



AR

Annual Report to Customers
2015/2016



Hello,

This year's Annual Report to Customers lets you know how we performed during the 2015/16 financial year.

Throughout the year we've been focusing on improving our services and we will continue to do so.

Some of our successful projects this year include:

- Setting up a webchat service to make it easier to contact us
- Helping 456 customers find work or take part in training, volunteering or work experience
- Funding 120 community projects
- Helping our customers access more than £1m in benefits and grants

We've looked for new ways to get value for money through our work with other companies, and are looking at how we use the office space we own.

Our new Customer Voice Forums are putting customers at the heart of our improvements, working together with staff across the business to help change the way we do things.

I hope you enjoy this look back on the year.



Tom Dacey
Group Chief Executive



Customer
involvement

Value for
money

Customer
service

Our plan to
be the best at
customer service

HEAT

New
homes

Repairs

Community
investment

Care and Supporting
Independence (CASI)

Lettings

Your
feedback

Anti-social
behaviour

Customer involvement

In 2016 the Customer Voice Forums replaced the Resident Service Panels to give customers more effective input into how we work. The three forums target different aspects of our business in a move away from the old, regional panels. Customers from different areas with a wide range of experience and opinions will work closely with staff to make positive changes to the way we do things right across the Group.

Each forum has a number of sub-groups, each managed by one customer. The sub-groups work throughout the year reporting back to the forums every three months to show their progress.

The forums were launched in February 2016 when involved customers met up with counterparts from the Group to outline how they will work together.

Over the coming months the Customer Voice Forums will:

- Review the complaints process to make it more customer-focused
- Create and deliver a workshop for our complaints appeal panels
- Work on the Group's procurement processes to make sure we achieve value for money.

If you're interested in becoming part of the Customer Voice Forums go to shgroup.org.uk/customervoiceforums

Our plan to be the best at customer service

Chris Harris – Group Customer Services Director

In 2015/16 our overall satisfaction level was 73%. That's not bad, but we want to do better.

Our plan is to make Southern Housing Group's customer service the very best, so we're putting our customers' needs at the centre of everything we do.

We started the process a year ago and have already made some great improvements:

- We've reviewed our high-level operating structure to help us deliver better frontline services.
- Our new Customer Experience Team will make sure that your dealings with us are as easy and effective as possible.
- Our new computer system for managing our work means that whoever you talk to at the Group will be able to see your records of your previous calls. This means we'll be able to deal with any requests or feedback more quickly and efficiently.
- Our new Customer Voice Forums will make sure our progress is guided by our customers. This will make sure that your service is the best it can be.

We want our staff to be more accessible so we're going to start working more locally, on or near our housing schemes. This means you'll be able to get hold of your local officers more easily. We hope you'll quickly start to see improvements over the course of the year.

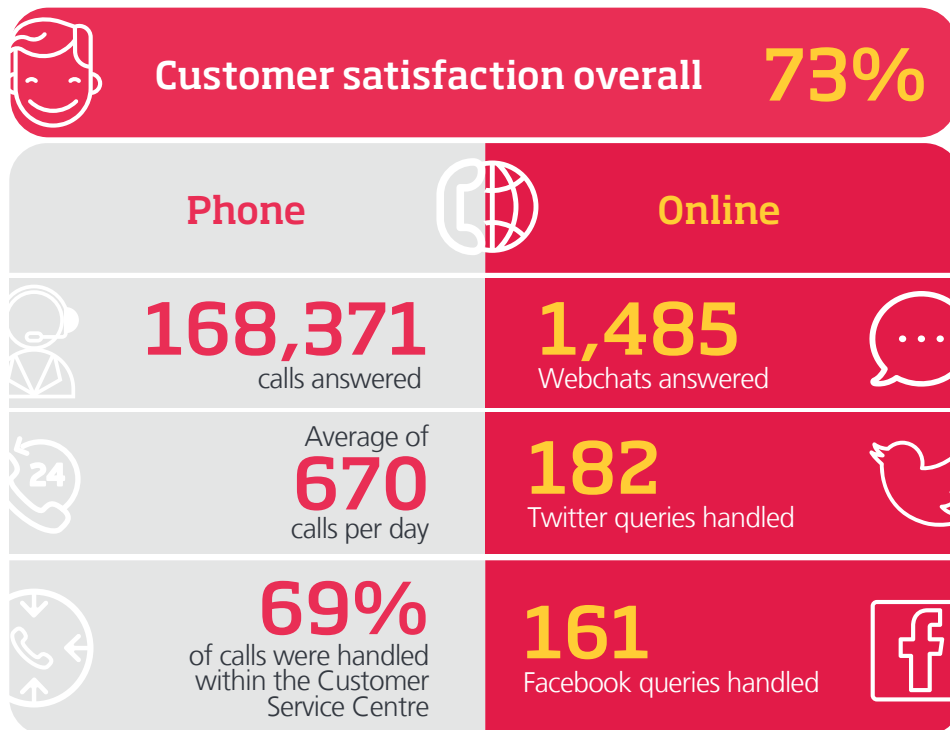
If you have any feedback about your service please let us know by getting in touch with our Customer Service Centre.

