

Tenants' Annual Report 2015-16





What is the tenant annual report.....?

The tenant annual report is an opportunity for us CVCH to report back to our tenants on our **performance**. This report will also give **transparency** with regards to our income and spending.

We also use this opportunity to highlight any big **changes** in our organisation.

This report covers from **April 2015 to March 2016**.

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***"Unlocking the potential for change
in people and communities"***



Our year long journey.....

It has been a huge year which saw the creation of The Pioneer Group (which CVCH is a part of). The group was created following a strategic review carried out in 2014, by the Board and Senior Management Team of Castle Vale Community Housing Association and its subsidiary Castle Vale Community Regeneration Services. This review needed to be far reaching to make sure we are able to respond to the challenging and changing (as well as exciting) environment in which we operate and set the future direction from 2015 to 2020.

By 2015, some 10 years after the end of the regeneration programme, Castle Vale continues to be a good place to live. The quality of the housing is good, the environment is clean and pleasant, crime has continued to reduce and there is a substantial waiting list for people wanting to live in the area. Over the past three years the quality of education at the secondary school has shown significant improvement and is now at a good standard. There has been positive progress around employment and health, though these still remain a difficult challenge in the years ahead.

We are proud of our work in Castle Vale. Much has been achieved significantly through partnership (facilitated through the Neighbourhood Partnership Board) with the community and local agencies as well as with statutory partners.

Throughout the review there was a clear understanding that doing more of the same was not an option. We knew that we had a responsibility to use our financial and organisational capacity to do more.





Community Pledge
2015-2025

Through the stock transfer process in 2004, we set out a promise to all of our tenants and to the whole Castle Vale Community. We promised to be a good landlord by delivering high standards of service and ensure the funds would be there to carry out major renewals when required. We also understood our role in making sure Castle Vale was a clean and safe place to live. Through the work of Compass Support, we also promised to invest in the services for young people, families, older people and the most vulnerable in the community.

In light of the changes, and the new group structure (creating the Pioneer Group) we wanted to work with the community to set out a new long term commitment to Castle Vale. We are therefore making a new promise, known as the Community Pledge, to the community. This demonstrates that we are true to our values but also ensures we are investing in the long-term sustainability of an area where the majority of the group's housing assets are located.

Through focus groups with local people, and the support of one of our ward Councillors, we developed the principles for a new pledge to Castle Vale. We recognise that there needs to be a clear financial commitment to continue to deliver the range of 'added value' services that are beyond our core landlord responsibilities. We will therefore ensure there is a minimum of £500k per annum for such investment.



Castle Vale Community Housing will for the next 10 years...



1

Commit:

In addition to our 'landlord services' to spend a minimum of £500k a year on ensuring Castle Vale remains a great place to live.



2

Responsive:

Ensure that we spend that money on those things that matter most to residents of all ages.



3

'On tap':

Maintain a 'Head Office' where customers can, through 'face to face' contact, raise queries and concerns.



4

Feeling safe:

Work with partners such as West Midlands Police to keep Castle Vale a safe place to live.



5

Green, clean and tidy:

Be environmentally responsible and work with the community and Birmingham City Council to keep Castle Vale clean and tidy.



6

Help for the vulnerable:

Provide support to those in most need and look to take action at the earliest opportunity.



7

Providing support:

Working with others to provide services that help Castle Vale residents build their skills and confidence, find employment and improve their health.



8

Meeting together and having fun:

Provide community facilities and resources so that people can meet, socialise and have fun.



9

Pledge pot:

Provide a small pot of money to fund community initiatives.



10

Connected:

Provide help and support with residents accessing the internet so they can be 'connected'.



11

In the know:

Where CVCH is not responsible, to direct residents to those service providers that may be able to help.

The Sanctuary

Providing innovative responses to social change through a range of proven support services across Birmingham. Our opportunities include health and well-being provision, support to families and vulnerable people, services for young people, and employment and training advice.



The Pioneer head office and home to CVCH

At CVCH we provide high quality housing services to ensure that Castle Vale continues to be the popular and successful neighbourhood it has become.

