



Focused | Innovative | Trusted

# Annual Report 2022-2023

The best managing agent  
in England by 2023!

Westfield House





Dear customers, tenants, leaseholders and stakeholders,

Welcome to our Annual Report for the financial year spanning April 2022 to March 2023. This report is designed to give you a short snapshot of how Homes in Sedgemoor has been serving customers during the last year.

And what a year it has been with many significant challenges and changes for us all. First and foremost, we have been very aware of the continued cost-of-living crisis that has affected everyone. Homes in Sedgemoor prides itself on being a caring and supportive organisation and we hope that this has been our customers' experience if they needed our help during the past 12 months. We are very pleased to have been able to extend our comprehensive support services with a range of extra provisions during the last year, and thanks to ideas from our colleagues and financial support given by the Homes in Sedgemoor Board, you will see that we were able to offer much needed grants for winter support and warm hubs for our customers to meet in. Of course, these new services complemented our existing and well-established support services across areas such as income management, neighbourhood management and independent living. With the cost-of-living crisis set to continue, we remain ready to help customers in whatever way we can.

Last year we celebrated the 15th anniversary of Homes in Sedgemoor managing the Sedgemoor District Council housing stock. This anniversary

coincided with a major change in Somerset as the county prepared for the transition from five councils to one single unitary authority called Somerset Council. The new council officially came into being in April this year and this means that whilst we continue to be the managing agent for the former Sedgemoor area council housing stock, we now have a new owner (Somerset Council). We are looking forward to building a similarly close and productive relationship with Somerset Council like the one we had with Sedgemoor District Council.

In March this year, our current three-year Corporate Strategy came to an end. This strategy made sure that we focused on doing the basics very well – delivering great services to customers, ensuring good quality, safe homes, and making sure our business was as strong as possible in order to meet the challenges ahead (of which there have been plenty in the form of a pandemic and then a cost-of-living crisis!) We hope that the performance results contained in this report demonstrate our progress across all three areas. Of course, we still have areas that we can do better in and therefore our commitment to giving our customers the strongest possible voice in order to influence and shape our services will remain a constant in our new strategy that will be shared in the Autumn of 2023.

This commitment will build further on the successful work already being undertaken by the Sedgemoor Tenants' Assurance Committee, service improvement groups and involved customers.

In the last year we have seen many terrible stories in the media regarding poor conditions in affordable housing. The homes we manage are getting older so investment in them to keep them safe and warm is hugely important. You will see in this report that we continue to spend significant sums on the homes we manage. However, sometimes problems will occur despite our best efforts, but when this happens, it is important that we listen and deal with enquiries professionally and quickly. This is all part of our long standing 'Customers First' philosophy that puts customers at the centre of everything we do.

Finally, when discussing the current cost-of-living crisis we cannot ignore the fact that Somerset faces a huge shortage of affordable housing. Homes in Sedgemoor was therefore honoured last year to have been entrusted to manage the former Sedgemoor District Council's new affordable housing development programme. In this report you will see that Homes in Sedgemoor is managing the development of many new, high quality,

council homes across the Sedgemoor area. Both Sedgemoor District Council and now Somerset Council are committed to funding more new council homes in the future, and we look forward to seeing more people being given one of the most important things in life – a home to call their own.

Before we sign off this welcome note, we wanted to say a big thank you to the brilliant Homes in Sedgemoor team, our committed Board and our partners at Sedgemoor District Council and the new Somerset Council, without whom none of what you read about in this report would be possible. Lastly, we want to say a heartfelt thank you to customers, especially those who were able to get involved with us over the last year in order to help improve the services we provide.

We hope you enjoy this report.

**Peter Hatch**      **Paul Stephenson**  
Chief Executive      Chair

## Income and Expenditure

This is the money we get to manage and maintain your homes. This is mainly from the rent you pay to Somerset Council.



We funded £430,000 from our reserves, which was planned in the budget.

This money was invested in several initiatives to help improve the services delivered to our customers and to maintain our high compliance standards.

### Income

Management Fee	£9,225,000
Property Improvement	£5,806,000
Other Income	£477,000
Interest	£66,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£15,574,000</b>

### Expenditure

Property Repairs and Maintenance	£3,637,000
Property Improvement	£5,806,000
Staff Costs	£3,479,000
Service Level Agreements with Council	£1,283,000
Housing Management Costs	£1,799,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£16,004,000</b>

**More expenditure than income      £430,000**



# Repairs and Maintenance



We always work hard to maintain customers' properties to a great standard to ensure they have good quality, safe homes. We're proud to work closely with customers and partner contractors to carry out responsive repairs safely and efficiently, which is evident in customers' positive feedback of our service.

