

Annual Report for Tenants

2021-22

A milestone year



Thrive
Homes

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[**> Get in touch if you'd like a printed copy of this report**](#)

Welcome



2021-22 was a positive year for Thrive Homes, despite the legacy of Covid's continuing challenges. Thank you for working with us to rise to these challenges throughout this difficult time.

During the year we reached the milestone of owning and managing a total of 5,000 homes, an achievement supporting our purpose to provide more people with a secure home they can afford.

To keep pace with this growth, we have appointed new colleagues to ensure we continue delivering the same high

standard of services and quality homes. You'll hear from some of these colleagues in this report.

Building on our commitment to being open with our residents, keeping you informed and listening to feedback, we have launched Thrive Customer Voice (TCV) so you can have your say about Thrive in the most convenient way for you.

The group's first activity was telling us what they wanted to hear about in this report, which included these key areas:

- Improvements to your home – [page 8](#)
- How happy you are with our services – [page 15](#)
- How our income is spent – [page 18](#)
- Making our homes more energy efficient – [page 09](#)
- Anti-social behaviour (ASB) – [page 13](#)
- Acting on your feedback – [page 6](#)

We want to hear from as wide a range of customers as possible. To find out more about Thrive Customer Voice and how you can get involved – [see page 5](#).

Elsbeth Mackenzie

■ Chief Executive, Thrive Homes



Your home

Getting to know you

Our annual Home Plan visits let us see how things are with you, while checking on your home's condition.

In 2021-22 we carried out some visits via video call. Once Covid restrictions eased, we re-introduced face-to-face visits as well.

We hope to visit all our properties by March 2024, as it is a great way to keep in touch, get your views and feed them into our activities with Thrive Customer Voice (see page 5).



Emma Comer

■ Assistant Director of Estates and Facilities



1,392 Home Plan visits



27% of homes visited so far



On average, less than 2 repairs are identified at a second Home Plan visit (compared to 5-6 at the first)

> Home Plan is making a real difference to customers' lives. [Click here to find out more.](#)

Have your say

We took a fresh look at how we engage with you to ensure we are listening to all customers and understand how your voices can help shape our services.

We ran a number of workshops which identified the need to:

- make it easy and flexible for you to get involved
- capture feedback from all dealings with customers in a centralised system, to see how we can improve

- show your feedback's impact
- accept that some customers do not want to get involved.

Thank you to all customers who worked on this project, including those who took the time to tell us how you prefer to interact with us. Find out more about what you told us on page 5 of our summer newsletter [here](#).



Jo Barrett

■ Executive Director Operations

Thrive Customer Voice – how it works

1. We use feedback from a range of sources to identify areas needing review – such as comments when you speak with us, issues highlighted through our services such as grounds maintenance, and how we handle complaints.
2. Once we identify an area, we reach out with details of how you can be involved.
3. You choose if, how and when you get involved.



> Join Thrive Customer Voice – tell us what you want to have a say on at: portal.thrivehomes.org.uk/get-involved or call [0800 917 6077](tel:08009176077)

Listening, learning and improving

Thrive Customer Voice will help us hear your feedback and understand what matters most to you.

While we can't do everything customers suggest, we always strive to make positive changes.

Last year we:

- spent more on maintaining homes (kitchens, bathrooms, windows, flooring, insulation and improvements around flat blocks)
- improved how we deal with grounds maintenance feedback and information about the service on our website

> Keep up to date with how we are working to improve services at:
thrivehomes.org.uk/yourfeedback

- changed how emergency repairs calls are diverted and handled
- introduced an option to save myThrive customer hub as an icon on your smartphone or tablet, making it easier to access with one click.

Thank you to Customer Experience Panel members who helped us take action in these areas.



Keeping you safe in your home



99.9%

homes had a valid **gas safety certificate**¹



98.5%

homes had up-to-date **electrical tests**¹



100%

communal areas had a **fire risk assessment**



100%

recommended **fire safety actions** were completed



100%

fire safety equipment was serviced



77%

customers were satisfied they lived in a safe and secure home



This year we welcomed residents to our first high-rise flats in St John's Road, Watford, and developed a way to interact with customers in line with new building safety legislation. Find out more at: thrivehomes.org.uk/safety-approach

We invested in partnering with local fire rescue services and signed up to the Building a Safer Future Charter. This demonstrates our commitment to protecting life by putting safety first. [Read more here.](#)

The wellbeing of our customers is a priority too.



97

customers referred for money advice and support



41

customers referred for mental health support

Working in partnership with other organisations, we helped a customer in financial difficulties secure a £900 grant.



