

Customer Annual Report

2024/25



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Introduction

Janine Green

Chair of Customer Influence Committee

If last year's theme for the Customer Influence Committee was *change*, welcoming new members and committing to put customers at the heart of our organisation, then this year's theme has undoubtedly been *growth*.

The Committee has embraced its new name and purpose, reshaping meeting agendas and the information we receive to ensure customer views are heard and communicated to the Pioneer Group board.

This year's key successes include:

- Adding a tenant CIC member to Voice of the Customer meetings.
- Involving a tenant CIC member in the governance review.
- Challenging initial targets for anti-social behaviour and complaint-handling satisfaction in the corporate plan, resulting in higher targets.
- Reviewing complaints service performance and monitoring progress on Scrutiny Panel recommendations.

These actions ensure the customer voice is not only heard but influences important business decisions.

We also welcomed a new tenant member, Jade. The CIC believes that the more tenants on the panel, the greater the positive impact we can make.

With this in mind, we invite you to consider joining the CIC at this exciting time. There's never been a better opportunity to have your say and shape positive change for our community.



Our Key Highlights in 2024/25

£1.5 million saved

Invested into community regeneration through the Pioneer Pledge.

£867,000 secured

From the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund to retrofit 77 homes in Castle Vale.

99.9% gas safety compliance

Plus 100% compliance for fire, electrical, asbestos, legionella, and lift safety checks.



£16 million

By customers through affordable rents, averaging 49% of private market rents in Birmingham.

84% customer satisfaction

With overall service, beating the sector average and improving year-on-year.

£100,000 social value investment

Committed by Nationwide through the windows and doors contract – delivered through 2025 into 2026.

Castle Vale Stadium

Continues to be a key part of the Castle Vale Community.



In April 2025 we launched our new Corporate Plan – hear more.



Our Spending

Our Pledge

Now in its final year, our ten-year pledge to Castle Vale continues to deliver positive outcomes for the community.

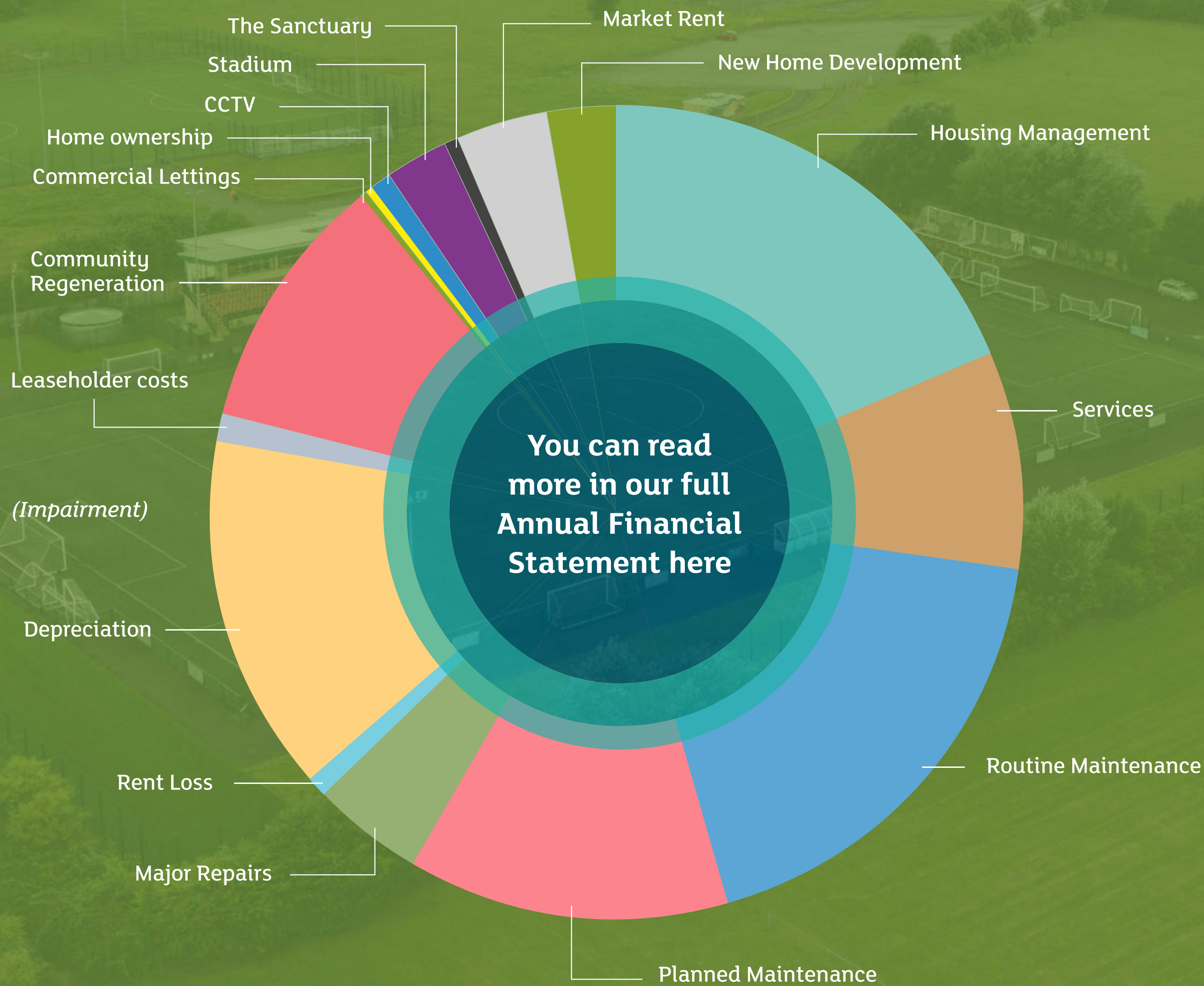
In 2024/25, we invested over £570,000 into services that go beyond our core landlord responsibilities which are to support customers with debt advice, community safety, estate services, and more.