<p>We carried out <b>5,331</b> same day repairs</p>  <p><b>99%</b> of same day repairs were completed on time</p>	<p>We carried out <b>4,437</b> routine repairs</p>  <p><b>92%</b> of routine repairs were completed on time</p>	<p>We carried out <b>782</b> emergency repairs</p>  <p><b>99.5%</b> of emergency repairs were completed on time</p>
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**93%**  
overall customer satisfaction with the responsive repairs service

## Working with MD Group

Last year, we spent **£2.4m** on repairs and maintenance with MD Group.

Repairs and maintenance (emergency, same day and routine)	<b>£1,224,600</b>
Small works (planned)	<b>£420,900</b>
Voids (standard)	<b>£770,800</b>

We tendered the repairs and void contract last year and MD were successful in retaining the work. We strive to provide great services for our customers and to give our customers a strong voice. We were pleased to be able to involve customers directly in the procurement process, which included the selection of the winning bidder.

## Damp and mould

- We have carried out **236** damp and mould treatments
- We have carried out **47** damp remedial works

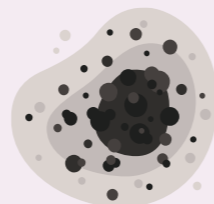
We are aware that many of the homes we manage are of an age and structure that can be prone to excessive condensation, leading to mould growth.

Therefore, we have now developed a Damp and Mould Policy to ensure that we are adhering to all guidance and legislation, and adopting best practice.

For all reports of damp and mould we arrange for a surveyor to attend and inspect within two working days. Remedial works are booked to clean and treat mould, and for items such as extractor fans to be repaired/replaced/installed.

During their inspections, our surveyors will offer advice and guidance to customers on how they can minimise condensation within their homes and steps they can take to manage this.

All initial contacts for damp and mould are logged on our CRM system and captured within our monthly compliance report.



# Home Safety



Customer safety remains our number one priority. We work hard to ensure customers' homes are safe for them, their family and other visitors. Thank you to all our customers for letting us carry out essential safety checks.

Fire Safety	Fire risk assessments completed	Fire actions completed	Fire system testing
	Target 100%   Actual 100%	Target 100%   Actual 98.81%	Target 100%   Actual 100%
Water Safety	All relevant sites to have a risk assessment	Legionella actions completed	Monthly water temperature checks
	Target 100%   Actual 100%	Target 100%   Actual 100%	Target 100%   Actual 94.35%
Asbestos Safety	Blocks to have a management survey	Garages to have a management survey	
	Target 100%   Actual 100%	Target 100%   Actual 100%	
Electrical Safety	All homes to have an electrical installation condition report (5 yearly)	All blocks to have an electrical installation condition report (5 yearly)	
	Target 100%   Actual 98.83%	Target 100%   Actual 100%	
Gas Safety	Properties with a current gas safety certificate	Commercial properties with a current gas safety certificate	
	Target 100%   Actual 99.67%	Target 100%   Actual 100%	
Lift safety	All lifts to have been inspected (6 monthly/annual)		
	Target 100%   Actual 92.75%		

## New fire safety measures at Westfield House

Westfield House, in Bridgwater, the tallest high-rise housing in the county of Somerset, has been fitted with a new state-of-the-art fire protection system.

Working in partnership with Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue and residents, we installed the new system, which directly alerts the fire service, to bring fire safety up to the highest possible standard.

Neil Richards, Fire Safety Team Leader for Homes in Sedgemoor said: "Since the tragedy of Grenfell, we have looked at every aspect of our high-rise building to make it as safe as possible for our customers living there. We have also worked even harder and with a more joined-up approach with Devon and Somerset Fire Service to make sure we are listening to their advice and that we are doing everything we can to ensure that safety for our customers and fire crews in the event of an incident occurring is a top priority. This has been a big project, but also a successful and satisfying one to undertake."

To read more about the new fire alarm system, visit our website at [www.homesinsedgemoor.org/whats-on/news](http://www.homesinsedgemoor.org/whats-on/news).



