Milton Keynes and Norwich. The support will be offered in person within our centres, as well as phone or online support.

Promoting active lifestyles

We agreed a partnership with Street Games, a national charity that use sport to engage young people, reduce anti-social behaviour, improve health and raise aspirations.

The two-year partnership will deliver a 'Doorstep Sport' programme in 13 key communities with the aim of recruiting 650 young people, volunteers and family members to take part in positive activities delivered by local community-led sports organisations. This year, the charity will be working in Sheffield, London, Bristol, Newcastle, Derby and Nottingham.

Employability support

We offer our customers access to a Skills and Employability Coordinator — offering one-to-one advice and support to help customers access training, work, work experience or volunteering. We have many links with training providers and employers.

Swimming lessons

Our Places Leisure centres offer free swimming lessons for children from low-income families in communities including Sheffield, Rotherham and Wolverhampton. So far, the project has helped 140 children to access swimming sessions where they would not otherwise be available.

Supporting young women

We are delivering the Big Sister project in partnership with Places Leisure, Women in Sport and Hey Girls — with funding from The Department of Culture, Media and Sport.

This significant project helps teenage girls lead healthy, happy and active lives, improving their wellbeing and establishing a supportive network of 'Big Sisters'. It is being delivered in areas including Norwich, Derby, Sheffield and Rotherham.

Wellbeing Project

We offer our customers access to a Wellbeing Coordinator — offering help, practical advice and access to activities or programmes to meet individual needs. This can include social or sports activities, or activities and projects to help our customers to manage mental health and wellbeing.

“Just having the right information makes me feel better. You listen, and have let me make my own mind up on what is right for me.”

Quote from Wellbeing Project participant



For more information on our national initiatives, please visit placesforpeople.co.uk/communityprojects or email socialvalue@placesforpeople.co.uk

Local projects

Here are some of the grass roots projects we have delivered across Places for People communities this past year.

Bristol

We launched projects this year to prevent homelessness or support those who are already homeless. In the South West, we funded Bristol Outreach Services for the Homeless which will use funding to furnish a new drop-in centre and carry out essential community outreach activities.

Chorley

We manage 2,400 homes in Chorley, so the work of the Chorley Youth Zone is a key part of our local Community Investment Fund Strategy. The organisation supports 1,000 children each year, and some young people who live with a range of social and financial challenges.

“The Chorley Youth Zone is a safe place I can go to escape from my problems. It’s a great relief from stress and worries and I’m reassured that there are youth workers who can help me if I need it – above all else, I can just be myself.”

Amy, Chorley Youth Zone member



East Sussex

We helped our customers learn basic digital skills that would help them get back into work. In partnership with We Are Digital and the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP), we helped provide tech kit, connectivity and learning sessions to people for whom this is a barrier to employment or training.

The project is for people of all ages, living in East Sussex, Essex, Kent, Medway, Southend and Thurrock if they are unemployed, or have been made redundant due to Covid-19.



Edinburgh

The Craigmillar Community Hub in Edinburgh was set up by Places for People Scotland. It offers a range of facilities and services for the local community, including the Hays Community Pantry. Supporting more than 130 households every week, the pantry offers customers access to healthy, affordable food, as well as giving the community a place to come together.

In December, the Hays Community Pantry was selected by Morrisons in Portobello to be the beneficiary of its 'Local Community Giving Tree' festive campaign, while a 'Christmas Dinner Giveaway' also took place in December with 190 meals given out to customers.

Edinburgh is also home to the Edinburgh Tool Library, which following an initiative that helps charities and social enterprises establish themselves in local communities, has now opened a new space at Urban Eden in the city.

Approximately 100 power tools including drills and grinders were donated to the centre, along with 12 battery chargers and around 30 batteries. This has helped the Edinburgh Tool Library to significantly upgrade their inventory and pass the benefits on to local people.

Thanks to support from the Travis Perkins Community Legacy Fund, arts charity Craigmillar Now organised a volunteers weekend in December, with Edinburgh University students giving an external makeover to the 19th-century church the group occupies. The charity was also able to transform an outdoor shed into a studio space supported by local artist Michael Inmand who will volunteer with Craigmillar Now for one year as an 'artist in residence' in the garden.

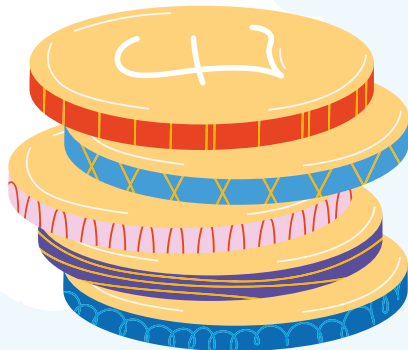


Hounslow

Our colleagues have been working to deliver a range of opportunities within The Meadows in Hounslow, offering customers advice on things like skills for work, saving money on bills, lowering food costs, increasing healthy eating and improving confidence and wellbeing.

Lancashire

Through the Age of Opportunity programme, we are giving customers practical support on a range of issues — including finances and wellbeing, CV development and job seeking, and finding volunteering roles that help build customers' confidence by helping others.



Leeds

Our newest digital skills club is in an over 55s community launched this year, giving local people in Leeds a chance to expand their online skills. Customers were given hardware from both Your Back Yard Leeds (a social enterprise) and our Digital Empowerment Project — ensuring they were able to stay online after their sessions ended.

Manchester

Working with Manchester-based Smart Works, we are helping women into work by providing coaching and clothing for interviews. Each attendee receives one-to-one interview coaching with an experienced HR professional and a personalised styling session to select an outfit for their job interview which they can keep free of charge.

Norwich

Still On The Go is a project for customers aged over 55 in Norfolk, giving them the chance to take part in free exercise sessions with people of a similar age. They are designed to be fun while at the same time, help with strength, fitness and weight loss. The project is currently working with 23 people by supporting them to get more active.

As the cost-of-living crisis continues to impact our communities, more than 1,000 customers in Norwich also benefitted from free energy advice this year. The initiative helped them to save energy and keep their bills as low as possible.



Nottingham

Like many people across the country, we celebrated the Queen's Platinum Jubilee this year, including at Wollaton Play Space Park in Nottingham. Places for People suppliers, including Tomlinsons were generous in donating items that allowed us to furnish the space, giving customers a fantastic afternoon of fun.

Preston

We recently completed work on the Art and Rehabilitation Centre (ARC) building at the Mill Bank Wellbeing Centre, renovating an external room that will be used to deliver services in partnership with external charities — things like art therapy, parenting classes, health and wellbeing workshops, training and employment support.

Sheffield

The Manor Youth Club is a youth project in Sheffield, initially opening in 2019 with the aim of engaging young people away from the streets with a range of activities designed to support their education and social development. Now, thanks to support from Places for People, the Travis Perkins Legacy Fund, and the charity MyLife — an urban arts and media company that works with young people — the centre has reopened following works to revitalise the space.

Wellingborough

We extended our support of Service 6 — a Northamptonshire-based charity committed to changing lives and creating futures for disadvantaged children, young people and their families. Through the Community Investment Fund we are supporting two youth clubs for children aged from 5 to 16 years old.



For more information about the projects in your area, please visit placesforpeople.co.uk/communityprojects or email socialvalue@placesforpeople.co.uk



If you need information about your home, such as how to report a repair, money advice or wellbeing support — please get in touch with us and we will help you. Visit our website

www.placesforpeople.co.uk

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