



**Alliance**  
homes

# Customer annual review

2019-20



# CEO introduction

## Welcome to our new style Customer Annual Review.

This Customer Annual Review sets out what's been achieved over the last year, but it also reflects what you've told us about how we're providing services.

At Alliance Homes, we manage 6,468 homes, primarily in North Somerset but stretch across into Bristol, South Gloucestershire and Bath and North East Somerset.

We want to make every house a home and create thriving communities and support you to live independent lives.

To do this we need to understand you and what matters most to you. Over the course of the last year we have been speaking to you to understand more about our current service provision and what you'd like to see in the future.

The second half of this report has been drawn from research conducted by our partner customer research agencies and from feedback from our new online customer voice platform HIVE.

This insight will help us in our decision-making and will help shape the range of services we offer and the way we provide them.

As a result of COVID-19 we know that there will be significant challenges ahead for our economy, society and for our general health and wellbeing. We want to ensure that we are supporting you as best as we can and striving to meet one of our core goals of delivering a great customer experience.

We also want to do more to involve you to support our decision making and we are looking at ways for people to get involved over the next year.

**Louise Swain**  
Chief Executive



## We need to understand what matters most to you.





# Our operational performance

Number of colleagues  
**493**

Number of homes owned  
**6,468**

Average **rent** arrears  
**1.88%**

Operating margin  
**23.7%**

Average **re-let period**  
**29 days**

Meeting our customers' needs  
**73%**

Number of customers  
**8,646**

Number of new homes  
**78**

Number of **hours of care delivered**  
**118,251**

Number of complaints  
**652**



Number of new **windows**  
**284**

Number of **repairs**  
**18,655**

Number of new **heaters & boilers**  
**153**

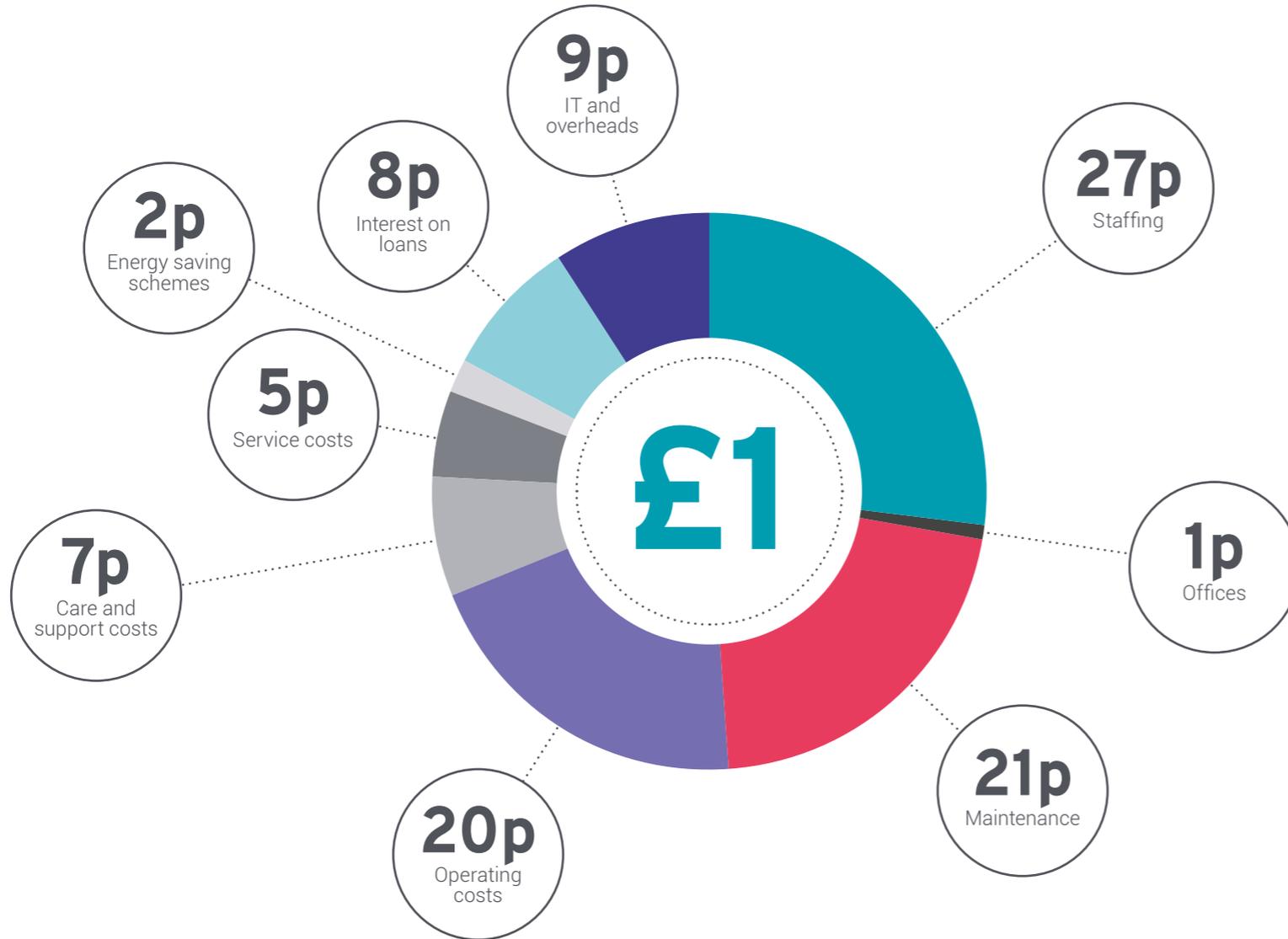
Number of new **bathrooms**  
**234**

Number of new **kitchens**  
**217**

Number of **compliments**  
**196**



# How we spend the £





# Year in review

## Improving customer contact

In April, we introduced a new system, Enghouse, to manage customer calls to our contact centre. This new system gives customers the option of scheduling call backs in busy periods and routes calls to the advisor who'll best be able to answer the query. The system gives us greater oversight of call volumes and enables us to set up post-contact surveys.

## Building 2,000 new homes

More progress was made against our plan to build 2,000 new homes over the next ten years. We built 73 new homes in the financial year and sold five from the previous year, bringing the number to 78. This was slightly shy of our target which was impacted by Covid-19. We've a growing pipeline of new developments coming online including homes in Congresbury, Keynsham, Clevedon and Portishead bringing much needed affordable housing.

