

# CREATING OPPORTUNITIES TOGETHER





## I am proud to introduce this annual report to our residents

Each year I say it has been a challenging year, but the post-Covid cost of living crisis has been especially difficult for our residents. It has meant that we have had to be our best, and most resourceful.

22 new build social homes were let to people waiting on the housing list. 48 overcrowded tenants moved into bigger homes. 8 new shared ownership homes were built, with priority given to local residents. A Community Panel of residents recommended a new engagement strategy to our Board; and more residents than ever have given us their views on HARCA services and decisions. 650 free smart home devices have been fitted in tenants' homes, and we're working to fit them in every tenant's home.

At a time when so many other organisations are cutting back on community investment, a 75% increase in social value – the way we measure the impact our services have – is an important indicator of our ongoing commitment to investing in our community.

From youth services, to employment and training support, to support for residents experiencing domestic abuse, to food pantries, to health initiatives, to learning to ride a bike, to fun on the canal to working with young people at risk of ending up in the criminal justice system. We will continue to invest in services, projects, and initiatives that make so much difference to all of you.

We can't cover everything in one report. I hope you can see how much our teams have put in to making sure we listen to residents, provide great services, and focus always on what our community needs.

I hope you and yours stay well.

**Steve Stride**  
Chief Executive, Poplar HARCA



# WHAT WE SAID WE'D DO

## Our Strategic Objectives

### Service Satisfaction

- ▶ Involve more residents in more decisions
- ▶ Technology that makes it easier to access services
- ▶ Understand residents' experience and act on what they tell us
- ▶ Provide residents with the means to scrutinise performance

### Successful Places

- ▶ Build homes to meet need and aspiration
- ▶ Reduce our carbon footprint
- ▶ Partner for cultural, environmental and industrial infrastructure
- ▶ Invest for health and local prosperity

### Committed Workforce

- ▶ Enhance equity and diversity at every level of every team
- ▶ Provide personal development for every staff member
- ▶ Create a flexible, agile, safe working environment
- ▶ Focus on health and wellbeing

### Strong Foundations

- ▶ Reduce operating costs
- ▶ Sustain quality
- ▶ Increase surplus
- ▶ Increase efficiency through smart technology



# 2022-23 SNAPSHOT

What we've  
done in  
2022-23

## Satisfaction

There are lots of ways you can tell us what you think of our services.

We last surveyed all residents in 2021/22, but we'll be doing a survey every year now, to meet our regulator's new consumer standards.

## Staff surveys

We plan to carry out our next staff survey in early 2024.

## TSMs coming soon

Our regulator has changed the way we report on what you think about our services.

Each year, all housing associations will ask their residents the same set of questions; and report the results to the regulator.

That means not only will you be able to see trends over time, but also compare us with other housing providers.

For more information please visit [poplarharca.co.uk/resident-satisfaction](https://poplarharca.co.uk/resident-satisfaction)

## Service Satisfaction

2022-23 (2021-22)

**195,137** ↑ (191,650)  
Total number of contacts

**5%** ↑ (4%)  
Complaints escalation

**83%** 2021-22  
Of residents satisfied with Poplar HARCA services

**2,284** ↓ (2,812)  
People involved in shaping our services

**46%** ↑ (41%)  
Percentage of online transactions

**100%** = (100%)  
Compliance for gas servicing, electrical, water, asbestos & fire

**437** ↑ (354)  
Total number of complaints

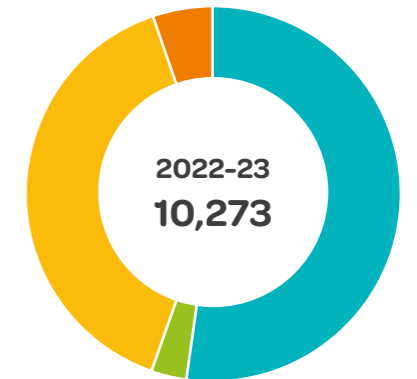
## Successful Places

2022-23 (2021-22)

**10,273** ↑ (10,128)  
Number of homes owned and managed

### Breakdown of homes owned and managed

Social rent	<b>5,205</b> ↓ (5,294)
Shared ownership	<b>320</b> ↓ (323)
Leasehold	<b>4,175</b> ↑ (3,982)
Non-social rent	<b>573</b> ↑ (529)



**85%** 2021-22  
Of residents satisfied with Poplar HARCA overall

**£24.8m** ↑ (£16m)  
Social value generated

**139** ↑ (115)  
Number of homes built

**2,247** ↑ (2,054)  
People supported

**£147** ↑ (£141)  
Average social rent per property per week (includes service charges)

**38,916** ↓ (39,552)  
People engaged through events, health initiatives, youth service and volunteering

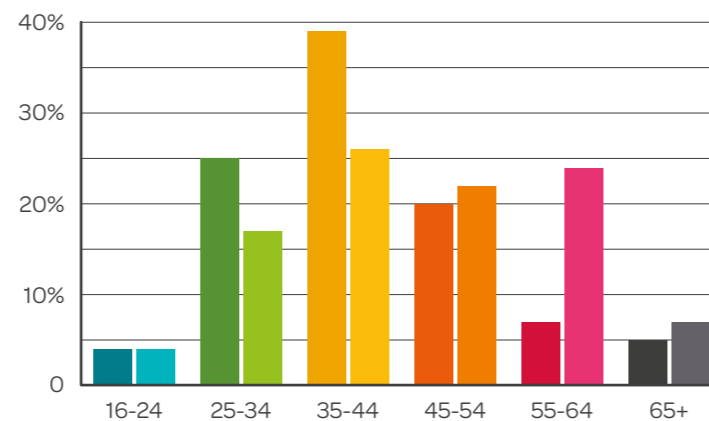
### Committed Workforce 2022-23 (2021-22)

- 347 ↑ (343)** Total number of staff
- 30% ↓ (35%)** Of staff live locally
- 92% 2021-22** Of staff are proud to work here
- 79% 2021-22** Of staff who are engaged
- 86% 2021-22** Of staff agree that Poplar HARCA looks after their wellbeing
- 89% 2021-22** Of staff would recommend Poplar HARCA

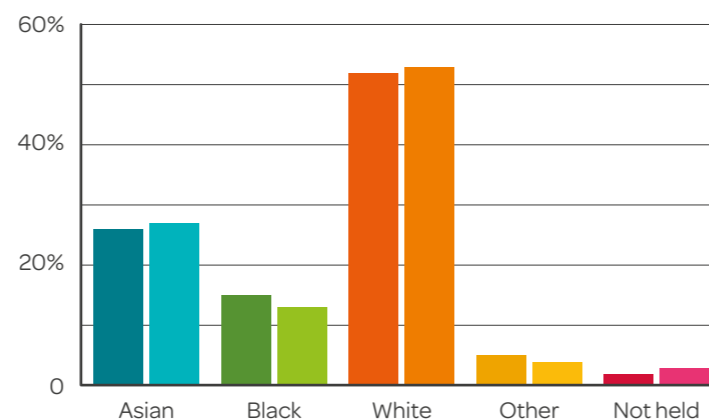
### About our teams

Our staff are representative of the community we work for.

