

Annual Report for Residents



2020/21

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Introduction

We pride ourselves on being a customer service organisation because our customers are at the heart of what we do.



Guinness is one of England’s oldest and largest housing associations, founded in 1890 with an endowment of £200,000. Today we have 140,000 customers and 64,000 homes across England. Guinness Property, our in-house maintenance service, delivers repairs to 46,500 of our homes.

Our Vision remains for Guinness to:

- Deliver great service** – to be one of the best service providers in the housing and care sectors.
- Provide great homes** – to provide as many high-quality homes as possible, and to play a significant part in tackling the country’s housing crisis.
- Be a great place to work** – to be one of the best employers in the country.
- Be a great business** – to be a strong and efficient business that does things well, and that people can trust and rely on.

In the extraordinary context of the Covid-19 pandemic over the last year, we have adapted to keep colleagues and customers safe, guided by our values and our sense of purpose.

The Social Housing White Paper, published in November 2020, set the tone for the ongoing development of housing policy. We welcome stronger regulation, clear expectations about tenant engagement, scrutiny and complaints resolution, and the Housing Ombudsman’s expanded role.

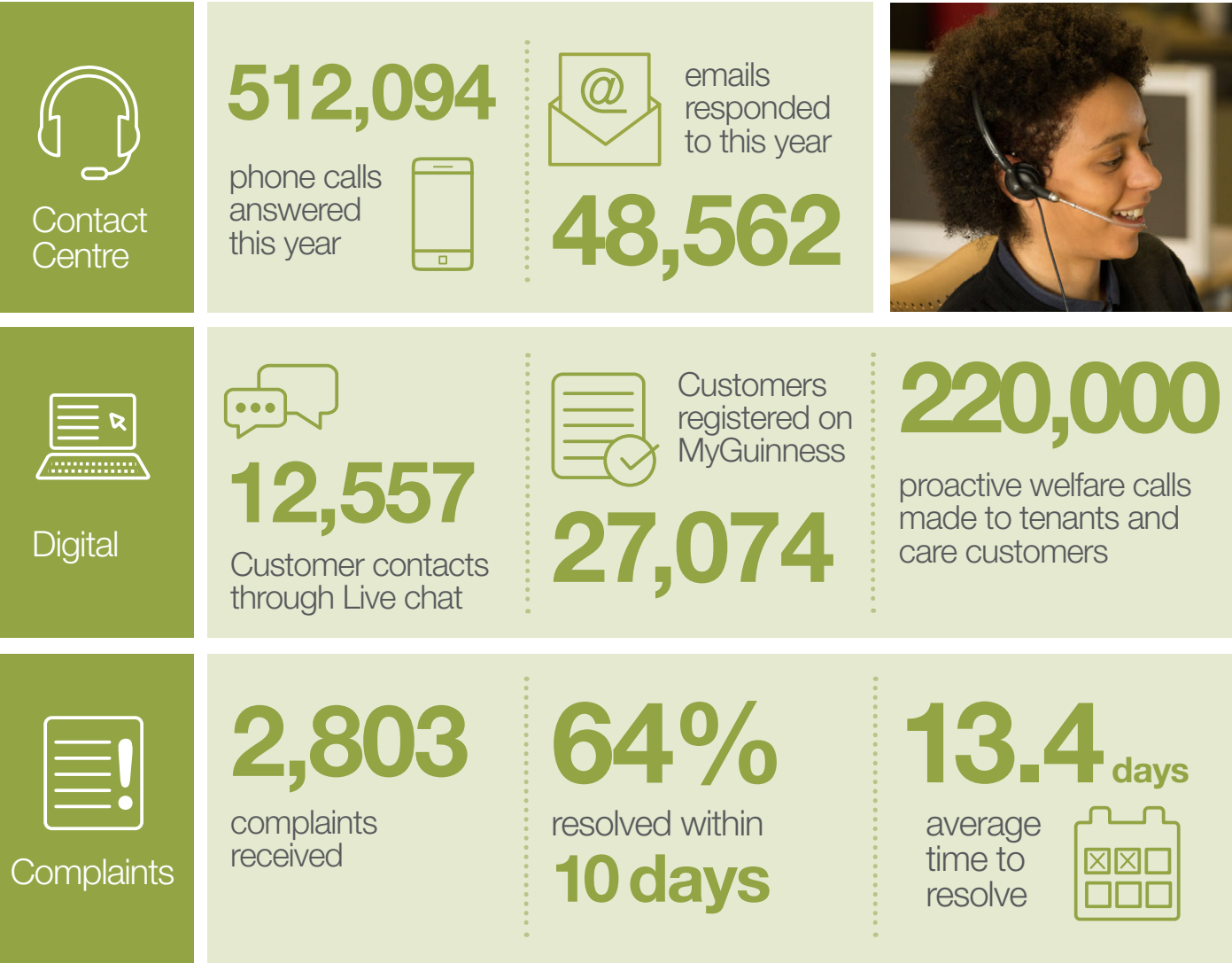
Building safety legislation continues to take shape, and the decarbonisation agenda is coming to the fore. Alongside our own commitment to providing safe, warm and decent homes, this means we will continue investing significantly in our homes over coming years and decades. We will also keep building new homes to help meet housing need.

