



# Circle 33

*Enhancing Life Chances*

**Resident  
Checked** ✓



2010 - 2011 In Review  
Circle 33 Housing Trust

# How has the last year



Chair of Circle 33's Board **Maggie Jones** and resident **Faye Gayle** from Islington discuss the highs and lows of the year gone by.

*Interviewer:* It's been a year since Circle 33 made their promises to residents. How do you think the year has gone - what's gone well? What hasn't gone so well?

**Faye Gayle (FG):** Over the last year the residents have been invited to get involved in many different ways, through training, the Tenant Scrutiny Panel, service improvement groups. I have personally found the training particularly interesting around first aid, mental health, and complaints. I've never come across a landlord that's provided as much as Circle 33.

**Maggie Jones (MJ):** One of the biggest things we have done this year is set up our Tenant Scrutiny Panel, so we can work with our residents to get better services for all. We've got 12 residents on this panel now, and a full training schedule coming up. It's set up now so in the coming year we just need to use it effectively.

We also introduced our customer loyalty and rewards scheme, which has many elements including encouraging people to pay by Direct Debit and our handy man service.

We've also done loads of work around employment and training – helping our residents get back into work.

*So you've mentioned resident involvement - what's the best example of where residents have helped shape services?*

**(MJ):** Well, there are 33 ways for residents to get involved with us and we get feedback through all these ways. One example is that residents requested longer opening hours for our repairs desk. And we are now recruiting more staff in the hope that eventually we can extend these hours to 6:30pm.

We also have our new anti-social behaviour (ASB) forum which is made up mainly of residents who have experience of ASB. These residents work with us and our ASB staff, who now offer 24 hour help for the most severe cases.

# gone at Circle 33?

Just going back to the last year, are there any areas Circle 33 could have done better in?

*(MJ)*: We need to communicate better about how residents are helping us. We also need to tell the outside world what we are doing and raise the profile of Circle 33.

*(FG)*: I think there is a lot that is currently being worked on, such as the enhanced repairs service, so we will see a lot of improvements in the next year.

The Scrutiny Panel has identified the areas that need to be looked at in the next year and myself and the other members look forward to getting involved in that.

...and so what about the year ahead, what plans are there for improvements, and what hopes do you have?

*(FG)*: I think it's important that Circle 33 keeps in mind the diversity of residents. For example somebody with an impairment or learning difficulties may not want a decorating allowance

but would prefer help with moving in and getting sorted. There are many different needs and signing up and moving in isn't the same for everybody.

My hope for next year would be to get more residents involved especially with younger people and those that don't usually get involved. Continuing with the good work in working with and listening to residents.

*(MJ)*: I'm really keen to improve on our general tenant satisfaction. It's always hard in London, satisfaction levels tend to be lower. Of all the big London housing associations Circle 33 is what's known as second quartile – so we're not top but we are second out of four quartiles. This is good, but I want us to be in the top level.

There's so much that goes into that and in the next year we are keen to work on getting up to that standard.



# Getting you involved

Performance 2010- 2011

Our performance has been compared with four other local housing providers so you can see how we are doing.

	Circle 33	Hyde	East Thames	L&Q	Southern Housing Group
Satisfaction with views taken into account	65.5%	54.7%	57.5%	58.4%	63%
Satisfaction with landlord services	72.8%	79.9%	72.1%	80.2%	78%
Complaints resolved at first stage	93.8%	Data unavailable*	Data unavailable	Data unavailable	Data unavailable

*\*The data has not been published by this housing provider*

## My say

**John Green** has been a resident for over 16 years, but has only recently got involved.

“Since I completed my training to become a Resident Inspector, I have carried out two inspections. One on an estate, and one on a Circle 33 office. I have also attending a number of Service Improvement Groups and am also on the planning group for the Community Action Day that Circle 33 are running for their street properties. I will also be doing some ASB training sessions shortly.

Becoming involved has opened my eyes to how Circle works. I feel that I can do my bit, in some small way, and helping shape the future of Circle 33 and our homes.”

## Highlights from 10/11

We have:

- increased the amount of diversity information we hold to 76%
- reviewed our service standards with residents through a range of methods
- worked with residents to change the ways they can be involved
- consulted with residents on all of our Service Improvement Plans, to ensure that residents are at the heart of our improvement plans next year
- developed a new tenants scrutiny panel, to scrutinise all areas of our work, which works directly with the Circle 33 board and feeds back on our performance

## Plans for 11/12

We will:

- change the way we thank residents for being involved, by allowing residents to build up loyalty points, which can be converted to time from our Handy Man service
- develop our resident inspectors to be able to undertake a short-notice inspection audit at Circle 33
- undertake a resident engagement impact assessment, to ensure that our engagement activities are reflective of resident's needs
- build links with community groups across our boroughs
- run a community action day to allow staff and residents to get together and volunteer to deliver project in our communities, which have been suggested by residents
- provide opportunities for residents to have access to training and employment opportunities

*GIVING YOU what you asked for...*

We have consulted with 102 older residents aged over 65, and 46 younger people aged 16 to 24

Following feedback, we are working to shape our Neighbourhood Action Plan to include Street properties. We are working on developing a Community Needs Assessment questionnaire



# Looking after your homes

Performance 2010- 2011

Our performance has been compared with four other local housing providers so you can see how we are doing.

