

Thrive Homes



Annual Report for Tenants

2022-23



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Contact us to request **a printed copy of this report!**

Welcome

I'm pleased to introduce this year's annual report, which has been influenced by Thrive Customer Voice members for the second year. This is especially important, as it makes sure that you're kept informed about things that matter to you.

Members told us they are most interested in hearing about what we are doing to improve our properties and to make them more energy efficient. It's been a challenge dealing with continued rising costs and pressures to meet new regulations, but it's our purpose to provide safe, well-maintained, and affordable homes.

Doing what we said we would, I'm pleased to share we kept our promise to spend £5.1m on improvements (such as windows, kitchens etc) last year. We also secured over £1.5million in funding to make our homes easier to heat with less energy (see page 6).

A 40% increase in HomePlan® visits has been a big part of this success, helping us to keep a close eye on the condition of our homes so we can carefully plan and work out the costs for improvements.

Thrive Customer Voice members also showed an interest in our customer satisfaction performance.

In April 2023, the new Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) began. This is a set of questions our regulator requires us to ask you about things like our repairs service, complaints process, or how we're listening to your views.



Elspeth Mackenzie
Chief Executive

Mindful of our responsibilities as a professional landlord, we introduced these questions early in July 2022.

In doing so, we already know we need to pay more attention to listening to your views and acting on them, by doing what we say we will and making it easier to deal with us. We've made a start on this, and you can read more on page 21.

I hope you find this report valuable. Please [contact us](#) if you have any questions.

**Have a say
your way!**

Become a Thrive Customer
Voice member at:

**[thrivehomes.org.uk](https://thrivehomes.org.uk/getinvolved)
/getinvolved**

Your Home

HomePlan® helps us identify improvements and repairs needed to keep your home safe, energy efficient and well maintained.



Knowing how important this is to you, we're especially pleased to share that 68% of our homes have now had a visit.

With less than two repairs identified at a second visit (compared to five or six at the first), **HomePlan®** helps us deal with issues early on. Last year we dealt with 22 cases of damp and mould using our improved process.

The **HomePlan®** approach helps us carry out repairs more quickly and improves your experience, whilst helping us operate more efficiently.

Things can only get better as we head towards March 2024, when all Thrive rented properties will have had a **HomePlan®** visit.

Jo Barrett

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OPERATIONS

"Many thanks for my HomePlan Visit where you confirmed I should be given a new kitchen and bathroom, both of which were very expertly installed by the hard working and highly skilled craftsmen. Not only have my wonderful new kitchen and bathroom made the flat much brighter, they have also made my whole life much brighter!"

Thrive Customer

1,392
in-person visits
(40% more than last year)

68%
of homes have had a visit

Repairs detected early through **HomePlan®**

2020-21
700

2021-22
626

2022-23
1,101

Investing in existing homes

Even though costs for materials and labour went up, it didn't stop us doing what we said we would to improve our homes.

Our **HomePlan**[®] visits and Stock Condition Surveys help us identify where improvements are needed, so we can plan and budget works carefully.

Number of improvements made

	2022/23	2021/22
Bathrooms	67	38
Boilers & heating systems	266	338
Kitchens	91	56
Roofs	165	87
Windows	161	318
Doors	111	248
Fire doors	117	232
Electrical works	115	84
Fire safety works	30	13
Door entry and lift works	5	58
Flooring	13	7
Environmental works	3	1
Major aids & adaptations	54	43
Works to building walls	8	18
Structural works	1	0
External wall insulation	24	0

Our replacement programmes are based on long-term plans, so each year the type and number of things we replace changes.

