

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

Welcome to our new annual update for all Riverside home ownership customers.

Inside, you'll find a range of information on what we've done to support you this year.

You'll also find data on how we're performing, information on what to expect next year as well as updates on other key issues like service charges.

We wanted to send this update to showcase the work we're putting into delivering improvements and assure you that we're always taking your feedback on board.

Helen Reddington

Helen Reddington
Director of Home Ownership

This year, we've made a range of improvements to our services. We have adapted the information provided on our website which has helped us to reduce the call waiting times in our customer service centre.

On behalf of all my team, thank you again for being a Riverside customer.

We'd love to know what you think so, if you do have any feedback, please contact us via rhohousingmanagement@riverside.org.uk



A BETTER WEBSITE FOR YOU

One of the biggest changes we've made this year to try to support you more effectively is improving our website.

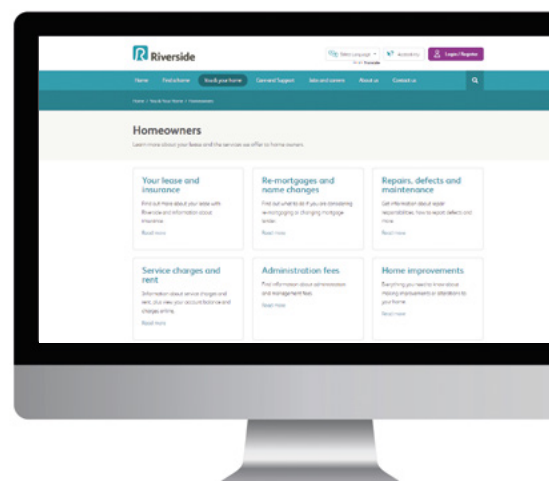
Rather than running a standalone Home Ownership website, we've merged all our services into the main Riverside site.

We listened to your comments about what you want from our website and acted on them as appropriate, ensuring we are now more helpful than ever online.

Importantly, it means you don't have to switch between the two websites any longer to access different elements of our service, making it easier to use on mobile devices.

We also provided a dedicated Home Ownership contact page which has proven popular and is being well used.

Look out for further improvements in the coming year and please take a look now at www.riverside.org.uk/homeowners



PERFORMANCE IN THE SPOTLIGHT

We know how important it is to listen to our customers and have been reviewing your feedback to help us deliver better services.

Each month, our research partner IFF, contacts around 100 Home Ownership customers to complete a 'Customer Experience Perception Survey'. The purpose of this survey is to obtain a clear view of how you feel about your home and the services you receive from us. The information and results obtained through this survey helps us shape improvements and deliver a better service to you.

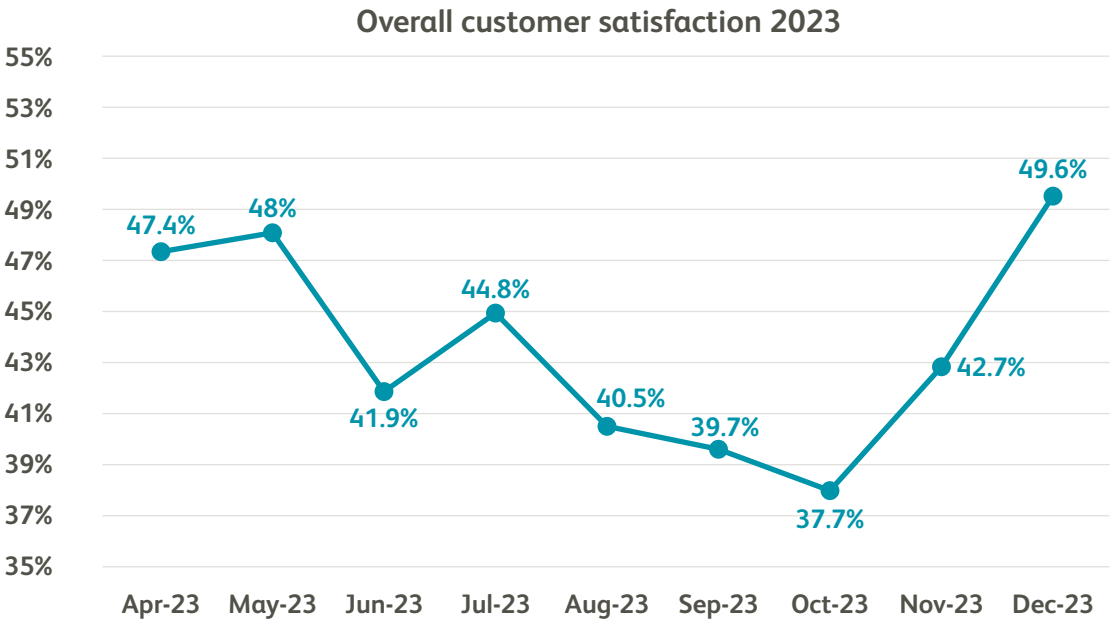
From April to October, overall customer satisfaction was on a downward track. Using customer feedback obtained from this survey, we were able to identify areas which required improvement and work on implementing solutions to the issues reported. Some examples of this include:

- changes to ground maintenance contracts
- updating our website and creating webforms enabling customers to contact us quickly and easily
- upgrades to MyRiverside App, including the ability to log communal repairs
- working with call handlers within the customer service centre to improve knowledge allowing for quicker and easier query resolution.

From October, overall customer satisfaction began to improve, and we ended 2023 with the **highest level of customer satisfaction** reported all year.

We know that there is still a long way to go and challenges to overcome, however we are committed to listening to your feedback and working together to improve the service you receive.

The graph below shows the results for overall customer satisfaction across 2023.



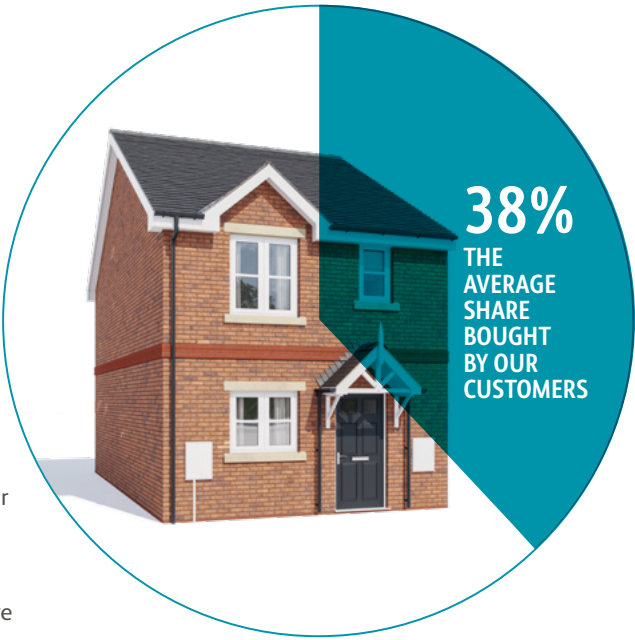
SUPER SALES IMPACT

Did you know that we sell around 200 brand new shared ownership homes every year, as well as those we sell to tenants through the Right to Buy and Right to Acquire schemes? From giving us your views about how we deliver services or telling us how you prefer us to communicate with you; our home ownership customer voice is growing every year.

Our new build sales activity covers the country and during 2023/24, we have sold on more than **28 different developments**: from family homes on the North East coast in Amble, starter homes in Cheshire, residences in the Midlands and apartments in London. We really do have something for everyone.

By 31 March 2024, our Sales Team had **sold 223 new homes**, with the average share bought at 38%. We have also let over 100 Rent-to-Buy homes during 2023/24, our biggest year ever for Rent-to-Buy. The typical open market sale value of our homes was £211,000 meaning that through shared ownership, our customers were able to secure a high-quality home in a location of their choice, whether that be close to family or friends, good schools, or near their place of work.

And, with the new model of shared ownership introduced by the Government in 2020, we are now offering **shared ownership from 10%** on some of our developments, making it easier for aspiring homeowners to get onto the property ladder.

