A year with paragon

Annual Report 2015/16
A YEAR WITH PARAGON

It has been another busy and challenging year.

We’ve focused on improving the way we work, in particular by uniting into a single organisation, and by looking at individual services to see where we can do things better.

Once again, I’m proud of the impact that residents have had on reviewing and monitoring our services. The awards won by the Resident Scrutiny Panel really pay tribute to all their hard work.

We’ve also concentrated our attention on improving the experience you have with us – from the ways you can contact us, to how we manage the process for your individual enquiries. We will continue to focus on improving the customer experience over the next year because we want you to be completely satisfied with us as your landlord.

I hope this report gives you a real flavour of all our activities, and not just the good bits. In last year’s report, we made a number of commitments to improving our services, listing what we planned to do over the coming 12 months.

This year, we’ve reported back to you on how well we’ve achieved each of these actions.

We’ve incorporated the review from the Resident Council, rather than producing a separate document as we’ve done in the past. As well as being better value for money, I feel it better shows how well we work together.

We’ve also included a number of personal stories to highlight some of our main services and achievements and to give a real residents’ perspective. Thank you to those people who were willing to share your experiences.

Dilip Kavi, Chief Executive
Review from the Resident Council
I have thoroughly enjoyed my first year as Chair of the Resident Council and I hope this review gives you a sense of what we’ve been up to and how important resident involvement is to the way Paragon is run.

The Resident Council looks at all sorts of issues that directly affect the services we receive. During this last year we were heavily involved in shaping the new Housing Management service and reviewing how Paragon delivers its anti-social behaviour service to affected residents.

So far, all our recommendations have been accepted, and the Council is now working hard to monitor these service improvements by meeting senior staff regularly.

Apart from our scrutiny and monitoring work, we also review the Challenge Fund (which you can find out more about later in this document), comment on new policies and most of us are active in our local forums as well.

Personally, I get a lot from being involved. When you know that an issue has been resolved because of your efforts, there is a real sense of achievement and I have been delighted to take on some new personal challenges. We do have a couple of vacancies on the Council, and many other opportunities, so I would very much recommend getting involved if you can.

I’d like to thank all the residents who have been involved over the past year. You are having a great influence and are truly helping to improve the services we get from Paragon and the homes and neighbourhoods we live in.

Joan Swift, Chair of the Resident Council
The Resident Council is a group of up to 15 Paragon residents. We work with senior managers and the Board to monitor the quality of services - and how satisfied you are with those services. The Council also plays a vital role in scrutiny, overseeing the work of Resident Inspectors and reporting back to the Board.

**Members**

Members of the Resident Council make sure we keep the resident’s voice at the heart of all that Paragon does. Everyone plays a role, and we are developing a team which can be very effective on your behalf.

Over the last year, the Council has grown and now has 12 members.

- Joan Swift, Weybridge (Chair)
- Jean Corbett, Cobham
- Ann Netts, East Sheen
- Michael Goldsmith, Claygate
- Dorota Sookanadenchetty, Twickenham
- Mariantonia Armenante, Weybridge
- Karen Dempster, Chessington
- Nigel Mitchell, Weybridge
- Jen Laney, Hampton
- Dave Hobbs, Hampton
- Colin Pantel, Walton
- Jo Bailey, Walton

Two of our members have stepped down – Natalie Gibbs and Roger Evans. Thank you both so much for your fantastic contribution to the Council.
Get involved
- make a difference

We’re looking for more residents to join our Resident Council.

It’s hugely interesting and rewarding and you’ll have a real impact on how Paragon is run – improving services for the benefit of all residents.

Members meet four to five times a year and are given full training and support.

For more information, check out the ‘Ways to get involved’ pages of the Paragon website or contact the Resident Involvement Team.

01932 235 888
getinvolved@paragonchg.co.uk

We’d love to hear from you

If you’d like to get in touch with the Resident Council, please pass your message via a member of the Resident Involvement Team.
Residents play a big part in scrutiny – looking in depth at a service to see how well it is working and suggesting ways it can be improved.

At Paragon, scrutiny is a two-part process. Firstly, our team of Resident Inspectors reviews how a service is working. They make recommendations to the Scrutiny Panel to take forward. Both are equally valuable parts of the process.

In the past, the Scrutiny Team has looked at a wide range of services, including repairs, planned maintenance and home ownership. This year our main focus was on reviewing how the Housing Service is delivered and how Paragon deals with anti-social behaviour.

Following a thorough review of each area and discussions with staff, senior managers produce an action plan of recommendations which is reviewed and approved by the Resident Council. This year, all of our recommendations have been accepted.