Customer service

Our Customer Service Advisors will usually be the first people you speak to when you get in touch with us. Whether you call or email our Customer Service Centre or contact us through our new webchat service or social media, our advisors are on hand to help you with whatever you need.

Our Customer Service Team receives hundreds of queries every day, which they try to deal with as quickly and efficiently as possible. If they are unable to deal with a query directly they will refer it to another team or colleague.

Here's how we did in 2015/16:



Value for money

We want to make sure we're making the most of the money you pay to live in your home. To make sure we get the best value for money we made some changes in 2015/16.

Here are a few of the things we did:



Made a commitment to social value. When we work with other companies we want to make sure we're getting good value services, but we also ask them to give a little extra for our customers. This could be in the form of job or training opportunities, or money towards community projects. For more on social value visit shgroup.org.uk/socialvalue

Extended our Southern Maintenance Service repairs team to cover a further 5,000 homes in east London and Essex. Since it started, Southern Maintenance Service has saved more than £600,000 compared to using external contractors.



Changed the way we buy services. In 2015/16 we entered into 47 contracts for a total value of £6.4m. Our procurement activity generated estimated savings of £705,000.

HEAT

Our Home Energy Advice Team helps customers save money and energy. If you worry you're paying too much for your electricity or gas, or would like tips on how to save energy in your home, you can email the team at energy@shgroup.org.uk

Here's how we did in 2015/16:



631
customers visited



£245
recommended annual
saving per home



194
customers claimed the
Warm Home Discount
with our support



£12,044
of utilities debt cleared

shgroup.org.uk/heat

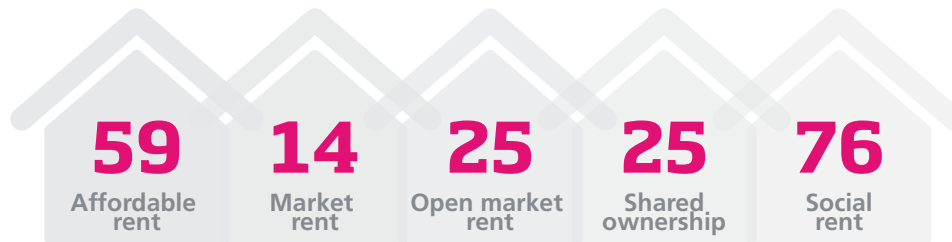
GO BACK

New homes

We want to build more great quality new homes.

We build different types of homes to meet a wide range of customers' needs, from those who want to rent to those who want to buy their homes outright.

In 2015/16 we completed 199 new homes and started work on 414 more.



Our commercial arm, Southern Space Ltd, sold 35 new homes at an average price of £278,407. This delivered a profit of £1,511,164 which will be reinvested in building more affordable homes.

Shared ownership in 2015/16

We offer customers the chance to buy shares in their home (also known as 'part buy, part rent').

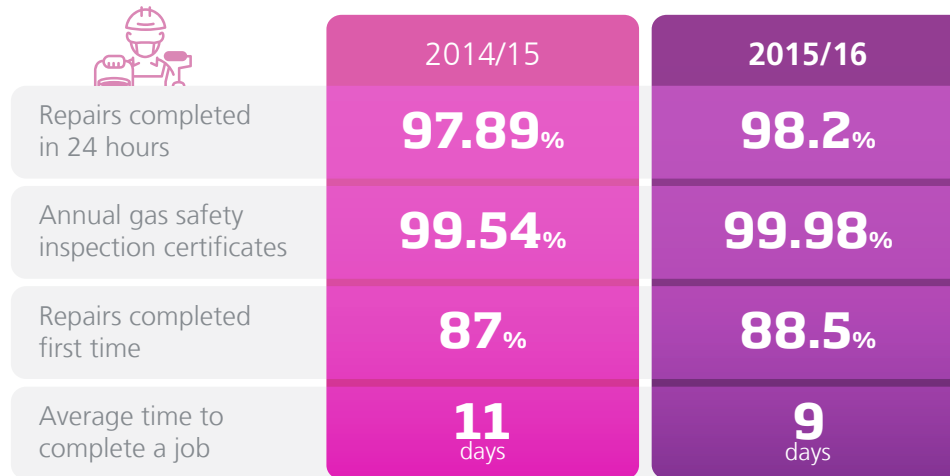
In 2015/16:

- We **sold 157 homes** through our shared ownership scheme
- The average **initial share purchased** was **42%**
- **233** customers **bought more shares** in their home
- **172** of these **increased their ownership** level to **100%**

Repairs

We're working hard to improve our repairs service. In most cases an external contractor working on our behalf will carry out your day-to-day repairs.

In 2015/16 we carried out 55,266 day-to-day repairs.



We've improved our service but we still want to do better. We're developing a repairs strategy for the next three years that will help us develop even better services.

As well as day to day repairs we also invest in doing work to improve our properties.

In 2015/16 we spent:



Community investment

Our Community Investment Team helps customers find work or training, gives advice on managing money, and helps customers access benefits they are entitled to but not claiming.

The team also awards grants to organisations who work for the benefit of our customers.