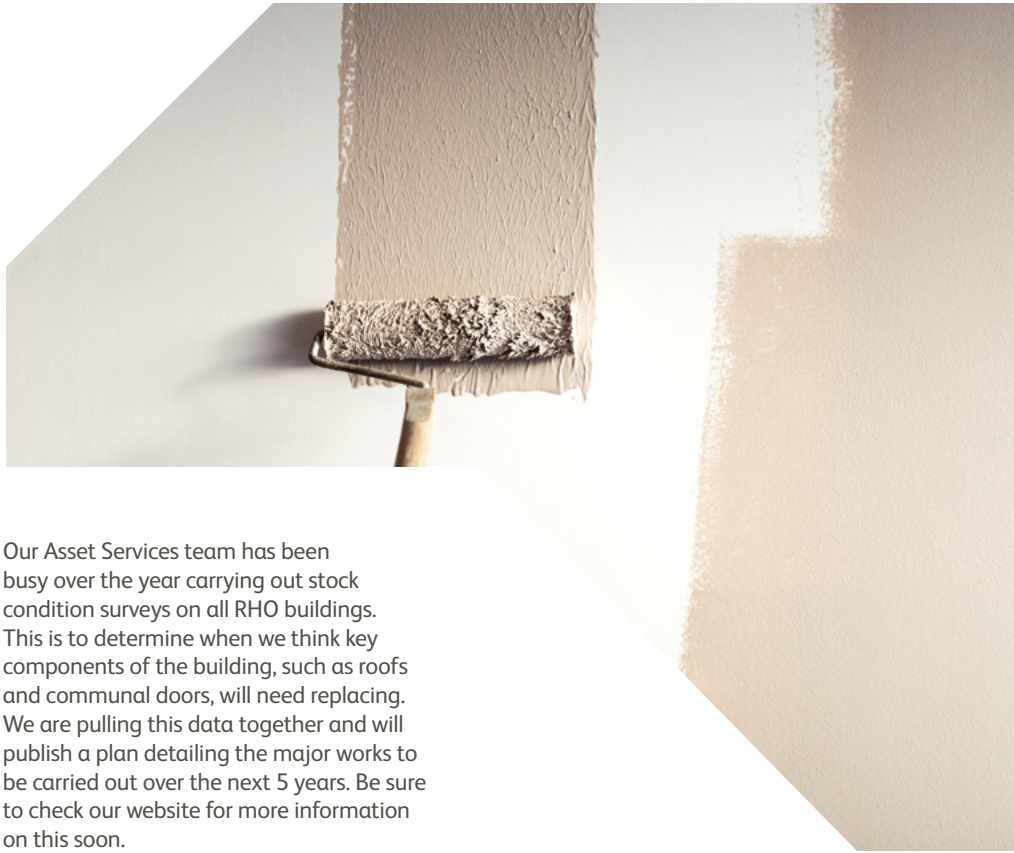


To find out more about our new homes, visit <https://www.riverside.org.uk/find-a-home/buy-a-home/>

INVESTING IN YOUR HOMES

Following delays due to the pandemic, we were pleased to announce the return of our cyclical redecoration programme in 2023.

To ensure we can offer this service without future interruption, Riverside entered into a 5-year contract with Trident for our LCR and North regions and Bagnalls for our South and Central regions. As we near the completion of the first year of works, we have received some positive feedback on our contractor's performance and continue to work closely with them to ensure that your needs and expectations, as customers, are not only met but exceeded. We will look to publish a schedule of our painting programme for the remaining four years on our website soon, so you will know when we will be decorating your building.



Our Asset Services team has been busy over the year carrying out stock condition surveys on all RHO buildings. This is to determine when we think key components of the building, such as roofs and communal doors, will need replacing. We are pulling this data together and will publish a plan detailing the major works to be carried out over the next 5 years. Be sure to check our website for more information on this soon.

SUPPORTING YOU – KEEPING YOU SAFE IN YOUR HOME AND THE COST-OF-LIVING CRISIS

The housing sector has faced intense scrutiny this year around the safety of homes and the cost of living.

So what have we been doing to support you?

KEEPING YOU SAFE IN YOUR HOME

Whilst some homeowners are responsible for their own repairs and property upkeep, in many cases we have legal duties and service standards to meet when it comes to keeping you safe.

On repairs, we've made major inroads this year, bringing all our services in-house, **average waiting times down** and upgrading our My Riverside app and web pages to make **reporting repairs easier and more convenient**.

We have also **prioritised fire safety**, spending more than ever before to address historic issues with buildings, such as cladding.

Meanwhile on damp, mould, and condensation, we've carried out **double the number of inspections** across the group to try to proactively manage problems and we delivered our biggest ever promotional campaign to try to ensure everyone is aware of how they can get help and support.

Whilst we know there is more work to do and we don't always get it right, we hope to continue making progress in the right direction.

COST-OF-LIVING SUPPORT

Through our "Let's Talk" campaign, we've **supported thousands of customers** through the cost-of-living crisis.

Our five "Lets Talk" service areas - Let's Talk Rent, Energy, Money, Employment and Training - have been able to support customers struggling to meet payments, afford heating bills or find employment.

We've also signed up to **The Mortgage Charter** – a government initiative which provides support to people with mortgages, including shared owners.

This enables most borrowers to stay in their home for the first twelve months after a missed mortgage or rent payment, supports those on a fixed rate mortgage to lock in a new rate up to six months before their current rate ends and allows borrowers to switch to interest only payments for six months.



