



Homes fit for modern living

Understanding the needs and priorities of diverse tenants



The external context

There has been an intensive sector wide focus on the quality of housing across the country.

We are seeing rising and record levels of investment across the sector in existing homes.

The level of expectation from tenants continues to increase.

New future for decent homes

Ombudsman awards £5,000 to resident after Orbit's severe maladministration on damp and mould case
6 December 2022

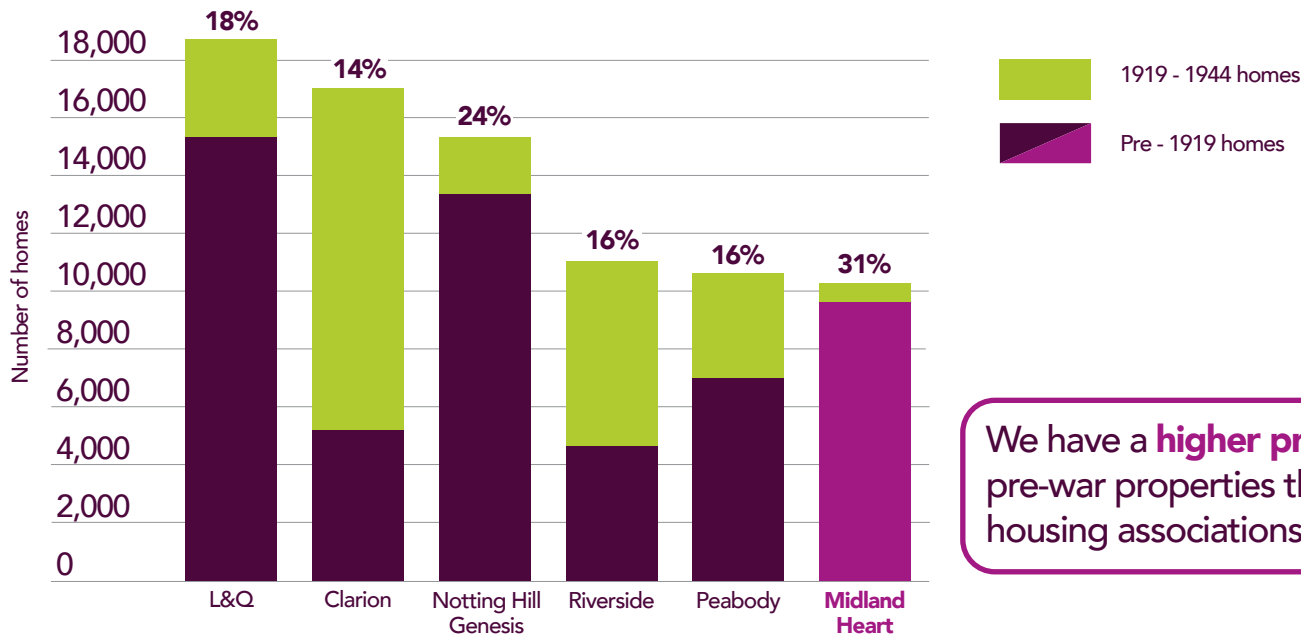
itvX
The year-long investigation that uncovered unlivable conditions in Britain's social housing
HERE'S THE STORY | HOUSING | Monday 21 March 2022 at 8:23pm

Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities
Open Consultation
Awaab's Law: Improving Social Tenant Rights

Our strategic context: structural challenges



Around **10,000** of our properties were built pre-1919.



We have a **higher proportion** of pre-war properties than other large housing associations.





Our strategic context: inherent challenges



Some of the most
deprived urban
wards in the UK



Most ethnically
diverse tenants



More likely to be
in rent arrears

% of MH homes > 100 years old

49%

Sparkbrook &
Balsall Heath

67%

Lozells

76%

Alum Rock

79%

Birchfield

49%

Bordesley Green

Tenant insights driving our priorities

The key themes from our tenant feedback:



Quality of repairs service



Affordability



Feeling safe



Clean and safe neighbourhoods



Being treated fairly and with respect



1,437
tenants have provided feedback



30%
of feedback has been provided by ethnically diverse tenants



650
face to face visits with tenants

Overwhelming tenant feedback is the need to focus on quality



Tenant perception of a modern home: Modernising our homes

Survey Feedback (73 respondents)

Survey feedback from 73 respondents

44% told us their homes do not meet tenant expectations, for example, decorations.

Alleyway

56% have an alleyway attached to their home – 75% do not use it and 37% told us that ASB originates from it.

Bins

Bins are stored in gardens and at the front of their homes, access was mentioned as an issue for some properties.



Cooking and bathing

Nearly half stated that cooking/bathing was fine however some told us that both areas needed upgrading and that their kitchen was too small.

Heating

81% have an effective central heating system. 56% stated that they suffer with condensation (over half dry their clothes indoors).

Gardens

36% want improvements to their garden to allow them to do all of the activities they would like to.

What does a modern home look like to our tenants...



