

**Customer  
Annual  
Review 2019**

**Our journey this year**





# Customer Annual Review 2019

## Our journey this year



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# Hello and Welcome

In April 2019, we created a new Customer Experience Team. While we're proud of the service we deliver to our **70,000+** customers, we know we don't always get it right.



*Sue Shirt*

Executive Director -  
Customer Experience

Wife, proud mum of two  
kids and Rufus the dog

I personally read a lot of the cases where we get things wrong and I feel upset – even angry – when a customer has been treated in a way I wouldn't want to be treated myself. It's really important we learn when we're not so great and get better. The new team will help us do that, putting you - our customer - right at the very heart of our business.

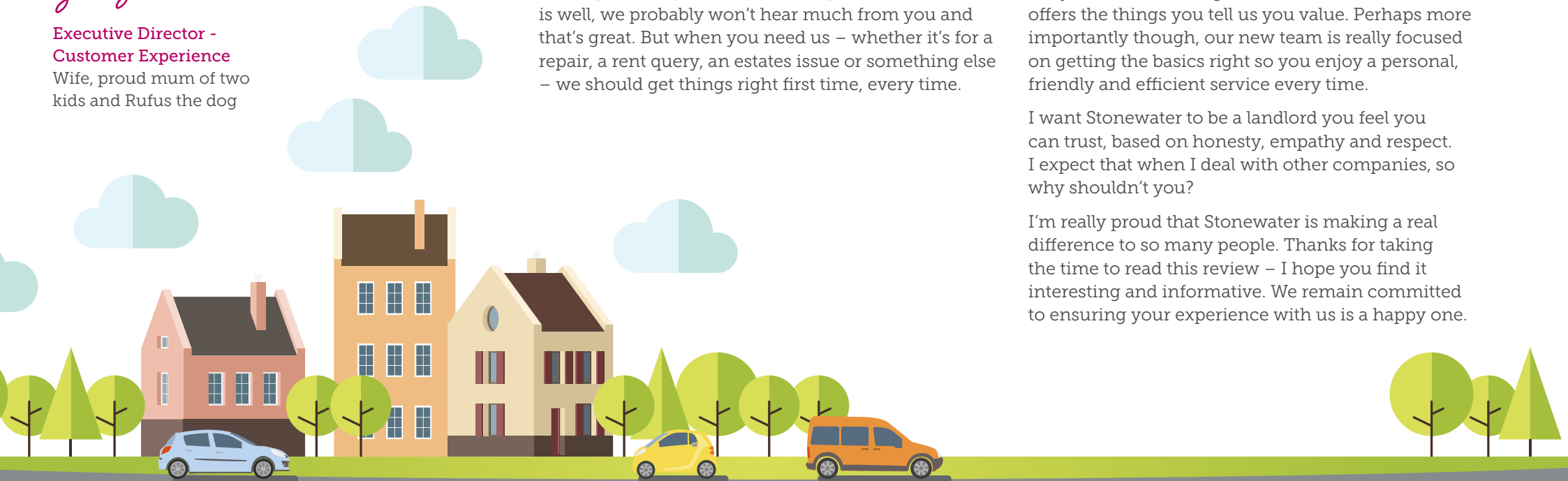
I believe the homes we provide are so much more than just bricks and mortar. They're central to supporting families and individuals to live stable, happy lives. A secure, comfortable and affordable home gives people the opportunity to thrive. When all is well, we probably won't hear much from you and that's great. But when you need us – whether it's for a repair, a rent query, an estates issue or something else – we should get things right first time, every time.

So in presenting this annual review I want to make you my personal promise – to work with you to learn from what we already do well and where we can improve. We'll be listening through the Customer hubb, other feedback channels, the newly launched MyHome, and our fabulous Scrutiny Panel to ensure that your voice is heard.

We know you want services you can access at times that suit you, wherever suits you, and we're already working hard to develop these. This includes adding more functionality to MyHome as we move through the year and reviewing Reward to make sure it offers the things you tell us you value. Perhaps more importantly though, our new team is really focused on getting the basics right so you enjoy a personal, friendly and efficient service every time.

I want Stonewater to be a landlord you feel you can trust, based on honesty, empathy and respect. I expect that when I deal with other companies, so why shouldn't you?

