

whg CUSTOMER
annual
report
2019/2020

making a
difference



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welcome

Welcome to our 2019/2020 Annual Report to Customers

We pride ourselves on providing high quality homes and services – and delivering on our promises. We have a good track record of continually improving our services, in recent years on how we manage our empty homes, build new homes and continuing to hold excellent levels on fire and building safety.

The start of 2020 has been a challenging time for everyone, but our commitment

to you, our customers, has remained the same. Now, more than ever, we want our customers to feel safe, well and happy in their homes.

Some of the work we have done over the last year has received national recognition, with whg winning a string of awards. Our commitment to tackling fuel poverty saw us named Landlord of the Year at the Energy Efficiency Awards 2019, while we were ranked

an impressive 36th in Inside Housing's Biggest Builders 2020, after building 446 new homes in 2019/2020.

Our annual report is a great way for us to share with you:

- How well we are delivering services against our performance targets
- How our performance compares with other landlords
- Our plans to improve our services.





where are we now?

We are immensely proud of everything we achieved in the last year. We are committed to being more than just a landlord and aim to deliver great services while also transforming customers' lives by improving health, building confidence and working with them to improve their employment prospects.

Our Employment and Training team have supported more than 3,000 customers in the last three years, and helped them gain the skills they need to impress future employers. We are now continuing to build on this with a whole range of new initiatives that can help customers learn new skills and secure a job.

These include a "Women into Construction" pilot that is helping women gain trade skills such as painting and decorating, with many moving onto apprenticeships as a result.



We are also proud to be playing a central role in tackling homelessness in Walsall and in 2019, became one of the first housing providers in the West Midlands to commit to the Housing First programme at scale. We have made 40 of our homes available for the pilot, which aims to alleviate rough sleeping and street homelessness.

During the year, we continued on our Digital First journey and were delighted to sign up our 5,000th customer on our digital portal. In line with our plans to progress as a digital first business, this year we plan to redesign our central office to offer improved self-serve facilities, providing another route for customers to quickly and efficiently resolve their queries.

We own and manage
21,323
homes

including
1,034
leasehold and low-cost home ownership properties

In 2019/2020 we have built
446
new homes

including
149
shared ownership homes



money advice

Our Money Advisors support customers who may be struggling to manage their finances. They advise on welfare benefits, debt issues and budgeting.

Our money advisors helped customers access an average of **£8,105,661**

67 households avoided homelessness

347 customers have reduced their debt by a total of **£345,069**

2,291 customers benefited from money advice

supporting our customers into employment and training

As part of our commitment to successful people, we work with customers in a range of training and employment courses. Our Community Champions are customers who understand the problems and issues some of our customers may face through their own personal experiences. They are great listeners and know how to access support for all sorts of things. They can help build confidence and run a Proud to Be Me programme that can help participants become happier and healthier. This year 218 customers enrolled on courses run by Community Champions.



We supported **1,274** customers to improve their employment prospects

149 customers moved into employment

292 customers completed accredited training

We engaged **146** employers to find out about local job vacancies

15 apprenticeship roles were filled within whg and through our contractors



meet Shahida

From an isolated stay-at-home mum of six children, to a confident care worker with a raft of qualifications behind her, Shahida Ahmed has transformed her life in the last six months.

