



RESIDENT'S ANNUAL
REVIEW 2018/19

“Our focus remains on maintaining and improving the quality of the service we provide to our residents and ensuring that we have a sound financial base”

Sandeep Katwala, Chair

RESIDENT'S ANNUAL REVIEW 2018/19

Every year we produce a report to keep our residents and the people who use our services up to date on some of the important things that we have done over the last twelve months. In an era where profit is the primary driver for so many organisations, we are proud to work with residents and those in our local communities to put people first.

Throughout the year, many of you have helped us to improve or expand the range of services and opportunities that we provide to

residents and a wider group of people living in London. This review is intended to give you an overview of what has been achieved with your help and to thank those who have helped and contributed over the year.

We have lots of other performance data available throughout the year. You may also like to see our more detailed Annual Report and Financial Statements. If this is of interest, please visit our website or get in touch.

WHAT'S NEW?

SOME HEADLINES AT A GLANCE

CHALLENGE AND CHANGE

This year we saw some changes at Board and Director level. Most significantly, just after the end of the financial year, Grahame Hinds who has been Chief Executive for the last 18 years retired, and we are delighted that Sandra Skeete joined the organisation in his place at the beginning of September.

In the last year Brexit uncertainties, economic pressures and changing

regulations have also had a big effect on residents as well as the external world in which Octavia operates. It has been a challenging year as the cost to build and look after homes is increasing; the supply of experienced staff is decreasing; and sources of external funding, that we rely on to support many residents in ways other than housing, is being put under more pressure. However, we have always taken a considered and long-term approach and this year has been the same. We have focused on improving the quality of existing homes





and services, while building manageable numbers of new affordable homes and keeping our financial position stable.

NEW RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY

Over the year we evolved our 'resident involvement' strategy. Now we have more ways than ever before for residents to have influence over the way we work or to give their feedback, including via a new digital policy group, resident mystery shoppers who test our services, and lots of local events. We also have a new 'Your Voice' group, which combines the previous 'Tenant Steering Group' and 'Services Scrutiny Panel'. Your Voice acts on behalf of all residents and is focussed on improving experiences from a resident's point of view.

IMPROVING OUR REPAIRS SERVICE

In Spring 2019 we completed a thorough process to re-tender our repairs contract. Mears, who have provided this service for several years, were successful in securing the contract and will continue to provide a day-to-day repairs service for all our homes but with some added new developments. These include a future online booking system, which will help to save costs and improve the service residents receive. We also more than doubled the number of energy efficiency works this year, which keeps energy bills for residents down and helps to protect the environment. We were awarded SHIFT Gold standard by Sustainable Homes as a reflection of our eye on energy efficiency.



UNIVERSAL CREDIT (UC), HELPING PEOPLE TO MAKE THE CHANGE

UC replaced the old benefit system in more boroughs throughout the year and we continued to provide support for people to make the change. Hundreds of residents have received one-to-one help from our Financial Inclusion Manager and many more have been able to benefit from our strong partnership with Citizens Advice, which also provides free, confidential, one-to-one guidance at our office.

FIRE SAFETY AND SUPPORT FOR GRENFELL

We continue to put health and safety first, with a focus on fire safety. We are working alongside residents on a challenging plan with contractors to re-clad one building. Back in June 2017 we were quick to offer any

available properties to the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea to help the survivors from Grenfell Tower and we have been supporting residents, where we can, ever since. In addition, we are very grateful to have received an anonymous donation to purchase six large family homes for Grenfell families. We are pleased to say that these families are all living in their new homes.

MORE HOMES FOR LONDON

We completed 123 new homes including 58 for affordable rent, 8 for intermediate rent and 57 for shared ownership. In November 2018, we were proud to be selected as a strategic development partner with the Greater London Authority (GLA), a role usually given to much larger housing providers. This is really good news because it means that we will be able to build even more new affordable homes for local people in the future.

HOW DID WE DO?

GOOD HOMES

369

369 homes benefited from **energy works** including wall insulation and draught proofing.

