





Tenants' Annual Report on Housing Services 2020 – 2021

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Welcome to Dimensions' report to our tenants 2020/21



Dear Tenant,

Welcome to our Tenants Report for the year 2020/21.

This past year has been one of the most challenging we've experienced in our lifetime. The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has changed the lives of everyone in the country in one way or another. Dimensions' housing service is no exception. We had

to change the way we deliver many of our services to make sure tenants and staff stayed safe. We had to find new ways to stay in touch because we couldn't visit you. We had to limit our repairs to emergencies only, which meant we had to say 'no' to some things that we would normally do. It was much harder to support people to move home. In fact some of our bigger projects, like planned improvements for homes, had to pause while we tried to understand what the new world would be like.

We even needed to change the way that we do our annual Tenant Survey. Last year our survey was online only. This gave us some good information but we did not receive as many responses as we would like because so many of our tenants need support to complete the survey and our support colleagues were busy dealing with the virus. As the virus stayed with us for so long it was the same this year. To avoid giving our colleagues even more work to do at a time when they were trying to keep everyone safe, this year we decided, with our Tenants Group, to have some in-depth conversations with tenants. We approached all the tenants who gave us some feedback in last year's survey to understand how they are feeling about our services. We are grateful to those that got involved. With so many of us vaccinated and restrictions gradually being lifted, we hope to be back to a full survey in 2022.

We have been thinking hard about how we respond to your comments. We want to build a better service for you and those that provide you with the support you need to live a better life. There is lots of work being done. We will be introducing new ways for tenants to order repairs and get advice on housing issues during 2021/22, and we plan to re-launch our Quality Consultants, Tenant Meetings and Tenants Newsletter as COVID restrictions are lifted.

I hope you find the 2020/21 Tenants' Report informative, interesting and that it encourages you to get involved and work with us to shape and improve our Dimensions housing service.

Nick Baldwin
Chair of the Dimensions Board



About this report



We are Dimensions. We are the people who look after your home.



This report tells you if we did a good job last year.



The first section of this report is in easy read.



The second section of this report gives you some more detailed information, if you want to find out more.



This report tells you what we do with the **rent** you pay us. **Rent** is money a person pays to live in a house or flat.



This report tells you about our homes and the people that live in them.



This report talks about what happened between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021.



About the people who live in our homes



We have people of all different ages living in our homes.





There are more old people than young people.



There are more men living in our homes than women.



Everyone living in our homes has a disability.



About our houses



1006

From 2020 to 2021 there were 1006 people living in our homes.



We own or have a long lease on 561 low cost rent homes. We manage 381 low cost rent homes for other landlords.



We also rent 120 homes from private landlords (5 more than last year).



We have sold some larger homes and bought or leased smaller ones. We will use the money from sales to build or buy new homes.



More of our tenants now live in their own homes with their own front door, with some support.



We had 60 places in our houses that were empty, which is less than last year.



We follow rules set by the Government and councils to make sure that all our homes are used by someone with a disability who needs them.



We also try to make sure our tenants will get on well with each other.



Repairs



We use your rent money to make repairs and redecorate your homes.

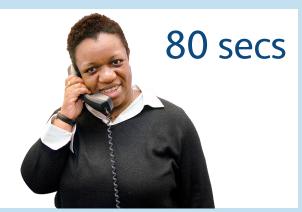


When people find something that is not working in their homes they call us to get it fixed.

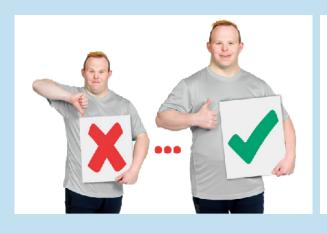


We received 4468 calls last year. 2,772 led to a repair being agreed.

In 2019/20 there were 5057 calls and 3051 repairs.



Last year it took 80 seconds on average to answer the call. In 2019/20 the average was 39 seconds.



We want to be quicker at answering your calls. We are challenging our call centre.



Almost all (97 %) of repairs were finished in the time we said they would.