## Connecting Care - Phase two

Phase two of our Connecting Care project to bring new technology to the management of Alliance Living Care came during the year with the launch of Cold Harbour and Cell Trak. These IT systems allow carers to view and update customer records in real time and give customers the ability to review their care plans online. The systems also improve the way we manage information, helping us to be more efficient in scheduling in care appointments.

## Pre tenancy pilot launch

Helping customers move into the right home at the start of a tenancy helps get them off to a great start. Our new pre-tenancy support service is a proactive approach to offering guidance and support to help applicants understand what's expected of them when they become our customer. It also sets out how we can help and our remit as your landlord. As well as helping customers plan and prepare for the practicalities and costs of moving, we're making sure that the person who signed them up remains your point of contact so that we're familiar with their individual needs and requirements.

## New look, new fleet

After ten years on the road, our 100 strong fleet of home repairs vans had come to the end of their life cycle. We used the launch of a new fleet to refresh the look of the organisation and went live with this in September. We've taken this across all our offices, customer information and workwear. Feedback from customers and colleagues has been positive and we plan on looking at signage within our neighbourhoods as part of a review of our communities.





**HIVE is alive**

October saw the launch of Alliance HIVE, our new online platform which allows customers to share their views and let us know what they care about most. HIVE allows us to better understand our customers' needs. With HIVE, customers can log in at any time and participate in surveys, polls and discussions. We've started to use the findings from this research to shape our plans and make changes to the way we provide services. If you haven't joined HIVE, why not visit the join 'HIVE' section on our website?

**Connecting with our local community**

We've also been doing more to engage with local councillors including introducing a new councillor newsletter and we hosted an event to let them know about the range of services we provide and how we're supporting residents in their wards. With many of our homes located in North Somerset we have been strengthening our relationship with the Council so we can do more to support our local community.

**New instant repairs feedback**

In November, we launched a new SMS customer feedback platform within our Home Repairs Service (HRS). Customers who receive a home repair are sent a text message with a link to a short survey. This feedback gives us a real feel for how we're doing and allows us to help better shape our future services.

**Highest regulatory rating**

In December we were awarded the highest grading of G1/V1 (governance and financial viability) by the Regulator of Social Housing. This rating is aligned to our credit rating and supports our development plans to build 2,000 new homes over the next ten years.

