

Resident bulletin

Spring
2025

YOUR FEEDBACK

REPAIRS

SAVING MONEY

SAFETY

COMMUNITY

Welcome to your latest newsletter

Hello and welcome to your latest newsletter which includes updates on how we're improving our service to you, ideas for keeping your home warm in

the spring and lowering energy bills, and our contact information so you can stay in touch whenever you need. Thanks for reading.

Hello from Mel Barrett

As MTVH's new Chief Executive I wanted to take the chance in this latest Resident Bulletin to say 'hello' and that I'm delighted to be able to serve you, our residents.

It's been a busy first few months as I have visited MTVH residents across London, the South East, East Anglia and the East Midlands and had the chance to talk to some of you about your experience of MTVH. My commitment to you is that we will continue to put you at the heart of all the decisions we take as we strive to serve you better every day.

It's vitally important to me to hear your views. Therefore I would encourage you to use our feedback emails and phone lines, complete one of the 16,000 surveys we run each year, or even join one of our Regional Resident Panels or Customer Council.

To show the impact of resident feedback, we have featured a case study from Ashley Johnson, an MTVH resident who is the Regional Panel Chair and a member of our Customer Council. In this case study, Ashley shares the issues these involved resident groups engage on and provides examples of how resident voices are making a difference. More information on how to get involved is available on our website: <https://www.mtvh.co.uk/contact-us/share-your-voice/>

I look forward to hearing your thoughts, and meeting more of you in the year ahead. Wishing you a peaceful and positive 2025 – Mel.



Mel visits residents in Derby.

You said, we did

We have been listening to you and working with our Regional Resident Panels and Customer Council to discuss the issues that matter to residents and find better ways of working.



Listening to you

Our approach to customer satisfaction surveys was shaped by feedback from a diverse panel of resident groups. They highlighted the importance of prompt action from MTVH if a repairs survey indicated an incomplete repair or if additional support was needed. The focus groups also shared their thoughts on survey timing, channels, survey fatigue, and opting out.

The Customer Council shaped our Residents' Annual Report, presenting survey results. They also helped create our performance information webpage, making it user-friendly. Through the "Back to Basics" process, they ensured we have taken appropriate actions based on TSM survey insights to improve resident experience.

Residents from our Service Charge Collaboration Group, and Customer Council have shaped the content, tone, and language of our annual rent and service charge letters for the coming year. We are grateful for their input.

Home visits pilot

Our Housing teams have been busy with a Home Visits Pilot, exploring further ways to engage with you and better understand your needs. Between July and September last year, our teams engaged with 244 households.

This has been a valuable exercise, providing insights into your needs and helping us identify areas for

improvement. We also want to extend our thanks to our residents for welcoming our teams into your homes.

Looking ahead, we're focused on developing a digital solution to streamline this process, making it easier for our teams and more accessible for you. We plan to roll out this initiative over the next two years.

Residents influencing service improvement

Ashley Johnson, Regional Panel Chair and member of our Customer Council, outlines the type of issues these groups engage on and shares some examples of how resident voices are making a difference.

As Chair of the Regional Panel for North and Central London, my role is to represent the views of residents in my region, and I work closely with MTVH Regional Directors and local teams to help enhance the services MTVH provide.

I also sit on the national Customer Council with eleven other residents from across the three MTVH regions, providing insight into different resident experiences. It's an effective way to feedback resident issues and success stories to MTVH, so that together we can develop effective policies and processes that will have a positive impact on residents.

I participate in these groups because I want to make a difference in peoples' lives. In 2016,

having previously worked as an Early Years teacher, I decided to open a small non-profit baby group to support vulnerable families. This experience inspired me to make an even bigger contribution, so in 2020 I decided to join the MTVH Regional Panel and Customer Council to help support families at a national level.

I really enjoy chairing Regional Panel meetings and have learnt a lot about myself and others during this time. Of course, there are residents and customers on the Panel and Council that see things differently, and that's fine because we always find ways to work alongside and support one another – whether we agree with each other's viewpoints or not.



Ashley Johnson, Regional Panel Chair and member of our Customer Council.

Together, we have really sunk our teeth into different areas of MTVH including anti-social behaviour, repairs and the complaints procedure. Many of our Regional Panel discussions have led to issues being explored at a deeper, national level with the Customer Council.

This is where MTVH, together with the Council, makes suggestions which are put forward to the Customer Services Committee so that improvements can be made and the organisation can truly say, "you said, we did, you felt!"

