



2020

Customer
annual review



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Welcome

Every year we share our customer annual report, where we update you on how we're performing in key areas across Catalyst.

For 2020, a year of a lot of change for everyone, we wanted to do something a bit different.

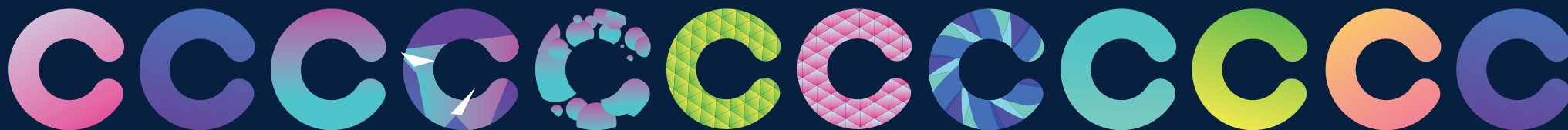
We've put together a year in review for customers, focusing on those areas of the business you told us you wanted to know more about, through our customer survey.

We'll also share how we've adapted services during the Covid-19 pandemic.

This includes:

- How we've kept everyone safe and well
- How we kept our contact centres open as the first national lockdown began
- How your feedback has made a difference in 2020
- Important business updates and how these affected you
- How our services at community centres and local offices have changed
- How we have adjusted our community services
- How you can get involved and have your say.

If you have any questions about the 2020 customer annual review, or you'd like to get involved in the production of our next customer annual review, please contact us at info@chg.org.uk





Keeping you updated

Our 2020 customer survey

At the start of 2020, we ran our biggest customer survey yet. With over 1,800 surveys completed, it was a great reflection of your views across different homes and locations.

What you told us

Thanks to your feedback on our communications, we know you want to read more about things happening in your local community, as well as saving money and updates to services.

We've also seen a change in the way you want to talk to us, with more customers using our online forms to get in touch and report repairs.

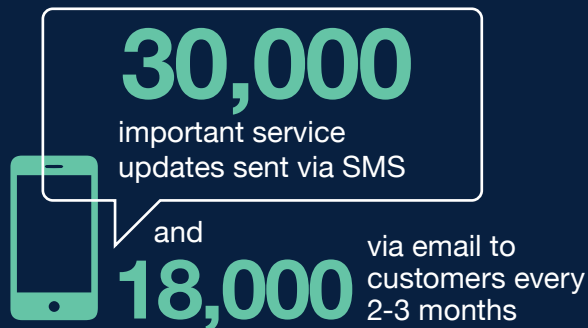


9 out of **10**
customers read our
Catalyst magazine

all our important updates, and sent a letter updating approximately 34,000 customers.

Inclusive and accessible customer communications

We want all our communications with you to be inclusive and accessible. We understand that everyone has different needs, and we're working hard to develop our communication channels to help you access the information and services you need.



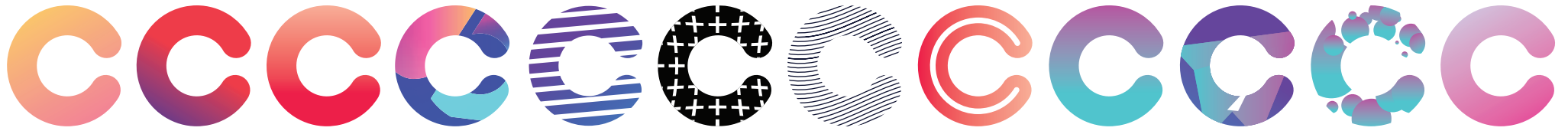
Adapting our communications during Covid-19

The first national lockdown dramatically changed our service delivery, which we needed to communicate to all customers swiftly and effectively. In April 2020 we created a coronavirus section on our website with

Our quarterly Catalyst magazine is sent to

28,000





Translation services

Some of our customers have told us that they would like help with translating the communications we share with you. We've introduced an internal directory of colleagues who speak a range of languages. These colleagues can be contacted by our teams to help translate for customers, if needed.

Many of you have told us how you'd like to be contacted. We're currently reviewing and updating our customer database to make sure we can record your preferences correctly. There'll be more on this in 2021.

Continuing our digital journey

Our website is one of our main platforms for sharing information and services with you, and we know that you want this to be more accessible and easier to use. In 2020, we held eight online workshops with 25 customers, where we discussed our digital platforms.