	Circle 33	Hyde	East Thames	L&Q	Southern Housing Group
Repairs completed on time	92.9%	Data unavailable*	Data unavailable	Data unavailable	Data unavailable
Satisfaction with repairs	89.8%	74.7%	70.5%	77.8%	73%
Homes meeting Decent Homes Standard	100%	100%	99.9%	100%	100%
Homes with valid Gas Safety Certificate	99.8%	Data unavailable	Data unavailable	Data unavailable	Data unavailable

*\*The data has not been published by this housing provider*

## My say

Ms Prestina Ogiste was living in overcrowded conditions in a top floor property with a number of stairs that were a daily concern for her whilst looking after her two young children. We worked to move the family as a management transfer case into a brand new flat.

“Our Customer Services Manager was really helpful and I’m thrilled with my new home, we have much more space and no stairs to worry about.”



## Highlights from 10/11

We have:

- o improved the speed in which repairs are done and continued to increase customer satisfaction with the repairs service
- o met the Decent Homes Standard in October, two months ahead of target
- o £50 million Warner refurbishment is complete, with all homes meeting the Decent Homes Standard
- o reduced the cost of our gas servicing and repair contract
- o merged a number of small homes into seven new large family sized homes for our tenants who are severely overcrowded
- o improved the common areas of 15 more estates through our Excellent Estates Investment Programme

## Plans for 11/12

We will:

- o continue to work with our contractors to improve the speed in which repairs are done
- o reduce the time it takes to make empty homes ready to be let again
- o carry out the priority fire safety works
- o make our repair service more accessible by piloting the extension of our opening hours to 6.30pm
- o improve the out of hours emergency repairs service by changing to a more efficient cost effective provider
- o invest over £1 million in communal areas to reduce the risk of fire

*Giving you what you asked for...*

We publish our repairs service standards in our tenants handbook and on the website

We provide new residents with a copy of the lettings standard

2163 of residents who have had planned works this year were given a dedicated Resident Liaison Officer


# Providing homes

Performance 2010- 2011

Our performance has been compared with four other local housing providers so you can see how we are doing.

	Circle 33	Hyde	East Thames	L&Q	Southern Housing Group
Average re-let turnaround times (days)	25.5	34	38	47.7	40.5
Homes vacant (% of total homes)	2.3%	1.7%	1.2%	1.2%	1.1%

## My say



Mrs J Guven had been living in a difficult conditions, with nine family members in a three bedroomed property. We had recently refurbished a six bedroom house on Blackhorse Road and when the local council were unsure whether they could find a suitable family for the home, we worked with them to transfer Mrs Guven and her family there.

“This is great, we now have much more space and some of my children now have their own rooms.”

## Highlights from 10/11

We have:

- o worked closely with key local councils and been successful in make 23 illegally occupied homes available to let again to those in need of housing
- o 199 families living in homes that did not meet their needs, have received assistance from our Housing Options team
- o worked with local councils to give us more information about people nominated to Circle 33 homes, so that we can better identify support needs and make sure they are being met before they are offered a new tenancy
- o continue to involve tenants in policy reviews and the Tenancy and Estate Management Service Improvement Group.
- o a new lettings policy and lettings standard were consulted on with tenants and put in place

## Plans for 11/12

We will:

- o be part of the new London moves scheme - a brand new project to help housing mobility across London
- o review and agree with tenants what will go into a new tenancy handbook
- o agree with tenants what the new flexible tenancy model will be
- o agree with tenants how we can support and deliver a reshaped financial inclusion service following changes to the benefits system
- o continue to identify illegally occupied homes and take action to make sure they are available to those in housing need

*Giving you what you asked for...*

We have a clear lettings policy and lettings standard for new residents

51 residents have accessed our housing options and advice service

We continue to develop tailor made lettings plans for new developments, and significant lettings programmes to ensure that new residents are housed appropriately, and sustainable communities created



# Building communities

## My say

**Matt**, Chair of the Central St Giles Tenants Association tells us about setting up the group.

“I started by leafleting everyone in the block and putting up notices. When there was enough interest from residents I was supported further by Sarah Schofield at Circle 33

So far we have had four meetings where residents and Circle 33 staff have attended. This has really helped residents to feel that they can have an impact on their environment and collectively support each other to improve both the building and our individual homes. It also brings people together and helps us to get to know our neighbours.