# Upgrading Homes



We carry out a large number of home upgrades every year to ensure we provide customers with good quality, safe homes. Last year, our capital expenditure was around **£6.2m**, which was spent on upgrading homes and communal areas. Our planned works schedule, which is created based on our stock condition surveys, was smaller last year, which allowed us to prioritise works in other areas. As part of these other works, we were pleased to carry out around 750 new fire door installations and to fit a number new lifts across some of our blocks.

We also carried over **£1.2m** to fund a refurbishment project at Westfield House which we are looking forward to starting later in 2023.



## Case study West Bow Communal Room refurbishment

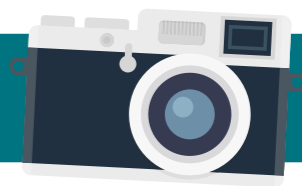
As part of our project to improve the lives of our customers in sheltered housing, the Independent Living Service Project delivered its first hub at West Bow House.

The communal room is now a fantastic facility, created through consultation with customers that provides activities to support customer wellbeing, improve health, reduce isolation, and support our link into the local community.

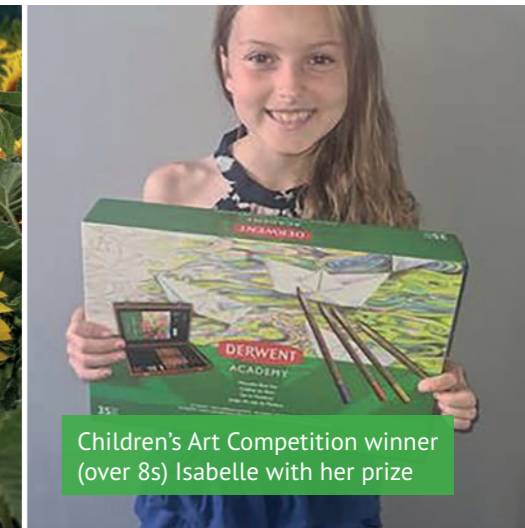
The first of three communal hubs to get a makeover, residents now enjoy an open-plan kitchen and communal area, new WC facilities, heating, a thermal upgrade, flooring, soft furnishings, decorations and bi-fold doors onto a new patio area. Windows, an alarm system and an electrical upgrade all complete the new-look hall. The refurbishment was carried out in partnership with the council, Impart Links as the Principal Designer and the works were delivered by MD Group. We are looking forward to replicating this project in other areas in the future.



# The Year in Photos



The winning Photo Competition entry by Chris



Children's Art Competition winner (over 8s) Isabelle with her prize



Colleagues and contractors proud to install the new fire alarm system at Westfield House



Clearing the garden at Houlgate Way



Contractors and colleagues show off new environmentally friendly equipment



Involved customers were recognised at our Star Awards



Surveyor Phil with the new gates at Brooklands



Strivers celebrated at the Strive Awards

# Customer Involvement



## Social Value

Everything we do as an organisation creates a wellbeing uplift. We use a Social Value tool, championed by HACT, a charity that enables social housing organisations to drive value by unlocking the potential for lasting, transformational change. Social Value is calculated based on an organisation's social and environmental impact through improvements to wellbeing and savings made to the community.

We created  
**£3,007,966**  
worth of social value.

## Involved customers

We have

**19**

formally involved customers

We have held

**31**

involved customer meetings April 2022 - March 2023

We held

**2**

scrutiny events to improve our services

A total of

**£2,643**

Making a Difference (MaD) funding was granted to 5 community groups

Customer Involvement is our framework that provides opportunities for customers to influence decision making processes to help shape our service delivery. Last year, we were proud to have:

- 6 customer members of Sedgemoor Tenants Assurance Committee (STAC)
- 10 customers on the Service Improvement Panel (SIP)
- 4 customers on the Making a Difference (MaD) Fund Panel
- 19 customers involved with the Scrutiny Group
- 6 customers as Neighbourhood Champions

**Did you know...** The Service Improvement Panel now rotates its meetings around our communal halls and invites other customers to pop along for tea and cake to get to know our customers. A customer member was instrumental in setting this up as he wanted all tenants to have an opportunity to have their voice heard.

## Scrutiny

### Customer Involvement in Procurement

**14** customers involved with procurement process scrutiny

Customers attended an introduction to procurement, covering the purchase of all goods and services, the process and legislation behind it and highlighting customer involvement.

Following recommendations a list of future procurements was created, and customers were invited to review the tenders. Since the session, 5 customers have joined us in 3 of our tender processes.