“Thank you so much for your help. My daughter has spoken many times of how helpful and kind you have been with her and I'm very grateful to you for that.”

If you need support, visit: thrivehomes.org.uk/wellbeing

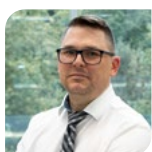
¹ At the end of March 2022, 1 property did not have a valid gas safety certificate and 65 properties did not have a valid electrical safety check certificate. If customers will not let us into their homes for gas and electrical checks, we take legal action to gain access.

Investing in your home

The labour and material shortages in the construction sector delayed some maintenance work last year, particularly plastering and kitchen and bathroom refurbishments.

Having employed supporting contractors, we have improved delivery of this work.

Thank you for your understanding during these challenges.



Robert Berry

Assistant Director Property

This year we spent **£4.3 million** replacing parts on our homes compared to **£3.5 million** in the previous year.

> Find out more about the 2022-23 programme at: thrivehomes.org.uk/plannedworks

Breakdown of components replaced:

	2021/22	2020/21
Bathrooms	38	6
Boilers and heating systems	338	309
Kitchens	56	17
Roofs	87	156
Windows	318	263
Doors	248	250
Fire doors	232	323
Electrical works	84	81
Fire safety works	13	3
Door entry and lift works	58	46
Flooring	7	11
Environmental works	1	6
Major aids and adaptations	43	25
Works to building walls	18	0



Did you know?

You can ask about improvements to your home at your Home Plan visit.

Warm and efficient homes

2,574

homes already meet the Government's 2030 target for energy efficiency (EPC-C)

1,712

homes require further efficiency upgrades and we are working on this now

193*

insulation upgrades carried out

*Thrive also partnered with energy provider E.ON to better insulate 183 of these homes and secured a share of £1.6million government funding for this type of work.

Looking forward

400

properties will have loft insulation this year

82

properties will have external wall insulation this year

100%

of our homes will meet the government's energy efficiency target by 2030

If you think your home has no insulation and we have not contacted you yet, please get in touch.

This work is vital to ensure our homes are energy efficient and more environmentally friendly.

Hundreds of customers have shared their meter readings with us to help prioritise efficiency upgrades. Share yours at: thrivehomes.org.uk/meter-readings

Want to cut your energy use? Check out: thrivehomes.org.uk/energy-tips



Good working order



13,842
repairs completed



88%
satisfaction with repairs service²



98.55%
emergency repairs completed on time



78%
repairs completed right first time



22 days
to complete a repair on average
(20 days when completed
by Thrive Homes Services)

Despite Covid related staff, contractor and material shortages which delayed some repairs, the service performed well compared to other social landlords and ended the year with **88%**² customer satisfaction.

We know how important repairs are to you, so our team and supporting contractors are working hard to deliver our **service standards**.

² Compared to 74.88% when compared to other social landlords that use IFF, our market research company.

> See updates on our repairs service at: thrivehomes.org.uk/repairs-status

Around your home

What to expect from our cleaning and grounds maintenance services is set out on our website at: thrivehomes.org.uk/communalstandards

These communal standards are agreed with customers when we draw up the contract and confirm costs.

Last year's Covid and Brexit challenges affected services. We want to ensure a fair deal for customers, so this year we launched our estates and facilities team to keep a closer eye on this area of our work.

Grounds maintenance

Chequers took on our grounds maintenance in April 2021. Following initial problems, the service has settled down. Thank you for telling us about issues and helping us resolve them.

- You told us having separate grass cutting and grounds maintenance teams was confusing, so now these services are carried out in one visit (where possible).

- Chequers employed a 'floating' staff member to fill in for sickness or where sites require extra attention.

- We notify Chequers as soon as customers mention issues, so they can be put right straightaway.

- Following our work with Chequers, grounds maintenance complaints fell by 36.3%³.

³When comparing April – July 2021 to April – July 2022 (the busiest months for the service).



Communal cleaning

We addressed cleaning service issues through close monitoring and action plans for areas experiencing problems.



So you only pay for the service you receive, we claimed £6,000 credits where we could prove lack of attendance. Thank you for telling us about these issues. We will notify you in September 2022 if you are due a credit, which will be applied to your account from 1st April 2023.

Find out more about service charges in our video at: thrivehomes.org.uk/servicecharges

To get your views on our cleaning service, we are planning an activity with Thrive Customer Voice. To take part, head to portal.thrivehomes.org.uk/get-involved, update your interests and we'll be in touch.

Anti-social behaviour (ASB)

We've set out on our [website](#) how we tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB) and support customers facing such problems. As our powers are limited we often rely on other agencies, such as the local authority or police, to take action.