99%

99% of **repairs** were completed within target time.

100% of high and medium risk **fire safety** assessments completed.

External decorations completed at over **230** homes.

100% **gas appliances** with current certificates.

206 adaptations were completed to support residents to stay in their home.

Bathrooms, kitchens and boiler replacements carried out at **180** properties.

93% of residents are **satisfied** with completed repairs work.

BETTER LIVES

624

Our **Befriending and Outreach service** benefited **624** people, reducing loneliness and isolation.

521

Our **Employment and Training service** helped **521** people into work or to be more job ready.

Our youth activities and events specialising in **digital media** helped **224** young people.

107 households struggling financially received **welfare or financial grants**.

Our **Handyperson service** carried out small jobs in **467** disabled and older people's homes.

Our 7 extra care homes and 6 sheltered housing schemes supported **280 older residents**.

240 households received **benefit and debt advice and support**.

Our '**Better Lives Community Fund**' distributed more than **£100,000** to **27** small local charities.



"I was unaware I could volunteer within my housing association. Octavia have helped me into full time employment."

EXCELLENT SERVICES

3.93%

Rent arrears at **3.93%**, our best ever performance on this important income indicator.

88%

16,327 repairs jobs received, and **88%** of repairs were completed in one visit.

Affordable homes - average social rent at **£122.51** per week (**40%** of market rent).

94% of estate inspections achieved the **3-star cleaning standard** (the highest rating).

We re-let **vacant homes** efficiently, at **22** days on average.

Complaints response target times were achieved (average of **9** days).

100% of **ASB (Anti Social Behaviour) reports** were responded to within our target times.

Our **Contact Team and Repairs Line** received 71,175 calls, and answered calls on average in **17** seconds.



£8.5m spent on routine maintenance, planned maintenance, and major repairs.

We have higher repairs and maintenance costs than some housing providers because many of our homes are older, heritage properties in central London. We believe in spending more to improve homes for residents for the longer term. We also spent more on fire safety works and energy efficiency to ensure safety and reduce energy bills for residents.

! You said

We would like more ways to be involved in shaping Octavia's policies and the way you work.

✓ We did:

Based on your time and communications preferences we have introduced a variety of ways people can help us to improve the services we provide and the way we work. You can find out more about ways to get involved on our website at www.octaviahousing.org.uk/be-involved/options

141 complaints received (+25 compared to the previous year).

The services receiving most complaints were:

- **Repairs service – 43%**
- Responses to **Anti-social behaviour (ASB) – 14%**
- **Planned works – 12%**
- **Time waiting for transfer – 6%**
- **Service charges – 6%**

96% of complaints were resolved with residents by service managers. Only **2%** of cases needed to be referred to an independent Complaints Panel and the remaining **2%** were passed to the Housing Ombudsman but they found no maladministration by Octavia.

In **30%** of cases we recognised that we could have done better and have worked with residents to improve the service.



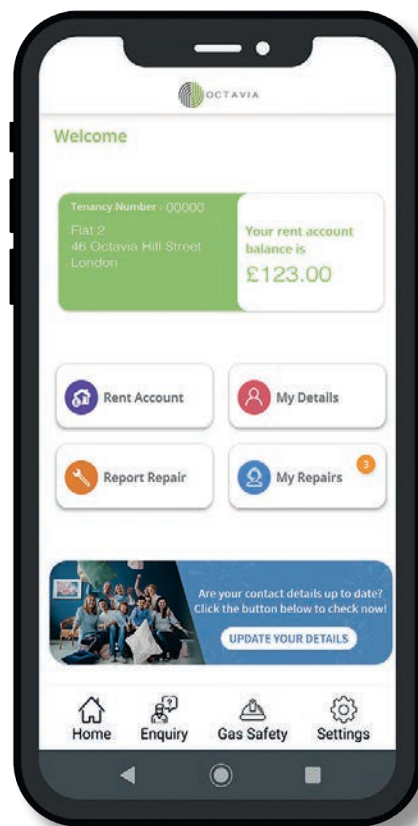
WHAT ARE WE WORKING ON NOW?