Age	Residents	22-23	21-22
16-24	1%	4%	4%
25-34	9%	25%	17%
35-44	23%	39%	26%
45-54	24%	20%	22%
55-64	17%	7%	24%
65+	18%	5%	7%
Not held	8%		



Ethnicity	Residents	22-23	21-22
Asian	41%	26%	27%
Black	9%	15%	13%
White	21%	52%	53%
Other	3%	5%	4%
Not held	26%	2%	3%



### Gender

Residents	22-23	21-22	
Female	50%	47%	46%
Male	45%	53%	54%
Not held	5%		

### Disability

Residents	22-23	21-22	
Yes	3%	5%	5%
No	97%	95%	95%

### Strong Foundations 2022-23 (2021-22)

- G1 V2 = (G1 V2)** Regulator Rating
- Baa2 Negative outlook ↓ (Baa1, stable)** Moody's Rating
- 20% ↓ (52%)** Operating margin
- £6,500 ↓ (£6,800)** Social housing cost per unit
- 100% = (100%)** Statutory compliance
- £88.5m ↑ (£71.8m)** Total annual turnover



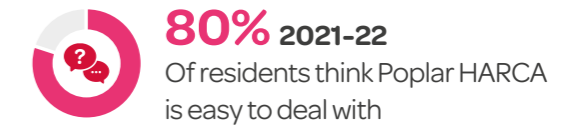
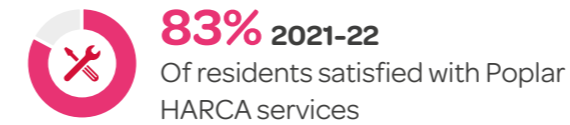
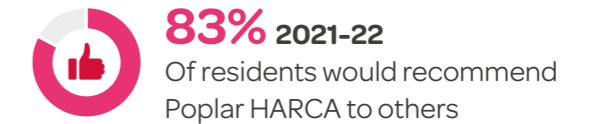
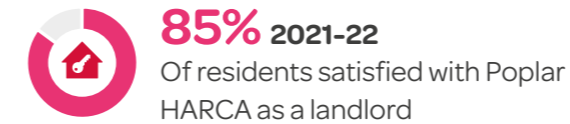
Service satisfaction relies on listening and responding, being open to challenge and doing what we say we will.

# SERVICE SATISFACTION HIGHLIGHTS

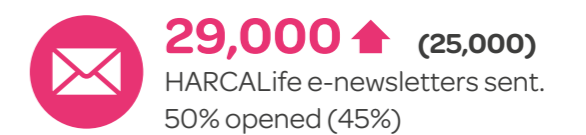
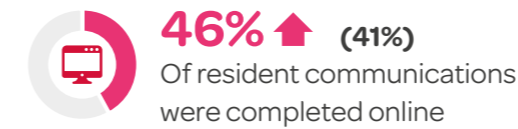


## Satisfaction

2022-23 (Figures from 2021-22)

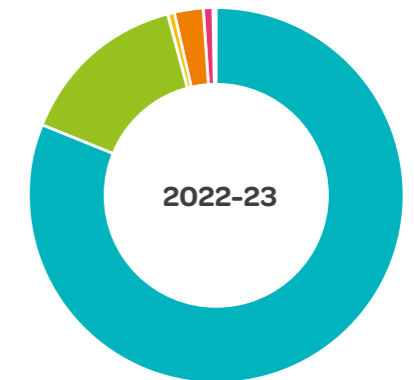


## Online Services

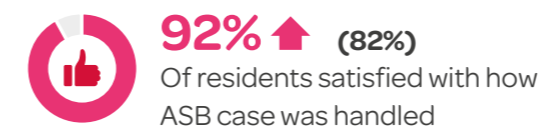


### Resident online communications

Website visits	<b>356,566</b> ↑	(265,907)
MyHARCA	<b>64,134</b> ↑	(59,261)
Chatbot	<b>2,175</b> ↓	(5,294)
MyHARCA payments	<b>11,802</b> ↑	(7,135)
Digital correspondence	<b>3,339</b> ↓	(4,401)
Social media	<b>378</b> ↓	(1,313)



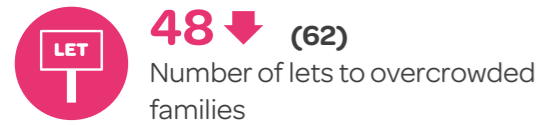
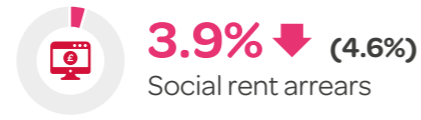
## Antisocial Behaviour





## Housing

2022-23 (2021-22)



### **i** Awards & Recognition



**New London Award**  
Public Spaces Award for Aberfeldy Village



**British Home Awards**  
Best Housing Partnership for Aberfeldy Village



**Housing Heroes Awards**  
Lifetime Achievement Award for our former chair, Christine Searle



**Evening Standard New Homes Award Best Regeneration**  
Highly Commended for Aberfeldy Village



**Inside Housing Development Awards**  
Best Partnership (over 100 homes) for Aberfeldy Village



**Housing Heroes Awards**  
Highly commended - Rents team



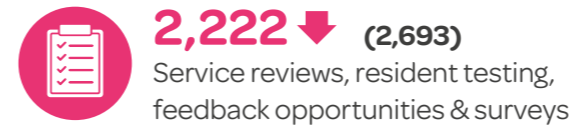
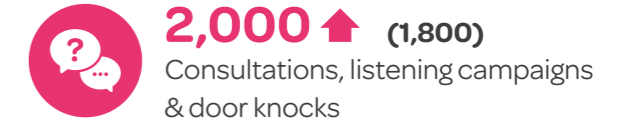
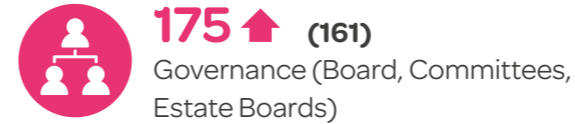
**Pineapple Awards**  
Community Engagement Award for Aberfeldy Village



**Planning Awards Stakeholder Engagement**  
Highly commended for the Aberfeldy New Masterplan

## Residents: Involved & Influencing

2022-23 (2021-22)



### **i** Bumper year for awards



Our projects, people and partners were recognised an incredible 8 times, this year.