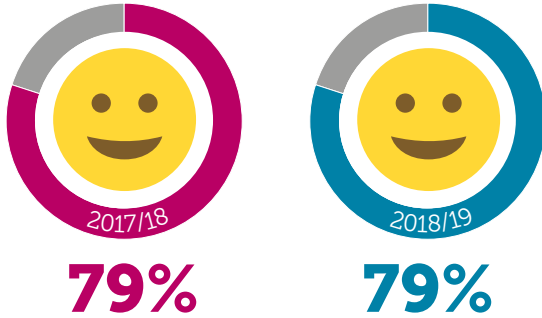
I'm really proud that Stonewater is making a real difference to so many people. Thanks for taking the time to read this review – I hope you find it interesting and informative. We remain committed to ensuring your experience with us is a happy one.



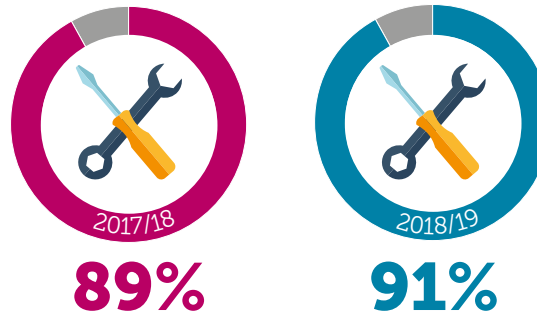
# How are we doing?

We ask for your feedback via a monthly survey. Here's what you told us for 2018-19 and how it compares to the previous year.

