

OCTAVIA 



Putting residents and
communities first



Residents'
Annual Report
2021-2022



A CEO's perspective on 2021-2022

Octavia Chief Executive
Sandra Skeete

I would like to begin by saying thank you to everyone. We all know how testing the last twelve months continued to be and I am personally very grateful for your help in working with us to enable us to keep our services running effectively and your communities supported.

While the last year saw us doing things differently, it hasn't stopped us from making good progress. In fact, it has made us more determined to tackle inequalities by providing quality homes, care and opportunities.

In this Residents' Annual Report 2021-2022 we share more about how our services are performing and how residents are influencing all areas of our work. While Octavia's performance is strong we want to do better. I have been especially pleased to see how our complaints review, completed in partnership with residents, has led to a direct improvement.

Our Communities Team engaged with more than 3,400 people, providing support and financial aid to residents of all ages.

A portrait of Sandra Skeete, Octavia's Chief Executive, is positioned on the right side of the page. She is a Black woman with long, dark hair, wearing a dark blue blazer over a dark top and a multi-strand necklace with white and silver circular pendants. Her arms are crossed, and she has a slight smile. The background is a soft-focus indoor setting.

Our Communities team engaged with more than **3,400 people**, providing support and financial aid to residents of all ages.

We continued to prioritise fire safety through our building safety programme and despite the challenges, we continued to build more homes for Londoners. We are on track to achieve our affordable homes targets, creating new homes for people in the areas close to where they live and work.

I am pleased to report Octavia's governance is strong and we are a financially resilient organisation. Following the In-Depth Assessment by the Social Housing Regulator in November 2021, we received a G1 rating for governance and our financial viability grade remains V2.



OUR VALUES

- ▶ RELIABLE
- ▶ RESPONSIVE
- ▶ RESPECTFUL
- ▶ RESOURCEFUL

We also welcomed two new people as apprentices to our Board – both brought their knowledge and ideas to Octavia and learnt more about housing governance.

Full details of our Financial Statements 2021-2022 are available on the website:

www.octavia.org.uk/annualreport

I started by saying thank you and I would like to end by thanking our colleagues, volunteers, Board members and partners for their commitment to Octavia and residents throughout 2021-2022.

As we continue to work in partnership and prepare for the economic and social challenges ahead, we remain committed to our ambitions to build on our legacy and serve residents and communities in central and west London.



A resident perspective on 2021-2022



Natasha has been an Octavia tenant for nine years. She joined our resident influence group, Your Voice, in Spring 2021. She reflects on the last year and how the group's members have been involved in scrutinising Octavia's work.

"Your Voice allows Octavia to speak directly to residents about their experience of services," Natasha explains.

"We are representatives for people who receive Octavia's services and it is important for us to be involved in having a say in how things are run.

"If there is anything in particular that residents want Octavia to look into, Your Voice is here to help. It is our opportunity to ask questions and ensure residents are included in decision-making and kept informed."

Natasha said some of the key areas the group looked into in 2021-2022 included:

- ▶ communications around the costs for shared heating/ hot water systems
- ▶ noise nuisance related to hard wood floors
- ▶ fire safety works and the changing safety legislation
- ▶ use of CCTV cameras, and
- ▶ technical problems with the resident app

She feels in her first year the panel was able to positively impact how Octavia listens and responds to concerns, and how it communicates with residents when things go wrong.

Your Voice

Our resident scrutiny group met ten times in 2021-2022, working closely with our colleagues and Board to input into many areas of our work. This included:



Resident welfare due to the impact of Covid



Energy costs/
cost of living



Managing agent service quality and costs



Safety and security



Building safety



National consultation on the Tenant Satisfaction Measures



Complaints



Communications and feedback



Repairs

Resident members also contributed to Octavia's

- [Corporate Strategy, Better Lives for all 2021-2024](#)
- [Communities Strategy, Building on our legacy 2021-2024](#)
- [Environmental Sustainability Strategy, Towards a sustainable future 2022-2025](#)

“Octavia does many things for residents very well, but I think in the past the importance of the feedback loop that Your Voice can provide has not been fully understood. I feel this is changing now and they are definitely getting better at joining up the way they communicate with residents.”

With the increasing pressures of the cost of living crisis and rising energy bills, Natasha says it is vital that Octavia listens to, supports and involves residents as much as it can.