### Damp, Mould & Condensation Deep Dive Scrutiny

**4** customers involved with the damp, mould and condensation scrutiny

STAC and the Audit and Risk Committee worked together on a scrutiny session focusing on damp, mould and condensation.

#### Actions from the scrutiny include:

We will make every visit count and ensure we always ask customers if their home has any damp, mould or condensation, including when contractors visit.

We will review our processes with the aim of keeping customers better informed by providing a plan of action following an inspection, including timescales, so residents know what to expect.

It was felt we should understand our stock better and ensure our capital works programme focuses on homes which could be more susceptible to damp, mould and condensation issues. We are now looking to undertake a rolling programme of stock condition surveys and the investment programme for 2023-24 is designed to address issues with thermal efficiency.

## Sedgemoor Tenants Assurance Committee

**6** meetings held by STAC between April 1, 2022 – March 31, 2023

It has been a busy year for the Sedgemoor Tenants Assurance Committee (STAC), which ensures that agreed service delivery standards to all customers, shared owners and leaseholders are being achieved. The committee has welcomed two new members, Chair Sarah and tenant member Craig, and held six meetings.

#### Some of STAC's achievements include:

- Agreeing the Terms of Reference for all groups
- Agreeing the workplan for improvement groups
- Directing scrutiny on two business areas (Planned Maintenance and Procurement)
- Reviewing the Compliance Dashboard

- Developing a Statement of Intent for Social Value
- Developing the Customer Influence and Engagement Strategy
- Developing the STAC KPI Dashboard
- Providing feedback on our revised housing management model (Project Matrix)
- Overseeing the Customer-led scrutiny activity and action plan delivery
- Sharing feedback on Tenant Satisfaction Measures
- Sharing feedback on the new Corporate Strategy
- Participating in a joint working group as part of the Local Government Reorganisation
- Supporting the Rent Policy for new Somerset Council
- Playing a key role with the Audit and Risk Committee to review our approach to Damp and Mould

## Customer Influence and Engagement Strategy

Tenants Participation Advisory Service (Tpas), England's leading tenant engagement experts, led our Re-Engineering Engagement project to draw on experiences of customers and colleagues to co-create the Customer Influence and Engagement Strategy, also approved by STAC. We engaged with 14 tenants not previously involved. The Customer Influence and

Engagement Strategy outlines our vision for customer involvement and engagement to meaningfully involve and engage current, and future customers. Our aim is to create an environment where customers have a strong voice as a key stakeholder, to shape and scrutinise services delivered by HiS acting on behalf of their landlord, Somerset Council.

## Strive Live

We teamed up with Enterprise Cube to provide opportunities to our tenant entrepreneurs to take part in a six-week online course giving them access to everything they need to start a successful business.

The Strive course supported a range of business ideas, from mobile food vans to craft businesses, from event management to health and beauty treatments.

- 17 Strivers graduated the course
- 100% of Strivers recommend strivelive
- £3,850 micro grants awarded to Strivers
- 9 Strivers made their first sale two weeks after graduating



# Supporting Customers



Our Neighbourhood Team works closely with a range of different agencies and charities across the district to make sure customers receive the correct support and continue to love where they live. As well as working collaboratively with organisations across the district, we are also proud to have launched our new way of working through Project Matrix to ensure customers receive a great service from their Neighbourhood Team. The new structure offers a localised way of providing our services. Instead of multiple parts of the organisation working separately, four new teams now provide a 'one-stop shop' for everything customers need.

## Last year...



We responded to **79** antisocial behaviour cases

The highest number of antisocial behaviour complaints was about **noise and harassment**

Noise **27** cases

Harassment **12** cases



**71** customers used the Noise App

**5,658** recordings were made



**1,578** of these were of music

**Did you know...** we worked with **11** domestic abuse survivors, providing support where necessary

## Downsizing

Case study

We helped **43** customers downsize



A customer was referred to our Homes Moves Plus Officer in June 2022 after losing his wife.

He'd been struggling to manage a two-bed bungalow, front and rear garden and garage.

We spoke about his personal needs and property preferences. He was struggling with multiple illnesses such as arthritis and shortness of breath. His current home was too large and unmanageable for him.

To help this customer find the property that best suited him, HiS contacted him initially then met with him face to face. During their time together an assessment was completed and we sent him some advice in accessible formats, making it easier to read.

