



Your Local Standard

DESIGNED BY CUSTOMERS FOR CUSTOMERS

ANNUAL REPORT 2013

FOURTH ISSUE

Scrutiny Drives Change and Improves Services

See page 2

Your Home - Your Voice - Your Choice

See page 7

Response Repairs - Getting it Right

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Mrs Humberstone from South Molton receiving her £200 vouchers

Customers give a vote of confidence to North Devon Homes in latest satisfaction survey

94 OUT OF 100 CUSTOMERS SATISFIED WITH NORTH DEVON HOMES!

We recently asked our customers what they think about the services that North Devon Homes offers and how these are delivered.

The response was overwhelmingly positive, as you can see from the table below, with 94% of North Devon Homes customers stating that they were very or fairly satisfied with the services that North Devon Homes provides. This is up from 82% in 2004 and the fourth

successive increase in customer satisfaction. This improvement could not have happened without the involvement of customers. Feedback on what we do has informed the changes that we have made. These results show that North Devon Homes' customers are amongst the most satisfied of any housing association. The overwhelming majority of customers (91%) also expressed their satisfaction that North Devon Homes

continues to offer 'value for money for your rent'. The survey also confirmed that 88% of customers were satisfied with the quality of their home; 93% of customers were satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live; and 90% of customers were satisfied with the way in which North Devon Homes deals with repairs and maintenance.

Continued on page 3...

Throughout this report we have included some of your comments and facts from this survey relevant to the different areas. These can be found in the star speech marks and blue 'star fact' boxes.

★NDH - they care for people, they believe in people's needs and listen. And that it is an organisation that is committed to their tenants and has an excellent high standard of qualities and excellency. They are a fabulous landlord★

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Level of satisfaction with	2013	Target Figures	2009
Service provided by North Devon Homes	94%	90%	91%
Overall quality of your home	88%	88%	87%
Your neighbourhood as a place to live	93%	88%	91%
Your rent provides value for money	91%	88%	92%
Service charges providing value for money	78%	78%	N/A
The way NDH deal with repairs and maintenance	90%	87%	84%
NDH listening to your views and acting on them	81%	77%	70%

STAR FACT
94%
of respondents satisfied with the services provided by NDH

Service Standards in Brief

In 2010 we introduced a range of service standards to set out what you can expect from the services provided by North Devon Homes. Performance against the standards is reported by service managers to our customer Scrutiny Panel to ensure we deliver our promises and provide a good service to our customers. Your Local Standard provides you with an update on each service area and sets out compliance with the standards.

Throughout this publication you will see Service Standards Compliance panels for each area. Each area will have been awarded one, two or three crowns.



**1 Crown =
Met National
Standards**



**2 Crowns =
Almost Compliant
with Local & National
Standards**



**3 Crowns =
Fully Compliant
with Local & National
Standards**

A full set of our service standards is available from <http://www.ndh-ltd.co.uk/publications/information-leaflets.cfm> or our Customer Care Team on 01271 312500. Over the coming year we will be reviewing our standards and have set out what we will be doing next for each service area.

Customer Views at the Heart of What We Do

This year the Customer Forum, a group of NDH customers who give up their time on a voluntary basis to ensure that customers views are heard by Managers and Directors at North Devon Homes, have become even more involved in how the company is run.

Members of the Customer Forum attended a Strategic Planning day with the Board and the Executive Team to review progress in delivering the Corporate Plan and to discuss and establish company's priorities for the year ahead.

The joint event was held on 1 November 2012, the first of its kind for the company. It was a real success and included discussions and debates on Value for Money at North Devon Homes, the future direction of the Supported Peoples' Service and Customer Scrutiny. All those who attended agreed that the day was really valuable and that the Customer Forum views brought a different and valuable perspective to complement others and help keep things on track!

Chairman of the Board, Nick

Lewis, said "It was really pleasing to see how the Customer Forum responded to our invitation to be even more involved in informing how the business operates. We are lucky at North Devon Homes to have customers who want to be involved and staff who are interested and keen to hear and respond to their views. The regulator calls this sort of thing co-regulation but at North Devon Homes we prefer to call it by its old fashioned name.....common sense!"

Times Top 100 Number 42



In March we were delighted to discover that we had come in at number

42 in the Times Top 100 Not for Profit Organisation category - the first year we had entered. This prestigious award is fantastic recognition for the work done by

North Devon Homes as an employer.

Nearly 900 organisations entered the competition, with NDH being one of only three organisations based in the south west making it through to the Top 100 Best Companies list - an achievement we are very proud of.



Good Governance

In March 2013 the Homes and Communities Agency, the social housing regulator, published a Regulatory Judgement for North Devon Homes.

The Judgement set out the regulator's view that the organisation is Properly Governed, receiving the highest level of assurance for this and meeting the requirements on governance.

The judgement also set out how North Devon Homes was considered to be financially viable, again receiving the highest level of assurance and meeting the requirements on viability as set out in the Governance and Financial Viability standard.

The Board has been stable throughout this year and the recognition of the regulator is also backed up by the views of other organisations who have visited to give peer feedback.

The voluntary Board, made up of customers, local authority representatives and independent professionals, has continued to drive North Devon Homes to deliver improvements in service and value.

Nick Lewis, Chair of North Devon Homes, said "It has been a successful year for North Devon Homes. We have a strong Board who bring together views from customers, the local authority, the communities we operate in and a range of professions that are significant for the work of the company to support, challenge and improve what the company delivers. We have focused on strong service delivery and value for money for our customers and will continue to do so."

SCRUTINY DRIVES CHANGE

On 1 April 2012 the Board of North Devon Homes set up a Scrutiny Panel of customers to look at services and give a customer perspective on what is working well and where things could be improved. Since then, the group has been working tirelessly, looking at different areas of the organisation and preparing reports for the consideration of the Board that support improvement and hold the organisation to account.