We still need your help with this. If you'd like to get involved, please email get.involved@chg.org.uk

We're working hard to adapt our current communications to make sure you're receiving the news and information that is important to you, and in the right way for you.

Find out more about our new customer online community - The Garden at thegarden.chg.org.uk



You can subscribe to our email newsletter at chg.org.uk/our-email-newsletters



You can read our Catalyst magazine online at chg.org.uk/customer-communications



Visit our website for all the latest news, updates and service information at chg.org.uk/resident-news

Follow us on social media



[@catalysthousing](https://twitter.com/catalysthousing)



[Catalyst Housing Limited](https://www.facebook.com/CatalystHousingLimited)



Maintaining services during lockdown

Following the announcement of the first national lockdown in March 2020, 37 colleagues from our contact centres moved to working from home, in less than 24 hours and with no break in service.

This was made possible through the implementation of our new telephony system and the support of our IT teams.

As we gradually remobilised day-to-day services in July and August, our call volumes increased. We made sure we actioned and prioritised outstanding and new repairs whilst continuing to deliver services.

Making sure you receive the best service

We continue to strive to deliver excellent customer service and undertake regular call handing quality reviews, to make sure we meet performance targets and the standards you expect.

Our contact centre colleagues also respond to queries on our social media, email and online forms.

We will:

- Aim to resolve your query at first point of contact
- Call you back within three working days, if we can't resolve your query straight away
- Always send an immediate acknowledgement to your email and respond within ten working days
- Respond to your question on social media within one to two hours between 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday.

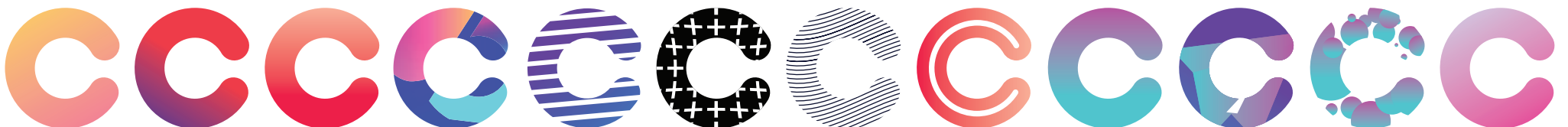
Over **5,000** repairs rebooked and completed from first lockdown

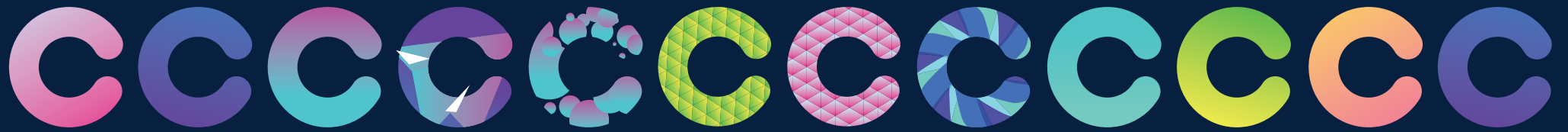


120,823 calls received



8,993 emails received





‘Whenever I call them, the staff are quick to answer and to put me through to the person I need to speak to. If they can’t transfer me then and there, the staff make sure to pass on the message and the person gets back to me as soon as possible’

Customer feedback





Supporting our colleagues

When the March lockdown began, most of our colleagues started working from home. We kept them updated by sending regular frequently asked questions, along with vlogs from our CEO, Ian McDermott.

We know that positive colleague wellbeing leads to better productivity and a greater service to you. We ran regular colleague wellbeing sessions throughout the year, including physical wellbeing - yoga and HIIT sessions, mental wellbeing - talks and regular meetings with managers, financial wellbeing - budget webinars, TED talks and more.

Keeping everyone safe and well

During a national shortage, we worked hard to find and supply customer facing teams with the correct personal protective equipment (PPE) such as face masks, face visors, hand sanitiser and anti-bacterial wipes.



for virtual sessions held by leadership team

‘I have found delivering the services on the frontline way more challenging since the start of Covid-19. However, we have found a way by working with the relevant PPE and putting safeguards in place, which has allowed us to still provide the essential services needed to our customers as much as possible throughout the last year’

Matthew, Housing Services Officer





How you made a difference

Despite the challenges of Covid-19, we've created new opportunities for you to interact with us and share your unique insights.