Our commitment to you includes communicating our performance so you know how we are doing as your landlord. This is our Residents’ Report for 2020/21.

Customer contact

We value and respect our customers and their time. We do what we say we're going to do, and keep our customers informed about what is going on.

We aim to respond quickly when things go wrong and make it easy to contact us. This has been more challenging during the pandemic – our focus has been on keeping our customers, communities and colleagues safe.



Customer focus

We listen to our customers and see things from their point of view. To help us understand how we are performing and what could be improved we conduct regular surveys by phone and text message. We engage with customers to help us shape our services.



Our **Tenancy Enforcement team** can support you if you are experiencing antisocial behaviour in your neighbourhood:



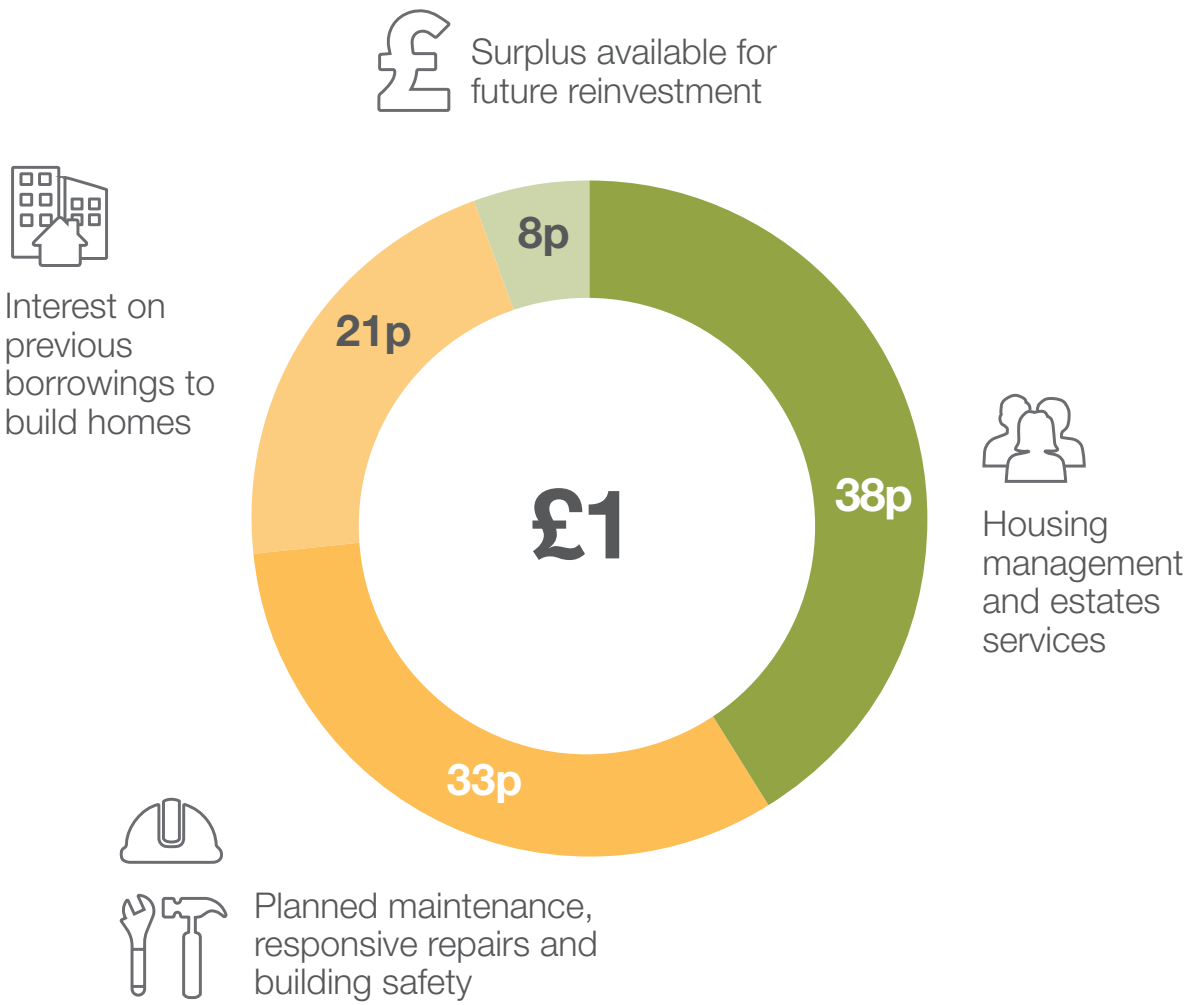
Our **Customer Liaison Officers** are there to support you and help look after our homes and estates.