**Alliance Living Care Bristol rated good**

Our care colleagues in Bristol achieved a rating of 'good' from the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in January. The report said that customers were happy with their care and all felt supported by staff who were described as kind and caring and helped to promote independence.



**HIVE allows us to better understand our customers' needs.**





# Customer involvement & scrutiny

We have invested in a new research platform, Alliance HIVE, to understand what matters to you. Through this platform we can conduct a range of surveys, polls, discussion forums and focus groups to understand customer views. This has enabled us to have a meaningful dialogue with more customers than ever and allows us to truly represent the breadth of opinion and view from different customer groups - not just those who were able to engage with us through previous models. This goes far beyond traditional resident involvement approaches and is creating a truly representative and inclusive customer voice capability in real time.

We know that many of you were not able to participate in our previous customer involvement approaches, which typically happened during office hours. HIVE enables you to participate in a range of activities at a time that is convenient to you and you can be involved as much or as little as you like. We are also continuing some telephone surveys to ensure we can reach everyone.

We have chosen this approach as a core platform to ensure as many customers as possible can participate. Importantly, it is also delivered through a partner agency to maintain complete confidentiality and anonymity – you can be confident to give honest feedback without worry – which you have told us is important.

We currently have around 500 customers who have signed up to HIVE and in the coming year are developing other new approaches. For an opportunity to participate and also influence the development, sign up by visiting the Alliance website.

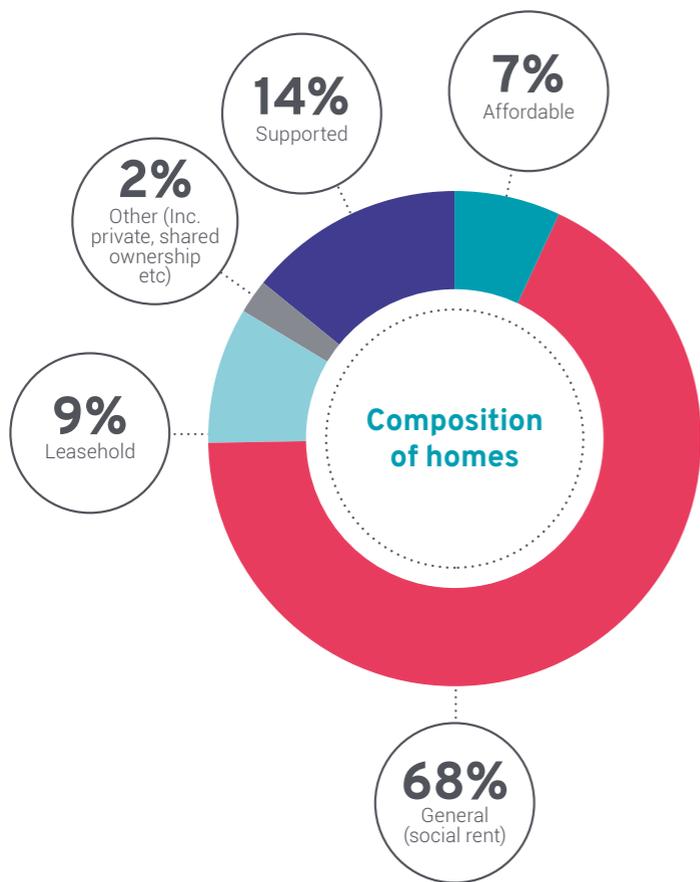
In the coming year we will be sharing our customer experience outcomes and inviting you to comment. We'll also be asking you to be part of the conversation in developing key policies for resident involvement, customer complaints and a customer service charter.

Alongside this, we are also developing real time measurement of customer experience through our transactional touchpoints. We have an instant SMS feedback programme for our Homes Repairs Service and are developing consistent professionalised approaches to feedback across the business.

