



.....
93.6%
positive customer
outcomes



.....
97.7%
of new tenants
were visited within
four weeks



.....
83%
of you are
satisfied overall

Annual Report to Customers 2016

.....
87%
think your rent provides
value for money



Working with you

We know it's important to communicate with you, involve you in decisions and make sure our services are right for you. In fact, some of our customers were involved in the production of this report.

To make sure we focus on the things that matter most to you, we now work with an independent research company, Voluntas, to listen to your feedback via an on-going telephone satisfaction survey. We've included some customer comments within this report.



We try to give a great service but sometimes we get it wrong. We record everything you tell us that we could have done better, from a missed contractor visit to us not replying quickly enough to an enquiry. This helps us spot where things are going wrong.

We have improved our website so you can contact us more easily. You can now pay your rent, view your latest statement, report a repair or have an online 'webchat' with one of our advisers from your PC, tablet or mobile phone.

Anna Bishop, Director of Customer Service and Community Engagement

We received 2,447 complaints

between April 2015 and March 2016. Of these...

93% were resolved at the first stage: **7% were resolved at the second stage:**

52% upheld	3% upheld
17% partially upheld	1.5% partially upheld
24% not upheld	2.5% not upheld

Top three complaints received:

- 62%** Responsive repairs
- 22%** Customer care, by Riverside or contractors
- 4%** Planned cyclical repairs

A strong customer voice

National Scrutiny Committee member Glynn Williams said: "Scrutiny has provided tenants with an opportunity to act as 'critical friends' to Riverside, to recommend changes and improvements so that customers get a consistently good service and value for money. We are all volunteers who give our time and advice for the benefit of all Riverside customers." Find out more at www.riverside.org.uk/scrutiny

Your home

We work with you, our contractors and our in-house repairs teams to keep your homes safe and well maintained.

Our in-house repairs contractor, Evolve, now works across Carlisle, Merseyside, the North East, Greater Manchester and the Midlands and is also responsible for gas servicing, most recently taking on the contract for the Midlands.

Last year we carried out property MOTs on 2,746 homes. These top-to-toe 'health checks' help save time and money, enabling us to carry out repairs before they become costly and time consuming.



We're investing £27 million to modernise our Retirement Living schemes over the next five years. We want to ensure they continue to be attractive and modern places to live, for current customers and the next generation. In 2016 we'll invest in the first five schemes of the programme, each getting new equipment, updated facilities and redecorated communal spaces and external areas.

Alison Halstead, Head of Retirement Living

Planned improvements

We're planning to spend around **£80 million** on repairs and improvements to your homes in the coming year.

What's happening about... Voluntary Right To Buy?

Riverside has been taking part in a Government pilot, offering some tenants in Merseyside the chance to buy their home under a voluntary scheme. For more information visit www.riverside.org.uk/voluntary-right-to-buy

Did you know?

We agreed with our National Scrutiny Committee to remind customers that they are responsible for some smaller repairs and maintenance tasks around their home. If we have to carry out these for you, we may have to charge you for them. Find out more at www.riverside.org.uk/repairs

"They've brought out an MOT for their properties and someone comes out to check if everything is ok or if any repairs need doing. I think that's a good scheme."

Riverside customer, Runcorn



83%

of you are satisfied overall

Same result as 2015

Compared to others:

Best	Average	Worst
97.5%	86.0%	63.2%

74%

think that we listen to your views and act upon them

9% better than 2015

Compared to others:

Best	Average	Worst
93.1%	68.7%	55.4%

95%

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

2.6% worse than 2015

Compared to others:

Best	Average	Worst
95.98%	92.97%	86.39%

Target for this national specialist benchmarking group is 95%

It cost us the equivalent of **£112.19**

per home to provide resident involvement service (2015)

Compared to others:

Low	Average	High
£7.31	£58.69	£151.34

92%

of repairs appointments were kept

1% worse than 2015

Compared to others:

Best	Average	Worst
100%	96.7%	63.2%

89.9%

of repairs were fixed during the first visit

New measure

75%

of you were satisfied with our repairs service

2% better than 2015

Compared to others:

Best	Average	Worst
95.2%	78.5%	53.5%

It cost us the equivalent of

£887.13

per home to provide our repairs service (2015)

Compared to others:

Low	Average	High
£570.26	£840.13	£1,366.46

Your tenancy

We are always looking at ways to improve the way we let our properties and help you maintain your tenancy, supporting those most at risk of losing their homes.

New tenancies can now start on any day of the week, so tenants can move in more quickly, keeping empty properties to a minimum.

We are helping customers prepare for Universal Credit, running a pilot with tenants in one area of Liverpool who now receive Housing Benefit direct to their bank accounts.



The Riverside Foundation provides practical support to help people in our neighbourhoods overcome obstacles to a better quality of life. Over the past year it has invested £858,000 in eight different projects, helping to support over 2,800 individuals or households. Projects in our neighbourhoods included offering a subsidised handyperson scheme to older people and providing items needed to help people into employment.

