



OCTAVIA 

Resident
Report
2022/23

For the
common good

The CEO'S perspective

“Make homes happy, lives noble, and family life good.”

These are the words of our founder, Octavia Hill.

We want to build on Octavia's heritage for future generations of Londoners while helping residents with the challenges they face today.

Throughout 2022/23, we worked to support people through the ongoing cost of living crisis.

We directly supported more than 4,500 people with services ranging from access to emergency food and energy support to grants. We also worked to build resilience and independence by providing training and employment opportunities to help people find better paid work.

We ran schemes and clubs for children and young people, including at weekends and during school holidays, to support working families and help reduce their childcare bills.

Working with you

We want our residents to be involved in what we do and how we do it, in every part of our organisation. So, in 2022/23, we worked with you to develop our Resident Influence Strategy in order to help us achieve this aim.

The strategy was complemented by our revamped Resident Panel. The new panel, which replaces the former Your Voice group,



is made up of 13 residents and includes a resident Chair. These residents generously gave up their time to work with us so we could hear directly from people who live in our homes about the things that really matter to them. The panel will also enable residents to hold us to account and make sure we are working to improve and get things right in the future.

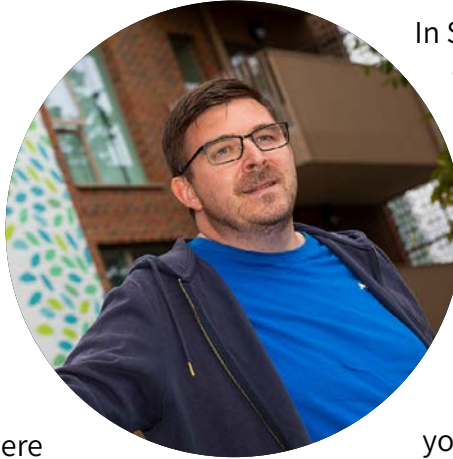
Our new complaints policy, also introduced during the year, is another way people let us know how well - or not - we're doing. This helps us to improve our services, when we are under performing. In 2022/23, 83% of complaints were resolved first time by a service manager.

Our performance

I am pleased to report that despite rising costs affecting the whole social housing sector, our service performance for 2022/23 was strong in most areas.

In terms of repairs, 100% of emergency or urgent incidences were resolved in the agreed target time as were 96% of routine repairs. But we know from your feedback that we don't always do a good enough job and we're working hard to change that.

We recognise a reduction in our overall resident satisfaction levels and we are already working with residents on an improvement plan to address this.



In September 2023, the Regulator for Social Housing downgraded our governance and financial viability grading to G3/V3. This means we are not currently meeting the Regulator's requirements. Please be reassured that this does not affect our services to you. We remain in a good position with our finances and we are doing everything we can to return the organisation to a stronger overall position.

We know things will be tough for the housing sector for some time yet but we're ready for this.

Looking to the future, you will have received a letter recently, informing you about the opportunity for Octavia to explore a partnership with another housing association. We'll be listening very carefully to what you have to say about this and will be working with the Resident Panel before making a decision. In the meantime, I want to assure you that this does not change your tenancy agreement with us. We will continue to manage your home in the usual way and we will keep you updated on developments.

We remain committed to living our Values and building on Octavia Hill's legacy through providing well-managed, sustainable homes for future generations to enjoy and be proud of, for the common good.

Sandra Skeete
Octavia CEO




Residents' perspective

Our Values:
Reliable
Responsive
Respectful
Resourceful



Our new Resident Panel came together for the first time in November 2022. It is made up of 13 residents that represent the full range of Octavia's residencies.

The panel meets with representatives from Octavia regularly, usually once a quarter. Together they look at how we are doing, where we need to improve in terms of our service delivery, and discuss what's on residents' minds.

During the year, the panel and Octavia collaborated on a range of issues, including helping people manage through the cost-of-living crisis, our new policy for the management of damp and mould, the development of our [Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy](#) , and making sure we deliver for residents in line with our Values.

Panel member Ray (pictured above) has been closely involved in creating our Resident Charter, which launched in November 2023.