Last year the Panel reviewed our Voids and Estate Management services. We have made the following changes in response:

- Reinstated a programme of estate inspections
- Reinstated a "Good Garden" scheme
- Identified misused and neglected land
- Appointed a Neighbourhoods Property Advisor
- Conducted inspections before customers move out to identify works
- Included health and safety measures on surveyors' check lists
- Implemented property inspection checklist

Marc Rostock, Director of Neighbourhoods, said, "the work of the Scrutiny Panel is having a real impact here at North Devon Homes. It's a valuable reality check and a great opportunity to get a sense of what is valued by our customers and to identify what is not. Following scrutiny we have reviewed how we let properties and have a member of our Neighbourhoods Team focusing on this area and making improvements".



North Devon Homes Scrutiny Panel along with members of Curo

Yet Another Record Year

Working Together - We've Done It Again!

Our Income Team continues to work with you, our customers, to help reduce debt and support our customers to sustain tenancies. This has helped to reduce rent arrears to a record low of just 0.28% and reduce the number of evictions carried out. This sector leading performance is

especially pleasing given the wider financial environment, both in terms of the world wide recession and, closer to home, the changes through Welfare Reform. We would like to thank our customers for continuing to work with us throughout these challenging times.

We're here to help

We continue to work with customers in difficulty to help them through challenging times. Our Benefits Co-ordinator James has supported 1302 customers during the year with help on a range of benefits including housing benefit and pensions. Last year we appointed a Financial Support Officer who has worked with 111 customers to increase their income by a combined £159,000. If you need any support, please contact us on 01271 312500.



Welfare Reform

The Income Team has been working extremely hard over the last 12 months to support those customers impacted by the Spare Room Subsidy (commonly referred to as the bedroom tax). Over 14% of affected customers who wanted to move have successfully downsized, compared to less than 1% nationally. We will continue to work with affected customers, seeking ways to improve finances and generally improve the financial wellbeing of our customers.

The story so far – our customer Mrs A lives in a 2 bedroom house and, under the new bedroom tax rules, was under-occupying by 1 bedroom, reducing her benefit by £12 per week. Another customer, Miss C lives in a 3 bedroom house, also under-occupying by 1 bedroom (approx £12 per week) and was also suffering from some neighbourhood issues.

How did NDH help? - Both customers worked with NDH to find suitable solutions to their issues. Through partnership working between our Income Team and Neighbourhood Services Team, along with the Housing Options service at North Devon Council, we were able to successfully put a plan of action in place to help all of these customers...

The solution - NDH was able to find a 1 bedroom flat in a suitable area for Mrs A. Miss C was then able to move across to the 2 bedroom house vacated by Mrs A, also in a suitable area for her family needs.

And the 3 bedroom property vacated by Miss C? This was advertised on Devon Home Choice meaning another family has been successfully re-housed and is no longer on the waiting list for accommodation.

HOME SPOT!

- Rent Collected £13,072,909
- Rent Arrears 0.28%
- Evictions 1

★★ We enjoy living here and have had no problems. Any problems with benefits we see James - he is the expert.★★

STAR FACT
80% of respondents are satisfied with the help and support with benefit claims

WANT AN EASY WAY TO SAVE FOR CHRISTMAS?



PLOUGH & SHARE DEVONWIDE CREDIT UNION CAN HELP.

Simply pop into the NDH town centre office Mon-Fri 10am-1pm to find out more or call them direct on **01837 658123** or visit www.ploughandshare.co.uk

What next for the Income Team?

- Support customers through the introduction of Universal Credit.
- Support customers to open bank accounts
- Promote See My Data

What Would You Say to a Friend or Neighbour? *Continued from front page*

When we completed this customer satisfaction survey we asked what you would say to a friend or neighbour if talking about North Devon Homes. Customers were invited to respond to the question with the first thing that they thought of. The results were fascinating as you can see in the table!

The most popular response, given by over 200 people, was that North Devon Homes is an excellent or good landlord. Over 130 households identified the second most popular response, that North Devon Homes staff were helpful and supportive. The third most popular response again praised

staff for being polite, friendly and courteous. This is particularly pleasing given the drive for NDH to invest in and maintain good levels of customer service. Thank you to all who have

responded. We value feedback (good or bad) and will be using the detailed responses to plan further improvements to what we do.

Theme	Total count
Good / Excellent	203
Helpful / Supportive	134
Polite / Courteous / Friendly	65
Good repairs / Maintenance service	42
Happy / Content	41
Quick to respond	32
Good quality homes	26
OK	26
Caring / Committed	25
Listens / Understands	24

Home Contents Insurance. Are you covered?

We ensure that Buildings Insurance is in place on all our properties. If something happens that causes damage to your home contents there is **no** cover for lost/damaged possessions under our insurance policy.

For more information contact the Customer Care Team on **01271 312500** or Aviva directly on **0845 408 2033**.

Value For Your Money - Activities During The Year

Ensuring good Value for Money (VFM) has been a key business objective for us. By offering good VFM, we do not mean the cheapest. For us VFM is about ensuring that we get the best value for every pound we spend to deliver excellent services in all areas of the business.

VFM has been at the core of our business and the Finance Team has worked with budget holders to support this. In addition, every member of staff at NDH has been looking for ways of doing things better and more efficiently.

The drive for VFM comes from the very top of the Company and the Board approved the updated VFM Strategy and our three year Action Plan, which covers the following areas:

Embedding VFM

Making sure that all staff understand and contribute towards VFM.

Benchmarking

To ensure that we have a good understanding of our costs in comparison to other housing providers.

Procurement

To ensure that we buy goods and services in the most cost effective manner which are fit for purpose.