I highly recommend getting involved in a residents committee if you have the opportunity.”

Pictured - Dorothy Williams, member of the Central St Giles Tenants Association



## Highlights from 10/11

We have:

- o involved residents in choosing a new gardening contractor
- o invested £6 million in improving the common areas of estates through the Excellent Estates programme
- o continued to meet with the tenant ASB forum to review the ongoing impact of the ASB plan, and improved the experience of how we handle ASB
- o put new software in place to help improve ASB case management
- o introduced a Customer Loyalty and Reward scheme. This rewards residents who pay their rent on time, look after their home and are good neighbours

## Plans for 11/12

We will:

- o set out the estate services on offer to residents, and how much they cost in an annual consultation with those who pay service charges
- o report to the local Resident Scrutiny Panel and Circle 33 Board on what we plan to do to continue to support effective tenant engagement at a local level
- o work with other the local councils and other landlords on shared estates to develop Local Offers and where relevant shared services in order to achieve improved value for money and service quality
- o continue to work with the tenant ASB forum to ensure the ASB services meets residents needs

*Giving you what you asked for....*

30 residents are members of our ASB Forum which helps us to review what residents can expect in terms of how we will handle, respond to and manage ASB

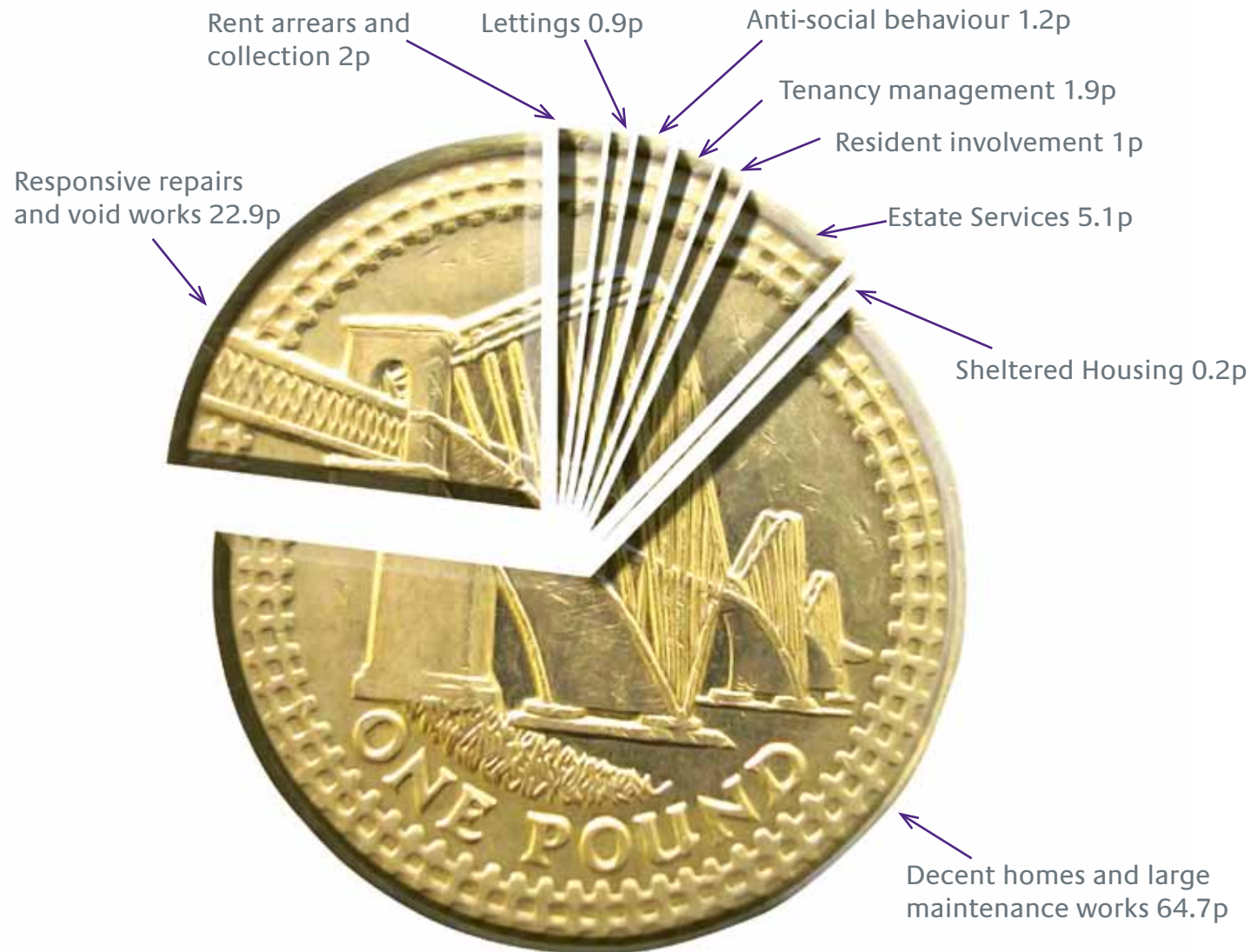
Finished our Excellent Estates programme where we have made nearly £4 million of improvements over 3 years based on residents priorities