"The state of the economy is on everyone's minds obviously. Coupled with rent increases, it has fuelled a lot of concern," said Ray.

“The introduction of this new panel is very positive. But we need to do more work to make sure people are aware of it, the role it plays, and what it can do for them.

“The Resident Panel is not just about being the voice of residents and holding Octavia to account. I see us as partners, engaging with each other and working together to deliver for residents.”

Looking ahead to 2023/24, the cost of living will continue to be a top concern for the panel. There is also some concern about Octavia’s recent downgrading by the Regulator of Social Housing and how it may affect our financial and environmental objectives and, ultimately, service delivery.

“Communication with residents will be more important than ever,” said Ray. “It could help to manage people’s expectations, and being more responsive will instill confidence and give residents assurance in these unsettling times.”

Octavia resident Keith (pictured right), who is the panel Chair, agrees that the new panel represents a positive step.

“Octavia is making a conscious effort to involve the Resident Panel in their work and report back on what they have done, if there has been a recommendation from the panel.

“We have created a strong partnership with Octavia. One that has responsibilities on both sides. We hold the organisation to account and work with staff side-by-side on mutual projects.

“Working closely with Octavia on our core priorities of providing good quality homes and services is a good thing for all of us to be involved with.”

Having your say

Our founder Octavia Hill understood the importance of understanding residents’ lives to inform the design of homes and neighbourhoods. Today, we use that same approach when delivering our services, so that we get the best outcomes for you.

With this in mind, in 2022/23 we worked together to develop a new [Resident Influence Strategy](#) 🗨️

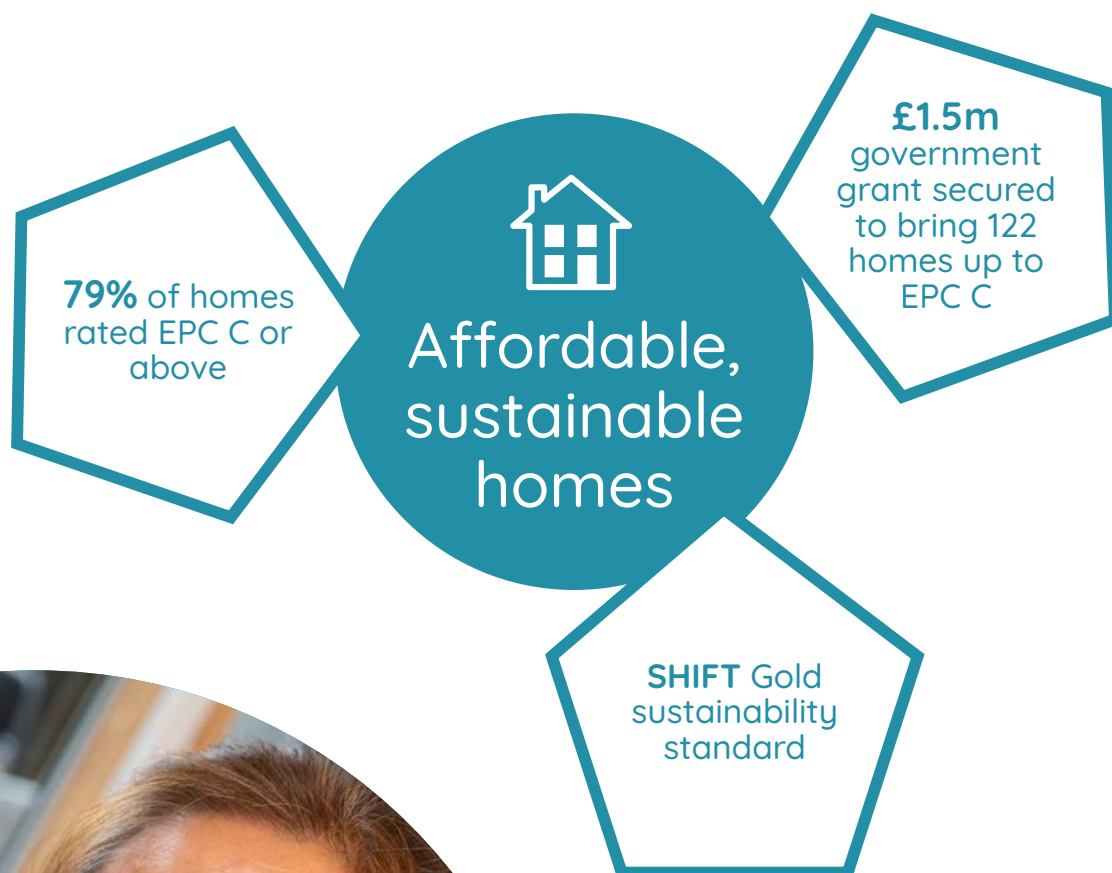
The strategy sets out our commitment to making sure your voices are heard at all levels in the organisation and you are more involved in what we do and how we do it.