We created Catalyst Voice

Catalyst Voice is our community of over 1,200 engaged customers, across London and the Home Counties. In 2020, involved customers took part in workshops, attended events and got involved in improving our services.

We collaborated with you

We held a series of fun, energetic and creative co-creation sessions with 50 customers, throughout January and April 2020. The mixed session with colleagues and customers involved feedback and solution-driven thinking about areas and services you've said we can improve.

We're now using this important feedback to help us develop our customer promises and shape our services to reflect our values, and earn and keep your trust.

We invested in our resident groups

We encourage customers to come together to champion local issues, and help us get valuable insight too. We've provided financial support to six resident groups this year, for things such as venue costs and activities.

Want to start your own residents' group?

Download our guide at:
chg.org.uk/help-improve-your-local-neighbourhood

Helping us Build Back Better

We were joined by 25 customers for our Build Back Better sessions in September and October. These creative sessions helped us understand what really matters to customers.

We held two youth sessions as well, with a group of customers aged 9-12 and 13-18. These unique groups of younger customers told us how we can help create homes and services they love.

'I like getting my issues heard and I liked knowing progress is being made'
Build Back Better, customer feedback

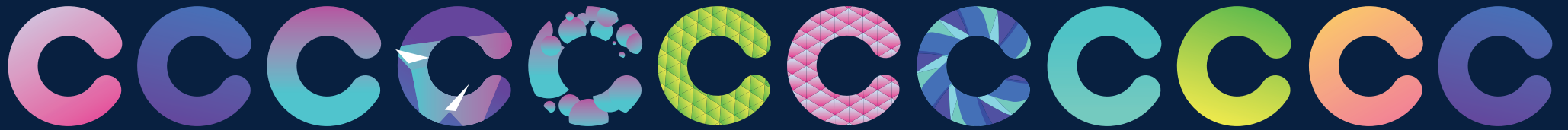
The Garden

We launched our first online customer community - a space to grow ideas and collaborate on projects and service improvements.

Join The Garden by visiting
thegarden.chg.org.uk

Find out more about getting involved, by emailing get.involved@chg.org.uk or visiting chg.org.uk/getinvolved





**'I really enjoyed Catalyst
in listening mode, I liked
the proactive approach
and structure around
pre-defined questions'**

Co-creation workshop, customer
feedback





Here to help you

The wellbeing project was introduced in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. We knew that many of our customers would be affected and we wanted to let you know that we're committed to supporting you in any way we can.

In April 2020, we gathered a group of 20 colleagues to form our Wellbeing team, to start making calls to customers to see how they were doing and if they needed any support.

Since April, we've called customers offering a range of support, including signposting to local external services like befriending and mutual aid groups, as well as food banks and food distribution networks.



Our Wellbeing team called

7,942 customers
(April-December 2020)



151

referrals to our employment specialist teams

We've been able to offer access to emergency fuel and food grants, as well as providing digital devices and intensive training to digitally excluded households. We've also helped customers with employment and financial support through our specialist teams.

We know that the long-term impact of Covid-19 is still being felt by many. We'll continue to offer wellbeing, financial and employment support to all our customers.

'I wanted to say thank you for issuing me with a food voucher. I also wanted to say what a kind, caring and professional man Warren is. His kindness in listening to my story truly lifted my day and spirits.'

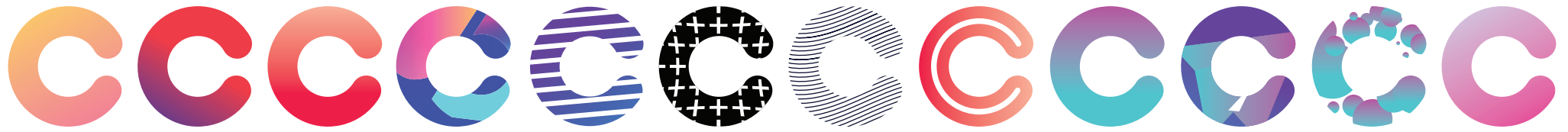
Customer feedback, Wellbeing team

Find out more about the Wellbeing team and how to get in touch on our website at chg.org.uk/wellbeing-support

583

customers received money and benefits advice





Catalyst Housing Charitable Trust (CHCT) grants

- 6 community chest grants have been awarded
- 4 clearance grants have been awarded
- £76,434.38 spent (Apr-Dec)