- ▶ Special recognition was given to our Rents team for their outstanding support to residents and each other.

**"The Rents team make sure each residents' experience is positive by being as helpful and supportive as they can."**

Dawn, Head of Housing Services

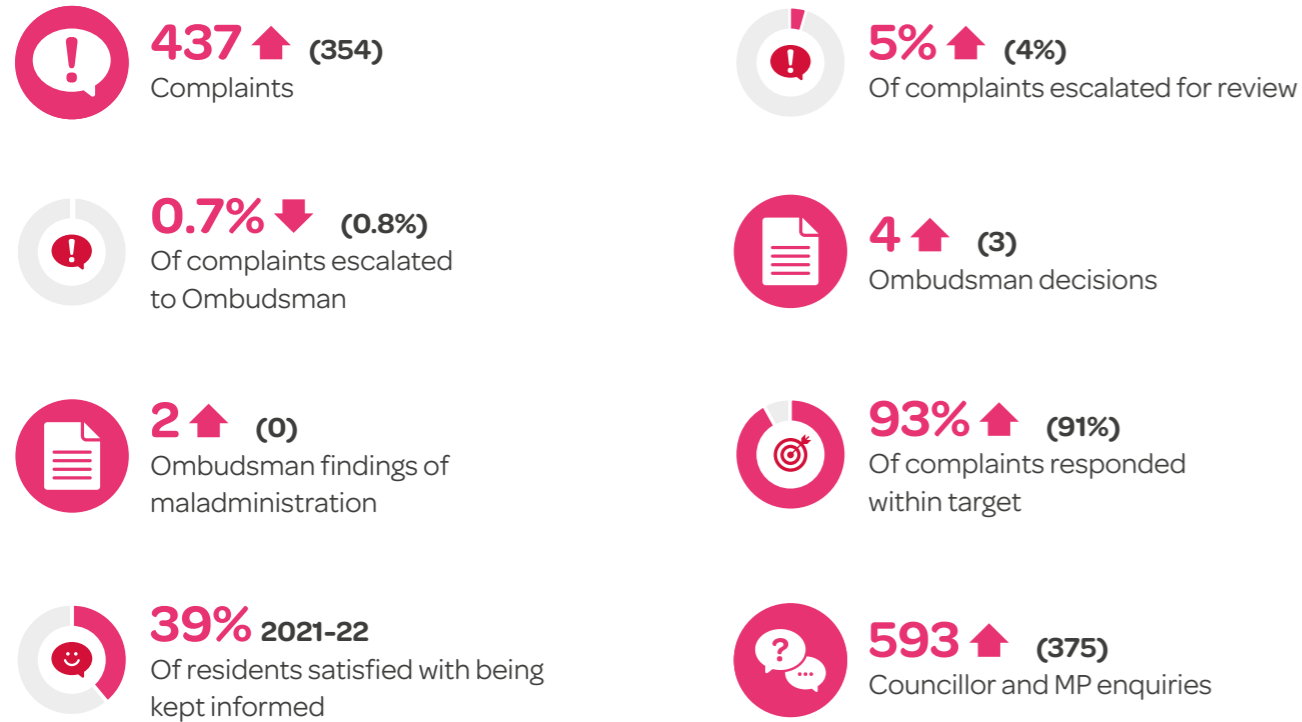
- ▶ Our former Chair and board member, Christine Searle MBE, was awarded Lifetime achievement in housing, for her tireless work to promote meaningful resident involvement.

- ▶ Our regeneration on Aberfeldy won and was highly commended for 6 awards, including exemplary community engagement. We proudly share these awards with our joint venture partners, EcoWorld London, architects Levitt Bernstein, Morris + Company, ZCD Architects and LDA Design and Aberfeldy involved residents.

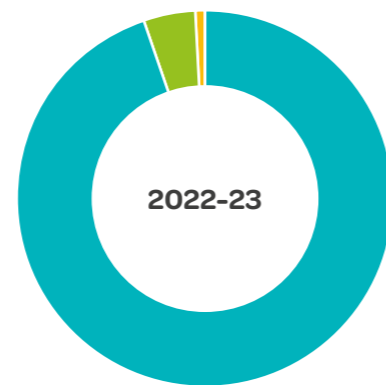
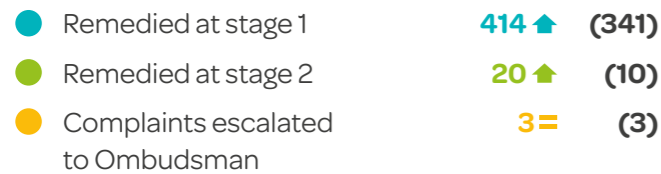


## Complaints

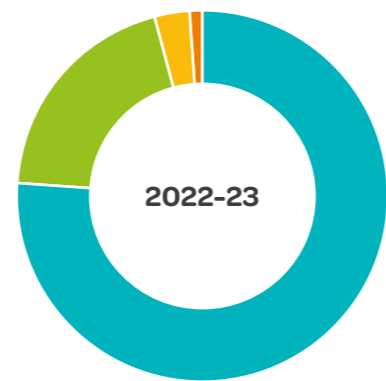
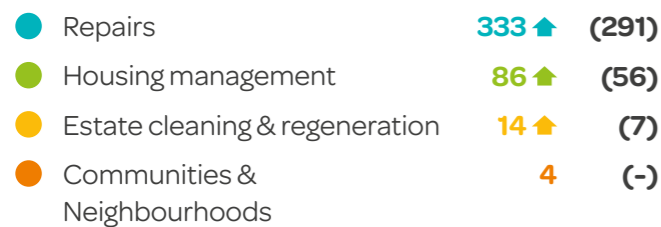
2022-23 (2021-22)



### Total number of complaints



### Type of complaints



## More complaints resolved first time

Complaints increased this year. This was due, mostly, to you telling us that you didn't agree with our proposals for parking.

