



mhs
homes group



Customer annual report

2023/24

Listening and acting

on what you tell us



This report is where we feed back to you on how we've performed over the past year and share our plans for the year ahead.

Over the last year, we've worked with you to deliver your services and continue to improve them.

Our commitment to putting you at the heart of what we do aligns with new consumer standards for social housing. The standards make sure you have a safe home to live in, your feedback is listened to and acted on and that you are treated with fairness and respect.

We're putting the right people in the right place, with the right skills.

The figures included in this report relate to the mhs homes group and Heart of Medway (HoM) with any differences highlighted.

You've told us what's important to you and we're putting the right people in the right place, with the right skills. You'll read more about the changes you've helped us make as you go through this report.

As we work towards the commitments set out in our three-year strategy, we'll be guided by our values – Pride, Respect, Inclusion, Driven and Empathy. They support our everyday actions and behaviours and help us do the right thing for you, your homes and your communities.

We know there's more to do, and our priority for the year ahead is to find new ways to listen, act quickly on what you tell us and work with you to shape better services.

Nigel Hopkins
Chair, mhs homes group

How have we been listening?

Last year we carried out surveys based on the tenant satisfaction measures set by the Regulator of Social Housing. These have been introduced to see how happy you are with your home and to measure your perception of mhs homes as your landlord.

1,658 of you (392 from HoM), rated our performance on five key themes – repairs, building safety, customer engagement, complaint handling and neighbourhood management.

Home owners are less satisfied than tenants and we're increasing ways to listen to the views of all our customers.

Your feedback and experiences are helping us set our priorities and make sure we focus on what's important to you.

Your overall satisfaction with the service provided by us... 81%

(78% for HoM)



79% satisfied with repairs we carry out on your home



78% satisfied that your home is well maintained (82% for HoM)



86% satisfied that your home is safe (82% for HoM)



85% agree that we treat you fairly and with respect (87% for HoM)

Where you think we need to do better



43% satisfaction with our approach to handling complaints (44% for HoM)

56% satisfied with the way we handle anti-social behaviour (58% for HoM)

68% satisfied with the time taken to complete your repair

54% satisfaction that we listen to your views and act on them

Read the full report at mhs.org.uk/tsms



Your feedback is helping change services for the better

The Customer Scrutiny Panel (CSP) is a group of customers. We meet regularly and make sure your voice is heard and acted on by carrying out independent reviews of mhs services.

Our reviews are supported by customer surveys, focus groups and mhs staff and customer interviews. We also carry out mystery shopping to test services and assess them from a customer's point of view.

Last year, we completed reviews of gas services and aids and adaptations.

In the gas services review you told us there were issues around poor communication, time waiting for jobs and appointments.

Our recommendations included a contract service review to make sure terms and conditions are being met, increased training and better monitoring and reporting of data.

We've been encouraged to see mhs homes driving forward service improvements based on our recommendations. We value our close working partnership, but always maintain our independence to deliver high quality service reviews.

We're grateful to all customers for sharing your experiences - together we make a difference.

If you'd like to find out more about us and how you can get involved, visit mhs.org.uk/csp

Keeping you safe

We take our responsibilities as a landlord extremely seriously and your safety and building safety always come first.



Last year we spent
£1.9m on fire safety
(£900,000 for Heart of Medway)



Our teams are constantly assessing our buildings, working with our partners Kent Fire and Rescue Service and carrying out the work that's needed to keep you and your homes safe.

Tackling damp and mould

We take a zero-tolerance approach to damp and mould and we've created a dedicated team to tackle the issue. Any homes reporting damp and mould have been visited, and repairs are either in progress or have been completed.



We were proud to be one of the first organisations to be awarded Building a Safer Future champion status as part of a government-led scheme to promote safety culture and behaviour change in the industry.

It means that everyone who works for mhs homes understands the important part they play in keeping our buildings and the people living in them safe.



Keeping your homes in good repair

We want everyone to live in a home you can feel proud of. But we know that our repairs and maintenance service has not been the standard that it should be.

The majority of the complaints we receive are around repairs and fixing them sooner so we're building our in-house repairs and home improvements team to reduce the use of sub-contractors. This investment in our teams will help to bring down your waiting times.



We spent **£6.8m** on repairs (£400,000 for HoM)



We completed **57%** of repairs on time (59% for HoM)



99% of your homes met the Decent Home Standard (100% for HoM)

Improving your homes

Each year we plan a programme of upgrades to your homes and those recently vacated.

In 2023-2024 we invested £15.8m

in improving your homes

(£1m for HoM)



277
new kitchens installed (6 for HoM)



262
new bathrooms installed (2 for HoM)



The proportion of our homes at EPC rating of C or above increased from 75% to 77% leading to a reduced carbon footprint and lower bills for our customers.



624
boilers replaced (43 for HoM)

Building new homes

We completed **94** new homes (24 for HoM), moving us closer to our three-year group target of **363** homes.





Respectful and

helpful engagement

We want you to have the best service at all times, but we know we haven't always got this right. You told us we need to answer the phone more quickly so we've increased staffing levels to make sure you get a speedy response.

But we know there's still work to do to achieve a good level of service consistently.