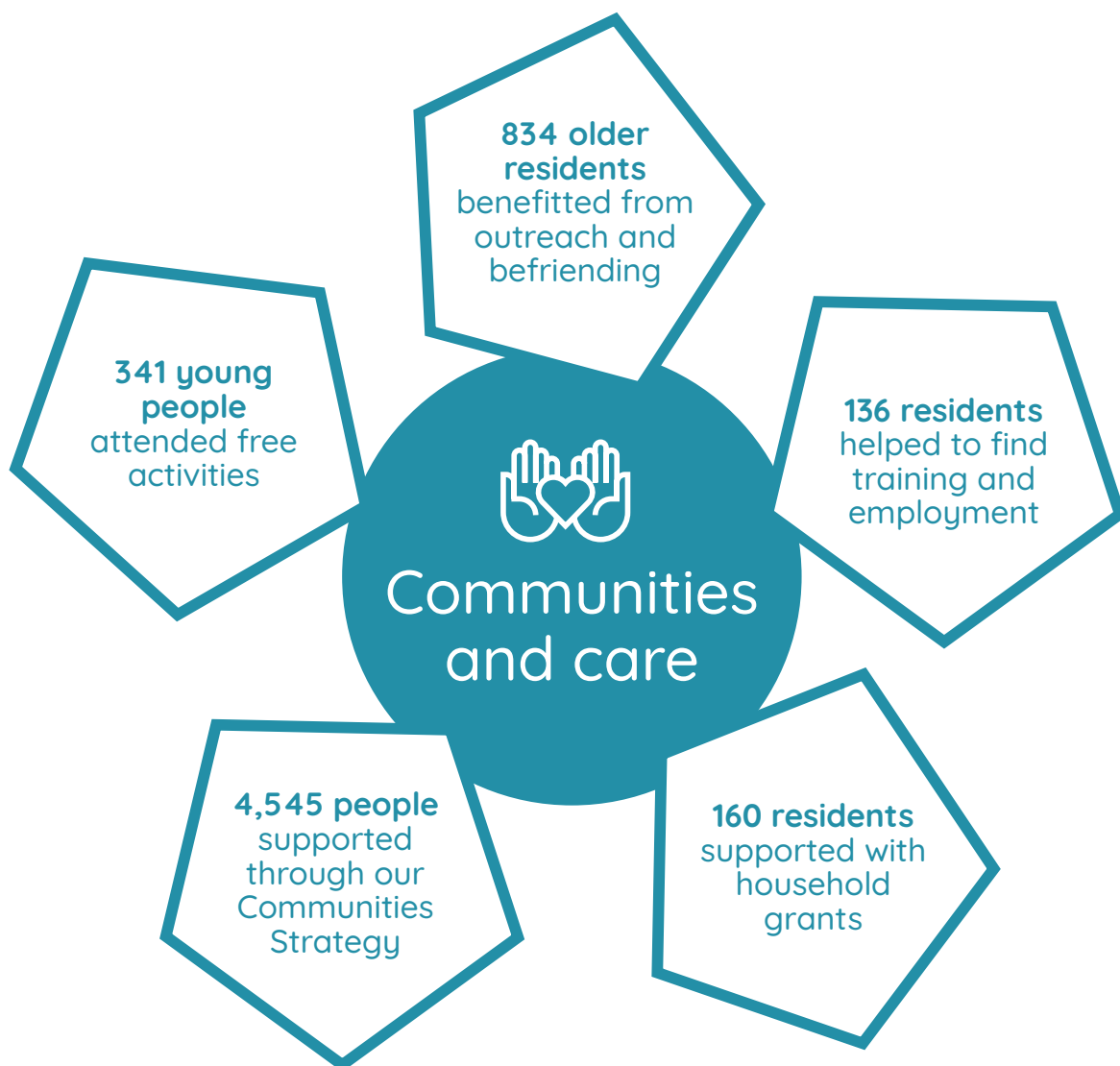
Our new Resident Panel is one development that came out of the strategy. Another is the introduction of our [Resident Charter](#) 🗨️, which was launched in November 2023.