Finance

We are transparent about how our money is spent, whether it's spent delivering services day to day, or invested in upgrading existing homes or developing new homes for the future.

For every £1 of income we receive, we spend:



£1.8m
Total community investment

£3,981
Cost per social housing unit



Customer engagement

We’re committed to delivering a great service for all our customers and listening to feedback and views helps us to improve our services. Our Customer Experience team is responsible for championing the voice of our residents and ensuring customers are involved in our decision-making.

We run regular customer engagement events to seek your views on our services. In 2020/21 we engaged with over 400 residents who have helped us make improvements and shape how we deliver our services. Using feedback from residents, our Customer Experience team works

with colleagues across Guinness to agree and make changes to improve what we do. These are some of the things that residents have helped us with over the past year.

Rent and service charge letters

Why

Our customers told us that our letters could be clearer, and they did not understand some of the information in them.

What we did

- Invited customers to an online focus group.
- Discussed what could be clearer and what information customers wanted to see in their rent and service charge letters.
- Shared some example letters so our customers could provide feedback on their preferred option.



What's next?

As a result of the customer feedback our letters have been reworded so they are easier to read. We redesigned the layout of letters and updated the description of charges. These letters will be sent to our customers in September 2021.


Customer Welcome Pack

Why

To provide new residents with the information they will need during their tenancy with us, and to help them to settle in to their new home, we designed a new printed welcome pack for our customers.

What we did

- Invited customers to an online focus group.
- Presented a range of sample welcome materials to identify what customers like and dislike.
- Explored three stages of moving into a new home (before living with us, on the day of the move, first few days living with us) to understand what information customers want and when, to make sure we provide the right information at the right time.
- Presented the proposed Welcome Pack to the focus group and asked if there was anything missing. Customers told us they liked the look, feel and layout, and had some suggestions for the content.



What's next?

We have updated the pack using feedback from our customers and colleagues and it will be sent to new customers from July.


Complaints

Why

We wanted to engage our customers in updating our complaints policy to ensure it is clear, accessible and effective.

What we did

- We completed our first annual assessment of compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's new Complaint Handling Code.
- We conducted focus groups to understand customers' experiences of our complaints handling.



What's next?

Our self-assessment was published in December 2020 and informed the areas we need to improve. Key themes from the focus groups have been taken on as part of the policy and procedure review and the survey shaped our new policy. Our website has been updated in line with customer feedback and the feedback confirmed we should continue to offer customers multiple ways to make complaints to us.

Customer engagement

Estate Contract Extension

Why

We wanted to understand how satisfied customers are with the grounds, trees and pest control services provided by our contractors to determine whether to extend the contracts.

What we did

▢ Surveys were sent to our customers asking them about the services.

What's next?

The responses told us what customers think works well under our current contracts and what customers are concerned about. Where customers highlighted any issues, we shared this with contractors so they could develop improvement plans.

Gas Servicing Tender

Why

We are tendering for a new gas servicing contractor and wanted to make sure that the new provider met the needs of customers and Guinness as an organisation.