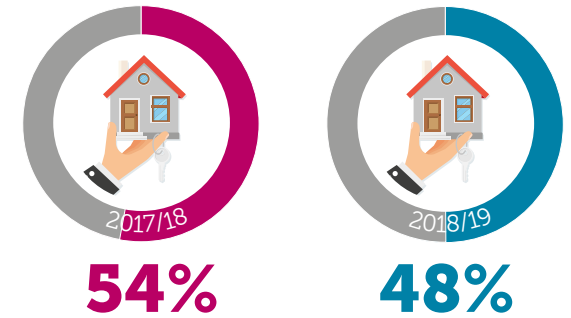
Customer satisfaction overall



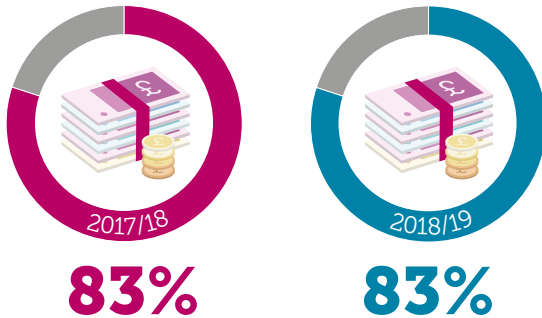
Responsive Repairs



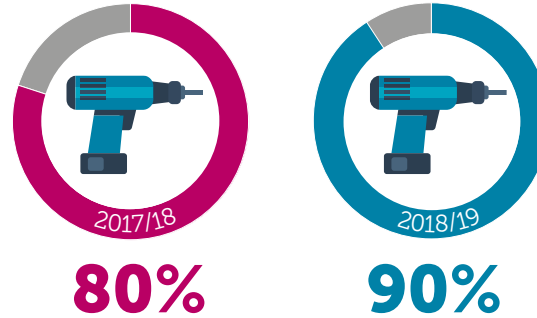
Stonewater Homes



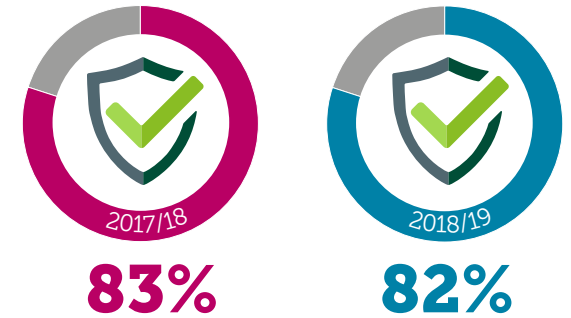
Value for Money



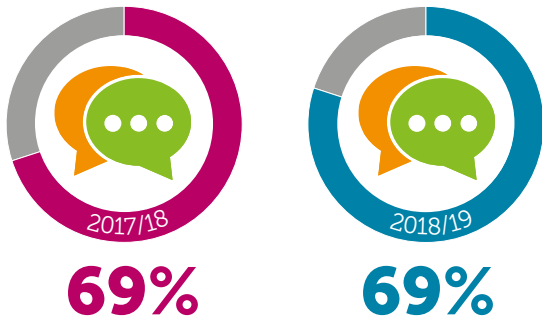
Planned repairs



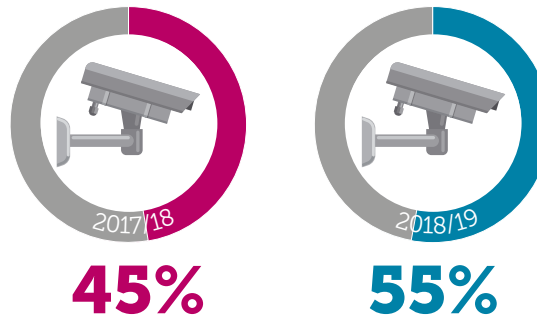
How safe do you feel in your neighbourhood



Listening to your views



Dealing with anti-social behaviour (ASB)



% of customers who are 'fairly' or 'very' satisfied

# What's new?

## MyHome

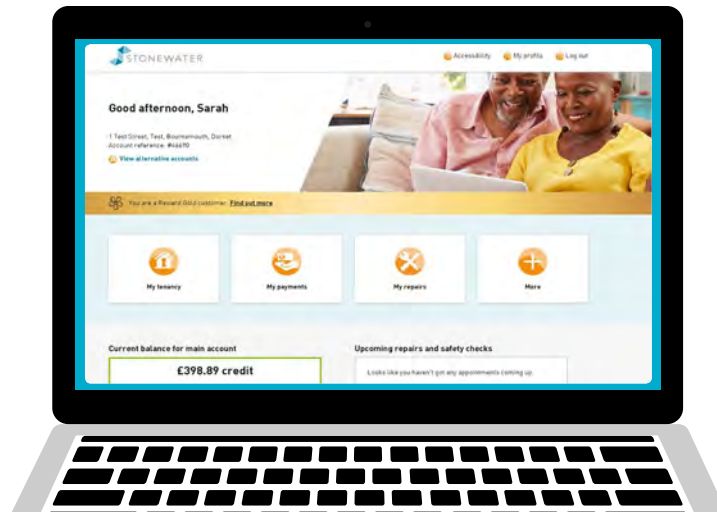
Making managing your account a doddle!



MyHome, the new way to manage your Stonewater account, has been created to make viewing your account details, making payments, updating your profile and much more as easy as possible...wherever and whenever it's most convenient for you.

We've designed MyHome with customers, for customers to make sure we bring you an improved, digital way to reach the Stonewater services you need. Customer hubb members played a key role in this, so a big thank you to everyone who gave us feedback on the designs or took part in testing.

MyHome has now gone live and registering for an account couldn't be easier. Simply [click here](#) to set up your account.



### Customer feedback – Jason



*"Just want to say how brilliant the new MyHome account online is.*

*"It's so easy to use and that's coming from someone finds switching on the computer a task I love that everything is on your home page and easy to find your rent account. Plus report a repair and more!*

*"Thank you to the digital team."*

## Rewarding you

Last year, we launched Reward – our new scheme aimed at recognising customers who manage their tenancies well.

This offers additional rewards for customers who do things like pay their rent on time and take care of their home.

The agreement between Stonewater and you is your tenancy agreement. By doing things like paying your rent on time, looking after your home and engaging positively in your community, you support us to deliver our services quicker and with better value for money. This means we can build more new homes and invest in improving our existing services.



### How many customers are in each category?



In the coming months, we will be further enhancing Reward and working with our customers to understand how this can add even more value to the lives of you and your families. Keep an eye out for further updates in the near future!

Currently, Reward offers three levels of service: Gold, Silver and Bronze, with each Reward banding supporting customers to access differing levels of rewards.

Recently Chris, a lucky Gold customer, received £1,000 in our prize draw to spend on whatever he liked. When asked whether this was perhaps for a holiday or a treat, we were really pleased to hear his personal story.

### Chris – winner for June 2019



Chris, a keen football fan, hasn't seen much of his son, who lives in Liverpool, because of the distance. Now he is over the moon that he can afford a car to go and visit him and together, watch their favourite team play. The windfall will also help Chris reignite his passion for fishing.

