



# Introduction

Mark Vaughan - Group Director of Housing

Hello and welcome to our annual standards report for 2020/21. I hope you find it interesting to read and that it gives you a better idea of the work we have undertaken over the last 12 months to improve services and provide extra support to those residents that need it. I want to thank everyone who has taken part in our resident surveys, in resident involvement activities, as well those that are involved in resident associations. Your feedback and the time you give to do this is valued.

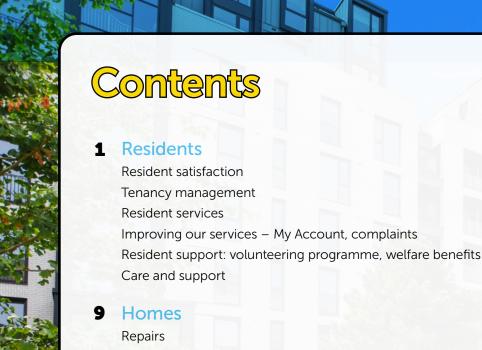
The last 12 months has been one of the most challenging we have faced. Covid-19 has had a lasting impact on our lives. Anxieties have increased as we have coped with illness and loss, the difficulties faced by our loved ones and the impact it has had on employment and incomes. The changes that were introduced to keep us all safe have invariably led to changes in how we have delivered services to you. This has been difficult to do but our focus has always been on what we could do to best maintain our services and provide support to our residents and your homes.

We have been able to increase the number of food bank referrals, as well as increase the amount of emergency support we provide through food vouchers and energy payments. Those suffering from isolation were befriended so they felt less lonely and our care and support teams provided round-the-clock care to our most vulnerable tenants. I'm very proud of the work they did, as I hope you are too, and the report features some of the feedback we received.

As we have come out of lockdown we have enjoyed being able to reconnect with residents and the communities you live in. We expect your named local housing officer to now have started to make visits to your local area, and annual home visits have also restarted. The My Account portal has been launched and the number of residents signed up to it continues to increase, meaning more of you are now able to use the self-service platform for getting things done.

I hope you enjoy reading the report and I look forward to meeting as many of you as I can over the next 12 months.

Best wishes.



Safety and compliance

### **12** New homes

New builds Regeneration projects

**15** Resident involvement

# Who we are

Created in 2018 from two well-established housing associations, we are now one of the largest housing associations in London and the south-east, owning and managing more than 66,000 homes and employing around 2,000 staff. We provide homes across a range of tenures and are committed to continuing to deliver housing that is affordable for all. More than half our homes are general needs properties charged at social or affordable rent levels, but we also offer extra care and supported accommodation for older people, as well as temporary housing, shared ownership, market rent and commercial properties.

Notting Hill Genesis

Read more about our <u>corporate strategy</u> and <u>vision and mission</u>.

We aim to provide a modern, digitally enabled housing service that residents are happy with and that keeps them safe. We want to achieve sector leading resident satisfaction levels at a lower cost.

### Resident satisfaction

We are committed to improving resident satisfaction with our services and have made it a key performance measure and outcome from our corporate strategy.

In 2020/21 of our residents were satisfied with the services that they received from Notting Hill Genesis.

We also use the customer service index (CSI) to understand how all our residents view us. This is a perception measure and includes the views of residents who have not had any recent contact with us. For our baseline survey in 2018 our CSI score was 65.2%. **The score for 2021** was 7.5%, a slight decrease from last year. Surveying our residents in different ways means we can track how we are doing each month, resolve issues more quickly when things have gone wrong and make changes based on the feedback received.

It has been a difficult year for everyone. With restrictions in place, most residents have not had the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of our new housing model. We expect to see this score increase now our local officers are getting back into communities and more functionality continues to be added to My Account, our self-service platform.



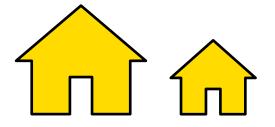
Residents



### Tenancy management in social housing

Our 2020/21 performance on a page:





### Rent collection 2020/21:

of rent collected. Target 100.3% (2019/20: 99.25%).

Arrears (as a % of annual rent due) Target 4.1%.