What we did

▢ Customers participated in the tender process. They fed back on the specification for the tender and then evaluated and scored the tenders that were submitted to Guinness.

What's next?

We included customer comments and scoring in the overall scoring. The procurement team is able to award the contract informed by customers' views.

Ways to get involved

We run consultations to seek your views on key policies and our services.

In 2020/21 we spoke to our customers on subjects ranging from trialling a new digital community tool, providing feedback on our specification for our gas servicing tender process, developing our new welcome communication and the design of our rents and service charge letters.

To get involved, sign up today at www.guinnesspartnership.com/get-involved/ There are a range of activities to get involved in.

Feedback: tell us how we're doing



Online / telephone

Complete a survey

5-10 minutes



Satisfaction survey

5-10 minutes

Influence: help shape the information and services we provide



Online / telephone

Review documents

2-3 hours

Join a focus group

1-3 hours

Join a procurement panel

10-20 hours

Telephone interviews

30-60 mins

Scutinise: our performance and services



Online / face-to-face

Scrutiny panel

participate in 4 reviews per year involving formal meetings and engagement between meetings

circa 30 hours



Together with Tenants

The Together with Tenants Charter was developed by the National Housing Federation (NHF) and with landlords and tenants from around the country. It is a sector wide commitment focused on strengthening the relationship between residents and housing association landlords.

We held focus groups with residents and colleagues at Guinness to develop our Together with Tenants Plan showing how we will deliver the Charter's six commitments:

Relationships – housing associations will treat all tenants and residents with respect in all their interactions. Relationships between tenants, residents and housing associations will be based on openness, honesty and transparency.

Communication – tenants and residents will receive clear, accessible and timely information from their housing association on the issues that matter to them, including important information about their homes and local community, how the organisation is working to address problems, how the organisation is run, and information about performance on key issues.

Voice and influence – views from tenants and residents will be sought and valued and this information will be used to inform

decisions. Every individual tenant and resident will feel listened to by their housing association on the issues that matter to them and can speak without fear.

Accountability – collectively, tenants and residents will work in partnership with their housing association to independently scrutinise and hold their housing association to account for the decisions that affect their homes and services and the quality of the homes and services they provide.

Quality – tenants and residents can expect their homes to be good quality, well maintained, safe and well managed.

When things go wrong – tenants and residents will have simple and accessible routes for raising issues, making complaints, and seeking redress. Tenants and residents will receive timely advice and support when things go wrong.

We share regular updates on our progress with the Tenant Scrutiny Panel.



Looking after our homes

In 2020/21 we spent £118m on repairing and maintaining our homes. This is less than we originally planned, as the pandemic prevented us from carrying out some of our repairs, maintenance and planned works. We have plans in place to catch up with this work.