We assisted him in creating and registering for a Homefinder Somerset account and every week monitored properties based on his requirements.

He was also helped to apply for Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) for top up rent from former district council, Sedgemoor District Council.

The customer's downsizing preference was accepted and a bid on the property was successful.

# Independent Living Service



We work hard to provide great services for our customers. Our Independent Living Service provides access to a team of staff who provide tenancy sustainment, support and the reassurance of a 24/7 alarm system in the event of an emergency.

The Independent Living Team helps customers to maintain their independence, sustain their tenancy, and provides extra support if needed through a Bronze, Silver and Gold service level system.

**829** customers receiving the ILS service

**7** customers receive support through the Gold service

**71** customers receive support through the Silver service

**751** customers receive support through the Bronze service

Voicescape was introduced in February 2023, and in the period since, all customers received an automated call each month of which 32 people requested to speak to an Officer. All queries raised were dealt with on the day, without needing a visit.

## How our Independent Living Service helps

*One customer, who was supported by our ILS team, was experiencing alcohol addiction with no support, other than family, and in the early days he barely went out and felt he didn't need help.*

*An incident in the customer's flat ended up with him being admitted to hospital, and it was then that we visited him to gain his trust and offer support.*

*After building up communication and visits with him, we contacted Addiction North Somerset on his behalf. Despite him having more relapses and being admitted again to hospital a couple of times, he was given medication to help him stop drinking and after a few weeks in hospital he was more determined to quit drinking.*

*Severe weakness in his legs, caused by chemotherapy a few years earlier, meant that the customer couldn't evacuate his flat as he lived in a first floor flat with no lift.*

*We worked hard to get him on Universal Credit, apply for a Personal Independence Payment (PIP), and also complete a Homefinder application as he now needed a ground floor flat.*

*With the help of the Housing Officer, we managed to get him a ground floor flat.*

*Once he was in receipt of PIP, the customer got a mobility car. We then secured a blue badge for him, and he was able to get his independence back. He began to visit his family in Weston-super-Mare, which really changed his life. Now a few months on, he's got himself a dog which has helped with his mobility and mental health.*

*Now we're helping him to go back on Homefinder as he would like a bungalow with a garden for his dog.*

*He is always so grateful for all the help and support we gave him along his journey to where he is today.*



261

households given keys to new homes between 2022-2023



All empty homes let in



days needed, on average, for standard re-lets

98.6%

of customers were satisfied with the letting process

97.2%

of customers were satisfied with the condition of their home



5

new homes into our management



Case study

### Our Home Moves Plus Officer worked with a customer over the past six years with multiple complex needs who had gone into rent arrears.

In order to support the individual to remain in secure housing we identified that the tenant's vulnerabilities meant a specific property type would be needed - no large blocks, not in current town where they lived, somewhere where antisocial behaviour could be quickly identified, and an area where their vulnerabilities would be less likely to be exploited.

Working closely with special officers we were able to identify a tenant that needed to move whose home would be suitable.

The tenant in the home identified had also experienced difficulties so we explored a managed move which was agreed on the basis of risk, vulnerability and successful outcomes for three current customers, and reducing the number of those waiting on Homefinder by freeing up another home for bidding. This

home was matched to another customer who had a child and was expecting another so required a larger home.

In moving these three tenants we resolved:

- Risks to tenants
- Long-term antisocial behaviour issues
- Financial hardship
- Created a safe environment for a young family

For HiS we resolved:

- Officer time spent tackling antisocial behaviour
- Reduced costs to the local authority on discretionary housing payments
- Freed up time for Housing Officers to spend focusing on our customers and communities



We collect rent and pay it to Somerset Council. The council then gives us some of the rent back as a Management Fee so we can look after customers' homes, carry out repairs and do work in the neighbourhood. Last year, rent was charged over 50 weeks.

## Average Rents

Bedrooms	Affordable rent	Social rent
0	-	£65.40
1	£100.48	£79.02
2	£129.74	£87.27
3	£157.71	£97.45
4	£209.29	£105.41
5	-	£110.77
6	£212.61	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>£131.03</b>	<b>£88.19</b>

## Income

99.1%

of rent charged in 2022/2023 successfully collected

0.91%

current tenant rent arrears for 2022/2023

4

tenants evicted due to rent arrears

£10,098

reduction in former tenant arrears

## Welfare and benefits

We made **23** employment, benefit and welfare referrals to support partners

We supported **304** new Universal Credit claims

**£30,680.65** of Discretionary Housing Payments awarded in total

We have issued **83** Foodbank vouchers

**Did you know...** during the winter of 2022/23, **51** tenants received grants to the value of **£11,310** to help over the winter after experiencing short term financial crisis.