The Scrutiny Panel has worked closely with the Housing Services Team, shadowing them and making observations that were taken into account in the design of the new team structure. The new 0300 phone number and the revamped reception area at Case House are among innovations that resulted from residents’ scrutiny work.

The value of the Scrutiny Panel was recognised when Paragon and the Scrutiny Team won two national awards for our scrutiny work during 2015.

Get involved - get your voice heard

If you’re passionate about great customer service and would like to have a say in how services are delivered, why not join the Scrutiny Panel or our team of Resident Inspectors?

For more information, check out ‘Ways to get involved’ pages of the Paragon website or contact the Resident Involvement Team.

01932 235 888
getinvolved@paragonchg.co.uk
Forum volunteers work with the Resident Council and Paragon staff to inspect estates and identify local needs and priorities. With Paragon’s support, they are encouraged to lead projects that improve their communities.

Our resident forums cover:
- Richmond
- Kingston and the Dittons
- Weybridge, Cobham and Addlestone
- Walton and Hersham.

Working with the local council, Weybridge forum members have knocked on doors in the area to speak to residents about fly-tipping and dog fouling and are raising awareness about mental health.

The Richmond forum has become involved with the council’s village planning process. They’ve also door-knocked in Twickenham and Hampton to speak to residents and helped revive a Hampton allotment space.

The Walton forum is our newest group, formed in June 2015. They are looking at how they can improve communal spaces on different estates in Walton and are planning to host some community events.

The Kingston forum door-knocked in Kingston to speak to residents about environmental issues. They’re planning to expand their door-knocking to Chessington. They have also been ambassadors at some tenant engagement expert (TPAS) events.

Get involved - join your local forum

This is your chance to talk about any housing or community-related issues where you live.

Meetings happen four times a year and are attended by up to 15 residents and members of Paragon’s Neighbourhood Team.

For more information, check out the ‘Ways to get involved’ pages of the Paragon website or contact the Resident Involvement Team.

01932 235 888
getinvolved@paragonchg.co.uk
OTHER WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

Whether you’ve got lots of time, or only a little to spare, Paragon offers many ways that you can get involved and have your say.

**Mystery shopping**
A great way of improving services is to become a ‘mystery shopper’, where you can help improve residents’ experience of contacting Paragon.

**Green groups**
If you’d like to keep the green spaces in your community looking good, you could join one of the resident-led green groups and work alongside Paragon’s Estate and Grounds Maintenance teams.

**Youth forums**
We would love more young residents to give their views, and our youth forums allow them to discuss the changes they would like to see in their neighbourhoods.

**Service improvement panels**
You can have your say about how we support and communicate with people who are struggling to pay their rent by taking part in the income Service Improvement Panel.

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Get involved - find out more

Find out how you can take part in these activities by visiting the "Ways to get Involved" pages on the website. Or, get in touch with the Resident Involvement Team and have a chat.

01932 235 888
getinvolved@paragonchg.co.uk
Six years ago, Joan Swift was unemployed and living with depression. She followed up on a Paragon employee’s suggestion to get involved in resident activities, and her first such involvement was to scrutinise Paragon’s grounds maintenance work.

Since then, Joan hasn’t looked back. She has been involved in various scrutiny inspections and is chair of the Weybridge local area forum and has helped judge the Paragon in Bloom competition. She was recently part of the Paragon team that received an award from the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS), and she was nominated for a ‘Women in Housing’ award.

Joan joined the Resident Council two and a half years ago and became Chair in September 2015. Joan says:

“I feel that, in my mid-60s, I’ve entered a new phase of my life. Being an involved resident has helped me hugely with my confidence. For example, I never expected to be speaking at a conference. And, once you’ve done it once, you do get the appetite for doing more!”

Joan now plans to raise the profile of the Resident Council, Scrutiny Panel and local area forums and encourage more residents to get involved.
About our homes

235 NEW HOMES during the year

£62 MILLION in new homes, compared to £50.1m last year

£11 MILLION on improving existing homes

658 HOMES during the year, including 71 mutual exchanges

9,066 HOMES mainly in Surrey and South West London. Our varied housing stock provides homes for first-time buyers, keyworkers, older people, and those in general housing need.
WHERE WE HAVE HOMES