Find out more at
thrivehomes.org.uk/plannedworks

Spend on
improving
our homes

£5.1m
2022-23

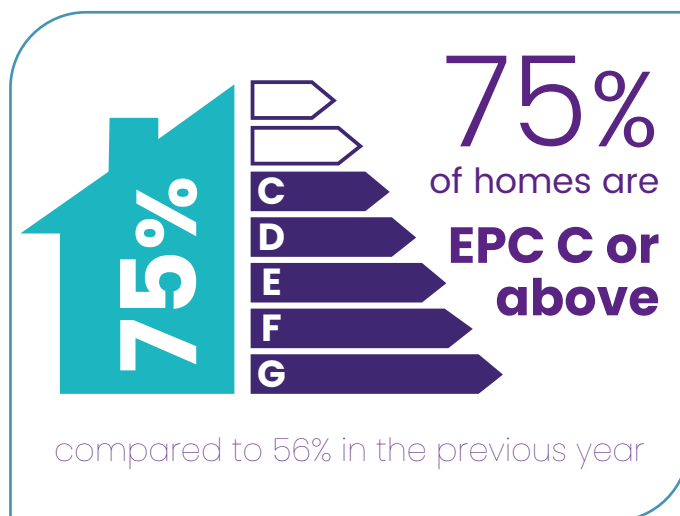


£4.3m
2021-22

Warm and efficient homes

Heating homes is responsible for a third of all carbon emissions in the UK, so managing energy at home is essential.

Last year we insulated **250** homes and hundreds of customers read our advice on how to keep their home warm by using less energy.



Together with our partners, we have secured over £1.5million in funding to improve the energy efficiency of our homes.

Instead of installing items like electric car charging points, our focus remains on upgrades to things like insulation and windows. That way, all our customers can benefit - whether they live in a new build or not.

Did you struggle to heat your home last year?

You may need more insulation! Tell us at thrivehomes.org.uk/insulation-upgrade



81

homes started to
receive external wall
insulation

121

homes will
receive external
wall insulation

100%

of our homes
will meet the
Government's
energy efficiency
target by 2030



16,825 repairs completed



89% satisfaction with the repairs service¹



81.55% repairs completed right first time



99% emergency repairs completed on time



28 days to complete a repair on average



71% satisfied with the length of time to complete a repair

¹ Compared to 79.8% when compared to other social landlords that use IFF, our market research company.

Good working order

Our repairs service

We saw an increase in repair requests, which meant our average appointment wait times increased by six days whilst we prioritised emergency and urgent repairs first.

To help this, we grew our repairs team meaning our engineers were able to complete 22% more repairs compared to the previous year.

We have now appointed a new support contractor and an engineer dedicated to dealing with damp and mould. Together with **HomePlan**[®], we hope these steps will help reduce wait times by picking up issues early on and in one visit.





Listening and acting on your views...

Thrive Customer Voice members said...	We...
<p>“Better inform customers about repair appointments.”</p>	<p>re-trained colleagues to ensure you receive all the information needed about your repair.</p>
	<p>improved the communications you receive when booking a repair.</p>
	<p>reminded our colleagues and contractors to let you know when they are on their way.</p>
<p>“Share any next steps following a repair visit.”</p>	<p>will make sure you know when we’ll return to carry out further works before we leave your home.</p>
<p>“Provide customers with clear and accessible information about the repairs service.”</p>	<p>have updated the homepage of our website so you can easily find information about our repairs service.</p>
	<p>have reminded customers of the tools on our website that can be used to translate and read content aloud.</p>

Customer experience

At a time when there has been an overall decrease in satisfaction for housing providers (mainly due to cost of living and rent increases), Thrive’s customers were more satisfied compared to those with other landlords.

	Thrive	Other landlords ²
2022-23	69.8%	67.5%
2021-22	71.4%	74.98%
2020-21	74.92%	80.96%

73% felt they were kept informed about things that matter to them

75% felt they were treated with respect

Areas for focus

73% said Thrive is easy to deal with

62.9% of customers trust us to do what we say we will do

57% of customers felt we listened and acted on their views

Listening to your feedback, we’ve introduced a new way for you to have a say on our services, re-trained our colleagues and introduced new processes to make sure we stick to our promises.

[READ MORE >](#)

We meet the Regulator for Social Housing’s Consumer Standards!

Independent agency, Altair, reviewed our self-assessment to make sure we’re delivering on the requirements that we must meet for our customers.

We are already preparing for our regulator’s new consumer standards and will share any changes with customers and in next year’s report.

