

Annual Report 2023 - 2024

This annual report was originally published as a single web page. The content below is a copy of that page, which was removed during the Cornerstone website refresh in November 2025.



Welcome to our annual report to residents for the year April 2023 to March 2024

We work together to create places that people love to
come home to.

✔ Great places

✔ Great business

✔ Great services

✔ Great people

“ Welcome

Welcome to our 2023/24 annual report - our first since Adam, Cornerstone's new Chair, and I stepped into our new roles here at Cornerstone. This report describes how we are performing and what we achieved with you last year. We've shaped the report with you in mind, sharing helpful information focussing on the Cornerstone things that matter to you most as residents.

Everything we do here at Cornerstone is about warm, safe, affordable and comfortable – homes that you are proud to come home to. This year has been no exception, as we began asking you more questions about the services you receive from us as part of the new Tenant Satisfaction Measures, which the Regulator of Social Housing introduced. The results are published [here](#), and whilst it is great that overall service satisfaction was 86.1%, we want to continue improving services in 2024/25, having taken on board the comments you've made.

We know that we need to do more about responding in a timely way to your complaints when we don't get it right and we are working on this with the introduction of our new contact and relationship management system.

To provide good services we will be focussed on listening to residents and what you want at every level of decision making throughout the organisation. In the year we continued to work alongside our vibrant Resident Engagement Panel and there is more information about their work in this report.

In 2023/24 we completed 3682 responsive repairs to your homes, and you told us that overall, we are doing this well as 91% of you are satisfied with the way we carry out repairs.

We plan to listen and carefully notice what you tell us, learning from the information and knowledge we have about homes and residents as well as we can. Our aim next year is to work more efficiently and be even better at using the information we hold to provide homes and services that meet the diverse needs you have as residents. This also means giving you greater value for money at a time when the cost-of-living challenges have dented residents' income more than ever before.

In 2024 we are looking forward to stepping up the number of new affordable and social homes we build and being able to house more families as a result. By 2025 we will be aiming to build more than 40 new homes every year.

Thank you for taking the time to read this report. We value your suggestions about how we can do things better whether you tell us about this report, your homes or our services – we really would love to hear from you! You can reach us at mail@cornerstonehousing.net by phone on 01392 273462

Adam Carrick Chair

Harriet Bosnell CEO



Highlights from 2023/2024



Janet Gale, Anne Seaborne & Peter Howard Williams visiting Howill Close

We have reinvested...

- £1.53 m on completing 8 new homes
- £194 k on repairing empty properties
- £1.56 m on replacing kitchens, windows, bathrooms, doors and windows
- £626 k on carrying out repairs
- £379 k on keeping homes safe

What residents thought of our services...

- 86.1% of you were satisfied with our overall service
- 85.8% of you were satisfied that their home is well maintained
- 88.6% of you were satisfied with the overall repairs service over the last 12 months
- 86.3% of you were satisfied that their home is safe
- 73.2% of you were satisfied that we make a positive contribution to neighbourhoods



Cornerstone staff at Selfield event

We are now completing quarterly surveys on tenant satisfaction using the Tenant Satisfaction Measures.

You can view our 2023/2024 results here



Residents at our Resident Engagement panel relaunch

We have received...

- 113 compliments
- 57 complaints
- 52.8% of you were satisfied with our approach to complaints handling

We have completed...

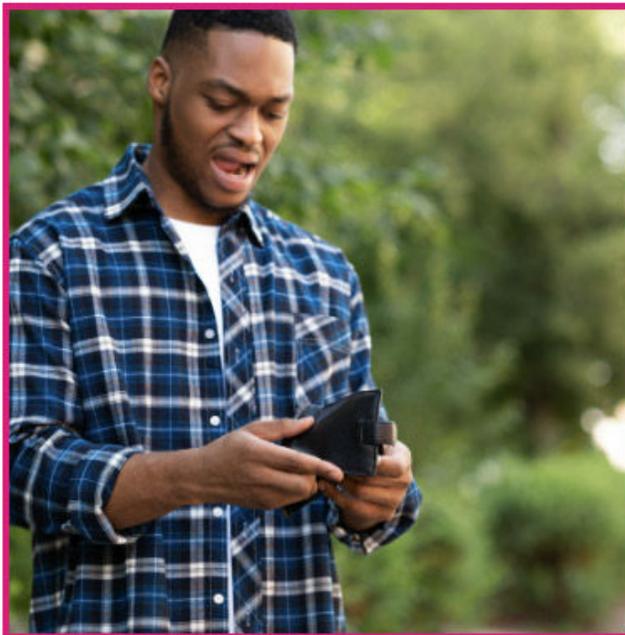
- 165 homes have had their windows replaced
- 88.6% of you were satisfied with the time taken to complete their most recent repair
- 100% of our gas servicing were up to date
- 100% of our fire assessment were up to date



Direct labour operative fitting new windows



Support provided to you



Financial help through the cost of living crisis

The cost of living crisis has unfortunately meant many households have been feeling worse off and worried about their financial situation.