Customer support fund

- 296 customer support fund grants have been awarded
- £18,405.63 spend (Apr-Dec)

‘As the first national lockdown progressed, I felt as if I was struggling to cope. I wasn’t sure who to speak to about the difficulties I was having. I received a call from a member of the Wellbeing team, which really helped me’

Customer feedback, Wellbeing team



166

individual CHCT grants awarded



Awarded **30**

community-based organisations across our communities with grants



Independent living

We provide various independent living services across all our locations, such as supported housing, older people's services, retirement accommodation and our young person's service. It was a busy and complex year for our independent living services. Many of our teams are scheme based and continued to offer socially distanced support, developing how they deliver services to make sure all our customers continued to receive the support they need.

Older person's service

During the first national lockdown, like many services, our teams were unable to contact customers face-to-face. We increased welfare calls from every four days, to every two days - making around 1,800 calls a week to our customers.

To help lift the spirits of our customers during the pandemic, our teams have facilitated

socially distanced support sessions and picnics, and even held birthday parties in the communal gardens.

Our housing support managers helped customers with filling in forms, paying bills and general advice and support to access benefits.

'One of my elderly couples started struggling to pay their utility bill during lockdown, after their utility company could not attend site and started sending overestimated bills. I contacted the utility company on their behalf several times, until I managed to resolve the issue. The couple's bill ended up being £94.41 in credit instead of being hundreds of pounds in debt. This reduced their anxiety and stress, which was already taking a toll on them.'

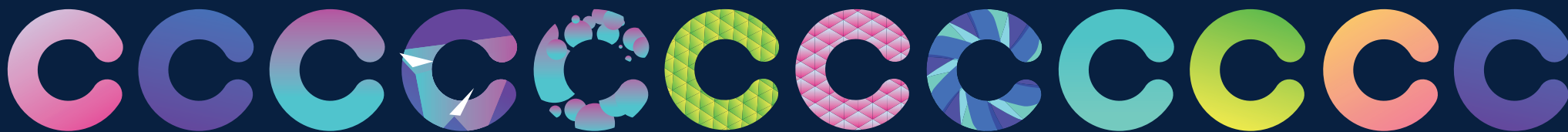
Alice, Housing Support Manager

Our Reading based older person's service supported customers to receive food parcels and access important benefits too.

'During lockdown Catalyst and especially Donna, have been very helpful and supportive. We have received help during, after and before lockdown, with important issues such as forms, paperwork, financial situations ie benefits and electricity. Also welfare checks to see if you're doing ok, checking the building for safety and sometimes even the odd food parcel when things got tight. A big thank you Donna and Catalyst for all your support.'

Aaron, resident at Asantewa House





Young Person's Service (YPS)

Our young person's service (YPS) has worked tirelessly to provide a valuable service to all our vulnerable young people throughout the pandemic. To make sure they could continue supporting customers, all teams had to adapt new ways of working.

At the height of the first national lockdown, although our teams remained scheme based, most of their support was via the phone. The team made 1,394 welfare calls to customers in just one week in May 2020.

Facilitating activities for young people in the service throughout the pandemic has been challenging, with many of the usual group activities having to be paused. Project teams worked hard to come up with different ways to engage with the young people in their schemes.

During Black History Month, colleagues created notice board displays with inspirational quotes, information and pictures to engage and start conversations about the national event. Some schemes also facilitated a socially distanced quiz and cooking evenings.

'The YPS service continued to provide support to some of the most vulnerable 16-25 year olds throughout the pandemic. Phone support has replaced face-to-face contact in most cases, and we have continued to see our residents move-on to more permanent accommodation in a structured way'

Mika, Service Manager



Key living

Our key living schemes provide much needed accommodation for frontline key service workers, such as NHS staff, emergency services, education and public transport workers. In 2020 it became even more apparent how important key workers are to the community.

‘Covid-19 has turned everything on its head and we’ve all realised that the term key worker applies to lots more professions than nurses and fire fighters.