More complaints were resolved first-time, which means our teams are listening and responding to what you tell us.

## Repairs & Estate Services

2022-23 (2021-22)





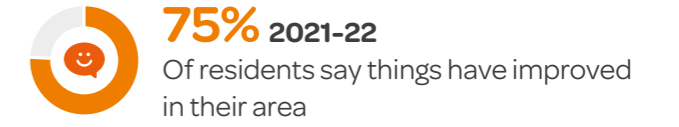
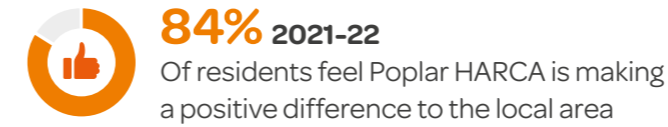
Success is people feeling proud of where they live. It's a secure affordable home, enjoying good health, and being able to take-up opportunities.

# SUCCESSFUL PLACES HIGHLIGHTS

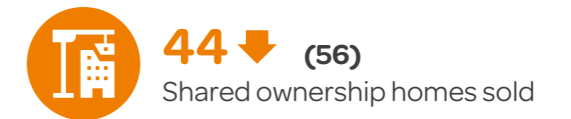
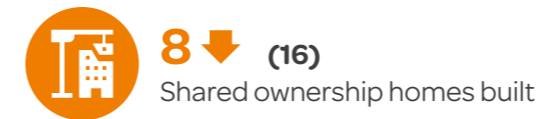


## Satisfaction

2022-23 (2021-22)



## Homes



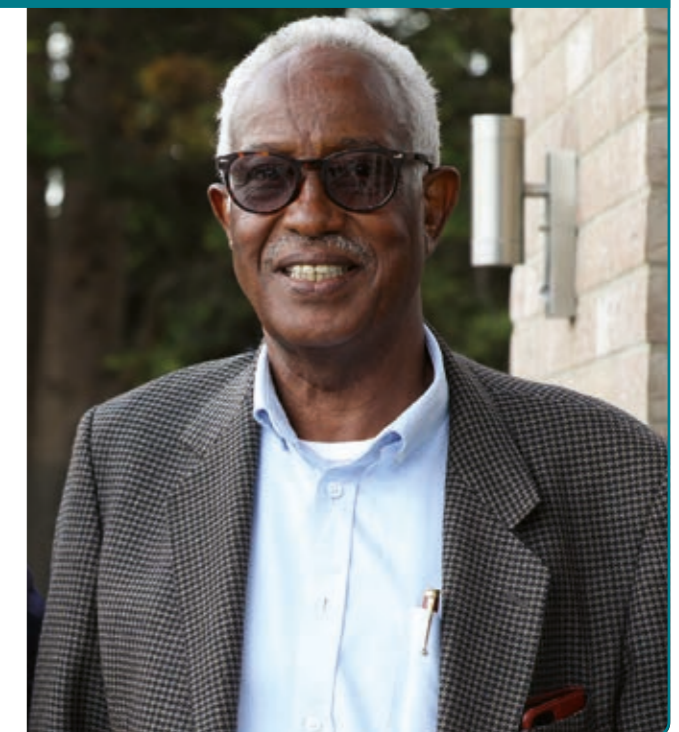
### **i** "I want to stay living here for a long time"

22 Tower Hamlets residents moved into new social homes in Aberfeldy Village and Bromley High Street.

Mohamed Hassan, a new Aberfeldy resident, moved from the neighbouring Teviot estate.

"I went to have a look at my new flat and loved it straight away. I want to stay living here for a long time. It's spacious and on the ground floor which is better for me because I find using stairs difficult. I don't have to cram my belongings in anymore."

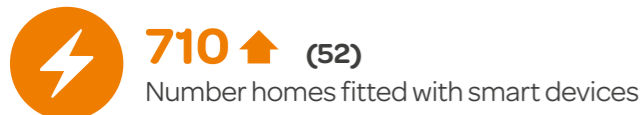
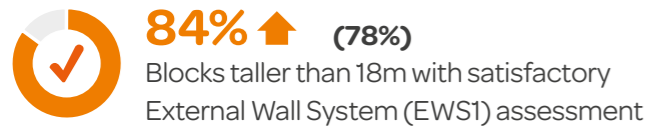
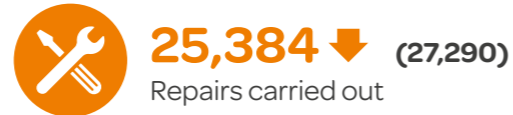
Mohamed





## Safety & Sustainability

2022-23 (2021-22)



### EPCs

Contributing to our environmental strategy, EPCs are completed for all tenanted homes. They are valid for ten years and only reassessed when a home is sold or let.



