



Annual Report to Tenants 2013/14

Welcome

Our Annual Report to Tenants is our opportunity to tell you how City South is performing, look back at some of our key achievements over the past year and outline what plans we've got for the year ahead.

While there are signs that the economy is recovering, we know many of our customers still face tough challenges due to personal finances being stretched by the high cost of living, rising energy prices and changes to benefits. We've put a lot of effort into helping tenants meet these challenges by offering financial support, helping residents reduce their energy bills and supporting residents into work or training.

To help us target this support to tenants who need it most we're contacting each and every customer to make sure we have up to date information about you and your circumstances. So far we have spoken to over 3,000 tenants, and we're already putting this detailed information to use by communicating opportunities such as jobs and training courses to residents we know are interested.

We've made some important changes to our core services, such as repairs and neighbourhood management, to make sure we look after the investments we've made to our



properties and communities, and provide excellent services that offer value for money for our customers.

We also want to ensure your views on our services, and changes we have made to them, are listened to and acted upon. In a recent customer survey 1,200 of our households gave their views and our Board will be reviewing our service offer in light of your views. We will let you know our response over the summer.

I hope you enjoy reading the report.

Dave Power
Chief Executive

Tenant involvement and empowerment

This covers customer service, choice and complaints, customer involvement and how we respond to the diverse needs of our customers.



staff training on our housing management systems, improved signage and a better queuing system in our reception.

- We surveyed more than 3,000 of our customers to ensure we hold up-to-date information, and so can better target our services to those who need them most. We will survey the remaining tenants this year.
- We launched Steps2Success – a new service helping tenants find work, training and volunteering opportunities. Find out more on page 8.
- We launched a new City South Young Ranger scheme in Hulme to get young people involved in community activities.
- We launched our 'Environmentors' scheme – a group of eight tenants who act as environmental champions to help tackle environmental issues and promote recycling.
- We organised 13 different cultural activities including visits to the theatre, and new 'history walks' in Hulme.

Our performance

	2013/14	2012/13
Overall customer satisfaction	82%	90%
Calls answered	91%	95%
Calls resolved first time	83%	80%
Satisfaction with how we deal with issues	81%	n/a
Stage 1 complaints received	33	51
Stage 2 complaints received	1	11
Average response time to complaints	10.7 days	11.7 days
Complaints upheld	79%	96%

What City South has done in the last 12 months:

- Tenants got involved in over 260 activities and events with City South, including meetings, focus groups, neighbourhood inspections, leaseholder panels and community events.
- Our tenant Scrutiny Panel reviewed the service we provide to customers over the phone and who visit our offices. We have implemented many of their recommendations for improvement including raising awareness of equality and diversity issues, further

How we plan to improve in the year ahead

- We will do more to listen to and act upon what our tenants tell us about our services and neighbourhoods.
- We will improve our online services and work with customers to give them the skills and confidence they need to benefit from using the internet.
- Our Scrutiny Panel will carry out more service reviews and be more closely linked to our Board by reporting on the organisation's overall performance twice a year.
- We aim to increase recycling in our neighbourhoods by training more residents to become environmental champions.
- We'll develop more ways for young people in our neighbourhoods to improve the services they receive from us and other local service providers.
- We will run more activities to involve people in local cultural opportunities and provide support and training to customers to help them develop their skills and confidence.



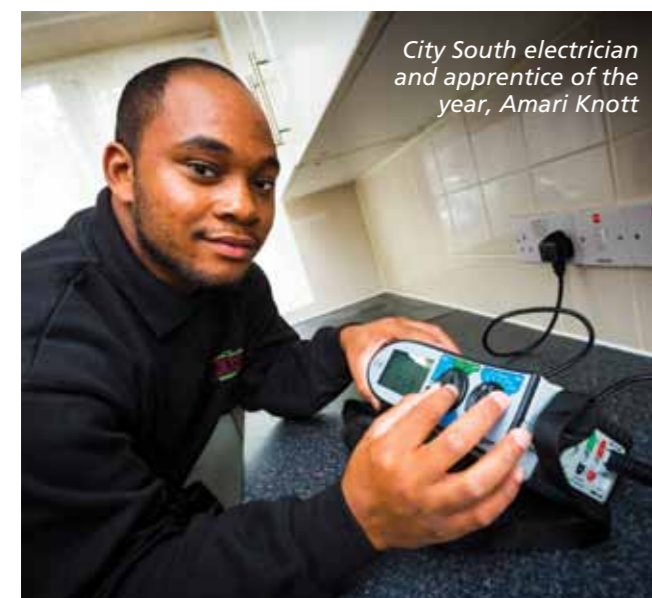


Your home

This covers the quality of our properties and the repairs and maintenance service we provide.

What City South has done in the last 12 months:

- We carried out 14,033 individual repairs.
- We carried out a programme of 'planned' maintenance including new communal doors, boilers and improved communal areas.
- Work has started on our first new-build properties – a development of 12 new two and three-bed houses that will provide much-needed family homes in Moss Side (pictured above).
- We introduced important changes to our repairs service to better enforce tenancy agreements and free up our resources to focus on planned maintenance and other service improvements.
- We ran a series of energy advice events at our high rise blocks to help residents save money on their utility bills, use their heating systems properly and find a cheaper energy supplier.
- We carried out tree surveys in many areas and started removing diseased trees or those that were damaging property.
- All our caretakers have gained grounds maintenance NVQ qualifications so we can now bring further improvements to the grounds around our high-rise blocks.
- 99% of our properties now meet Decent Homes Standard.



