



ANNUAL REPORT 2023



Last year, we created a new style of annual report to demonstrate more clearly how well we are complying with guidance for housing associations laid out in the Social Housing White Paper.

This year, we've focused our Annual Report for 2022/23 around the same White Paper commitments which residents can expect from us to help show our progress:

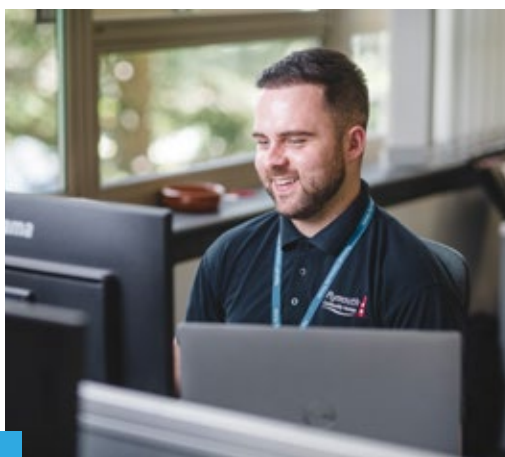
1. To be safe in your home

2. To know how your landlord is performing

3. To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly

4. To have your voice heard

Here's what we've achieved over the last 12 months.



1. To be safe in your home

It is important you feel safe in your home. To ensure that all our residents are living in safe environments we have...

- Completed 297 fire risk assessments – 11.6% more than last year
- Completed 100% of required communal asbestos checks
- Completed 99.95% of required gas safety checks
- Ensured 98.37% of properties had a valid 5-year electrical test
- Completed 88.36% of required water safety risk assessments
- We adopted a new, proactive approach to tackling damp and mould in our homes, created new roles to drive forward better ways of working, and are introducing an improved, faster rectification process.
- We continued working hard to tackle anti-social behaviour issues, and more residents were satisfied with how their ASB complaints were handled



A high-quality affordable home for everyone

PCH Mission Statement, Strategic Business Plan

2. To know how your landlord is performing

We want you to know how we are performing so you can see how we are spending our time and money.

Energy efficiency of our homes

On average, the energy efficiency of our homes is a C rating on a scale of A to G.

At the end of March 2023, 71.42% of our homes had an energy rating of A to C – a small increase on last year's figure.

We've carried out energy upgrades to 24 homes in a £1.6m project which benefited from £275K of funding from Wave 1 of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, and successfully secured a further £5.6m of funding in Wave 2 of the fund which we will match-fund with £8.6m to make a further 600 of our homes more energy efficient.

Finances

As of March 2023, our financial position remained strong with low debt of £122m while owning properties of £590m, and our rent

arrears stayed low at 1.48%.

Our operating surplus was £5.8 million – down £2.7 million from last year, which was a result of the challenges presented by greatly increased rates of inflation and cost-of-living price rises.

We remain in the top quartile for our management costs when benchmarked against other housing associations, which demonstrates PCH's commitment to obtaining best value for money for its residents.

We were proud to maintain our A+ credit rating despite the financial pressures, and we remain a secure organisation for investors.

We retained the highest regulatory judgement of G1 for our governance from the Regulator but, along with a number of other social housing organisations, our financial viability was regraded from V1 to V2 as a result of the economic climate.

“Without shared ownership, we would have had no choice but to move to a nearby town. But now we can stay put and enjoy our retirement.”

Shane, SO Living homebuyer



Repairs

During 2022-2023, we completed 56,358 repairs – 2% more than the previous year.

On average, we completed these repairs within 13.14 calendar days.

We completed 97.53% of emergency repairs within 24 hours and 89.67% of routine repairs within 20 working days. This showed a small drop from last year, when the figures were 98.05% for emergency repairs and 95.01% for routine repairs.

We increased how much we spent on repairs to our homes by more than £1.5million – spending £16.6m against a budget of £14.3m.

And we invested £22.1m on improvements and upgrades to our homes - £3.1m more than 2021/22.

Our homes

The number of our rented homes increased to 14,139, and we now have 96 in Cornwall – up by 20 from last year, 23 in the South Hams (an increase of 10), and 40 in West Devon.

We have 1,696 leasehold homes – 12 more than last year - and 336 shared ownership home – 19 more than last year – as we continue helping people get a foot on the property ladder.

We completed 121 new homes this year – 55 for affordable rent, 33 for social rent, 21 shared ownership homes and 12 for open market sales.

Highlights of the year included building our 1,000th home, and completing Phase 5 of the North Prospect regeneration as we marked the 10th anniversary of the scheme.