Customer Involvement & Scrutiny Panel

Input from our Customers and the Scrutiny Panel to identify areas for improvement, how we can do things differently and achieve VFM.

Budgetary Level

We want to make sure that budget holders are cost aware and that we monitor our costs to achieve VFM.

Strategic VFM Objectives

This ensures that attaining VFM is part of our Corporate Strategy which is set by the Board.

Performance Management

In addition to monitoring our spend we also consider other performance information, such as how long a property is empty before being re-let, how long it takes us to carry out emergency repairs and what our staff turnover levels are. By monitoring financial information, we are able to make changes that ensure that we continually improve and offer good VFM.



NDH OFFERS VALUE FOR YOUR MONEY

We have made changes in each of the Value for Money areas mentioned in the above article and will be building on our progress. For example, on benchmarking we compared our costs to 31 other social housing providers working in the south west. The latest available information was for the year ended 31 March 2011. The comparison looked at cost per property and the results are:



The houses in the chart above show the highest, average and lowest operating costs per property for housing associations in the south west. In order to compare costs, the total costs are divided by the total number of properties managed. Each housing provider will have overheads for essential resources such as a head office and computer systems regardless of the number of properties.

We compared our costs per property against the 31 housing associations operating in the area. NDH were the smallest in the comparison group with 3,101 properties. We are very pleased to say that our cost per property was £2,950, which clearly demonstrates that our financial performance is excellent when compared to other social landlords.

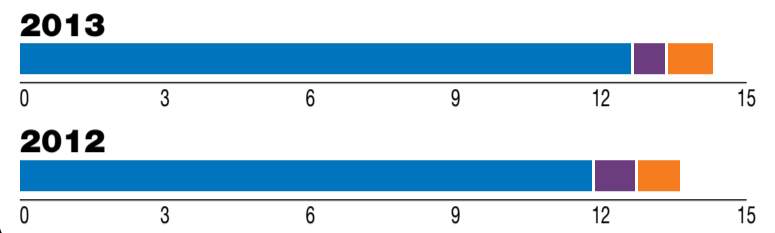
We are always looking for fresh VFM ideas! Please contact our Customer Care Team on 01271 312500



YOUR MONEY

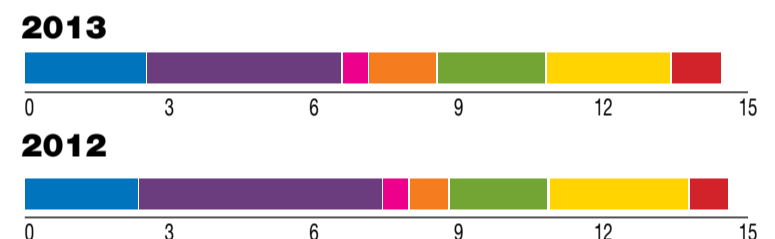
Where the money comes from

- Rent and Service Charges **£12.5m** (2012: £11.8m)
- Support Charges **£0.6m** (2012: £0.7m)
- Other income (Garages, Devon Home Link and Commercial lettings) **£1.0m** (2012: £0.8m)



How the money is spent

- Responsive Repairs **£2.6m** (2012: £2.3m)
- Planned Maintenance (Including kitchens, bathrooms, heating systems) **£3.9m** (2012: £5.0m)
- Service charge costs **£0.5m** (2012: £0.5m)
- Cost of providing Services **£1.4m** (2012: £0.8m)
- Depreciation **£2.2m** (2012: £2.0m)
- Interest charges **£2.5m** (2012: £2.8m)
- Other costs (Garages, Devon Home Link and Commercial lettings) **£1.0m** (2012: £0.8m)



★★ We would recommend to a friend - everyone at NDH are very approachable and you are made to feel very welcome when you go into the town centre office. Also good value for money.★★

Equality and Diversity



At North Devon Homes we pride ourselves in making sure that everybody has an equal opportunity to request a service and that we deliver services in the most appropriate way. Our equality and diversity team has worked hard over the past year to monitor and improve what we do. As an example of this we have:

- Made significant changes to how we undertake planned maintenance to better meet the needs of the customer e.g. older customers and parents.
- Introduced better flexibility about the final specification of planned maintenance improvements to better meet customer needs.

- Reviewed each and every complaint to ensure that they did not raise or identify any underlying E&D issues.

In addition we have also made sure that contractors share our commitment to equality and diversity.

Supporting our Older People



SUPPORT ADVISORS GO ONLINE

This year has seen the introduction of a new client management system (ECCO). The system holds customers basic information securely through an internet connection and provides us with a quick and easy way to record when we make contact and the support provided on each occasion. The programme itself is designed to help us work with customers to really think about what it is they want to achieve and how we can help them do it.

We have just finished setting up all our existing customers onto this new system and the support advisors are beginning to use iPads (instead of the old notepad and pen) to record their daily activities. An added advantage of the use of new technology is that the internet connection can also be used to help customers find information and even do on-line shopping!



NDH 55+ Forum

This year has been a busy and productive year for our 55+ Forum. Here is a summary of their achievements.

- Assisted at Customer Fayre by organising and running refreshments area
- Established regular contact with Neighbourhoods Team, to gain a better understanding of their work and to discuss issues and initiatives from the perspective of older people.
- Continued involvement with Asset Management Team to explore impact of / difficulties facing older and / or people with impairments when major works are undertaken in their homes e.g. heating and boiler replacements.
- Acting as the main consultation group (for support service users) as new contracts and ways of delivering service are introduced by DCC. This includes the development of a service description that is flexible to customer needs regardless of their tenure.

HOME SPOT!

- Number of support service customers: 512
- Number of new Homelink customers: 47

What next for Older Persons services?

- Increase number of customers on the home support service.
- Develop the service offer.
- Develop a telecare service.