KEY: Social rent | Home ownership | Market rent

1: Arun
- Social rent: 11
- Home ownership: 7
- Market rent: 0

2: Elmbridge
- Social rent: 4,450
- Home ownership: 735
- Market rent: 9

3: Epsom and Ewell
- Social rent: 16
- Home ownership: 0
- Market rent: 0

4: Guildford
- Social rent: 13
- Home ownership: 4
- Market rent: 0

5: Hounslow
- Social rent: 44
- Home ownership: 13
- Market rent: 0

6: Kingston
- Social rent: 764
- Home ownership: 181
- Market rent: 0

7: Lambeth
- Social rent: 43
- Home ownership: 0
- Market rent: 0

8: Lewisham
- Social rent: 0
- Home ownership: 55
- Market rent: 0

9: Mole Valley
- Social rent: 20
- Home ownership: 0
- Market rent: 0

10: Richmond
- Social rent: 1733
- Home ownership: 471
- Market rent: 2

11: Runnymede
- Social rent: 88
- Home ownership: 93
- Market rent: 0

12: Spelthorne
- Social rent: 73
- Home ownership: 12
- Market rent: 0

13: Wandsworth
- Social rent: 141
- Home ownership: 63
- Market rent: 0

14: Woking
- Social rent: 3
- Home ownership: 22
- Market rent: 0

London

Surrey

Arun
## OUR PERFORMANCE compared to last year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2015/16</th>
<th>2014/15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emergency repairs completed in 24 hours</td>
<td>97.2%</td>
<td>90.72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned work completed (kitchens/bathrooms)</td>
<td>104%</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyclical work completed (painting/decorating)</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Properties with current gas certificates</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of complaints</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of cases of anti-social behaviour raised</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time taken to re-let a home</td>
<td>34 days</td>
<td>43 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of empty homes at year end</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New homes built for social and affordable rent</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New homes for sale</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overall satisfaction with our services improved from 75% to 75.7% this year. This has increased steadily by 6% in total over the past four years.

**75.7%**
Overall customer satisfaction

**82%**
of you are satisfied with the overall quality of your home

**87%**
are satisfied with your neighbourhood as a place to live

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**Satisfaction with individual services**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>2015/16</th>
<th>2014/15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lettings</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welfare benefits</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyclical work (painting/decorating)</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned work (kitchens/bathrooms)</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grounds maintenance</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleaning</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handyperson service</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support officers for older people</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
YOUR FEEDBACK

When you receive a service from us, we want to know whether you were happy with the outcome, or if you feel we should have done things differently.

Your feedback helps us to learn from our mistakes and continually improve the service we provide you. It’s also a real boost for our staff to hear when you think they’ve done a particularly good job.

Give us your feedback

If you have feedback about our services, good or bad, we want to hear from you.

You can phone, email us, or fill in the form in our ‘Complaints and compliments’ leaflet.
We have made big improvements to the way we manage complaints. 90% of complaints received a response within ten working days, (above the sector average), up from 66% in 2014/15. An improvement in our repairs service means there’s been a huge drop (by 62%) in complaints about repairs.

201 complaints received. 43% less than in 2014/15 (355)
98% acknowledged within three working days
50% were about repairs or gas (sector average is 70%)

We’ve used the feedback from complaints to improve our services. We have introduced case officers to manage more complex repairs to ensure that residents have a named contact to oversee repairs which are not straightforward. This will improve communication and reduce any misunderstandings around timescales and who is doing what and when.

Feedback has also encouraged us to improve the way we check that our procedures and processes are always followed correctly, for example, keeping things confidential and meeting deadlines.

Handyperson service
“I’d like to thank the handyman for being a smashing guy and having done a fantastic job. From the time I reported it to being fixed was about an hour. Best service ever!”

Repairs
“They were very nice and helpful people. They worked quickly and safely, they warned us about health and safety.”

Income
“You were extremely kind and helpful and quickly identified the issue made by the council with our rent payment. Very happy customers.”

Independent Living
“A big thank you to everyone who was involved in the gardening work recently. It has really improved things. Keep up the good work!”

Better Homes
“I’m very satisfied with my kitchen refurbishment. The operative took pride in everything he was doing. He was a very hard worker.”

We recorded 288 compliments over the year.
77% of the compliments were for the Handyperson service (218 compliments). This service received fantastic feedback.
Over the year, 67,738 calls were received by our Repairs Team and our contractors.

To make sure we give you the best service we can, we’ve been tracking what a ‘customer journey’ looks like – asking residents about their experience of reporting a repair, monitoring calls and shadowing staff. This has led to some new improvements and satisfaction with our maintenance service has increased from 79.5% to 85%.

We’ve continued to hold maintenance action days (MADs) and have dramatically expanded our use of Property MOTs.