Maintenance

100%

gas compliance

78%

building maintenance satisfaction

81%

grounds maintenance satisfaction

Repairs

81%

satisfaction with our responsive repairs service

78%

satisfaction with communal repairs

96%

of emergency repairs completed within 24 hours

73%

of repairs completed on first visit

Planned works

3,996

boilers replaced

948

fire doors replaced

402

kitchens replaced

321

bathrooms replaced

Homes let

92%

satisfied with the lettings process to move into a new home

3,133

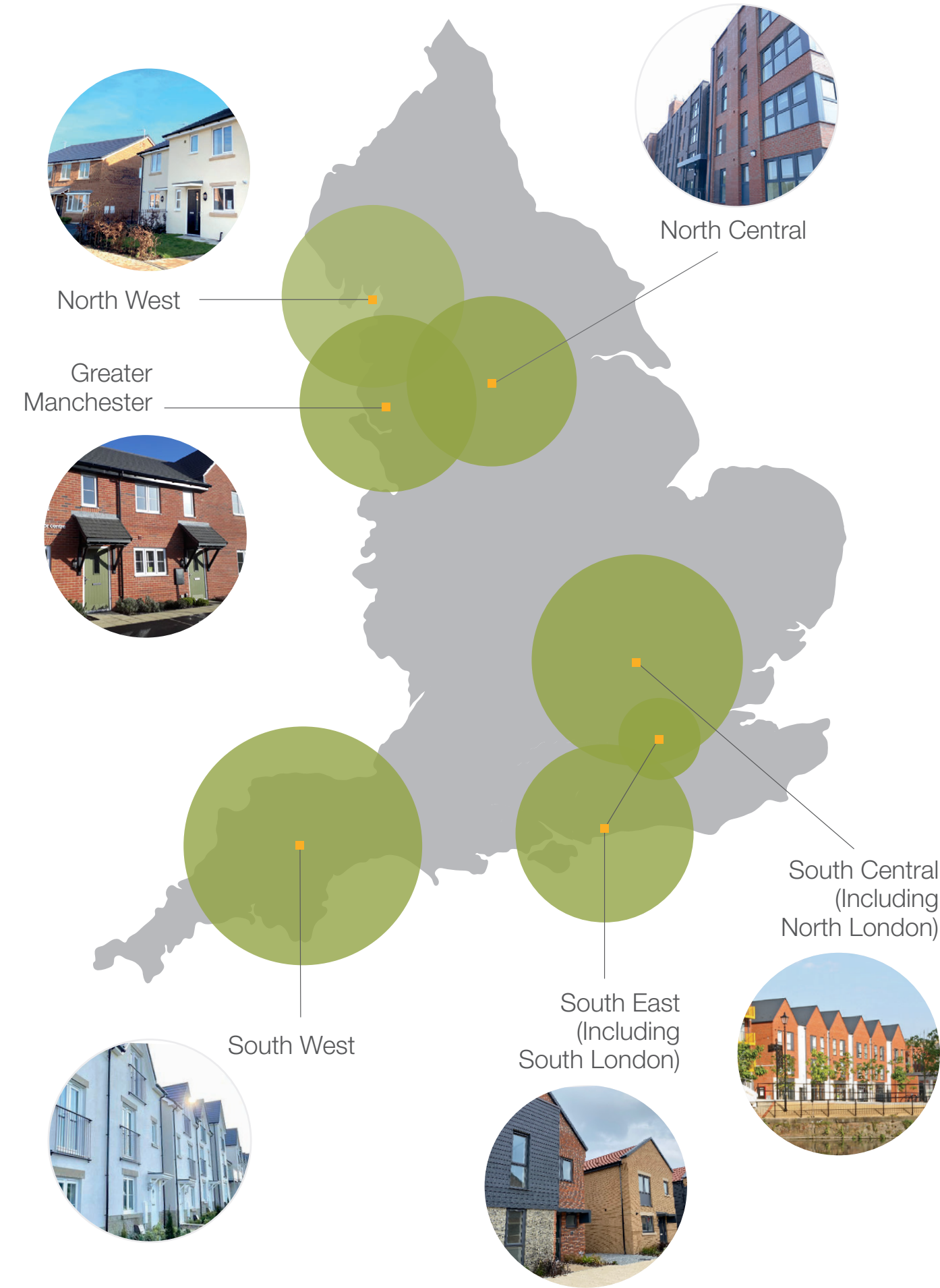
homes let to new tenants

81%

satisfaction with property condition

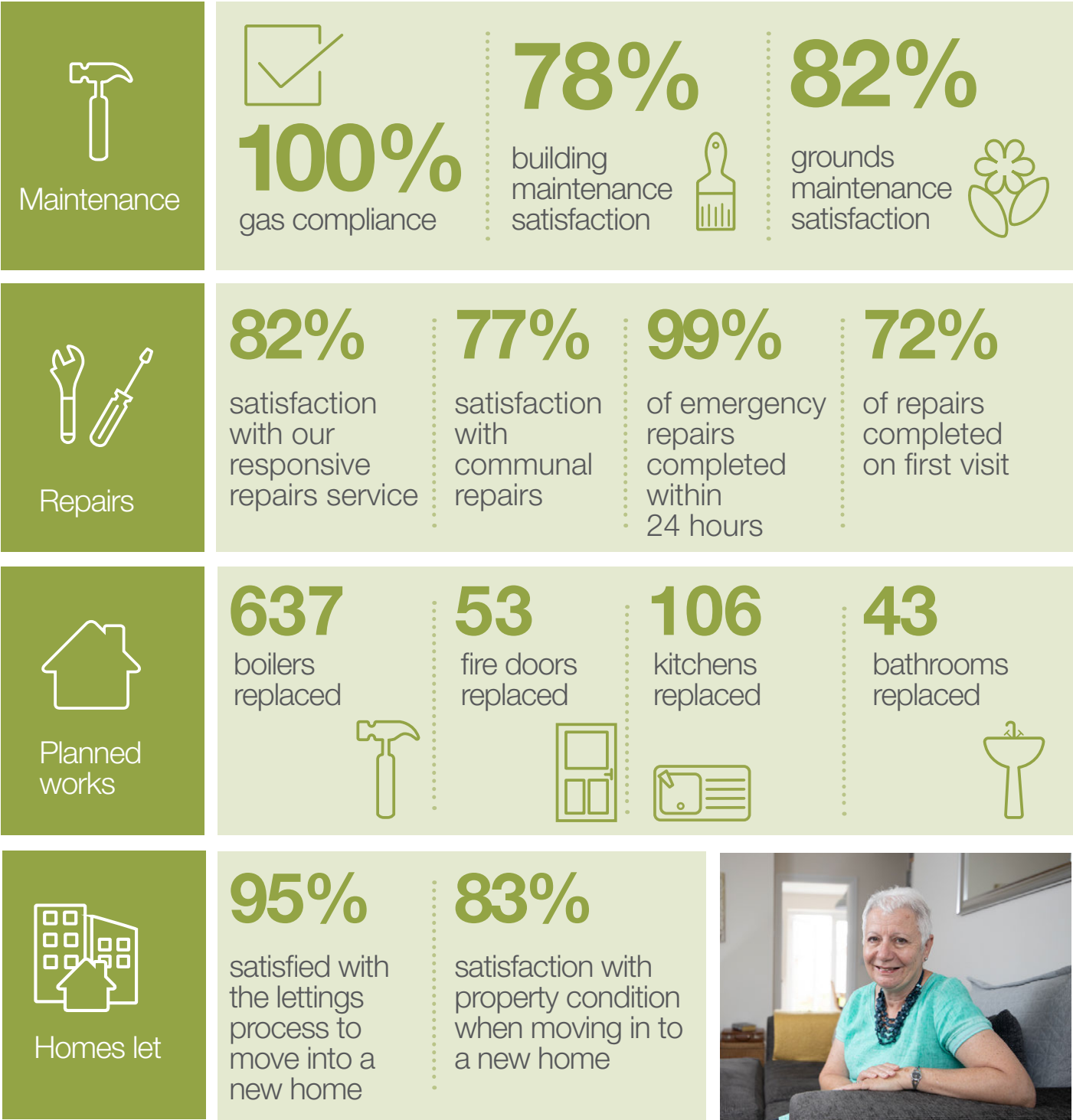


Our regions



Greater Manchester

In 2020/21 we spent £20.3m on repairing and maintaining our homes. Circa 11,000 properties.