★★ As I am 98 the sheltered scheme I live on is ideal. I feel very safe knowing I have a support advisor and 24 hour alarm.

I often tell other people that this place is ideal for anyone who needs a bit of extra support. My needs are met on every level.★★

Support Services Available To All

One of the key requirements of our new funding contract with Devon County Council is that provision of support is tenure neutral (this means that the service is equally available to older people across the area, regardless of whether they own their own home, rent from a housing association or rent privately). This provides a long term opportunity to expand our services and provide a valuable service across North Devon. Of course, the first step in this process has been to think about our existing customers living in sheltered housing and to give them the same choices as everyone else. We have

known for some time that not everyone moving into sheltered properties wanted or needed support, yet the Tenancy Agreement said that by accepting the property the person accepted the support and this had to be paid for. From April 2012 the provision of support was no longer a condition of the tenancy for new customers and throughout the year we have worked with all our existing customers (and colleagues from other teams) to introduce new Tenancy Agreements and offer the choice of whether each household wishes to accept alarm and / or home support services.

ARE YOU OVER 55? DO YOU WANT TO MAKE SURE YOUR NEEDS ARE REPRESENTED?

If this is you, why not join our 55+ Forum. The group meets 4 times a year to discuss the issues specific to those aged over 55.

For more information contact us on **01271 313358**

Candar Customers Raise £5000 for Charity

Customers at The Candar in Ilfracombe raised a massive £5000 last year for the Chemotherapy Appeal at North Devon Hospital. This is a truly amazing achievement raising such a large amount of money for such a worthy cause.

Support Advisors have also been doing their bit for charity with Stu, Doug and Becky raising over £1000 for the Bristol Baby Unit. They ran and cycled from Ilfracombe to Barnstaple calling in at our sheltered sites en route.



Devon Homelink

Devon Homelink is an alarm service for anyone living in the North Devon area.

A small alarm unit fits to your telephone, and a pendant or wrist stap allows the wearer to summon help in an emergency (24 hours a day)

For more information or to arrange a FREE demonstration call FREE on: **0800 083 7553**

STAR FACT
96%
 of respondents are satisfied with housing services

Neighbourhoods Round Up 2012-2013



Your Neighbourhood - Your Vision

Since the last edition of *Your Local Standard* we have been working with you to finalise our 15 Neighbourhood Vision Plans. Last year we held 7 Neighbourhood Vision events to find out what you think of the plans so far and how we can continue to improve your area and our services.

We are holding events for the remaining 8 neighbourhoods. If you have not seen a copy of your plan, or would like to share your views, please contact your Neighbourhood Officer on 01271 312500. You can also view the plans on our website: www.ndh-ltd.co.uk.



HOME SPOT!

- Tenancy changes (acquisitions + successions) 52
- Number of Neighbourhood events: 13
- Number of Neighbourhood Vision Plans: 15

Improving Mutual Exchange Experiences

We have been reviewing the way that we deal with mutual exchanges. As part of this and the voids review, we have introduced the role of Neighbourhood Property Advisor. The advisor will visit all mutual exchange properties to identify necessary work by both the existing customer and NDH. The advisor will ensure these works are completed and

provide a follow up service to deal with any moving issues. This has improved the service received by both the outgoing and incoming tenant and we have seen a reduction in complaints as a result. We have also developed a new satisfaction survey with the Customer Forum to continue to monitor this service.

Upsize, Downsize

Our Neighbourhood Services and Income Teams have been working closely with our customers and Housing Options to help those affected by the spare room subsidy to downsize. We have moved 14% of customers compared with just 1% nationally. We have also started to hold Upsize Downsize Home Swap events to directly match customers looking to upsize or downsize. Look out for our next event in Home News.

What next for Neighbourhood Services?

- Further review and improve mutual exchanges
- Review and improve voids and allocations
- Programme of grounds maintenance and estate inspections

★★Wow, could not believe how accommodating NDH were.

I made an enquiry and NDH went 'that extra mile' to help and sort my question out. Here I am in a flat I can manage and a small garden as a plus and I could bring my beloved pet dog with me - thank you so much.★★

Anti Social Behaviour Update



Last year we had 123 ASB incidents reported. Our Neighbourhood Officers deal with each case in line with our service standards to try and resolve the issues promptly. Each case has an action plan to set out what customers can expect from us in response to their complaint. We confirm the conclusion and closure of all cases in writing.

We have had no instances of any risk to person, property or offensive graffiti requiring a response within 24 hours. Fly tipping accounts for 40% of ASB reported to NDH. This costs NDH over £2000 per year to identify the sites, remove the items and take them to authorised tips for disposal within 3 working days of notification.

Neighbour related disputes account for most of the ASB reported to us with the majority of this relating to noise complaints. As a result we have invested in specialist noise recording equipment to assist with noise related issues.

We Asked, You Said: Improving How We Deal with ASB

In the last edition of *Your Local Standard* we asked for volunteers to help us review our ASB Strategy. We met these customers, along with our Neighbourhood Services Improvement Group and the Customer Forum, to review our approach to ASB. The review highlighted that we spend a disproportionate amount of time dealing with fly tipping and minor neighbour disputes which are the most common complaints received. As a result our Customer Care Team will be trained to make clear assessments of reported incidents to distinguish between minor and major incidents. Minor cases will then be dealt with by the Customer Care Team, to enable our Neighbourhood Officers to spend more time on complex cases. Customers also advised the need to improve our communication

to explain what we can do and the timescales involved. We have improved our procedures to ensure that all cases have an action plan and customers are clearly informed of how we intend to respond.

We will also seek to identify trends and resolve cases early to avoid matters escalating. The review also identified how we can make better use of our existing resources as well as investing in new technology to ensure we are cost effective in our approach.