We’ve also moved our Estate Services Team into the Repairs Team, to give a more joined up approach and to help us to concentrate on improving satisfaction levels (currently 69% for grounds maintenance and 71% for cleaning services).
# Repairs and Maintenance

These are the commitments we made for our repairs and maintenance service during 2014/15.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What we said we’d do</th>
<th>What we did</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carry out 2,300 Property MOTs</td>
<td>We only held 1,466 MOTs, as this scheme started later than expected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce complaints about repairs by 20%</td>
<td>Complaints have actually been reduced by an impressive 62%.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase customer satisfaction to more than 90%</td>
<td>Overall, satisfaction levels have been improving in repairs. 91% of residents are satisfied with the service provided by the contractor and 84% are satisfied with the overall repairs service. We are working on increasing this figure to more than 90% next year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hold eight maintenance action days</td>
<td>This year, we held nine maintenance action days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have 100% of properties with a valid gas safety certificate</td>
<td>We continue to have 100% gas certification on all our properties.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **19,000 repairs completed**
- **1,466 Property MOTs carried out**
- **9 MADS each completing an average of 60 jobs**
- **1,826 jobs completed by our handypersons**
- **100% satisfaction with the handyperson service with 100% of jobs completed on time**
RESPONSIVE REPAIRS

Customer feedback showed that there was real frustration when urgent repairs were rescheduled with short notice so emergency repairs could be completed instead. To improve this, we have created an emergency team and this has already resulted in improved performance.

97% of emergencies are now attended within four hours of being reported and are resolved within 24 hours.

For complex repairs, we assign a repairs case officer who acts as a single point of contact for you and ensures the job is proceeding as it should. In the past year, case officers have handled 23 jobs in this way.

Report your repairs online

Why not sign up for an online account so you can report and track your repairs 24/7. It’s mobile-friendly too!

Visit www.paragonchg.co.uk/your-account to find out more.
This year we held nine maintenance action days (MADS).

These were attended by carpenters, plumbers and electricians from our contractor (Willmott Dixon), our handyperson, repairs officer and neighbourhood co-ordinator. On average we completed 60 jobs at each event, including any outstanding work to communal areas and small repairs flagged up on the day.

Keep an eye on our website, or follow us on Twitter (twitter.com/ParagonCHG), to find out when MADs are taking place in your area.
We carry out a ‘check-up’ on your home every three years, to make sure that your home is well maintained, as well as to reduce the need for repairs.

This year, Willmott Dixon (which carries out our repairs) visited 1,466 homes, making sure that doors, windows, floors, walls and roofs were in good working order. They also carried out small repairs while they were there, and arranged an appointment for any larger jobs that needed doing.

“I think the MOTs are a brilliant idea, particularly for the sheltered schemes. We had bits and pieces fixed there and then, or within a couple of days, and the service was outstanding.”

**Book an MOT for your home**
Call 0300 123 2221 or visit our website to book your appointment. We will arrange an MOT for you within six weeks, at a time that suits you. You will be given an AM or PM appointment, and the MOT should take about an hour.
HANDYPerson SERVICE

Our handyperson service is going from strength to strength and, this year, we’ve expanded the team to three people. In 2015/16, the handypersons carried out:

- 1,826 general jobs
- 82 aids and adaptations jobs
- 306 fire risk jobs
- 52 jobs for new tenants

100% of jobs were carried out on time with 95% being completed on first visit.

You can find out more about the handyperson service on our website by searching for ‘handyperson’.
Phyllis, 78

The handymen have done so many jobs for me. Most recently, they fixed a rail in one bedroom that kept falling down and they’ll be back soon to help me with the other one. They’ve also unblocked my sink.

When my bathroom was turned into a wet room, they really helped me out. They put up all the furnishings — the toothbrush holder, the soap holder, the mirror, everything. They even took out a radiator to do the job properly. They were so good, clean, tidy and efficient.

I have health problems — I’ve had a heart attack, surgery and a back problem. Doing these kinds of jobs around the house is very difficult for me. Without the Handymen, I would be paying left, right and centre just to put a toothbrush holder up, so this service is great for me.

I would absolutely recommend them to other people. They can do little jobs like these for us and they do it with a smile and that just makes your day.
We want your home to be safe and pleasant to live in. So, as well as fixing unforeseen problems, we have a comprehensive programme of planned work and routine maintenance.