Thames Valley repairs service



Trevis
MTVH Metworks' colleague.

We've been listening to your feedback through resident surveys, with over 16,000 conducted each year. Satisfaction is higher in areas where our in-house Metworks team handles repairs and maintenance directly. Earlier this year we transferred the repairs service for 7,000 MTVH homes in the Thames Valley to our in-house repairs service Metworks from an external contractor.

Metworks already looks after thousands of our homes nationwide and consistently receives good satisfaction and performance scores from residents. The Metworks team has been in place for eight years and is made up of experienced and qualified plumbers, electricians, decorators and more, who are trained to look after you and your home.

By bringing Metworks on board, our aim is to provide our Thames Valley residents with a better service and higher satisfaction scores. However, whilst we've been moving over to Metworks, we know that due to a backlog from the previous contractor some repairs are taking longer than we'd like. We are working hard to resolve this.

We have:

- Employed more skilled tradespeople to join the team.
- Increased coordination between local housing managers and our Property Desk team that handle repairs calls and emails.
- Appointed an interim additional contractor who will help us deal with the temporary higher volume of jobs more rapidly.

To request an emergency repair, call us on 0203 535 3535, Monday to Friday 8am-6pm. We'll give you an appointment and send someone out to fix it as soon as possible.



MTVH Metworks colleague.

Please continue to book non-urgent repair requests through the MTVH Online portal on www.mtvh.co.uk.



Residents in Tutin Court
Later Living Scheme.

Tenant Satisfaction Measures

We are pleased to present our first ever set of Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM). Last year was the first year that the Regulator for Social Housing (RSH) required all housing associations to report a consistent set of TSMs. The aim is to enhance transparency for residents and to allow associations to identify areas of strength, and where improvement can be made.

It is encouraging that 68.3% of our tenants are satisfied with MTVH's homes and services overall, and over 75% say that we treat them fairly and with respect.

However, we acknowledge there is room for improvement and work to be done particularly around our homeowners. We are already taking actions to better serve our homeowners and have established a new team specialising in the needs of shared owners and leaseholders.

Additionally, we've formed a Service Charge Collaboration Group, bringing together shared owners and leaseholders from all our operating areas to work on homeownership-specific themes, and service charges in particular.

When asked specifically about the condition of their property or building, over three quarters of renters are satisfied MTVH provides a home that is safe. We understand feeling safe at home is about much more than bricks and mortar, and most of our renters (61.4%) are satisfied with our handling of anti-social behaviour.

When asked about our repairs services, 71% of renters and 66.2% of homeowners were satisfied, and 72.2% of renters also found that MTVH maintains communal areas well.

Whilst the feedback from our renters is encouraging, we remain committed to address the areas where improvement is needed. As we move forward, we remain dedicated to serving our residents better every day. We have published our TSMs on our website, which outlines how we are working with our residents and responding to what we hear through TSMs and other feedback routes.

We encourage you to visit our website for more information: www.mtvh.co.uk/about-us/our-performance/tenant-satisfaction-measures/

Saving money on energy bills

Here are some ideas for saving money on energy bills. According to the Energy Saving Trust, replacing a single traditional halogen bulb with an LED can save £2-3 per year on energy bills, which means that if the average household replaced all their bulbs, it would save around £40 a year on electricity.

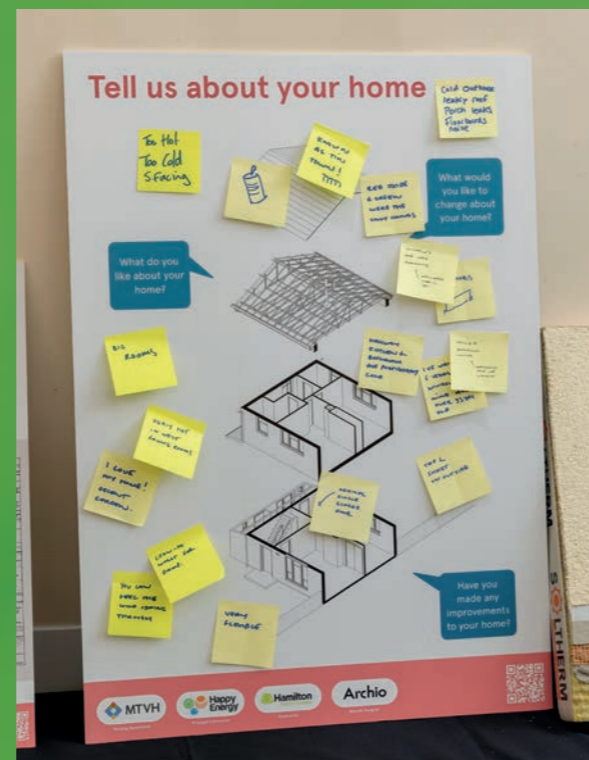
MTVH is also doing our part which you can read more about in our Sustainability Update for 2023/24 on our website. The report found that MTVH has reduced its carbon emission by 9.36% or 1,117.48 tonnes which is the equivalent of 2,792,500 miles driven by a car or 134,040,000 smartphones charged. Examples of energy saving projects we've completed include:



- Openable roof lights fitted at two new office spaces.
- Air-source heat pumps at two new office spaces.
- Removal of centralised hot water system at Dover Court.
- Tree planting initiatives.



East Leake decarbonisation, Nottinghamshire.



MTVH Decarbonisation Team in East Leake, Nottinghamshire.

Delivering warmer homes and lowering bills

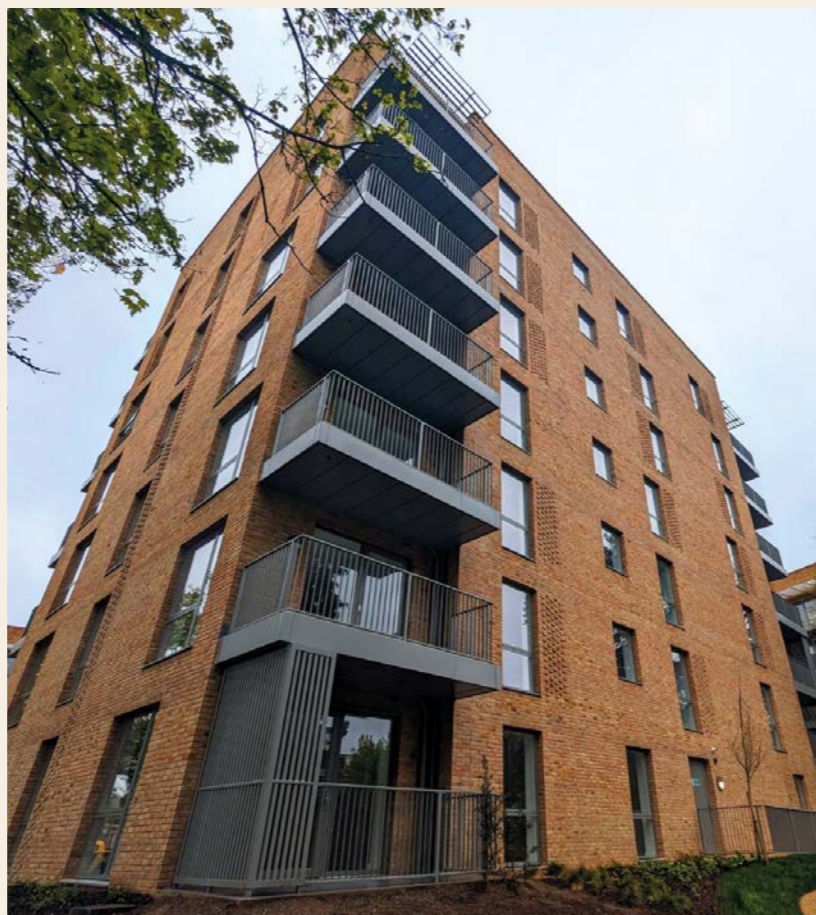
In the last year, we've been busy investing in the energy efficiency of your homes. As part of this, we've insulated 1,300 existing homes to improve their Energy Performance.

We are continuing to roll this out in the year ahead, providing you with warmer homes that will require less energy to heat.

For tips on saving money on bills have a look at our website by searching 'money advice'.

Building new affordable homes

MTVH's vision is for everyone to have a decent home and the chance to live well. Last financial year we built 892 much-needed homes for individuals and families and we are on track to build 569 more in the current year to March 2025 as we play our part to address the UK's housing crisis.



Westhorpe Gardens, Barnet.

Westhorpe Gardens and Mills Grove Estates

The regeneration of the 1960s Westhorpe Gardens and Mills Grove estates in the London Borough of Barnet was proposed by MTVH in 2018 in collaboration with Barnet Council, and with funding support from The Mayor of London's Affordable Homes programme.