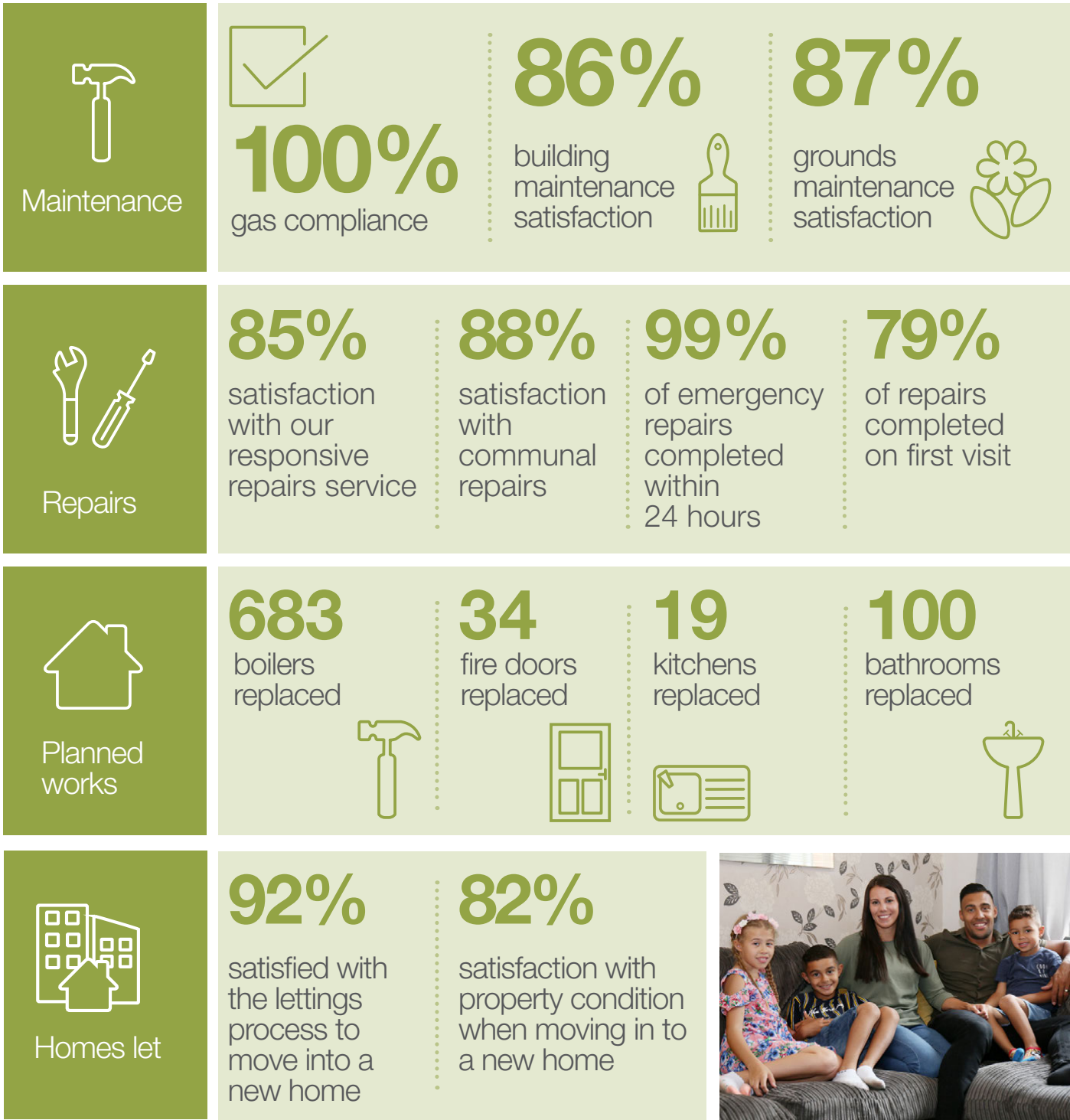
North Central

In 2020/21 we spent £17.1m on repairing and maintaining our homes. Circa 10,500 properties.



North West

In 2020/21 we spent £15.6m on repairing and maintaining our homes. Circa 8,000 properties.



