



gentoo

Great homes
Strong communities
Inspired people
for Sunderland



Customer
Annual Report
2023–24

www.gentoo.com

Welcome from our Customer Committee

As Gentoo's Customer Committee we are delighted to introduce your 2023-24 Customer Annual Report.

As we look back over the last year, this report provides an opportunity to look back at what was achieved and examine the overall performance of Gentoo and the services it provides to all of us among its 60,000 customers.

Back in November 2023, this new committee was created by Gentoo to place customers at the forefront of its decision-making process. We meet bi-monthly to help shape how services are delivered, giving direct feedback to Board members to ensure customer standards are being met and value for money is being achieved. Through the committee, Gentoo customers are guaranteed a voice as we are consulted on key matters, offering advice and guidance from a customer perspective and making sure Gentoo listens and acts on the feedback it receives.

As customers, we are passionate about the communities we live in and we want to make a positive difference for everyone who lives in a Gentoo property.



Gentoo Customer Committee with Louise Bassett, Chief Executive Officer and Emily Cox MBE, Group Chair

Since forming, we have been able to have a real input in how Gentoo delivers key services. We have helped Gentoo refine how it deals with cases of damp and mould, bringing in a more customer-friendly procedure with an empathetic approach to dealing with reports.

As a committee, we were also delighted to meet the Housing Ombudsman on a visit to Gentoo back in February where customers had the opportunity to raise issues and ask questions in person. This was a very valuable event for Gentoo as it looked at ways of improving the services it offers.

We have also worked with Gentoo on how it communicates with customers on important topics such as rent, providing advice on what information customers require and how it should be presented.

Members also represent Gentoo on The Social Housing Quality Resident Panel. The panel brings together social housing residents from across the country so they can directly share

their views with the government and ministers on their approach to driving up the quality of social housing.

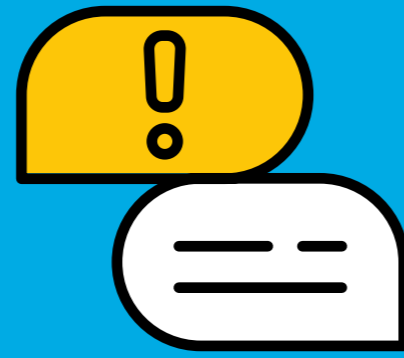
Members of the committee also attended the launch of the North East Housing Partnership in November, with Gentoo joining forces with 16 fellow providers of social housing across the new North East Mayoral Combined Authority, working together to bring significant change for all of their customers. Some of the committee also met Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner, Kim McGuinness, on a visit to Gentoo properties to discuss how partners can combine to tackle anti-social behaviour where it has a detrimental effect on neighbourhoods and we wish Kim every success as the new North East Mayor.

2024 will be a very important year for Gentoo. The Regulator of Social Housing has established a new way to assess how social housing landlords are performing in terms of providing good quality homes and services. Along with new consumer standards, a new set of Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) have been compiled and these will help customers to understand how well Gentoo and other landlords are doing. You will be able to read more about TSMs and how Gentoo is performing in terms of complaint handling in this report.

We have worked with Gentoo to compile the Customer Annual Report to help ensure it contains information that is relevant to you. You'll see it shows how Gentoo spends your rent and how it has invested in its properties over the period. The report also shares stories of some of our customers as well as highlighting the various ways you can get involved with helping Gentoo shape its services. We'd encourage as many of you as possible to use your voice and participate.

Thank you for reading and we hope you enjoy the report.

Complaints performance



Complaints are very important to us, they help us to improve our service and offer us the opportunity to learn when things go wrong.

If something does go wrong, we will apologise, investigate what happened and work with the customer to make it right. Gentoo's dedicated Customer Voice Team will investigate and respond to customer complaints.

The Housing Ombudsman

Customers may access The Housing Ombudsman service for advice at any point throughout their complaint, however, customers can only escalate their complaint to the Housing Ombudsman if they are unsatisfied with our response to a stage two formal complaint.

Key complaint themes

Key complaint themes throughout the last financial year have centred around roofing repairs, in particular timescales to have work completed, damp and mould where the cause of the issue had not been identified first time resulting in repeated appointments.