Learn how we partner with other agencies to address ASB [here](#).

Since everyone has been spending more time at home following the pandemic, we have seen a rise in ASB reports.

Everyone is entitled to live peacefully in their home, so it is important we are understanding, treat each other with respect and avoid disturbing neighbours.

Find out how we deal with ASB and access resources such as 'Dear Neighbour' cards to raise issues and diary sheets to gather evidence at: thrivehomes.org.uk/asb

These are the average number of open cases per month:

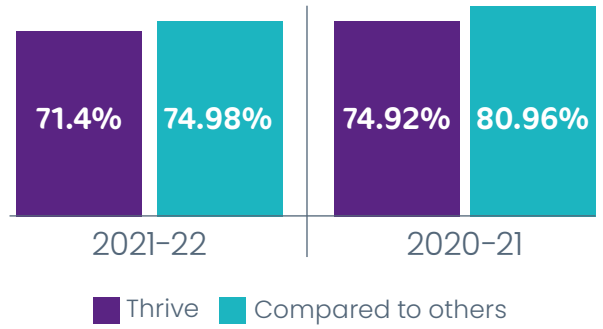




Customer satisfaction

Last year, 71.4% of customers were satisfied with their experience of Thrive.

Whilst this has reduced compared to 2020-21, this is in line with a national drop in satisfaction across public sector organisations.



81.6%

felt Thrive keeps them up to date with the latest news and information

75.4%

felt they are treated with respect

91%

of colleagues completed online refresher training (CPD) to make sure we continue delivering a fair deal

Room for improvement

65.9%

of customers feel we do what we say we will do

49.6%

of customers feel we resolve enquiries at first point of contact

54.3%

of customers feel we listen and act on their views

We look forward to working with Thrive Customer Voice to improve.

We want to hear your suggestions on how we can do better. Sign up to Thrive Customer Voice at:

portal.thrivehomes.org.uk/getinvolved

Meeting national standards

Every year we assess our performance against the Regulator of Social Housing's consumer standards to ensure we are delivering services in line with these and the Together with Tenants Charter, a series of commitments to customers.

This year an independent agency, Altair, reviewed our self-assessment and found we met these standards.

Complaints

2021/22

2020/21



5 cases referred to the Housing Ombudsman, resulting in one service failure determination

15 days to reply on average

1 case referred to the Housing Ombudsman*

14.49 days to reply on average

Our 39.3% increase in complaints is in line with the sector, including the Housing Ombudsman who reported a 53% increase in referrals⁴.

⁴As per the Housing Ombudsman Insight on Data and Individual Cases Report October – December 2021 <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Insight-report-issue-9-final.pdf>

Key themes

We look for themes across our complaints to identify areas we need to focus on. Last year's findings, which matched our customer satisfaction figures, highlighted we could improve by making sure we:

- do what we say we will
- listen and act on your input.

Taking a closer look at feedback, we have made changes to some services. Find out more at: thrivehomes.org.uk/yourfeedback

We will further address these areas with Thrive Customer Voice members. Get involved at: portal.thrivehomes.org.uk/get-involved

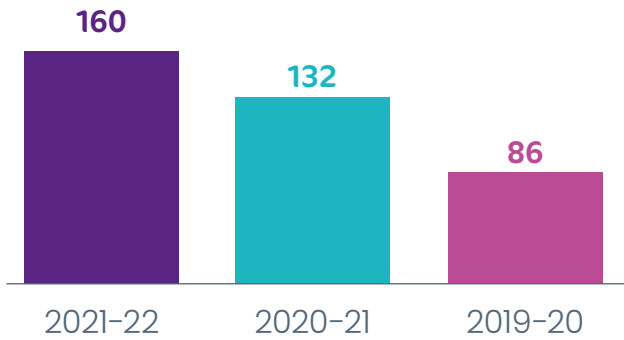
Code assurance

As a member of the Housing Ombudsman scheme, our complaints process has been audited by an independent agency and assessed as fully meeting the Complaint Handling Code. Key highlights included:

- good record keeping
- effective complaints tracker
- fair response times.

We also completed a self-assessment against the code. [Learn more here.](#)

Compliments



The rise in compliments and complaints reassures us we have made it easier to give feedback, so we can work with you to ensure we deliver a fair deal for customers.

Sometimes things go wrong, but we always work hard to put things right.

“I am thrilled by the way you have handled my complaint and made sure there was a solution. The slabs have now been repaired by two of your operatives who provided excellent customer service and were very professional... there is no longer any danger outside. Thank you for your excellent customer care, I really appreciate it.”