Case study

One customer was under occupying her three-bed home after her son moved away and was experiencing problems paying her rent. The customer struggled to engage with us and slowly fell into financial difficulty. The customer's Income Officer made contact with her during a home visit and was able to openly discuss her problems.

At the end of the meeting, an affordable payment arrangement was made to reduce the

rent arrears, support with downsizing was arranged, and a referral with the YMCA Tenancy Training Scheme to assist with budgeting was made. Through this training scheme the customer was able to contact creditors to make arrangements to clear the debt.

The customer has now cleared her arrears in full, moved to a smaller, more affordable home in the local area and can pay essential bills regularly.

# Customer Services and Feedback



Our Customer Services Team works hard to provide great services to our customers, and is on hand to help with queries via email, social media, telephone or face-to-face. We take pride in answering customers' calls in 92 seconds (on average), offering help and support quickly and efficiently. Last year, Customer Services also worked closely with the Communications Team to modernise its services, and were pleased to launch our new online web messenger facility.

## Last year...



We received a total of

# 39,033

calls between April 2022 – March 2023

On average, we answered your call in



# 92

seconds

Dealt with

# 86%

of calls at first point of contact

## What you called us about

Repairs **39%**

Neighbourhoods **22%**

Income **20%**

Other **12%**

Independent Living Service **3%**

Planned works **2%**

Homes and Lettings **2%**

## STAR Satisfaction Survey

Thank you to all of our customers who have shared their feedback over the past year. Customer feedback helps us to continually improve the services we provide.

We are continuing to use MEL Research to carry out the STAR survey on a quarterly basis, and this runs alongside our transactional surveys that we carry out via phone/text or email when customers access any of our services.

STAR satisfaction year end results – 2022/23	Actual	Target
Overall satisfaction taking everything into account	81%	90%
Satisfaction with overall quality of home	82%	90%
Satisfaction with HiS providing a home that is safe and secure	86%	87%
Satisfaction with how easy HiS is to deal with	83%	90%
Satisfaction with neighbourhood as a place to live	83%	90%
Satisfaction with rent providing value for money	89%	89%
Satisfaction with service charges providing value for money	78%	80%
Satisfaction with overall repairs service (experience from a recent repair)	79%	80%
Satisfaction with HiS listening to views and acting upon them	70%	75%

**Did you know...** as from April 1, 2023, we are now reporting on the new Tenant Satisfaction Measures, as outlined by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH). This is a suite of 22 questions, and we will be providing regular updates on results via our website.

## Complaints

We received

# 131

initial complaints

# 95%

dealt with at initial stage

# 52%

of initial complaints were upheld or partially upheld

# 6

complaints went to Stage 2

# 5

complaints were investigated by the Housing Ombudsman, where 0 complaints were upheld

## What the complaints were about

Repairs **43**

Planned works **16**

Income **4**

Neighbourhoods **22**

Homes & Lettings **12**

ILS **3**

Liberty **20**

Compliance **8**

Non-HiS **3**

Whilst we have achieved high levels of customer satisfaction with our repairs service, it also remains the highest area for complaints. We upheld, or partially upheld, 40% of all complaints received for this area. The main themes are poor communication and delays with works being completed.

## Lessons learned

### Customer feedback and complaints are key to ensuring continuous improvement.

We continue to try and deal with all initial complaints at the first point of contact and recognise that in most cases, customers want their complaint resolved as quickly as possible, without having to go through a formal process.

We also realise that personal contact from the Service Lead, either by telephone or face-to-face, can really help us to fully understand and resolve any complaint.

We have noted some of the repair complaints are related to the Out of Hours (OOH) service provided by Orbis. This has resulted in more regular meetings with them to ensure their contact centre staff are aware of our service standards.

We have also received complaints from customers when our contractors have attended without an appointment, so we are now managing the appointing of jobs via our Customer Services Team.

Further improvements are planned via our customer portal, where customers can self-serve, and works are on-going to improve this.