Allocations



During 2012/13 we signed up 244 customers. Each customer was offered an appointment for viewing and signing their tenancy. As part of this process, we explain the contents of the Tenant Handbook to highlight the importance of tenancy conditions. Customers are also provided with the lettable service standard for their home. All 244 new customers were granted a starter tenancy and received a visit from their Neighbourhood Officer within four weeks. All tenancies were reviewed after 9 months to determine conversions and written confirmation was provided within 10 months.



HOME SPOT!

- Total lettings (relets + first lets) 244
- New lettings (new customers only) 173
- Mutual exchanges 61
- Transfers 71
- Customer satisfaction with Allocation Service 100%

HOME SPOT!

- Number of new ASB cases: 123
- Number of resolved cases: 124
- Number of closed cases: 126
- Number of cases without an action plan: 2
- Number of cases open at year end: 17

STAR FACT
93%
 of respondents are satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live

Customer Involvement

Your Home - Your Voice - Your Choice

Customer Involvement means working with you to find out what you really think of our services to help us understand what you want and expect. In order to deliver the services that meet your needs and suit your preferences we need you to tell us your views.

You can do this in a way that suits you from our range of 14 activities shown in our menu of involvement. We listen to your views and make changes to our policies and working practices to improve the services you receive. Any time you can spare is

invaluable and important for the continuous improvement of your home and community. Our dedicated Involvement Officer can provide you with the training and support you may need to become more effectively involved.



Customer Involvement Statement

During 2012 the Customer Forum developed an Annual Involvement Statement for 2012/13 to ensure that all customers have the opportunity to get involved. The Statement sets out our action plan for the year to inform you of key activities which you can get involved with. We completed our 20 actions which included the development of the Statement, a review of service standards

and performance indicators, service and policy reviews, training, events, mystery shopping and inspections. Following the success of this Statement, the Forum published one for 2013/14 and this was included in the summer edition of Home News. If you would like to get involved in any of this year's activities, please contact Clare Paddon on 01271 313384.

HOME SPOT!

- Number of ways to get involved: 14
- Number of Involved Customers: 1,528
- Number of Customer Forum Members: 12
- Number of Customer Forum Meetings: 12
- Number of Customer Training Events: 18
- Number of Policies reviewed and developed by customers: 7

Customer Summer Fayre

We held our third successful Customer Summer Fayre on Wednesday 31st July at Barnstaple Rugby Club. Over 500 customers came along to enjoy the displays, talk to NDH staff and partner organisations and, of course, take part in all the fun and games. We were very pleased to see so many of you there, with attendance increasing by 200 from last year. We also had representatives from

40 partnering organisations to offer help and support to our customers. There was so much more to see and do this year with particular highlights including archery, family portraits, training, surf simulator, Punch and Judy and Merlin. Thank you to everyone who came along and made it such an enjoyable day. We hope to see you again next year!



Delivering high quality services to all

Our trained customers regularly and independently inspect and mystery shop a range of services to ensure that our service standards and high quality services are met. This year our inspectors have looked at communal cleaning, grounds maintenance, planned maintenance, out of hours, voids and new lettings. We are always looking for new inspectors. If you might be interested in this role, please contact Clare Paddon on 01271 313384.

Service Standards Review

We will be reviewing all our service standards which set out the minimum level of service you can expect from each service area. If you would like to take part in the review to ensure our standards set out what customers expect from us, please phone Clare Paddon on 01271 313384.

What next for Customer Involvement

- Review our Customer Involvement Strategy
- Recruit new Customer Forum members
- Develop involvement through social media

STAR FACT

20% of our customers would like to get more involved

Fly-tipping! Don't do it!

It's ugly and takes your rent money to clean up

You can report fly-tipping confidentially on 01271 312529 or text 07811273673

★ I have lived in one of their properties for 46 years - that says it all. ★

Wanted: Volunteers to improve the services provided by NDH

We want your help to make sure that our services meet customer needs. Do you have any suggestions on how we can improve our service delivery? Why not come along to one of our meetings to find out more and have your say. We run a range of groups including the Customer Forum, Repairs and Maintenance Improvement Group, 55+ Forum, Neighbourhood Services Improvement Group. If you would like to join any of these groups, please call Clare Paddon on 01271 313384.

Putting Customers at the Heart of What We Do

New Telephone system Helping us - Help you

In June 2012 we introduced a new telephone system as we felt that the old system had outlived its useful life and we had been experiencing some unnecessary disruption. We identified some specific features and functions that we felt would benefit both us and our customers. These included better visibility for staff of who was available at any given time and call recording to



help our Customer Care Team and customers when required. Customers have reported an improvement in our telephone communications.

Repair Diagnostic Training

We know that diagnosing repairs quickly and correctly saves both time and money so each member of our Customer Care Team has gone through a programme of online repairs training to help us to identify your repair accurately. This has contributed to the 'Right First Time' measures introduced this year by helping the team to make much swifter, accurate diagnostics. The result is much more efficient processing of repairs jobs, fewer variations in costs and a reduction in the number of inspections required.



We have a number of vacant garages to let in the following areas:

Frankmarsh • Gorwell Forches • North Molton Rackenford • Ilfracombe Prieford

If you are interested in renting a garage and would like further information, please contact the Customer Care Team on 01271 312500

★★[North Devon Homes] are always there to help - very polite and very efficient - really feel like a family run company! North Devon Homes care about their tenants 100%★★

What next for the Customer Care Team?

- Improve call quality.
- Introduce first line ASB into the CCT.
- Introduce and run a garage maintenance programme.

Now Open at Christmas

Christmas 2012 was the first time that we had been open as normal over the festive period. This enabled us to provide a 'business as usual' service between Christmas and New Year instead of calls being diverted to our Out of Hours service provider. During this three day period we received 245 telephone calls from customers who were pleased that we were able to assist

them with their enquiries in our normal knowledgeable, friendly and polite way.