Going forwards, we will continue to be focused on investing in our homes, ensuring homes are safe, supporting residents affected by welfare reform, and growing our community initiatives. We have some big projects underway to help:

IMPROVING SERVICES

In the last year we have been training our staff and developing our systems so that the Contact Team can deal with 75% of all your queries as the first point of contact. This is a long-term project that has involved lots of residents, which we will continue along with our plan to increase the number of services you can access on our website or through our new app. We are currently demonstrating our app with a group of residents and we aim to have it available for all residents to use by the end of the year. The app is a really easy and free way to check the progress of your repairs and view your rent statements at any time, seven days a week.

90% of residents who have seen a demo of the new app liked its look and functionality, and said they would use it.



“It’s perfect, the app will make it much easier and convenient”

“Looks good and easy to navigate”

WORKING TOGETHER

Resident Involvement is an area that is undergoing lots of change in the wider housing world. New regulation on resident involvement is expected in the Autumn and the National Housing Federation has started a pilot to test its new charter of resident rights, which we are taking part in. If you want to be involved or to have a say in how we work, the policies we put in place and the services we provide for all residents, we are always looking to connect with you. Please get in touch and speak to our Resident Involvement Manager.

“I would highly recommend residents to get involved in mystery shopping calls. You get to see how much work goes into wanting to improve the quality of service Octavia provide”

Princes Place Resident

“I had the opportunity to voice my concerns. I look forward to the next meeting”.

Mrs S



COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Through our charity, the Octavia Foundation, we helped nearly 2,200 local people (an increase of 586 from the previous year) with:

- ▶ Befriending and outreach care.
- ▶ Youth activities and events.
- ▶ Handyman and gardening services.
- ▶ Benefits advice, employment and training support and welfare or education grants.

We want to help even more local people so we have recruited more volunteers and are fundraising via our charity shops and through partnerships or donations to provide more care and community support for local people. We have already increased the number of social activities we run for isolated older people and we are developing more ways to help those who are seeking jobs and training, including people who want to start their own business.

We know thousands of our residents are community-minded and so if you, or anyone you know, would benefit from our care and community projects, or perhaps you would like to offer help by volunteering or fundraising to help us deliver more in your local neighbourhood, we would love to hear from you. We have a waiting list of people who are seeking a befriender so if you have time to help a neighbour, please get in touch.



Kusam is a volunteer befriender and has two befriendees who she visits for one hour every week. Kusam and Anna were matched in 2017 and have been meeting up for a coffee ever since.

“It’s easy to feel isolated and organisations like Octavia bringing people together is very important. It has increased my social life and I feel very supported and valued.”

Anna

“It’s not just Anna gaining something out of it, I look forward to meeting her every week. We respect each other and I don’t know where the hour goes. Octavia do a great job and are very supporting to befrienders as well as the befriendees.”

Kusam

THE YEAR AHEAD

A WORD FROM OUR NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE SANDRA SKEETE



Sandra has more than 30 years experience as a housing professional, including over 20 years at executive level with a range of housing organisations. Sandra currently sits on the Board of One Housing Group and the Duke of Lancaster Housing Trust.

“Octavia has a long and remarkable history. I am proud and excited to lead an organisation with such a clear sense of social purpose. I want to take Octavia to the next phase, to make sure that we stay committed to that purpose and put people first; to build more homes, help more local people and to provide them with opportunities and support, which benefits all of society.

I am greatly looking forward to meeting residents, people who receive care and support services from Octavia or those who take part in one of our many community projects. I will also be making contact with local councillors, members of parliament and community partners to see how we can do more to contribute to improving local areas and providing more opportunities for local people.

I look forward to meeting you.”

Get in touch or find out more

We have lots of other performance information, community events and free services or access to support. If you want to know more visit our website at www.octaviahousing.org.uk or email us at info@octavia.org.uk

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