We supported 20 residents who were in hardship with vouchers for shopping or energy and issued 16 foodbank vouchers.

We continued to work in partnership with HomeMaker Southwest, investing a further £5,875 in direct funding, for them to provide expert advice and guidance to residents who are experiencing debt or financial hardship.

The total financial gain for customers supported by HomeMaker in 2023/24 was £27,686. This included helping them to access welfare benefits they were entitled to but not claiming.

If you are worried about your finances, or experiencing debt, please contact us to discuss the support we can provide.

Westcountry savings and loans

We continued to support and work in partnership with, Westcountry Savings and Loans, an ethical community-owned, not-for-profit credit union. We are part of the credit union's sustainability partnership which includes the credit union and other housing associations. We work together to create better outcomes for customers and communities by raising awareness of credit unions and promoting financial well-being for residents

Visit www.westcountry.org.uk for more information



Tenancy Support

We provided £31k on community investment and financial or tenancy support to residents. This included funding specialist support for people needing help to declutter their homes or gardens.

20

residents helped with shopping or energy vouchers

£26k

spent on tenant support and engagement activities

£27,686k

in financial improvements for customers through money advice





Our work in your communities

We are proud of our neighbourhoods and we are committed to finding new ways to engage and support our residents. We are always working to improve connections and to work together with residents and community partners to make your neighbourhoods great places to live. Some of the community projects we have been involved in this year include;



Selfield

For a Christmas treat for 2023 we hired Selfield for our residents to attend for free with their families and friends. Over 100 people came and took selfies, made crafts and interacted with staff.



Gardening Competition

We held our first gardening competition for residents to enter. We had some beautiful gardens submitted. The Resident Engagement Panel judged the entries and crowned winners in the 4 categories Best Overall Garden, Most Creative Use of Space, and Best Young Gardener.



Skip day at Ebrington Road and Mildmay Close

Our Housing officers joined tenants at Ebrington Road and Mildmay Close for a skip day with Coastal Recycling. Our skip days are of great use to residents and help people to declutter and remove bulky items from their homes.



School Fete

We attended the Bowhill school fete, running an unlock-the-house game. Our staff spoke to many residents and enjoyed being in the local community.



Colouring Competitions

We ran two competitions across the year at Christmas and Easter. For every entry we received an Easter egg or Chocolate Santa was given to the Resident. The pictures brighten up our Western Way Office.



Exeter City Council Wellbeing Community Event – Merrivale Park

We attended a well-being event at Merrivale Park arranged by Exeter City Council Wellbeing and the Live & Move team. We donated yoga mats, fitness bands and footballs for residents to use. These have continued to be used at Merrivale Park fitness sessions which are free to attend.

Resolving Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)



ASB can have a very negative impact on residents, often making them feel unsafe and unhappy in their own homes or neighbourhoods. We know that reporting it can be a worry for some people and you may feel we can't do anything to help but we will work with residents and other agencies, like the Police, to try and tackle it. We are proud that 75% of residents who reported ASB to us were satisfied with how we handled it. There are still improvements we can make to our service and we remain committed to doing that.

We received 67 new reports of anti-social behaviour in the year, the most common cause of anti-social behaviour was verbal abuse or threats accounting for 26% of cases. Drug-related activity was the cause of almost 15% of cases opened.

We work collaboratively with several community safety partnerships, which include the Police, Local Authorities and other agencies, to provide safe and secure homes and communities.

67

new reports of anti-social
behaviour received

89

cases were resolved

75%

of customers who provided
feedback were satisfied
with how we managed their
case

50%

were satisfied with the
outcome of their case

92%

said they would report ASB
to us again.

Safeguarding our residents

There were 67 safeguarding concerns reported in the year, this is where someone is worried about the health, safety or wellbeing of a resident they know or have come into contact with.

18 of those our housing officers identified through their engagement with residents and others were reported to us. 60 of those were related to vulnerable adults and 7 involved concerns about children, some involved both.

Our Housing Team made 6 referrals to social work teams, 1 of those were formally investigated and 6 domestic violence referrals were made to the police-led multi-agency partnership.

We work in partnership with a range of organisations including Adult Social Care, Children's Services, the Local Authority and the Police, working together for the safety and wellbeing of residents.

Please do get in touch with us if you are ever worried about a resident's health, safety or wellbeing.