**Last year we answered
74% of your calls on time.**

**The average time you waited for a
call to be answered was 6 minutes.**

What we've done

- We've stepped up our team training so everyone has the skills and knowledge to get you the answers you need. This means we can deal with more queries at the first point of contact, reducing your wait times.
- We're asking you to tell us about your individual needs so we can adjust our services if you need us to.
- We're investing in MyAccount, our website and self-service options so that you're able to quickly find the answers you're looking for, without having to call in.

**Putting things right
when they go wrong**



When things go wrong, we want to put them right and learn from your experiences. But we know we don't always respond as quickly as you'd like, and you've told us we need to improve the way we handle your complaints.



**Last year, it took an
average of 8 days to**

resolve your complaints.

More complex complaints can take longer to resolve and we know we need to do better.

What we've done

- We're bringing in more complaint handlers to listen and learn from your feedback, investigate complaints and explore solutions
- We've introduced quality assurance checks alongside new training for all staff.

You can contact the Housing Ombudsman about any complaints, or for independent advice and guidance. Call 0300 111 3000 or visit [housing-ombudsman.org.uk](https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk)



We want you to receive excellent customer service every single time. That's why everyone at mhs homes is completing 'allstars' customer experience training. It's about learning how to communicate in the best way, showing empathy and actively listening to truly understand the customer's perspective.

Looking after your neighbourhood



We're committed to improving the lives of customers and the neighbourhoods where you live.

You've told us we need to do more to improve estates. Some of the changes we're making include:

- More grounds maintenance staff and caretakers to keep your estates clean and well maintained all year round
- A new team for waste management
- More estate service officers to support communal repairs and maintenance and a gutter clearance programme.



Anti-social behaviour (ASB) is a really important issue for our customers, and a big focus for our teams.

In 2023/24, 188 ASB cases were reported to us.

(16 were reported for HoM)

What we've done

- We're bringing in more people to manage tenancy and neighbourhood services to improve the way we handle ASB and hate crime. You'll get to know the people working in your area and you'll see them out and about more often.
- We're reviewing our response times to make sure we get back to you quickly when you let us know about ASB, and that we keep you informed as we make progress.
- A new process is prioritising the most serious ASB incidents. And we're doing more to understand how we can support you when you've got a problem with neighbours.

Working with our partners

We're working jointly with the police and other partners to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour in communities



where significant issues have been identified.

Our housing officers are part of multi-agency teams, working with social care and health to keep people safe.

Helping when things

are difficult

We're proud to be more than just a landlord, providing homes to over 26,000 people in Kent. We help to support our customers so they can live independently in their homes and we partner with charities and organisations to help build stronger local communities.

253 people (9 from HoM) were awarded grants totalling £57,500 through our Customer Support Fund

29% of all mhs homes group homes went to homeless households. For HoM, it was 45%.

Our fundraising activities brought in more than **£26,000** for community initiatives and local charities.

Boosting our support

We are here to meet housing need, and we provide support and advice to help people maintain their tenancies and stay in their homes long-term.

Last year, we secured funding to develop a new supported housing scheme for young people experiencing homelessness.

And we're improving our response to domestic abuse by supporting emergency moves through a Kent-wide reciprocal agreement.

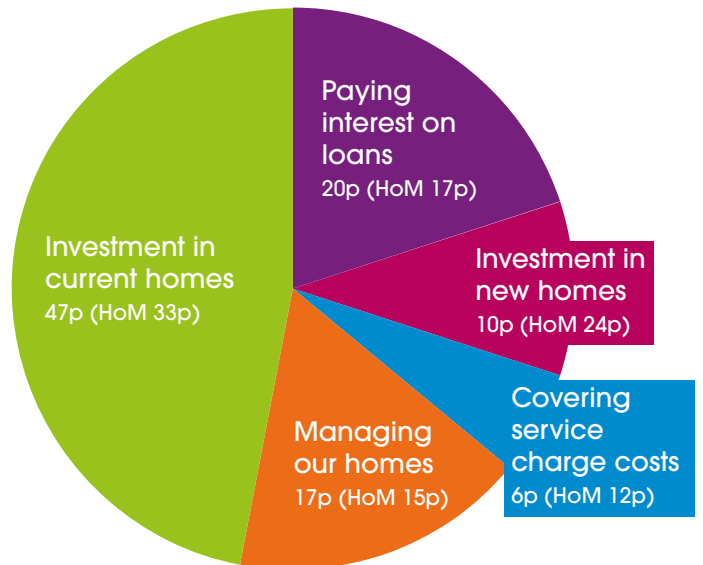
We're also working on gaining Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation to help us support more survivors to safety.



Your money and how we spend it

mhs homes is a housing charity and Heart of Medway is a not-for-profit housing association. This means all the money we receive goes back into your homes and services.

Where each pound of your rent goes



We hope this report has been useful in understanding how we're performing as your landlord, and how we're listening to you.

If you have any feedback on what you'd like to hear more about, or you'd like to join a group looking at our communications, please email communications@mhs.org.uk





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If you want to get involved in giving feedback, please get in touch. Email contactus@mhs.org.uk, call 01634 565333 or write to us at Leviathon Way, Chatham ME4 4LL