## i Getting savvy with smart home devices

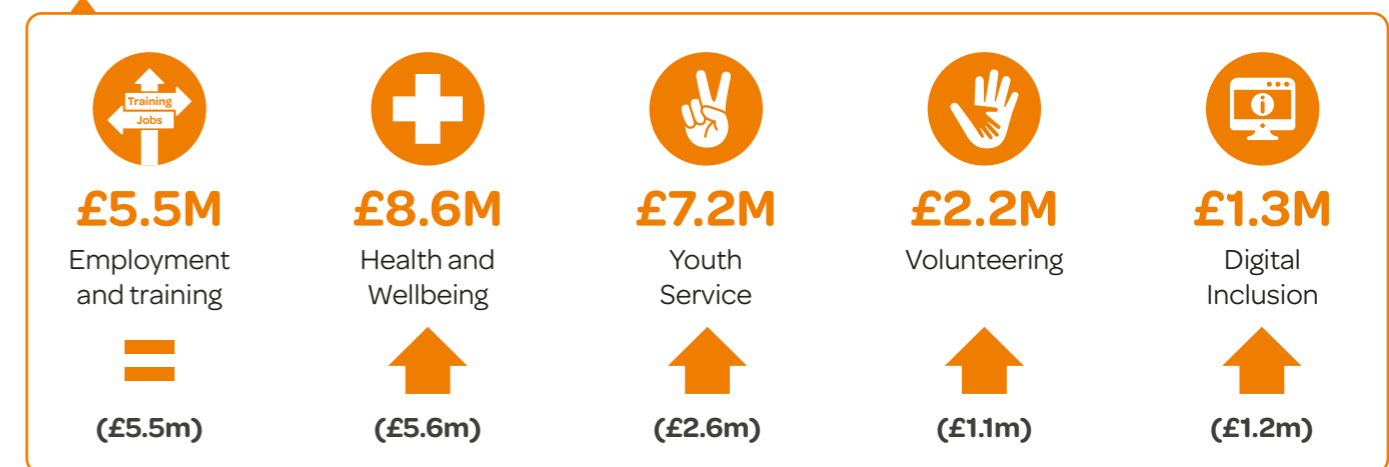
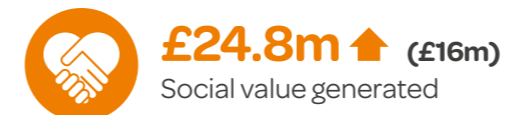
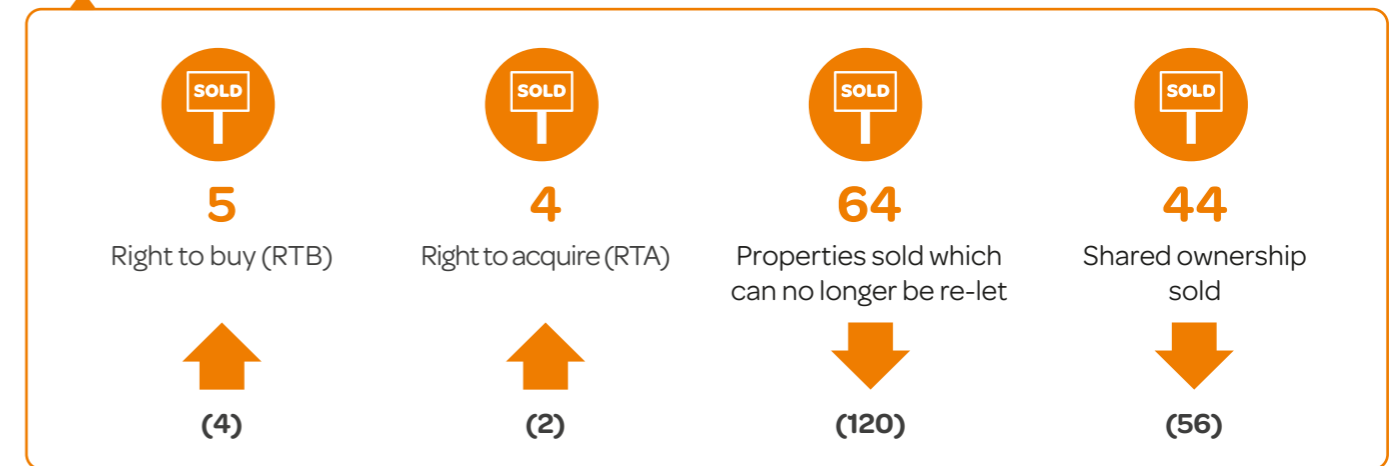
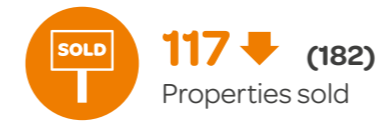
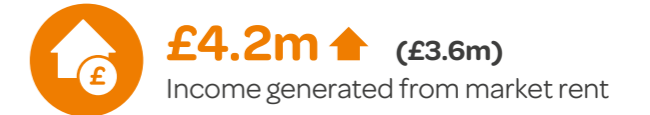
With our partner, Aico, we're putting smart devices in our tenants' homes.

The devices are linked with smoke, heat, and carbon monoxide detectors. These help tenants to be smarter about how they use energy, and see how much humidity there is, so reducing mould-producing condensation.



## Generating income and value

2022-23 (2021-22)

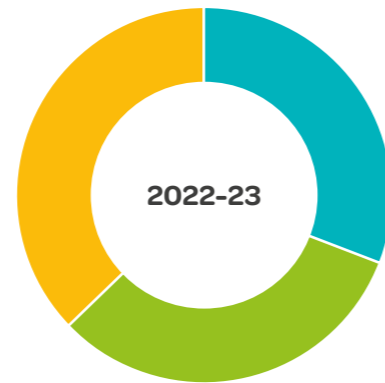


## Media Coverage

2022-23 (2021-22)

There was lots of discussion in the media this year, with our planning application for Aberfeldy widely covered in the sector press.

● Positive	36↓	(49)
● Neutral	37↓	(42)
● Negative	43↑	(4)



## Community Support & Services

**77%** 2021-22  
Of residents satisfied with centre activities

**73%** 2021-22  
Of residents satisfied with support from our community centres

**290** ↓ (291)  
Local people in jobs

**1,215** ↑ (1,102)  
People completed accredited training

**10,561** ↓ (16,670)  
Engaged in events

**23,791** ↑ (19,706)  
People accessing health related activities

**4,006** ↑ (2,875)  
Young people engaged in youth service

**558** ↑ (301)  
Volunteers

**572** ↑ (483)  
Financial advice and payment plans

**170** ↓ (178)  
People supported by Safeguarding

**2.8%** ↑ (2.6%)  
Of tenants supported by our Safeguarding team

### **i** A fresh start in a new home

Often, the toughest thing can be to ask for help.

One of our older residents was being financially abused by a visitor. Her husband had recently died, and she struggled getting around.

She reached out, and our Safeguarding team was able to work with statutory support services to prioritise a move. With the local pre-loved furniture shop, More Life Home, her new home was made comfy and she was helped with moving costs.

"We focused on what was best for our resident and how to keep her safe by working closely with the other support agencies."

George, our Support Advisor



"I feel a lot safer now. There was a lot of memories at my last place, but I'm enjoying my new flat and am looking forward to making this my home."

Resident

### **i** Shared ownership helps Joe stay in Bow

We prioritise our shared ownership homes to help local people get on the property ladder for less.

Joe bought one of the 44 shared ownership homes we sold this year having lived in Bow for almost 20 years.

"The London market is impossible for normal people. I was really struggling to find something. I've found shared ownership is a great way to expand the range of affordability and find good quality housing."