When completed in 2026, the scheme will not only have replaced and upgraded all 102 social rent homes originally on the site, it will also provide an additional 149 affordable homes to create a strong multi-generational community.

For children on the site, we are developing play areas with landscaped mounds and creative play equipment. For the older generation we are providing 46 later living homes for the over-55s at London Affordable Rent. These homes



Westhorpe Gardens, Barnet.

will be fully integrated with the wider community by locating a residents' lounge within the later living accommodation that will also act as a hub for the entire estate.

"Westhorpe not only increases the supply of affordable homes in Hendon,..[it] will promote an even stronger and inclusive community when fully built out in the coming years." – **Councillor Joshua Conway, Hendon Ward.**



Fire safety progress

Your safety is our top priority and we work hard to make sure all homes meet building safety standards, and that any issues are addressed.

In addition to keeping all our residents safe, we have said that we will protect leaseholders in buildings over five storeys or 11 metres high from having to pay building safety improvement costs, either historic or ongoing. While the cost of this is significant for MTVH, we took this action as it is the right thing to do to provide certainty and peace of mind for our leaseholders.



We continue to meet with residents whose homes require remediation. Our Building Safety Managers hold regular meetings with residents, MPs, and other local stakeholders. We are committed to continuously improving our services and have surveyed over 2,500 residents living in our high-rise buildings to ensure our communication meets their needs, and to understand their experiences and where safety remediation work is needed. As of January 2025, works have commenced to 32 MTVH and third-party blocks. Five blocks have also been fully remediated.

We know building safety issues can be worrying, so keeping up regular and effective communication with you is a priority. The 'Keeping Safe in Your Home' page on our website has been updated – we encourage you to take a look. You can now find general fire safety information and advice, details on the regular checks carried out to ensure your homes are safe, and contact the building safety team directly to ask questions or raise any building safety concerns.



Helping residents save money and providing financial support

Through our Tenant Welfare Fund, we help residents who have urgent need for financial support. In 2023/24, we spent £729,000 to help people with rent adjustments, food, fuel, and other essential items. This is an increase from the year before when we invested £638,000.

The Tenant Welfare Fund also provides person-centred crisis assistance, money advice, debt counselling, and financial support. We are now offering money advice across all our communities, having supported 3,675 residents in the last year. This resulted in £3m of value to our residents in saved costs, benefits provision, and increased incomes.

Our ongoing partnership with Pocket Power offers residents an inclusive phone service to help them save money on household bills and

connect with financial support. Since 2020, over 956 MTVH households have switched to cheaper deals and applied for discounts, resulting in total saving of £252,653.

We also support residents through our own money advisors, who provide one-to-one advice on money, debt and benefits.

One of our residents explains how money advisor Jose helped her: "It's been an extremely difficult time for me, I was struggling financially especially with rent as I had to pay it from my pension – my only source of income. I was overwhelmed with how I needed to go about getting support. With Jose's help, I was able to understand what support was available. Jose helped develop financial stability in my life. I am truly grateful for all that Jose has done to help me."

Delivering for community

We are always working hard to organise and deliver community events and initiatives for residents and neighbourhoods. Here are just some of the recent highlights.

Faith and Fun day event

In July, we delivered a family-friendly community event day in Wembley, London. The event included activities tailored for our Muslim community such as a Quran competition, Islamic Calligraphy, and charity collection.



Residents at Chalkhill Wembley Faith and Fun Day event.

Clapham Park Winter Fun Day

Attendees were welcomed by cheerful volunteers donning Santa hats and stalls offering Christmas gifts, handmade bags, mulled fruit drinks, candyfloss, massages, and more.

A standout attraction was the Mandinga Arts stall, hosted by a local arts organisation that brought an array of dazzling headdresses and flamboyant costumes. Entertainment included a resident DJ playing festive hits and a spoken word artist performing poems celebrating community and identity.

Clapham Park London Winter Fair.



Residents at Black History Month celebration in St. Ann's, Nottingham.

Marking Black History month

We're proud to honour Black history and heritage. In October, we hosted a Black History Month celebration for our residents in St. Ann's, Nottingham. This year's theme, "Reclaiming the Narrative", provided a meaningful opportunity to reflect on Black history and the experiences that shape our community.

Residents gathered to share their stories and enjoy a Caribbean feast prepared by local caterers Chez Coors. The celebration also featured live music from local radio station, Kemet FM.



