

CORNWALL
HOUSING

Working together

to improve the lives
of people in Cornwall



PART OF THE
CORNWALL GROUP
A CORNWALL
COUNCIL COMPANY

Annual Report 2020/21

www.cornwallhousing.org.uk



We're now managing a wider range of homes:

- **10,280** homes managed for Cornwall Council
- **56** social homes owned by Cornwall Housing
- **66** Gypsy & Traveller residential pitches
- **1** transient Gypsy & Traveller site
- **22** homes for other providers
- **73 & 99** Temporary Accommodation and Private Rented Accommodation
- **55** homeless units and provision
- **400** leaseholders

Your home, our services

Welcome to Cornwall Housing's Annual Report, which covers the period from April 1, 2020, to March 31, 2021.

It was, of course, a year like no other. The coronavirus crisis started in March 2020 and had a huge impact, including on how we delivered our services.

Despite the challenges, by working with you, our tenants, and in partnership with other organisations, we delivered some good results and positive projects. You will see some examples in this report, such as our emergency homeless accommodation schemes and the Liskeard Together project.

As well as new ways of working because of the pandemic, there were also changes within our senior leadership team.

This has brought a refreshed approach to how the organisation is run. Despite the successes in 2020/21, we are aware there is more to be done and we recognise we need to make changes.

Careful planning, investment and research into good practice are all taking place and there will be plenty of opportunities for you to influence what happens. Providing you with the

best possible services is at the heart of this, and we hope you will support us.

The past year has demonstrated that by working together, people can overcome all kinds of challenges. Let's build on these foundations and make Cornwall Housing better than it's ever been.

Iain Sim
Interim Managing Director



Helping Cornwall during the pandemic

As with many other organisations, the pandemic meant we had to make some changes to the way we delivered services to help keep everyone safe.

We kept you updated on the changing situation with a dedicated page on our website and a Q&A section to answer the most common questions. We kept meetings involving residents going and introduced new ones using new technology.

Our employees went over and above to help, changing the ways they worked to maintain essential services, and some working extra hours to help with wellbeing calls and activities.

The pandemic further delayed maintenance areas that were already under pressure, but we are now working through the backlog of repairs to clear it as soon as is practicable. Covid-related issues are still impacting, but the situation continues to improve as measures ease.



3036

welfare calls made to residents

“ Just wanted to say a big thank you to whoever was responsible for the lovely card that came by post. It was such a wonderful touch, very kind indeed and arrived when we most needed a lift, thank you.”

For those of you who needed a little extra help, Cornwall Housing provided a range of support which was well-received by the individuals concerned and the communities in which they live.

- **10,298** of you received a Help Hub card
- **3036** welfare calls made to residents
- **50** shielding tenants and five families sent friendship activity parcels
- **150** regular calls to check on wellbeing or reduce loneliness
- **100** referrals for extra support to organisations



“I received your ‘friends’ card today; I just want to say what a nice touch. I’m fine, but many might well need it. Top marks.”

Tackling the housing crisis in Cornwall

Cornwall's long-established and widely publicised housing shortage was made worse in 2020/21, partly by Covid-19.

The ability to work from home saw an influx of buyers who didn't need to be in travelling distance of their office. We also had landlords wanting to convert their homes to holiday lets. This all had a significant impact on emergency accommodation being available and led to more people than ever approaching us for help with housing.

Working in partnership with Cornwall Council, Cornwall Housing has helped deliver schemes across the county to help tackle the situation.

As part of the Government's, Everyone In, campaign, emergency accommodation schemes were set up in Longrock and Penzance, Newquay, Looe and Truro.

Among them was Carrick Cabins, a small community of 11 single-berth and fully self-contained units in Truro. They have housed some of the most vulnerable people living in our county. From June 2020 they have helped over 40 residents move on from the streets to a permanent home. In December 2020, we won a national HomelessLink Excellence Award for Collaboration and Working in Partnership for the schemes.

- Total contacts: **8,800**
- Rough sleepers (autumn 2020 count): **29**
- Households helped to secure either existing or alternative accommodation 2020/21: **1,705**
- Households accepted as homeless and provided with temporary accommodation 2020/21: **1,488**

“Everyone whom myself and my wife have dealt with have been absolutely fantastic. The accommodation is absolutely lovely.”