These are the targets we set and what we actually achieved:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What we said we’d do</th>
<th>What we did</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Replace the kitchens in 148 homes</td>
<td>We replaced 120 kitchens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replace the bathrooms in 149 homes</td>
<td>We replaced 142 bathrooms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replace the windows to 267 homes</td>
<td>We replaced the windows in 203 homes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Externally decorate 1,545 homes</td>
<td>We externally decorated 1,553 homes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carry out internal communal decoration to 436 homes</td>
<td>We carried out internal decoration to communal areas in 447 homes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We also replaced:

- **292 boilers**
- **92 roofs**
- **295 guttering and rain-water pipes**

We were unable to achieve all of our targets in 2015/16. Unfortunately, planning permission was not granted at two schemes where we were planning to replace original single glazed timber windows with high quality, energy efficient double glazed windows. And we were unable to achieve all our kitchen and bathroom replacements because customers either did not provide us access or chose not to have the improvements carried out.
During the year, we have upgraded homes by decorating, fitting new kitchens and bathrooms, replacing windows and roofs, installing boilers and decorating. We carried out 3,034 separate planned improvements at a cost of £11 million.

We also selected two new contractors – Axis and Architectural Decorators (AD) – to carry out communal decoration and associated repairs for the next five years. Over the coming year, 1,833 homes will benefit from this service, which will also deliver cost savings, improved communication with residents and apprenticeship and employment opportunities for local people.
Keeping You Safe

Last year, we continued to meet safety regulations in the fields of fire safety, water risk assessment, electrical testing and asbestos.

Much of our fire risk work, such as replacing door closers and improving signage, was carried out by the handyperson service.

We also completed a programme to make sure every home is fitted with a carbon monoxide detector.

We will continue this safety work next year by developing an in-house electrical testing team and making sure all of our properties have an electrical test and an asbestos assessment.
LETTING HOMES

- 75,000 calls received by our Housing Services Team
- 658 homes let
- 11 homes sold to tenants through Right to Buy and Right to Acquire
- 71 families moved through mutual exchange
- Average letting time of 25 DAYS
- Average re-let time of 34 DAYS
LETTING HOMES

Last year, we developed a new lettings process to help us improve your experience when moving into a new home. We tracked people’s journeys – from viewings to sign-up and how they settled in. We’ve used your feedback to make the moving process quicker and smoother.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What we said we’d do</th>
<th>What we did</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improve the re-let turnaround time to 26 days</td>
<td>We have improved the re-let turnaround time to 34 days, but this is still short of our target. We’ll continue to work with local authorities to push re-let times down further, for example by speeding up the nominations process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve residents’ experience of the moving process</td>
<td>We’ve carried out an extensive exercise to understand our residents’ experience, especially around lettings and used this to make improvements. Our latest results show that 100% of new customers were happy with their lettings experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Update lettings information on our website</td>
<td>This area of the website has been brought up to date and made more user-friendly.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HOME MOVES

It has been a challenging year for people being able to move home. There has been a fall in the number of properties available to let, with 44 fewer empty homes becoming available, a drop of 17% compared to last year.

Mutual exchange is now the best way for a family to find a more suitable home for their circumstances and more than 70 households used this method to move house this year. We can help you to find a mutual exchange and support you through the process.

INDEPENDENT LIVING

This year, we launched a new way of delivering our sheltered housing service. While this new approach bedded in, satisfaction figures fell, but have now picked up. At the end of 2015/16, we saw 82% satisfaction with the team, although we appreciate that some residents are looking for further improvements with the service.

“My Mum really enjoys her life at the scheme and says her independence is really important. She is very pleased with the service that you give and is happy with everyone that visits her – they are all very nice.”

Sign up for mutual exchange

Did you know that you can swap homes with another Paragon tenant or someone who lives in another housing association home?

To find out more, call our Customer Advice Team on

0300 123 2221

Or visit our website and search for ‘swap homes’.
Vicki, 39

This time last year, my husband was working in Bognor but we were living in East Molesey.

We really wanted a fresh start so I was checking Paragon’s website daily to see if anyone in Bognor (where Paragon has properties) wanted to swap homes. It was a stressful time but we were lucky and a possible match came up quickly – we started looking just after Christmas and found our new home in March. It doesn’t always work out this way but, for us, it’s been pretty straightforward.

I know someone at work and she’s been finding it really difficult. She’s having problems going online as she’s older and no one’s getting back in touch with her. We’ve found that other organisations don’t always get back to you.

My advice is to keep going with it. You’ll find someone to swap with in the end.

The whole experience and process was great – I have to say it, I’m 100% happy. Going from a three bedroom flat to a three bedroom house was amazing, especially since we have children. And it’s only 10 minutes from the beach.

“We love our new home – we both really wanted the exchange.”
We don’t just want to provide you with a decent home. We also want to build communities that are clean, safe and great to live in.