73.4%

of residents were satisfied that we keep communal areas clean and well-maintained

Grounds maintenance and cleaning service

In the year we introduced QR code posters in communal areas which link to a digital survey for residents to give regular feedback on services and to highlight health and safety issues they might spot.

We also created an Estate Champion role for interested resident volunteers to feedback to us about their neighbourhood and review the communal services we provide. You can find more information on that here [Estate Champion – Cornerstone Housing](#).

In 2024/25 we are completing a review of how we deliver these communal area services to ensure we provide great service and value for money.

64%

of residents say their service charges were value for money



Hearing your voice



Residents Engagement Panel

The Residents Engagement Panel have been exceptionally busy this year, here is a glimpse:

- reviewing and updating the tenants handbook
- attending various community events
- judging the annual gardening competition
- reviewing anti-social behaviour policy
- reviewing parking policy
- reviewing the social media policy
- reviewing gardening and maintenance of grounds policy

The old 'Tenants Performance Panel' was re-launched and renamed Residents Engagement Panel, we think this better describes who we represent, residents, and what we are about, engaging with you.

We now have a very strong panel of three men and three women, working hard for all the residents' interests. We would still like new members, and we are keen to welcome residents from a diverse range of backgrounds. If you are interested, please contact Cornerstone or get in touch with the panel directly via [Facebook](#).

As Residents Engagement Panel, we aim to work with Cornerstone and the Board, in the best interest of the Residents. YOU, the Residents are our most important people, and we need your voice to be heard loud and strong, making sure that we all work together in harmony.

Janet Gale (Resident, Chair of REP and Cornerstone Board Member)



Hearing customer voices

Our Board and Executive Team have engaged with residents in the following ways to ensure we take customer views on Board:

- the chair of the Resident Engagement Panel is a resident and attends Board meetings to provide regular reports and to have a say in decisions made at Board level,
- other Board members regularly attend the Resident Engagement Panel meetings to hear views directly from residents,
- the Board has access to all individual comments made by residents in their annual satisfaction survey and can use this to challenge the Executive on their work and how specific issues are being tackled,
- Board members and the Executive have been out engaging with residents at community events across the year, hearing views directly from residents in our communities.



Mystery Shopper

We introduced mystery shopping in the year, this provides residents the opportunity to give us feedback on their experiences with us, straight after they happen. This might be following a call to report a repair or any engagement you have had with us. If you're interested in knowing more, please get in touch.

[For more information click here](#)

Learning from complaints

We received 57 complaints and upheld 26 of them, 15 fully and 11 partially.

That means we could have done better and we are listening and learning from that valuable feedback.

Complaints received were related to the following areas:

Reason for complaint	No. received
Maintenance of the home	23
Staff communication	8
Other reasons	6
Lettings	1
Property condition	3
ASB case handling	7
Ground maintenance	1
Staff performance	2
Rent	1
Communal area maintenance	5
Grand Total	57

*Other - parking charges from PCN, multiple (comms, maintenance, repairs, Out of hours service), damp and mould, DHC, garden condition.

What we are doing

Learning and actions from initial concerns and complaints have included:

- Training for staff around recording complaints
- In-person visits can be most effective in understanding how to resolve complaints
- There is a need for consistent and quick responses to heating issues in winter
- ASB handling to be strengthened and customers to be regularly updated regarding action plans and outcomes
- Appointments and scheduling need to be consistent with effective notice periods adhered to and cancellations being given with sufficient notice
- Responses to damp and mould need to be undertaken quickly, collaboratively amongst departments and consistently
- Service charge consultation is required to ensure value for money and effective communal services are provided
- Neighbourhood management needs to be consistent, quick responses and visible improvements in neighbourhoods
- The Out of Hours service needs to be communicated more effectively

You can find more information on our website

How we deal with complaints

[Make a complaint, give feedback or a compliment](#)

57

Complaints received

80.7%

of complaints resolved within the 10 day target

46%

of complaints were upheld

50%

satisfaction with how we handled their complaint

75%

satisfied that we listen and act upon your views

Complaints quotes

- ” Resident unhappy about being issued a parking charge notice
- ” Feels ASB has not been handled well for "over a year"
- ” Customer not satisfied as we "have not moved her from the property or responded to the complaints of harassment".

Compliments quotes

- ” Tenant wanted to pass on how great the new windows are, they really keep the house warm and quiet and the fitters were really friendly and professional
- ” Wonderful job 100% and a lovely guy
- ” I would like to say how impressed I am with your team, who are currently working in Ebrington Road, there all very polite helpful, considerate and clean

Responding to your surveys

We ask you to complete surveys when we provide a service to you, for example, a repair to your home, we also ask you to complete an overall tenant satisfaction survey once a year. The results of both of these are reviewed and they help us to improve the services we provide to you, we share some of the results with you in this report.