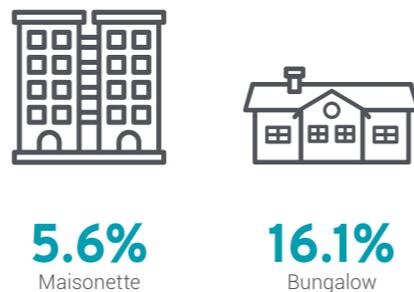
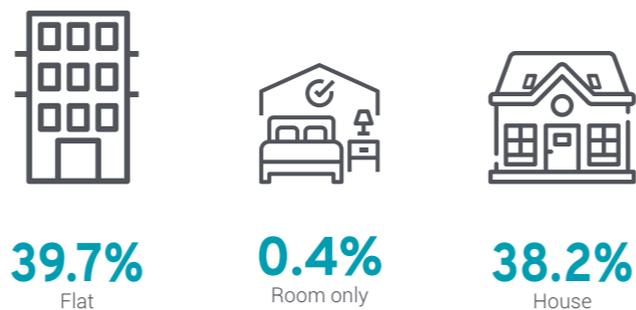




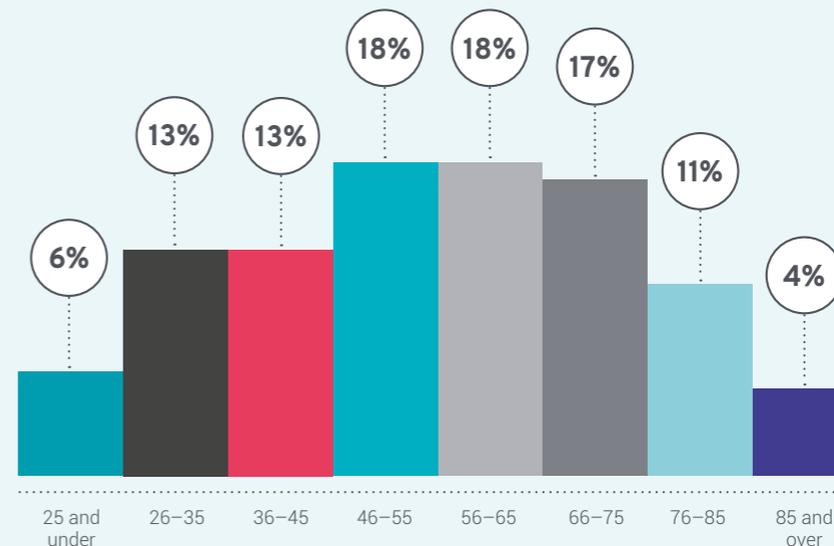
# Understanding our customers



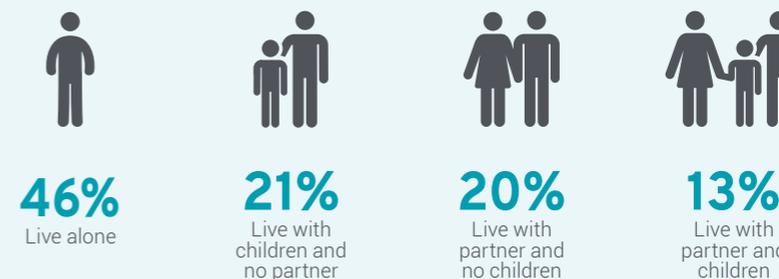
## Property type



## Customer age



## Who do you live with?





# A digital world

In an increasing digital world, many of you are embracing technology and are increasingly using online shopping and other services. Over half of you have said they would prefer to arrange repairs appointment time slots online.