We need talented people to want to work for us. People who live by our values and are motivated by our purpose.

# COMMITTED WORKFORCE HIGHLIGHTS



## Committed Workforce

2022-23 (2021-22)



## Pay gaps

Pay gaps don't mean groups are paid different amounts for doing the same job. For Poplar HARCA it means more of some groups in some roles.

We're making some progress on the pay gaps between different groups. But there's still a way to go.





## **i** Equality, diversity and inclusion

Being welcoming and inclusive is an important value for us. This year, all staff had sessions to talk about what this means to them, so we all understand each other better.



### About our Board and senior management team

	Board	Senior Management
<b>Age</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
16-24	-	-
25-34	10	8
35-44	60	33
45-54	20	17
55-64	-	25
65+	10	17
unknown	-	-
<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Asian	30	17
Black	10	8
White	50	75
Other	10	-
unknown	-	-
<b>Gender</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Male	50	83
Female	50	17
unknown	-	-
<b>Disability</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Disability	-	-

## **i** Bala's story

Bala Thakrar, head of operations for our Community Development and Wellbeing team, has a rich background in supporting communities across the world.

"To do this work, you do need to have empathy. I realise how fortunate I am to be able to have a positive impact on people's lives."

"Poplar HARCA is a very diverse and dynamic organisation to work for. It recognises and values its staff and offers lots of opportunities to develop."

Bala



## **i** Treaser's story

Treaser Jassal, a Support and Evaluation Coordinator for Spotlight, our creative youth service, began her 8-year career with us as a volunteer.

Treaser now runs several key programmes for young people including an early intervention programme, a creative group for those who identify as female, and Health Spot, an in-house GP service.

"I've learned a lot about myself through the work I do. It's enabled me to grow both professionally and personally. I've realised I never really stop being a youth worker, even at home. If there's something going on with my family, I step in and support them."