We carried out our annual consultation with those who pay a service charge on our estate services



# Offering value for money

Every pound of your rent money goes into the services we provide. Here is how we spent it in 2010/11.



## Highlights from 10/11

We have:

- o put together and discussed with residents, a plan for improving value for money
- o involved residents in reviewing the progress and impact of the plan
- o worked with residents through our wide range of resident involvement arrangements, mystery shopping, resident inspectors and the service improvement groups - to make further service improvements and tackle the biggest causes of complaints, for example delays in completing repairs
- o asked residents what their priorities were in order for us to plan for improvements through 2011/12

## Plans for 11/12

We will:

- o put together and discuss with residents a plan for improving value for money
- o involve residents in reviewing the progress and impact of the plan
- o provide residents with information about the cost of services through our newsletters
- o continue to consult with tenants about what their priorities are and use this to shape the services being delivered
- o develop the theme of 'the rent pound', which shows how each pound of rental income is spent

## Performance 2010- 2011

Our performance has been compared with four other local housing providers so you can see how we are doing.

	Circle 33	Hyde	East Thames	L&Q	Southern Housing Group
Rent collected as % of rent due	100.7%	Data unavailable*	Data unavailable	Data unavailable	Data unavailable
Current resident arrears as % of rent due	3.1%	6.5%	5.7%	5.6%	5%

*\*The data has not been published by this housing provider*



# Making decisions

The Circle 33 Board consists of 10 members. Three of these resident representatives and seven are independent representatives. Board Members have a clear responsibility and are provided with training to support the requirements of the role. Champion roles are also given to members of the Board to ensure that specialist areas are developed and specific focus can be made in certain areas.

In order to assess the quality and effectiveness of the Board, last year each member was assessed on their performance and the Board as a whole was reviewed by an independent expert. The Circle 33 Board was given a clean bill of health and both assessments showed it was performing well. The Board also completed an effectiveness review of its governance role and revised its annual training programme to make sure there were no knowledge gaps.

## About you

Age:  
15.3% of you are under  
35 years old

Age:  
18% of you are over 60  
years old

Gender:  
Over 64% of you are  
female

Ethnicity:  
Just over 33% of you are white  
British. Nearly 22% of you are  
black African or Caribbean

Disability:  
Nearly 18% of residents  
said they have a disability,  
26% said they do not have a  
disability and the other 56%  
did not reveal this  
information

# How have residents have been involved in this document?

A copy of last year's residents' review was sent to every resident. Within it we included a survey asking for feedback and offering the chance to join our Circle group-wide residents group - Communications Connectors.

Based on what you told us - we have made several changes this year. This includes simplifying the text to be more resident friendly, not using technical jargon and reducing the corporate feel of the document.

Feedback from this group means that this year we will not send this document to every resident. This decision was agreed by Circle 33 residents. Instead a summary version will be included within the Autumn 2011 edition of our resident newsletter Home Matters. You can find a full copy on our website [www.circle33.org.uk](http://www.circle33.org.uk) or call 0800 073 0417 to request one.

Our Communications Connectors group now has nearly 300 residents signed up and we asked them what format they would like this document to take this year and what information should be included.

By not sending copies to every resident we will save paper wastage and money that can be spent on the services you want to see improved.

Faye Gayle - an involved resident took part in an interview for the introduction to this document. This was to give an honest and transparent view on how the last year has gone.

A group of Circle 33 residents were asked what information they would like to see published and what improvements could be made. One of the main points was around the fact that the Tenant Services Authority standards and jargon around them did not mean anything to residents, so we have reduced this.

A final designed version of the document was approved for print by the Readers Panel and the Chair of the Board.

The text was sent to the Readers Panel for comments.



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## Part of the Circle Housing Group

We're one of 12 partners within Circle. Being part of a larger group means we have more financial security and more influence to achieve better deals with suppliers to deliver value for money for you.

We are first and foremost a Registered Provider and charity. We retain our individual and independent approach and run our services to meet your needs.

You can view our policies, publications and your tenant handbook on our website [www.circle33.org.uk](http://www.circle33.org.uk)

If you would like this document in large print, Braille, audio, an alternative format or in a different language contact us.