New Cornwall Housing tenant

Top 3 reasons for feeling threatened with Homelessness

- 1 Family/friends unable to accommodate (**26%**)
- 2 Eviction from Private Sector (**9%**)
- 3 Notice to Quit Private Sector (**8%**)

New homes

The Council has committed to increasing council housing, and during 2020/21 it acquired 24 new Council homes in Penzance, Looe and St Anns Chapel:

Social Rent	8
Affordable Rent	0
Shared Ownership	16
Total	24

Treveth Homes, a Cornwall Council project, is building 500 new homes every year which will be available in a mix of sizes to suit varying budgets - to rent and buy. People wishing to rent or buy one of the affordable homes must have a connection to Cornwall and already be living here.



29

Rough sleepers
(autumn 2020
count)



“I’ve got my own
front door,
so I’m home.”

Your **safety** is our priority

Cornwall Housing is committed to making sure your home meets high standards of health and safety.

To check we were performing as we should, during 2020/21 we commissioned external experts to carry out a full check of the main health and safety duties we have as your landlord.

The compliance areas checked included electrical safety, gas and other heating systems, asbestos management, legionella, fire safety and lifts.

The report did not identify any significant risks to your safety, but the findings show we're not fully compliant in the first five of the six areas listed above.

This means we have fallen behind with some of our safety checks on your home and the systems used to record the findings of these checks need improvement.

We have taken these reports very seriously and, working with Cornwall Council, we have started to make important changes. We are now in the process of identifying and correcting inaccurate data in our records and ensuring moving forwards that accurate information is recorded.

“ Following the Pennington Choice’s review, we have been cleansing our data and have agreed a new suite of performance measures. Once the cleansing is complete we will be in a position to report our performance more effectively to our residents. This is likely to be in place by the end of 2021. ”

Heidi Flack, Interim Director of Homes and Investment

Actions being taken

- Detailed programme of safety checks
- We are writing a Building Safety Policy
- Forming a Building Safety Tenant Group
- New, specialist skilled employees will speed up the work
- Money invested to ensure work is done efficiently
- Improvement plan will be closely monitored



Looking after your homes and neighbourhoods

Our work to improve your homes, neighbourhoods and satisfaction levels continued in 2020/21 with some new initiatives introduced.

We recruited a 'Neighbourhood Warden' in the Bodmin area to test if it would help manage some of our bigger estates. The Council was pleased with the results and has supported us to fund several more.

Our aim is always to carry out no evictions and we're starting a tenancy sustainment programme with the Council to reduce them to an absolute minimum. In 2020/21 we carried out just one eviction in relation to antisocial behavior and no solely rent-related evictions.

Early in lockdown, several communities in Truro began to complain about an increase in anti-social behaviour. In partnership working between Cornwall Housing, Truro City Council and Cornwall Council, online meetings took place where each community could come together to discuss the issues and work towards a positive outcome. The groups worked hard and helped to get full Closure Orders granted on the properties where the problems were happening.

Our Inclusion Advisors have helped reduce the overall arrears whilst closely supporting tenants. They have managed to bring in an extra £838,453.53 of financial benefits for tenants over the last 12 months.

- Rental income **99.7%**
- Residents' satisfaction with ASB case handling - **75%**
- Lettings - **550** - 496 after general works + 54 new homes or following major works
- Average re-let time **38 days**
- Housing management enquiry responded to in 3 working days - **86%**



39

homes sold under right to buy in 2020/21



Investing in and maintaining your homes

During the year we managed and delivered a capital programme of £15.8m which means more than 4,500 properties benefited from improvements.

Despite the pandemic, this is 90% of the amount originally planned.

We also introduced the first phase of our Mobile Working Project to make the repairs and maintenance service much more efficient and customer focused. As a result, automatic appointment reminders are sent by text, and you receive a satisfaction survey to feedback to us after the repair operative has left. In December 2020 residents were invited to have a say on ways the repairs service could be further improved.

Work started on the Whole House Retrofit Project to deliver energy efficiency improvements, such as external wall insulation, and solar panel installation to dozens of your homes.