The cost of our services during 2022-23

The cost-of-living crisis has affected both individuals and businesses. We regularly review our contracts to make sure we're getting the best value for you. These are some of the increases we experienced last year:

	2022-23	2021-22	% increase
 A new bathroom suite	£3,210	£2,500	33.6%
 A replacement kitchen	£5,525	£5,012	9.7%
 Communal gas*	£211	£53	119.6%
 Communal electricity*	£2,200	£600	114.2%

Some of these rises increased service charge amounts for 2023-24. Ensuring a fair deal for customers, **we did not increase our administration charge for handling services this year** and our process makes sure customers only pay for services received.

A fair deal

The **Thrive Deal** clearly sets out our service offer. This helps us make sure all our homes are well-maintained.

Anything required above our service standards – such as communal tree removal – comes at a cost, so we have to be careful with our decision making.

We constantly look ahead to plan any works or services required and will let you know if this impacts you.



*Costs shown are per household per year. This is an example based on typical use only, actual charges vary depending on usage.



What we spent last year

The average rent for a Thrive property last year was around **£119.26** per week. Although our costs increased, we continued to provide the service we commit to in the **Thrive Deal**.



Repairs

£5.1m



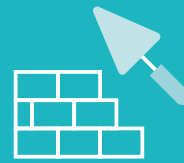
Making homes safe

£1.6m



Investing in existing homes

£3.8m



Building New Homes

£6.1m



Energy Efficiency upgrades

£1.2m

Research suggests falling behind on rent is less likely when a direct debit is set up. This helps customers stay in their homes by keeping to their tenancy. We're pleased to have helped 9.5% more customers set one up last year.

We continue to work with Citizens Advice Service to provide money advice to our customers.

Last year we referred 226 customers compared to 130 the previous year.

Rent is our biggest source of income, and we always reinvest our profits into improving our existing properties and building more homes. It costs us to recover rent arrears from customers, so thank you to 64% customers who paid on time!

Want more detail?

Read our full Annual Financial Accounts
HERE >

Around your home

We welcomed new members to our Estates & Facilities team to keep the areas around your home safe and well maintained.

To keep you informed, we placed monthly updates on our website and in newsletters about the communal cleaning and grounds maintenance services.

Last year 67.3% of survey responders voted to keep the existing cleaning service for another 12 months, to avoid a rise in costs. The contractor employed a new set of cleaners and we're pleased to have seen an improvement.

A fair deal for you

In addition to our **Communal Standards** (outlining what the service provides to you), we also:

- hold regular contract meetings
- carry out site inspections
- review and respond to your feedback
- rearrange missed visits or claim refunds
- provide a tool to view schedules and give feedback

In 2024, we will be working with Thrive Customer Voice members to support the renewal of the cleaning contract.

148

gave feedback on cleaning and grounds **maintenance**

78

issues resolved without becoming an official **complaint**

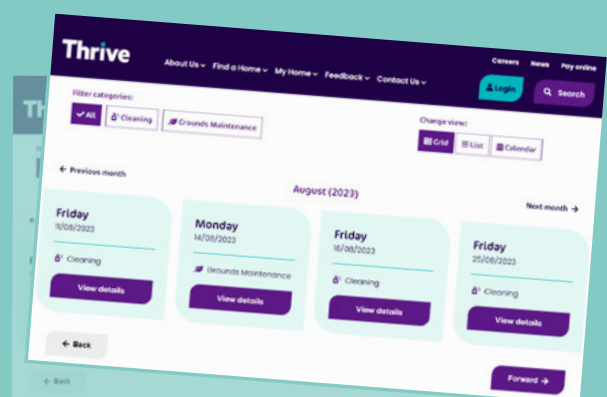
54%

feel we keep communal areas clean and well **maintained**

Stay in the know!

View your cleaning and grounds maintenance schedules and read safety information about your building online.

thrivehomes.org.uk/my-home-info



Thrive Customer Voice has made a real difference!

2,926

members

Including 140 members without online access.

698

members took part in activities last year

60%

average readership of membership updates

Members influenced:

- topics included in our Annual Report for Tenants
- the use of more animation and video content to promote safety messaging
- the introduction of evening and weekend appointments for gas servicing (if needed)
- holding colleague refresher training on appointment arrangements and follow-up works.