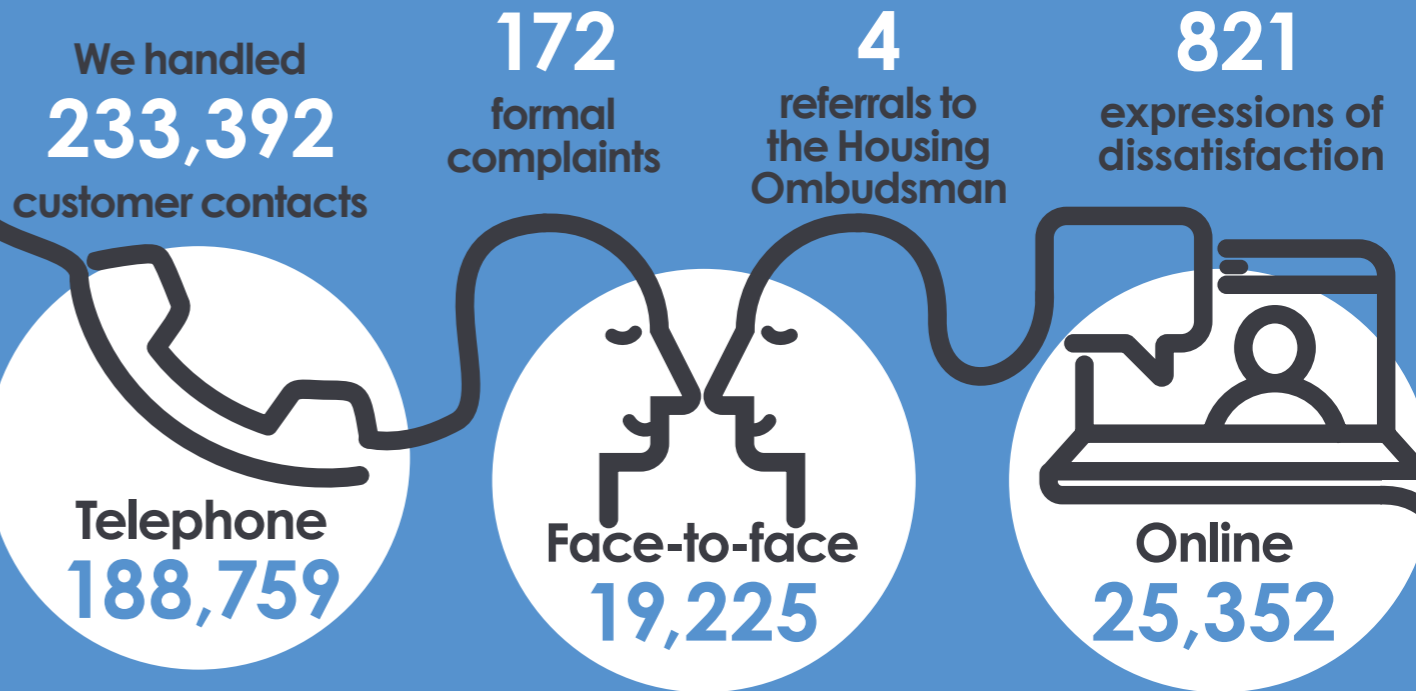
“ I started doing the courses just to get out of the house and get to know people and make friends. whg have really believed in me and if it wasn't for them I wouldn't have got out of the house to do all this. There's a lot of women out there who need this kind of support. It's given me a new lease of life and I've now got my first job in 16 years! ”

what do you think of our services?

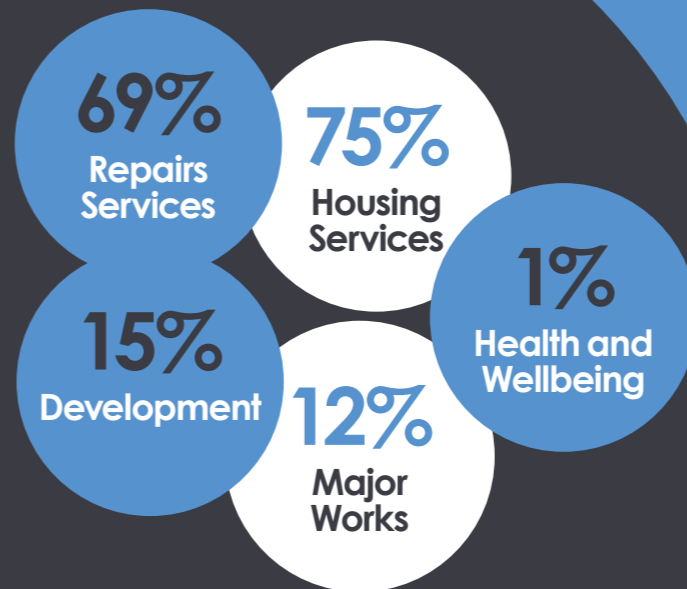


customer satisfaction and complaints

We aim to deliver great services but we know something things do not go so well. We welcome your complaints and use them to learn from and improve our services.