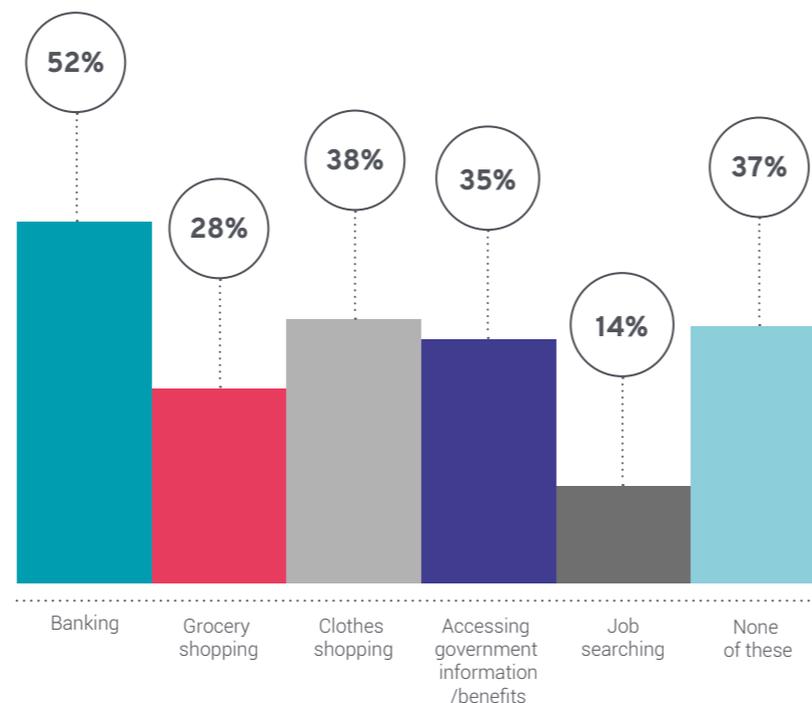
## Daily life

Many of you live busy and active lives, seeing family and friends regularly. Around 60% find time for hobbies and interests and over half of you feel happy with your life.

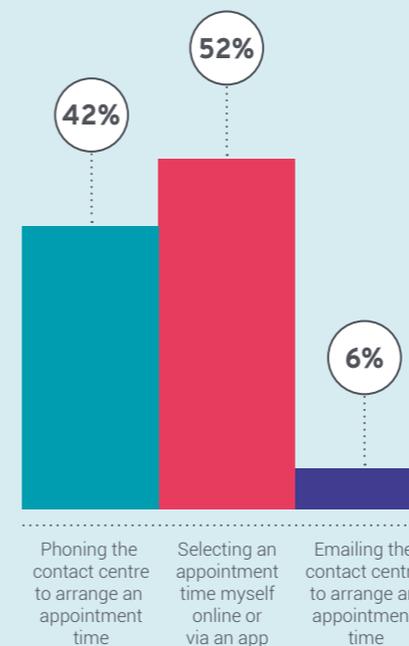
However, there are many who do not have a strong support system around them and are experiencing loneliness and social isolation. Around a third of you say you feel lonely a lot of the time and for a fifth, a week can go by without speaking to anyone.

Around 15% of you feel you don't have enough time in the day to get everything done. Typically, you are juggling paid employment and parental or caring responsibilities.

## Do you use the internet for any of the following...



## How would you prefer to arrange your repairs appointment timeslot with Alliance Homes?





# Customer insight

## Homes and maintenance

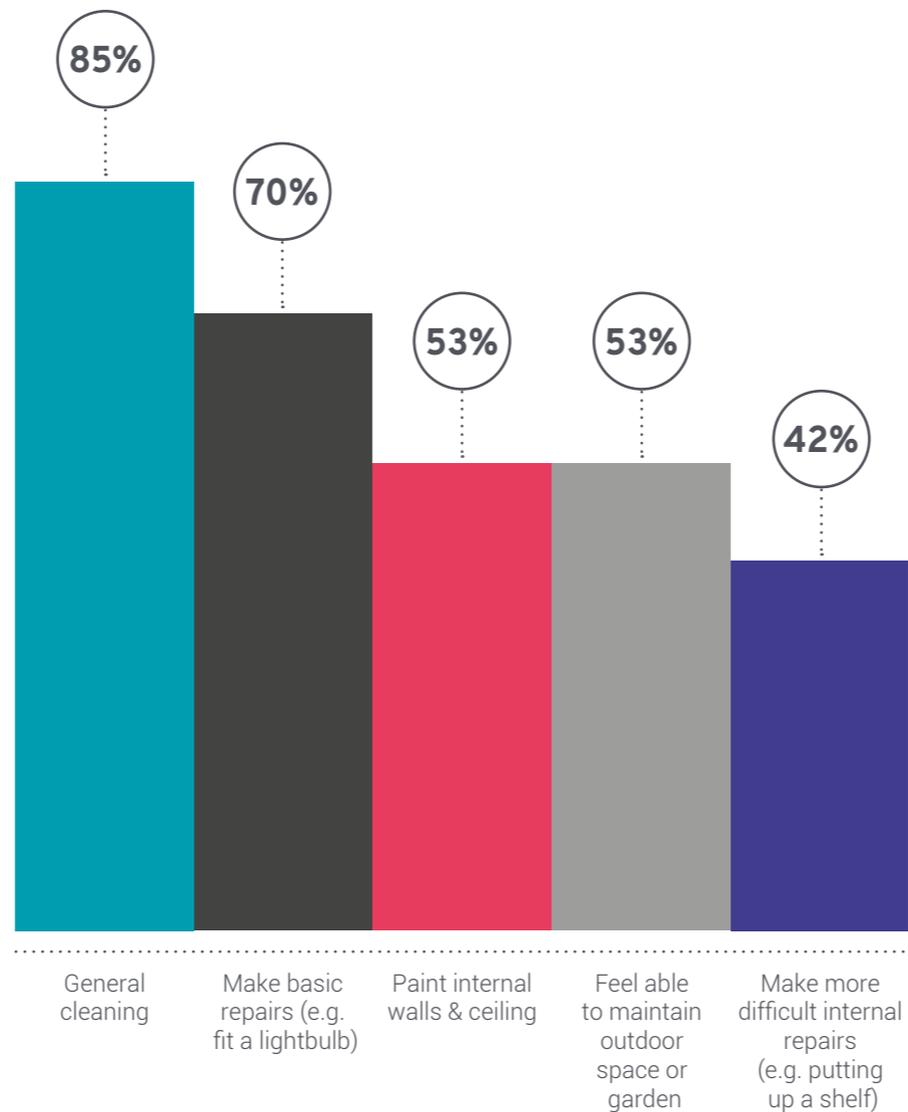
We are committed to providing homes that are affordable, warm, safe and secure. We also want to ensure that our homes are well maintained and each year we carry out thousands of home repairs as well as replacing kitchens, bathrooms and windows.