“ We have also been installing solar PV, a project aimed at residents benefitting from free electricity. Mr W was one of our first installs and said he is saving well over £1 per day since benefitting from the new system. He is delighted we’re helping lower his fuel bills. Due to the success of this project, we have now secured the funding to install Solar PV to more homes. ”

Kerrie Hanna, Solar PV Project Resident
Liaison Officer



246
Kitchens



282
Doors



163
Windows



189
Bathrooms



193
Home adaptations



196
New Roofs

- Responsive repairs completed on time **92%**
- Satisfaction with repair **90%**
- Capital programme (improvement works) completed **90%**
- Time taken to complete adaptations against published target **64%**
- Repairs and maintenance budget **£8.8m**



4,627

Total number of
properties receiving
capital works



£15,822,953

Total capital money spent
on improving homes and
neighbourhoods

Engaging you to improve services and communities

We recognise that the best way of providing services that meets your needs and expectations is to involve you in their creation and development.

Also, as part of our commitment to providing excellent housing services, it is important that when we make changes, we ask you how we're doing and listen to your feedback to help us improve.

In 2020/21 our involvement and engagement work included everything from surveys about our complaints procedure to involving children and staff from Falmouth Primary Academy in planting wildflower seeds on The Beacon.

We also reviewed our Resident Engagement Strategy and are making real changes in this area in 2021/22, including the development of a Building Safety Engagement Strategy.



4672

Number of residents that gave their views

Resident Involvement

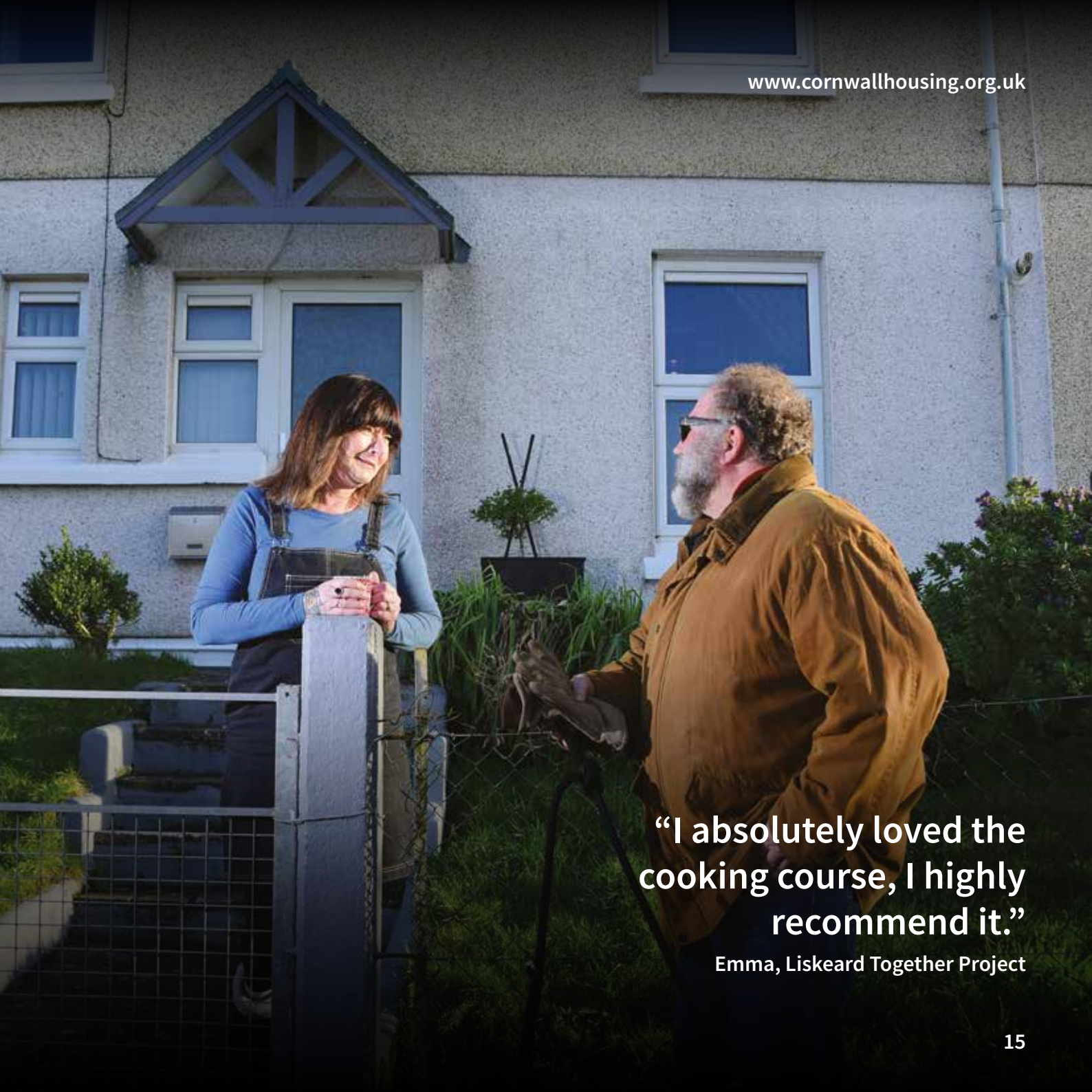
- Number of residents that gave their views **4672**
- Feedback considered **100%**
- Feedback resulting in action **89%**
- Policies and services changed **8**
- Area representatives supported **15**
- Other groups supported **19**
- Tenant Scrutiny report 'How accessible and relevant are CHL service standards to their customers?' **11 recommendations made.**