Type of complaint



Reason for complaint

Failure to Resolve First Time	44
Delays/Timescales	35
Poor Communication	27
Condition of Property	18
Poor Quality of Work/Service	18
Damage Caused by Colleagues/Contractors	9
Attitude of Colleagues	7
Bias/Discrimination	5
Grounds Maintenance	2
Restricted Access	2
Other	2
Poor Workmanship	1
Recurrence of Previous Issue	1
Communal Cleaning	1

Mywhg

We are very proud of how we have developed our online customer portal, Mywhg, over the last year. 7,165 customers have now joined Mywhg. The Mywhg portal allows you to access services online at any time to suit you. We are continuing to add new things you can do online.

4,894

customers registered on Mywhg

5,177

customers reported a repair through Mywhg

3,438

customers updated their details through Mywhg

£5,962,113

of rent has been paid through the portal since its launch



health and wellbeing

Our work has seen us launch a wide range of projects designed to improve the lives, health and wellbeing of our customers. This has included:

4,000

people took part in our fitness activities each week including: walking football, weekly exercise classes and health walks

195

participants signed up to Nifty over 50, our active ageing programme

42

customers signed up to lose weight through waist away

550

people benefited from our pop-up health information and advice sessions

meet Craig

When Craig Handy received a call from whg to check he was okay during the pandemic, little did he know it would lead to him being offered employment with Morrisons.



“ At the start of the pandemic I had a call from whg to ask how I was and I admitted that I was struggling. I was in a low place. I had applied for jobs and wasn't getting anywhere but Emily, from their Social Prescribing Team, really boosted my confidence and kept my spirits up. She provided me with a tablet which made applying for jobs so much easier and also meant I could do my online training. ”



repairs

We are committed to maintaining and repairing your home to ensure it is kept in good condition.

average number of days taken to complete routine repairs:

9

84%

of customers were satisfied with their last repair

98%

of repairs appointments were kept

100%

whg has been compliant with gas regulations at all times

Planned maintenance
£15.7m

Routine maintenance
£10.9m

Major works
£16.7m

Repairs to existing home stock
£43.3m

updates from last year's report

improving the customer voice

We are committed to working in partnership with our customers to improve the service we offer. Last year we said we would introduce a new Customer Voice Plan and appoint a new Customer Voice Manager to explore new ways customers could get involved and help us shape our services. We're pleased to say that this has been achieved. Our new Customer Voice Strategy will ensure we stay committed to listening closely to you – our customers, acting upon your feedback and driving forward the message that your voice matters by providing a range of ways for you to have your voice heard.



focusing on repairs

In the last year we have worked on a number of projects to improve the repairs service, such as changing how we organise appointments. We have also changed our stores provider, with Travis Perkins Managed Services now supplying materials needed to maintain our homes. This change has enabled us to modernise our service and ensure we have instant access to the materials and resources we need to work efficiently.



customer first

Our Customer First service is progressing well and we are exploring ways to improve our services by answering as many of your questions as possible when you first contact us, without needing to pass your question to another team.

meet Maxine

“ whg are always really quick to respond when I have to report a repair. Their staff are really friendly, both in person and at the end of the phone. ”