■ Thrive Customer

> We'd like to share the good news with you, find out more at: thrivehomes.org.uk/compliments

Easy-to-use services



50% of households registered on the myThrive hub



Over **70%** of our website visitors are using a mobile device



Digital transactions rose from **60% to 68%**

Whilst most customers choose to use our digital services, some customers prefer to phone us. Despite difficulties with our phone system, we answered more than **85%** of calls within our target time, compared to **87%** in 2020-21.

You told us we need to be clear when we will call you back, so we introduced a phone appointment system for issues that can't be managed online.



How we spend our income

All profit we make in rental income is reinvested back into keeping our properties safe and well maintained, whilst providing more families with a place to call home.

This is where our income was spent during 2021-22:



Repairs
£4.1m



Making homes safe
£1.8m



Investing in existing homes
£2.7m



Building new homes
£30.6m



Energy efficiency upgrades
£1.5m

The current average rent for a Thrive property is around £120 week. Rent is our biggest source of income, so thank you to the 63% of customers who paid on time last year.

We know it can be difficult to keep up with rent payments, particularly with the current rising cost of living, so we partner with the Citizens Advice Service to offer money advice to customers who are struggling.

> **Want to know more about how we spend our money? Find out in our Annual Financial Accounts [here](#).**

Welcoming new customers

In 2021 we reached the milestone of owning 5,000 homes – a 21% growth since 2008 - increasing the number of affordable homes for people living in some of the UK's most expensive areas.

229

homes built last year

89.7%

satisfied with their experience of becoming a Thrive customer

23

people applied to buy their home through Right to Buy or Right to Acquire

52

days to re-let a home, on average

Difficulty re-letting some homes has affected our average re-let time. For example, bedsits and over-55s schemes can be less popular and attract no bids through the choice-based lettings scheme, so we are looking to advertise them differently.

Contractor and materials shortages also caused a backlog, so we introduced a new contractor, Gilmartin, to clear this. This has been successful and we are now working to reduce re-let times further.

“Thrive has been professional, helpful and an absolute delight to work with ... Everything has been very well explained and this has made the moving process, something that can sometimes be very stressful, a most pleasant and simple procedure. Thank you.”

■ Thrive customer

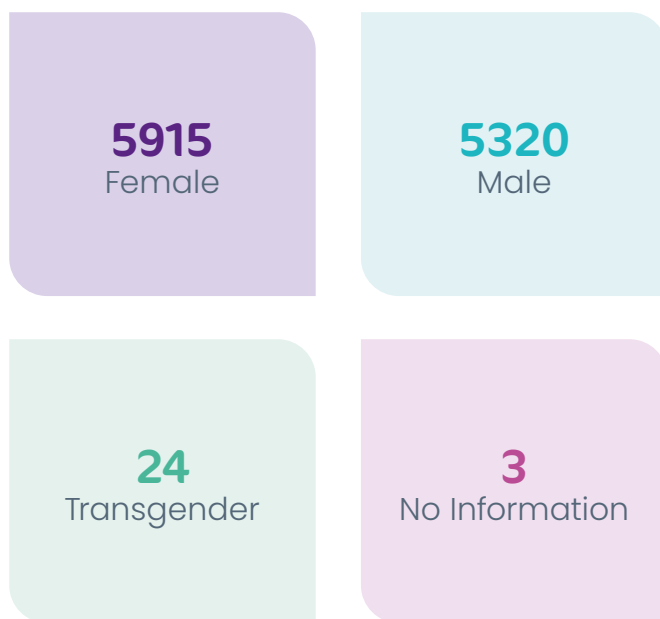
A fair landlord

This year we were accredited by the Housing Diversity Network for excellence in equality, diversity and inclusion. This helps us measure how well we are providing fair services. We are proud to have achieved six distinctions in this assessment.

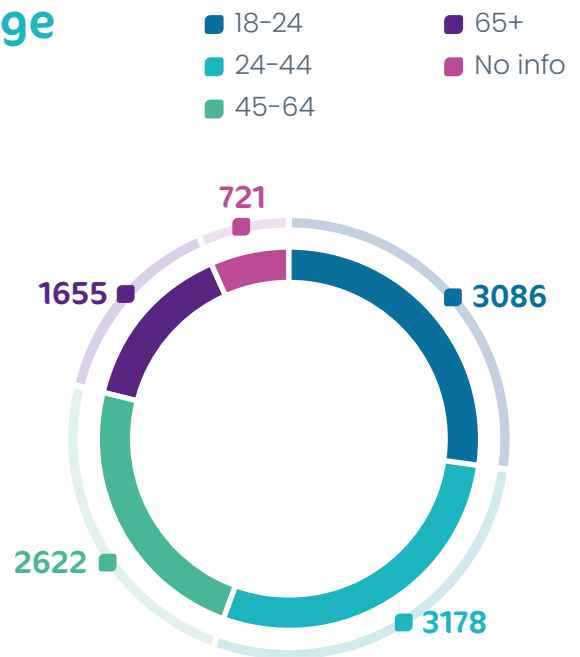
[Click here to learn more](#)