*"I moved here 15 years ago and I love it! I've never won anything, apart from the odd fishing contest but this is amazing! I can now go and visit my son, start up my favourite hobby and enjoy a well-earned holiday!"*



# Listening to you

## Customer satisfaction

We received over 12,500 customer satisfaction survey responses this year, plus an additional 6,000 text message survey responses, meaning we've listened to more of what you had to say than ever before.

The great news is the results show that our services are getting better. We have also focused on getting more customers involved digitally: nearly 1,000 customers have now signed up to our Customer hubb to share feedback and comment on the latest news, plus an extra 201 people have joined our Facebook group.

During 2019/20, we will be running a programme of digital confidence and skills training courses with We Are Digital, our partner on this project, so look out for more information about this coming soon!

Based on feedback received this year, we adopted a resolution approach whereby customers who have said they are dissatisfied with our services will now be called back so that we can apologise for any failure and to allow us to understand exactly what went wrong.

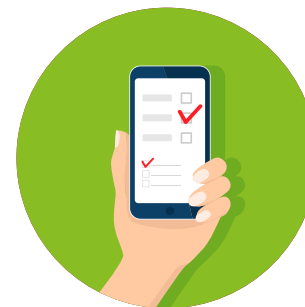
We have launched our Customer Offer, which sets out clear expectations of the service levels you can expect. We are also working on a set of service standards to show you how we are doing and allow you to hold us to account.

Did you know we have a number of online panels about specific topics including Estate Services, Communication and Friends of Scrutiny? As these panels are online, they're an easy way to get involved with what matters to you. To find out more, [click here](#).



**12,500**

customer satisfaction survey responses this year



**6,000**

text message survey responses



**1,000**

nearly 1,000 customers have now signed up to our Customer hubb



**201**

people have joined our Facebook group



## Stonewater census

We want to better understand your needs and work towards creating a more accessible service that everyone can use.



We reached out to all customers this year to help us do this by sending out our Stonewater census, asking for information about you and family, and what support you may need.

A fantastic 9,720 households responded and having this information is vital to help us improve, as it tells us where to direct our resources and shows us if people are making the most of our services.

This type of information will help us get our services right and reduce duplication. We will also be able to ensure that we always consider those who have different needs and who may be more vulnerable.



**9,720**

households responded  
to the census

### Miss Rickards' story

Last year, we heard from Miss Rickards, a customer who is registered as severely sight impaired, who was keen to encourage other customers to fill in the census.

When the survey ended, we informed Miss Rickards that over 9,700 customers completed it. She said:

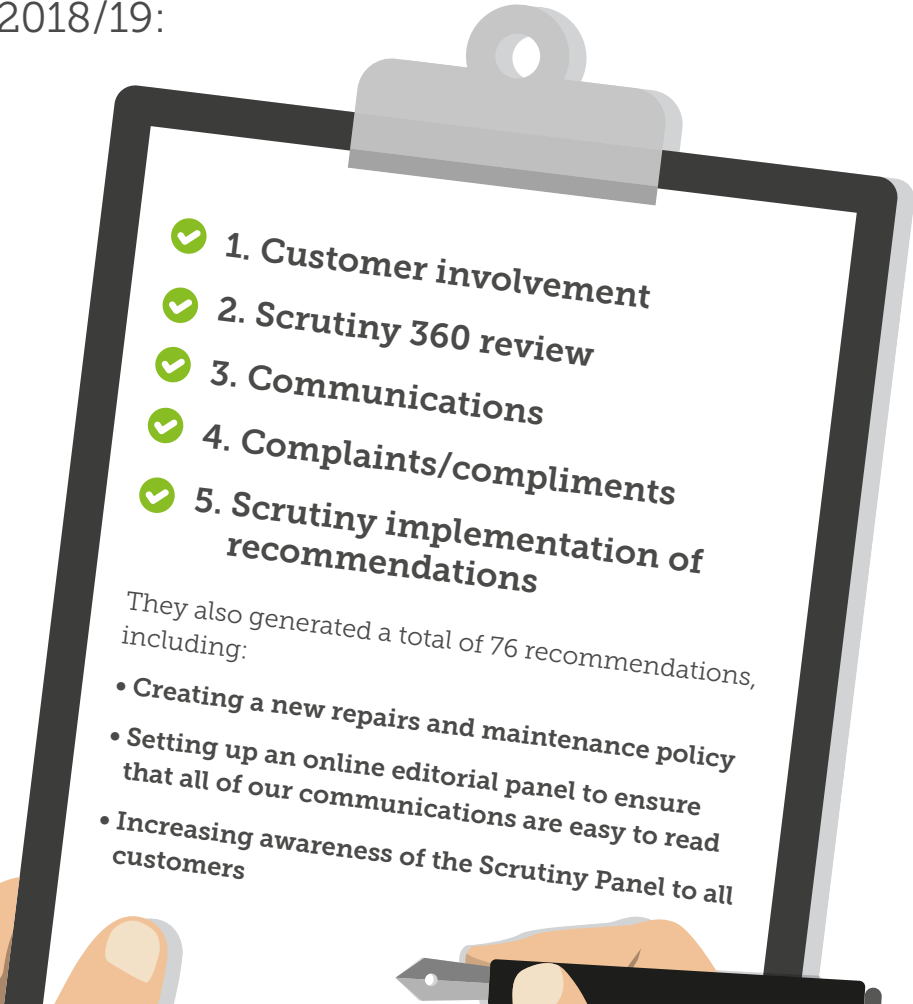
*"I feel really happy that so many filled in the survey. So many people have had the opportunity to be heard and now that gives Stonewater the opportunity to improve services for the future.*

