



Customer
Annual Report
2017-18

A photograph of two young girls smiling and posing on a colorful playground structure. The girl on the left has long dark hair in braids and is wearing a white shirt with pink and blue patterns. The girl on the right has long blonde hair and is wearing a purple and white striped shirt. The background is a bright, colorful playground with blue and yellow bars. A blue geometric overlay is present in the bottom left and bottom center of the image.

Our Vision

For everyone to have the
opportunity to have a place
that they can call home.

Contents

	Page
Introduction	4
Estate services	5
Customer services	6
Customer feedback	7
Complaints	8
Collecting income	9
Maintaining homes	10
Your safety	11
New homes	12
Lettings	13
Looking forward	14



Introduction



Welcome to our 2017/18 Customer Annual Report, which shows how we've been doing over the past 12 months, and highlights changes we've made in response to your feedback.

We work hard to give all of our 60,000+ customers a great service and most of the time we get it right. When we don't do so well though, we need to understand what's gone wrong and what we can do to improve. That's why your feedback is so important and I'd like to thank everyone who's left a comment, sent an email, written a letter or responded to a survey – your views really do matter.

This year we launched 'Reward', our customer incentive scheme, which links the services we offer to the way customers manage their tenancies. To find out more about Reward, including the benefits given to Gold customers, visit our website.

We know that the way we maintain and repair your home is one of the most important aspects of our service. We invested over £38m last year in repairs and improvements, and have begun trialling a new way of working with our contractors to make the repairs process quicker and more efficient.

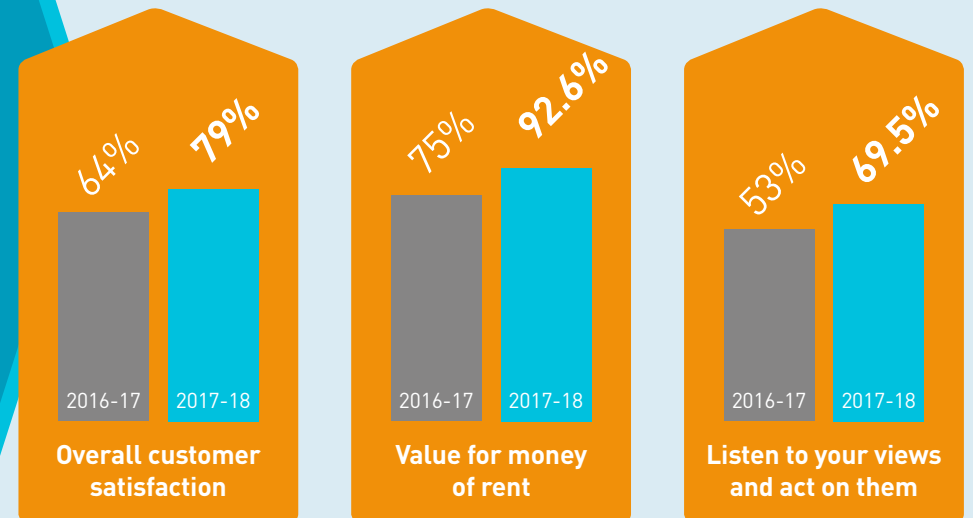
Last year, we also began a £9m investment in our retirement living schemes. So far, we have improved 14 schemes across England, and we're aiming to complete another six over the coming year (2018-19).

I'm really proud that Stonewater is making a real difference to so many people. Thanks for taking the time to read this report – I hope you find it interesting. We remain committed to ensuring your experience with us is a happy one.

Sue Shirt
Executive Director for Housing

Customer satisfaction in numbers

We measure customer satisfaction through regular independent surveys that our customers complete, and three key indicators below have shown improvement last year:



	2016-17	2017-18
Overall	64%	79%
Responsive repairs	89%	89%
*ASB	-	45%
*Stonewater Homes	-	54%
*Planned repairs	-	80%
How safe do you feel in the neighbourhood you live in?	81%	83.3%

*We only began reporting customer satisfaction in these areas in 2017.

Estate services

Cleaning and gardening contracts have been in place for nearly two years, and we are phasing the re-tendering over three years. The first of the contracts to be re-tendered will be in the South region. We have taken feedback from customers on the specification for the next contracts, which are due to go live in the South in April 2019.

In response to customer feedback, we have:

- > Improved our data, so contractors can easily resolve scheme boundary queries
- > Asked contractors to provide us with their schedule of visits for each scheme
- > Shared contract details with customers so that they can provide feedback through the Customer hubb and an estates services Yammer online group
- > Increased the frequency of services at some schemes (such as communal window cleaning)
- > Retendered contracts regionally to ensure that new contracts are consistent
- > Encouraged medium-sized contractors operating across specific regions to tender for contracts
- > Retendered our leasehold retirement living schemes on an individual basis due to their diverse requirements
- > Developed a mobile, digital, estate inspection application for staff to use when out on site.

