

HOW DID WE DO?

OCTAVIA RESIDENT'S ANNUAL
REPORT 2017/18



Every year we report on some of the important things that we, together with the many residents and local people we work with, have done in the last 12 months. We publish lots of extra performance data including our full Annual Report and Financial Statements, which you can view on our website or you can ask for information to be sent to you but for now...

Here is a summary of the difference we have made in the areas that you have told us are most important to you:

HOW DID WE DO?

! You said:

Fire safety was your top priority.

✓ We did:

Residents voted fire safety as their most important area of interest last year. We want all our residents to feel safe in their homes. After the terrible incident at Grenfell Tower, the Government issued lots of new advice and recommendations practically for tall buildings. We have followed this closely, consulting with residents and setting out plans to carry out any upgrades or extra works where necessary. Every block has a fire action plan displayed in the communal area and we have been sharing advice from our Health and Safety team as well as the London Fire Brigade on how you can do small things to help prevent fires from starting.

FIRE SAFETY ASSESSMENTS
COMPLETED

100%

% OF GAS APPLIANCES WITH
CURRENT CERTIFICATE

100%



! You said:

We want a say in the new repairs contract.

✓ We did:

Every 10 years the contract for our repairs service comes up for review, and new contractors are invited to pitch for the job. The Tenant Steering Group and other 'involved' residents (those on regular panels and committees) told us how important it was to involve residents in the process to select a new repairs contractor – so we did. We held an open house consultation at our annual community day (Your Space 2017) and a separate focus group. We included your priorities in the list of things that we asked prospective contractors to cover in their pitches.

We have also been looking at how we can make it easier for residents to book and arrange repairs appointments in the new contract.



% REPAIRS COMPLETED WITHIN TARGET TIME

99%

*Target times vary depending on the urgency of the repair for example target times for emergencies are 24 hours, for urgent repairs are 5 working days and routine repairs are 15 working days.

% SATISFIED WITH COMPLETED REPAIRS

95%

(target 93%)

834

PLANNED WORKS CARRIED OUT

(longer term maintenance like roofing and painting the outside of homes).

You can become a more 'involved' resident and give your feedback by visiting our website or contacting our Resident Involvement Manager.

! You said:

It is important to contact you when we have said that we will.

✓ We did:

We appreciate that it can be frustrating when you don't get a call back if we have promised to do so. Often it's because staff are still working on a resolution but we are trying to improve the way we keep you updated.

Resident inspectors helped us to remind staff about call service standards and mystery call tests showed great improvement.

We have also made some major changes to the way we deal with any enquires from residents or people who use our services and we have developed our IT systems to match. Now a lot of enquires can be dealt with at the first point of contact directly with our customer contact team, which means you get a faster resolution, first time.

We are also working on creating an improved online service system so that you can report repairs and access other services from your mobile phone, a PC or a mobile device in a much easier way.



AVERAGE CALL
ANSWERING IN SECONDS

14

SECONDS
(on target)

* You will know from your experience of calling other organisations that this is a speedy response time and we want to keep it that way.

OUR CONTACT AND
REPAIRS LINES RECEIVED
APPROXIMATELY

70,000

CALLS LAST YEAR.



! You said:
Fuel bills are a worry.

✓ We did:

We have been working hard to improve the energy efficiency of homes because it means fuel bills are cheaper for residents and its better for the environment. During the year Octavia was recognised as 'Sustainable Housing Provider of the Year' at the annual SHIFT Sustainability Awards for our approach to improving energy efficiency for residents and we have been working with two resident volunteers to help us spread the word to more residents about how we can help in this area.

EXTERNAL WALL
INSULATION FITTED TO

44
HOMES

DRAFT PROOFING FOR

128
HOMES

AVERAGE STANDARD
ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE
(SAP) RATING:

70

* SAP is the Government's recommended system for home energy rating, based on energy costs for space and water heating. The rating can be anywhere between 1 to 120 and the higher the number, the better the standard. The last time that the UK average SAP rating was calculated was 2016 when it was 62, which makes our rating really high especially as many of our homes are old Victorian properties.