Your area map

Introducing.... the Customer 1st Team

As a result of the change programme a new team was created. Customer 1st is the first point of contact for all requirements from our customers. Our aim is to try and resolve as much as possible on the first contact regardless of the topic. We are still embedding this service but **thank you** to all who have supported us during this change.



Company results from 2015/16

97% of all calls answered.

96% of all post responded to in 10 days.

94% of all complaints responded to in 10 days.

Did you know.....

Customer 1st take around 700 calls per week and we resolve around 80% of these at first contact.

Around 140 people visit our reception each week!

Welfare reform and support services

In this report we will mostly focus on what has happened in 2015/16 however decisions and changes made by the government during this time will impact us for the foreseeable future. We are CVCH believe knowledge and collaborative working are essential to a successful tenancy and therefore on this page we will discuss the Welfare reform.

- Currently only for singles or childless couples however will be rolled out to all eventually.
- Applications online only.
- Paid directly into your bank account and putting ownership on tenant to pay housing provider.
- Paid monthly in arrears.
- Paid monthly in arrears.

Universal credit

Bedroom tax

- Impacts under pensionable age.
- Effective as of April 2013
- Impacted if you live in a property which has more bedrooms than required by government criteria. If this is the case you will have your housing allowance cut.

- The benefit cap is a limit on the total amount of income from certain benefits a household can receive.
- If you receive more than the capped value your entitlement will be reduced.
- From the 7th of November 2016 the government will be rolling out the cap however no date has been given to when this will impact individuals.

Benefit cap

Local housing allowance (LHA)

- Impact tenants who have signed their agreement from 1st April 2016.
- From April 2018 housing entitlement will reduce in line with new housing rates.
- Biggest impact will be single under 35's who will only be entitled to the equivalent money to occupy a room in a shared house

What is welfare reform?

The Government is in the process of changing most benefits across the United Kingdom through 'Welfare reform'.

The Government's idea is to reduce the effects of the poverty trap so people in work are better off than people on benefit.

Rent arrears performance end of 2015/16

2.83%

If you are worried about paying your rent, what can you do?

Here at CVCH we are here to offer support and guidance if you are currently having difficulties paying rent or believe you may in the future (due to the welfare reform or change of circumstance). As well as the Customer 1st team we have a great Income team that can offer support and advice on next steps. As well as this service we also have the Pioneer Groups Compass Support where you can be supported with your journey in to work. We also work along side the TRA (<http://castlevalle.org.uk/>) who can offer financial guidance and support on what you can do to ensure you have a successful tenancy.

We at CVCH can only support you if you tell us that it is needed. Please contact us on 0121 748 8100 if you would like to discuss anything above.

Major renewals

2015/16 saw the continuation of our major works programme. At CVCH we have a commitment to our residents to ensure we maintain a high standard of accommodation.

Our key objectives are to improve energy efficiency and enhance comfort for those in our properties.

Completed the upgrade of communal lighting to 57 blocks to LED fittings. This improved lighting levels and reduced energy costs.

Upgraded 80 electrical systems to Dimplex Quantum heaters. This improved thermal comfort, controllability and economy.

Installed 13 full heating systems changing from old electrical storage heaters to "A" rated Vaillant combination boilers. This improved thermal comfort, controllability and economy.

Replaced communal carpets to 57 low rise blocks.

304 new kitchens!