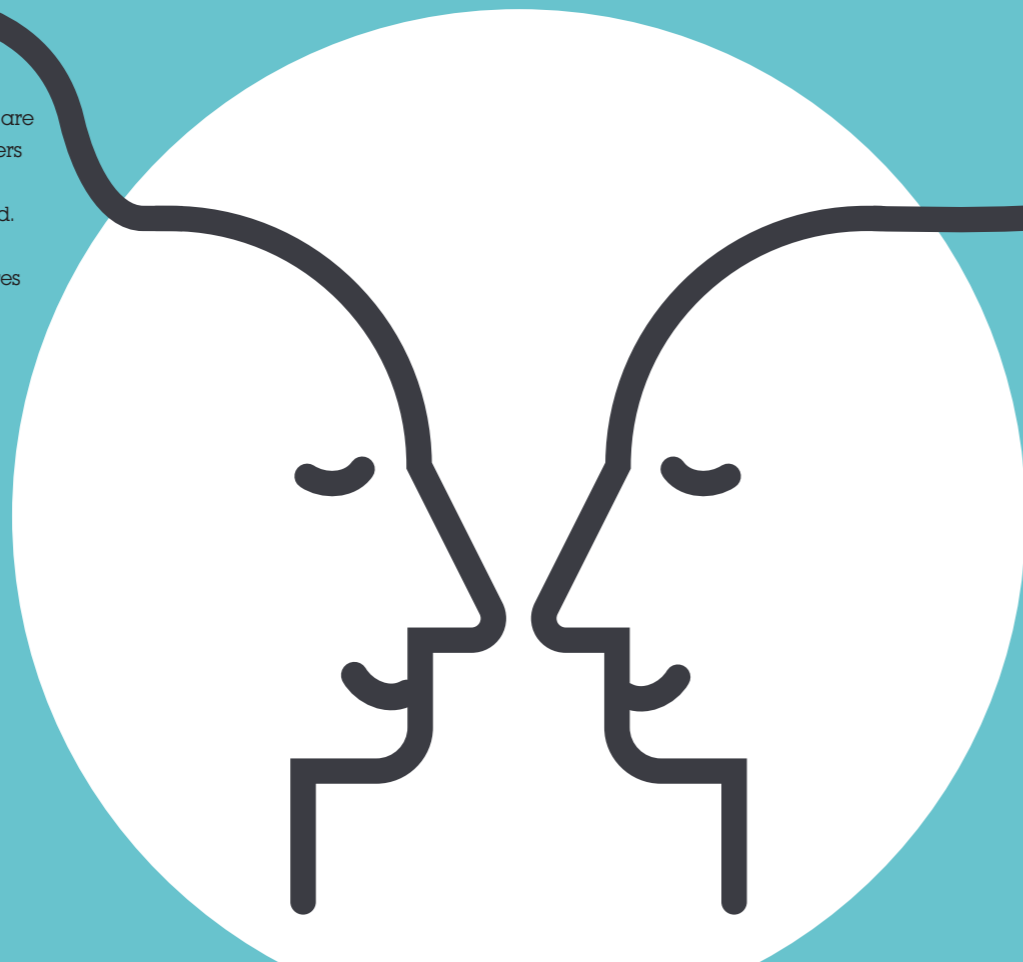
how we compare to others

To help us to continue to improve, we regularly compare our performance with other housing providers. We compare with providers who are of a similar size to us, so those who own at least 10,000 homes.

Within the West Midlands that means we are comparing ourselves to the other members of the "M6" group of Midlands housing associations like Orbit, Citizen and Accord.

Our performance in some areas compares well, such as on how much our homes cost to run per house (where we are median). We also compare well on how much money we lose when our homes are empty (void).