OTHER KEY STATISTICS:

Rent

Our rents are some of the lowest in London. On average our affordable rents are set at less than 40% of market rents in the same areas. Our aim is to keep rents affordable to support mixed communities in the Capital.

AVERAGE RENT ON
SOCIAL RENTED HOMES IS

£123.31
PER WEEK

(on average this is well below the Government's formula for social rented properties).



Complaints

We received 101 complaints in 2017-18 (+5 compared to the previous year).

COMPLAINTS TOPICS:

REPAIRS SERVICE

37%

RESPONSES TO REPORTS OF
ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

17%

LENGTH OF TIME WAITING
FOR A TRANSFER

12%

We review cases regularly to make sure that we learn from feedback. This year as a result of feedback we:

- ▶ Simplified the process, which reduced the average time it takes to complete a complaint by 6 days.
- ▶ Reviewed complaints with our repairs contractors to improve the way residents are updated about complicated repairs.
- ▶ Use our IT systems to better track reports of anti-social behaviour.
- ▶ Reviewed our transfers policy and trained staff to be clearer with residents about the realistic time it is likely to take to be transferred.



New homes

Over the year we completed 160 new homes. We also received a generous private donation from a charitable trust of £10m which was used to purchase 6 large family homes specifically for families affected by the fire at Grenfell Tower.

During the year we also completed our brand new community hub, The Reed in north Kensington, which offers a modern and lively space for older and younger people to learn new skills, access care and support and to socialise.

If you are interested in attending a class at the Reed or know someone who could benefit from attending a day centre for older people, visit our website for more details. All our residents are welcome as well as other neighbours in the local area.

166

NEW HOMES

(101 for social and affordable rent, 5 intermediate rent, 33 shared ownership and 27 for outright sale - the profits of which were reinvested into building social rented homes)



Financial help

Over the last year Universal Credit has continued in many local areas. We planned ahead for this and increased the advice and support that we have on offer. We also continue to partner with the Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB) who provide independent advice and support at our office two days every week. And for those in particular hardship, the Octavia Foundation were able to help some with welfare or education grants.

220

RESIDENTS HELPED
TO REDUCE DEBTS

84

RESIDENTS ASSISTED
WITH WELFARE/EDUCATION
GRANTS

Care

We now have seven extra care schemes which provide apartments for older people with 24-hour care services and a big social programme available if they need or want it. With an aging population and the cost of care increasing for many, this is a big area of focus for Octavia.

Over the year we expanded our service in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and opened another extra care scheme in Isleworth to offer 36 new homes for older people. We also continued the work we do for existing residents including our floating support service and adaptations which help people to stay in their homes for longer. In March we were awarded the Great British Care Award for Best Employer .

197

OLDER PEOPLE RECEIVED
FLOATING SUPPORT

288

ADAPTATIONS COMPLETED
TO HOMES



Dealing with neighbourhood issues

Everyone has the right to a peaceful space they can call home. Sometimes we are contacted to get involved in disputes or to manage individuals or groups who act in an anti-social way, causing issues for their neighbours. Our Investigations team dealt with all reports of anti social behavior (ASB) within target times and where we had sufficient evidence, we were able to take legal action.

We also recovered 6 homes from fraud investigations to make sure these valuable resources are available to families in genuine need.

87

ASB REPORTS RECEIVED.
ALL DEALT WITH ON TIME



Shared areas, cleaning and caretaking

Last year we introduced new standards for our communal services team who make sure that schemes and shared areas are kept clean and tidy. To make sure these new standards were being met, we carried out hundreds of inspections, along with visiting 40 schemes as part of our Walkabout Wednesdays (our regular door-knocking event where we check in with residents and get feedback on how we can improve).