Here's how we did in 2015/16:



158
customers helped
into work



391
customers
given employment
support



388
customers helped
to take part in
volunteering, work
experience, education
or training



120
community projects
funded



£130,000
donated to projects
through our small
grants programme



We helped customers
access over
£1m
in benefits and grants

Visit shgroup.org.uk/southernworks for help finding a job, building your skills or getting training.

Visit shgroup.org.uk/moneymatters for support with financial issues.

Care and Supporting Independence (CASI)

Our dedicated care and support team on the Isle of Wight had a successful year, achieving a number of awards and positive inspection results. The team has also focused on increasing its partnership working with other local agencies.

The CASI team was awarded contracts with the Isle of Wight Council to deliver support services to homeless families, people with mental health problems, young people and people with learning disabilities. The three year contracts began in April 2016.



Residential care home at
22 Argyll Street rated 'Good'
by the Care Quality Commission.



Byrnhill Grove won a **Healthcare award**
for the high quality home cooked meals
provided at the scheme.

35

customers volunteered
for charities including
the Red Cross and RSPCA.



6

supported customers volunteered
to help us at sheltered housing
schemes and gardening groups.

Lettings

Our Lettings Team is responsible for repairs to a property once it becomes vacant and for managing the property until a new customer is ready to move in.

	2014/15	2015/16
Re-let general needs homes	30 days	27 days
Re-let supported homes	26 days	18 days
Overall satisfaction	87%	84%

We listen to our customers to help us improve our lettings service. In the last year we've decreased the time it takes to re-let our homes. This means we're minimising the time our homes are empty, which helps increase income for the Group that we can use to deliver better services.

Our overall customer satisfaction has decreased slightly in the last year. From feedback we've received we know that the standard of our homes at the start of tenancies is an area we need to focus on. We'll continue to work closely with our customers and contractors to improve the standards we offer our customers at the start of their journey with us.

Sue McDonnell joined us in January as our new Head of Empty Homes and Lettings. She said:

"It's an exciting time for the business. I'm looking forward to making a difference for our customers."

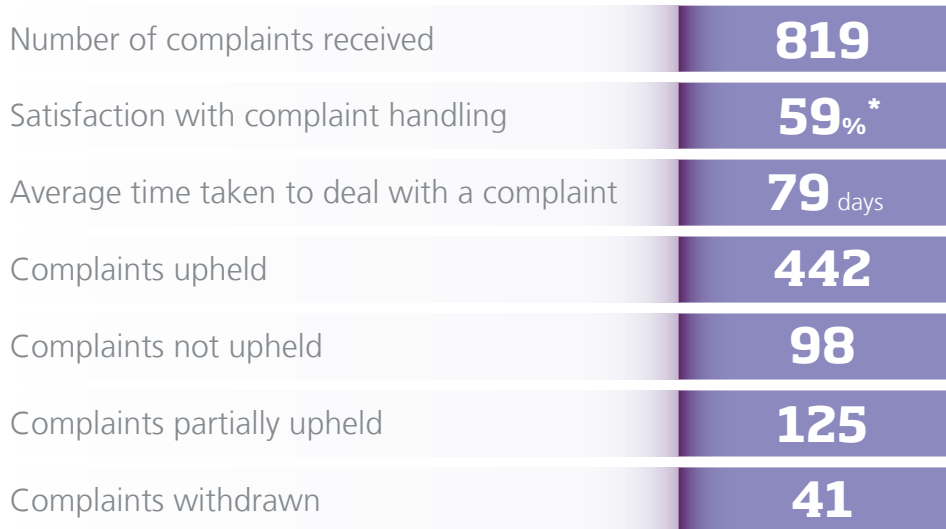
Your feedback

We continued to develop our complaints management service in 2015/16. Most significantly we established a highly skilled Customer Relations Team to respond to all formal complaints.

Each complaint is managed by a Customer Relations Advisor who works to resolve and respond to the issues you raise. The advisor will keep you updated until we have either provided a response or resolved the issue.

Advisors work closely with the Service Improvement Manager to ensure we learn from any complaints. We'll make sure your feedback is translated into service improvements to reduce the likelihood of a customer having to make the same complaint again.

Here's how we did in 2015/16:



*data only includes surveys from Dec 2015 to Mar 2016

GO BACK

Anti-social behaviour (ASB)

We're working to improve our ASB service. You've told us you want to be regularly updated about the actions we've taken and have more face-to-face contact and support that suits you. We'll do our best to make sure this happens.

Here's how we did in 2015/16:

891 cases handled



Overall satisfaction with service

3.4 out of **5**

Court action



3

Evictions

4

Injunctions

1

Undertaking

326



Noise

162



Verbal abuse

99



Drugs

64



Domestic abuse

48



Alcohol

We want to make it as easy as possible to report any problems you're having with ASB. You can now report any issues through our website, via social media or by calling our Customer Service Centre. We're also considering introducing a smartphone app to make it easier for you to report and record incidents.

Information on how we deal with ASB, our commitment to you and the excellent work we are doing is available at shgroup.org.uk/communitysafety

GO BACK