Following a member’s suggestion to promote our website’s helpful tools for translation, reading aloud and other assistance, we saw a 32% increase in use!

“It’s amazing how one piece of feedback can make such a big impact. Thrive acted quickly, and this is really helping our diverse community.”

Ms. Patel
Thrive Customer Voice member



Hear about the successes of Thrive Customer Voice from Anne Bijum, Assistant Director Customer

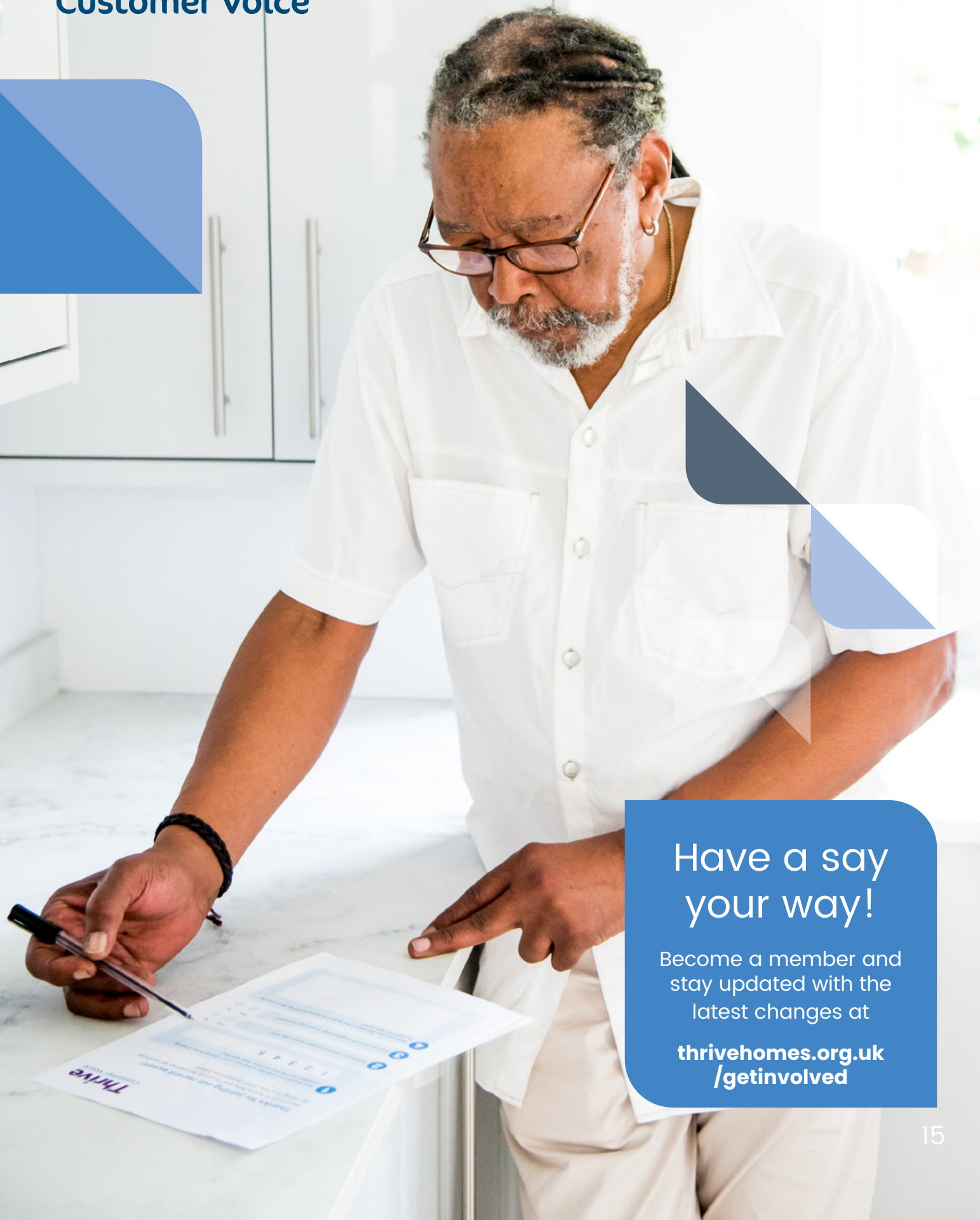


“The way Thrive is going about customer engagement now is much better, it will benefit customers.”