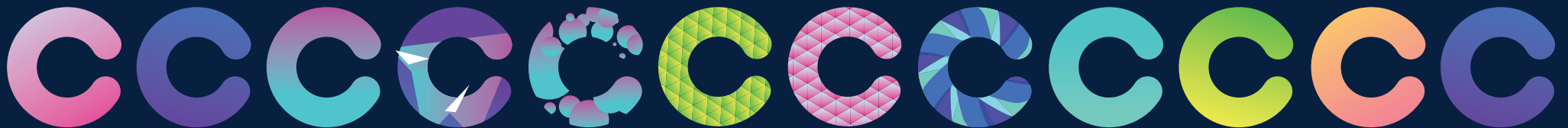
‘They’ve all been working throughout this unprecedented time. Many of them work unsociable hours or irregular shift patterns, so it’s really important we continue to support them with our affordable, convenient, high-quality accommodation.’

Charlotte, Specialist Services Manager

‘I’ve been out of work for six months, which has now affected my salary. It has been a tough year for me, I lost my grandad and best friend to Covid-19, and my dad is currently unwell with Covid-19, which is worrying me.

My resident officer has been very supportive and kind, showing a lot of compassion towards my situation. She’s helped me and referred me for financial support’

Customer feedback, Key living





Helping you move

Moving home in 2020 gave us new and unexpected challenges, including uncertainty due to lockdown, social distancing requirements and keeping everyone safe.

Our teams worked quickly to make changes to how we manage the moving process, keeping everyone safe and updated at all times:

- We introduced virtual viewings, taking multiple photos to create photo-montages and video tours to provide virtual viewings
- We've conducted face-to-face viewings with interested applicants, by seeing one customer at a time and increasing the gap between appointments
- We introduced online and over the phone sign ups and meetings, to minimise face-to-face contact.





Our communities

A huge part of the Communities team’s service is working locally in our neighbourhoods and community centres to offer support, events and activities for you. Throughout the pandemic the team worked hard to maintain key services such as employment and digital support; whilst moving many of our services and events online.

‘When the pandemic hit, we had to shut all the youth clubs and community centres, making it more challenging to engage with our young people. Colleagues and partners came together and I’m very grateful we were able to deliver an online summer programme with activities packs, which also inspired other partners to get involved and help young people.’

Hafi, Youth Engagement Team Leader



received activity packs throughout the summer

Our summer programme

The Communities team provided a packed calendar of events for families and young people for 306 different households, from 19 local authority areas.

Here’s some of the highlights:

- Launched an online easy sign-up form
- Supported families to get online, through our digital inclusion team
- Provided wellbeing advice and support

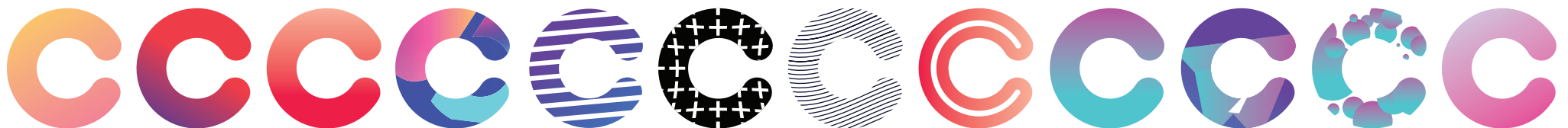
- Online drama workshops, exercise classes and music clubs
- 12 virtual projects
- Our summer cycling programme.

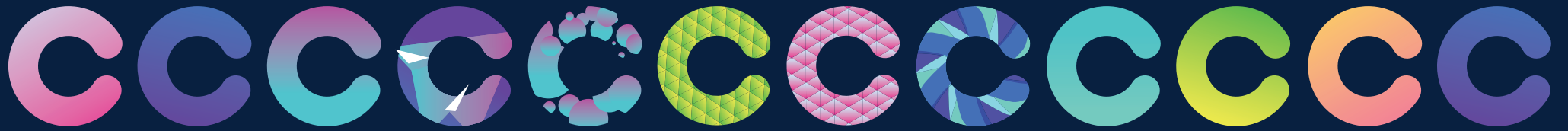
‘We got some really great feedback from customers who found it really useful. We even heard from one customer who was so pleased the sessions helped fix their bike, helping them get back on the road to cycle to work.’

Nick Manthorpe, London Bike Hub

Our Futures programme

We worked with the EY Foundation to support eleven 16-19 year olds through the ‘Our Futures’ programme. Running until April 2021, our young people have taken part in a training week, been matched with a mentor, and will get a chance to gain valuable experience with teams from across Catalyst.