If you complete a tenant survey you will be entered into our £25 monthly prize draw and the £100 prize draw for resident completing the Tenant Satisfaction Survey.

Our Property Services and Housing teams have been busy contacting customers this year and following up on the survey comments made in the tenant satisfaction survey. Here are some of the outcomes;



"I've had a few problems with a neighbour directly across, we are fine but it's made me uncomfortable and want to move"

– The Housing Officer spoke with the neighbours after which the neighbour feedback "feels totally comfortable and does not need to move"



"An issue with the trade button on the front door causing problems for deliveries and the postie"

– Letters were sent informing residents that we will be issuing new key fobs and have a new intercom handset inside their flats.



"Some things seem to be forgotten when you report them, particularly the standard of grounds maintenance"

– The Housing Officer and Director of Housing visited the estate and raised issues with contractors. The resident commented "its really nice here now" when followed up.



Providing homes for those in need

Re-letting our empty homes

We re-let 74 homes in the year, housing over 160 people, including 62 children and 5 victims of domestic abuse. We also helped 2 tenants to downsize to smaller homes as part of our downsizing assistance scheme, this provides practical and financial help to those moving from a larger home to a smaller home. Get in touch with us if you're thinking about downsizing and need some help.

On average we re-let our empty homes within 21 days, this is 6 days slower than the previous year (not including those that needed major improvements such as a new kitchen). This was mainly due to properties being handed back to us in poor condition and therefore needing a lot of work to get them back up to our lettable standard. We continue to try and carry out pre void inspections on all properties when we receive notice so we can get an idea of the works required ahead of the property going void to enable us to complete works as quickly as possible.

-  74 homes re-let in the year
-  8 new homes developed
-  165 people housed
-  98% were satisfied with the lettings process



New homes delivered

8 new homes were delivered in Thorverton and Alphington. We are proud to be increasing the number of homes we have so that we can help more people in housing need. We are in the process of building 21 homes which will be completed next year.

Repairing and improving your homes

We invested £1.56m in improving customers' homes, and our move to component replacements (like kitchens and windows) meant many more residents received an improvement to their homes in the year. Resident satisfaction with our repair service is consistently high showing our commitment to providing a great service to residents. We continued to work responsibly on keeping homes safe, with 100% of required safety checks completed on time.



- 3682 responsive repairs were completed
- 99.2 % of emergency repairs were completed within 24 hours
- 96.1% of our properties had non-emergency responsive repairs completed within target timescales.
- 80 kitchens were replaced
- 160 homes had new windows
- 42 homes had a new boiler
- 65 fire risks assessments completed
- 35 homes has new front/back/patio doors
- 308 electrical safety tests
- 2 bathrooms were replaced
- 1212 total gas safety tests completed
- 37 legionella checks
- 384 asbestos surveys completed
- 77 aids and adaptations completed in resident's homes at a total cost of £13k

Healthy Homes

We gathered a lot of useful information from residents who were, unfortunately, experiencing damp and mould in their homes. To tackle this, we used new monitoring tools, provided training for staff, carried out repairs to homes and worked with residents to tackle the causes. This included providing advice and guidance on managing moisture in their homes and introducing complimentary mould-cleaning kits.



Useful Links

- [Healthy homes charter](#)
- [What is condensation, damp and mould?](#)
- [How to prevent condensation, damp and mould](#)
- [How to clean condensation, damp and mould](#)
- [When should I report damp and mould?](#)

Our Priorities

Progress with our 2023/24 priorities

Here is are the priorities we committed to and our progress with them

- Implementation of a new IT system, this will bring with it the ability to better monitor customer contact and complaints and performance against our customer standards -the new system has been implemented and customer contact is now stored in a timeline for easy access and monitoring.
- Improving the customer experience of our complaints process – we have implemented a new complaints module to better track the progress of complaints, our TSM results indicate we have further work to improve the customer experience, this will be ongoing in 2024/25.
- Reviewing and improving our approach to tackling damp and mould in homes – completed, further work is taking place in 2024/25 on simplifying customer communication.
- Relaunching our resident engagement panel with further improvements to diversity and better engagement with residents through social media – the panel was relaunched, they have their own Facebook page and we have launched on Instagram, we have further work to do on improving the diversity of our involved residents.
- Having a greater presence in our communities through event and projects and responding promptly to neighbourhood and community issues, this includes introducing community surgeries for face to face to contact – we have completed many surgeries in communities and held or supported events and projects.

Our priorities in 2024/25

Having listened to feedback from residents, these are the areas we are focusing on

- Improving resident satisfaction with how we handle complaints
- Improving resident satisfaction with how we handle anti-social behaviour
- Improve resident satisfaction with communal areas.