### Voids & lettings 2020/21:

Occupancy (2019/20: 98%) (18/19: 98%).

### **65.7** days

Average number of days to re-let a property. Target 24.3 days (2019/20: 38.5 days).

### 70 days

Average number of days to let a new property. Target 29 days (2019/20: 78 days).

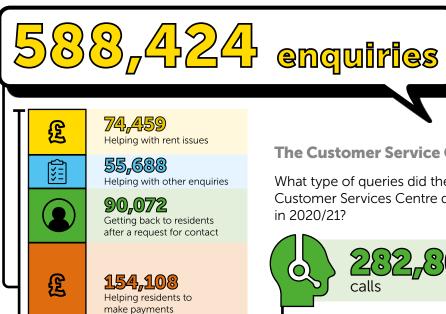
Homes let

Lettings were badly impacted by the pandemic, which meant we had to carry out property visits individually rather than in groups. It's also taken longer for us to receive nominees for properties and works have taken longer than unusual, due to issues with supply chains and staffing levels.

### Resident services:

The new housing model ensures that we make the most of modern automated technologies, combined with personalised support from a named housing officer or property management officer, who are still here to help resolve queries and help with tasks concerning tenancies or leases.

During the pandemic, residents were able to self-serve for the majority of their day-to-day needs from the safety of their own homes via our My Account online service, to which we've continued to improve throughout the year. Here are the key things local officers have been supporting residents with over the past year:



9,032

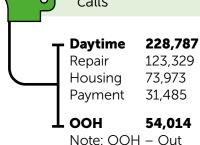
Repairs

Visiting residents

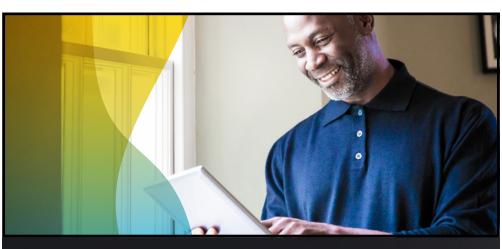
Helping with payment requests

### **The Customer Service Centre**

What type of queries did the Customer Services Centre deal with



of Hours, usually emergency repairs



# **My Account**

At the end of 2020/21, **50% of our residents had registered for** My Account (target 75%). 72.2% of all new tenants created an account, which means more and more of our residents can take advantage of being able to manage their queries and cases online.



Out of 588,424 enquiries, 160,576 were raised on My Account by residents (29.3% of all cases for the year). **151,212 payments** were also made using My Account.

### What can My Account be used for?

It is a guick, convenient and easy way to perform a number of tasks, 24 hours-a-day. Whether you want to make a payment, report and track a repair, contact your housing officer/property management officer or give feedback, there is no easier way to do it than via My Account.

Register or log in to My Account | Notting Hill Genesis (nhg.org.uk)

### Gathering and using resident feedback to improve

Our resident health and disability group and Bolney local scrutiny group took part in a virtual focus group and commissioned a survey for residents which received over 5,000 responses. We want to say a huge thank you to all residents who took part. The aim was to better understand the potential barriers our residents face when using My Account and find out what additional features our residents would most value.

The survey told us most residents use My Account to view rent and service charges statements, report repairs, make payments and manage accounts. Convenience, ease of use and keeping track of queries were named as the top three reasons for using My Account. Two-thirds of My Account users said they would recommend it to a fellow resident.

Our key focus now is to continue to develop My Account so it works for all our residents and to encourage as many as we can to sign up and start to engage with us in this way. Residents who completed the survey gave us a lot of insightful feedback and suggestions for additional functions, so we are working many of these into upcoming development plans.

We recognise that My Account is not suitable for all residents, but the more our residents are able to use the self-service platform, the more time staff will have to support those who are unable to engage with us online and deal with more complex issues.

### **Survey responses**



- **62%** Report repair for your home
- **43%** Manage your account details
- **41%** Make a secure payment 24 hours a day
- **21%** Track a repair for your home
- 21% Get in touch with your housing officer or property management officer



76% found it very convenient



55% found it easy to use



43% liked they can keep track of their queries

5

### Complaints

We always strive to provide the best possible service but understand that sometimes our residents may need to make a complaint. We welcome any form of feedback, including complaints, so we can improve our services for everyone.