'I went from a stuttering mess over the phone, to being able to articulate myself properly. My self-confidence and communication skills have definitely improved. It's crazy how in just one week, I managed to learn so much, I can only imagine what new skills I will learn in the coming weeks, I really enjoyed it'

Qulsuma, Our Futures participant





Making sure you received essential services

As the first national lockdown approached, we prioritised our essential services to make sure measures were in place to keep you, our colleagues and contractors safe.

Estate services

We made sure that:

- All our colleagues had the correct PPE to keep everyone safe and well
- We continued to provide a full and enhanced communal cleaning services to our blocks, with a focus on sanitising frequently touched areas such as handrails, lift buttons and communal door handles



45,000
scheduled cleans



24,925
gardening visits

- An essential gardening and maintenance service of basics such as cutting the grass and keeping hedges trimmed continued
- Changing schedules to limit contact between teams and customers and reduce the potential spread of Covid-19
- Important safety checks within buildings such as emergency lighting and fire alarm tests continued
- Moving all colleague meetings to online, enabling us to check-in with our frontline teams and make sure they had everything they needed
- We carried out over 850 inspections and cleaned 902 blocks every week.

Our Estate Services teams and contractors were in our communities, keeping you updated and making sure our neighbourhoods were clean and maintained.

‘They do a good job with gardening and cleaning etc. The services are on point.’

Customer feedback, Estates services



completed
4,161
emergency repairs during the first national lockdown



Keeping everyone safe

As we were going into customer homes and communal spaces, we wanted to make sure that everyone felt safe. All our repairs colleagues and contractors were kept up-to-date on changes to services and the measures in place.

We produced a series of written guides for customers including what to expect when a contractor visits your home for a repair.

Repairs

- Our day-to-day repairs were put on hold until 1 July, when a staggered service was gradually reintroduced
- Emergency repairs continued throughout, without a break in service
- Empty homes repairs and maintenance continued, with the team assisting our allocations team with virtual viewings
- Gas servicing was maintained with the support of our partnering contractors
- Communal repairs continued throughout, without a break in service.

You can read our Covid-19 and repairs guide at chg.org.uk/repairs-and-maintenance

‘Catalyst do routine general checks; I don’t have to worry and feel secure. If there are any problems Catalyst rectify them straightaway’

Customer feedback, Estates services





Building new homes and communities

New homes

Despite 2020 being a challenging year, we continued to build more high-quality affordable homes across London and the Home Counties, for those who need them most.

Some of our latest developments include:

- The Lanes at Thorn Fields, Houghton Regis
- The Printworks, Dunstable
- The Switch, Wimbledon
- Littlemore, Oxford

Regeneration

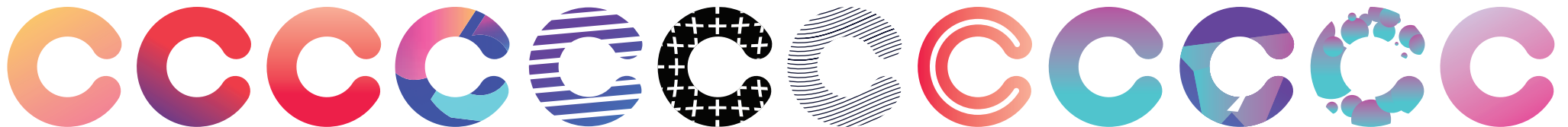
In September, we completed the first phase of the Havelock estate regeneration in Southall, delivered in partnership with Ealing Council. We built 291 new homes, with over 55 per cent available new homes for social rent, London Affordable Rent, shared ownership and a fixed-equity product designed for leaseholders that lived on the existing estate.

The project also won the Best Regeneration Project category in the Evening Standard New Homes Awards 2020.

Not to be outdone, Bond Mansions, the second phase of Portobello Square regeneration, won Best Urban Regeneration at the First Time Buyers Awards in October.

In 2020 we continued to collaborate with Oxford City Council to carry out virtual consultation on the redevelopment of two sites in Blackbird Leys. Our proposals include new social housing, a new community centre and new shops, alongside improved green and public spaces.

Last autumn's round of consultation included a design pack and freepost questionnaire sent to 5000 homes in the neighbourhood, a consultation website, and a series of webinars where local people could ask their questions to the team.





