

Customers and Communities Strategy 2025-2028



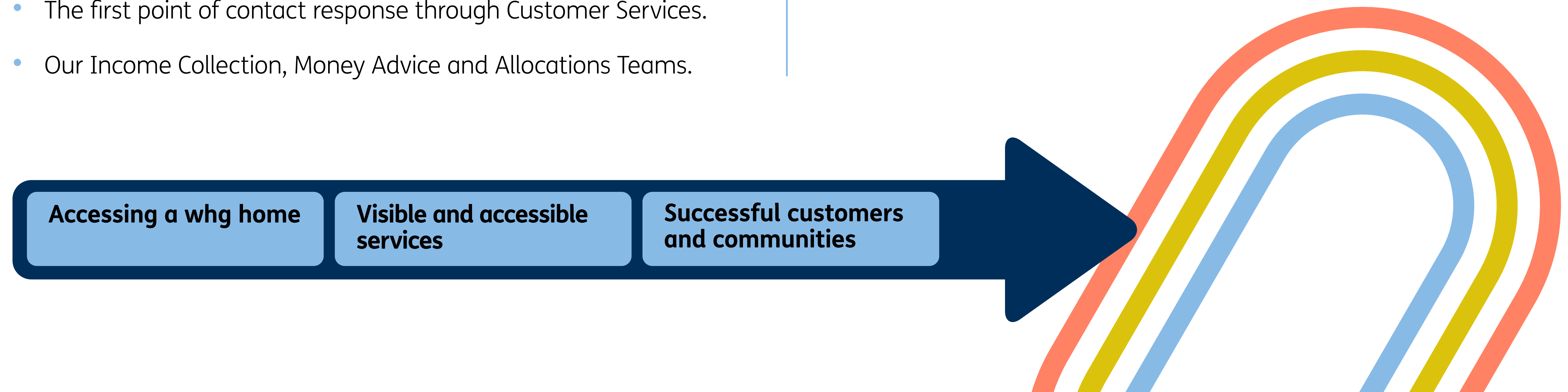
Introduction

We are a regional housing association with 22,000 homes owned and managed across the Midlands. We started life in Walsall, where most of our homes are, and it is still the place that anchors us to our communities.

The Customers and Communities Strategy is the cornerstone of our housing services offer. Our housing services include:

- The Community Housing model including Community Safety and Neighbourhood Services.
- The first point of contact response through Customer Services.
- Our Income Collection, Money Advice and Allocations Teams.

These essential services provide daily support to customers in their homes and communities. We know our customers value this support, which enables them to thrive through effective service delivery.



Our journey so far and the strategic context

Our current Housing Strategy ends in 2024. This strategy has delivered some key elements of our housing services upon which the Customers and Communities Strategy will build:

- Rolled out our Community Housing model across our communities.
- Delivered a new omni-channel customer contact solution.
- Our collection with care initiative has been fully implemented and is a core part of our work in relation to income collection and tenancy sustainment.

A new regulatory framework for social housing was launched in early 2024. This set out requirements for registered providers to comply with four new consumer standards:

- Neighbourhood and Community Standard.
- Tenancy Standard.
- Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard.
- Safety and Quality Standard.

The delivery of this strategy will support us to ensure that we are continually and consistently demonstrating our compliance against these standards.

We hear our customer voices through our published Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) and a range of other feedback mechanisms. As we continue to understand what is important to customers living in our homes, this strategy will be key in delivering the fundamentals that they most value.



Links to Our 2030 plan

Our 2030 plan was launched in 2024, setting out our ambition:

“We will provide safe and secure homes and deliver high-quality services. Our communities will be empowered to thrive and we will always do the best for our customers.”

This strategy will deliver on this ambition by:

- + Transforming our use of data and insight to enable us to become more forward thinking and proactive in what we do and how we do it. Examples of this can be found in:
 - Our objective to use predictive technology to focus resources on tenancies at risk of failure.
 - The aim to identify issues of concern before customers report them to us.

- + Enhancing our focus on sustainability linked to our objective to significantly increase the numbers of unused open spaces being developed into green growing spaces within our communities. To enable this, we will:
 - Develop a prioritised plan of all underused land which will be converted into green growing spaces.
- + Colleagues delivering our housing services will be recognised as the professionals that they are and will be appropriately skilled, qualified and trained to deliver excellence in their area of work.
 - Through this strategy we will ensure that we have the right people, in the right place, at the right time in order to deliver high quality services.