Here are some figures from 2020/21 to show how we are managing and responding to the complaints we receive:

### Top three complaints themes:

- Repairs
- Housing management
- Heating and hot water

Total number of complaints (including quick fixes) received (2019/20-2.790)

Somplaints resolved as a 'quick fix'

Complaints (excluding quick fixes) resolved at stage one of our process (2019/20-96%)

Complaints escalated to Stage 2 (Target 4%) (2019/20-

What have we done to improve our complaints process?

- Residents can now log complaints themselves on My Account we received 521 complaints this way. Between October 2020 and March 2021, over 54% complaints were raised using My Account.
- ▼ We have worked with our involved residents to update our website and complaints leaflet, making it easier for residents to complain when things go wrong
- ✓ We have focused more on 'quick fixes' to resolve complaints as quickly as possible when things do wrong.

I feel the quick fix option is definitely a very welcome addition ....I was extremely impressed and very happy with the way my complaint was quickly dealt with and resolved using this option.

### **The Housing Ombudsman**

If a resident has been through our complaints procedure and is still unhappy, they can refer to the Housing Ombudsman Service which was set up to resolve disputes involving the tenants and leaseholders of social landlords. The service is free, independent and impartial.

During 2020/21 the ombudsman published a new code of complaint handling. You can view our self-assessment against this on our website: nhg-selfassessment-hos-code-of-complaint-handling-dec-20.pdf



Number of complaints determined by the Housing Ombudsman Service. (2019/20-47).



Number of cases with a maladministration (6) or service failure finding (Target 12).



(2019/20-22-46.8% proportion of cases that were maladminstration or service failure.).

### Resident support

Our partnerships team join up with local services to support residents with employment, legal advice and their wellbeing. A total of 554 referrals were made to external services between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021, mostly for emergency food, Covid-19 support and help with energy bills. Support at the start of the pandemic focused on emergency needs:



food bank referrals and 162 supermarket vouchers/e-gift cards were issued



Wellbeing checks were carried out over the phone to older and vulnerable tenants.



residents have been matched with a phone befriender as part of Call and Chat (volunteering programme)



food parcels were delivered to shielding and vulnerable residents via the Good Gym project (as part of the volunteering programme)



Covid+19

packs were produced for staff to direct residents to those offering help

### **energy saving** trust

was awarded to 25 households for pre-paid meter payments as part of the HACT energy redress scheme in December

Other areas of support include:

- Working with the London Plus Credit
   Union to increase awareness and encourage saving behaviour, supporting residents to apply for family loans and savings accounts.
- The Notting Hill Genesis hardship fund, for which a total of 499 requests were received for grants.

Case study: One unemployed tenant was awarded £190 so he could renew his Security Industry Authority (SIA) licence, which was due to expire. This meant he could look for security work.

### Welfare benefits:

We operate an inhouse welfare benefits team made up of eight specialist caseworkers. The team assist in challenging benefit decisions, resolving complex issues and representing tenants at tribunals. We provide a holistic service and advisers will refer tenants to employment, debt or other support where appropriate

13004 referrals were received by the team, with most cases being in arrears

We have helped residents to claim around through lump sums and increased income.

Some feedback from residents who have received support this year:

You have given me more than just financial help to support me so I don't struggle, but also motivation and hope for the future. That's priceless and I can't thank you enough for that!