HOME SPOT!

- 92% of letters were responded to within 10 working days
- We received 43,885 calls
- 75.9% of calls were answered within 15 seconds

Increased Repairs Surveys

The best way to understand how we are doing at North Devon Homes is the feedback customers give us on how they regard the services we provide. We know this, and we know that getting our repairs service right is very important. As a result, we contact customers who recently had a repair to their home to ask about the experience and their satisfaction with this.

We now speak with a minimum of 75 customers a month, gathering their feedback and comments as well as continuing to welcome customers' thoughts and experiences through our written survey.

Thank you to all the customers who have made the time to tell us what they think. Your feedback has helped us to be clearer about where we are delivering things well and identified areas to focus on for further improvement.

We will be continuing this through next year to monitor and further improve our service.

Call the Customer Care Team on **01271 312500**



Text Alert

Customers told us sometimes it was expensive to retrieve messages we'd left on their mobile. So now we can text you at no cost to you. Make sure you let us know if you change your phone number. 01271 312500.

Another Successful Apprenticeship

Following the successful apprenticeships we offered in 2012, this year we have once again taken on apprentices throughout the business. This is in addition to the ongoing apprenticeships we have been supporting in our Finance and Home 2 Home repairs team.

Laura joined us on a one year apprenticeship in September 2012 working towards a NVQ level 2 in Customer Service. She has been working within our Customer Care Team, working hard to provide the high level of service that our customers expect.

Laura says "It's a very interesting and diverse job; it has been great working in such a friendly environment and gaining knowledge and experience that I didn't have before. The job has given me the confidence to develop my communication skills and given me the opportunity to learn to empathise with people. Working here has been a real eye opener and I am so pleased that I was given the opportunity."

Following the successful completion of her NVQ Laura has secured a temporary position within our Customer Care Team covering a maternity post allowing her to gain additional experience.



ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A HOME SWAP?

If you want to move why not try HomeSwapper? All you need to do is register your home and they will automatically match you to as many swaps as possible. Go to www.homeswapper.co.uk and register today - it's free.

STAR FACT
80%
of respondents are satisfied that we listen to their views and act upon them

Complaints are Gold



We encourage feedback from all customers whether it is good or bad as we like to know what we are doing well and where we need to improve. Last year we were delighted to receive 171 compliments.

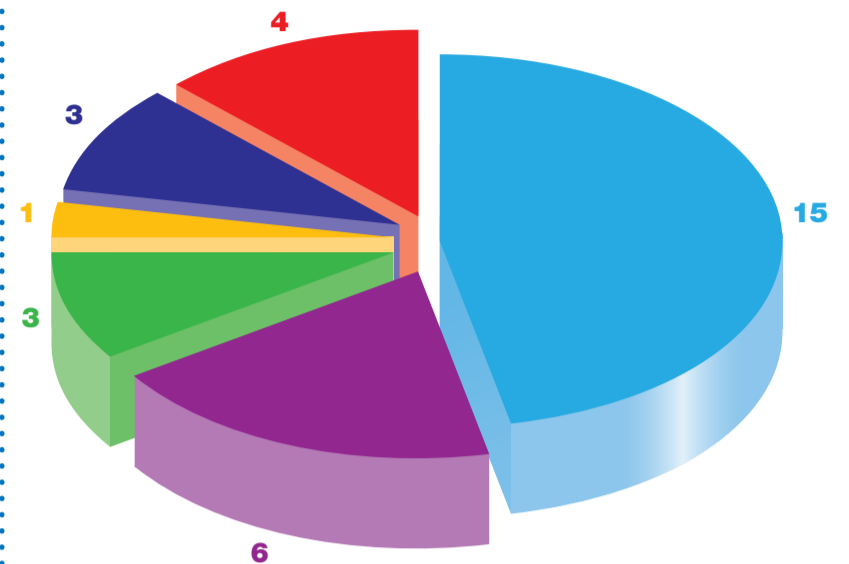
During the same period we

also received 32 complaints as shown in the pie chart on the right. 69% of these complaints were resolved during stage one. We are happy to report that no complaints went to stage three. We responded to 94% of complaints within 15 days.

All complaints are reviewed on a quarterly basis to ensure that we learn from your feedback. During 2012/13 we identified 18 improvements that could be made to our services. The majority of these relate to repairs as shown below.

Complaints By Team

- Response Repairs
- Customer Care Team
- Regeneration
- Planned Maintenance
- Income/Rents
- Neighbourhoods



Complaints	Actions Taken
Repair issues following mutual exchanges	Inspections completed before and after exchanges to agree and check works
Not completed first time	Tickets can be booked in straight away by operatives at customers house
Reallocation of jobs resulting in delays	Tickets can no longer be reallocated or restarted

We would like to thank all our customers who have taken the time to contact us with their compliments and complaints.

Stage Zero Complaints - What Are They?

Stage Zero complaints are those complaints that are generally resolved at the first point of contact with our Customer Care Team. We log these on our complaints system and include them in our quarterly managers meetings to identify trends and look at how we can improve things.

During 2012-13 we received 30 Stage Zero complaints. All were resolved within a short timescale.

We were able to identify that many of these complaints related to our Out of Hours service failing to send contractors when needed. Each time an issue arises

we contact the Out of Hours service and receive copies of call recordings. We are then able to establish what went wrong and discuss how to resolve any issues to stop them happening again in the future.

Another area where we received feedback was around missed appointments by our operatives and contractors. During 2012-13 a new appointment system and mobile technology was introduced for our operatives and we had a few issues during the implementation process - these issues have now been resolved.

There have also been a couple of instances where customers have not understood their responsibilities relating to repairs in their home and we will continue to address this through information in our newsletter and updating our leaflets.