We’ve re-launched our estate inspections schedule with clear neighbourhood standards – ranked gold, silver and bronze. This is so that you know what to expect. Take a look at the ‘Neighbourhood standards’ brochure on our website.

- **69%** satisfaction with grounds maintenance services (68% in 2014/15)
- **71%** satisfaction with cleaning services (71% in 2014/15)
- **91** anti-social behaviour cases raised (98 in 2014/15)
- **4 PEOPLE** evicted due to serious anti-social behaviour
We’re working with our contractors to improve our services. We know there’s more to do but we are confident that you will see improvements this year.

We introduced a new cleaning contract in July 2015. This will allow us to have more consistency, and the same high standards across all our areas.

We have moved our Estate Services Team – which covers cleaning, caretaking and grounds maintenance – into the repairs and maintenance department and aim to deliver big improvements for you in the coming year.

Based on your feedback, and working with our Resident Scrutiny Team, we’ve changed how we deliver our housing services. Instead of tenancy services officers, we now have seven neighbourhood co-ordinators, supported by specialist teams.

This new role was part of a reorganisation aimed at giving you a better local service and building stronger links with communities.

The neighbourhood co-ordinators will:

- carry out regular estate inspections and follow up on action
- monitor work carried out by our contractors
- carry out new tenant sign-ups and follow-up tenancy visits, and
- support and develop community initiatives and resident groups

They will keep notice boards up-to-date with information about when they will be in your area, dates of estate inspections and other community messages. Look out for when the co-ordinators are out and about in your neighbourhood and have a chat with them.
ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Last year, we were commended for our handling of one of the worst cases of anti-social behaviour (ASB) in our area, involving a family whose persistent ASB blighted the lives of residents in Weybridge.

Late-night parties, drug dealing, dogs barking and violent domestic incidents escalated to threats and acts of violence against their neighbours and others in the community. We teamed up with our solicitors and Surrey Police, and worked closely with local residents to provide evidence that led to the family being barred from the property. We were awarded outright possession by the courts.

How to report ASB
Contact our Customer Advice Team or speak to your neighbourhood co-ordinator to report any incidents.
- If the incident is criminal and urgent, call the police on 999.
- If it is criminal but not urgent, call the police on 101.
Check out our website for lots more useful information and advice.
**REAL STORY**  A second chance for Sylvia

Sylvia was in a very difficult place 18 months ago. Her son’s anti-social behaviour had ruined her life – she lost her job, was drinking more than usual and found herself with some mental ill health issues.

But then her son was sent to prison, releasing her from the nightmare. And since then, she’s taken huge and positive steps to completely turn her life around.

She learnt how to tackle the internet and get online. She got her foot back in the employment door by doing volunteer work. She even went back to college with a shiny laptop.

Sylvia’s story doesn’t end there. She needed somewhere safe where she could build her future with a fresh start. And, after being on the list for a few weeks, she moved into her own one-bedroom place, supported with Perfect Fit funding to see her through.

Sylvia is now set for whatever opportunities come her way. She’s ready to face the world again and not just survive but prosper.

*(We have changed the name of the resident to protect her identity.)*

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**Did Sylvia’s story inspire you?**

We offer lots of support programmes and initiatives. Our digital training and Ethos programme can help you get back into work by giving you the skills you need for success in today’s fast-moving world. Call us on 0300 123 2221 to find out more.

You can also get in touch with our Lettings and Housing Moves Team for information and support with moving home. Visit our website for more information.
COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

Challenge Fund
This year we have awarded nearly £25,000 in grants to residents through our Challenge Fund. This fund is created from savings we’ve made over the past year.

Projects we’ve funded this year include:
- a holiday for older people at an Independent Living (sheltered housing) scheme to address issues of social isolation
- landscaping and maintaining a communal garden and social space
- Helping a lady with mobility problems to resurface her garden and make it a haven for her family.

Paragon in Bloom
Paragon in Bloom is an initiative of the Resident Council (and supported by our Resident Involvement Team) aimed at recognising residents who have used their gardening skills to brighten up their area. Each year, we get more applicants, showing how much Paragon residents take pride in their homes and gardens.

Allotments
Working with Walton Charity, we’ve invited local residents in the Terrace Road area of Walton to come together to grow food, share and learn new skills, enjoy the outdoors, and make new friends on a new allotment site.

Apply to the Challenge Fund
If you have an idea or project that will benefit people in your community, you can apply for a grant of up to £2,500. Find out more and download an application form on our website.
REAL STORY  Working together to make our scheme great

Brenda, 66

At our scheme, we’ve used the Challenge Fund to look after our homes and our people. It’s helping residents be active, feel useful and even be creative.”