NEW CONTRACTS AND SERVICES TO IMPROVE CUSTOMER'S LIVES

BROADBAND WITH HYPEROPTIC

We have been working with broadband provider, Hyperoptic, allowing them to install their equipment in schemes across Manchester. This will give you access to **high-speed internet and an increased choice in network provider**. Hyperoptic also offer a social tariff, which is available for customers on universal credit or qualifying benefits.

Check their website (www.hyperoptic.com) for more information and to see if their services are now available in your building.



CHANGE IN GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

On 1 October 2023 we changed our grounds maintenance provider in Greater Manchester and Liverpool to address concerns around performance. This decision was taken after it became clear the previous contractor could not deliver the standard of service expected by both Riverside and our customers.

Since the new contract went live in October, we have received a **number of compliments** from RHO customers. The mobilisation of a new contractor hasn't been without its challenges, and we recognise that there is still work to be done. However, we are very pleased with the start the new contractor has made and we remain committed to ensuring this progress continues over the summer season and beyond.



Some of the feedback we have received so far:

"Tenant called to express how pleased she is with the work Tivoli have carried out looking after the communal gardens, they have put the effort in and taken care of the details as she expected them to do. They have done a good job and the customers wants the contractors and us to know."
Beaumont Crescent, Aughton

"Customer called on the phone to say how pleased she and her husband are with the hard work done by the new gardening team Tivoli. If they keep doing a great job like this, we will all be very happy people, thank you."
Admiral Court, Bootle

"Our new garden firm is brilliant. The gardeners are nice as well".
Sylvan Court, Woolton

CUSTOMER INVOLVEMENT

Listening to your views and using this to inform our decisions and shape improvements is important to us at Riverside.

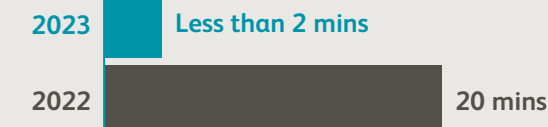
To ensure that your voice, as a leaseholder, is heard and to provide you with more opportunities to help us shape improvements, we are looking to create a [Leaseholder Consultation Group](#).

Customers may recall that work began on this back in 2022 but was paused due to our integration with One Housing Group. As we look to revisit this in 2024/25, we want to ensure that both Riverside and One Housing leaseholders are represented within this group.

The group will consist of around eight panel members who will be required to take part in meetings, workshops, and scrutiny projects throughout the year. The insight that leaseholders will provide throughout these events will ultimately [help shape our service to you](#).

Further information and details on how to apply will be communicated in the forthcoming months.

CALL WAITING TIMES HIT RECORD LOW



You asked and we've listened and acted on your feedback...



Last year, we acknowledged that call waiting times were simply not good enough. At one stage, in winter 2022, customers had to wait up to 20 minutes before being able to speak with an advisor.

Fast forward a year, and we've turned that around with [consistent averages below 2 minutes](#) - with often barely any wait at all during non-peak times.

This is a vital step forward and one we're solidly focussed on maintaining.

We've also been working with our Customer Service Centre to increase their knowledge around home ownership to try to support better outcomes for you and help to ensure more of you get [queries answered the first time you call](#).

Finally, we've also [upgraded our app](#) to provide more services than ever before.

Most importantly, you can now report and track the progress of communal repairs there which we know will make a big difference to some customers.

Don't forget, our "Let's Talk" services on the app are also available to you, including forms to source cost-of-living crisis support and a range of other new functionality. Why not check it out today?



SERVICE CHARGE IMPROVEMENTS

We have listened to your feedback and understand that you would like to see more information within your service charge accounts.

As a result of this we have increased the resources available within our Asset Services team to allow them to focus more on service charges and the information you receive regarding them. We aim to stop using 'vague' job descriptions and instead ensure enough detail to [allow customers to understand](#) exactly what works have been carried out on their properties.

We have also been [reviewing our cyclical fund collections](#) to make sure the amounts collected are adjusted, where required, so we are not under or over collecting money. We will continue to make further changes based on feedback we receive from you.





Riverside's Home Ownership team was established over 90-years ago to provide a range of affordable housing options for people across England and Scotland. With customers firmly at our heart, we are all about creating vibrant, friendly, diverse communities where people want to live, work, and relax.

The Riverside Group Limited

Registered Office:
2 Estuary Boulevard,
Estuary Commerce Park,
Liverpool L24 8RF

A charitable Registered Society under
the Co-operative and Community
Benefit Societies Act 2014