This year’s investment generated over £4.6 million in social value, with every £1 spent returning £8.10 in measurable impact.

As we approach the end of this decade-long commitment, our focus is on making sure the legacy of this investment continues to benefit Castle Vale for years to come. We’re working closely with customers and partners to embed long-term solutions that support wellbeing, safety, and opportunity across the estate.

		Our Investment	Our value (24/25)
Debt Advice	Total social value generated	£60,000	£81,404
	Social value per £ spent		£1.36
Community Safety / CCTV	Total social value generated	£96,980	£137,360
	SV Per £ Spent		£1.42
Estate Services	Total social value generated	£137,686	£958,494
	Social value per £ spent		£6.96
Compass (Pledge Expenditure)	Total social value generated	£275,555	£3,443,718
	Social value per £ spent		£12.50
Totals	Total social value generated	£570,221	£4,620,976
	Social value per £ spent		£8.10

Spending



Category	Cost (£'000)
Housing Management	£2,721
Services	£1309
Routine Maintenance	£2,741
Planned Maintenance	£1,904
Major Repairs	£657
Rent Loss (Voids)	£126
Depreciation (housing properties only)	£2128
Impairment (reversal)	£(256)
Leaseholder Costs	£198
Community Regeneration	£1,516
Commercial Lettings	£67
Home Ownership	£30
CCTV	£118
Stadium	£391
The Sanctuary	£49
Market Rent	£562
Development of New Homes	£390
Total Operating Costs	£14,722

Investment in our Homes

Windows and Doors Programme

(in partnership with Nationwide Windows and Doors).

As part of our commitment to investing in our homes, we launched a major upgrade programme to improve safety, security, and comfort for our customers.

Between April 2024 and March 2025, 779 properties were successfully signed off and handed back to us, following extensive surveying and preparatory work.

We appointed Nationwide Windows and Doors to deliver this multi million-pound programme which, once complete, will see more than 2,000 homes benefit from new, high-quality windows and doors.

This investment is already making a real difference to our customers. One resident shared:

This programme is a key part of our plan to ensure our homes are safe, secure, and energy-efficient, supporting our customers and investing in the long-term sustainability of our communities.

★★★★★

*“Great team,
John & Sam. They
explained everything
that was going
to happen.
Super Service”*

2000+
homes fitted with
quality new
windows and
doors

Investing in Safer, Warmer Homes

Our Retrofit Programme

As part of our commitment to improving the energy efficiency of our homes, we joined forces with fellow Matrix Housing Partnership members to submit a joint bid for Wave 2 of the government's Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.