We know condition of home is really important to you. 71% of you say the overall condition of your home is good and over 80% of you feel safe in your home.

In terms of home maintenance, around half of you do not feel able to maintain an outdoor space or paint walls and almost 60% struggle with DIY. 15% of you find it difficult to keep up with general cleaning.

Many of you would prefer for Alliance to fully paint the walls in a neutral colour at the start of a tenancy.

### Customer ability to maintain home



### What we're doing

Based on this insight, we have developed a home standard that takes forward the recommendation that we fully paint the walls in a neutral colour. Customers will still have the option to decorate to their personal taste later, if this is important to them.

We have implemented a quality assurance stage into the pre-letting process where a Tenancy Officer ensures each empty home meets the new standard and is ready for the customer to move in.

We assess customers' needs at the lettings stage and make referrals to our own support service and external agencies where appropriate.





## Your local neighbourhood

**57% of you feel that most people would like to live in their area.**

We asked you to spontaneously recall the parts of your neighbourhood that you like most and least, as a way of determining key drivers of your overall neighbourhood satisfaction.

The six key positive drivers are: local shops and access to amenities; green spaces; good neighbours and community spirit; transport links; a tidy, well-maintained area and feeling safe.

Key negative drivers include anti-social behaviour; poor transport links; lack of car parking; heavy traffic and noisy main roads; dog mess and litter; poorly maintained gardens and fly-tipping.

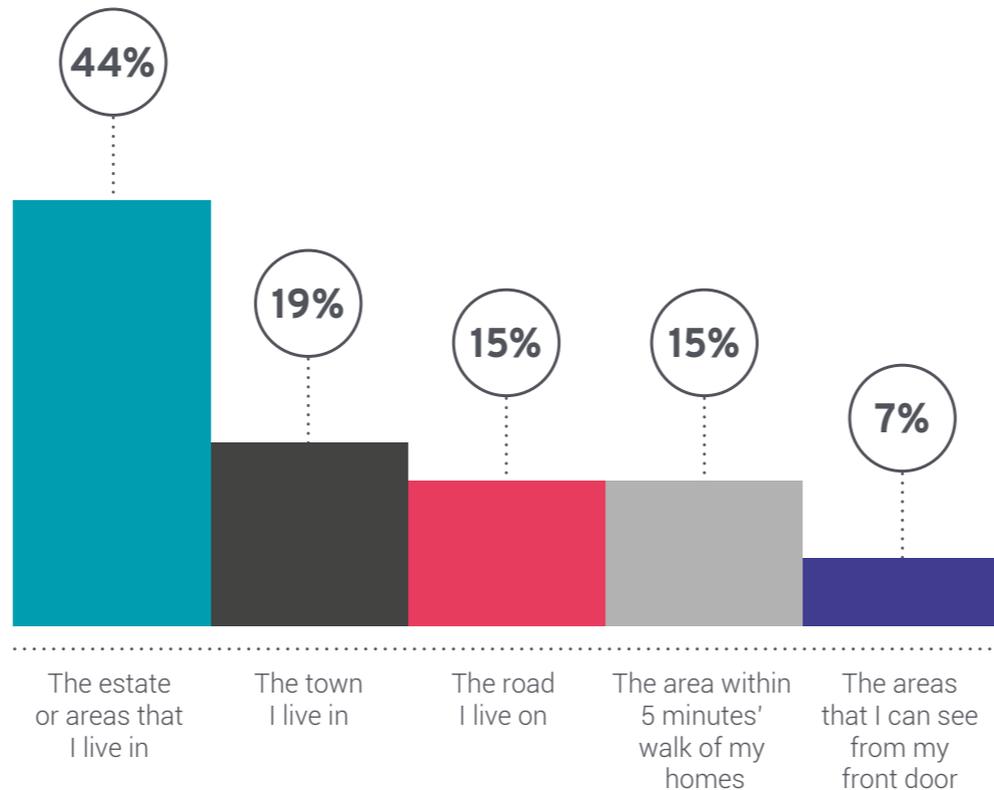
Overall, 83% of you feel safe in your home. 78% feel safe in the neighbourhood that you live in.