Housing Ombudsman determinations 2023-24

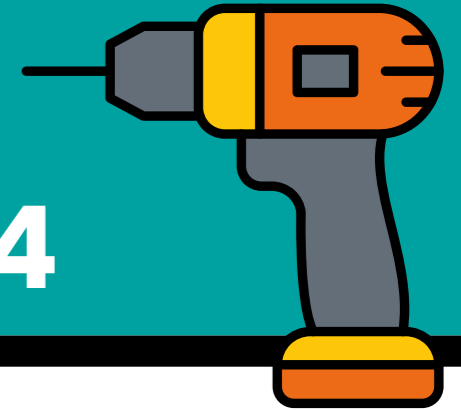
The main themes of the determinations from the Housing Ombudsman were Property Maintenance, Housing Management, Asset Management and Leasehold Management. The main issues were lack of communication and repair timescales.

Analysis of Complaint Handling Performance 2023-24

This table shows a breakdown of complaints received in 2023-24 as well as complaints that were extended with customer agreement.

Stage 1	345
Complaints extended (in agreement with customer)	52 (15%)
All stage 1 complaints handled within timescale	80%
Stage 2	107
Complaints extended (in agreement with customer)	14 (13%)
All stage 2 complaints handled within timescale	98.1%

Service Improvements made in 2023-24



Complaint feedback has influenced and improved the services provided to customers.

As a result, several service improvements were implemented during 2023-24, such as:

Damp and mould

Following customer feedback in October 2023, Gentoo introduced a new damp and mould case management process. The process involves triaging the severity of the damp and mould. The individual case is overseen by a Case Coordinator who is required to carry out at least one aftercare check with the customer once treatment and/or remedial work has been completed.

Changes were also made to communication channels to make it easier for customers to report cases of damp and mould. The new process and procedure were co-designed with Gentoo's involved customers.

Repair timescales

Repair timescales have been a key theme of complaints in 2023-24. In October 2023, a comprehensive review was undertaken, and 20 extra staff members were appointed to support day-to-day repairs.

Repair Managers and Repair Supervisors were moved from a 'trade based' approach to an 'area' approach to offer a consistent

personal service for customers, ensuring that one supervisor and one manager oversees a geographical area rather than their allocated trade.

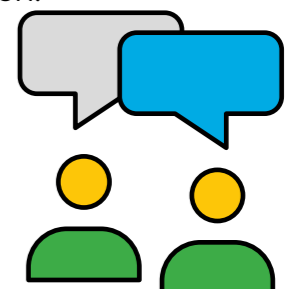
Outstanding repairs were reduced by approximately 4,000 jobs by applying an area-based approach for non-urgent repairs. The team reduced the average repair response time from 40 days to approximately 17 days by the end of the financial year.

Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM)

Gentoo's TSM score for annual satisfaction is currently 39.7% with complaint handling.

To further understand the low TSM satisfaction scores, Gentoo has been analysing customer feedback in more detail.