Estate champions

We have successfully piloted customer 'estate champions', who share an hour or so of their time per week to assess the condition of communal areas near their homes. The champions share any issues with the local Tenancy Service Officer to resolve, and we will be rolling this out across Stonewater this year.



“ The estate champions have become my eyes and ears for times when I can't be at the scheme – they've helped improve the relationship with local communities too. ”

Hannah Saltonstall
Housing Area Manager

Customer services

Over the last year, 84% of our customers have said that they are satisfied with the way we dealt with their enquiry. This positive feedback was maintained even in the face of extreme winter weather conditions, such as the 'Beast from the East' and 'Storm Emma'. Good preparation and management throughout these events ensured we had the resources available to manage unprecedented call volumes and service demand.

How customers contacted us:

Phone	338,000
Email	32,802
Social media	1,483
Letter	1,022
Total	373,307



We've also been upgrading and improving our customer service.

During this last year we've:

- > Reviewed processes and improved knowledge of our CCT colleagues so they can answer more of your queries at first point of contact
- > Replaced our telephone system without any impact on service to our customers.



What we're going to do next:

- > Examine the '**customer journey**' and see how we can continue to improve your experience
- > Review how we are interacting with our customers via social media



We have been procuring our new contractors for the South East and part of their service delivery will be to offer an appointment at the first point of contact. This model will be rolled out to the rest of the country within the next five years. We also are aware that residents don't always know when contractors are due to return to fit parts, and in our new approach, contractors will book appointments for follow-up works before their operative leaves the home.



Customer feedback

We received over **11,000** customer survey responses this year, and the results show that our **services** are **getting better**. We also focused on getting more customers involved digitally, and more than **700** customers have now signed up to our **Customer hubb** to share **feedback** and **comment** on the latest news.



The Customer hubb (help us be better)

The hubb enables customers to discuss issues that matter to them, including estate services and antisocial behaviour. Feedback has already influenced how we write our rent statements and the way we advertise our homes.



Over **700** members



Over **200** posts created, generating over **1,000** replies



300 users log in every month

Customer Scrutiny Panel

The **Scrutiny Panel**, made up of **11 customers**, completed **four reviews** and **generated** around **90 recommendations** to improve the way we work in the future, including:

- Developing consistent policies and procedures
- Improving communication to customers
- Involving customers in changes to services

The panel uses digital platforms such as the Customer hubb to gather feedback. The top three issues hubb users felt we should focus on in 2019 were:

- Customer communication
- Estate services
- Customer service standards



Your views count

If you would like to know more about how you can get involved and help shape the services you receive, please contact us on **01202 319119** or email customer.engagement@stonewater.org

Complaints

Last year, we saw a significant reduction in customer complaints. We received **661** complaints – approximately **0.1%** of all the contacts we receive – which was **156** fewer than the previous year.



817
complaints in 2017



661
complaints in 2018

We are continuously improving our complaints process in response to customer feedback. Over the next year we will:

- > Provide colleagues with **additional customer service and complaint handling training** so they can resolve complaints at first contact.
- > Enable **job shadowing opportunities** to improve colleagues' understanding of how different departments work across the business, allowing us to prepare for complex complaints.
- > Enhance **staff training** to improve the quality and detail of our responses to your concerns.



** We are currently improving our repairs monitoring systems, which includes making sure that your repair is completed as quickly as possible.

Collecting income

Most of our money comes from rent, so we work with all our customers to enable them to keep up with their payments.

This year, we're working on a new 'customer-centred' model which focuses on working more closely with those who find it difficult to pay their rent. We will analyse accounts and work with customers to help find options that support their needs. We are working pro-actively to identify and engage with those customers who are moving on to Universal Credit (UC), to ensure they are supported to manage their finances.



How do we know this is the right thing to do?

Last year we reviewed our income collection. As a result, we are now helping new customers by:

Creating direct debits when they move into one of our homes.

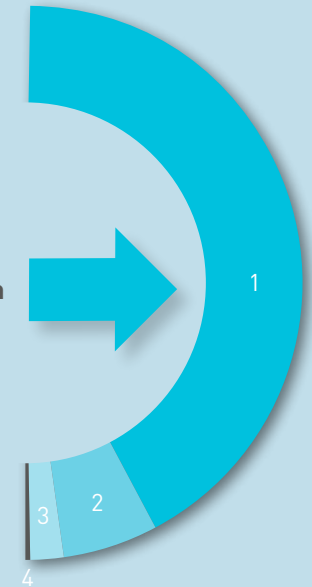
Finding support through debt advice services.

Sending text reminders to support customers with their financial planning.