After our social club folded we asked for financial help for our Christmas meal as this event really brings everyone together and creates a community spirit. We received £700 which not only paid for our Christmas meal, but our Easter do and summer lunch too.

We also used the money to revamp our front entrance. People here already look after their own gardens when they can, but we believe it’s important to look after your whole scheme so it’s an inviting place to live.”

But that’s not all. We also received £200 for a monthly craft afternoon and knitting club. This event is very popular and it’s definitely money well spent. The knitting club used the money to stock up on materials so they can make and send clothes and blankets to the baby unit at Kingston Hospital.

“
This year our rent arrears (rent that is owed to us) stood at 1.4%. This is a slight increase on last year (1.3%), but it is still low compared to many other housing associations.

We have invested a great deal in keeping rent arrears low, by helping you cope with the impact of welfare reform and maintain your tenancy.

Our Inclusion Team have focused their efforts on supporting people into work and helping them to get online.

We’ve also worked with Money Advice Plus (MAP) and Citizens Advice (CAB) so that they can give money and debt support to our residents.

Support and advice

- 17 Welfare Benefit advice sessions held
- 930 enquiries received about Welfare Benefit
- 122 Residents referred to MAP and CAB for money and debt advice. 83 engaged with these services, reducing their arrears by an average of £207
These are the commitments we made last year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What we said we’d do</th>
<th>What we did</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Help residents who need to get ready for Universal Credit, providing support and</td>
<td>In November 2015 we started to develop Get Set, an initiative with Jobcentre Plus, Surrey County Council, Elmbridge Borough Council and the Citizens Advice Bureau. Together we are training 40 Universal Credit champions who will be able to give advice to residents.</td>
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<tr>
<td>guidance to help you pay your rent.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expand the digital champion scheme to offer more opportunities for training and</td>
<td>Three residents and seven staff have been trained as digital champions and they have been involved in training 19 other residents, including older people, how to get online. We aim to recruit more digital champions in the coming year.</td>
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<tr>
<td>developing skills.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identify and promote digital deals such as affordable IT hardware.</td>
<td>This area of the website has been brought up to date and made more user-friendly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduce a rental exchange scheme to improve credit ratings.</td>
<td>We are testing software which uses residents’ rent payment details to support their credit and ID records. This will allow you to get better deals on things like mobile phones, insurance and retail purchases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop an online portal to offer better access to rent accounts, enhanced services</td>
<td>This online account has been set up and is available to all residents, making it easier for you to manage your tenancy and log and follow the progress of repairs.</td>
</tr>
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<td>and repairs.</td>
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34 residents engaged with support from Surrey’s Lifelong Learning Partnership project, ETHOS (Employment, Training and Housing Options Support) and job clubs. Of these, eight found employment and nine have gone into further education.

14 residents were trained through the Strive partnership, aimed at helping people to set up their own businesses.

“I was encouraged by your reception lady to speak to ETHOS about a college IT course. I did that and now work full-time for Look Ahead as a support worker.”

If you find yourself in arrears, we aim to tailor our support to your individual circumstances, working with you and our partners to tackle the root cause of your difficulties. That might be employment support, helping you to manage debt, or access benefits or even buying second-hand furniture to avoid getting into debt through expensive credit agreements.

Find out more: Universal Credit
You can access advice and information on our website. Search for ‘Universal Credit’.
WELFARE REFORM

We work to help you understand the impact of welfare reform, offering a range of services at no extra cost. It is important to tell us if you're having financial difficulties, so that we can discuss it with you and find the right support for your circumstances.

Of those that used our service, 89% said they found the advice they received helpful and 87% said they would recommend it.

"I am writing to convey my thanks for the support given to me by your Welfare Benefits Advisor. I could not have wished for better support. He was incredibly patient and understanding and was willing to give considerable time to my case. It was encouraging to see such dedication and invaluable support during what was a very stressful time for me."
GETTING ONLINE

We’ve been supporting people to get online as a way of helping them to make savings, find a job, manage their tenancy accounts and prepare for Universal Credit.

We have launched the online resident account portal, trained digital champions and used our three community hubs for online training.

We have also worked closely with a number of agencies including Superhighways and We Are Digital to give training to residents to improve their digital skills with a view to getting a job.

Sign up for an online account
Through your online account you can report and track repairs 24/7, as well as keep up to date with your rent account information.

To access your online account you’ll need to have a registered email address. We will also give you a secure personal reference number.