Customer satisfaction
96%

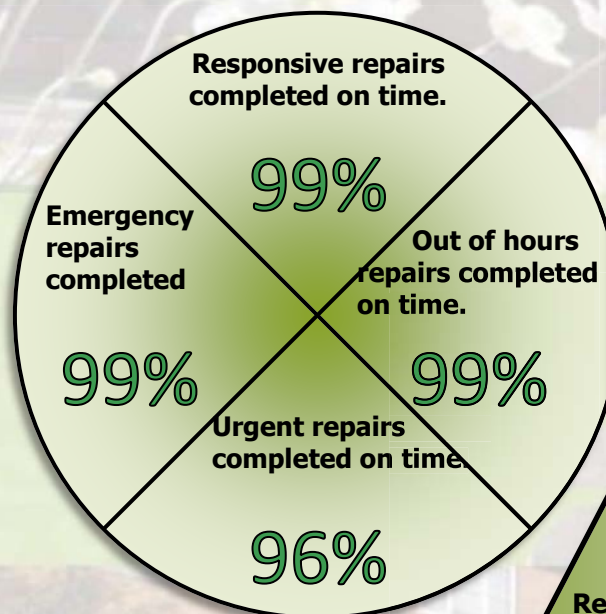
118 new "A" rated Vaillant combination boilers were installed, providing improved controllability of heating/hot water supplies and economy.

Customer satisfaction
100%



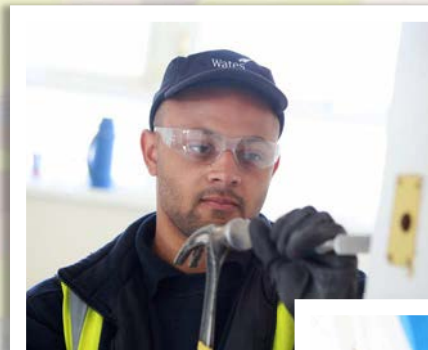
Repairs and maintenance

Within CVCH our Asset Management team recognise that keeping your home at a high standard is one of the most important elements of your tenancy. On this page we will discuss our performance as a landlord and it's contractors.



Customer said we were
"right first time!"

93%



Gas repairs completed on
time!

100%

Val- id
gas certificates!

100%



Repairs appointments
kept.

97%

Average cost of a
responsive repair.

£88.87

Remember.....

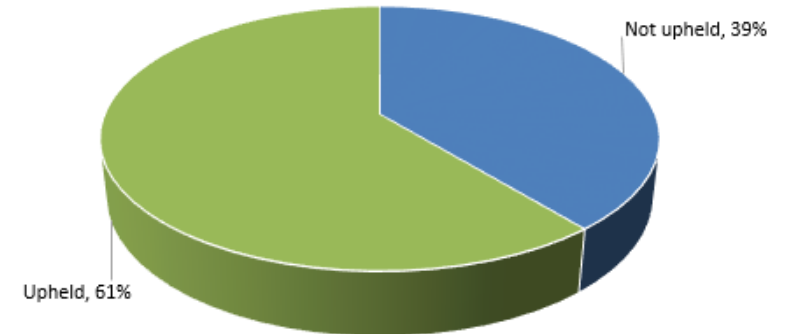
Your feedback is vital to us to understand what we have done right and what we need to improve on. If you have any feedback on this service we would love to hear from you!

Complaints

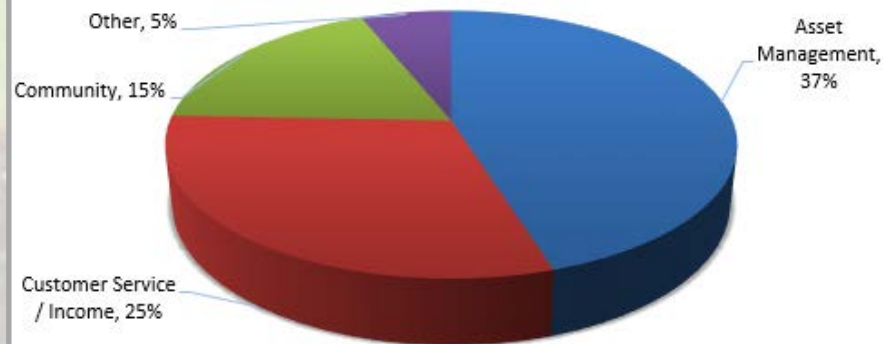
Here at Castle Vale Community Housing (part of The Pioneer Group) we always **love** hearing from you! A **big thank you** for everyone who has been in touch both to let us know the great work we have done but also on how we can improve!

We rely on feedback to help us on our journey and ensure we are making the right decisions for both our tenants and our organisation. Keep it coming!