St. Ann's Hospital - Haringey, London



Fire safety

Fire and building safety remain a top priority for us. We work closely with the fire and rescue services to make sure that our buildings and procedures meet all statutory requirements and regulations.

Here's some of the areas of fire safety we've been working on in 2020:

- We are in year two of our five-year fire safety programme, to ensure all our buildings above 18 metres meet current regulations
- Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) cladding has been removed from all our buildings that are over 18 metres. This includes Crossway Point, Dan Court and Merle Court
- Eight communal fire alarm and detection systems fitted to high-rise buildings where fire safety works are underway or planned, benefiting 586 households
- Nine grant applications to the Government's Building Safety Fund (BSF) on behalf of 238 leaseholders, to help fund works for nine high-rise buildings to any wall cladding materials that need to be removed and replaced
- Fire safety consultation with 351 engaged customers, which has resulted in 30 customers expressing an interest in joining our building safety group
- Improved fire safety information for customers on our website at chg.org.uk/fire-safety



£20m

spent on fire safety works



2,194

fire risk assessment actions completed in communal areas

1,038

fire risk assessments completed





Working with you to develop our approach to fire safety

In July, 67 Catalyst Voice customers who live in blocks completed our fire safety survey. Over half of you told us you want your fire risk assessment (FRA) presented in an easy-to-understand way, including immediate actions.

Following your feedback, we'll also be looking at ways to share your FRA with you online and via email. More coming on this in 2021.

How we're using your feedback

We created a dedicated fire and building safety area of the website, at chg.org.uk/fire-safety

We've also set-up a fire safety inbox firesafetyworks@chg.org.uk as well as opportunities to get involved in shaping our services on The Garden at thegarden@chg.org.uk





Complaints and suggestions

During the first national lockdown, the team achieved a four-day average handling time for stage 2 complaints, which was previously 13 days before the lockdown.

We've seen a 19% decrease in complaints logged in 2020 in all service areas, except repairs. With 5% decrease in housing and neighbourhood complaints since April 2020.

Dealing with repairs complaints

All repairs complaints we received before lockdown were investigated and any urgent repairs were booked in and completed.



repairs were rebooked and completed by July



Total weekly complaints received, reduced on average from 50 before the pandemic to 38

All non-urgent repairs were added to a central repair spreadsheet and actioned once we remobilised our services in July 2020.

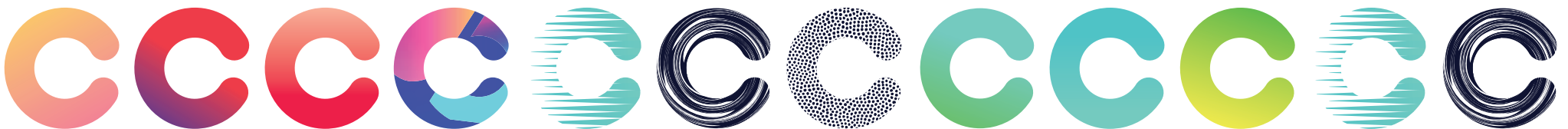
Improving our complaints process

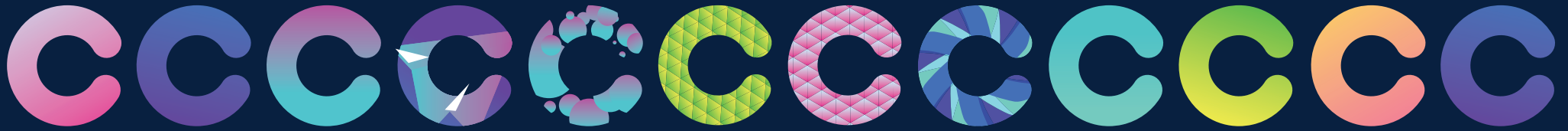
In consultation with our involved customers, we've updated our complaints policy - making it clearer and simpler. We want to make sure your complaint is resolved quickly and efficiently while driving service improvements too.

What's new?

- We'll now accept complaints for any service failure within the last six months
- The complaints process is now a two-stage process instead of three, with the second and final stage being an appeal stage
- The final appeal stage will now be carried out by a manager or above, who has not been previously involved in the complaint.