“Rent increases and the cost of heating and hot water are high on everyone’s agenda, so going forward it is more important than ever that we continue to have a dialogue about this. You don’t expect your housing association to have all the answers, but you do want them to be listening to you and trying to help.”

Octavia's year at a glance 2021-2022



Performance

- ▶ **1,789** residents contributed to Octavia's customer and complaints review
- ▶ **97%** of complaints resolved first time by managers
- ▶ **90%** of residents satisfied with last repairs



Affordable sustainable homes

- ▶ **70%** of homes rated C or above for energy performance
- ▶ **240** residents received energy saving advice with last repairs



Communities and care

- ▶ **3,495** residents involved in our communities programme
- ▶ **874** older residents connected through outreach and befriending
- ▶ **105** residents supported into training and employment opportunities
- ▶ **896** young people regularly attended creative activities
- ▶ Extra care schemes rated 'Good' by the Care Quality Commission
- ▶ RBKC Mayor's Award for our outstanding community response to Covid
- ▶ Directed **£519,000** to residents in need through more than **400** Financial advice sessions



Safety

- ▶ Fire Safety Scrutiny Group launched in partnership with residents
- ▶ Supported **170** residents in **96** homes impacted by flash floods in west London



People and culture

- ▶ Involved our **440** colleagues and Board in our new People Strategy
- ▶ Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Taskforce ensures our workplace is fair and inclusive
- ▶ Increased our support to Uplift, our Black Staff Network through our Black Lives Matters (BLM) Commitments
- ▶ LGBTQ network group played a key role in producing a new candidate recruitment pack
- ▶ Ran 'lunch and learn' sessions for all staff around wellbeing, pension planning, menopause and allyship

“Through my apprenticeship, Octavia has supported me to gain a youth work practice qualification. Completing my Level 2 Certificate has motivated me to work towards completing a Level 3 Diploma. I’m grateful to Octavia for sponsoring this next step in my youth work journey.”



How are we doing?

Our performance and finances

Octavia's services performed well this year, meeting our targets and regulatory requirements and comparing positively with other similar housing associations. The constraints of Covid did continue to affect access to properties and the timescale in which we re-let empty homes. We anticipate this to be back on track by 2023.

Thank you to all of you who participated in our customer service consultation throughout 2021-2022. Your input, ideas and suggestions have helped us make improvements to many areas of our work.

Performance Indicator

	2021/2022	2020/2021	London HouseMark Comparison*
Rent arrears as % of rent due	3.34%	3.8%	Upper median
Rent collection as % of rent due	100.08%	100.6%	Upper median
Empty home loss as % of rent due	0.78%	0.5%	Top quartile
Average empty homes re-let time in days	33.65	35	Lower median
Number of ASB cases per 1,000 properties	10	10	Top quartile
% residents satisfied with last repair	90%	87%	Upper median
% properties with valid landlord gas safety certificates	99.97%	100%	Top quartile
% fire risk assessments completed	100%	100%	Not available
Average call answering time in seconds	13	14	Top quartile
Average time (in days) to respond to a complaint	7.5	8	Top quartile

*Compares result with other similar housing associations

Complaints

- ▶ We received 163 complaints in 2021
- ▶ Most complaints concerned Housing Management (handling of ASB), Asset Management (repairs delays and communication around repairs) and Development (leaks and planned works)
- ▶ Average time for a stage 1 response was 7.5 working days – which is a top quartile HouseMark comparison
- ▶ Five complaints were escalated to the Independent Complaints Panel
- ▶ We receive no determinations from the Housing Ombudsman relating to this year

2022 Resident Satisfaction Survey

We carry out independent surveys to find out how satisfied you are with our services, your home and neighbourhood, and whether you think our service represents value for money. Our next survey will be taking place later in the year and we will share the results through our resident newsletter.