My household feels less anxiety, more inclusive and connected, which is a good positive effect

She has always been there for me and is still helping me

### Care and support

Our care and support team provide a 24-hour, 365 days a year service to our residents living in extra care schemes, supporting them with domiciliary care, written support plans and providing as much independence as possible. Through the pandemic, staff have been able to provide a high level of service to residents despite the challenges of Covid-19. Our residents had some positive things to say for our annual satisfaction survey:

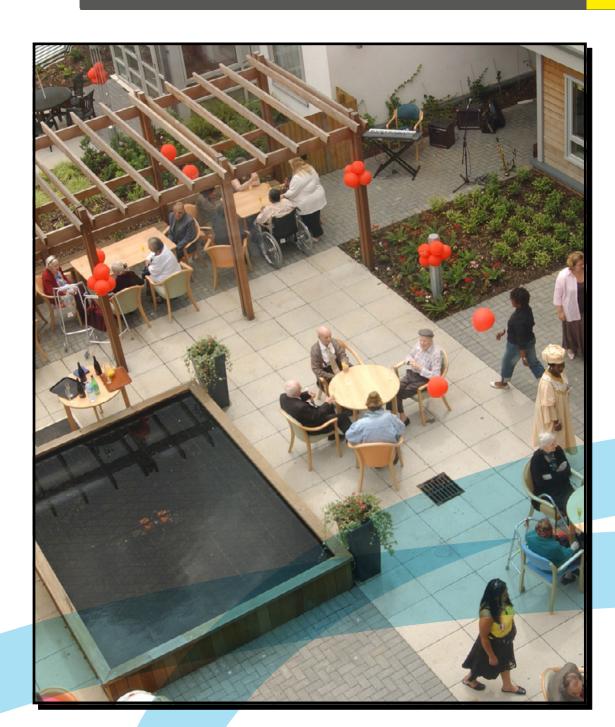
In light of the pandemic, it has improved. There are checks to make sure that we are okay. Notting Hill Genesis often do testing There have been no problems. I have always received a good service from them. Any problems and they sort it out

I am happy living here. Any repairs Notting Hill do promptly

They have improved tremendously, I do not have many grumbles with them now

I'm so happy here it's so easy

I love being here, everybody is friendly and the area is lovely



### Volunteering programme

In the past year, unable to deliver our usual engagement projects, our volunteer team set up and delivered a range of Covid-19 response projects, developed to support and celebrate our most vulnerable residents:

### **Clicksilver IT mentoring programme**



The volunteer team, alongside others, have developed partnerships to get residents connected and develop their digital skills – skills that were shown to be so vital during the Covid-19 lockdowns.

We recently launched a new partnership and IT mentoring project with Business in the Community (BITC) Clicksilver is a mentoring service for residents that aims to build IT confidence, reduce social isolation and help residents gain new skills.

Clicksilver aligns with our digital inclusion strategy. Colleagues from general needs and care and support

identify residents with reduced IT literacy skills and then they are then matched with a mentor sourced by BITC and enrolled on a four-week mentorship programme to support their learning needs. The project is resident-led so mentors focus on the areas most important to participants. This may include things like setting up an email account, finding your way around a smartphone device, online shopping and video calls.

To date, we have received 19 referrels

**Nigel, a participant stated:** The mentoring was going "very well" and he enjoyed the programme and learned a lot as he went along.



### Little Village fundraising initiative

We exceeded our initial fundraising target of £3,750 to buy 250 Christmas gifts for children living in our homes raising more than meaning 6004 children received a gift for Christmas.

### **Every Kinda People project**

with residents 'telling their stories' and choosing the music that means the most to them. Series two of the project will have a multi-generational aspect whereby younger tenants are trained to interview older tenants.

Each episode traces the story of one resident as they share the songs which embody treasured memories and pivotal moments in their lives. From Nina Simone's carer, to a Trinidadian steel pan expert, listen as their selection of songs ebb and flow, weaving their fascinating and often vulnerable words into a fascinating story. Binge on all 10 or listen when you have 20 mins to spare. One thing is for sure you won't be disappointed. All 10 podcasts are available now to stream via our MixCloud. Click here to listen.

### Call and Chat befriending project

As Covid-19 restrictions called for clinically vulnerable individuals to shield, we became increasingly aware of the impact this would have on many older residents' mental and emotional wellbeing. As it was unsafe to visit in person, we made the decision to adapt our befriending home visits and transition to a safer new telephone befriending scheme - Call and Chat. The service was well received, and residents have shown appreciation for the companionship and care during these difficult and uncertain months. To date over **70 referrals** have been matched with volunteer befrienders.