Ms Dunham
Thrive Customer Voice member

Thrive

Customer Voice



Have a say
your way!

Become a member and
stay updated with the
latest changes at

[thrivehomes.org.uk
/getinvolved](https://thrivehomes.org.uk/getinvolved)



99.92%

homes had a valid gas certificate³



100%

fire risk assessments completed in communal areas

flat blocks have had a fire risk assessment carried out

100%



100%

of fire safety equipment serviced within target, along with 100% remedial actions completed within target

Keeping you safe

Completed electrical tests

97.83%

homes



100%

communal areas

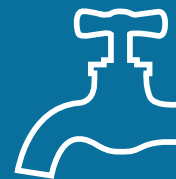


77%

felt they have a safe and secure home⁴

100 percent

of recommended fire safety actions and works completed and on track with target



100%

water hygiene checks (communal)

100%
asbestos
checks
(communal)



99.8%
homes meet the
**Decent Homes
Standard**

619
fire doors
replaced

100% lifts in
working
order

lost when customers
were not at home
for **safety checks**
£48k



3765

heat, smoke and
carbon monoxide
alarms **checked**

98.88%
fire doors
checked³

For your safety,
we cleared 14
bin stores
of fly-tipping or overflowing
rubbish last year. This cost
around £8,000, one of the
reasons for rising service
charges.

If you spot an issue in your bin store,
please **contact us** as soon
as possible!

³At the end of March 2023, three properties did not have a valid gas safety certificate and 1.2% of fire doors were pending a safety inspection. On occasions where customers will not let us into their homes for gas, electrical and other safety checks, we take legal action to gain access in accordance with the tenancy agreement.

⁴Compared to 77.4% when compared to other social landlords that use IFF, our market research company.

Our safety approach

We are committed to ensuring customers can feel and be safe in their homes, so we've published **our approach to building safety** on our website.

Doing what we said we would, we kept customers up to date with the latest safety information in our newsletters and provided a number of opportunities to meet with our safety team.

Knowing the latest safety advice could save your life, we partnered with Buckingham Fire and Rescue Service to develop some of our communications.



“Thrive’s communications about fire safety in the home strongly reflects their commitment to resident safety. It follows the national best practice guidance and they have an effective safety team available to answer any questions or concerns.”

Jonathan James
Primary Authority Manager
Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes
Fire Authority



Thrive Customer Voice members suggested using film and animation in safety messaging, so we developed a video about fire door checks which resulted in a 5% increase of views.



Anti-social behaviour (ASB)

We are committed to creating quality homes where people enjoy living.

Each ASB case presents its own complexities, and we have limited powers without our partners including the local authority and police.

In January 2023, the Housing Ombudsman released a report on managing noise complaints. We are working with Thrive Customer Voice members to review this guidance and our existing policy to make sure we're providing a fair deal.

Stay tuned at:
thrivehomes.org.uk/getinvolved

Help us to help you!

- learn more about the way we handle **ASB**
- download 'Dear Neighbour' cards to let residents know about their **behaviour**
- complete diary sheets to help us gather **evidence**

HEAD TO:
thrivehomes.org.uk/asb

69 open cases

worked on each month

8 new cases

opened each month on average

185 average days

to resolve a case

57.1% satisfied

with our approach to handling ASB⁵

95 closed cases

during 2022-23



⁵In comparison to 40.2% when compared to other social landlords that use IFF, our market research company. This information is based on customers who have had an ASB case.