*"I'm really grateful that so many took the time to help move things in the right direction – it's amazing such a large number of you have responded."*

**Don't worry if you didn't return your Stonewater census, you can still update your details on [MyHome](#).**

## Scrutiny

The Scrutiny Panel is made up of nine customers from across the country. They completed five reviews during 2018/19:

- 
- ✓ 1. Customer involvement
  - ✓ 2. Scrutiny 360 review
  - ✓ 3. Communications
  - ✓ 4. Complaints/compliments
  - ✓ 5. Scrutiny implementation of recommendations

They also generated a total of 76 recommendations, including:

- Creating a new repairs and maintenance policy
- Setting up an online editorial panel to ensure that all of our communications are easy to read
- Increasing awareness of the Scrutiny Panel to all customers



*"By being a Scrutiny member, I get no end of knowledge which is a gift! The team are fantastic and I always feel welcome. I encourage anyone to get involved as the insight is priceless.*

*"It's lovely to give back as well. If we can make one recommendation that makes a difference to any tenant out there then it's a positive thing."*

**Loretta**



*"Being part of Scrutiny really shows how we can truly work together to make our services better for all of our customers.*

*"It's a great opportunity to learn new skills, meet new friends and really make a difference."*

**Michelle, Customer Involvement and Scrutiny Manager**

## When you contact us

Last year, we told you we going to examine the customer journey to see what we can do to improve your experience when you contact us.



**94%**

of customers said they were satisfied with the way we dealt with their enquiry



**£2,000**

We have invested £2,000 in new mobile equipment for our Customer Contact Team (CCT)

We highlighted the need for better training for our teams, as well as a quicker resolution to issues you contact us about.

We have been working hard over the last year to get things right first time and we're pleased to say that 94% of customers said they were satisfied with the way we dealt with their enquiry. This is a great improvement on previous years.

During the bad weather of last year, we recognised the importance of enabling our colleagues to have the ability to work from home. We have invested £2,000 in new mobile equipment for our Customer Contact Team (CCT) colleagues to work from home in case they were snowed in, meaning we could still answer your enquiries quickly.

*"Thank you to all of the CCT staff for being polite, helpful and efficient whilst dealing with numerous problems that I've had in the past few years."*

**Miss Finn**

*"Thanks to Ellie, things moved forward - she successfully organised call-backs and gave great customer service."*

**Denisa**

*"Whenever I call in to the CCT everyone is very friendly and lovely. I feel proud to live in a Stonewater property."*

**Miss Bright**

**Did you know? Last year:**

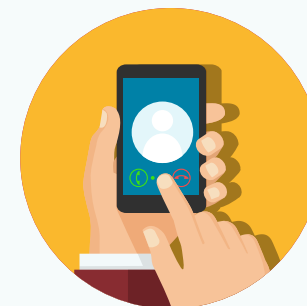


**100,000**

We logged over 100,000 new repairs! Logging a repair in your MyHome account is quick and easy. To find out more about MyHome and how to register, [click here](#).