Residents at Black History Month celebration in St. Ann's, Nottingham.

Top tips to keep your home warm this spring



1 Seal Drafts and Insulate: Check windows, doors, and any gaps where cold air might be entering your home. Use draft excluders, weatherstripping, or even rolled-up towels to block the cold. Adding thick curtains or blinds can also help to keep the warmth in.



2 Layer Up: Dress warmly in layers, even indoors. Wearing multiple layers traps heat more effectively than a single thick layer. Don't forget to keep cosy blankets on hand for extra warmth.



3 Use Heating Wisely: Set your thermostat to the lowest comfortable temperature, and make sure to heat the rooms you use the most. Close doors to unused rooms to keep the heat where you need it.



4 Keep Radiators Clear: Ensure that your radiators are free from obstructions like furniture or curtains. This allows the heat to circulate more effectively around the room.



5 Let the Sun In: During the day, open your curtains to let any sunlight naturally warm your home. Close them as soon as it gets dark to keep the warmth in.



6 Cook and Bake: Use your oven for cooking and baking during the colder months. The heat generated can help to warm your kitchen and nearby areas.



7 Use Hot Water Bottles: At bedtime, use a hot water bottle to warm up your bed. You can also keep one by your side when sitting down to relax.



8 Cover Hard Floors: If you have hard floors, consider using rugs to add warmth underfoot and reduce heat loss through the floor.

Small steps to make your community and neighbours safer, healthier, and happier

Balcony safety tips

- Never use barbecues on your balcony, including disposables.
- Never store flammable or hazardous materials (i.e. gas cylinders) on balconies.
- Keep balconies clutter free – they should not be used for storage.
- Do not modify your balcony or install screening or netting.
- Avoid smoking on your balcony. If you do smoke on a balcony, do not discard cigarettes or smoking materials on or over the balcony.
- Use a sturdy ashtray with a small amount of water in it to ensure materials are extinguished.



E-bike or e-scooters safety tips

Charging

- If possible, avoid charging e-bikes and e-scooters indoors.
- Never store or charge e-bikes and e-scooters in communal areas as this can affect people's ability to escape.
- Charge batteries whilst you are awake and alert and do not charge them if you are away from home.
- Avoid charging near combustible or flammable materials.
- Ensure your smoke alarms are working. If you charge or store your e-bike or e-scooter in a garage or kitchen ensure you install the correct detection equipment. We recommend heat alarms rather than smoke detectors for these areas.
- Always use the manufacturer approved charger for the product and carefully follow the instructions.
- Unplug the charger when you have finished using it.

- Check your battery regularly for any signs of damage.
- Do not cover chargers or battery packs when charging as this could lead to overheating or a fire.
- Do not overcharge your battery. Check the instructions for charge times.
- If you need to dispose of a damaged or end of life battery, don't dispose of it in your household waste or normal recycling.

Storage

- E-bikes, e-scooters and their batteries should be stored in a cool place, avoiding excessively hot or cold areas.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for the storage and maintenance of lithium-ion batteries, particularly if they are not going to be used for extended periods of time.
- In the event of an e-bike, e-scooter or lithium-ion battery fire, do not attempt to put it out. Get out, stay out and call 999.



Damp and mould – top tips for your home

These tips are good practice to follow even when damp and mould is not a problem in your home.

- Keep your home well ventilated.
- Keep trickle vents open.
- Open windows when the weather allows.
- Open kitchen and bathroom windows when you're showering or cooking – and keep them open for a short time after.
- Use the boost function on extractor fans during cooking or bathing and keep doors and windows shut.
- Dry clothes outside if you can.
- Use an extractor fan or open a window if you're drying clothes indoors.
- Place large furniture slightly away from walls (especially outside walls) so air can circulate behind.
- Warmer air can hold more moisture – so if a home isn't heated, it takes a smaller amount of moisture to cause condensation, which can lead to damp and mould. Try and keep your home heated to a comfortable level if you can.



Your chance to win £50 Love to Shop voucher!

Enter our prize draw and be in with a chance of winning £50 Love to Shop vouchers. All you have to do is share your feedback about this newsletter and let us know what news you'd like to see in the next issue of this newsletter.

Submit your feedback by emailing communications@mtvh.co.uk. Competition closes on 14th March 2025.