Additionally, these inspections, and the feedback from residents led to 31 scheme improvements being funded for things like improving bin storage, replacing lift floors and introducing bike storage.

31

SCHEME IMPROVEMENTS
FUNDED

Leaseholders, shared owners and intermediate rent residents

In 2016 Ducane housing joined Octavia, adding 206 homes for students and key workers to our stock. The staff from Ducane bring valuable expertise and systems to provide a better service for all our leasehold, shared-owner and intermediate-rent residents.

Going forward, we have joined the National Leasehold Group and are adding resources internally to improve services for this group of residents including how we manage service charges and how we deal with managing agents.

Throughout the year we also helped 22 shared owners resell their homes, and 17 new shared owners to buy homes with us. In both cases, the majority of purchasers were individuals or families who previously were living in social rented accommodation or with friends and family. We also sold 5 new homes on the open market in order to help fund the development of more affordable homes in the Capital.



Satisfaction

We ask for feedback regularly throughout the year but every three years we also take part in a big survey with other housing providers to see how we compare. In 2017 we were really pleased to hear that 83% of residents are happy with Octavia's service overall, which makes us one of the best when compared to other housing providers of a similar size in London. Thank you to those who contributed to the survey. We will continue to work hard to improve.

Our leaseholders tell us that they are generally less satisfied than tenants and we have a project underway to improve home owner satisfaction. As part of this we are closely monitoring service charge costs on schemes where we are not the freeholder so do not provide all or, in some cases, any of the services on the development.

We are also recruiting for a Customer Aftercare Manager who will be focussed on providing shared owners with an improved service once the sales process has completed.

83%

TENANTS SATISFIED OVERALL

(the top performance level for housing providers in London of a similar size)

84%

TENANTS SATISFIED WITH THE QUALITY OF THEIR HOME

(top performance level)

WHO HAS HELPED ALONG THE WAY?

When residents are involved in helping to shape policies or change the way that we deliver services we know we get a better result. We really appreciate the value that residents bring, to all sorts of areas. We learn a lot and so do they (or so they tell us), with training and support available if individuals need it. We want to involve residents as much as possible and to make sure that you feel empowered to contribute.

We also have a large number of volunteers or community groups who help us to run services that are not related to maintaining homes but make Octavia a wider force for good and a source of help for people in the communities where we have homes. For example we have expanded our befriending and outreach programme, which aims to reduce loneliness in older or vulnerable people living in our neighbourhoods, we run programmes with young people to provide them with opportunities and learn new skills and we have funded a number of worthwhile local initiatives aimed at helping communities to thrive. None of this work is funded by rent money, instead it is supported by our 22 charity shops and other fundraising activities.

442

OLDER OR ISOLATED
PEOPLE SUPPORTED WITH
BEFRIENDEES

162

YOUNG PEOPLE INVOLVED
IN PROJECTS TO BUILD
CONFIDENCE, LEARN
CREATIVE, MEDIA AND
LIFE SKILLS

22

CHARITY SHOPS
(RAISING MONEY FOR
COMMUNITY PROJECTS)

DON'T TAKE OUR WORD FOR IT

Our work is about people. The aim of what our Founder, Octavia Hill set out to do is still very much what drives us today. Here are just a few stories (there are many more) of some of those who have helped us, or who have been helped in one way or other, over the course of the year.

MEET KEITH **Volunteer and 'involved' resident**



Keith has been a resident for more than 30 years in and around the Ladbroke Grove area. Since he retired in 2001, he volunteers with the Citizen's Advice and four years ago, he also took on a role as part of a panel of Octavia residents who inspect policies and procedures to make sure they represent the best interests of all Octavia residents.

"I always had a lot of respect for Octavia. They looked after me very well when I was having a bad time and

I have been eternally grateful for it, so I was happy to get involved."