# Homes

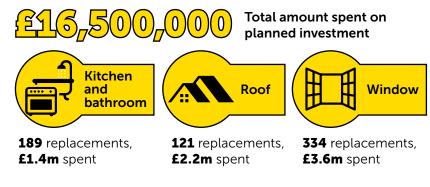
We want all our residents to enjoy a safe, comfortable home where they can thrive and enjoy life. We want to be sector leading, achieve more for our residents and create great places to live. We will deliver a better repairs service to our residents and improve the quality of our existing homes through a programme of planned investment. In line with legislation we will ensure we keep our residents safe in their homes

### Repairs:

Residents can report and track repairs by using the My Account service. Below are the figures for 2020/21 showing the number of repairs carried out and the total spend:



Number of repairs		Total amount spend on responsive repairs		
116,702	66.9%	£16,098,040		



Average days taken to complete repairs	Number of emergency repairs completed		
13.6	26,960		

Customer satisfaction with recent repair

Due to an increased spend on day-to-day repairs since last year (just over £2.8 million) and unforeseen issues due to the Covid-19 pandemic such as issues ordering materials, the total amount spent on planned works decreased from last year by just over £3 million. Spending more on our responsive repairs service (just over £2.8 million more than last year) meant that more repairs could be carried out, including over 5,000 more emergency repairs that were needed.

## What have you told us about the repairs service?

Quotes from our repairs surveys:

The repairs process was easy and the repair was sorted

The guy who came was really nice, very pleasant and helpful, he clearly explained what he was doing so that I understood. He was pleasant and respectful

I called in the morning and the contractor came within four hours. He introduced himself, was very polite and told me what he was doing. I had no problems

He took a lot of attention to sort the problem and spent a long time checking everything We know there is still a lot to improve on, including repairs that have been delayed due to the pandemic:

The contractors were very nervous when they came in however they placed mats on the floor to get to the garden and had all the PPE

I really need a new gate not a repair. My housing officer said this will be happen after the coronavirus lock down

I was very worried at the beginning, as I am at a vulnerable age, regarding the contractors coming into my home as I have anxiety. They had masks and gloves and did the work quicker than estimated which was really good. My housing officer also checked I was okay after the work had been completed

## What have we done to improve over the past year?

Working with residents in our asset management steering group and Kensington and Chelsea scrutiny group to ensure there is a resident voice in decision making, such as:

- Ensuring day-to-day roofing repairs have a robust and cost-effective approach
- Ensuring the right language is used and the right questions are asked in our satisfaction surveys, setting a satisfaction target of 80% for any planned works
- Ensuring any Covid-19 guidance relating to repairs is clear, accessible and up to date

In 2019, many mortgage providers began to make requests for evidence, certification and information about the safety of external walls to high rise residential buildings. An EWS1 (External Wall System 1) form confirms the external wall has been assessed as safe by a qualified professional, providing assurance to lenders, valuers, residents, buyers and sellers. Find out more here.

Whilst we are in the process of assessing all affected buildings, we know the issue has been very frustrating for our residents, particularly those looking to move. As of April 2021, our building safety team carried out 211 EWS1 assessments, and as a result we have helped residents to obtain 174 favourable EWS1 forms, which has increased to 269 as of September 2021. To ensure residents have been kept up to date, the building safety and homeownership teams have:

- Scheduled 24 resident meetings (12 held as of April 2021) to discuss any concerns or technical issues
- Worked to create an EWS1 wish list for 2021/22, identifying high priority blocks to be assessed
- Attended quarterly local virtual forums for residents to stay up to date and have the opportunity to ask questions. The latest videos and Q&As are available on our website.