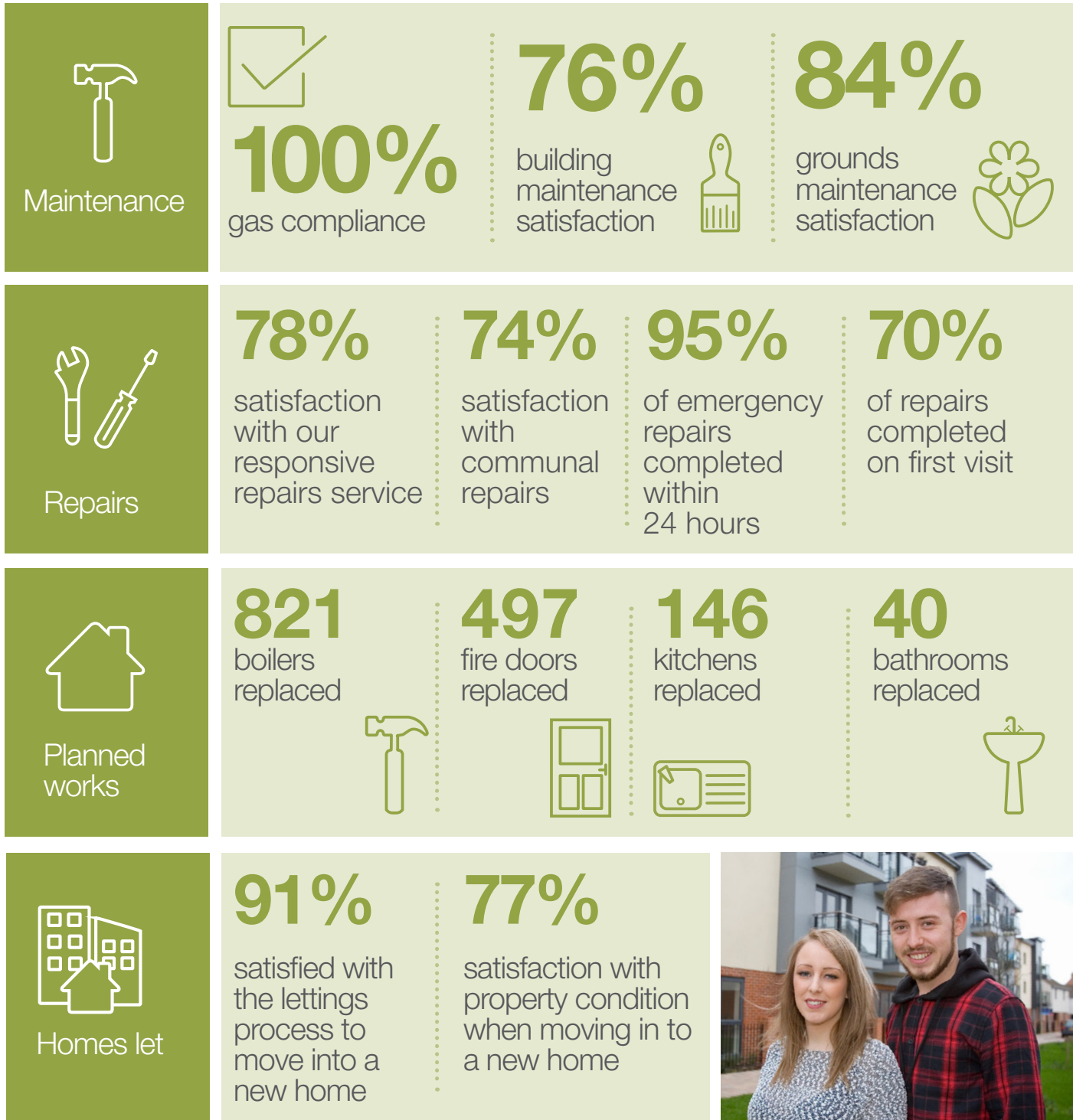
South Central (Including North London)

In 2020/21 we spent £24.1m on repairing and maintaining our homes. Circa 12,500 properties.



South East (Including South London)

In 2020/21 we spent £25.0m on repairing and maintaining our homes. Circa 11,500 properties.



South West

In 2020/21 we spent £15.9m on repairing and maintaining our homes. Circa 10,500 properties.





Supporting our customers

Last year we helped customers claim over £13.5 million additional income due to them in benefits. Our Customer Support team can help with advice on benefits and budgeting. We treat contacts confidentially and deal appropriately with sensitive information. During the pandemic the demand for this service has significantly increased.

Support	Customers	Amount
Housing related income	7,266	£8,164,000
Personal income	1,238	£4,563,000
Council Tax Support	1,102	£578,000
Food provision	977	£11,000
External grants	215	£70,000
Fuel provision	484	£19,000
Hardship awards	996	£148,000

Some of what we have done

- Invested £200,000 into a **Hardship Fund** which has supported 996 residents with things like food, gas and electricity, white goods and furniture.
- Supported the **reduction and prevention of domestic abuse** through: accreditation from the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance, publishing a toolkit for frontline workers and donating £50,000 to six domestic abuse partners.
- Partnered with PopUp Business School to **provide online training sessions** nationally to 217 entrepreneurs interested in setting up their own business. Twenty percent of participants were trading by the end of the programme.
- Partnered with Tutors United to provide **online maths and English tutoring** for 172 children to help narrow the attainment gap.
- In partnership with LGBT Foundation, we have supported the development of the **'Bring Dementia Out'** webinar programme which over 500 people attended.
- Supported Talk Listen Change to provide **mental resilience support** and counselling to 33 residents.
- Trained over 500 staff to **spot scams and support affected residents** as part of our Friends Against Scams campaign.

great service
great homes
a great place to work
and a great business

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE™
We invest in people Gold

30 Brock Street, London NW1 3FG
www.guinnesspartnership.com

The Guinness Partnership Ltd is a charitable
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September 2021