Who lives in our homes⁵

Gender



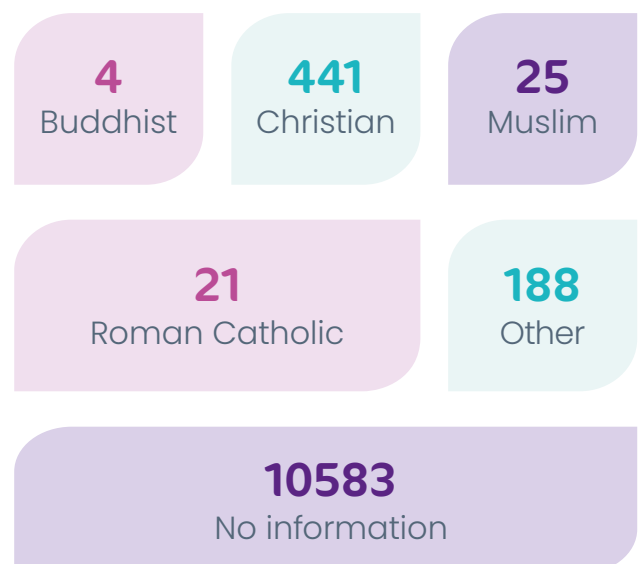
Age



Ethnicity

Asian	151
Black	173
Chinese	7
Mixed	90
White	5266
No Information	5568
Other	7

Religion



Sexual orientation

Gay or Lesbian	6
Heterosexual or Straight	1127
No Information	9947
Other	182



Disability

Hearing Disability	21
Learning Disability	5
Mobility Disability	26
Vision Disability	23
Mental Disability	51
Physical Disability	58
Other Disability	280
No Disability	567
No information	10231

Can you spare a moment to update your information?

Please keep us posted on who lives in your home and the needs they have, so we can ensure easy access to our services.

We never share this information or use it to change your tenancy. Update your information by contacting us or at portal.thrivehomes.org.uk/my-household

⁵ Data based on joint tenants, leaseholders and shared owners and is correct as of January 2022.



Beyond the bricks and mortar

Our greatest contribution to communities is providing good quality, safe homes people can afford.

We also partner with other organisations to support our diversity of customers and their neighbourhoods.

In 2021/22 we supported:

Grant funding

Our grant scheme, Thrive GIVE, allocates funding to charities and groups to provide services making a real difference to customers and their communities.



Help with energy costs

We work with Three Rivers District Council, Housing Associations' Charitable Trust and Three Rivers' Citizens Advice Service to help those struggling to pay their bills.

Last year's support included contributing towards a voucher scheme and accessing a £15,000 fund for customers.

As some people are not eligible for this support, we awarded a Thrive GIVE grant to the Citizens Advice Service to fast-track vulnerable customers and provide extra support.



If you are struggling to make ends meet, please contact us.



Rewarding customers

Thrive's annual prize draw is our way of saying thank you for being a great customer. There were even more winners this year, with 10 customers sharing the £2,000.

The draw is open to all tenants who stick to the terms of their tenancy and keep their safety check and Home Plan appointments. This year we have extended it to include leaseholders and shared owners who share their gas and electrical safety check certificates with us.

Find out more at:
thrivehomes.org.uk/prizedraws

"I can't believe I've won! I'll be putting half towards my bills but I'm also planning on buying a new shirt because it's not often you get a chance to treat yourself!"

■ Thrive customer, Mr Barton



Stay in touch

We are always keen to hear from you. You can contact us in various ways, including:

- your annual Home Plan visit
- becoming a Thrive Customer Voice member at: portal.thrivehomes.org.uk/get-involved
- giving feedback all year round at: thrivehomes.org.uk/feedback
- emailing enquiries@thrivehomes.org.uk
- live chat on our website at: thrivehomes.org.uk/talktous
- the myThrive hub at: thrivehomes.org.uk/mythrivehub

If you contact us online, we can help you faster and it reduces wait times on our phone lines.