New developments started in Saltash and Whitleigh, and we announced plans for a £33.5m eco-friendly neighbourhood in partnership with Plymouth City Council to deliver more than 140 new affordable homes in the city centre.



£22.1m
invested in
improvements and
upgrades to our homes

Environmental Services

We helped over 450 residents with their gardens through our garden assistance scheme, and kept 429 planters looking vibrant.

The caretaking team carried out 14,832 stairwell cleans across our estate – an average of 252 a week – and cleaned 784 empty homes so they could be relet to new tenants, with 422 empty gardens cleared and tidied.

Teams removed 357 tonnes of rubbish from 838 properties, and cleared 179,981kg of fly tipped rubbish from surrounding land.

A further 1,564 ad hoc requests were completed including graffiti removal, powerwashing and grounds maintenance work.

We secured £7.6m of grant funding from Homes England and Plymouth City Council to help us buy a £21.5m former MoD estate in Plymouth which will provide 86 three-bed homes for social rent and shared ownership sale to local families in housing need.

SO Living homebuyer Shane, who bought a shared ownership home with his wife Jane in Newton Ferrers where he had lived for 60 years, said: “Without shared ownership, we would have had no choice but to move to a nearby town. But now we can stay put and enjoy our retirement.”

On average we took 36.59 days to re-let routine, or standard, empty homes – an improvement on last year when the figure was 43 days, but still longer than we’d like, with our target being 20 days.



450+
residents received help
with their gardens

3. To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly

Sometimes we don't get it right, and we welcome complaints so we can put things right when we need to.

It's important we deal with your complaints promptly and fairly so we work to targets to make sure that happens.

There were 436 complaints received in 2022/2023 – this was an increase of 45.8% on the 299 last year, which reflects a national trend.

A survey of 278 housing associations across the UK found that complaints had increased on average by 78% since March 2022.

PCH had 31.14 complaints per 1,000 homes last year, so we rank in the second quartile when compared to other housing associations.

Despite the increased volume of complaints, we improved how quickly we responded, and dealt with 99.29% of complaints within the published timescales – closer to our target of 100%, and an improvement on last year's figure of 98.83%.

More residents were satisfied with the handling of their complaint too – 87% up from 61% in 2021/22.

And customer satisfaction was high overall – at 86.06% with overall resident satisfaction of 85.59%.

We want to learn from any complaints we receive, and have made changes during the year as a result of lessons learnt through complaints - for example:

- Changes were made to our Alterations to Homes policy and our Complaints policy following feedback which highlighted the need for more specific information to be included.
- The process for resident consultations was changed to ensure they are followed up with clear, relevant communication to residents to let them know the outcome of a consultation exercise.
- Improved guidance was provided to contractors to ensure they are aware of the PCH code of conduct they are expected to follow when working for us.

We produce an annual report which compares our complaints numbers with the previous two years and helps us monitor any trends.

To make the complaints process easier, we have supported residents to report complaints in different ways, and we received complaints from 11 different communication sources in 2022/23 – one more than last year.

We also increased promotion of how to make a complaint through our newsletters, website and communication channels to help people understand the process and feel empowered to make complaints where needed.

Our customer-focused approach was recognised as we secured the Customer Service Excellence accreditation for a second year.

26% increase in resident satisfaction



4. To have your voice heard

We are committed to ensuring residents have opportunities to get involved in how we make decisions, and shape what happens in their communities.

In 2022/23 we delivered 31 training courses – four more than last year – for 165 residents, up from 126 in 2021/22. These included employment skills, first aid, food safety, digital and IT courses.

We held 31 resident involvement consultations, and 4,953 surveys, responses and attendances were completed – an increase on the 2,288 last year.

We increased the number of residents on our engagement register by 44% to 932.

Investing in our communities is important to us, and this year, we invested £812,000 in community development - £112,000 more than last year – and completed 43 community projects.

These included tree planting, gardening schemes and community groups like Men's Shed.

PCH resident Mick said: "I have been at the Janner Men's Shed since day one and I have enjoyed every minute of it. I lost my wife eight years ago and since then I moved from once place to another, and I didn't know anybody. When I first moved here, I was told about the Janner Men's Shed and I went along to see what it was all about."



“I have been at the Janner Men's Shed since day one and I have enjoyed every minute of it.”

Mick, PCH resident

We formed a new partnership with LiveWell and have agreed to jointly fund a programme of health initiatives aimed at improving lives.