We spent £1.5 million on repairs and maintenance last year.

In 2019/20 the spend was £1.8 million.





We spent seventy thousand pounds on decorating.

In 2019/20 we spent sixty seven thousand pounds on decorating.



Thinking about the future



We have been thinking about where we can build new homes or make our homes better.



We have plans to build new homes in Bricket Wood in Hertfordshire and at Highgreave in Sheffield.



Work is starting soon but we will take a few years to finish these plans.



The Covid-19 pandemic has made these plans take longer but we are still doing them.



We know that we cannot build and own all of the homes that we need to support people so we spend a lot of time looking for homes that are owned by other people.



We have staff in Dimensions to help us do this. Last year we found 13 homes for 16 people.



Tenants' Meetings



There are two people that speak up for the people who live in our homes. They are Martin Hancox and Carl Warwick.



Martin and Carl have meetings with the bosses of Dimensions. They talk about any problems people have and the things that people want to see change.



We have meetings for people that live in our homes. These are called **tenants' meetings**.



Martin and Carl meet other Dimensions tenants at **tenants' meetings** to share the information they found out.



These meetings give people a chance to find out what we have been doing. People get to say what they think about Dimensions and if they think we are doing a good job.





In 2020 we had **tenants' meetings** planned in Bath, Darlington, London and the East coast of England. We had to cancel these because of the Coronavirus pandemic.



Meetings at Dimensions are currently held online.

We used technology so Martin and Carl could attend the Dimensions Council meetings online.



We had an online **tenants' meeting** for all tenants using Zoom in December 2020.

Tenants' meetings in 2021 are once a month and all on Zoom.



We want more people to go to these meetings. If you are interested in going to a **tenants'** meeting, speak to your Regional Housing Advisor on 0300 303 9194.



We know that not everyone can join meetings online. We can help you to be involved in different ways.



Listening to you – Quality Consultants



We have people who check that we are doing a good job. They are called **Quality Consultants**.



We have trained some **Quality Consultants** to look at our housing and housing services to see if we are doing a good job.



The Quality Consultants are also Experts by Experience.

An Expert by Experience is someone with a learning disability who is also one of our tenants.



Our Housing Quality Consultants had to stop doing visits to our homes because of the Coronavirus pandemic.



Our Housing Quality Consultants will restart their roles soon and will use the results of the Tenants Survey to know what to look for.



Listening to you Tenants Survey



Every year we ask our tenants some questions about what they think about Dimensions' housing services.



This year we spoke to some of the tenants who had made comments in the 2020 survey.



We wanted to find out more about their comments and we asked them what they think about Dimensions' housing services now.



64 tenants had written comments in the 2020 tenants' survey.



We asked if they wanted to speak to us about them. 29 tenants said they did.



We let the Tenants Group know what was being said in these interviews.



We asked for a different team in Dimensions to look at the results of what we found.





We will do the full survey in 2022 where you can tell us what you think.



Here is what we found:



Many of the tenants we spoke to said it was hard to know who was in charge of their housing if so many different people are involved.



Many of the tenants we spoke to did not know what housing services Dimensions was in charge of doing like repairs and decoration.



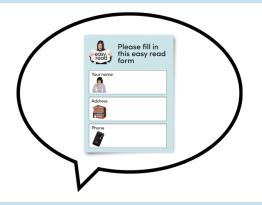
Lots of the complaints tenants had about their housing were not things that Dimensions were responsible for fixing.



Tenants who had Dimensions responsible for more things to do with their housing were happier with Dimensions.



What we will do next year



You said you wanted us to let you know about the Contractor Feedback form.



We will have a new Customer Repair Satisfaction form in October 2021. This means you can tell us about any repairs that need doing in your home.



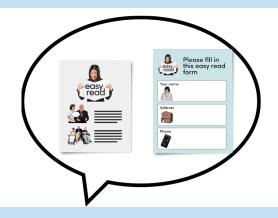
You said you wanted everyone to know who is in charge of the fire doors.



We will work with our Health and Safety team and support teams to make sure people know who is in charge so we can keep our tenants safe.