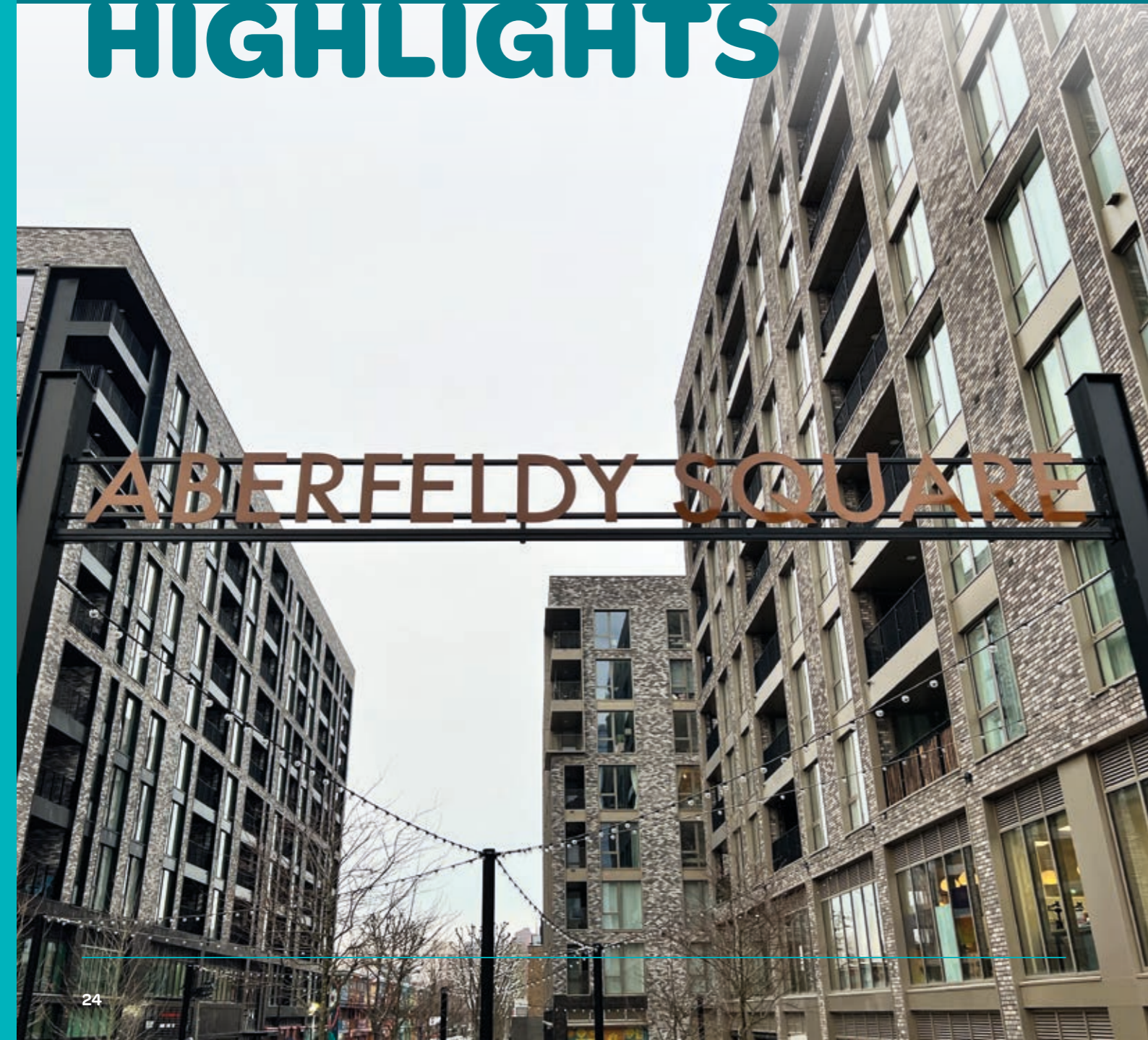
Treaser





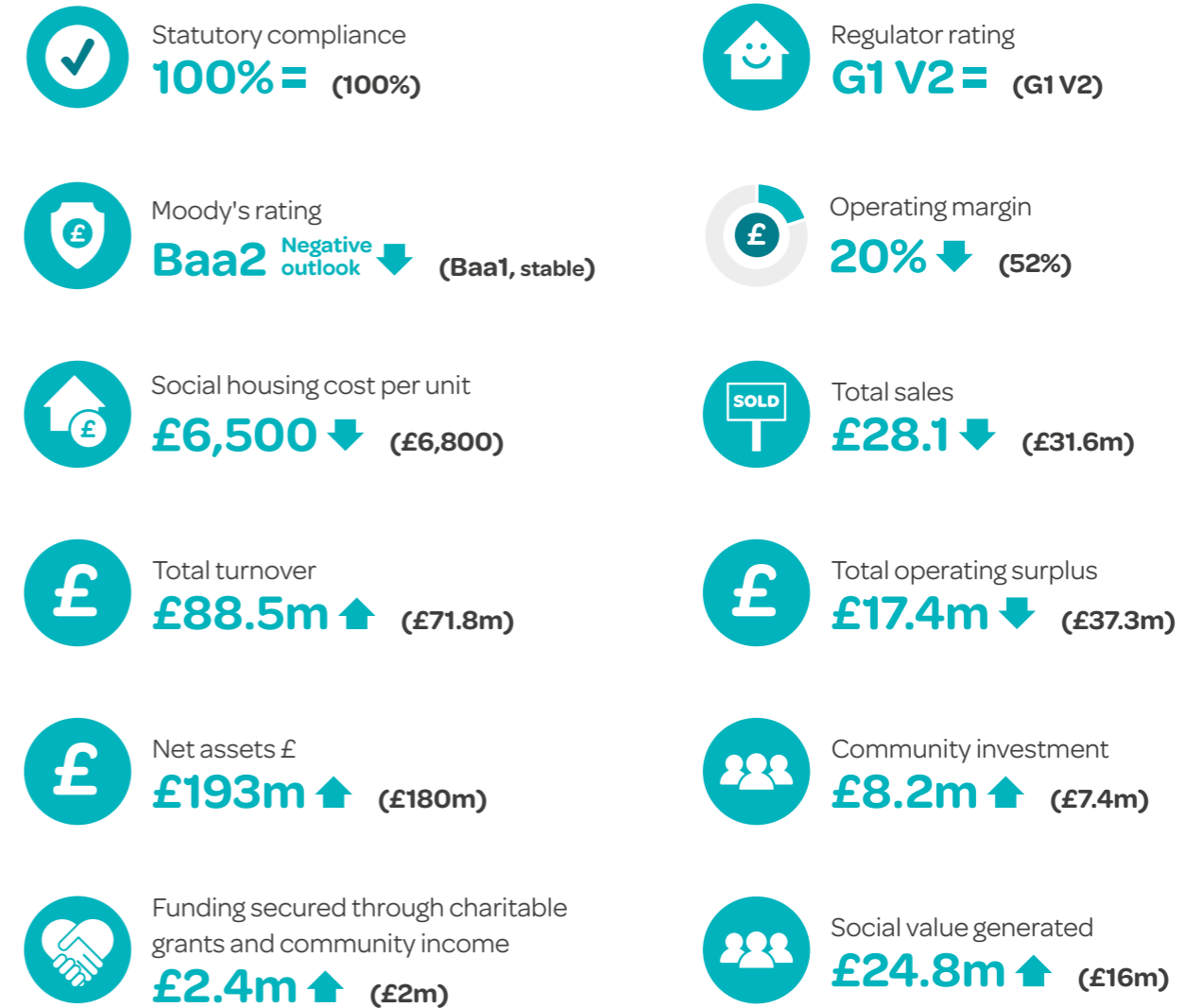
Financial capacity determines what we can achieve, and how long it will take us to achieve it.

# STRONG FOUNDATIONS HIGHLIGHTS



## Strong Foundations

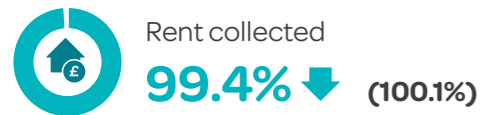
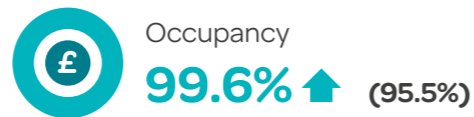
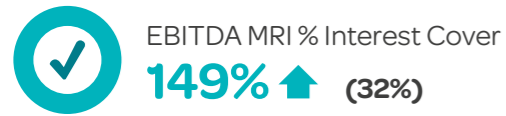
2022-23 (2021-22)





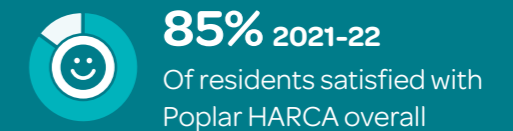
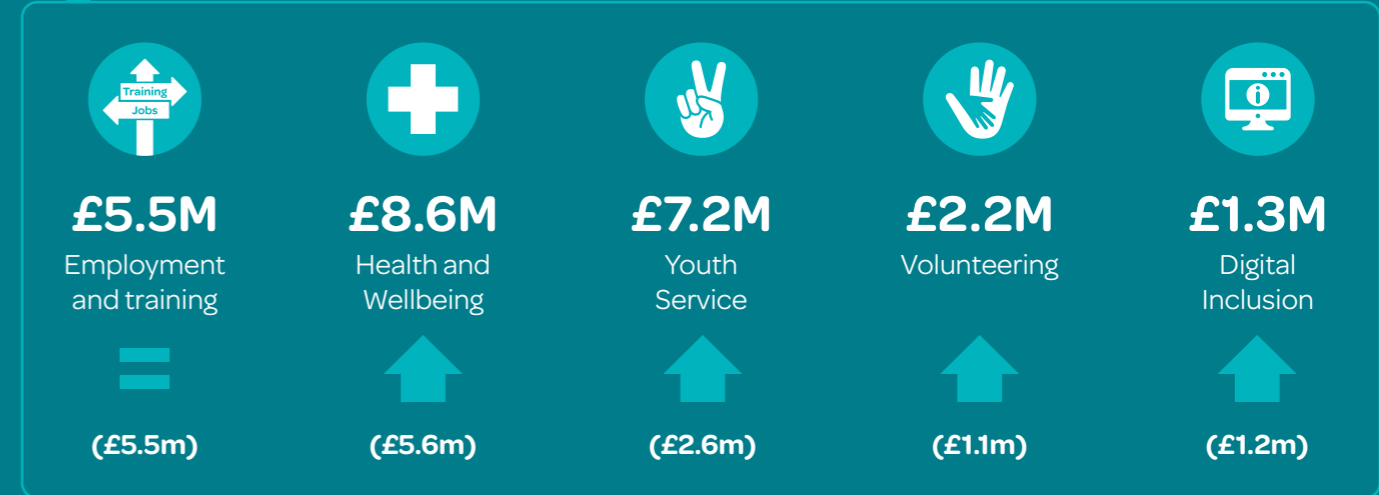
## Value for Money