Home

- Modern kitchen / bathroom with storage
- Modern fixtures and fittings that are suitably located
- Double glazed windows
- Good quality plasterwork
- Effective central heating systems
- Additional bathroom or downstairs toilet



Garden

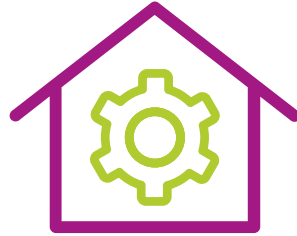
- Private garden (higher/new fencing)
- Paved/slabbed area
- Level garden (i.e. no sloped areas)
- Free from tree stumps



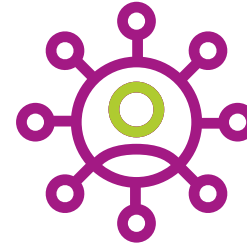
Key considerations in developing our approach



Viewing the home as more than just components - instead taking a whole house approach



Learn from the work we have done on our intervention schemes, from communal spaces to inside the home



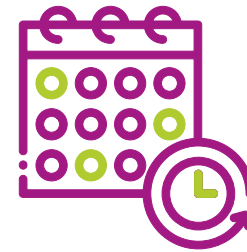
Consider broader tenant outcomes e.g. fuel poverty, arrears, warmth, safety and security



Tenant impact and disruption, and logistical challenge



Remain financially strong to fund this 'additionality'... and VFM



A long term programme



Focus on how tenant insight helps identify and shape the modernisation programme so we understand and respond to the diverse needs of tenants.

Our response

- To pilot an approach in Birmingham and Wolverhampton in 2024/25 in some of our most challenging older homes.
- Develop a model for tenant engagement that focuses on tenant outcomes.
- Establish a clear baseline of tenant impact and property condition.
- Develop a model for delivery of works, working across functions within Midland Heart, with suppliers (contracted, planning and mobilisation) and external partners.
- Understand scalability and the pace of change given our financial capacity and VFM.
- Roll out approach for next corporate plan 2025-30 and beyond.



Baseline tenant survey in pilot areas

The survey provided us not only with insight into tenant needs, availability and concerns, but also enabled us to capture information and perception that could be revisited as part of the overall evaluation of the project. To date 39 occupied homes have been identified and confirmed for works, with the baseline surveys completed.

Perception of their home:

- There is a clear message in the feedback from tenants that they feel their home is in need of improvement.
- Only 18% (6) of tenants surveyed told us they would currently describe the condition of their home as 'good' or 'great'.
- Almost a third of tenants (10), said their home was 'OK' and the remaining 52% of tenants said their home was old, dated or in need of improvement.

Condition of their home:

- 56% (20) tenants felt their home was fit for purpose, with over 30% (11) saying they disagreed with this statement.
 - When asked about what would make their home more fit for purpose (but not necessarily modern), it was clear that upgraded kitchens and bathrooms were a priority for tenants. In particular tenants referenced space and storage in relation to kitchens and the need for both a bath and shower, or a shower in their bathroom. A breakdown of the top improvements identified are included below.
- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| • Bathroom (21, 58.3%) | • Doors (5, 13.9%) |
| • Kitchen (14, 38.9%) | • Windows (4, 11.1%) |
| • Walls (6, 16.7%) | • Warmth (5, 13.9%) |

Taking tenant needs into account:

- 64% (25) tenants told us that there are children living in their home, with 21 having at least one child under 54% (16).
- Just over half of tenants also informed us that they or someone in their household was vulnerable and would need an adjustment or support taking into consideration when reviewing both the works to be completed, but also the impact / disruption this may have on them.
- A number of tenants referenced conditions such as asthma that may be impacted by dust from works. There were other factors referenced such as tenants having a neurodivergent child who may need time to adjust to any changes / disruption.





Tenants also made reference to their homes being difficult to decorate, with only 19% (7) tenants saying they had no issues when it came to decorating their home. The majority of tenants concerns related to high ceilings 30%, (11), Damp and Mould 22% (8) and Plasterwork 21.6% (8). A number of tenants also reference issues with leaks, cracks in walls and their own health/mobility as barriers.



59.4% (19) tenants had experience of damp and mould in their home, 46.9% (15) had issues with condensation and 68.8% (22), experienced draughts. This led to just 43.2% (16) tenants feeling they could currently effectively heat their home.



There was also high proportion of tenants 40.5%, (15) who used a tumble dryer to dry clothes and a further 16.2% (6), who used a radiator for this purpose. Some tenants referenced issues with their gardens as a reason they did not use washing lines. Only 29% (9) of tenants felt their garden was a space they could enjoy.



Finally, additional points of note when it comes specifically to modernising homes, 38.5% (15) of tenants made reference to the need for more plug sockets and 20.5% (8) of comments referenced the need for more storage.



Pilot update: 73 Fisher street

Pilot commenced in April 2024 to complete works on c45 properties. Half of these are on the same street, Fisher St – Wolverhampton, with the other half across a number of different types of properties in north west Birmingham.

Assessments have been undertaken on a number of properties, with works covering the following:

- Retrofit measures to achieve EPC C on all homes.
- Adding mechanical ventilation into all properties.
- Clearing rear garden space to a useable area.
- Ensure boundary walls e.g. fencing is reestablished.
- Improving the general condition of interior walls.
- Including sustainability technology such as fuel poverty monitors.
- Temperature and humidity sensors included in all properties.
- Undertake core component replacements together, minimising future disruption.
- Baseline core metrics to track success of works undertaken, spanning number of repairs, and also social metrics.

Before

After

Rear garden area transformed into a useable space, and fencing re-established



Full kitchen and bathroom replacement, completed together to minimise tenant disruption



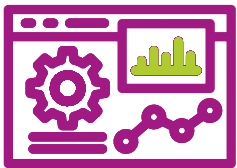
Full wall replaster to improve property condition, and also damp proofing



Next steps



We are seeking to have made significant progress in the pilot by the end of Q3 2024/25.



Baseline and begin to measure tenant impact.



Evaluate findings in the context of building a longer term programme.





“Wow, blown away, I’d seen it before the work, so seeing it afterwards with the changes... I’m just so happy with it!

Moving into a modernised home is amazing, you walk into the bathroom and kitchen and the floor is done, everything is brand new. It’s just amazing. As a mom myself with one child there’s so much space, there’s a whole garden she can run around in - it’s just perfect for my first home.”

Trinity, Tenant

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