We are starting fire safety works in September 2021.



You said you wanted more easy read guides.



We will work with the national tenants' forum to write more easy read guides.



You said you wanted to be able to do more things in your home by yourself.



We will make it easier for you to tell us about any repairs that need doing.



We will write more easy read guides showing you how to do things.



You said you wanted tenants' meetings to be in person.









We will have online meetings in 2021 with in person meetings again from 2022.



You said you wanted a full survey in 2022.



We will do a full survey in Spring 2022.



Tell us what you think



Thank you for reading this report.

If there is something you would like to tell us about your housing please write in the space below.





About our homes

This section tells you about the homes we own and how they are managed.

Our social homes are low cost rental – so the rent is less than the main rental market. We have 762 social homes. We manage 562 low cost rental homes that we own and manage 381 low cost rental homes owned by other landlords. A total of 169 homes are managed by other support providers for Dimensions. These are mostly in registered care homes.

Dimensions also manages 170 units of non-social housing.

	Low cost rental homes owned and directly managed by you	Low cost rental homes owned by Dimensions but managed by other organisations	Low cost rental homes managed by Dimensions for other organisations
General needs	0	0	0
Supported housing	553	9	235
Housing for older people	0	0	0
Intermediate rent	0	0	0
Affordable Rent general needs	0	0	0
Affordable Rent supported housing/ housing for older people	8	0	
Care homes	32	160	146
Total	593	169	381

Who manages our tenancies?

This information tells you a little about who manages tenancies in Dimensions properties. We have increased the number of tenancies managed by Dimensions as we have taken back housing management of some supported living schemes and some registered care homes have de-registered over the year.

	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19
Dimensions managed but with a different support provider	385	414	356
Another agency manages the property	128	207	216
Dimensions /03Way and Discovery manages AND provides support	373	320	392
Dimensions manages private rented properties	120	115	121
Group Total	1006	1056	1085

Accommodation type

The types of home we offer are changing.

We are changing some of our registered care homes into supported living for people with a learning disability or autism. More of our tenants now live in an ordinary home with some support.

We are handing back or selling some of our older larger properties and replacing them with smaller properties because people prefer to either live on their own or share with less people.

Number of homes				
	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19	
Supported Living homes	616	630	609	
Registered Care Home units	270	311	355	
Supported Living tenants in Private rented homes	120	115	121	

About our performance

Maintenance call centre

To respond to people who need a repair at any time of the day we use a call centre called Astraline. We monitor Astraline's performance.

We ask how long it takes them to answer calls. The target is 30 seconds, and they did not meet this target in 2020/21.

We are not happy with the performance.

It takes too long to answer calls so we have decided to make arrangements to answer your call ourselves in 2021.



Call centre	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19
Inbound calls	4468	5057	3661
Time to answer (target 30 secs)	80s	39s	17s

Repairs completed in time

Our target is that 100% of emergency jobs are completed on time and 95% of urgent jobs completed on time.



Repairs	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19
Number of repair jobs	2772	3051	2230
Emergency jobs completed on time (target 24h)	95 %	96 %	95%
Urgent jobs completed on time (target 7d)	97 %	96%	98%

Contractor performance

We use three contractors to do repairs to our

We meet our contractors regularly to discuss their performance and what we want them to do to improve their performance.

Contractors	ASW	Bellrock	D&M
Total jobs	703	1061	1008
Emergency jobs completed on time	87 %	96%	100%
Urgent jobs completed on time	94%	97 %	100%
Routine jobs completed on time (target: 28d)	85%	100%	100%

Maintenance costs

We do different types of repairs.

'Reactive' repairs are the things tenants report to us that are broken and need repairing.

'Major' repairs are big repairs that we need to think more carefully about – sometimes getting more than one contractor to give us a price so that we can get the best value for money.

'Cyclical' repairs are things like decorating that we know we need to do from time to time. We plan for these on a 'cycle'.

We have a list of homes that we are going to work on over the next few years so that we know what we are going to spend. Many of these works are requested by our tenants. These are things like new bathrooms or kitchens.