You can find out more about our complaints process at chg.org.uk/complaints





'I would like to say a huge thank you to Alexandra and Beverley for your fast and very helpful response to my complaint during this difficult time for everyone'

Customer feedback, Resolution team





Working together for safer communities

Our Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) team had to change the way they worked with both customers and partner agencies, to manage our neighbourhoods.

In a time where more of us were at home, and with the closure of schools, gyms and shops - we had to get used to living with each other as our lifestyles changed.

Types of ASB reports in 2020

As a result of these lifestyle changes, we saw a 70% increase in reports of noise nuisance, neighbourly disputes and reports of breaches to government Covid-19 restrictions.

Our ASB team responded to reports within one working day, working with you to find solutions and reduce anti-social behaviour.

Noise

We supported customers to self-resolve disputes and agree positive ways forward. We also worked with local authority noise teams to assist with any further action needed.

Neighbourly disputes

Mediation was used successfully to help customers understand the differences in everyday living noise and how this can affect others.

Breaches to government Covid-19 restrictions

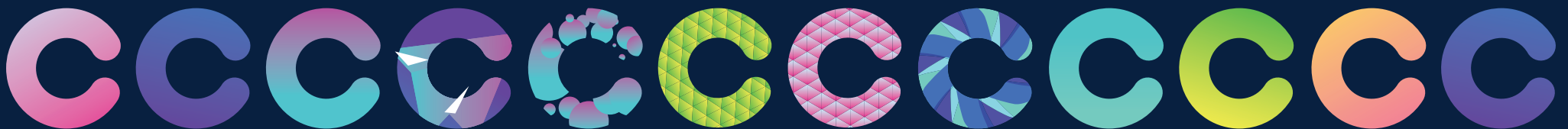
All customers who reported a breach in government restrictions were advised to contact the police who have the power to enforce the rules.

New methods and approaches

The team's partnership working didn't change. Engagement and inclusive working developed, as partners were able to join meetings via video conference calls.

This gave the team better opportunities to make sure that customers were receiving the right help from the right people, where needed.

The team did have to change the way they dealt with higher level ASB. This involved more collaborative working with the police and courts to carry out partial closure orders to support our customers, stop the anti-social behaviour and action more injunctions.





Our ASB team worked on a case involving an ongoing anti-social behaviour problem, by unknown individuals from a nearby estate.

The team worked with our legal team, local police and solicitors to obtain an unknown person's injunction, to cover the entire scheme.

The injunction was granted, which stopped all anti-social behaviour within the scheme almost immediately. Customers living within the scheme now feel safer and happier in their homes and the team continue to work with them, to make sure similar issues don't return.

'The injunction was not only the first of its kind in Westminster but has had an amazing affect. The level of ASB we had on this estate was up there with our worst, and suddenly we no longer need to visit. I do foresee this becoming a standard for other estates who suffer similarly high levels of ASB'

Sujan Miah, Metropolitan Police Service





Income maximisation

2020 has been one of the most uncertain and difficult years for many customers. Covid-19 has impacted many people's jobs, either through furlough, reduction in paid hours and redundancies. This has led to many customers having to claim benefits, often for the first time in their lives.

Our Income Maximisation team makes over 1,500 calls to customers every week; offering financial support, helping customers with budgeting, assisting them to navigate the benefit system and referring them to the Wellbeing team for additional support, when needed.

The team has conducted on average

11,000

income related actions each week



and helped customers obtain

£1m

housing related benefits

'Thank you for additional information, I am a nurse so still working. It's nice to know there is support if needed. It takes the pressure off.'

**Customer feedback,
Income Maximisation team**

Many customers regularly under-claim on the benefits they're entitled to. The team has proactively contacted many of our elderly and more vulnerable customers, to help them make sure they're accessing everything they need.

The Income Maximisation team will continue to focus on supporting customers to prevent arrears and help them access the benefits, grants and funding they're entitled to.



1,500

calls to customers every week



‘Many of our residents faced unforeseen challenges due to Covid-19. As an income specialist I’ve helped them with Discretionary Housing Payments, Universal Credit or Housing Benefits, referred them to our Wellbeing team for support with food and fuel vouchers, and their local authority when needed too’

Samirah, Income Specialist



We'd like to hear your thoughts on our 2020 customer annual review

We want to make sure that you receive all the information you would like to know about in our future annual reviews.

If you have any thoughts or ideas or you would like to influence what's included, please get in touch at editor.catalystmagazine@chg.org.uk



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