### What we're doing

We have undertaken a full review of the Community Environmental Warden service and will be using the outcome of that review to define a revised service offer within our neighbourhoods to address the issues which we can influence and are of greatest concern to you.

We have reviewed our anti social behaviour service offer and are implementing a new approach to the management of anti-social behaviour issues in our communities based on your insight.

## What do you consider to be included in your neighbourhood?



## What makes a great neighbourhood?

- 1 Local shops and access to amenities
- 2 Green spaces and quiet area
- 3 Nice neighbours and community spirit
- 4 Bus service and transport
- 5 Tidy, well maintained area
- 6 Safe and lack of anti-social behaviour

## What is a neighbourhood issue?

- 1 Anti-social behaviour
- 2 Poor transport
- 3 Car parks and lack of parking spaces
- 4 Heavy traffic and noisy main roads
- 5 Dogs and abundance of dog mess
- 6 Poor upkeep of gardens/fly tipping



## Customer service

We want to be known for providing our customers with a great experience when they use our services or interact with us.

### Satisfaction with quality of home repairs

Feedback from our SMS survey shows our Home Repairs Service operatives are respectful of customers and your homes and are friendly, polite and professional. We know that you are generally satisfied with our repairs service but we need to improve the service we offer to report repairs.

#### You said...

- **Easy to get repair fixed – 82%**
- **Satisfaction with repair – 89%**
- **Easy to report a repair – 63%.**

Areas for improvement include shorter waiting times to get through to a customer service adviser; shorter waiting times for a repair appointment and ensuring repair issues are not left outstanding. Communication and information throughout the process, particularly around changes to appointment times is another area for focus in the coming year.

The insight provides clear evidence of demand for a digital self-select appointment platform. Self-select online or via an app is the preference for around half of customers overall. We will be developing our digital service offer through 2021.

### What we're doing

We are in the process of transforming our Contact Centre, moving towards the creation of a multi skilled team who can answer the full range of enquiries we receive quickly and effectively at the first point of contact.

We are looking at introducing an automated payment line for customers as well as a customer portal to enable a self service option for customers.

We have restructured the Tenancy Services team to ensure customers have the same point of contact from moving into their new home right through the lifetime of their tenancy which will enable us to support customers who need it and take a more proactive approach to the way we support our customers to manage their tenancies.



**We want to be known for providing our customers with a great experience when they use our services or interact with us.**





# How we're performing

## How we measure performance

We have developed a clear set of key performance indicators (KPIs) based on what you have told us is important. This will enable us to track our progress.