Lisa Connor, Fundraising Manager



Planned improvements

We will introduce measures to help tenants who hoard, as hoarding can often cause health and safety issues and problems for neighbours.



What's happening about... rent reductions?

Following a Government decision, many tenants will have their rents reduced by **1% a year** for the next four years. Whilst good news for customers, this has created a big financial challenge for housing associations.



Did you know?

Our Employment and Training teams helped **624 people nationwide into work** this year, including 364 who were supported by the Riverside Foundation.

"It's very easy to notify them about faults via the phone or online; you can check your rent and everything online, which is good. If there are any problems then you can ring them."

Riverside customer, Widnes



25.3 days
time taken to re-let our empty properties

▲ 4.5 days better than 2015

Compared to others:

Best	Average	Worst
12	28.7	92.7

97.7%
of new tenants were visited within four weeks



■ Same result as 2015

4.39%
Rent arrears as a percentage of total rent due

▲ 0.13% better than 2015

Compared to others:

Best	Average	Worst
0.68%	3.68%	8.26%

It cost us the equivalent of £532.29

per home to provide our housing management service (2015)

Compared to others:

Low	Average	High
£281.61	£474.68	£827.78

"Riverside services are fine it's just a few things in the neighbourhood we are unhappy about."

Riverside customer, Wilmslow



86%
of you are satisfied with your neighbourhood

▲ 3% better than 2015

Compared to others:

Best	Average	Worst
92.8%	84.0%	75.0%

It cost us the equivalent of £193.53
per home to provide our estate management services (2015)

Compared to others:

Low	Average	High
£74.40	£190.16	£657.57

It cost us the equivalent of £57.35
per home to manage antisocial behaviour in our neighbourhoods (2015)



Compared to others:

Low	Average	High
£21.36	£64.80	£143.38

Your neighbourhood

We work with you and our partners to keep our neighbourhoods safe and clean. We are also committed to projects that improve people's quality of life.

For example, we've launched successful volunteering schemes with the support of residents who provide advice on heating and fuel costs and a befriending service to older people in the neighbourhood who may be lonely.



We are looking at lots of ways to reduce our operating costs without affecting service delivery. Over the next 12 months we will be re-organising our current five divisions into three larger regions and investing in new technology to enable us to deliver more services to customers without them needing to visit a local office. This will mean some offices may no longer be needed and we'll be working with customers themselves to agree and implement any such changes. We will also introduce Regional Plans to support a more joined-up approach to service delivery for general needs, care and support and home ownership customers.

Léann Hearne, Executive Director, Shared Services



Planned improvements

With the help of our newly appointed Equality and Diversity Manager we will produce regional action plans to ensure that all customers and staff are treated fairly and with respect, regardless of their age, gender, race religion etc. We are proud to be listed as one of the country's top 100 employers by the equality campaign group Stonewall.



What's happening... in my neighbourhood?

You can find information on events we are running in your neighbourhood on our website www.riverside.org.uk/your-neighbourhood or why not follow us on Facebook?



Did you know?

Our tenancy fraud team has reclaimed 27 properties since we launched a clampdown on illegal sub-letting in the South East, with a further 10 in the process of being returned to us.

Care and support

Our Care and Support business operates in over 150 local authority areas, providing a wide range of services and housing options to customers who need additional support in order to live independent and fulfilling lives. Our customers include people with disabilities; people with mental health problems; older people, or those who are homeless.

We work with health and social care partners and other funders to provide innovative, flexible services that deliver exceptional value to commissioning authorities and in a way that enables customers to meet their own aspirations and goals.



We're changing the way we deliver our Retirement Living services, to better reflect the way that these services are funded as well as the changing needs of our ageing population. Our staff will work over a group of schemes and this, coupled with improved technology, will help customers remain happy, healthy, safe and independent for longer. Our new Health and Wellbeing service will work with partner organisations to develop initiatives, events and activities that promote a feeling of inclusion and wellness for our customers.

Cath McAndry, Director of Operations, Care and Support



Planned improvements

This year we are recruiting a dedicated manager to oversee our GROW (Giving Real Opportunities for Work) trainee programme. This provides a pathway for people to volunteer in our services, through peer mentoring or other volunteer opportunities, with the aim of becoming a GROW trainee. Working as a paid member of staff on a 10 month programme, many of our trainees then go on to gain permanent employment with us, including 10 of our 27 GROW trainees in 2015/16.



What's happening about... Local Housing Allowances?

The government is introducing changes that will limit housing-related benefits for some new social housing tenants. Although these have not yet come into effect, we are concerned about the potential impact on tenants in supported housing. We are working hard to influence Ministers over the detail of this policy.



Did you know?

We're helping ex-offenders in Greater Manchester to use their experiences by acting as 'Gate Buddies' to others as they are released, helping to break the cycle of offending, prison and homelessness.

"I get really good support, they help me a lot and they let me know how to move on and get my own house."