### Building safety remediation projects:



Number of schemes where we are covering the cost of 24-hour patrols due to building safety issues (£5.3 million spent in 2020-21)



Number of sites with temporary fire alarm systems installed (This allows us to reduce or remove the patrols)



Number of sites with temporary patrols (50K spent)

### Compliance figures (2020-21):



### £8.9 million

spent to improve fire safety. (£12,159,205 spent in 2019-20)



### 99.9%

% of gas safety checks completed on target. (99.87% in 2019-20)



### 9413%

% of properties with valid electrical installation condition report certifications

### **CASE STUDY:**

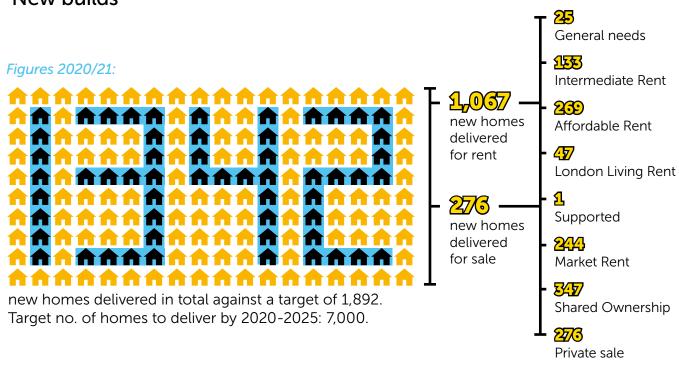
### Involving residents in building safety

An independent review of building regulations and fire safety was conducted by Dame Judith Hackitt and published in May 2018. Alongside various recommendations and comments regarding buildings (advance notices), there was a recommendation to have more of a focus on engaging with residents around building safety. At the end of 2020, residents and staff worked together to form a building safety resident engagement strategy for Notting Hill Genesis, due to go live in 2021/22. The strategy sets out how we will engage with residents on building safety where they live and should be considered when beginning any meaningful engagement with residents about the safety of their homes. As part of this work, residents:

- Ensured the content of the strategy was clear, understandable and easy to follow
- Added content where more detail was needed
- Brought forward ideas on improvements to current procedures
- Reviewed and improved building safety letter templates

There is a housing crisis in and around London. We would like to see a much greater supply of low-rent, secure homes, accessible to all who need them. We also want to create sustainable and vibrant communities and for our residents' experience of their new home to be the best it can be. That is why we are committed to maintaining a development programme during this difficult external climate.

### New builds





## Notting Hill Genesis Community Foundation

Community foundation grants awarded a total of

£216,330.76

### **The Aylesbury Estate**



Notting Hill Genesis and Southwark Council are working in partnership on the regeneration of the Aylesbury Estate in south east London. The regeneration is about more than just new homes, community facilities and improved open spaces, as important as they are. We are committed to ensuring that local people experience the social and economic benefits of regeneration, such as employment, education and training and improvements in health and wellbeing.

Over the past year, the team has adapted its approach to ensure we continued to deliver on our commitments to residents during the

pandemic. As always, our offer has focused around residents' needs. This has included delivering online and, where possible, in-person holiday activities for young people, hosting online coffee mornings aimed at reducing isolation and delivering postcards to advise of our various support services.

Due to the increased risk of food insecurity and many young people unable to go to school, we modified our bursary support so that residents could claim for food packages and resources to learn from home.

### 2020-21:

12

Southwark residents supported to secure and sustain jobs (six months plus)

59

training places for local residents

apprenticeships for local people through our supply chain

20

local young people receiving one-to-one support

141

Working Communities Bursaries awarded (27% relating to digital inclusion and 26% to food security) 10

Aylesbury Community Grants awarded to local community groups, a total of £15,000 awarded

1

new interim use project established – Albany Road Community Garden



Grahame Park is Barnet's largest housing estate and a significant part of the Colindale Area Action Plan. Notting Hill Genesis is working in partnership with Barnet to deliver more than 3,000 new homes across a range of tenures, replacing 1,777 older dwellings and regenerating and renewing the estate.