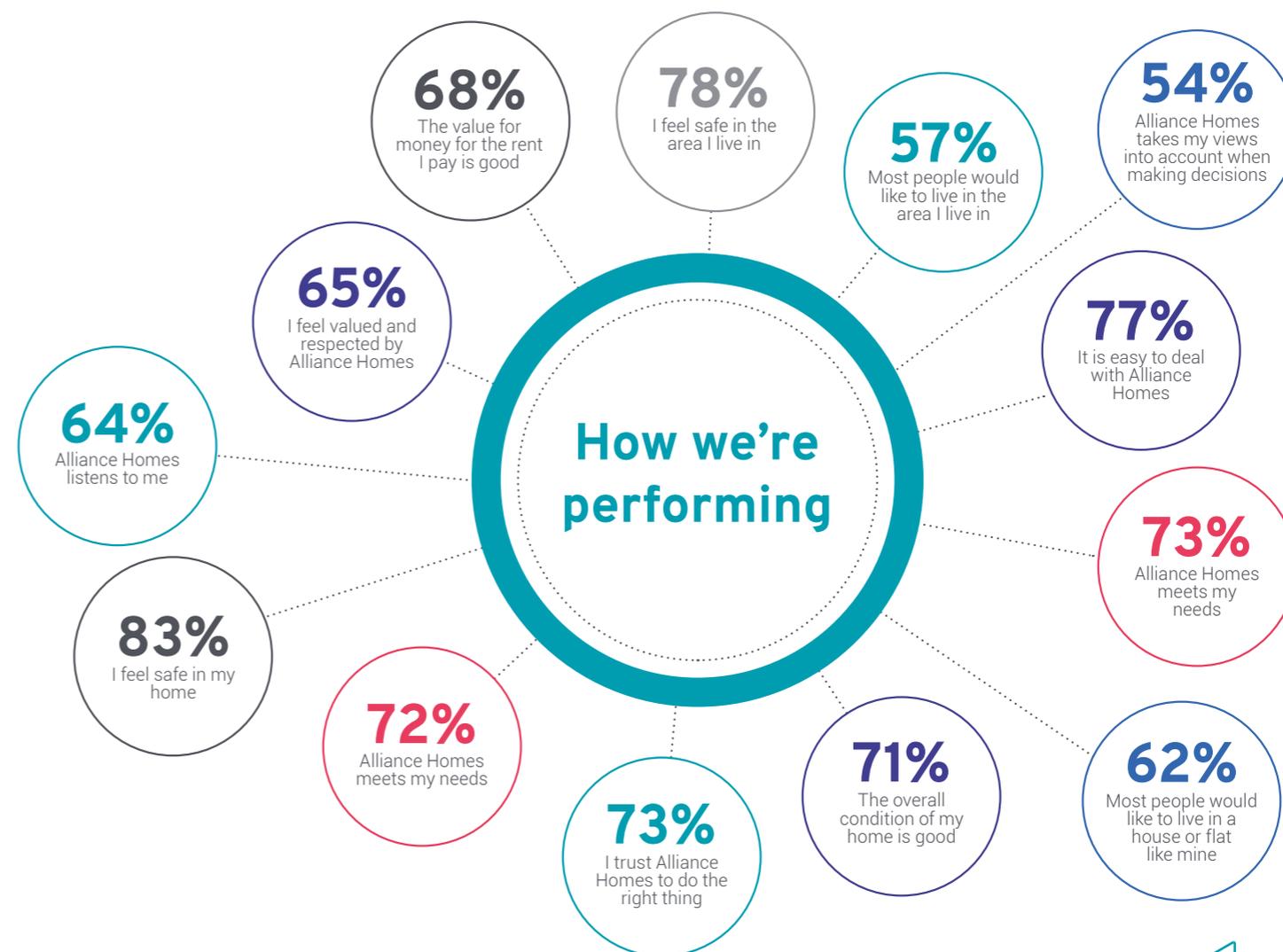
We will report against the KPIs twice a year and we will share these with customers.

We will also record your experience across our range of activities at transactional touchpoints to enable us to understand differences and drive consistency and quality.

- HRS SMS instant feedback – customers receive a simple SMS survey within 24 hours of an operative visiting their home.
- Contact centre – customers may be selected to complete a few short questions following their call to our contact team by staying on the call.
- Major works – customers will receive an email/postal or telephone survey following completion of a range of work (including bathrooms & kitchens; windows; roofing; external decoration etc).
- New customer experience – assessment of experience within first 6-12 months of tenancy.
- Support – customers will receive a survey following the support they have received.
- Continuous ad hoc research and dialogue with customers on HIVE to improve customer experience.

All data will be managed by our Business Insights team and our partner agencies. This ensures complete confidentiality and anonymity for our customers in line with Market Research Society (MRS) Code of Conduct.

## Our customer experience performance 2019/2020



We have developed a clear set of key performance indicators (KPIs) based on what customers have told us is important.



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