Transformational programmes in Our 2030 plan



**Data-driven
decisions**



**Forward-thinking
services**



**Social justice –
transforming lives**



**Sustainable
futures**



**Making
places**



**Work & workplace
of the future**

Customer voice

Customers have influenced this strategy through their feedback in satisfaction surveys, complaints and compliments, questionnaires and events in communities. Over 1000 customers gave us their thoughts on what should be in this strategy.

We have listened to this feedback and used it to produce the vision and objectives for the 3-year period of the strategy.

Customers told us:

whg being visible in my community is important to me

It is important that whg works collaboratively with community partners like the police and my local council, to resolve issues

It is important that I have a named Community Housing Officer to contact

It is important for whg to support customers to thrive in their home

It is important that internal communal areas are kept clean and safe

It is important that shared gardens and other green spaces are well maintained

Access to community green spaces in my neighbourhood is important to me

It is important for me to get my issue resolved the first time I contact whg

Strategy vision

We aim to deliver places where people are proud to live and services that we are proud to provide.

Through this strategy, we will ensure the delivery of high-quality housing services which are accessible, joined up and focused on the customer journey.

Pillars of the strategy

Customers and Communities Strategy

**Forward-thinking
housing services**



**Clean, green and safe
neighbourhoods**



**Easy to contact,
effective resolutions**



**Successful
tenancies**



Pillar 1: Forward-thinking housing services



1. We will maintain a high level of presence in communities with our Community Housing Service as the face of our housing services in the community. The majority of customers will know who their Community Housing Officer (CHO) is and how to contact them. To achieve this, we will keep patch sizes low to enable CHOs to be present and engaged with their communities.
2. Our Community Housing and Neighbourhood Services offer will be clearly defined and well communicated so that customers and stakeholders know the boundaries of our remit and where our partners will be best placed to deliver.
3. Customers will report high levels of satisfaction with our Community Housing and Neighbourhood Services, across all of our CHO patches.
4. We will be more proactive in what we do by developing our use of predictive technology. Our aim is that in 50% of cases, we will identify an issue related to housing or neighbourhood management before a customer has to contact us about it.
5. We will develop a robust approach to tenancy fraud, taking a zero tolerance approach to issues of fraud, recognising the signs at an early stage and acting upon them.



Pillar 2: Clean, green and safe neighbourhoods



1. Neighbourhood Services will keep the communal and shared spaces where our homes are clean, green, well maintained and safe. The service will be responsive and react quickly to issues of concern.
2. We will support the delivery of our Sustainability Strategy by:
 - Working in partnership with customers and partner organisations to develop our programme of green growing spaces.
 - Developing our partnerships to enable us to proactively deal with issues of waste management.
 - Using our interactions with customers to engage on matters relating to sustainability and decarbonisation.
3. We will ensure that the services provided in our neighbourhoods are deliver good value for money, in line with the service charges paid by customers.
4. We will work proactively with partners across our communities to respond to antisocial behaviour (ASB), hate crime and domestic abuse. Our partners will positively promote the work that we do in communities.
5. Our ASB services will be accredited by an independent body.





Pillar 3: Easy to contact and effective resolutions

1. Our services will be easy for everyone to access, with consideration for specific accessibility needs. We will provide clear information on how to access our services.
2. We will have clear customer service standards which will outline what a customer can expect when they are in contact with us. Aligned to these service standards, we will drive a culture of doing what we say we will.
3. We will aim to provide a range of self-service and digital options for customers, supporting customers to become digitally able wherever possible.
4. Where self-service isn't possible, we will aim to resolve enquiries at first point of contact or get the customer in touch with a specialist quickly.
5. We will understand the reasons for customer contact and seek to reduce levels of contact through proactive interventions.
6. Our first point of contact team will be skilled and empowered to deliver resolutions. Colleagues will have opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge further and progress their career within our first point of contact service.