City South electrician and apprentice of the year, Amari Knott

Our performance

	2013/14	2012/13
Homes with a valid gas safety certificate	100%	100%
Emergency repairs completed on target	96%	94%
Urgent repairs completed on target	98%	97%
Routine repairs completed on target	97%	99%
Customers satisfied with quality of last repair	82%	n/a
Repairs appointments kept	97%	97%
New tenants satisfied their home met our lettable standard	96%	97%
Customers satisfied with repairs service	70%	85%
Satisfaction with overall quality of home	80%	90%

Satisfaction with repairs

We know from our recent survey that satisfaction with the repairs service dropped last year. We are currently reviewing these results in detail because we want to understand why.

We want to make sure that the changes we made haven't impacted tenants in ways that we were not anticipating.

As part of the review we'll be introducing a 'Property MOT' – this is where we'll come and inspect your home to find out all the repairs that need to be done.

We'll then arrange for all the identified work to be carried out, even if some of those repairs are your responsibility.

The idea is to reduce the number of visits we make to your home to do repairs, and by doing them in this way it cuts down the number of visits because we will do all the work in one go!

You will only be charged for a repair if you caused the damage.

How we plan to improve in the year ahead

- We'll be restructuring our repairs team so we have more multi-trade staff, enabling more jobs to be completed by one member of staff in one visit.
- We will pilot 'property MOTs' on one of our estates, surveying each home to identify any repairs or other maintenance issues.
- We will explore opportunities to develop more new-build homes in our neighbourhoods.
- Our planned maintenance programme for 2014/15 will include improved insulation, external improvement to balconies and walkways, and tree maintenance.

Tenancy, lettings and rent

This covers how we allocate our properties to new tenants and how we set and collect rent.

What City South has done in the last 12 months:

- We let 212 homes – 38 less than the previous year – and 61% of our empty homes were accepted on the first offer
- We let 50% of our homes to working households
- We collected 100% of the rent due to us
- In partnership with Manchester City Council and other housing associations we launched Manchester Move – a new 'choice based lettings' process. In 2012/13 there were 21,784 individual bids for City South properties through Manchester Move.
- We helped 267 tenants protect and maximise the benefits they were entitled to and secure Discretionary Housing Payments to minimise the impact of the under occupation charge.
- Our Money Mentors have given one-to-one financial support to more than 100 tenants to help them manage their finances and deal with debt.
- We have trained more of our staff to give detailed financial support to residents to help them with benefits, debts and budgeting.
- We joined with other landlords in Manchester to invest in Smarterbuys – a scheme that offers tenants household goods with affordable weekly payments.
- We organised a Loan Shark Week of Action in Moss Side and Fallowfield to help warn residents of the dangers of these illegal moneylenders.
- We launched an annual £1,000 prize draw. Tenants who keep to the simple rules in their tenancy agreement will have the chance to win one of four £250 cash prizes.

Our performance

	2013/14	2012/13
Rent collected	100%	100%
Average time to let a home	22 days	25 days
Average weekly rent: 1-bed flat incl. service charge	£77.10	£72.59
Average weekly rent: 3-bed house/flat	£85.70	£79.74
Satisfaction with value for money of rent	73%	86%
Average rent increase	3.7%	3.1%
Lettings	212	250
Evictions	19	29

How we plan to improve in the year ahead

- We will use the information we gathered through our tenant survey to target advice and support with things such as financial advice and employment to those who need it most.
- We will reduce the number of tenants in arrears through early support and financial advice.
- We will make improvements to our 'housing options' service to help more people find a suitable home.





Neighbourhood and community

This covers how we manage our wider neighbourhoods, work with other organisations to improve communities and deal with anti-social behaviour (ASB).

What City South has done in the last 12 months:

- We took legal action 51 times to put a stop to incidences of anti-social behaviour.
- We worked with local schools, the Police, Manchester City Council and community groups to put on 38 neighbourhood events focused on benefit changes, anti-social behaviour, hate crime, the environment and education.
- We supported Crucial Crew – a community project helping young people stay safe in their neighbourhood.
- We've brought a range of improvements to each of our areas through individual neighbourhood plans.
- We launched a new neighbourhood inspection process, including a quarterly inspection for our high-rise blocks. We now work with tenants to grade each estate using a simple scoring system. We carried out 45 neighbourhood inspections last year.
- We launched Moss Side Market, a new traditional outdoor market, in partnership with the City Council and Mosscafe.

Our performance

	2013/14	2012/13
Tenants satisfied with neighbourhood	83%	88%
Tenants who feel their areas has improved	57%	n/a
New ASB cases reported to us	393	304
Number of cases in which legal action was taken	51	47
Customers satisfied with the way their ASB complaint was dealt with	95%	92%

- We opened The Pod in Moss Side, a new community business hub that offers flexible affordable office space for start-up businesses.
- We launched You 1st – a new service to help vulnerable young people overcome challenges. Residents will be referred to the services from the Council and other housing associations across Manchester.