Complaints

78

issues resolved
before becoming a
formal complaint

129

complaints upheld
out of 334 complaints
received

89%

complaints handled
within timescale
(including extensions)

80%

complaints resolved
at stage 1 of our complaints
process

14

average working days
to reply to a stage 1 complaint
(including extensions)

25

average working days
to reply to a stage 2 complaint
(including extensions)

3

cases referred
to the Housing Ombudsman, resulting
in three service failure determinations

34%

satisfied
with our complaint handling

"I decided to withdraw my complaint. Once you contacted me you dealt with the complaint swiftly and very professionally. Thank you."

Thrive Customer

Listening, learning and improving

We make service improvements using findings from your complaints and best practice guidance. Last year we:

- ✓ Reviewed our anti-social behaviour policy
- ✓ Enhanced our process for dealing with damp and mould
- ✓ Aligned our compensation policy with the Housing Ombudsman to ensure fairness

And it doesn't stop there! We'll be working with Thrive Customer Voice members to make even more positive change, including to improve complaints handling satisfaction. Stay tuned at

thrivehomes.org.uk/getinvolved



The Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code

Our complaints process has been audited by an independent agency and assessed as 'substantial assurance' – which means we fully meet the code.

See how we meet the code in our self-assessment

[HERE >](#)

Compliments



Last year customers sang our praises **136 times**.

Most of our compliments were about:

- **Quality of work for repairs**
- **The way our colleagues behaved towards you**
- **Thanking us for doing what we said we were going to do**

Your feedback helps us understand what's important to you so we can continue delivering a fair deal.

“The customer service agent who took my request was very pleasant, knowledgeable and extremely professional. The plumber who came from Thrive was very pleasant. I was not at home at the time but he called and told me he was on the job. He promised that when I got home the outdoor drain would be cleared and looking “pretty”. Needless to say, he was a man of his words and the drain is cleared, looking pretty, and working perfectly well. Thank you.”

Thrive Customer

Share your good news with us at:
thrivehomes.org.uk/feedback





Welcoming new customers

Last year we welcomed over 500 customers to Thrive as we took over as their landlord from L&Q.

“I would like to pass on my thanks and how great my first experience has been with Thrive. Your engineer was outstanding. He offered identification before he entered the property, he is very polite and cannot fault him. I feel much safer in my home now, I am very grateful!”

Thrive Customer from L&Q transfer

57 new homes built

2 applications to downsize

60 homes refurbished for Shared Ownership⁶

12 customers bought their home through Right to Buy or Right to Acquire

42 mutual exchanges took place

“I want to say how pleased I am with the way Thrive progress my three-way mutual exchange. Your team has been proactive and responsive in the process”

Thrive Customer

⁶This is equal to 1% of our total homes. When a home becomes empty, we'll assess it to understand what work is needed to bring it up to building safety and energy efficient standards. There are times when these costs can't be recovered by rent. This is when we may decide to sell it as shared ownership, which is still a social housing option for locals.

Learn more on our website by [clicking here](#).

A fair landlord

Research by **the Better Social Housing Review** suggests some social housing tenants face discrimination and negative stereotypes, especially those from minority ethnic communities and people with disabilities.

To make sure we're providing fair and equitable access to our services, we started asking you to share information about your household with us.

In doing so, we may be able to tailor our services to meet your individual needs – such as arranging a translator if English is not your first language.

Within two months, our campaign resulted in **493 customers** (8.1% of those contacted) updating their information.

Can you spare a moment to update your information?

We promise to never share this information, and we will not use it to make any changes to your tenancy now or in the future.

Update your record at
thrivehomes.org.uk/my-info

or contact us in your usual way!

Learn more about how we store and use your data at
thrivehomes.org.uk/privacy-policy