Pillar 4: Successful tenancies

1. We will provide a range of supportive options designed to provide housing that is suited to customers' needs, and makes best use of our homes. We will tailor our interventions to the customer need.
2. We will assess incoming customers to ensure their tenancy will be sustained and the customer will be able to live well in their home.
3. We will use our data to predict when a tenancy is at risk of failure and put in place early interventions to help prevent this.
4. If a home no longer meets a customer's needs, we will offer options like aids and adaptations to make it suitable or help the customer move to alternative accommodation, for example through our Wellbeing offer.
5. We aim not to evict into homelessness. Eviction will be our final option where all other interventions have been exhausted, or the tenancy breach is so serious no other option is appropriate.



High level timeline of activity (Further detail in years 2 & 3 to be developed in year 1)

Year 1

Pillar 1:

- Use data and insight to review CHO patch sizes and demand
- Review community housing definitions and boundaries
- Implement new approach to tenancy fraud
- Use customer feedback to drive service improvement in Community Housing, ensuring the service is visible and effective

Pillar 2:

- Launch new communal services contracts
- Implement customer engagement approach to measuring the performance of communal services contracts
- Accreditation of ASB services

Pillar 3:

- Develop customer contact model using the data we hold on customer contact behaviour and preferences
- Implement knowledge base for Customer Services
- Embed customer service standards which respond to customer priorities
- Implement digital customer chat function chat

Pillar 4:

- Embed Income Collection predictive analytics solution
- Develop 'risk and trigger' approach to tenancy sustainment using data and insight to drive our approach

Year 2

Pillar 1:

- Implement predictive technology to support proactive service delivery

Pillar 2:

- Develop full programme of green growing spaces, engaging with customers to deliver sustainable outcomes

Pillar 3:

- Review Customer Services structure, roles and responsibilities

Pillar 4:

- Implement new approach to pre-tenancy assessment, using the insight gathered to drive ongoing interventions

Year 3

Pillar 1:

- Seek external recognition for the Community Housing model as an exemplar of housing service delivery
- Review opportunities to expand the reach of the Community Housing model

Pillar 2:

- Review service charge approach with clear opportunities for customers of all tenures to influence this

Pillar 3:

- Review service offering and opportunities for improvements to digital and self-service offering

Pillar 4:

- Develop approach to transitioning customers through our services and property types, driven by the insight we hold

Supporting principles

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Customer engagement

- Customer voices will shape the delivery of our objectives, and we will take regular opportunities to engage customers in conversations which will help to shape our services and test the effectiveness of our approach and interventions.

Effective partnerships

- We will build and maintain partnerships across our geography which benefit our customers and communities.
- The boundaries of our services will be clear, and we will signpost and refer when our partners are best placed to deliver.

Use of data and insight and technology to influence our approach

- We will make use of the data and insight available to us to design services which are tailored to the customers living in our homes and communities.
- Technology will support colleagues to deliver a streamlined and effective service, reducing duplication and time spent on administrative tasks.

Skilled and empowered colleagues

- Colleagues involved in delivering our housing services will be trained and enabled to deliver the outcomes which respond to individual customer circumstances. In doing so, they will be recognised for the professional housing services they deliver.

Consistency of service

- Customers can expect a high quality housing management service, regardless of location, property type or tenure type.

Linked strategies

whg Customers and Communities Strategy 2025-2028

Social Justice Strategy	Colleague Development Strategy	People Strategy	Data, Digital and Technology Strategy	Diversity and Inclusion Strategy	Sustainability Strategy	Customer Voice Strategy	Asset Management Strategy
<p>This strategy seeks to level the playing field and enable customers to live well in our homes.</p> <p>Our Community Housing service supports the achievement of this with the aims of the Social Justice Strategy supporting the achievement of tenancy sustainment.</p>	<p>We want colleagues who are involved in delivering our housing services to be highly skilled, knowledgeable and recognised as professionals.</p> <p>The objectives outlined in the Colleague Development Strategy will support the achievement of this aim.</p>	<p>We aim to attract the best talent to deliver our housing services, where colleagues are able to successfully develop their careers.</p> <p>These two strategies will work in tandem, achieving shared objectives by delivering clear career pathways and the appropriate structuring and resourcing of services.</p> <p>We will deliver organisational capability through effective workforce planning and talent management.</p>	<p>We will use data and insight to influence our service design and delivery; with the Data, Digital and Technology Strategy enabling this.</p> <p>This strategy will support the Data, Digital and Technology Strategy through ensuring that we are collecting accurate and timely data as well as a focus on improving access to digital services for customers.</p>	<p>The diversity of our customers and colleagues influences all elements of this strategy.</p> <p>In developing our approaches to using data to sustain tenancies, we will know our customers in more depth.</p> <p>Our approach to resolving more at first point of contact will improve both customer and colleague experiences.</p>	<p>In our neighbourhoods, we will support this strategy by enhancing biodiversity in open spaces, raising customer awareness of waste management, and collaborating with partners for sustainable community solutions.</p>	<p>Customer voices have been used to shape this strategy and will continue to influence its delivery.</p> <p>We will do this by listening and acting on customer feedback and providing opportunities for customers to drive change and influence decisions.</p>	<p>There are clear links between these Strategies with this Strategy supporting the delivery of Building Safety and Sustainability priorities amongst others.</p> <p>We will support delivery of the Asset Management Strategy through our proactive approach to Neighbourhood Management and by ensuring we are connected to our customers through our Community Housing Model.</p>