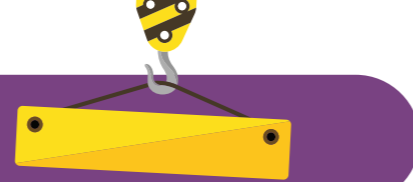
Customers said communication with us and our contractors could be improved, so this remains a focus for us. We are using alternative communication channels as appropriate and understand that all customers and complaints are unique, so review and respond accordingly.

Customer feedback helps us continually improve our services.

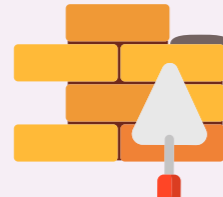




# Developing new homes



The Council's Housing Development Team permanently transferred to Homes in Sedgemoor in January 2023. The team's aspiration is to support Somerset Council to modernise its housing stock and develop a new generation of council homes.

<p>The Development Team is managing the delivery of a</p> <h2>£21.9m</h2> <p>new build council housing programme on behalf of Somerset Council.</p>	<p>We have secured grants and subsidy of</p> <h2>£7.6m</h2> <p>to support this investment.</p> 	<p>The investment will generate an operating revenue surplus back into the HRA of</p> <h2>£12.6m</h2> <p>and will see</p> <h2>110</h2> <p>new council homes built.</p>	<p>We have</p> <h2>95</h2> <p>homes currently under construction, with plans to start building a further</p> <h2>15</h2> <p>in 2023-24.</p>
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## Cricketers Farm, Nether Stowey

- 16 new homes
- £3.3m investment
- Supported by £1.7m subsidy from Homes England and EDF

The Development Team worked with Nether Stowey Parish Council and Strongvox to secure 16 affordable homes on the new 109-home development at Cricketers Farm, Nether Stowey.

The investment was made viable due to funding secured from Homes England and EDF.

People with the strongest connection with the parish will have priority for these homes and the properties are due to be completed in July 2023.



## Sydenham Garages development

- 14 new homes
- £4.2m investment
- Supported by £1.7m from Homes England and EDF



We are currently redeveloping four former council owned garage sites on the Sydenham housing estate in Bridgwater.

The development of 14 new homes will include a large six-bed property designed to meet the unique needs of a family and forms part of our Bespoke Homes initiative.

These new homes are expected to be ready for new residents by September 2023.

## Penlea House, Bridgwater

- 33 new homes at affordable rent
- £5.9m investment
- Supported by £1.56m

Work to redevelop the site at Penlea House on the Hamp Estate in Bridgwater began last year.

Penlea House was made up of six flats, however it was economically unviable to bring them up to a modern standard for customers.

We worked with the existing occupants to find them new suitable homes before we set about redeveloping the site.

When built, the site will provide 33 modern high spec and thermally efficient apartments.

The development will include ten homes designed to accommodate people with physical disabilities.

We anticipate these new homes will be ready for occupation in October 2024.



## Bigwood and Staples, Bridgwater

- 29 new social rented homes
- £4.3m investment
- Supported by £2m subsidy secured by Homes in Sedgemoor

The former Bigwood and Staples Factory was destroyed by a fire over 20 years ago and had been abandoned, becoming a long-standing blight in the town.

Homes in Sedgemoor worked with the council and the site owner to establish a plan to build new homes on the site.

All 29 homes, which are due to be ready in September 2023, will be available on a social rented basis.





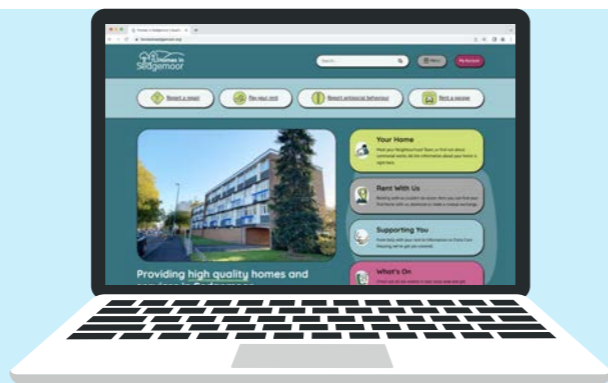
## New website

We were excited to launch our new website, which champions our customer-first ethos, in March.

We appointed Connect Internet Solutions to come up with a fresh modern look based on our current branding, and the Communications Team had sleepless nights adding all the bits of functionality that really makes the new site sing!

Customers were heavily involved in the entire process, from an initial “card sort” exercise, and “click test” to consultations online, at coffee mornings, and through our STAC meetings.