Where our money comes from

- 1 Rental income **£140m**
- 2 Service charge income **£18m**
- 3 Government grants **£7m**
- 4 Other income **£1m**

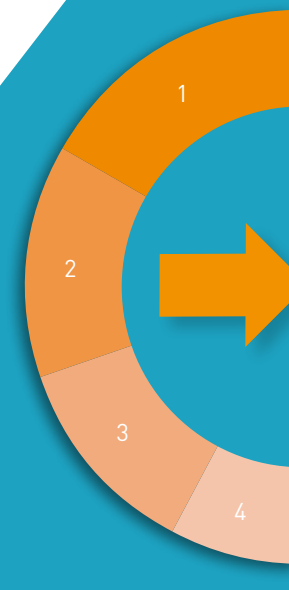
Total £166m



Where our money goes

- 1 Repairs and maintenance to homes **£38m**
- 2 Management costs (including staff salaries) **£31m**
- 3 Depreciation of properties **£28m**
- 4 Service charge costs including rechargeable repairs **£17m**
- 5 Other costs (including bad debt) **£1m**

Total £115m



Maintaining homes

Maintaining and improving homes is an important part of our relationship with customers. Last year, our contractors completed over **65,000 repairs** costing over **£13.2m**. This year, we have introduced new ways of working that allows our contractors to manage the cost of repairing homes more quickly and efficiently.

Our review of our repairs process highlighted a number of improvements we'll be focusing on this year, including:

- > Producing a **new repairs and maintenance policy** by January 2019.
- > Giving a **regular performance update** to the **Scrutiny Panel** from September 2018.

Total cyclical maintenance spend



Gas safety
£3.5m



Electrics
£600k



Painting and decorating
£2.7m

Improving homes

In 2017-18 we made significant investment in improving our customers' homes, including:



General home improvements
£2.8m

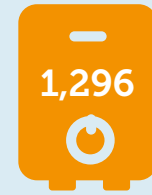


Major repairs
£1.5m



Fire safety improvements
£100,000

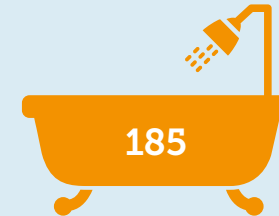
Number of major home replacements



Boilers and heating systems



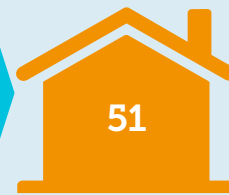
Kitchens



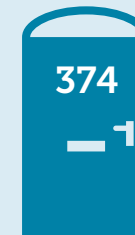
Bathrooms



Electric upgrades



Roof covers



Windows and doors



Structural repairs

Over the coming year, we will improve our homes by:



Installing
583
bathrooms



Installing
561
kitchens



Installing
819
boilers



Installing
60
heating systems



Installing
830
windows and doors



Rewiring
140
homes

Your safety

Health and safety is our top priority. We continually invest in our staff, systems and other key improvement projects to ensure our customers and our properties are safe and secure.

In the last 12 months, we have:



Set up a **new risk assessment team** of eight staff who ensure our property risk assessments are compliant.



Serviced all of our **gas boilers** to ensure **100% gas safety compliance**, at a cost of **£1.5m**.



Have reviewed, updated and completed all **1,421 fire risks assessments**, ensuring **100% compliance**.



Invested in **electronic systems and software** to manage key areas of compliance, such as **asbestos management, lift servicing** and **water treatment**.

**As of 31 March 2018
we have completed:**

**100%
gas safety
certificates**
(18,835 in total)



**100%
fire risk
assessments**
(1,421 in total)

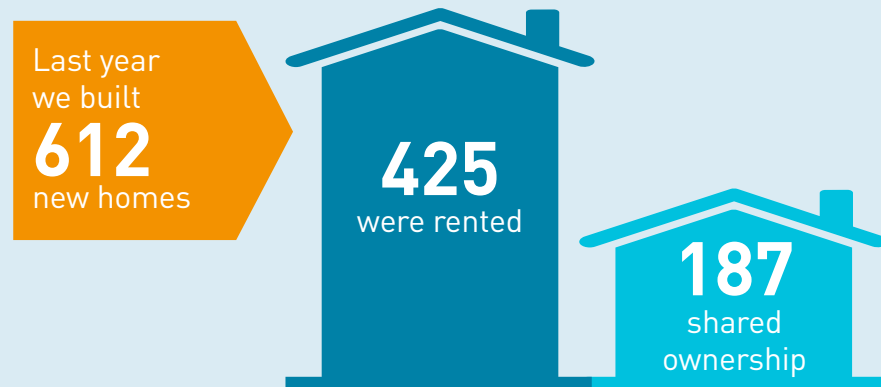


Our **ongoing electrical inspection and testing programme** is carried out by qualified electrical contractors to ensure supplies are safe and fully protected. These tests are carried out every **five years for flats and communal areas** and every **10 years for homes**.