Read more on our website:
www.octaviahousing.org.uk 🗨️



Year at a glance






How are we doing?

Our year in numbers

Our sector is going through a tough time right now, due to rising costs. When we compare ourselves to other providers, we are performing well. But we know from asking residents that some of you are far from happy with everything we do.

We need to do better and we are working with residents to improve. Our commitment to really deliver on our promises is set out in our [Resident Charter](#)  which we introduced in November 2023.

Performance Indicator


	2021/22	2022/23	London HouseMark Comparison*
Rent arrears as % of rent due	3.34%	3.97%	Upper quartile
Rent collection as % of rent due	100.8%	99.5%	Upper quartile
Empty home loss as % of rent due	0.78%	1.2%	Lower quartile
Average empty homes re-let time in days	33.65	34.98	Upper median
Number of ASB cases per 1,000 properties	10	7	Upper quartile
% residents satisfied with last repair	90%	86%	Median
% properties with valid landlord gas safety certificates	99.97%	100%	Upper quartile
% fire risk assessments completed	100%	99.21%	Upper quartile
Average call answering time in seconds	13	10.49	Upper quartile
Average time (in working days) to respond to a complaint	7.5	8.87	Not applicable
% overall resident satisfaction with services	82% (2020)	61%	Lower quartile

*Compares result with other similar housing associations

Complaints

We introduced a new complaints policy in line with the Housing Ombudsman code for complaints. Making a complaint about our service is now easier, particularly via our website.

We received 224 complaints in 2022/23, up from 163 in 2021/22:

- ▶ the average time for a Stage 1 response was 8.8 days and within target
- ▶ 83% of complaints were resolved in the First Stage of our [Complaints Process](#)  (compared to 89% in 2021/22)
- ▶ 49% of complaints were upheld (7% fewer than in 2021/22), 10% were upheld in part, and 41% were not upheld
- ▶ we received two Housing Ombudsman determinations in 2022/23. There were no cases of service failure or maladministration during the year