Complaints upheld / not upheld



Complaints by service



Thanks to all of your feedback we have put in better processes, additional training and improved our communication.

52 stage 1
complaints in
2015/16



Compliments

70

compliments in 2015/16

It is important that we also recognise the great work that people have done in our organisation. We always love hearing from you when someone has gone the extra mile.

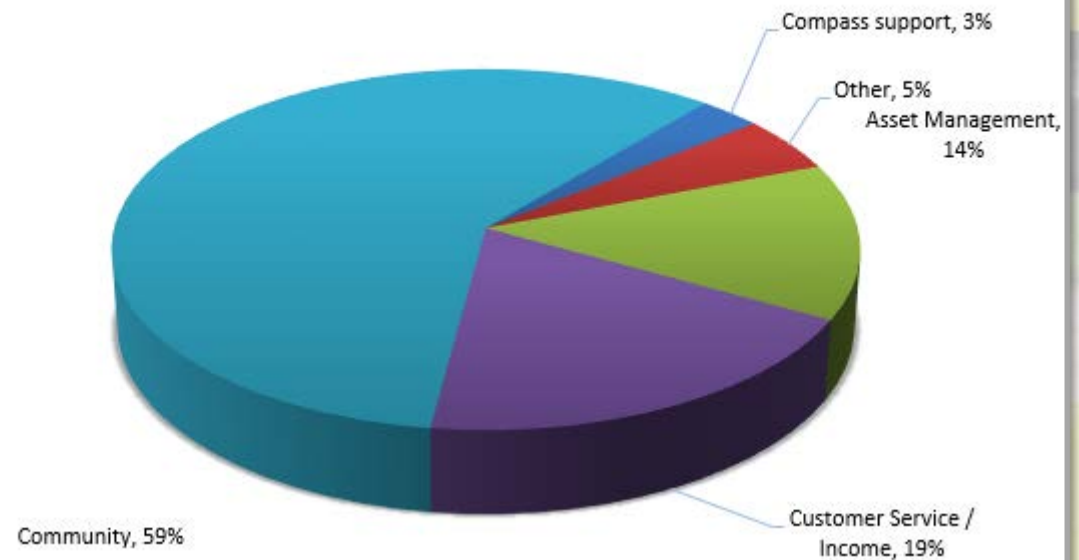
"Superb guy went above and beyond a real asset to the company, pleasant and caring."

"Thank you for a job very well done"

Improvement alert!!!!

This year we have improved the complaints handling software. This will make the complaints process a lot smoother for both us and you.

Compliments by service



"Professional, offered unbiased valuable advice in confidence and acted as a great sign post for a service user in distress."

Every year CVCH will produce an annual survey in order to understand our tenants perception of us as a landlord, the area they live in and the services that are offered. The information received back from our tenants is used to benchmark against other Social Landlords to see how we are performing.

Percentage of tenants very or fairly satisfied with the service provided by CVCH.

CVCH
2015/16

93%

Benchmark

90%

Percentage of tenants very or fairly satisfied with the way CVCH deals with repairs and maintenance.

CVCH
2015/16

91%

Benchmark

87%

Percentage of tenants very or fairly satisfied with the overall quality of their home.

CVCH
2015/16

88%

Benchmark

89%

Percentage of respondents very or fairly satisfied that their rent provides value for money.

CVCH
2015/16

86%

Benchmark

88%

Percentage of tenants very or fairly satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live.

CVCH
2015/16

88%

Benchmark

88%

Percentage of tenants very or fairly satisfied that CVCH listens to their views and acts upon them.

CVCH
2015/16

77%

Benchmark

77%

As a landlord it is important that we get feedback from all of our customers.