2022-23 (2021-22)



## Value for Money Examples

2022-23 (2021-22)

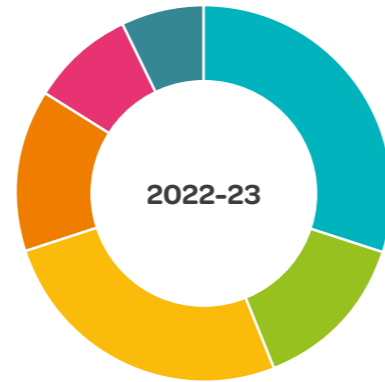




## How we spend our money

2022-23 (2021-22)

● Regeneration	10% ↓	(38%)
● Loan interest	14% ↓	(23%)
● Housing and Estate services	26% ↑	(15%)
● Repairs & maintainance	14% ↑	(13%)
● Social investment	9% ↑	(5%)
● Other	7% ↑	(5%)



## New Community Panel



You told us in our last survey that we should be better at communicating, informing, and advising.

A Community Panel has spent time with experts from across the country, and recommended a new engagement strategy now adopted by our Board.





## **i** Our finances

Balancing ambition with resources is always difficult.

Our credit rating was reduced this year.

Most housing associations were also downgraded. This is because of the current economic challenges the country is facing.

It means that if we wanted to borrow more money it would cost more. But we don't have any plans to borrow more, and we spend wisely, so our finances are in good shape.



## **i** Cost of Living support

Supporting residents through the cost of living crisis has been a priority.

We've put together a lot of advice and information to help you make smart decisions.

We visited residents needing extra help. We sent out over 4,000 information booklets. Our centres stayed open longer so people had a warm place to spend the day, helping to save on heating bills.



## **i** Where you live



Aberfeldy and Teviot residents voted for regeneration. Since the vote, they have been working with us to design the future of their estates.

We never forget that these are your homes, and you know best what will work. That's why we make sure that every decision is considered by Resident Steering Groups.

**“Regeneration provides a wonderful opportunity to make sure our community continues to thrive and for Aberfeldy to become the place to be in east London”**

Alaina Morshead, member of Aberfeldy's 90 strong resident steering group and local business owner

## **i** Fire safety at home

If you live in a block, you may have spotted new signs in your block, and booklets through your door.

These include important safety information about what to do if there's a fire in your building.





# Your Voice Matters

## You Said...

**We need new homes in Tower Hamlets**

**We want to see more housing staff on our estates and to have one person we contact**

**We need more time to pay for our major works invoices**

**We want a say on how estate parking is managed**

**We want more ways to get involved and shape your services**

**We want to feedback on how Poplar HARCA can improve its services**

**We want to know more about how smart home devices can help us**

## We Did...

- ▶ We built 139 homes:
  - ▷ 22 new social homes
  - ▷ 8 new shared ownership homes
  - ▷ 109 homes for private sale
- ▶ And we sold 44 shared ownership homes.
- ▶ Every estate now has a Housing Officer
- ▶ We now have a licence from the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) which allows us to offer longer term interest free loans, for major works.
- ▶ We ran a survey on parking options, and the option with the most votes has been implemented.
- ▶ The recommendations from our Community Panel have all been approved by our Board.
- ▶ 73 residents attended deep dive sessions to explain what we should do differently.
- ▶ All tenant homes are being fitted with smart devices, and we've offered one-to-one and community training.

## You Said...

**We want to report repairs 24/7**

**We're concerned about mould in our homes**

**We're worried about our heating bills**

## We Did...

- ▶ We put new technology in place and we're set to improve online services further this year.
- ▶ You can report concerns by talking to staff, on the website, by phone, on social media and on MyHARCA. Smart devices are being fitted in every tenant's home. We'll publicise more advice.
- ▶ We launched an online cost of living switchboard to help you save money and find support, opened some of our community centres for longer to provide warm, friendly spaces for everyone to spend time, and we've fitted more than 700 smart home devices to tackle heat loss in residents' homes.





# Want To Get Involved?

There are lots of inspirational local people who give their time and energy to making Poplar a better place to live.

Why not join them...opportunities advertised at [poplarharca.co.uk](http://poplarharca.co.uk)



**175**

people involved with our Board, Committees, Estate Boards and Gatherings Groups



**2,222**

residents involved with surveys, resident testing groups, service reviews and feedback



**2,000**

residents involved with consultations, listening campaigns, door knocks and resident steering groups



## Boards & Committees

Local experts with skills, knowledge and experience are always sought to join our Board and Committees and set Poplar HARCA's strategic direction.

If you live or work in Tower Hamlets, are committed to community-driven decision making, and have an interest in great governance, we'd very much like to hear from you.



Visit [poplarharca.co.uk](http://poplarharca.co.uk) and search governance

## Estate Boards & Gathering Groups

Neighbours have been coming together to hold us to account, help us improve and have their say since Poplar HARCA was set up in 1998.

Find out how you can join in.

✉ [dave.tull@poplarharca.co.uk](mailto:dave.tull@poplarharca.co.uk)

## Youth Empowerment Board

Our community needs young people to step forward and speak up. Talk to us if you're interested in where you live, keen to influence, aged 16-21, and have opinions on how things should be.

- ▶ A meal & refreshments at every monthly session
- ▶ Personal development and employability skills
- ▶ Trips to meet professionals in their work spaces, to gain insight into different industries
- ▶ Free residential event

#CreateRealChange

Interested? We'd love to hear from you.

✉ [katy@wearespotlight.com](mailto:katy@wearespotlight.com)

## Resident Steering Groups (RSGs)

Big changes are happening on the Teviot and Aberfeldy estates. The residents affected by the changes are crucial to making sure that the decisions taken about where they live are the right decisions.



Contact Fintan on **07852 998 909** to find out more. New members can join any time.

## Volunteering

We offer a variety of volunteering opportunities to suit all sorts of interests, career aspirations and experience.



Visit [poplarharca.co.uk](http://poplarharca.co.uk) and search volunteering