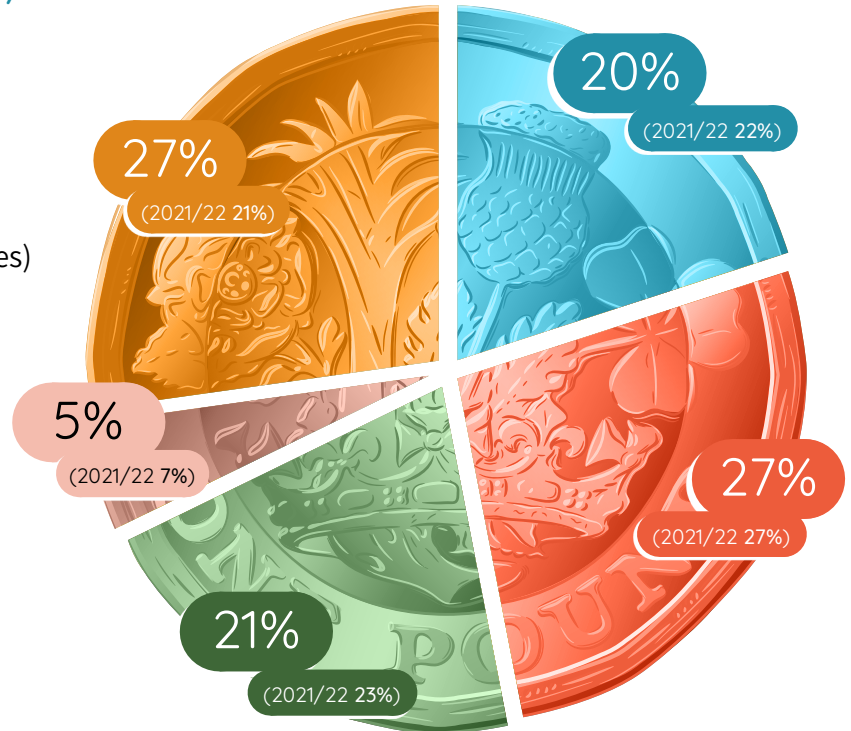
Our finances

The diagram below shows how we spent social housing income in 2022/23:

How every pound is spent

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

*Capital use represents property wear and tear, along with depreciation on disposals of properties, and replacement components such as kitchens and bathrooms



Our homes

We provide more than 5,300 good quality, safe, sustainable, and affordable homes across central and west London. We developed more than 70 new homes this year, 36 for social or affordable rent and 28 for shared ownership, while 11 were Care and Support homes for people with learning disabilities, autism, and diverse needs. We are on course to deliver 2,039 new homes by 2023, beating our target of 1,408.

Type of tenure	Ownership/ management	Number of homes
General Needs		
- Social	Owned and managed by Octavia	3,282
	Owned by Octavia and managed by others	2
- Affordable	Owned and managed by Octavia	493
Shared owner	Sold	494
	Unsold	30
Supported Housing	Owned and managed by Octavia	229
	Owned by Octavia and managed by others	92
Keyworker accommodation	Owned and managed by Octavia	169
Student accommodation	Owned and managed by Octavia	125
Housing for older people	Owned and managed by Octavia	137
Homeowner and other leasehold	Managed by Octavia	315
Market rent	Owned and managed by Octavia	19
Total		5,378

Safety

The safety of residents is our number one priority, so we are pleased to report that, at the end of March 2023, 99.21% of our properties had an in-date and compliant Fire Risk Assessment and 100% had an in-date, accredited gas safety certificate.

We continued with our fire safety works to homes. This included carrying out cladding and external wall inspections and introducing waking watches and extra fire security in homes that needed this.

We had 31 reported cases of anti-social behaviour and there were three reported cases of domestic abuse. We continue to work to raise awareness of domestic abuse and make



sure our staff are trained to recognise it and work with victims and survivors.

There were three reported cases of tenancy fraud, two of which were investigated and closed. We have improved our screening processes at tenancy sign-ups and our staff continue to receive up-to-date fraud awareness training.

Repairs

In 2022/23, 100% of emergency and urgent repairs and 96% of routine repairs were completed within the target time, and we carried out planned maintenance in 77 homes.

Work on homes affected by the July 2021 flash floods in the North Kensington and Westminster area is in its final phase and, over the last 12 months, we provided grants of more than £10,000 to 22 low-income households affected, to help them replace essential household items.

Sustainable homes

79.05% of our homes are rated EPC C or above for energy performance. We are using a £1.5m grant from the government to improve our homes that have energy ratings lower than C.

Octavia retained a Gold accreditation in this year's SHIFT assessment, an environmental sustainability standard specifically for the housing sector.

A place to call home

Octavia shared owner resident Chris (pictured above) bought his new home in February 2023. He chose his two-bedroom ground floor flat from Octavia's 20-home development in Harrow because of its location, transport links, and facilities, and because he felt it was very good value for money.

Chris had been renting in Greenwich for nine years but felt the time was right to get his own space and was impressed with the Octavia property. "It is more spacious than a lot of similar properties in London and it's a smaller development, which is what I was looking for," he said.

As the owner of Coco, his Jack Russell dog, outside space was very important for Chris so he was very pleased to find a home with a balcony and a shared garden.

Since moving in, Chris has made the place his own having decorated throughout.

"I am living close to central London but also near to lots of green spaces, so I have the best of both. I feel I have a sense of security in a place that suits my own needs. It's a place I can call home."

Our communities

Our 'Building on our Legacy' communities strategy, now in its third year, continued to deliver. We supported a record 4,545 residents, beating the target we set ourselves at launch.