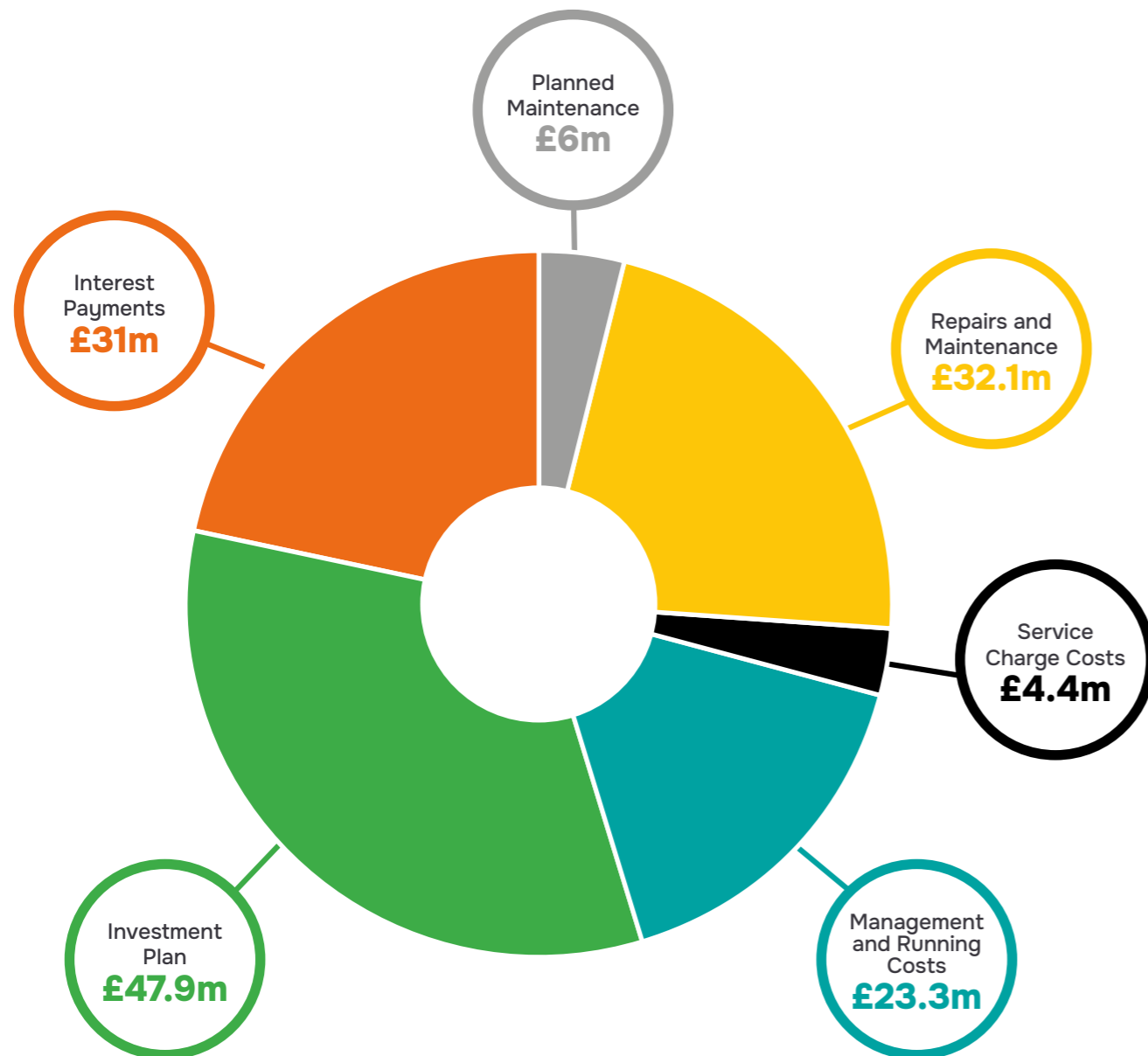
Customer feedback demonstrated that although customers felt it was easy to make a complaint to Gentoo, more clarity was needed when issues were handled as a service request. A new system for recording service requests has been introduced to ensure issues are followed up to improve customer satisfaction.



How your rent is spent



The Regulator of Social Housing grades us as 'G1' for governance. We have been graded the highest rating possible because we are well governed, well ran and financially viable.



we did.

By working with our customers, we are able to change the way we do things to improve the customer experience. Here are some examples from the last year:

Money Matters Team leaflet

Gentoo's Customer Committee identified the welcome pack as an area that needed reviewing. In January, a group of involved customers attended a task and finish group to review the current welcome pack that is issued when customers sign up with Gentoo.

During the session, customers felt the welcome pack could benefit from a leaflet being included to promote the support the Money Matters Team can offer to customers.

To ensure all customers were aware of the support the team can offer, we included a copy of the leaflet with the rent increase letters. From March 2024, all welcome packs include a leaflet titled 'Support to help you manage your money' to advise customers what support the Money Matters Team can provide.

Rent increase letters

In January, a group of involved customers attended a task and finish group to discuss the format and content of the annual rent increase letters that are sent out every April.

During the session, customers told us that the information in the letter was often duplicated in an accompanying leaflet, which therefore was not needed as part of the rent increase communication. The group scrutinised the leaflet and picked out key information that they would like to see incorporated into the letter.

The 2023-24 rent increase letters were sent out in April 2024 without the information leaflet. This resulted in a £4,200 saving!

Amends to the tenancy agreement

During the welcome pack task and finish, customers also reviewed the tenancy agreement that is included in a welcome pack.

During the session, customers raised concerns around the wording in the insolvency section of the agreement. Customers stated the wording may be found threatening by some.

After speaking with the Legal Team, this paragraph was removed from the agreements in February 2024.

Tenant Satisfaction Measures



In April 2023, the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) announced the introduction of 22 Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs). The RSH regulates providers of social housing in England.

They promote a viable, efficient and well-governed social housing sector able to deliver more and better social homes. The results of the TSMs show how we're performing when it comes to providing good quality homes and services for our customers.