**360,000**

Over 360,000 calls were made to pay rent. Setting up a Direct Debit is quicker and easier – you can also do this using your MyHome account or by calling 01202 319 119.



## When things go wrong

Last year, we saw a significant reduction in customer complaints. We received 574 complaints – approximately 0.1% of all the contacts we receive – which was 87 fewer than the previous year.

### The top three complaints were:

- 1 Outstanding repairs – **43%**. We're working with new contractors and new systems that will make booking repairs simpler and more efficient.
- 2 Communication – **19%**
- 3 Quality of repairs – **9%**

### What you told us

*"The team were very good. They were spot on. They were sympathetic. They tried to get the job done quickly. When the job was done, I was impressed. They have done everything I asked for."*

**Ms G from Somerset**

*"They cared. They were chasing as much as I was. They were compassionate."*

**Miss M from Reading**

*"Danielle handled my complaint, she kept me informed along the way and she was really good."*

**Miss C from Warwickshire**



# Your home

## Repairs and maintenance

Maintaining and improving homes is an important part of our relationship with customers.

### Amount spent:

- Gas safety - £3.4m
- Electrics - £818k
- Painting and decorating - £2.5
- Major repairs - £0.4m
- Fire safety improvements - £768k

### Components:

- Boilers and heating systems – 1,201
- Kitchens – 383
- Bathrooms – 469
- Electrical upgrades – 9
- Roof covers – 61
- Windows and doors – 1,035

Last year, our contractors completed over 78,000 repairs costing over £14.2million.

This year, we have introduced new ways of working that allow our contractors to manage the cost of repairing homes more quickly and efficiently. And where there is availability with our contractors, we'll book in work for responsive repairs without the need for the contractor to contact you.



**78,000**

**78,000** repairs costing over **£14.2million**

## Keeping you safe

Your health and safety is our top priority. We continually invest in our colleagues, systems and other key improvement projects to ensure that you and your homes are safe and secure. Last year, we introduced new technology for our colleagues, enabling them to complete surveys on site via a mobile device, which gives us better control and accountability.

As of 31 March 2019, we have completed:



**100%**

Gas Safety Certificates  
(19,292 in total)

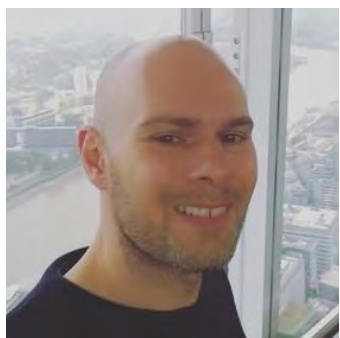


**100%**

Fire Risk Assessments  
(1,476 in total)

## Estate Services

You have been sharing with us what you like, and don't like, about the grounds maintenance and cleaning works we deliver.



*Guy Stenson*

Director of Housing  
Operations

A group of interested customers reviewed documents and gave us helpful comments on service levels via the Customer hubb. We used their feedback to update the requirements (for example, agreeing on the communal window cleaning frequency) and to make consultation documents more user-friendly.

We have used this information to re-tender the work, which many of you will know we have to do every few years.

We know that getting areas around your home looking tidy and attractive is important - after all, you are there every day. So this year we have rolled out training to our colleagues to help recruit and train Estate Champions – customers who work with our team to monitor their local contractors using the photobook. Following the success in the North area, we now have some new champions in other areas.

Maybe you fancy being an Estate Champion? Find out more [here](#).

Following your feedback, we awarded contracts in the South region and we are now preparing to contracts in the East and North to start in April 2020, followed by the West to begin in April 2021.

So far so good...

Our Estate Services project team have worked hard to ensure as smooth a start as possible and your feedback shows that they were efficient in recruiting and training their new staff, getting equipment and vans in place. Contractors have commented that our maps of the estates and data are useful, which is something we said we would improve last year.

Going forward, contractors will be required to provide their work schedules. They are testing these currently and will then share them with us. Our aim is to make these available on MyHome in the future, which I hope will ensure that you have greater visibility of when a service will be delivered locally.

