



Annual Report to Customers 2017

Working with you

It's important that we listen to your views to help us improve the services you receive. Hundreds of you share your personal feedback with us every month, while others get involved more formally. We'd love you to join us at www.riverside.org.uk/getinvolved

Whilst 81 per cent of customers are satisfied with our service overall, we know we need to be better at handling your complaints when things go wrong.

To help us improve, we have been working to resolve more complaints within our published timeframes. We've recently created one central team to analyse our complaints performance and help us to resolve more of them promptly.

We have also been learning from your feedback. This year, in response to complaints, we've provided customer service training for repairs teams, explained things better when people sign up for a home, and improved information about how we allocate properties.

Anna Bishop, Director of Customer Services



81%

of you are satisfied overall



↓ 2% compared with 2016

Compared to others:

Best	Average	Worst
98.5%	86.3%	68.9%

74%

think that we listen to your views and act upon them



▬ No change from 2016

Compared to others:

Best	Average	Worst
95.1%	72.5%	55.5%

95%

of calls to our Customer Service Centre (CSC) were answered

▬ No change from 2016

Compared to others:

Best	Average	Worst
99.4%	92.7%	69.8%

It cost us the equivalent of

£113.05

per home to provide our resident involvement service (2016)

Increased by 86p from 2015

£ Compared to others:

Low	Average	High
£5.31	£56.05	£113.90

We received 2,396 complaints

(April 2016 to March 2017) Of these...

89% were resolved at the first stage:

50% upheld
17% partially upheld
33% not upheld

11% were resolved at the second stage:

50% upheld
18% partially upheld
32% not upheld

43%

satisfaction with handling of complaint.

↑ 1% better than 2016



Top three complaints received:

- 1 55%** Responsive repairs
- 2 25%** Customer care, by Riverside or contractors
- 3 5%** Planned cyclical repairs

Giving customers a voice

We've made improvements so customers have a stronger voice and can hold us to account. Involved resident and member of the Neighbourhood Services Committee, Maria Milford, from Merseyside, says: "Customer scrutiny has given tenants the opportunity to act as 'critical friends' and make recommendations to improve services. It makes a positive difference to customers' lives and certainly is value for money."



Your home

We're continuing to invest in homes, and 86 per cent of you are satisfied with the quality of yours. Keeping you safe and preventing repairs problems are big priorities for us, too.



Providing you with a quality home matters to us – and it's vital that it's a safe home. This year we spent more than **£10 million on safety**, including carrying out almost 50,000 gas inspections.

The fire at Grenfell Tower in London was a terrible tragedy. None of our buildings failed government tests, and we've continued to invest in fire checks and prevention, whilst explaining to customers how we keep you safe.

We've continued working with London Fire Brigade so our safety policies and procedures nationwide are correct. In April, we also introduced Compliance Inspectors to regularly check communal areas in flats.

If you do have any concerns about safety in your home, please let us know.

Ian Gregg, Executive Director, Asset Services

92%

of repairs appointments were kept

■ No change from 2016

Compared to others:

Best	Average	Worst
100%	96.7%	74.3%

88.7%

of repairs were fixed at the first attempt

▼ 1.2% compared with 2016

75%

of you were satisfied with our repairs service

■ No change from 2016

Compared to others:

Best	Average	Worst
94.4%	79.7%	53.5%

It cost us the equivalent of

£873.09

per home to provide our repairs service (2016)

Reduced by £14.04 from 2015

£ Compared to others:

Low	Average	High
£543.50	£843.57	£1,947.99

Heard of Property MOTs?

They're a home health-check. We visit your property to fix anything from a leaky tap to a damaged roof – and prevent problems before they happen. By doing repairs proactively and in one go, we can keep your home safe and repair-free for longer.

We carried out more than 5,400 Property MOTs in northern England last year, reducing the number of times you needed to report a repair by 13 per cent. It saved almost £6 million for us to invest in other services.

We're now rolling out Property MOTs across the rest of the country.



Improving homes

Last year, we also spent **£21.5 million** on improving homes, including replacing 1,240 bathrooms, 1,475 boilers, 1,660 kitchens, and hundreds of front doors, roofs and windows.

Retirement Living customer Pamela, from Widnes, said:

"My bathroom has been renovated and it's made a huge difference. I used to have a bath with the shower over but I have a problem with my knee and it was quite difficult. Now I have a shower and it's absolutely brilliant."



Your tenancy

We've been working hard this year to re-let properties more quickly and collect more rent on time so we have the resources to provide more homes and better services. We're also supporting customers to manage financially when times are tough.

Our rental income pays for homes and services for around 100,000 customers all over the country. So we make every effort to collect rent and limit arrears – and we have to be firm in chasing up payments.



We also do lots to support customers who are struggling financially and are at risk of losing their home. From help dealing with debts and saving money on bills, to accessing benefits and finding work. This year tenants were £4.9million better off with our help.

We're also striving to reduce the number of empty homes, and the time it takes to re-let them.

John Wood, Executive Director, Neighbourhood Services



19.7 days

time taken to re-let our empty properties

↑ 5.6 days better than 2016

Compared to others:

Best	Average	Worst
10.1	28.7	95.2

Riverside's Peter worked 'miracles' for us

In times of crisis, we want to do all we can to help you. Our charity, the Riverside Foundation, funds an intensive intervention service which offers tailored support to customers at risk of losing their home.

Redundancy, ill-health and debt problems are just some of the issues the service aims to help with.

When Amy's husband David was diagnosed with a life-threatening illness, he had to give up work and the debts mounted. Their family, pictured, were facing eviction until the service's Peter Gallagher stepped in.

He applied for grants, helped them access funding to clear debts, and supported their move to a larger, more suitable home.

"When we first met Peter, my family was in a big black hole," says Amy, from Wigan. "Without Peter, I don't know where we'd be... He truly is a miracle worker."



99.1%

of new tenants were visited within six weeks

↑ 1.4% better than 2016



3.8%

Rent arrears as a percentage of total rent due

↑ 0.6% better than 2016

Compared to others:

Best	Average	Worst
0.8%	3.6%	5.9%

It cost us the equivalent of

£543.66

per home to provide our housing management service (2016)

Increased by £11.37 from 2015

Compared to others:

Low	Average	High
£312.17	£465.63	£773.45

Your neighbourhood

We've been making big changes behind the scenes this year so we can invest more in our neighbourhoods and do more for and with you.



86%

of you are satisfied with your neighbourhood

■ No change from 2016

Compared to others:

Best	Average	Worst
94.0%	85.4%	75.0%

It cost us the equivalent of

£215.22

per home to provide our estate management services (2016)

Increased by £21.69 from 2015

£ Compared to others:

Low	Average	High
£92.99	£185.76	£395.92

It cost us the equivalent of

£58.30

per home to manage antisocial behaviour in our neighbourhoods (2016)

Increased by 95p from 2015

£ Compared to others:

Low	Average	High
£24.26	£64.52	£113.97



We want you to get a great service from Riverside, wherever you live.

So we've made savings elsewhere to increase by 40 per cent the number of staff working in neighbourhoods like yours. That means more people to deal with your issues in your home, at a time that suits you.

If you'd rather use the website or ring, we've strengthened the Customer Service Centre and are developing better 24/7 online services.

We've reorganised five divisions into three regions, each with a 'hub' providing admin and support to frontline staff so they've got more time with you.

And Social Housing, Home Ownership and Care and Support teams are working better together to provide more joined-up services tailored to your area.

Léann Hearne, Executive Director,
Shared Services and Business Transformation



A better service where you live

Not only are more Riverside staff working out and about in neighbourhoods – they're getting technology at their fingertips and greater flexibility to offer you a better service.

Using a tablet or smartphone, they can call up 'live' information from the office while they're in your home or on your doorstep. The aim? To get you the answers or support you need quickly.

It also means they've got more time to spend on their patch, working with you, community groups and others to address the local issues that matter where you live.



Did you know?

In London, we're working with customers to shape multi-million pound regeneration plans for neighbourhoods in Bromley and Lambeth.

Our aim is to replace existing rented homes with new ones, as well as providing additional homes for sale. We hope to make these estates even better places to live – and help tackle the capital's housing shortage.



Care and support

We're one of the country's largest providers of homelessness services but we want to do more. So we're developing new ways of supporting people without a home of their own. We're also continuing to modernise our Retirement Living services.

As more people live into older age, it's vital that their needs are met. We've modernised our Retirement Living services, with new technology and staff working across groups of schemes.

We've spent £6 million improving some of these properties, and we've launched a national Health and Wellbeing service to help older people live happily, healthily and independently for longer.

Elsewhere, we've identified £1 million to invest in innovative ways to tackle and prevent homelessness. We've also completed a £1 million renovation of our Willow Walk centre for homeless people in Cambridge.

And we've re-signed the Armed Forces Covenant, reaffirming our commitment to providing specialist housing and support for veterans struggling to readjust to civilian life.

Cath McAndry, Director of Operations, Care and Support

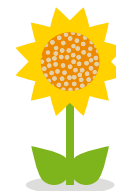


97.2%
of customer needs
and risk assessments
delivered on time

↓ 0.7% compared with 2016

95.1%
Positive customer
outcomes

↑ 1.5% better than 2016



Tackling and preventing homelessness

This year we've supported 11,000 customers who were homeless or at risk of homelessness, helping 5,000 to move on to more permanent accommodation.

We've worked closely with Greater Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham, pictured, as he strives to end rough sleeping in the region by 2020.

Care and Support teams have supported 800 people into work, and a Housing First service in the North West has generated £15 worth of benefit for society, for every £1 spent.



Helping you to live healthily and happily

Our new Health and Wellbeing service launched in more than 100 Retirement Living schemes nationally this year. Every week, customers take part in hundreds of themed activities to help them stay well and feel great.

We're working in partnership with organisations including The Stroke Association and Prostate Cancer UK to prevent health problems.

And on a sunny June day, more than 1,000 customers joined The Eden Project's Big Lunch, getting together with neighbours to share a bite to eat and have a chat. The service is varied and dynamic. Pop-up 1950s and 1960s-inspired rooms, pictured, are also helping older people to relive the good old days, and supporting customers with dementia.



Governance, viability & value for money

Delivering value for money, listening to our customers, and keeping you and your home safe have never been more important.



74%

of you think that service charges are value for money

↓ 1% compared with 2016

Compared to others:

Best	Average	Worst
89.9%	73.4%	53.5%

87%

think your rent provides value for money

▬ No change from 2016

Compared to others:

Best	Average	Worst
93.6%	83.9%	71.0%

£86.23

was our average weekly rent for general needs homes.

Reduced by £1.41 from 2016



Did you know?

Three commercial companies in our group generate profits, all of which we invest in Riverside. Last year they made £8.3 million to help us provide services and build more homes.



Our annual report aims to show you how we are changing and working to improve services at a time when the country still does not have enough affordable homes.

The challenge to deliver value for money has never been greater. At the same time recent tragic events have led to a renewed focus on the responsibilities of social landlords, especially in the context of safety, standards and compliance.

We have developed a new corporate plan which is designed to increase the number of new homes we build, connect us better with our customers, and help create thriving neighbourhoods.

To achieve these ambitions and to deliver the best possible service to you, our customers, we need strong leadership and financial strength. I am delighted that our regulator has given us the highest possible ratings for governance and financial viability, and that we have one of the strongest credit scores in our sector.

We're continuing with our major programme of change and investment in technology in order to drive further improvements in the way we deliver your services. This has saved £15 million in the last year, enabling us to become more efficient and reinvest more in our homes and neighbourhoods. I look forward to us building on this in the months and years ahead.

We also continue to involve and work closely with our customers so that you help to shape the services we offer.

Max Steinberg CBE, Riverside Group Chair

Procurement savings

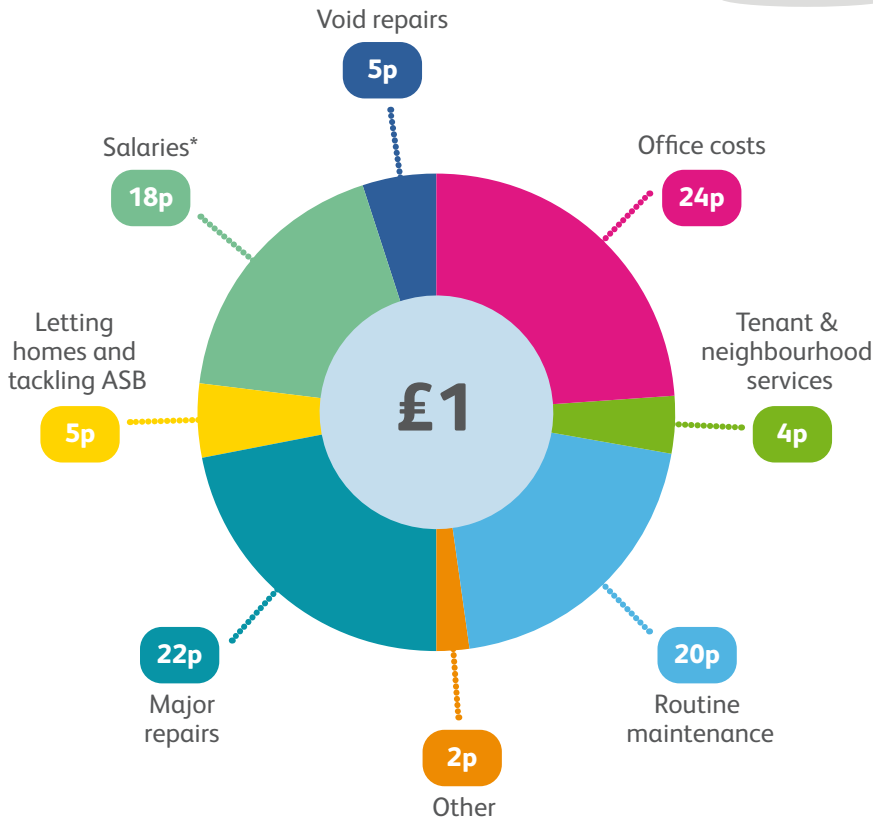
Over the last year, we also saved £2.7 million on the goods and services we buy by working smarter and negotiating harder.

For example, we saved £80,000 on empty homes security by arranging a new contract, and £48,000 by standardising furnishings when we re-fit Care and Support schemes (providing higher-quality furniture as a result!) We also saved £112,000 on office stationery.

All this helps us to manage income lost because of rent reductions, or provides extra resources to invest in homes and services for you.



How every £1 of rent is spent



These figures exclude service charges, non-cash items and interest costs.
*Includes costs linked to functions such as repairs and managing ASB.

To help us compare how we are doing, we share information about our performance with a group of 62 housing associations of a similar type and size. For customer satisfaction we compare ourselves to the lowest, average and highest performers. For service costs we look at associations with low, average and high costs. We use the latest available published information.

Did we get it right?

We'd love to know what you think about this Annual Report. Please go to www.riverside.org.uk/annualreport to complete our short questionnaire, with a chance to win £100 in shopping vouchers.

If you need this information in another format, please contact us ☎ **0345 111 0000**

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The Riverside Group Limited

Registered office:
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A charitable Registered Society
under the Co-operative and
Community Benefit Societies Act 2014

All facts and figures in this report are correct at the time of publication and relate to the financial year ending 31st March 2017. They do not include Home Ownership data.

Get in touch or find out more

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We are happy to accept
Next Generation Text
(NGT) calls. Press '3'
once connected