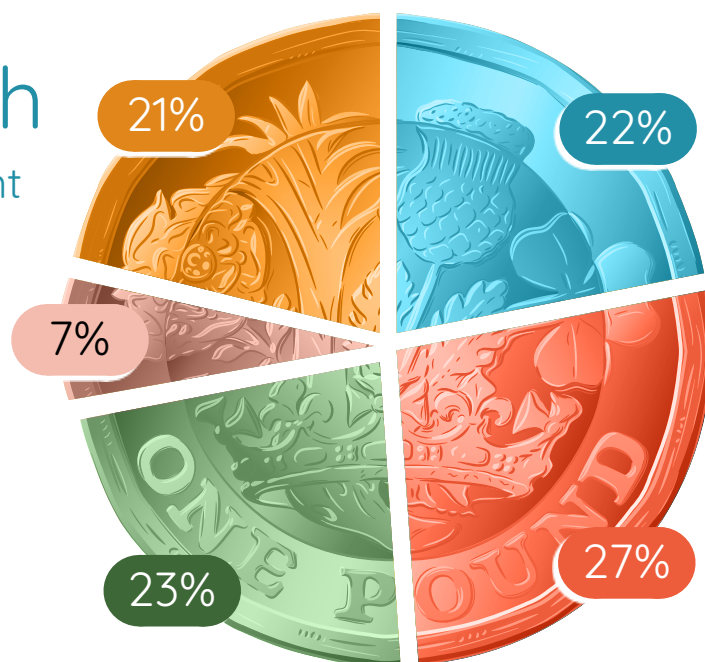
Financial strength

How social housing rent was spent

Value for money is very important to you and very important to us. The diagram shows how social housing rent was spent in 2021-2022.

How every pound is spent

- ▶ Homes management
- ▶ Homes services (service charges)
- ▶ Routine maintenance
- ▶ Planned maintenance
- ▶ Capital use*



*Capital use represents the depreciation cost of our homes during the year.

The table below shows our total income for the year across our business, as well as income from our housing rents. As a not-for-profit organisation, we reinvest our surplus income from rents into our homes and services to residents.

	2020/2021 (£millions)	2021/2022 (£millions)
Total income (turnover)	54.9	60.9
Income from rents	42.8	44
Surplus at 31 March (income minus spend)	1.3	1.7

Our total income was up by nearly £6 million – due to £0.6m increase in first tranche sales for new shared ownership homes, £1.2m increase in social housing rent income and £4.2m government grant received for cladding work.

For more information about our finances, see our Annual Report and Financial Statements 2021-2022. Our financial statements are independently audited annually and are available on our website

www.octavia.org.uk/annualreport

Homes

Octavia manages 5,313 homes across central and west London; providing a range of good quality, safe, sustainable housing. You can see the breakdown of the different types of homes we offer in the diagram below.



Number of Octavia homes at 31 March 2022, by tenure

Tenure	Ownership/ management	Number of homes
General Needs	Owned and managed by Octavia	3,282
	Owned by Octavia and managed by others	2
Intermediate Rent	Owned and managed by Octavia	170
Affordable Rent	Owned and managed by Octavia	527
Supported Housing	Owned and managed by Octavia	166
	Owned by Octavia and managed by others	81
Housing for older people	Owned and managed by Octavia	137
Shared ownership	Sold	488
	Unsold	19
Leaseholders	Managed by Octavia	297
Student	Owned and managed by Octavia	125
Private let	Owned and managed by Octavia	19
Total		5,313

“I attended the complaints workshop and was glad to have my voice heard. I felt listened to and taken seriously.”

Good quality housing requires a responsive, reliable service. This year we spoke to **1,789 residents** to learn how we can improve all areas of our customer service. This has increased resident satisfaction and empowered staff to resolve complaints more efficiently; 97% of our complaints were resolved by service managers. Repairs satisfaction was at 90% in March 2022 with all emergency and urgent works completed on time.



Because we were unable to access everyone's homes due to the constraints of Covid, we ran our planned maintenance programme at a reduced scale. Despite this, we still managed to replace 195 boilers. A larger programme of works is due to begin in early 2023 when we'll restart our kitchen and bathroom refurbishments.

Building safety

Feeling safe in your home is a right not a privilege. During the year we set up a Fire Safety Scrutiny Group involving colleagues and residents to discuss the Building Safety Bill and to make sure all our homes meet changing regulations. At the end of March 2022, 100% of homes had valid fire risk assessments and 99.97% had a current gas certificate. The removal of ACM cladding on one development more than 18 metres high was almost complete at 31 March 2022. Work is underway to two other buildings. Fire safety surveys continue to take place across all our homes.

Sustainable homes

As of 31 March, 70% of our homes were rated C or above for energy performance. During the year we launched our Sustainability Strategy 2022-2025 (developed in partnership with residents) and in November 2021 we became an early adopter of the Sustainability Reporting Standard for Social Housing. We have ambitious targets for all our homes to be C or above by 2030 and to meet 2050 net zero emissions.