We are focusing on improving our efficiency as well and recently introduced mobile devices for our teams to complete their estate inspections so they can grade the service, take photos and send emails to the contractor directly. This information is being used to feedback to the contractor at regular contract management meetings.

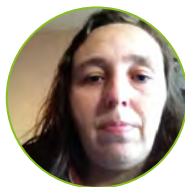
The weather will happen, the grass and weeds will grow, dust will settle and mud will get into communal areas... but if we can ensure that we keep on top of this, then I hope you will work with us so that together we can ensure that your homes and communities are places you are proud of. Small things, such as picking up litter, working together to prevent fly tipping, keeping gardens looking good, all add up to create a sense of community pride.

**Thanks for your feedback – don't forget to volunteer if you fancy being an Estate Champion!**



## What does your home mean to you?

There's nobody better to represent Stonewater than our customers. For a training session for all Stonewater colleagues, we asked customers to tell us 'What does your home mean to you?' and send us a selfie.



*"It means a home for me, my husband and children, making it our own home."*

**Tracey**



*"A place to put my feet up after work, a place for BBQs and Christmas dinners to come."*

**Ryan**



*"A place to unwind, chill and do home cooking. Friendly neighbours, great location."*

**Ian**



*"My home is everything. I'm safe, happy. Friends and family – it's all here."*

**Julian**



*"It is my autistic son's safe place. Where he can be himself and not worry about the outside world."*

**Louise**



*"Happiness and a safe and secure environment, with wonderful neighbours too."*

**Pauline**



# More homes for more people

Last year, we welcomed 3,149 new customers to Stonewater.

With 93% of customers telling us they were happy with the service we provided when they moved in\*, we recognised we could still go further to improve. We're continuing to work closely with local authorities up and down the country to make applying for homes quicker and easier.

We're working closely with our contractors too to ensure homes are ready sooner for new customers.

Did you know we spent £6.1 million making homes ready to let last year?

### Where our money comes from:

£144 million in rent  
£17.6 million from service charges  
£7 million from Government grants

### Where our money goes:

Service charge costs including rechargeable repairs - £16.9 million

Repairs and maintenance to homes - £37.7 million

Management costs (salaries etc.) - £30.7 million

Depreciation of properties - £27.4 million

\* Customer satisfaction survey – new lets, 2018/19

### Julian's story



Staying at his mum's house and living with arthritis, Julian was pretty stressed out waiting for the right home to come along.

*"I'd been living with my mum for some time but we both needed our own space and I needed to live somewhere that suited my needs.*

*"When I found out I had the chance to move in here, I was worried at first because of Universal Credit, but Andrew, my Tenancy Services Officer (TSO), and the rest of the Lettings team were so helpful and made me feel at ease.*

*"They helped me find this home that couldn't be any better. I have good neighbours and made new friends – its lovely!"*

### Ryan's story



Ryan, Sam and baby Tyler moved into their Stonewater home in March 2019, after living in a one-bedroom flat in the centre of Bedford. Police raids

were common on neighbouring properties and Ryan didn't like the idea of bringing up a little one in that environment.

*"Moving in took a little while but it was worth the wait because it has made everything so much better for my little family. We don't have to travel as far for work now, our family are closer to us, I can take Tyler to the park and the schools are really local too!"*



**3,149**

Last year, we welcomed 3,149 new customers to Stonewater.



**93%\***

of customers telling us they were happy with the service we provided when they moved in

# Looking ahead

In addition to investing in our existing homes, we have an ambitious plan to expand our number of homes by building new, attractive and high-quality properties.



**548**

Last year, we built **548** new homes.



**£224m**

funding for **4,500** additional high-quality affordable homes by 2022.

Last year, we built 548 new homes. Of these, 340 were rented and 208 were shared ownership properties.

Stonewater is proud to be part of the largest Homes England strategic partnership alongside Guinness Partnership – with £224m funding for 4,500 additional high-quality affordable homes by 2022. The funding will enable Guinness and Stonewater to extend and accelerate their development plans, bringing forward the building of affordable and social housing.

We've also been working hard on our digital vision, making it easier for you to do those things that previously you would have needed to call us about.

If you have used MyHome, we really hope that you are finding it easy to use – that is our aim, and that is why we tested it out with customers before we launched it. Over the coming months, we will be adding even more services to **MyHome**, so if you haven't used it yet, why not create your account today!