The measures are split into two parts:

- 10 performance measures that we will collect through management performance information
- 12 customer perception survey measures that will be collected through surveying customers directly

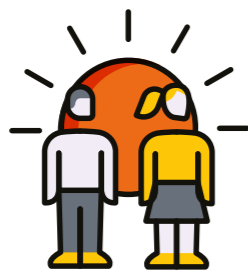
Gentoo is working with IFF Research, an independent social and market research agency, to gather feedback from our customers through surveys to review the service we provide. IFF Research will contact you by either:

- email from myopinions@iffresearch.com
- reminder email from myopinions@iffresearch-dm.com
- phone call from 0203 148 7645

If you do not want to participate, just let the surveyor know and you will not receive any further calls.

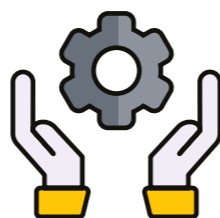
Overall satisfaction

78%



Satisfaction that the home is well maintained

77.2%



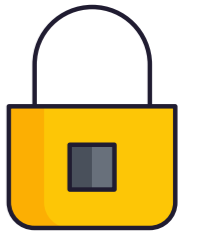
Satisfaction with our repairs service

78.8%



Satisfaction that your home is safe

82.1%



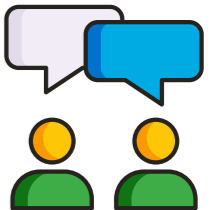
Satisfaction with time taken to complete your last repair

72.7%



Satisfaction that we listen and act

69.4%



Satisfaction that we keep you informed about things that matter to you

76%



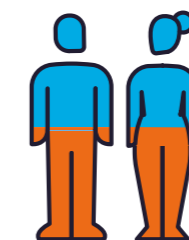
Satisfaction that we keep communal areas clean and well maintained

76.9%



Agreement that we treat you fairly and with respect

80.1%



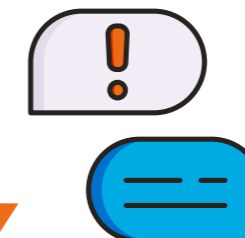
Satisfaction we make a positive contribution to neighbourhoods

69.7%



Satisfaction with our approach to handling complaints

39.7%



Satisfaction with our approach to handling anti-social behaviour

64.6%



Damp and mould - a new approach

In May 2023, we created a new Damp and Mould policy which details our commitment to working with customers to tackle damp and mould in our properties. This was signed off by the Group Board in September 2023.

We worked closely with our customers to create a user-friendly procedure and guidance document which was published on our website.

We now take a more proactive approach to identifying damp and mould in our properties. This is done through:

Rolling programme of stock condition surveys

Each stock condition survey includes an inspection of the home to identify any visible signs of damp and/or mould.

Empty homes

An Empty Homes Officer will visit all empty homes and carry out a damp and mould assessment prior to them being allocated.

Visits to customers' homes

Colleagues will proactively look for signs of damp and/or mould each time they visit a customer's home. Colleagues will now also identify any vulnerabilities, communication requirements, language barriers or disabilities and capture any reasonable adjustments customers may benefit from.

Reporting damp and mould

If you have damp and mould in your home, please call us on **0191 525 5500**.

Chris Tully, Call Distributor

Reporting damp and mould process



1.

When damp and/or mould is first reported, the contact centre triage the case with the customer. Based on the answers provided the case is given a severity rating.

2.

The case is allocated to a Case Coordinator who is responsible for overseeing and progressing all aspects of the case, including repairs appointments, investigatory work communication with the customer and the aftercare process.

3.

Based on the outcome of the severity rating, a mould wash down or damp inspection will be raised and booked within the priority timescales.

4.

Following the wash down or inspection appointment, we will raise any remedial works that are identified during the initial visit.

5.

The Case Coordinators will monitor all repairs and once they are complete, then move the case into our aftercare process.

6.

Four to six weeks after the case was moved into aftercare one, the Case Coordinator will contact the customer to check if the issues with the damp and mould have been resolved or if it has returned. If resolved, the case is moved into aftercare two, which involves the Case Coordinator contacting the customer 10 to 12 months later to check our intervention has fully resolved the damp and mould. If at any point the damp and mould returns during either period of aftercare the case is moved back into the inspection and repairs phase of the process and further actions agreed with the customer.

Investment and maintenance in customers' homes



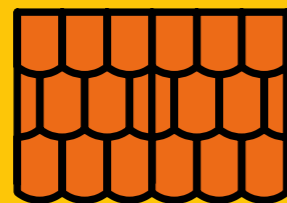
Each week we spend £1 million in our existing stock through planned investment and planned maintenance.