New affordable homes for Londoners

Octavia is committed to building affordable homes for Londoners and we are on target to deliver 1,408 new homes by 2023 through The Connected Partnership with Origin Housing and Shepherds Bush Housing Group, which we lead. In September 2021, the partnership was allocated over £55 million to deliver 450 new homes during 2021-2026 as part of the GLA's Affordable Homes Programme. Half will be for social rent, with the other half for affordable home ownership, including shared ownership and London Living Rent tenures.

Through our partnership with Barratt Homes and the GLA, we are delivering a new extra care social housing scheme, providing 60 homes for older people. This project is due to complete in Spring 2023.

Other schemes completed in 2021-2022:

- **Clipstone Mews – Fitzrovia** 15 Intermediate Rent Homes
- **Rome House – West Ealing** – 36 homes for London Affordable Rent and shared ownership

“Octavia has helped me to find a place I can call home. It's top notch. I like cooking and this is somewhere where I can entertain my friends. It's super quiet here but also well connected. I can get to central London in a matter of minutes.”

Jason,
shared ownership
resident

Putting communities first

This year we engaged with 3,495 people through our community services, empowering thousands of people of all ages to live well. This involved; employment and training, outreach and befriending, creative youth services, investment for local grassroots projects, distribution of support grants, running our 14 charity shops and supporting a strong and vibrant volunteering network.

Our new Communities Strategy 2021-2024 'Building on our Legacy' was launched in October 2021. It sets a new target to support and connect with at least 4,400 people a year by 31 March 2024. This target is a direct result of listening to residents and understanding what you need and want from our community services.

“Through the projects I’ve been involved in – a play, a documentary and five films – I’ve gained so much experience. I’ve also received guidance, support and connections that I haven’t got elsewhere.”

Adil



We are hugely grateful to all those who made continuing with our community projects possible. It was a real pleasure for us to be able to thank our volunteers and supporters at Octavia's Community Celebration event at Kew Gardens in December 2021. Here are the highlights of our joint achievements;



406 people volunteered with us to support their local community



105 people were supported with employment and training advice



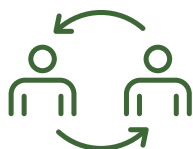
36 people were supported into paid work



242 young people attended regular weekday and school holiday events at Base, our creative youth provision



261 people received emergency food support



874 older people were connected with outreach support to address loneliness. 63% reported a decrease in loneliness and 41% experience improved wellbeing



106 people living on low incomes received grants for essential household items



453 older and/or disabled people received our free handy person or gardener service



896 young people attended activities provided through funding from Octavia's Better Lives Community Fund

Quality care and support



We specialise in compassionate, relationship-based care. We help people in need of care and support to lead better lives through enabling them to be more confident, resilient and less lonely.

We assess the impact of our work through both measuring our performance and by asking people how they feel about the services they receive from us. We are constantly looking to improve and adapt our care services to ensure they fit with customers' needs.

The last year continued to be tough for the care sector. However, the dedication and determination of our colleagues to maintain exemplary standards was just as consistent.

Octavia has seven extra schemes providing 179 homes for older people in central and west London. All were rated as 'Good' in their last Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection, with two rated as 'Outstanding' for responsiveness.

“Dad and I do appreciate everything you (Octavia) have done. We are forever grateful. Daddy is very comfortable and is settling in well thank you – just overjoyed to be back home.”

Relative of resident supported after the July 2021 flood



The Care and Communities team received a Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Mayor's Award for their outstanding response to keeping vulnerable people safe during Covid. The teams also worked with 17 supported households severely impacted by the unprecedented flooding incident in west London in July 2021, helping them to move while necessary works were carried out in their homes.

As we emerged from the pandemic at the end of the year, The Reed, our intergenerational community space in Convent Gardens W11, returned to full operating capacity, offering a range of activities and social events for older people with care and support needs.

We also launched Better Lives, Better Endings in partnership with St Christopher's Hospice, a training resource and toolkit for care staff to support people as they approach the latter part of their lives.

One way our Care colleagues put the project learning into action was through the creation of a memorial garden for residents at one of our extra care schemes. Initiated and developed with residents, the garden provides a space for relaxation and reflection for residents and their visiting family and friends. It opened in November 2021.

Highlights for 2021-2022



94% satisfaction rating from people using Octavia Care and Support



103 sheltered housing residents provided with on-site support



179 people received 3,369 hours of care per week



210 extra care residents took part in tailored activities



163 people benefitted from floating support



19 people able to leave hospital through our reablement units





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