Community empowerment

Our externally funded community projects have helped residents and families to build their confidence, set goals, access services, learn new skills and find work. We're incredibly proud that, despite the pandemic, our support workers helped residents to get online and carry on with support and training using the internet and phone.

- Liskeard Together Project - **55** residents gained ESF funding for learning and development support
- Together for Families - **61** new families supported: £196,418 gained in debt reduction and income maximisation for families





**“I absolutely loved the
cooking course, I highly
recommend it.”**

Emma, Liskeard Together Project

Ensuring a **good** customer service

During 2020/21 extra effort was put into improving our customer service.

We increased the number of our teams using the Customer Relations Management system to deal with enquiries more quickly and efficiently.

Learning from your feedback

From September to December 2020, we asked residents who made a housing management enquiry to complete a satisfaction survey. The satisfaction level was 59%. By looking closely at the feedback, we saw that we could potentially increase this to 75% and identified five changes to improve the service. Once these changes are complete we will test satisfaction levels again to see if they have made a difference.

- **142,016** total calls
- Out of hours calls **7670**:
 - Repair calls: **3959**
 - Homeless calls: **2944**
 - Misuse of line: **767**

“ It was an emergency as my toilet would not flush. I reported it at 9am and the repair was completed by 10.45am, truly amazing turnaround, operative was polite and efficient. Well done everyone at Cornwall Housing.”

Learning from compliments and complaints

In April 2020 we updated our customer feedback and complaints policy to make it quicker for you to receive a resolution to your complaint. Part of this was making the process simpler and reducing the number of steps in the process.

We ran two satisfaction surveys with residents who had made a complaint during the year.

As a result of what we learned from these, we made changes to our staff training and processes.



142,016

Total calls

Our Complaints Appeals Panel also makes recommendations for service improvement if a complaint goes to 'step 2'.



723

Complaints



173

Compliments



60

% of complaints responded to on time



58

% of complaints upheld

Improving our leadership and governance

Cornwall Housing's vision is:

"To deliver high quality homes and housing services to the communities of Cornwall."

To help us achieve this we aim to be a high performing housing company which is an ambitious, innovative and business focussed organisation.

Standards of leadership are very important in ensuring we carry out our duties and meet our targets to the very best of our ability.

During 2020/21 a new senior leadership team was put in place who have a plan that will be monitored, tracked and carried out within clear timeframes. They are accountable and responsible for our compliance recovery and will guide us to new levels of achievement.

Our Board

The Board's role is to provide leadership and strategic direction for Cornwall Housing and to ensure that we comply with our statutory and regulatory requirements.

Resident Board Members use their experience of living in our homes and communities to help make sure the Board can look at performance and strategy with a customer focus.

Resident Members

Hazel Tearne

Martin Emery (until 31.03.2021)

John Harris (until 31.03.2021)

Council Members

Mary May (until 09.05.2021)

Jacquie Gammon (until 09.05.2021)

Mike McLening (until 09.05.2021)

Independent Members

Michael Hanrahan (appointed Chair 01.07.2020)

Shelley Thornton (until 31.03.2021)

Nigel Williams (until 31.08.2021)

Peter Nourse (appointed 31.03.2021)

Managing Director

Nick Cross (until 15.02.2021)



“Tenant volunteers work in partnership with us to scrutinise our performance and improve our services”

CORNWALL HOUSING

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