All supported by our Communications Strategy which enables the promotion of this work across our customer base, our colleagues, our partners and more widely

Success measures

These measures will be used to track the success of the strategy throughout its life, and we will seek to deliver all of these outcomes by the conclusion of the strategy in 2028.

Pillar 1: Forward-thinking housing services	
Measure	2024 baseline
• 75% of customers tell us that they know their CHO.	47%
• Customer satisfaction with our Community Housing service will be at least 70%.	64%
• Boundaries of the service offering will be well defined and communicated.	n/a
• Proactive case management in 50% of cases (defined as a customer not needing to contact us to report an issue).	Baseline to be established in Year 1
• Homes brought back into use for social/affordable rent following successful action on tenancy fraud.	n/a

Pillar 2: Clean, green and safe neighbourhoods	
Measure	2024 baseline
• Customer satisfaction with communal services is 80%.	64.7%
• Programme of green growing spaces doubles each year for the life of the strategy.	n/a
• Customers will report at least 75% satisfaction with our positive contribution to neighbourhoods (TSM TP11).	69.2%
• Our partners positively promote our work across our geography.	n/a
• Neighbourhood Services will perform well when compared to peers (exceed TSM TP10 median score and achieve at least 67%).	64.2%
• ASB Service is accredited.	n/a

Success measures

These measures will be used to track the success of the strategy throughout its life, and we will seek to deliver all of these outcomes by the conclusion of the strategy in 2028.

Pillar 3: Easy to contact, effective solutions	
Measure	2024 baseline
• 80% of housing queries resolved at first point of contact.	New baseline to be established in Year 1
• At least 80% customer satisfaction with contact through our Customer Services Team and digital services.	Customer services c. 93% Digital services baseline to be established in Year 1
• Clearly defined service standards in place with high levels of adherence.	n/a

Pillar 4: Successful tenancies	
Measure	2024 baseline
• Over 80% of tenancies sustained in excess of 5 years.	68%
• Evictions are the exception and last resort, our performance continues to exceed our peers.	<0.5%
• Reduction in number of households under occupying their home by more than one bedroom.	Baseline to be established in Year 1

Linked Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)

In addition to the measures which will demonstrate the success of this strategy, we will also continue to measure and report on the TSMs, in line with the expectations of the Regulator of Social Housing.

Pillar 1: Forward-thinking housing services	TP01: Overall satisfaction
	TP06: Satisfaction that the landlord listens to tenant views and acts upon them
	TP11: Satisfaction that the landlord makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods
Pillar 2: Clean, green and safe neighbourhoods	TP01: Overall satisfaction
	TP05: Satisfaction that the home is safe
	NM01: Antisocial behaviour cases relative to the size of the landlord
	TP10: Satisfaction that the landlord keeps communal areas clean and well maintained
	TP11: Satisfaction that the landlord makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods
Pillar 3: Easy to contact, effective solutions	TP12: Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling antisocial behaviour
	TP01: Overall satisfaction
Pillar 4: Successful tenancies	TP06: Satisfaction that the landlord listens to tenant views and acts upon them
	TP01: Overall satisfaction
	TP08: Agreement that the landlord treats tenants fairly and with respect



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