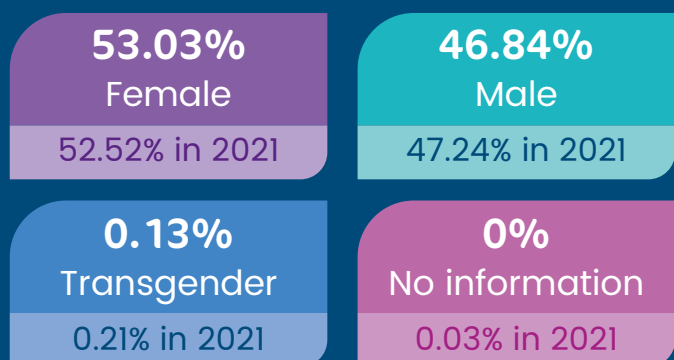


Who lives in our homes



Gender

100% of data held



Ethnicity

48% of data held

	2021	2023
Asian	1.34%	1.57%
Black	1.54%	2.01%
Chinese	0.06%	0.06%
Mixed	0.67%	0.91%
White	44.15%	43.46%
No information	49.28%	51.77%
Other	2.96%	0.22%

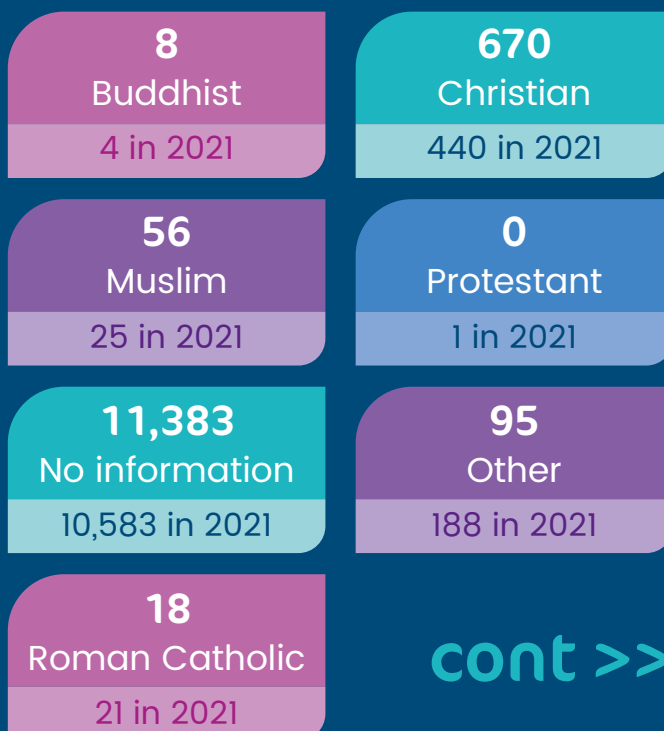
Disability

12% of data held

	2021	2023
Hearing Disability	21	18
Learning Disability	5	3
Vision Disability	26	19
Mental Disability	23	26
Physical Disability	51	92
Other Disability	58	90
No Disability	280	377
No information	10,231	10,771