Keith is one of many residents who are 'involved' to review and improve Octavia's services. For the last couple of years Keith has also been a member of our important Complaints Panel, which is the body that listens to resident complaints about our services and helps put things right when we get them wrong.

"I enjoy volunteering with Octavia. I feel there is a commitment with them to finding ways to make services better. They are a caring organisation – there are things that can be done better, but on the whole they do a good job at trying to improve things for residents.

"I would recommend that any resident thinking of getting more involved in their community consider volunteering with Octavia. They should come along to the resident events and see what roles are available. It would be really great if more younger people got involved. That is what I would like to see."

MEET JESS AND CHRIS
Shared-owners finding their forever home



Before they met, Jess and Chris were each living in shared ownership one-bedroom apartments in London. But when they got married and decided they wanted to start a family, they thought that getting a larger home through private sale was beyond what they could afford.

This year Octavia were able to offer a small number of family sized houses in the NW2 area on a shared ownership basis. Jess was already an Octavia Shared Owner in the area the location was ideal for both Jess and Chris to get to work and so they applied for the new scheme. The couple fitted the criteria and their application was accepted.

“We consider ourselves very fortunate to be able to qualify to buy this home. The income criteria was quite strict but we understand why. Luckily we fitted all the criteria.”

Octavia supported the couple through the sale of both of their shared ownership flats and the purchase of their new house.

“It has meant a lot to us to be able to stay in this area. The location offers a lot of stability and security and we feel we have a good community around us. We already know most of our neighbours. It’s also reassuring to know that we don’t have to move to another area that we don’t know just to be able to afford a home. We feel very privileged to be able to stay here and live in the home and area that we want.”

MEET LAILA

Mum, volunteer and entrepreneur



Laila has been an Octavia resident for 14 years and for the last seven years she has been a key member of our Tenant Steering Group (TSG).

“The role of the TSG is to bring tenant issues to the attention of Octavia and then work with staff to get them resolved.”

Laila had left her job as a manager at British Airways to become ‘a full-time mum’. *“I wanted to get involved with work again but I had lost my confidence a little bit. Around this time my resident services officer suggested I join the TSG, and after finding out more about it, I decided it would be a good thing to do.”*

Since then Laila’s voluntary work with the TSG means she is constantly engaging with other residents, attending meetings and training.

“I also really enjoy working with Octavia. They really do want to know what people think about services and how they can make them better.”

Laila credits working with Octavia as giving her the confidence to return to paid employment. She works for a local charity and helps people who are homeless or seeking to start their own business and she has ambitions to start her own business one day.

Whatever her future holds, Laila says she will continue to volunteer with Octavia as long as she is able.

“The TSG is something I really enjoy. When I was a child my parents told me: ‘don’t always take, you have to give too’. Through working with Octavia I feel tenants are making things better, for everyone, not just for themselves.”

WHAT'S NEXT?

We have set some big targets for the next three years. By 2021 we want to build more homes (around 200 a year), support more community working (by reaching 5000 local people with support they need), and be one of the best performing landlords (when compared to others of a similar size) in London, which means continuing to work with residents to adapt and improve the things that matter most to you.

Some of the big projects we are already working on are:

- ▶ Continuing to increase the number of things that can be dealt with at the first point of contact.
- ▶ Developing a better online self-service system and mobile app so you can report repairs, view your rent account, send us feedback and much more, at a time that is convenient for you.
- ▶ Completing the new repairs contract and working with residents to make the new service even better.
- ▶ Providing more assistance to help people on benefits to change to Universal Credit where necessary and giving more support to residents who hit hard times financially.
- ▶ Increase our outreach work into the community, especially with older or vulnerable individuals.

Find out more

This report is just a snapshot of how we have performed and the services and opportunities we have to offer. If you want to find out more, or you want to be involved in one of our panels or to volunteer, we want to hear from you.

You can access a lot of information on our website **www.octaviahousing.org.uk** or give our customer contact team a call on **020 8354 5500**.

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