During the last three months of the year we completed a stock condition survey of all the properties we own, the results of these surveys was used to set our 2021/22 maintenance budgets.

The Government has a rule that all homes must be of good quality called 'Decent Homes'. All of Dimensions' homes are decent.



Maintenance costs	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19
Reactive repairs €	£796k	£964k	£727k
Reactive repairs – year on year increase or decrease	-17 %	32%	5%
Major repairs and cyclical	£320k	£667k	£956k
Major repairs and cyclical – year on year increase	-52 %	-30 %	-8 %
Internal decorations	£70k	£66k	£66k
Internal decorations – year on year increase	6%	0%	53 %
Other maintenance costs	£369k	118K	98k
Total costs €	£1,555 k	£1,815 k	£1,847 k
Total costs – year on year increase	-17%	-2%	5%

Compliance					
Compilance		Compliance	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19
The number of Legionella and Electrical checks is		Gas safety checks	248	313	248
different each year, because we don't do these		Legionella checks	200	84	28
annually. We used to do Legionella checks every five years but		Electrical safety checks	22	65	41
we have moved these to every two years.		Fire Risk Assessments	140	13	20
		Thermostatic Monitoring Valve checks	223	148	n/a
Voids		Tenancy numbers	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19
We work hard to make sure that all the rooms in our properties are used by someone who needs them. At the end of the year the % had gone up because we have fewer properties.		Voids available to let	61 (8.85%)	67 (7.8 %)	70 (7%)
The reason that some rooms in shared houses are empty is because we have to make sure that anyone who might move in is a good match for the people	\Leftrightarrow	Empty properties unavailable to let	52 (7.5 %)	45 (4.6 %)	61 (5.8 %)
already living there. We also rely on Local Authorities to refer people for our empty properties.					
Rent arrears The convices we deliver are paid for by the rent	•	Rent arrears	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19
The services we deliver are paid for by the rent tenants pay us. It is therefore really important that we collect		% arrears as at 31st March	5.5 %	5.69%	6.53 %
all of the money owed. We have improved our performance even though we manage more properties. We expect this number to improve further in 2021/22 and beyond.					
Complaints and compliments		Complaints 2020-	21 201	19-20 2	2018-19
We received seven complaints all of which were investigated. We agreed with five, partly agreed			7	4	4
with one and didn't agreed with one. Where we		 	1	1	4
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agreed with a complaint we said sorry and tried to put things right. All the complaints we agreed with were about our repairs service. We have made changes to the way we manage the companies who do our repairs and how we let you know what is going on so we do not make the same mistake again. No complaints were referred to our Board or the Housing Ombudsman. We also received one formal compliment.



Complaints	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19
Complaints	7	4	4
Compliments	1	1	4

How we spend your rent money

We charge you rent to live in your home and we spend it on repairs, decorations and people to manage homes.

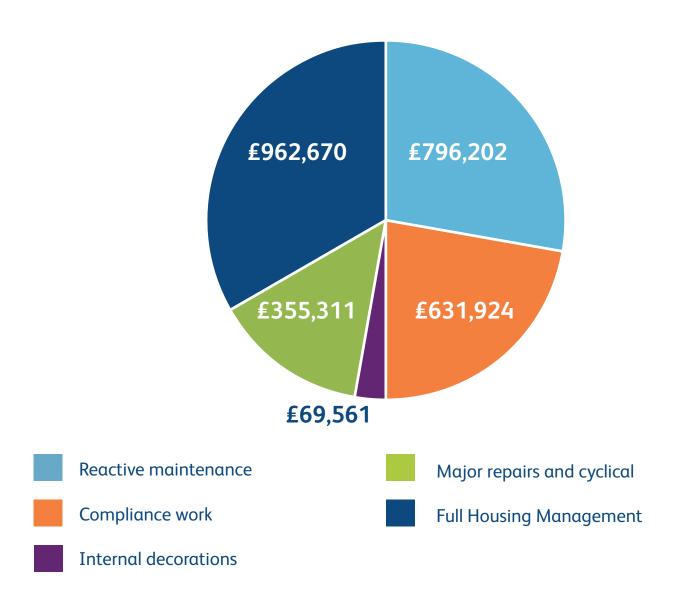
We also spend money on finding new homes for people and our tenants meetings.