When you contact our Customer Care Team with an issue that you have, even if it is resolved there and then, please ask for it to be logged as a Stage Zero complaint. This enables us to identify any issues our customers are having and put processes in place to prevent them from happening again.

Customer Feedback

This year we have been capturing more feedback from our customers through satisfaction surveys, neighbourhood vision events and the summer fayre to continue to improve our services to you. If you would like to share your views, please call us on 01271 312500.

What next for complaints?

- Reviewing our complaints policy to introduce the Designated Tenants Panel.
- Better understanding satisfaction levels with the complaints process and outcomes.
- Producing new leaflets/posters for complaints and the new process.

New Records

At the end of 2012 we introduced a new way of recording our compliments and complaints to make them more visible and to enable us to track them better to ensure they are resolved and answered on time.



★★ That if you are a North Devon Homes tenant you know that all you have to do is to ring one number and whatever the problem is, it is sorted within a short time. ★★

Designated Tenants Panel

In the last edition of Your Local Standard we talked about the changes to the complaints process to resolve them at a local level. Any complaints not resolved after stage 3 can now go to a Designated Person. This can be an MP, Local Councillor or Tenants Panel. We have established the Customer Complaints Panel with four volunteer members to take on this role. Please see the 2013 summer edition of Home News for full details.



Are you or someone you know having problems with Anti Social Behaviour?

DON'T SUFFER IN SILENCE, WE CAN HELP!

Call us now on **01271 312500** and speak to your Neighbourhood Officer.

Health and Safety at NDH

At North Devon Homes we take the Health and Safety of our customers and staff seriously. As part of our ongoing improvements this year we have added a specific health and safety statement in our Repairs Policy to further strengthen what we do. These improvements should ensure that we maintain our excellent health and safety record and that we keep customers and staff safe and free from harm while we are carrying out repairs.

Response Repairs



Getting It Right

Following consultation with our customers we decided to focus our efforts on getting repairs done "Right First Time". Last year customers surveys indicated that we completed 88% of repairs on the first visit. To make sure that we keep customers informed of delays this year we have added an extra question to the questionnaire that asks whether customers were notified of any changes or delays to the work. We are now looking at ways of recording "Right First Time" information on every job that we do so that we can work to improve our service to customers.

★★ A wonderful organisation with decent living facilities, caring staff and maintenance men. If I had known about it a few years back, perhaps I would have been in a flat then as I am now. Thank you NDH.★★

HOME SPOT!

- Total number of jobs 11,428
- Customer satisfaction 97.13%
- Gas survey checks completed on time 99.95%
- Inspections completed 11.1%

What next for Repairs Services?

- Increasing the number of "Right First Time" repairs.
- Developing our appointments and works planning to keep customers better informed.
- Grow our Home2Home Team to increase our service provision and provide valuable jobs for local people.

Repairs and Maintenance Improvement Group

During the past year we have been working closely with this customer group to improve the repairs service delivered to customers. The group deals with all operational aspects of the service, along with monitoring performance and complaints. During 2012/13 the group has made the following improvements:

- Improving communication with customers to keep them informed of any changes to repair dates
- Reviewing the Repairs Policy to include a section on health and safety
- Reviewed our repairs service standards
- Reviewed emergency repairs and our definition of what an emergency is.

Repair Priority	Number Completed	% On Time
Emergency	1703	98.4
Urgent	3858	97.6
Routine	5867	97.7

Home2Home Go Mobile

This year we have started using mobile devices to manage repair tickets. This has been working well and provides our Home 2 Home Team with all the information they need to carry out response repairs. We have had a few connectivity problems in some rural areas and, as a result, have been working with our suppliers to develop an offline facility. The new version is now available and following testing we will be introducing later in the year.

Why not join our Repairs and Maintenance Improvement Group? Please call Clare Paddon on 01271 313384 for more information.



STAR FACT
90% of respondents are satisfied with the way we deal with repairs and maintenance

GAS SERVICING IS ABOUT KEEPING YOU AND YOUR FAMILY SAFE

Make sure you let us into your home to service your boiler and stay safe!



NDH Regeneration Projects



Our Regeneration Team has had yet another busy year with lots of new homes being built. We completed two houses and a bungalow at Beechfield Road in June 2012. The final work was completed on the Woodville



refurbishment with a total of 36 homes having undergone extensive refurbishment work. Four flats were demolished at Kiln Close in Instow and 5 houses have now been built in their place, 2 of which were available for

sale, with one having already been sold.

On Forches the first phase of the planned regeneration is complete, with 68 new properties built. Phase 2 of this development is now



underway with an additional 80 homes currently being built by Pearce Construction. In addition we have also completed 26 new homes in Pill Gardens, Braunton completing the first phase of the regeneration on this site.



Keeping Your House a Home



It has been another busy year for our Planned Maintenance Team who have been working to make improvements to your homes. Over the year we

invested £721,856.73 making 425 improvements to 306 customers homes' – a great result! We have also been asking customers the team have worked with to let us

know what they think about both the improvements that we have made and the way in which we have undertaken them. Overall, last year 95% of customers were very

or fairly satisfied with the finished results – something of which we are very proud!

Value for Money

In March 2012 our long term Partnering Agreements came to an end and we took the opportunity to review all of our contracts. These new arrangements saw us move away from using a single contractor to the appointment of a Principal contractor for each area of work (e.g. bathrooms and kitchens).

This new approach has provided significant savings compared to the previous years which means that we can improve more homes, to the same quality for the same money!

New Kitchen - No Thanks

Most customers are thrilled with the prospect of a new kitchen or bathroom being installed but we know that not everybody welcomes the thought of improvements. We know that having work done on your home can be disruptive and have been working to make sure that we plan for and carry out work in a way that meets the needs and preferences of customers wherever possible. For example, we have changed working hours to suit elderly customers, or to fit in better with customer working hours. We have also made adjustments for working hours for customers who have children and who are involved in the school run. Customers have welcomed this development as it makes it more convenient for them to carry on with their normal routines and keeps disruption to a minimum. At your initial meeting with the Customer Liaison Officer, requests for this kind of adjustment can be made and make it as easy as possible for the work to be completed.