Visit: www.paragonchg.co.uk/your-account and sign up for your registration pack today.
Among the people we’ve been helping into work are residents who have the ideas and passion to start their own business, but not the commercial know-how or confidence.

We’ve teamed up with Wandle Housing Association to help our residents – 14 of them from Paragon – to set up their own businesses. After a 12-week training course run by Enterprise Cube, the budding entrepreneurs delivered a Dragons’ Den-style pitch.

Their enterprises included a video marketing company, building services, cleaning services and a cake designer.

Ndaya, 28, is passionate about helping women and young people who have faced abuse after experiencing it first-hand herself. She successfully pitched her social enterprise – Breaking our Chains – and hopes to run empowerment workshops for vulnerable women.

Ndaya came to us after getting our “Would you like to start your own business?” text. She explained: “I just knew this could open a new door for me. And, as we covered different topics each week, I felt my plan was getting more and more real.”

Ndaya believes that the course hasn’t just given her business insight. It has taught her skills, like budgeting, that have dramatically improved her everyday life. Now she’s managing her household more efficiently and her confidence is up.
We’ve continued to provide a range of tenures to meet different housing needs, ranging from the new Badger House supported scheme in Ham to homes available to buy through shared ownership – many of them joint ventures with partners such as Taylor Wimpey.

One of our most eye-catching new developments was Osiers Place in Wandsworth, with 38 new homes, 19 for low-cost home ownership. We also completed our first development in the Woking – Brookwood Farm is a mixed development offering 75 homes for shared ownership and rent, including flats for older people.

In the coming year, we aim to build 150 new homes, including 50 homes for rent or sale on the site of former sheltered and key worker accommodation in East Molesey.

We aim to build more new shared ownership homes in response to the government’s encouragement to do so.

- **235 NEW HOMES**
- **173 HOMES**
  built for social/affordable rent (141 in 2014/15)
- **49 HOMES**
  built for sale (116 in 2014/15)
- **411 NEW HOMES**
  started
Badger House is a newly built, specially designed home for young adults with autism. It contains four one-bedroom flats (one of them adapted for wheelchair use), two communal living spaces, facilities for support staff and a sensory garden.

We worked closely with the London Borough of Richmond and specialists in occupational therapy, adaptations and care and support to make sure the new accommodation was suitable for the residents.

Among the special design features are integrated window blinds and lockable socket covers, as well as appropriate lighting, ventilation, use of colour and sound-absorption technology.

Badger House is meeting an increasingly urgent need for housing and support for this group that allows them to live independently and, crucially, to keep them close to their families and friends.

“My Grandson is now 25 and this will be the first time he’s been able to live independently. Without this specialised housing he would not be able to do so. He is severely autistic and so the important design features of this flat are essential for him to live independently. The sensory garden is beautiful and has a very high specification with some wonderful features which will enhance his quality of life.”
We are in a sound financial position, but achieving value for money (VfM) is more important than ever before to help maintain our services and build more homes.

**This year we made savings of almost £1.5 million, with considerable social and environmental returns, through:**

- completely restructuring our housing services, to improve our service and reduce staff costs
- bringing some safety services, such as fire testing and water risk assessments, in-house
- our handypersons and super caretakers undertaking straightforward repairs to communal areas
- using our in-house anti-social behaviour co-ordinator to save on legal costs and solicitors’ fees, and
- providing better digital services, so that customers can raise a repair or select an appointment slot online, 24 hours a day.

We will continue to develop how we compare our costs and performance with others year-on-year so that we are clear and transparent about what our services deliver. For example, the work we carry out to empty homes is more expensive than others and we need a full understanding of how our costs compare.

We are also developing a ‘social value tool’ to cost out how our services give benefit and value. This is very important to demonstrate the benefits of our digital and financial inclusion work.

We realise that we need to share activities and forge partnerships with other housing associations in order to generate further savings and capacity. We are in discussions with asra Housing Group about a potential merger and we are identifying the many benefits and savings this could bring to both organisations.
Since 2000, when Elmbridge transferred its council housing stock to Elmbridge Housing Trust, we have spent over £70 million improving these homes, such as fitting new boilers, kitchens, windows, bathrooms and replacing roofs.

As part of our planned works programmes, residents benefit from on-going improvements to your homes, such as new windows, kitchens and bathrooms. You can also access initiatives such as the handyperson service, property MOTs and our enhanced estate services.
OUR FRIENDLY STAFF
OUR FRIENDLY STAFF
Please tell us what you think

If you have any comments about this report, we’d love to hear from you.

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