CONTACT US IF YOU WANT TO



Make a payment



Request repairs



Update your contact / personal details



Make enquiries

WAYS TO GET IN TOUCH

MTVH ONLINE

Request and track your repairs, make a payment or check your balance through your personal MTVH Online account 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. More than 1 in 3 MTVH residents use MTVH online. Visit www.mtvh.online.

CALL US

From 8am – 6pm, Monday to Friday our phonelines are open with support for emergencies available 24 hours a day. We offer a call back feature so you don't have to hold too long waiting for an answer. Choose the call back option when you phone and keep your place in the queue – let us call you. Call us on **0203 535 3535**

WRITE TO US

Our address for letters is: Metropolitan Thames Valley, Waterfront House, Technology Drive, Beeston NG9 1LA



Did you know our latest annual residents report is available online? Visit our website to view the full report



LISTENING TO RESIDENTS, CREATING OPPORTUNITY
RESIDENTS' REPORT
2023-2024

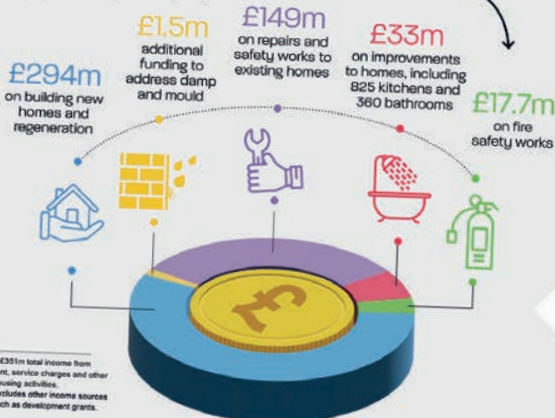
Delivering value for money

As a charitable organisation, we are committed to spending our money in ways that best serve you

In 2021, our 5-year strategy "Serving people better every day" set out our main priorities, which include improving your day-to-day experience, becoming more sustainable and providing more support services. We use this strategy to ensure any changes

we make align to our main aims and deliver the improvements you expect. We challenge ourselves to deliver financial benefits, as well as improvements to your lives, and each year we review our progress to see how we're doing and where we can do even more.

Highlights of how your money¹ is spent



Chalkhill Faith and Fun Day

This year we invested in a new Customer Relationship Management system, making it easier to deliver services more efficiently.

Improving your experience

This year we invested in a new Customer Relationship Management system, making it easier to deliver services more efficiently and provide you with clearer communications.

Meanwhile, MTVH Online has continued to provide an efficient way for residents and MTVH colleagues to create and monitor routine service requests, reducing demand on our teams so they have more time to dedicate to complex issues.

Over 40% of MTVH residents now use this digital service, with half of all transactions taking place through MTVH Online during 2023/24.

A full roadmap is now in place, linking MTVH Online with our Customer Relationship Management system, helping to make your experience with us smoother and more streamlined.

Procuring responsibly

In all our procurement activity, we place huge importance on delivering social and financial value for residents. Last year, we ran 75 competitive tenders which resulted in new contracts. During each tender process, we work closely

with stakeholders to determine contract deliverables, with a focus on resident impact.

Our procurement approach helps us to ensure that resident requirements translate into contractual commitments from suppliers and that we uphold excellent customer service.

Our main resident-specific Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are around Resident Communication, Resident Satisfaction and Social Value. During 2023/24, we negotiated 2,255 social value points into our new contracts.

These commitments included funding for the She Is Summit in Nottingham, reaffirming our stance against violence against young women and girls, and a fully-funded breakfast club at Chalkhill Primary School in Wembley to help families impacted by the cost-of-living crisis.

In November 2023, we introduced Match My Project, an online matching portal that allows our supply chain partners to match their social value commitments to local community-based organisations.

Investing in you

Over the past year, we have continued to provide financial support where it is needed most.

At the end of 2023/24, total arrears were at 5.2%, within our target for the year.

Our Tenant Welfare Fund was increased from £828k to £728k. This enabled our Customer Accounts team to access £366k to help 618 residents out of rent arrears so they could stay in their homes (671 in 2022/23).

The rest of our Tenant Welfare Fund was used by our Empowering Futures team to support residents with urgent food, fuel, essential household items and complex personal needs.

To help bolster MTVH funds that can be reinvested in the communities we work in, our Empowering Futures team raised over £120k of external funding and saved £40k through efficiencies.

We are planning to implement a number of other efficiencies to support our strategy and deliver further value for money for residents by 2026.