The strategy is designed to meet the needs of residents and the wider community and our work supports thousands of people in a number

of ways. They include creating opportunities for training and employment, outreach and befriending services, creative youth services, running our charity shops and volunteer network, and, importantly during a cost-of-living crisis, providing support grants and guidance on budgeting and managing personal finances.



341 young people regularly attended weekday and school holiday events



305 people supported with emergency food or energy support



457 people volunteered with us



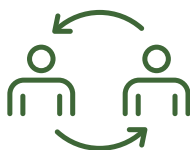
160 residents supported with household grants totalling £46,929



455 older or disabled people provided with home handy person and gardening visits



136 people received training and employment opportunities



834 older people connected with outreach support and community activities



35 people supported into new employment or better paid work



Money Wise

In partnership with the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, we ran a series of successful Money Wise courses. These three-day courses cover topics such as saving techniques, how to spot a bargain, and using energy wisely.

One resident, Evelyn, completed a course in March. "It was absolutely brilliant," she said.

"The course has made me more frugal. I don't waste anything at all. I am even able to help others with their shopping, giving them guidance on price comparisons."

"I learnt so much, from saving money on fuel and shopping to finding the cheapest broadband."

"Now I'm saving and have been able to put enough aside to pay for a new passport. I am also using lots more maths in my day-to-day life and I feel less stressed."

"I would highly recommend this course to everyone."

Building skills and confidence in young people

The Reed is our multi-generational space in North Kensington. It is home to our Base digital youth club, which runs a programme of free school holiday and term-time activities for young people aged 10-25. 341 young people regularly attended our free weekday and school holiday events and activities this year.

As part of our offering for young people in our communities, we also work with specialists and professionals to give them the chance to try their hand at a wide range of creative industries. They include filmmaking, animation, video and music production, photography, and art and graphic design. Our inspiring programme is inclusive, relevant, and aims to build skills and trust.

Recent successes include a series of four broadcast quality films, produced, written, and edited by young people aged 16-25. The films exploring the effects of gentrification were screened at the Childhood Poverty Summit in October 2022 and included a post-screening Q&A session with our filmmakers.

Two other films, tackling the theme of climate change and produced with support from environmental organisation Friends of the Earth, were among a handful chosen from 600 submissions by **Climate Spring**, to add to their resource blog.

[To view the films, check out our YouTube page here](#) 🖱️

The Reed hosts a wide range of activities for residents and other people in the community of all ages. It is also home to the Kensington Day Centre (KDC), where members can enjoy a full programme of daily activities and a freshly cooked lunch. It offers important social connection and stimulation for older people in the community. This year, we worked with the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea to provide an improved transport service, so that more people can travel there and enjoy the benefits of membership.



Our care and support

Highlights for 2022/23

We want all residents, including those with care or support needs, to live as well and as independently as they can and thrive in their homes. Our outreach and support services, together with our seven extra care schemes, all of which are rated 'Good' by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) (with two rated Outstanding for Responsiveness), support this ambition.



158 people received
3,015 hours of care
per week



Seven people
provided with
reablement care



834 older people
provided with outreach
support and community
activities



77% of people engaging
with the Better Lives
programme felt they had
someone to talk to since
joining the service



Adaptations and reablement

Our Adaptations team, working with an organisation called Care and Repair, were able to complete 123 projects that allowed residents to stay living in their homes and retain their independence.

Another part of our care and support services is reablement. This service allows people to leave hospital and receive short-term care in a home environment, before returning to their own homes, if that is possible. Of the seven residents who were provided with this care in 2022/23, five returned home, or moved to a higher level of residential care.



Staying connected

Our Better Lives Programme helps prevent older residents living in our communities from feeling isolated and lonely and creates volunteering opportunities. Last year we connected 834 older people with outreach support and community activities, including 265 who received one-to-one and group befriending.

The Better Lives, Better Endings project, delivered in partnership with St Christopher's Hospice, helps extra care residents to keep living at home towards and up to the end of their life, if that's what they want. We have also created more Memorial Garden spaces for extra care residents, to offer a relaxing space for reflection for them, their visitors, and Octavia care staff.





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