Paying through MyHome has proved popular, as, it's very quick and easy. You can also set up a Direct Debit to pay your rent without having to remember each month.

We also know that customers are using MyHome in the evenings and the weekends, so it really is there for you whenever you want to contact us.

Most of the telephone calls we receive are about repairs, and you can now report a repair using MyHome. Later this year we will introduce the ability to book appointments for certain repairs on MyHome – again making it easier and more convenient for you.

We are using digital more and more in the way we work: it makes our jobs easier and this helps us provide better services to you. If you are interested in finding out more about what we're doing or to be involved in giving us feedback on any future designs for MyHome, join our Customer hub [here](#).



# Get involved

## The Customer hubb (help us be better)

The Customer hubb provides you with a central area to leave feedback about our services, read others' feedback and discuss ideas about how we can improve for the future.

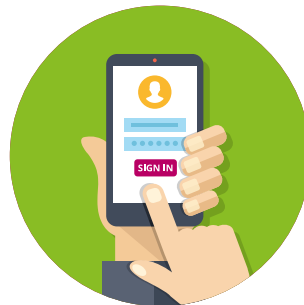
Last year, we saw membership of the hubb reach nearly 1,000 – meaning more customers are involved than ever before!

We have been hard at work making new areas for the 'Opportunities' and 'What's on where you live' sections, and a new place to find the surveys you can take part in to get your voice heard.

We have also introduced a new 'You Said, We Did' area, specifically to inform you of the changes made based on your feedback, plus any other important information we need you to know about.

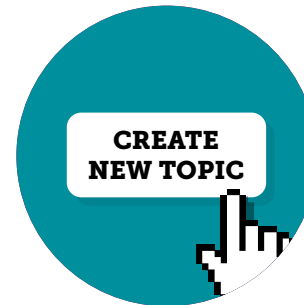


If you would like to find out about how to get involved and help shape the services you receive, please join the [Customer hubb](#).



**350**

logins every month



**200**

Nearly 200 topics created



**940**

members

## Social media

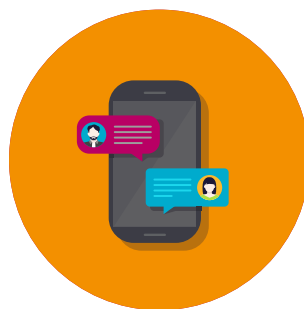
Recognising that more and more of us are using social media as a key way to communicate, last year we told you we would review our approach to Twitter and Facebook.



The amount of customers who contacted us via social media more than doubled during this time to 3,304.

We're pleased to say that this review has led us to create a new Social Media Team, launching a 2-hour response time (during normal office hours) for customers who prefer to contact us through Facebook and Twitter with queries.

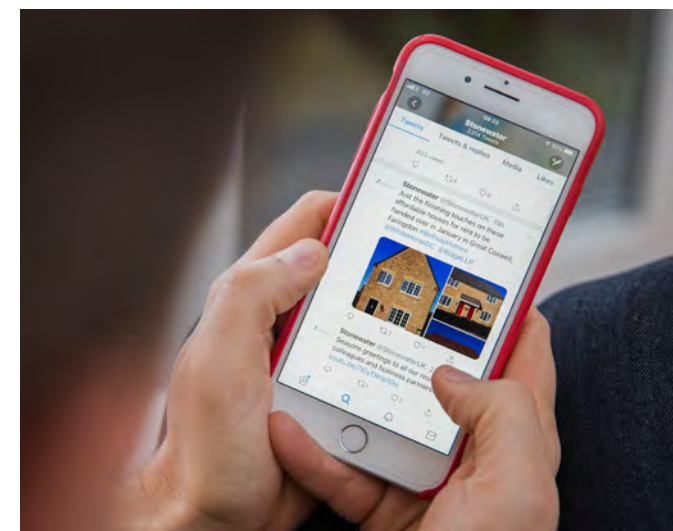
As well as quick, easy, customer service, you may have noticed our new Facebook Community Group and interesting content through Facebook and the Customer hubb about the things that affect you. These include our new Customer Commitments, our Reward scheme, how you can get involved in your local community, as well as customer news and stories.



**3,304**

The number of customers who contacted us via social media

Why not follow us on Facebook/Twitter and join in the conversation?





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**Contact us**