We know there is more for us to do on customer satisfaction. Whilst the number of customers who feel we listen to them is in the top group when compared to others, satisfaction with our neighbourhoods and repairs are things we are committed to improving as other providers do perform better than us.



customers satisfied with overall service

86%

85% in 2019

just below median at 86.6%

customers satisfied that their views are taken into account

77%

78% in 2019

customers who would recommend whg to their friends and family

82%

83% in 2019

no comparison

customers satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live

82%

same as 2019

lower group at 82%

customers satisfied with their last repair

84%

same as 2019

lower quartile is 84.5%

Formal complaints

168

87 in 2019

customers satisfied with the quality of their home

83%

85% in 2019

lower group (median is 85%)

customers that feel their rent is value for money

89%

90% in 2019

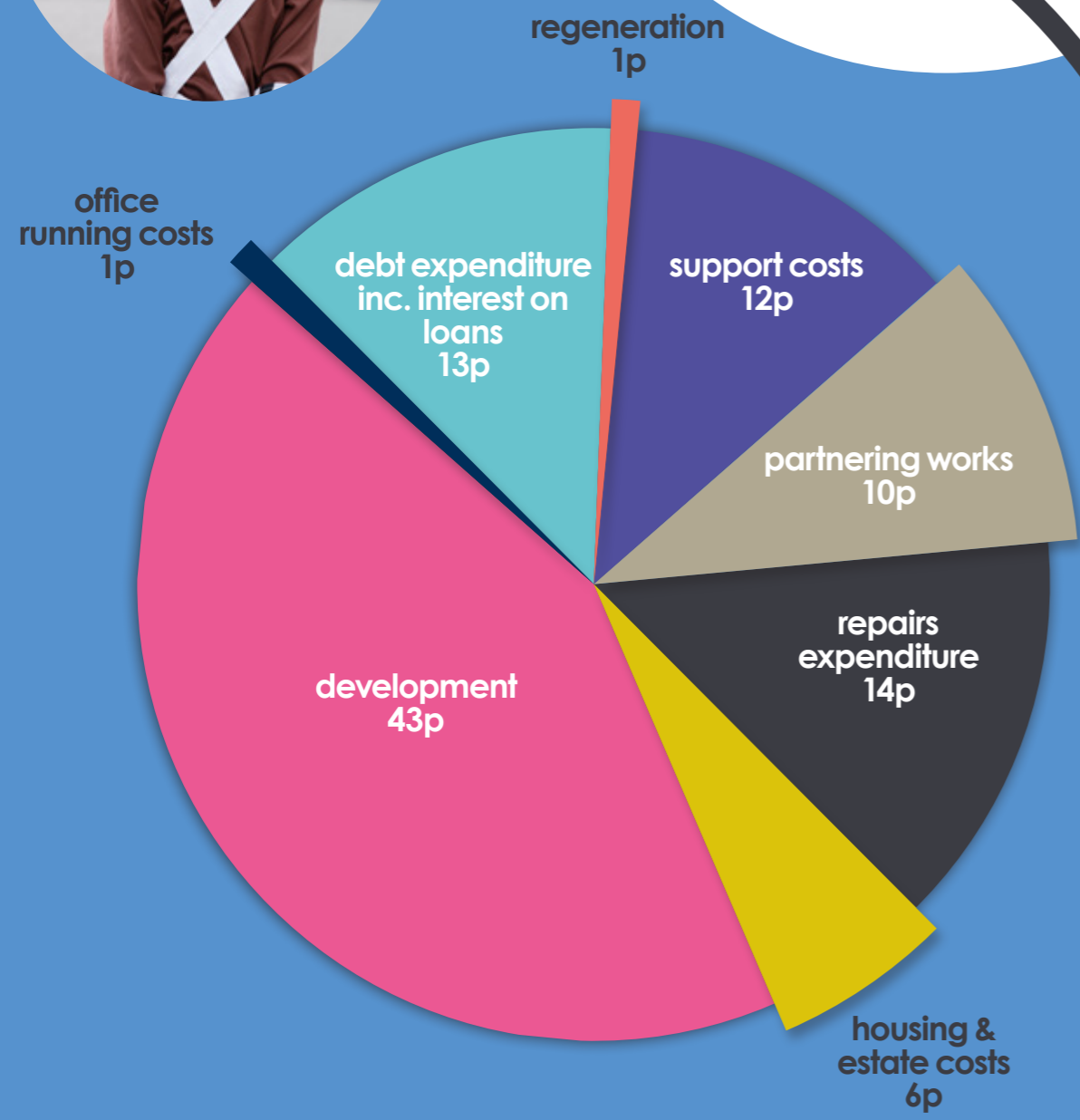
just below top quartile at 89.91%

Expressions of dissatisfaction

821

process changed so no comparison available

how each £1 of rent is spent

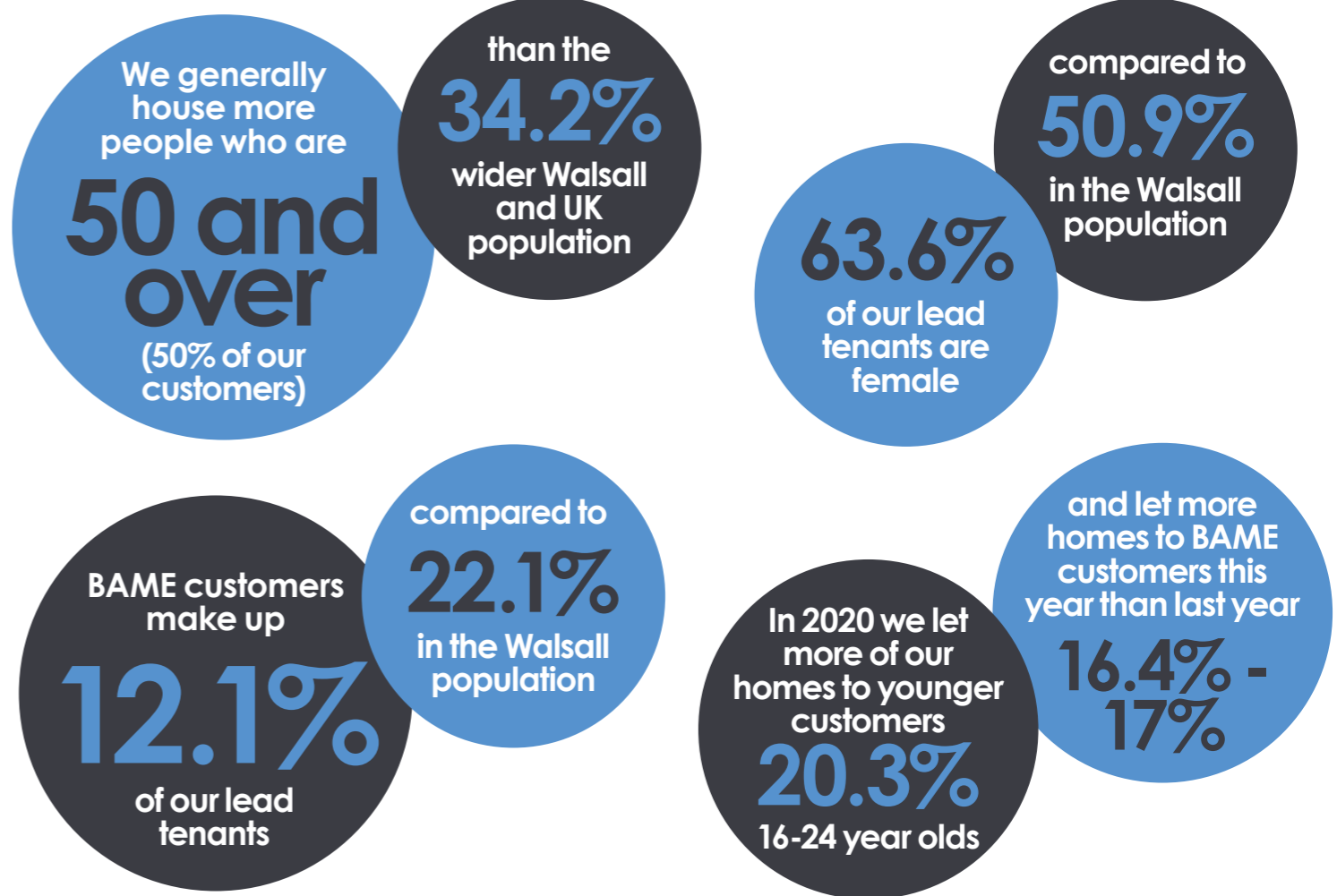


equality, diversity and inclusion