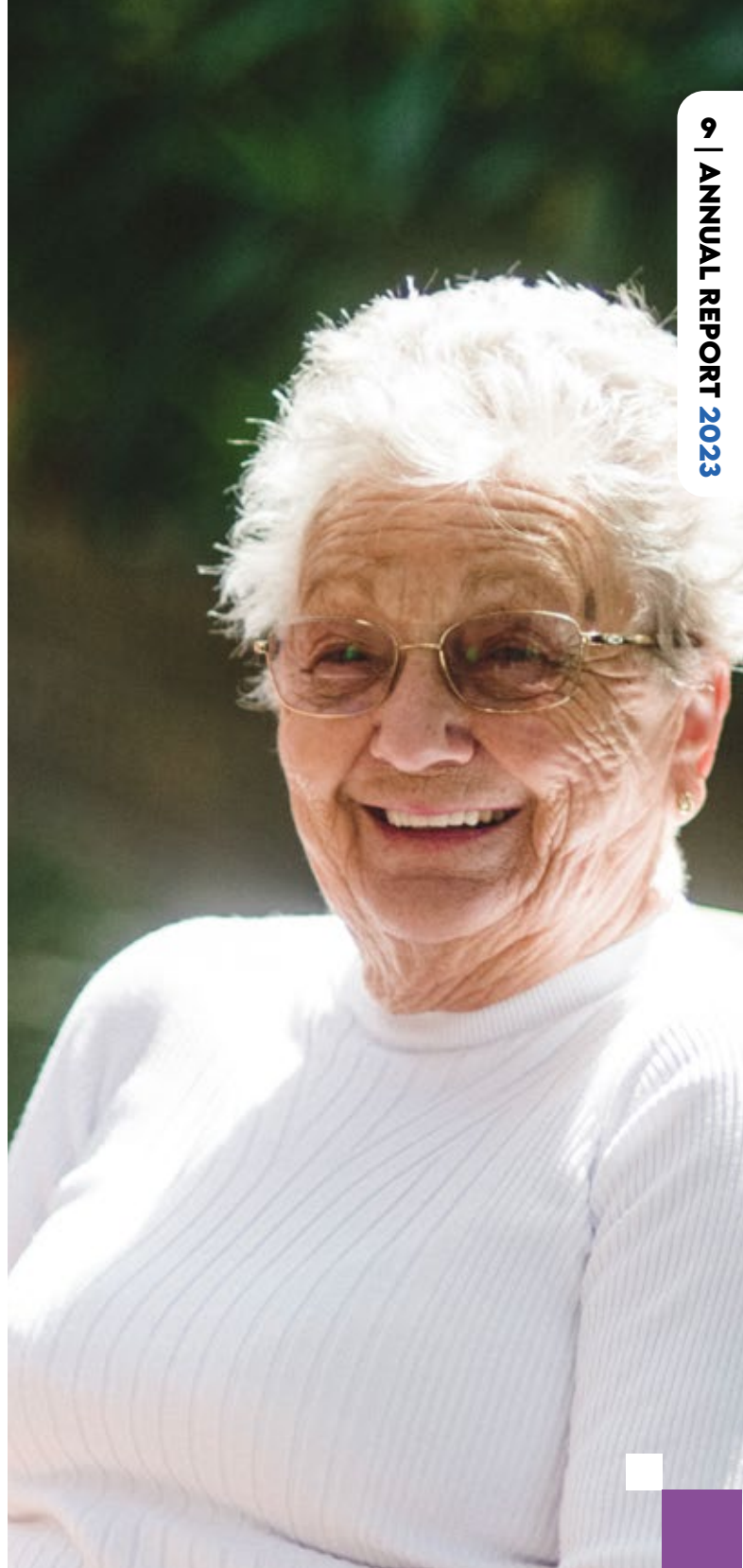
Jenette, a resident at a sheltered housing scheme where a new community garden was created, said: "This is the start of a new beginning and I love that it is bringing everyone together. Without the support of our PCH Housing with Support officers we wouldn't have got to where we are now."

Our staff have completed 150 hours of voluntary work through our Make a Difference scheme – a huge rise on last year's figure of 25.5.

We supported local charities including Woodside Animal Shelter and Gables Cats and Dogs Home, as well as Keyham Green Places Foodbank.

Helen Lecointe, Manager of Woodside Animal Sanctuary, said: "The support we have received from Plymouth Community Homes has been wonderful. It made it possible for us to help more animals in need - literally lifesaving."

And we helped families affected by financial hardship, supporting 202 people through our Financial Support Fund and supporting residents to claim £369K of additional benefits they were entitled to.



**Want to know more
about what we're doing?**

Visit our website at
www.plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk

£812k

**invested in community
development**

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YEAR END MARCH 2023



Plumer House, Tailyour Road, Crownhill, Plymouth PL6 5DH
info@plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk | www.plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk