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# A YEAR OF STEADY PROGRESS

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INTEGRATION  
UPDATE 2024





## Hello and welcome to our second annual update on the merger of Riverside and One Housing Group.

When we came together two years ago, we set out six pledges. Designed in consultation with customers, for customers; they are our promises to you. These aimed to show how we would invest in your homes, give you a louder voice, improve our services and provide greater support with the cost-of-living crisis. We also said we would make sure you could hold us to account. Publishing this update is a key part of that.

It's been an extremely busy year and one that has focused on change inside the organisation. Some of the changes we are making won't be that obvious to you though. Whilst we are now one organisation legally, we haven't yet harmonised the way we provide services to you. We continue to have separate customer service centres, websites and separate names.

What we have been doing though is a huge amount of work in the background, as we bring together the systems and tools that we depend on to give you effective, modern services. We need to do this first before we can deliver a consistent service to all our customers, and we don't want to rush this and cause you any disruption.

In other areas we have made more visible progress. But the big question is this – have we done things that we wouldn't have been able to do had we remained separate organisations? I think the answer is a resounding 'yes'. We have invested more money in things that really matter such as building safety, tackling damp and mould and supporting more of you with advice, assistance and funding to help you manage the cost-of-living crisis. We've also

been able to access millions of pounds of Government money to make homes warmer and more energy efficient. Our surveys show that you are more satisfied with our services now than you were this time last year. However, we recognise there is still much work to be done on that front.

This year will be a bit different. We will continue to invest in homes and communities, but we'll also start to bring our services together. We'll be looking at how we can create one single organisation which makes the best of new technology but also ensures we are accessible and connected locally - something which you've told us is important you - so that we are able to respond to issues in your neighbourhoods. As we make these key decisions, we will make sure you can have your say.

It will be different for me too, I will soon be retiring after 12 wonderful years at Riverside. The Riverside Board have appointed Paul Dolan as my successor, and I am sure you will be hearing from him when he starts work in May this year. I have had the privilege to work with many of you as we have increased investment in homes and communities, improved services and grown as an organisation. I know there is still a lot more work to be done though and I am sure that work is in safe hands, as I'm leaving a great team behind.

Wishing you a happy and healthy 2024.

A circular icon showing two hands shaking, symbolizing agreement or partnership. The hands are white with blue outlines, set against a dark teal background.

*Carol*

**Carol Matthews**  
Chief Executive

## OUR PLEDGES

1

**We will deliver better services for customers, protecting rents and tenancy rights.**

With soaring inflation affecting the cost of delivering services, it's not possible to completely protect you from cost increases. However, we've done our best to mitigate the effect of them. As well as capping rent increases at 7% in 2023 despite inflation being 3% above that, we also limited service charge increases for some of you by meeting the costs ourselves. We extended the rent cap to shared owners and retirement living customers too. On top of that, to help those most in-need, we provided £2.75m of support for projects and grants funds through the Riverside Foundation in the last financial year that have supported customers with the cost of living crisis (see more at Pledge 5) and that has increased to £3.25m for 2024/25.

When it comes to delivering better services, if you're a Riverside customer you'll have heard about our app upgrade, seen our increased winter support campaign and much more. One Housing customers will have seen enhancements to the MyOneHousing Portal too, including the ability to report repairs and book appointments, view rent statements and report a range of tenancy related issues. Both organisations have improved our telephone systems to make it easier to reach us and we have significantly reduced call waiting times as well as launching new local plans all over the country. Customer satisfaction is a top priority and we know when it comes to repairs in One Housing, that this is lower than where we would like it and our teams are working hard to get this right.

On a groupwide level, in consultation with customers, we now have unified our strategies and plans which will seek to deliver more improvements like that for all customers.

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**We will make sure there is a louder customer voice, with residents able to take part in our Boards and committees, and better able to hold us to account.**

The voice of the customer has always been an incredibly important part of both organisations and that will always be the case. Customers of both organisations have had a major impact throughout the year as vital consultees on the internal changes we've made to begin to prepare to become one fully merged organisation. As well as having played a key role in setting the pledges we've made around integration, customers are also involved in our Group Board and all of our operational committees as well as the board of the Riverside Foundation.

Our customer voice groups have also supported customer service improvements in various ways. Within Riverside, our Customer Voice Executive have carried out key scrutiny exercises on our anti-social behaviour service and empty homes management plan which have both been a key catalyst for major performance improvement. In One Housing Group we have delivered the first-year actions from our Resident Engagement Strategy and co-created the second-year action plan. Finally, we're also doing more than ever to show how we're listening to and acting on your feedback. Every month, we'll publish the top five ways we've done so and we'll promote those on our website and social media channels. You can view them at [www.riverside.org.uk/listening](http://www.riverside.org.uk/listening)

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**We will invest nearly £1 billion in improving and repairing homes over the next five years, with a focus on fire and building safety, warmer homes and regeneration. We will also build more new affordable homes.**

One key thing our partnership is allowing us to do is invest in key work we need to do to ensure our buildings are compliant with building safety regulations. From addressing historical challenges like tackling cladding replacement to driving up performance, we've made building safety a top priority. Since the partnership began, we estimate that we will have spent £72m on fire and building safety improvements at Riverside, completing 16% of One Housing's cladding remediation programme by December 2023. We are currently on site on another seven buildings and about to start on site on another building; this will bring this first phase of the cladding programme to completion. Works are well underway to deliver the next phase of the programme. We continue to seek Government support, and so far have received £38.2m in grants to help address building safety. That's in addition to the £470m we've spent repairing and improving homes since the partnership began and £5.1m supporting customers affected by condensation, damp and mould in the last year.

Our partnership was also a key factor in obtaining up to £13m in grant funding to make up to 1,000 homes more energy efficient. When it comes to investing in regeneration and new homes, we've also invested heavily.

We have completed 1063 new homes over the last year, of which around 90% are affordable homes for rent or low-cost homeownership.

On top of that, we have also had £0.9m of funding for similar work in Greater Manchester and £1.5m for energy efficiency works in Scotland.

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**We will improve care and support services for older people, those with complex needs and people who are homeless.**

Care and Support remains a key part of what we do, and we have confirmed this in our new Corporate Plan and Care and Support Strategy. We are now bringing together the delivery of our Care and Support Services, looking at how cost effective each service is to ensure we can sustain them into the future.

In October, the first joint customer satisfaction survey of customers across our combined supported housing services took place. Over a third of all our customers took part. Overall 89.9% of customers were satisfied and we took away some great insight into how we can improve the facilities offered in our services. We are developing several new services with local partners as well as building new extra-care schemes for older customers, with 450 total homes in our development programme going forward.

On homelessness, following the success of the Street Engagement Hub in Manchester which has supported more than 750 people last year, a second Hub has now launched in Wigan. The service engages with and provides practical support and advice around a range of issues for people who beg or engage in antisocial behaviour and may be homeless or sleep rough. In addition, Op FORTITUDE, is funded by The Armed Forces Covenant Fund to deliver a centralised referral pathway into veteran supported housing. The project works with individual veterans at risk of or experiencing homelessness, supporting them either into suitable accommodation, or supporting them to maintain their current home. Since launching mid-way through 2023 to date over 1,000 referrals have been received and 400 veterans helped into accommodation.

5

**We will improve the livelihoods of customers and build stronger communities, providing better opportunities by investing in employment support and money advice.**

We've made a major difference on this pledge through the investment of the Riverside Foundation. A total of 116 people have been helped into work this year through our Employment and Training team and we've helped customers secure more than £50,000 in grants to support them with rising energy costs.

We've also helped customers to access more than £2.5m in unclaimed benefits through our money advice team. As a result of our partnership, we are able to support individual customers facing hardship and small projects building resilience in your communities, by launching our Helping Hand Fund and Community Fund. The Helping Hand Fund has, so far, provided £703,000 in small grants to almost 3,000 customers to support them with the cost-of-living crisis. The Community Fund, meanwhile, has provided 53 grant awards worth £236,352 to support small projects in communities where Riverside and One Housing Group customers live.

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**We will keep our promises and make sure you can hold us to account, publishing a report each year on how we are delivering these pledges**

Publishing these updates to you is one way we try to be accountable to you on the progress of our promises. We will continue to provide annual updates, for all customers, although from next year (2025) we plan to provide the update in May, so that it can cover the whole financial year which ends in March. This brings it into line with other reporting in Riverside. We will also be reporting our overall performance against the Regulator's new Tenant Satisfaction Measures every six months, which will enable you to compare how we perform with other social landlords.



# PERFORMANCE IN FOCUS

Want to know more about how are group is performing and what we're doing to support customers? Here's two key ways we provide that:

## TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES – A NEW STANDARD FOR SOCIAL HOUSING

Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) are a new national initiative for England designed to make social landlords more accountable and transparent than ever before to customers.

There are a total of 22 key measures which we must report on every six months. We'll publish our first set soon.

## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

For some time now, and long before the Governments' introduction of TSMs, we've been publishing a set of performance measures.

We do that every three months, charting things like our average call waiting time and percentage of repairs that are fixed at the first visit, as well as survey results like overall customer satisfaction and how happy you are with complaint handling and repairs performance.

## ANNUAL REPORT

On top of the two measures above, we also produce an annual report to round-up what we've been doing throughout the year. It summarises how we're spending the money you pay in rent and how we're performing against your expectations.

You can read our performance results and our Annual Report at [www.riverside.org.uk/performance](http://www.riverside.org.uk/performance) or [www.onehousing.co.uk/about-us/our-performance](http://www.onehousing.co.uk/about-us/our-performance)



## KEY FACTS

- 99.9%** Homes that meet the decent homes standard
- 87.7%** Percentage of repairs completed within target timescales
- 75.0%** Satisfied your home is safe
- 70.6%** Agree we treat customers fairly & with respect
- 70.4%** Satisfied with repairs we carry out on your property
- 65.6%** Satisfied we keep you informed about things that matter to you



During the Cost of Living crisis we realise that customers may be facing challenging times.

If you are struggling and need help, please get in touch. Our team is here to help.

 **Riverside**  
[www.riverside.org.uk](http://www.riverside.org.uk)

**One Housing**  Part of **Riverside**  
[www.onehousing.co.uk](http://www.onehousing.co.uk)

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