Planned investment relates to the work we carry out in properties to ensure they meet the Government's Decent Homes Standard. This includes work such as installing new kitchens, bathrooms, windows, roofs and planned decoration.

Planned maintenance relates to the work we carry out on a day-to-day basis to ensure properties are secure, in a good condition and protected against the weather. This includes work such as gas servicing, electrical periodic testing, fencing repairs and non-urgent roofing repairs.

Last year we:

Installed
825
new roofs



Upgraded
1,565
heating systems

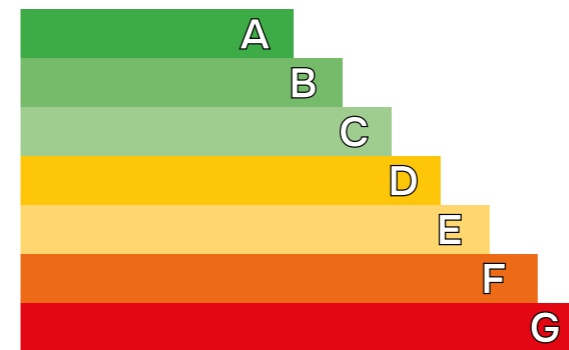


Responded to **2,350** reports of fly tipping

Decorated the externals of
1,628
properties



Installed double glazing in
1,213
properties



Moved from 62.24% to
72.9%
of homes at EPC C

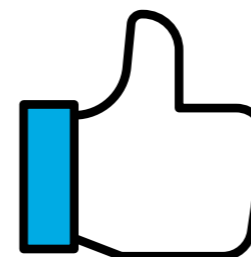


Completed
163,229
servicing, maintenance
and repair visits

Completed
30,143
emergency repairs



96.93%
of repairs completed
first time



531
properties benefitted from
new kitchens or bathrooms



Installed energy efficiency
improvements in
3,817
properties

Restored
1,904
empty homes



Inspected
1,867
trees



Get involved



We recognise changes to our services can have a significant impact on our customers.

It is therefore important we ensure customers are at the forefront of the groups decision making. Our current involved customers hold the Group to account, ensuring excellent services are being delivered and value for money is being achieved.

We have a range of opportunities for customers and leaseholders to get involved with. By sharing views and giving us feedback, you help us improve our services for you as our customers and leaseholders.

Customer and Community Voice Groups

During these meetings, attendees discuss local matters affecting customers and important business decisions before reviewing funding applications.

Scrutiny Group

The Scrutiny Group helps us to improve our services through deep dives, task and finish groups and policy reviews.

Neighbourhood Walks

The walks take place on a quarterly basis and provide an opportunity for Gentoo and key stakeholders to work together and proactively identify areas for improvement. You can find a full list of planned walks for the remainder of 2024 on our website.



Your Gentoo Voice is an online portal that allows customers and leaseholders to take part in online forums, surveys and polls.

For further information on how to get involved please visit www.gentoo.com/get-involved or contact Lewis Walmsley, Customer Engagement Lead using the below contact details.

If you would like to become an involved customer, please contact Lewis by emailing customerinvolvement@gentoo.com or calling **07936 931 077**.



Mark Robinson, Christie Laidler, Tyla King and Trevor Richardson

We're proud to have customers who care about their community. Last year we spent time with three customers who dedicate their time helping in their local communities.



The Secret Garden

Founded by Gentoo customer, David Banks, the Secret Garden is a regeneration project in the heart of the local community.

Local residents can get involved at the Secret Garden through volunteering, participating in events, learning how to grow their own food, or simply visiting for a catch up with friends and to meet new people from the local community.

Cherry Tree Garden social events

Gentoo customer, Evelyn, is dedicated to her community at our extra care scheme, Cherry Tree Gardens in Houghton.

When Evelyn lost her husband, she worked closer with the community and her friends to organise events at Cherry Tree Gardens to bring residents and the local community closer together.

Evelyn organises coffee mornings, quizzes, raffles, music events and meals for the residents.



Improving the community in Washington

Gentoo customer, Aloysius, is dedicated to supporting and improving his community in Washington.

Aloysius works closely with his local community, our colleagues and fellow customers by getting involved in estate walkabouts, events with his local church and joins our Customer and Community Voice Groups to share feedback to help us improve our services.



This document was created with and reviewed by our involved customers to ensure that the information we produce for customers is relevant, clear and understandable.



We're here to help

Your Neighbourhood Coordinator can help you if you need our support. If you are unsure who your Coordinator is, you can find their details at

www.gentoo.com/neighbourhood-coordinators