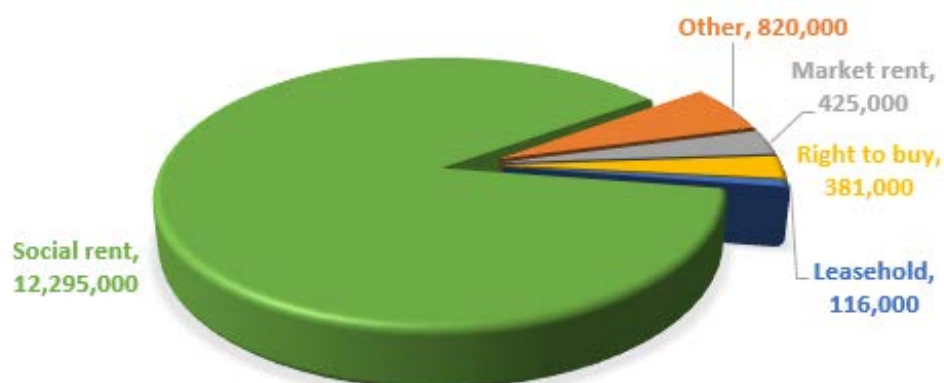
The annual survey that feeds in to these results will be coming out to you soon!

We would love to hear from you all.

Income and spending — Total Group

It is important that we as a landlord are transparent when it comes to our income and spending. On this page we will go into detail on where our income has come from and what we spend it on.

INCOME



In 2015/16 a surplus of **£2.878m** was realised.

This surplus was used in conjunction with CVCHA's reserves to help fund **£3.775m** of development opportunities, including;

- Kitchen and boiler renewals.
- Open market purchases.
- Construction of new homes.
- Investments in technology.

The total amount of income for The Pioneer Group in 2015/16 was **£14.04m**

£12.72m was generated from rental income (being social rent of **£12.295m** and market rent of **£0.425m**) and an additional **£1.317m** was generated from other sources that included:

Right To Buy property sales

Providing administration services for other organisations

Subsidies e.g. from our apprentice scheme

In 2015/16 we spent the income generated on various activities. The key areas where money was spent were as follows:

Paying interest on our loans - **£1.94m**

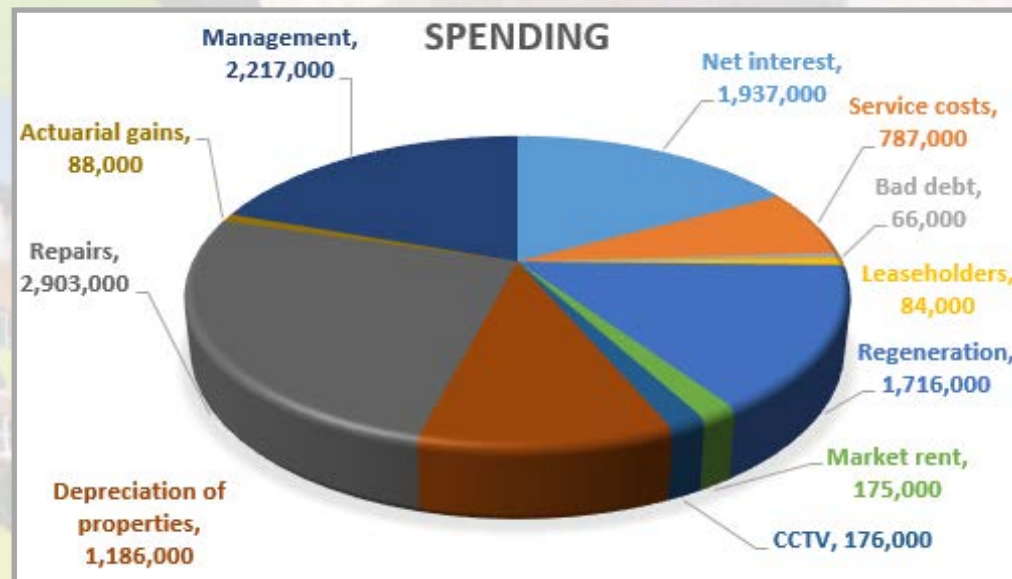
Repairs – **£2.903m**

Depreciation costs for the properties that we manage - **£1.186m**

Management costs - **£2.217m**

Regeneration and sustainability activities - **£1.716m**

SPENDING



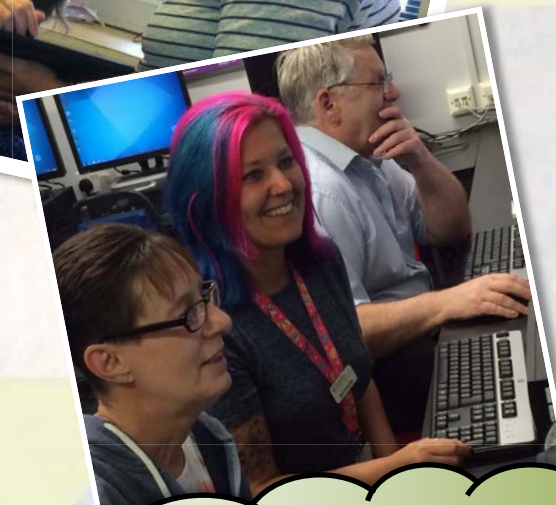
CVCH Digital!

- * Sessions at the hub increased from two per week to three.
- * Home to the weekly 'Social Snappers' photography group's weekly meeting.
- * Host to photography masterclasses!
- * Late night sessions specifically for employment support / job club sessions.
- * Three fabulous digital champions who are always at hand to support and guide residents when using the computer.

Double the amount of visitors from previous year and an increase of people using 'My Way' an online learning portal de-

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Phase 1 Wi-Fi roll out complete!
Phase 2 coming very soon!

*The world is changing at a rapid pace and we need to ensure that our community is as prepared as possible.
As well as IT support at our job club we have a strong presence in our community highlighting the importance of digital inclusion for all.*



Please visit our Digital hub!!

Monday 1pm-4pm

Wednesday 10am-1pm

Thursday 1pm-4pm

Events and involvement



You as our tenants are at the core of what we do. It is vital for us here at CVCH to be in the community as much as possible. This page gives an example of some of the events we were involved with throughout the year of 2015/16.

Gardening in The Vale

During 2015 we held 2 gardening competitions – Spring Competition in May and Summer in July, the competition was open to residents and local businesses. Judging was completed by employees of CVCH including The Inclusion Officer, Customer Service Manager and a member of the estates team. Winners got a certificate and a garden related prize such as B & Q vouchers, plants, seeds, decorations, solar lights etc. The competition is always very popular with residents proudly showing us their wonderful creations!

Social snappers!

The group was formed from a joint activity with Compass Support and CVCH known as Social Prescription; they came together to improve their health & well-being and decided they wanted more than just the 8 week course that was on offer so the group was formed.

With the guidance of CVCH Inclusion Officer they formed an official group with committee, a constitution, a code of conduct and an equal opportunity statement. The inclusion officer then supported the group by providing regular meeting space, setting up a bank account and help with funding applications for resources and equipment. Masterclasses were organised with local photographers willing to give up their time to share their skills with the group and photograph walks were arranged.

The group have put on several exhibitions and have produced some excellent work, some of which can be seen in Eden Court Dr's Surgery (and this report!).



CVCH are always keen to support any community activities that happen across the estate and further afield, during 2015-2016 we supported The Vale Challenge, a local sports challenge for residents of all abilities, Greenwood Academy's Family Fun Day, The Community Awards where residents are recognised and celebrated for the amazing work they do across the estate and further afield we supported Birmingham Pride a celebration of Birmingham LGBT community.



We would love you to get involved!

If you want to set up a group and need some support or are interested in an existing group please contact Becki Winkless on 07956 007 696.

The background of the slide is a collage of three photographs of residential buildings. The top photo shows a multi-story brick building with a red roof and white window frames. The middle photo shows a similar building from a different angle, with a stone wall in the foreground. The bottom photo shows a brick building with a green hedge in front. Overlaid on these photos are large, stylized green leaf graphics. A semi-transparent grey box contains the text.

**Thank you for reading this years tenants'
annual report.**

**If you have any questions regarding
anything within this report please call our
friendly Customer 1st team on 0121 748
8100.**