In 2020/21 we spent 2.8 million pounds on providing these services. The picture below shows you how much we spent in a pie chart. You can see all of the spending divided up.

We try to plan for repairs before they are needed so that you do not have to ask for them. We are pleased that most money was spent on these repairs and not things that went wrong in the year.

We will always be happy to answer any questions that you have about how we spend your money.

How we spent your rent in 2020 – 2021



Listening to our tenants: national meetings

Our two Tenant Representatives are Carl Warwick and Martin Hancox. Martin and Carl speak up on behalf of all our tenants about housing issues when they attend Dimensions' Council Meetings and pass information back to our tenants at our four national tenant meetings.

Our national tenant meetings are an opportunity for our tenants, their support staff, our Quality Consultants and our housing colleagues to meet up to share, discuss and consult with each other about everything to do with our housing service, review our performance and plan for our future.

In a normal year these meetings are held all around the country to allow as many tenants to take part in at least one meeting that is nearer to their region.

Sadly this year, due to the Coronavirus pandemic and lockdown, we had to cancel all four planned meetings which would have taken us to Bath, London, Darlington and the East Coast of England.

Like everyone we have had to change how we work so we can stay in touch with our tenants whilst not being able to meet in person.

We supported our Tenant Representatives to stay engaged by using technology so they could continue to attend the Dimensions Council Meetings online during lockdown.

We held an online meeting open to all tenants on the Zoom platform in December 2020 and it was lovely to finally meet up as part of a bigger group again.

Currently in 2021 we are holding all our Tenants Meetings online using Zoom; they are monthly and much shorter meetings than before because they are online; some meetings are held in the morning and some in the afternoon, we also hold them on different days of the week, so as many tenants as possible have the opportunity to attend.

We want to work with more of our tenants so if you are interested in attending tenants meetings, please contact your Regional Housing Advisor, who can be contacted on 0300 303 9194.

We understand that not everyone is able to meet online, much like not everyone is able to travel and meet in person, but we will do whatever we can to try and help you to become involved if this is something you are interested in.

Quality Consultants

We have lots of Quality Consultants who look hard at the quality of our services.

Our Quality Consultants now look at our housing services.

A Quality Consultant is an Expert by Experience. This means that they have a learning disability and experience of being a Dimensions Tenant. Our 5 Housing Quality Consultants had just started to go on visits with Regional Housing Advisors and were letting us know what they thought about our homes. These visits had to stop because of the Coronavirus pandemic.

We are looking at when the Housing Quality Consultants can visit our homes again. We are looking at what you said in our 2021 survey.

Listening to our tenants: Tenants Survey 2021

Introduction

Every year we ask all of our tenants some questions about what they think about Dimensions' housing services. We call these questions our Tenant Survey.

In 2020, we asked these questions online because of Coronavirus. It was not safe to visit people. Most of our tenants need some support to answer our questions but our Support Workers were so busy making big changes to support people safely that we felt we could not ask them to do more.

Coronavirus was still with us when we wanted to do our survey this year so we talked with the Tenants Group about how we could do our survey this year. We agreed to have a conversation with our tenants who had made comments in the 2020 survey. We kept the Tenants Group informed on the findings from the conversations.

We asked all the tenants who had made additional comments in the 2020 survey to have a conversation with us. In total 29 tenants agreed to this.

We always ask someone outside of the Housing Team to analyse and review our results to make sure that there is no bias. Themes and recommendations are outlined in the next sections. They will be used for improvement planning in Dimensions going forwards with our tenants and colleagues.

In 2022 we are aiming to return to our full survey, and everyone will be able to take part and tell us what they think.

Themes

Many tenants we spoke with said it is hard to understand who is people responsible for their housing and who is responsible for their support. Some tenants said it was not always clear who is responsible for their housing repairs. We know that this can be complex because we work with other landlords. Sometimes we are responsible for repairing homes and sometimes we have to ask other landlords to do things.