### 2020/21:

residents into employment

717 residents in training new businesses

residents into work experience

**550** 

residents helped with food insecurities (access to food banks/ parcels)

### **Woodberry Down:**



Woodberry Down in Hackney is Notting Hill Genesis' largest project. Almost 5,000 new homes will be delivered as well as community facilities and schools on the estate over the next 20 years. residents into employment

**36** residents in training

30 apprenticeships

residents helped with money management support and debt advice

232

residents helped with food insecurities (access to food banks/ parcels)

### Spaces refurbished:

The old library Grahame Park, space refurbished - £300K spent

<u>Grahame Park guests get first glimpse of new-look library | Notting Hill Genesis (nhg.org.uk)</u>

Grahame Park Social Value Group established (supply chain)

# Resident involvement

Covid-19 has had a major impact on our lives, with many of us working from home and interacting via video calls. While we are still dealing with the effects of our experiences over the past year, working remotely has been a positive factor in getting more of our residents involved. Previously, it was perhaps difficult for many to attend meetings due to the location or timing being inconvenient; however, residents can now join virtual forums, online meetings and send in their feedback from the comfort of their homes, working around other priorities.

This is great news as it means we can work with more of our residents to improve. We want to say a big thank you to everyone who has worked with us over the last year! We recognise this format of engaging and working with us doesn't suit everyone, so we have been working hard with our residents to understand a blended way of working that all residents can be a part of should they wish to.

### Resident involvement key performance indicators

	2020/21 target	2020/21 actual	2019/20 target	2019/20 actual
Number of involvement activities	<b>3</b> 0	<b>₫</b>	50	62
Number of attendees	<b>300</b>	407	200	349
Overall completed/actioned recommendations as a result of the activity	70	95	30	30

### What went well this year?

- Programme of resident involvement continued online despite challenges of remote working and the pandemic.
- Slight increase in overall activities taking place in the year (63).
- Increase in individuals taking part in activities (more than 400 residents).
- ▼ The Resident Voices Group was set up to act as representative hub for involvement. Find out more about the group here: Residents Voices Group blogs | Notting Hill Genesis (nhq.orq.uk)
- A round of task and finish projects were commissioned, responding to resident experiences and issues. These projects were launched based on feedback from resident surveys, residents' associations, resident groups and complaints. Some updates can be found here: Residents and staff working together | Notting Hill Genesis (nhg.org.uk)
- New opportunities for residents to feed into the work we do, including procurement, compliance, The Lab (repairs pilot projects in the West region) and our virtual forums.

### Examples of recommendations made:

### **Complaints**

Additional information included to improve the experience of making a complaint via the Notting Hill Genesis website.

### **Repairs**

Review of safety measures during lockdown where contractors needed to be in residents' homes.

### **Fire safety**

Overhaul of fire safety communication on website <u>Safety in your home</u> | Notting Hill Genesis (nhg.org.uk) and review of local information circulated and put on display in communal areas. Suggestions made to improve building safety templates.

### **Compliance**

Adjustments made to the gas safety warning letter resulting in a reduction in complaints.

### **Training**

Include process around handover, through induction packs and revive 'buddy' systems. Ensure temporary staff are given same level of training, including around communication.

### Surveys

Residents suggested adjustments to questions given in both planned works satisfaction surveys and repairs surveys.

### **Annual visits**

Communications plan suggested to ensure residents are aware of purpose and timings of visit and that we capture feedback of experiences via a post visit survey.

### Areas of focus for next year

There is still more to do to further support our residents to have a real impact on the services they receive:

### **Digital exclusion**

We need to continue to ensure all residents have the opportunity to be involved. During the Covid-19 pandemic, many were unable to participate due to lack of digital access.

### Implementing recommendations

We recognise that our residents have given a lot of time and commitment to make recommendations for improvement and want to ensure that progress is made in a timely manner for all projects.

### **Demonstrating impact**

We have seen some great examples of how resident input has improved services in 2020/21 and are committed to showing the positive impact that residents have had in all our work.

**Residents are at the heart of shaping our services.** The resident involvement team helps you provide feedback and enables you to work with us to identify opportunities to involve residents and help improve the services you receive. There are many ways you can get involved, including activities such as open meetings, panels, residents' associations, consultations and focus groups.

You can browse these opportunities <u>here</u>, <u>speak to your local officer</u>, or get in touch with us via involvement@nhq.org.uk for more information.

If you'd like to receive opportunities to get involved, please complete our <u>'expression of interest form'</u>. We recognise your involvement and reward your contribution. For more details see our rewards and recognition policy.



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www.nhg.org.uk @NHGhousing

Annual standards report **2020 - 2021**