We have also introduced more flexibility. For example, installing electrical sockets at a more convenient height; placing thermostatic radiator valves at the top of the radiator rather than the bottom where it is much easier for our customers to access.

We are now also working with Customer Forum members in a new initiative to provide a Buddy service which will allow customers to get information and advice directly from other customers about what is really involved. The aim is to provide reassurance from a group member who can also share experiences and offer support if required.

In the past, a small number of customers expressed concerned that their rent will increase if they have a new bathroom or kitchen installed. We have now updated the information that we send out to customers to make it very clear that this is not the case.



Customer Inspections

Whilst we are always focused on improving what we do, we know that we are not always the best placed to judge how things have gone. The best people to let us know how we are doing are you, our customers.

To help maintain standards and to indentify where we could do things better, we have trained and supported a team of customer inspectors who will carry out visits and check what we have done. So far we have inspected 9% of the properties completed in the programme this year. The inspections have identified a number of things that customers like, given assurance that we are generally working in a way which is valued and identified some areas for further improvement. If you are interested in getting involved in this work, please contact Clare Paddon on 01271 313384.



Got something to say about NDH? We want to hear it!

Call us on **01271 312500** or pick up a Customer Comments form from our offices.



★★Excellent landlords - don't know quite how I would manage without you - all round support, giving me peace of mind.★★

The Repairs and Maintenance Improvement Group

This group has evolved to from one group merged from the Planned Maintenance and Responsive Repairs customer groups and meets every six weeks throughout the year.

The group receives key performance information, early sight of policy and procedure for discussion and customer feedback and is a useful forum in which we discuss our approach

to all aspects of repairs and maintenance.

The group is encouraged to challenge and stretch the service area and assist asset management by continually reviewing and improving our delivery for the benefit of our customers.

If you are interested – please contact Clare Paddon on 01271 313384 for more information.

What next for Planned Maintenance?

- Complete performance related reviews on all contractors
- Using mobile devices to improve our services
- Improve the specification of products to ensure customers have the best products and maximum choice available

It's a bit of a mystery!

Would you like to help us monitor and improve our services to all customers?

We are looking for new mystery shoppers to observe the quality of the service you receive every time you contact North Devon Homes either in person or via the telephone. The 25th customer to sign up will receive a £25 voucher on completion of their first shop. We will also hold a quarterly draw which all shoppers who have completed a shop during that quarter will be entered into. For more information and to sign up please contact Clare Paddon in secret on 01271 313384, and please do not identify yourself to any other members of staff as you will no longer be a mystery!!



SEEDS FOR CHANGE FUNDING SECURED



We are always actively seeking external funding opportunities for our community based projects. In June this year, in partnership with Pluss and Action for Children, we secured 12 months funding for a part time community gardener within the Forches Seeds for Change Project.

Tim will work alongside volunteers, young people and children producing all year round home grown foods to sell locally and within the community.

Tim brings some exciting ideas to the garden, including composting, recycling materials, soil science and wildlife corridors. There are plans for bird boxes, toad and hedgehog reserves and insect habitats. If you would like to join in the fun, please call Frances Walsh on 01271 312527.

Youth Projects

We have continued to develop our youth work projects and now engage with over 170 young people through our three youth clubs, homework and fitness clubs, volunteering in the community and a variety of adventure activities. We mentor the young people; encouraging school attendance, gaining

good grades and helping with exam preparations, as well as employment and college applications. Each youth club now has a Youth Management Team with members of this team invited to attend some of our Board meetings representing the voice of our young customers.

Our young people's efforts have been recognised across the county with various individuals winning awards. Perhaps their biggest achievement will be a live performance of music and dance at the Landmark Theatre on October 26th. For more information and tickets, please call Andie Scilly on 01271 313377.

Sandcastle Competition

This year, as part of our Charities and Sponsorship Group, we organised the National Sandcastle Competition. This quirky fun annual event sees local businesses compete to be crowned National Sandcastle Champion.

£3,000 raised

The event raised around £3,000 for the North Devon Hospice who provide a fantastic service that many of our customers and their families benefit from. 13 teams enter the event with Elkie Brooks, our celebrity judge, deeming Pearce Construction to be the winner with their fantastic sandcastle depicting an aerial view of Lundy Island.



NDH Opening Hours

Head Office, Westacott Road:
Monday to Friday - 08:30 to 17:00

Town Centre Office, Boutport Street:

Monday and Wednesday to Friday - 08:30 to 16:00

Tuesday - 10:00 to 16:00

Don't tell your neighbour, ... tell us!

Panel 1: Woman 1: "HI HOW ARE YOU?" Woman 2: "NOT TOO GOOD. I'M HAVING REAL PROBLEMS GETTING MY GLITTERING REPAIRED"

Panel 2: Woman 1: "WELL... HAVE YOU SPOKEN TO NDH AND TOLD THEM? THAT'S WHAT THEY'RE THERE FOR!"

Panel 3: Woman 1: "I DID REPORT IT, BUT I'M STILL NOT HAPPY. I GET TOO FLUSTERED WHEN I CALL THEM TO COMPLAIN"

Panel 4: Woman 1: "WELL... WHY DON'T YOU CALL THEIR COMMENT LINE AND LEAVE A MESSAGE? IT'S 01271 312529"

If you don't have the time, don't want to talk to someone or if our offices are closed please use our comments line. You can call and leave a message on **01271 312529** or text us on **07811 273673**.

If you want us to, we will call you back the following working day, as long as you leave your name and contact number.