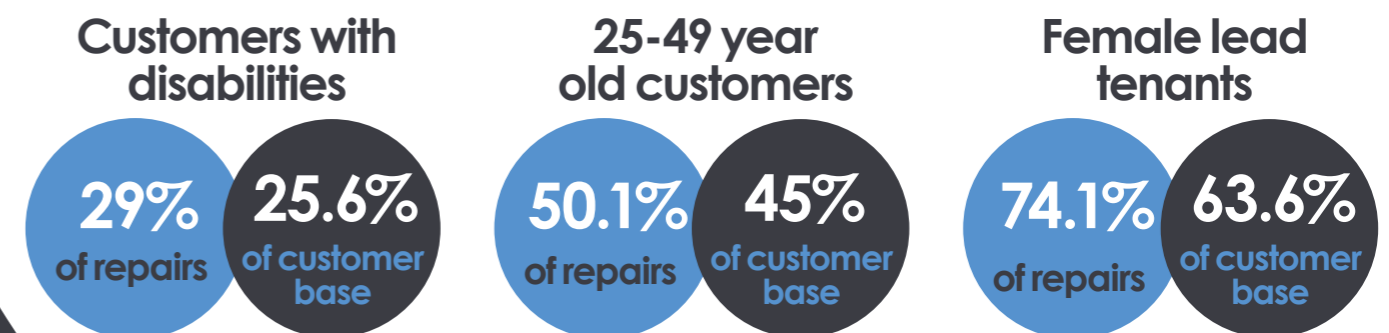
This year we set out a Single Equality Scheme action plan (2019 – 2022) which describes how we meet our legal responsibilities as defined in the Equality Act 2020. These relate to the protected characteristics of sex, gender

reassignment, disability, race, age, marriage and civil partnership, religion, pregnancy and maternity and sexual orientation. We have made progress on involving a wider range of customers in influencing our services but we plan

to work closely with younger customers and those who are BAME to ensure we are representative of our wider customer base.



We also know that the following groups have accessed our repairs services more than the proportion of the wider customer base that they represent.



our plans for the future

keeping you safe

Covid-19 has had a huge impact for us as a business. Our commitment to ensuring our customers remained safe and well became a key priority as we refocused our energy on how we could follow safety guidelines, while also continuing to deliver core services.

We are proud of the work we have done on fire safety – which has received national recognition. Building on this work, we have reviewed the forms for our Fire Risk Assessments so they are easier for people to read and we'll shortly be introducing more automation about how we arrange electrical condition reports.



listening to our customers

Designing services with you, our customers, ensures they are customer focused. We want to make sure we listen to your voice and consider your views when we make improvements to our services. Many of our customers got involved in shaping our new Corporate Plan and almost 300 customers supported us as we thought about how to recover our repairs service during the pandemic.



improving our services

Our investment in technology is helping us to improve our service to customers. We recently introduced a Chat Bot, to answer customer queries, and a better telephone system to reduce call waiting times. Our Customer First project will improve the customer experience further as we look at how we can resolve enquiries the first time you call us, without us needing to pass your question to another team.



focussing on neighbourhoods

We know fewer of our customers than other landlords are happy with their neighbourhoods, and want to improve where you live. We are reviewing our approach, such as thinking about how we can target 'hotspots' for fly tipping.