How we plan to improve in the year ahead

- We will continue to work with the Friends of Fallowfield to transform the library on Platt Lane into a new community hub offering a range of services for local people. We aim to launch the new centre this autumn.
- We will work with residents and partners to develop more effective recycling and waste disposal facilities.
- We will start work on a project to provide focused support and services for older people.
- We will aim to launch a 'neighbourhood fund' through which local people can bid for money to spend on community events, activities or improvements.
- We will work with other organisations to support residents with health and wellbeing including stopping smoking, healthy eating, fitness and drug and alcohol issues.



Value for money

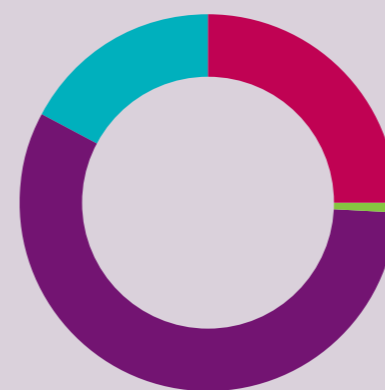
A key consideration in all areas of our work is to offer good value for money for our customers. This means making our services as efficient and effective as possible, reducing and making the most of what we spend, reducing waste, and maximising our income through rent collection and finding other sources of money, such as external grants and funding.

City South is required by our regulator to produce an annual Value For Money Self Assessment. We'll be putting a summarised version of that report on our website later in the year so all tenants can see what we're doing to offer our customers more value for money. We'll also be providing more regular updates on this through our tenant newsletter and website.

Here's a snapshot of some of the key things we achieved last year.

- The change to our repairs policy has greatly reduced the number of repairs we carry out, freeing up resources to bring other improvements and reducing money spent on sub-contractors.
- Bringing gas repairs and boiler replacement services in-house has saved us £167,000 in contractor fees.
- Retendering for specialist maintenance services and renegotiating our vehicle lease will save us £49,000 every year.
- We secured £202,000 of Community Energy Saving Programme funding to support the improvements we've made to our tower blocks.
- We benchmarked City South's services against other organisations so we have a better idea of where we offer good value, and where we are relatively 'expensive' and need to improve.

How we spend your rent



- 25% Housing Management
- 1% Arrears written off
- 57% Maintenance of homes
- 17% Interest on loans

- We received £261,000 in grants, commissions and other external funding to do a range of things including set up new services such as The Pod, transform Fallowfield Library and run our Mind Your Money project.
- We've generated extra income through offering some of our services commercially, such as repairs, grounds maintenance and tenancy management for private landlords. For example, our repairs service and handyperson service generated £46,000 of income, and we generated £22,000 through delivering specialist training courses to partners organisations. This income goes into making improvements to our homes and communities.
- We collected 100% of rent that was due to us. This is our main source of income.
- We have saved thousands of pounds through partnering with other organisations to buy goods and services, or re-tendering for them.

Money received

Lettings to tenants (incl. rents and service charges)	£17,042,000
Other housing activities (incl. leaseholder charges)	£130,000
Other activities (incl. grants)	£10,671,000
Total Turnover	£27,843,000

Money spent

Managing and improving our homes	£12,613,000
Other activities	£1,761,000
One-off adjustments	£477,000
Total costs	£14,851,000
Operating surplus for the year	£12,992,000
Financing costs	£2,147,000
Income from Right to Buy	£467,000



Grant funding will help us transform Fallowfield Library

Case Studies

Your future starts here!



Getting into work or accessing the right training or work experience can be difficult. That's where Steps2Success can help. Our new service aims to get local residents into jobs, and boost skills, experience and confidence through a wide range of training, work placement and volunteering opportunities. Last year we helped **189** residents find work, **299** access training, 96 into volunteering and **141** residents have gained a qualification. Michelle, pictured, went on a eight-week unpaid placement with City South and has now got a full time job with us.

A new chapter...



City South is working with Friends of Fallowfield to save Fallowfield Library from closure and transform it into an exciting new community hub call 'The Place'. The building will soon undergo a modern refurbishment, including the creation of a new suite of community rooms, to enable us to deliver a range of new services including jobs and training workshops, homework and after school clubs, youth groups and Credit Union services. Watch this space!

Our survey said...



We've attempted to contact and survey every single City South tenant to ensure we have up-to-date information so we can target our services better and identify tenants who may benefit from additional support. We're now using this information to offer things such as financial advice, employment opportunities and training courses to residents we now know want this extra support, and in a way they have asked to receive it, such as via text message or email.

Green-fingered caretakers



A day in the life of our Caretakers is about much more than making sure the insides of our tower blocks are kept safe and ship-shape! They are now also focusing their attention on providing nicer, greener, and cleaner communal grounds. Our caretakers and grounds maintenance teams have completed Level 2 Grounds Maintenance NVQs and have put their new skills to the test by transforming the grounds surrounding Westcott & Loxford Court.