We invest **22.5 million** pounds every year in our homes through planned programmes of work. This includes **upgrading fire alarm systems**, improving **fire protection**, undertaking **electrical rewiring** in our older stock and installing **energy-efficient emergency lighting** in communal areas.

New homes

In addition to **investing** in our **existing homes**, we have an **ambitious plan** to expand our stock by building **new, attractive, high-quality homes**. Last year we built **612** new homes, exceeding our planned target of **600**. Of these, **425** were rented and **187** were shared ownership properties.



Earlier this year we completed our **2,000th** home since our formation in 2015. The home is located in Evercreech, near Shepton Mallet, Somerset, and to celebrate, we invited customers, councillors and children from the nearby school for an open day, which included the planting of a pear tree and the burying of a time capsule. We have carried on building throughout the year and have now built over 2400 homes.

During 2018, many of the developments we built featured **public art** or **realm works** to help give our communities a **sense of place**. Next year, we'll aim to incorporate more enhancements to our new developments.

2400 HOMES

 2400
 NEW HOMES
 SINCE 2015



Local schoolchildren help with the installation of a time capsule to mark the completion of Stonewater's 2,000th new home.

Lettings

We've worked to continually improve our service by:

- > Creating a dedicated new homes team focusing on letting new build properties within **48 hours**.
- > Designing **'show flats'** in our retirement living schemes, providing customers with a better view of what our homes look like.



We held a **'digital lab'** session with over **40 customers**, which identified that we needed to improve the way we advertise our homes. We are now working with a number of websites, such as **Home Hunt**, to improve our advertisements.



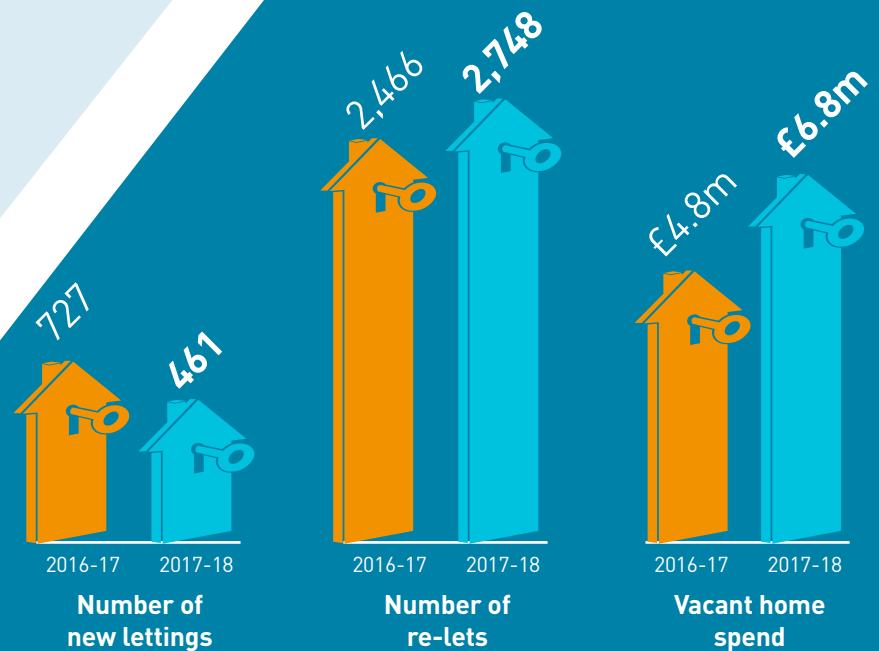
In the coming year, we plan to:



Improve the **speed** in which we **rent** our existing homes.



Work more **closely** with **local authorities** to make **applying** for a home **easier**.



Looking forward

The main focus for us over the next few years is digital transformation of our services. This will allow our customers to access our services at home or on the move and at a time that suits, making the whole experience easier and more convenient.

We're working hard to make paying rent, reporting a repair, or giving feedback much easier for customers. The first step is to **relaunch MyHome Online** by **spring 2019**, with a fresh look and improved usability.

By 2020, we plan to enable you to carry out a range of activities online, including:

- > Making repair appointments.
- > Making payments.
- > Completing applications for homes.



Our customers are at the heart of these new services, so your feedback will be key to ensuring we design a great solution that meets your needs.

We're currently planning how we involve, communicate with and support customers throughout this process, so look out for more information soon.



How to get involved

There are number of ways customers can get involved and keep up-to-date with our latest news and services:

- > Follow us on Twitter [@stonewateruk](#)
- > Follow us on Facebook by searching for **Stonewater UK**
- > To join the **Customer hubb**, or to find out more about how you can get involved, visit [stonewater.org/getinvolved](#) call **01202 319119** or email customer.engagement@stonewater.org.



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