Complaints about housing repairs and management were generally about other landlords. We know that we need to get better at supporting tenants to get the services they need from other landlords. However, we know we also need to improve our services too. We found that, mostly, the bigger the role that Dimensions plays in a person's life, the more positive they feel.

Some positive things we heard were –

- Communication from Dimensions is of a high standard.
- There are strong relationships and lots of contact opportunities.
- Regional Housing Advisors and Support Colleagues go above and beyond.
- Dimensions staff are being Covid-safe but still doing their best to engage and involve tenants.

Some examples of negative feedback –

- Not all tenants were aware of the feedback form to give information about repairs contractors.
- Some repeated call outs to "faulty" heating systems when staff and individuals forget how to work the system.
- Issues about fire doors following fire risk assessments normally about fitting and repeat refitting.
- It is not always clear who is responsible for what.
- One group of tenants were extremely unhappy, stating that they had been promised a new kitchen a couple of years ago and then the decision was changed.

Some comments were mixed -

- The performance of repairs contractors is not consistent.
- Time taken to do repairs varies and quality of repairs varies.
- Dimensions responded well to the issues reported in the 2020 survey but tenants said that it should not have been necessary to report them in the survey.

During the pandemic, to keep people safe, Dimensions and other landlords only did essential or emergency repairs. As a result, Dimensions did not do some things that tenants asked for. We know that it will take some time to recover from this and that there will be some frustrations for some tenants.

Listening to our tenants: What will we do after this year's survey?

Those tenants that were interviewed this year provided us with some important information based on real life experiences of being a Dimensions tenant and how we could improve our services to all our tenants.

Here are some of your recommendations and what we are going to do:

You said	What we will do
Make sure people know about the contractor feedback form.	We will have a new customer repairs satisfaction form in October 2021. We are spending more time with contractors and looking at how good a job they are doing. From October 2021 you will be able to tell us about repairs instead of Astraline.
2. Be clearer about who is responsible for fire doors.	The Housing team will work closely with our Health & Safety and support colleagues to make sure you are always safe. We will work harder to help you know who is responsible for fire safey in your home.
 3. We want easy read guides about: a) Roles and responsibilities of agencies in my home b) "How to" guides for heating and other property fixtures and fittings 	We will work with the national tenants' forum to write more easy read guides in 2021/22.
4. We want you to think about how we can be supported to do more things for ourselves.	To help you be able to do more things fo yourself, we will our repairs reporting service easier to use (see recommendation one) and we will write easy read "How to" guides (see recommendation three).
5. We want to know that all of the 'non-essential' repairs we have already told you about will be done.	We will do all of the repairs you have told us about. We are going to decorate inside all of our homes in 2021/22. This is so that all our homes remain compliant with the Governments' Decent Homes Standard.
6. We want you to meet with us in person as soon as it is allowed.	Regional Housing Advisors will be meeting with you in person in 2021. We will have in person and online national Tenant Forums in 2022. The monthly national Tenant Forums will still be online in 2021.
7. We want a full survey in 2022.	We will do a full survey in Spring 2022.

Championing the rights of our tenants

Dimensions is a member of Learning Disability England, and the Disability Benefits Consortium. We campaign on voting, around learning disability hate crime, and for improved health for people with learning disabilities. Working in partnership with all the main cinema chains, we run autism friendly cinema screenings across the country. We have extended this to libraries and other entertainment venues. Dimensions also runs the 'Learning Disability and Autism Leaders' List' which aims to support leaders with learning disabilities and/or autism to raise their voice and personal profile, and accelerate social change.

Thank you for reading this report



Proving life can get better

Dimensions provides evidence-based outcomes-focused support for people with learning disabilities, autism and complex needs. We help people to be actively engaged in their communities.



Find out more

Website: www.dimensions-uk.org

Phone: 0300 303 9001

Email: enquiries@dimensions-uk.org









Or follow us @DimensionsUK

Dimensions

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