Religion

7% of data held



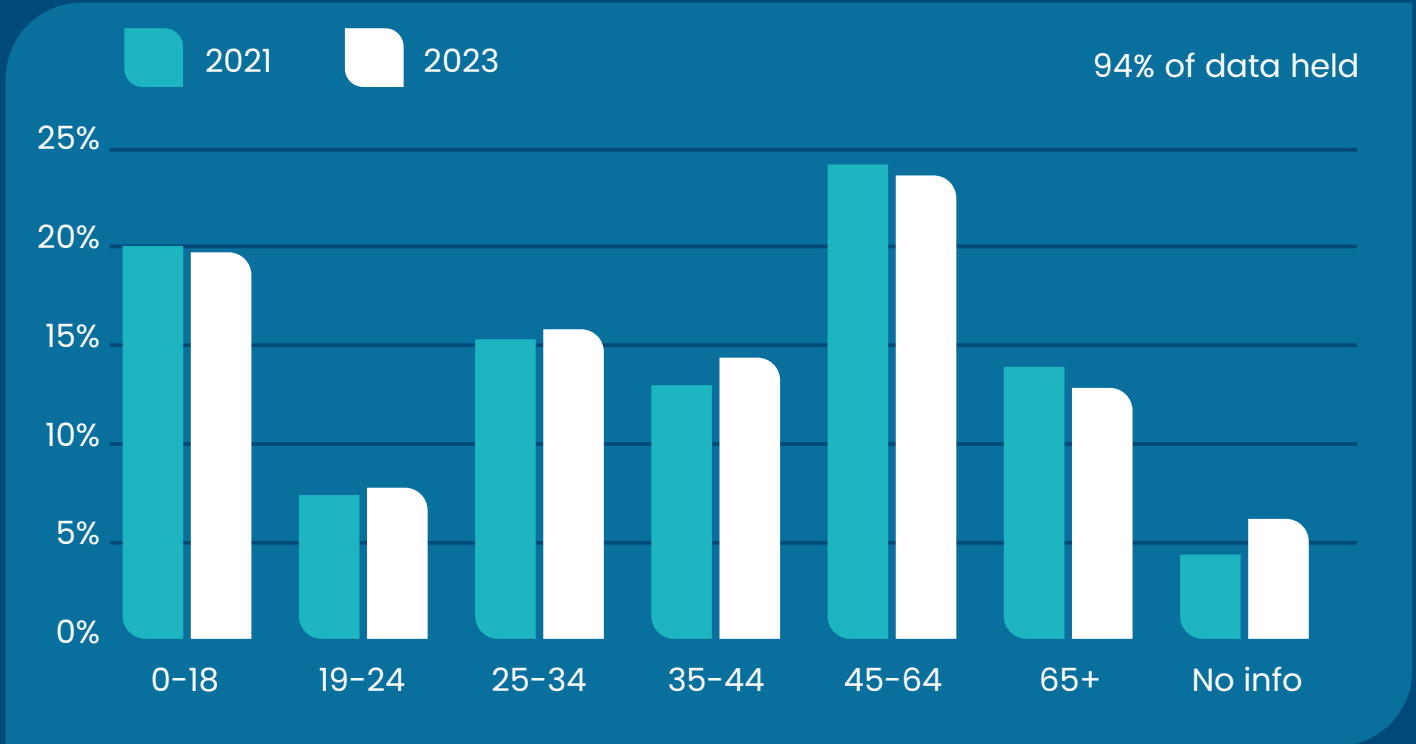
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continued

Who lives in our homes



Age



Sexual orientation

12% of data held

	2021	2023
Gay or Lesbian	6	12
Heterosexual or Straight	1,127	1,470
No information	9,947	10,726
Other	182	22

Total customers

Total customers in 2021

11,262*

Total customers in 2023

12,230*

*This total number of customers includes primary and joint tenants as well as household members

Giving back

Our greatest contribution to society is delivered through our core purpose – helping individuals and families secure a good quality, safe home that they can afford.

Last year we provided funding to locally based charities and community groups, enabling them to deliver projects and services that make a real difference to our customers.



Three Rivers Citizens Advice Service – delivering money advice and budgeting support.

Herts Mind Community Support Services – providing domestic abuse and community support caseworkers.

Abbots Langley Safer Neighbourhoods Team – a community policing service providing training and equipment to reduce damage to doors during forced entry.

Ascend 'Dig Deep' Sensory Garden Project – a weekly volunteering gardening programme in South Oxhey that works with a horticultural therapist to create a peaceful oasis for members of the local community.

Oxhey Woods Conservation Volunteers – enhancing and maintaining access to Oxhey Woods for the public.

Liberty Tea Rooms – a community-run tearoom and hub in Hemel Hempstead, which offers a donations-based payment service and award-winning free debit counselling, budgeting and life skill courses. They also work with the local foodbank to provide emergency food parcels.

Small Acts of Kindness – sourcing and distributing practical gifts and information to the elderly to reduce the negative impact of feeling lonely or isolated.

Watford Workshop – providing employment and independent life skills training opportunities to local adults with disabilities, the project tackles issues of unemployment, lack of skills and social isolation.

Learn more at thrivehomes.org.uk/givingback

Stay in touch

Book a HomePlan® visit at
▶ thrivehomes.org.uk/homeplan

Become a Thrive Customer Voice member at:
▶ thrivehomes.org.uk/getinvolved

Give feedback all year round at:
▶ thrivehomes.org.uk/feedback

Speak to us on web chat at:
▶ thrivehomes.org.uk/talktous

Manage your account online at:
▶ thrivehomes.org.uk/mythrivehub

Thrive
Homes