Riverside customer,
Wakefield



97.9%
of customer needs and risk assessments delivered on time (2016)

▲ 2.9% better than 2015

93.6%
Positive customer outcomes

▼ 0.3% worse than 2015



75%
of you think that service charges are value for money

▲ 8% better than 2015

Compared to others:

Best	Average	Worst
88.3%	68.5%	53.3%

87%
think your rent provides value for money

▲ 8% better than 2015

Compared to others:

Best	Average	Worst
91.8%	80.4%	71.0%



£87.64
was our average weekly rent for general needs homes.



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.

Governance, viability & value for money



Housing associations across the country have been affected by government cuts and are having to find radical ways to save money, whilst still ensuring a great service is offered to customers.

Riverside needs to find annual savings of £32 million over the next five years and so we are carrying out a complete review of our operations to create a leaner, fitter business.

This includes:

- reducing our office costs and other overheads by moving from five divisions to three regions
- generating savings of £5.3m this year on the goods and services we buy in
- overhauling our employee pension scheme
- providing more services online through our website
- streamlining our boards and committees.

We are making good progress in achieving the challenging targets in our 2014-17 Corporate Plan, whilst recognising there is still more to do.

Please see our 2016 Financial Statements and Business Effectiveness Statement on our website for more details on all of the above.

We remain committed to involving customers in how we are run and are fully compliant with the National Housing Federation's Governance Code.

I'm delighted to report that this year we once again achieved the highest possible ratings for governance and financial viability from the Homes and Communities Agency, the body that regulates housing associations.

Working with you, our customers, Riverside will continue through these challenging times to deliver our vision of Transforming Lives and Revitalising Neighbourhoods.

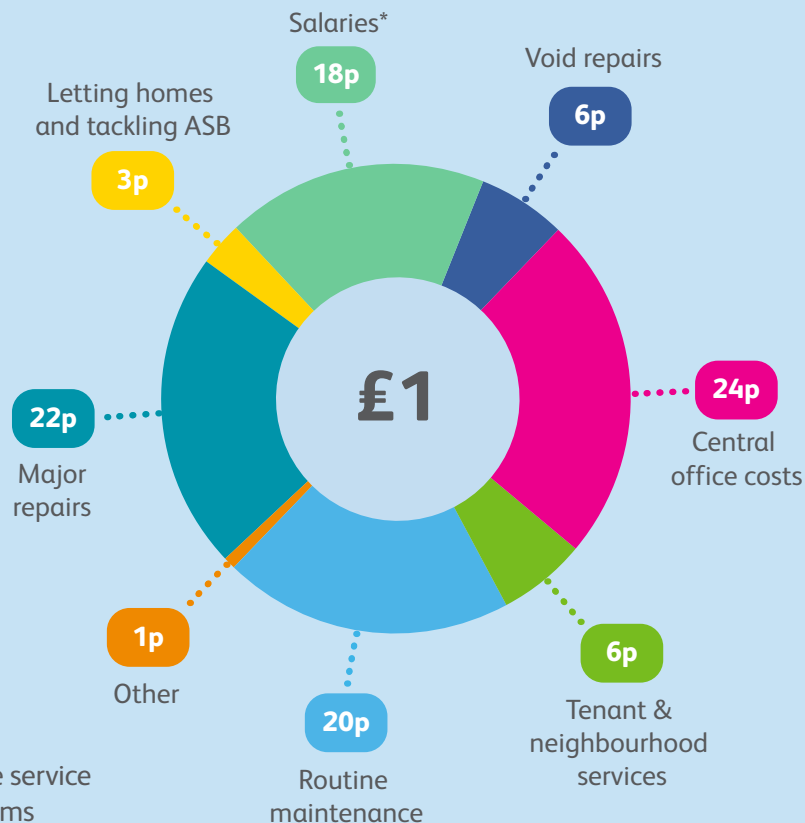
Max Steinberg CBE, Riverside Group Chair



Did you know?

Riverside started out in 1928 as Liverpool Improved Houses with 15 houses in Swan Street Liverpool, and the aim of making housing affordable to those most in need. Today we manage over 50,000 properties from the South East of England to the Isle of Arran, Scotland. Visit www.riverside.org.uk to find out more

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 other housing associations (62) of a similar type and size. Where the information is available we compare how we are doing alongside the lowest, average and highest performers with respect to customer satisfaction or low, average and high for service costs, using the latest available benchmarking data.

The 2016 Riverside Tenants and Residents Federation Annual Report, written by tenants, for tenants will be available from January 2017.

To order your copy, email involvement@riverside.org.uk. The report will also be available on our website and the Federation's Facebook page.

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

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The Riverside Group Limited
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All facts and figures in this report are correct at the time of publication and relate to the financial year ending 31st March 2016. They do not include Home Ownership data.

Get in touch or find out more

www.riverside.org.uk
email: info@riverside.org.uk
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 **Next Generation Text**
(NGT) calls. Press '3'
once connected