Several customer-led suggestions were implemented within the new site – a webchat function, an easier to navigate Book a Hall process, an easy-to-access form to make a complaint, and more obvious navigation buttons with quick



actions like paying rent and getting support right at the top of the page.

The new website is more vibrant, and more interactive with elements such as accordion drop-down menus, cartoon graphical motifs and online forms.

We hope you enjoy using the new website as much as we do.

## Institute of Customer Service (ICS)



We have been a member of the ICS since 2021, and our aim was always to achieve the Servicemark accreditation, so we were pleased to start this process in December 2022.

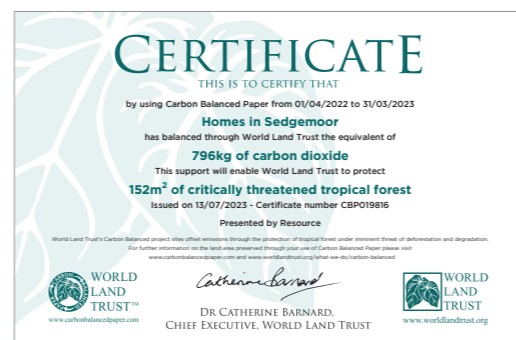
We completed customer and colleague surveys via the ICS, and an independent assessment of our service delivery.

We demonstrated that we are meeting the ICS Servicemark Standards and have been awarded the accreditation. This is a National Customer Service Standard and of the 46 housing providers that are members of the ICS we are one of only six who have ever achieved this accreditation.

This demonstrates our commitment to customers and our service delivery, and shows our Customers First culture is embedded across HiS.

We recognise there is always room for improvement, and will continue to use customer feedback to help with continuous improvement of our service delivery.

## Being Carbon Balanced



At Homes in Sedgemoor we are proud of our green credentials and work hard to ensure that our impact on the environment is as light as possible.

We work with We Are Resource, which is a “Carbon Balanced Printer” that works in partnership with the World Land Trust and uses FSC sustainable papers, as part of a commitment to being as green as possible.

By using carbon balanced paper between April 2022 and March 2023, Homes in Sedgemoor has balanced, through the World Land Trust, 796kg of carbon dioxide, protecting 152 sq m of critically threatened tropical forest.



We were proud to celebrate our 15th birthday in April 2022.

Founded on April 1, 2007, we manage around 4,000 homes on behalf of Somerset Council, formerly Sedgemoor District Council, from Shipham in the north of the district to North Petherton in the south.

After taking over the management of Sedgemoor’s housing stock in 2007, in 2011 £25 million in funding was released from the Decent Homes Programme to spend on improving the state of the housing stock, a programme that lasted three years.

In 2019 HiS was placed 31st in the Sunday Times list of best not-for-profit companies to work for in the UK. The same year HiS was named 24Housing’s Top Landlord of the Year. In 2021, HiS was awarded Investors in People Gold accreditation.

Claire, who has worked for HiS since 2007, said: “As an organisation Homes in Sedgemoor has gone from strength to strength since 2007 when we were first created by the council. From being a relatively small team, accessing funding and delivery of the Decent Homes Programme was a real turning point for us; we delivered the programme on time and on budget and made a real difference to people’s homes and lives.”

Today the work done by HiS has been recognised as some of the best in its field and the organisation

works with other organisations across the country to help them improve their customers’ experience and hosted senior politicians seeking customer consultation to inform and develop their policies.

Peter Hatch, CEO of HiS, said: “Homes in Sedgemoor was created in order to deliver a major investment programme to the homes owned by Sedgemoor District Council. Since 2007 these improvements have been successfully delivered alongside our commitment to both listening to and serving our customers, and making the neighbourhoods and communities better places to live. I hope that customers, colleagues, Board members and partners (both past and present) are proud of what Homes in Sedgemoor has achieved – none of which would have been possible without their support and dedication. I would also like to thank Sedgemoor District Council whose continuous support and trust we have benefitted from since 2007. As we look forward to the future I very much believe that Homes in Sedgemoor is perfectly placed to continue to deliver great homes and services to the our customers and help build even stronger communities. Thank you for your ongoing support and I look forward to continuing to work closely with you to achieve even more.”

HiS marked the anniversary with a series of celebratory events across the district during the year.



Our customers are at the heart of everything we do, and in our anniversary year we launched our prestigious Star Awards to put customers firmly in the spotlight by celebrating their everyday acts of kindness, extraordinary endeavors and incredible ideas.



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