This initiative supports social housing providers in achieving an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of C or above by 2030.

We're proud to share that our consortium was successful, securing approximately £10 million in funding, with over £867,000 allocated to us.

What We Delivered

Our retrofit programme focused on 77 flats located above garages, identified as having the greatest potential for improved energy performance. The works began in November 2024.



Upgrades included:

Loft insulation top-ups

Installation of new windows

Replacement of flat entrance doors

External wall insulation to gable ends

Internal wall insulation in communal corridors

Improved ventilation systems throughout properties

These enhancements not only improve comfort and reduce energy bills for customers, but also contribute to our wider sustainability goals.



Our New Builds

Rectory Gardens, Sutton Coldfield

In 2025, we delivered 42 high quality new homes in Sutton Coldfield, comprising 24 for affordable rent and 18 through shared ownership.

Designed with modern living in mind, these homes offer spacious layouts, fresh white interiors, contemporary kitchens and bathrooms, and generous gardens. Large windows flood the rooms with natural light, creating bright and welcoming spaces for individuals and families.

Sustainability was a key focus throughout the development. Each home features solar panels to help our customers reduce energy costs and lower their carbon footprint. In addition, electric vehicle (EV) charging points were installed to support greener transport choices and future-proof the community.

Through our shared ownership model, we've helped first-time buyers take their first step onto the property ladder, with opportunities to purchase between 40% and 75% of two- and three-bedroom homes.

This development reflects our ongoing commitment to delivering homes that meet local needs while championing sustainability and affordability.

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**Affordable and
comfortable new
homes in Sutton
Coldfield**



Safety in the Home

Keeping our customers safe is at the heart of everything we do. Over the past year, we've taken proactive steps to enhance safety across our homes and communities.

Fire Safety Upgrades

We've replaced fire doors in line with fire risk assessments and upgraded smoke detection systems in our properties. These improvements offer greater protection and provide early alerts in the event of a fire, giving our customers added peace of mind.

Electrical Compliance and Routine Checks

Working with Lakers, we ensured all electrical certification across our homes was up to date. Alongside this, our in-house team has continued regular visits to carry out essential safety checks and maintenance.

Improved Lighting for Greater Security

At Topcliffe and Chivenor, we upgraded car park lighting to improve visibility during the evening. This not only enhances safety but also helps our customers feel more secure in their surroundings.

Enhanced Access and Communication Systems

We introduced the Intratone system at Topcliffe and Chivenor, which includes digital noticeboards for clearer, real-time communication with residents. A new fob entry system was also installed to strengthen security within our blocks. Phoenix Court will benefit from these upgrades in 2025, further extending our commitment to safer, smarter living environments.



Gas Services Completed	2443
Electrical Certificates completed	661
Asbestos Re-inspection surveys	137
Fire Risk Assessments carried out	170
Fire Equipment Maintenance checks	291
Lift Services Completed	41
Legionella control activities undertaken	31

Your Estate

CCTV and Community Safety

We continue to work in partnership with West Midlands Police to deter crime and keep Castle Vale safe.

Their Neighbourhood Team is based in the same building as our CCTV Control Room, allowing for real-time collaboration with our CCTV Operators and swift action when incidents occur.

- 98% of our CCTV cameras have now been upgraded, with full completion expected in 2026/27.
- All entrances and exits to the estate are covered, helping us track vehicles and respond quickly to incidents.
- We're proud members of Vale Watch, a partnership focused on improving security across the estate.
- Customers can now report incidents directly to our CCTV team via email, helping us check footage and share evidence with the police
- 472 incidents were captured, marking a decrease from the previous year, a positive sign that our joint efforts are making a difference.



472
incidents captured
through our
system.

Estates Team

Our Estates Team plays a vital role in ensuring Castle Vale remains a place people are proud to call home. In 2024/25, we focused on listening to customers, responding to challenges, and delivering visible improvements across the estate..

Highlights from the year include:

- Responding to feedback from satisfaction surveys by replacing our grounds maintenance contractor with an interim provider to improve service quality.
- Completing 100% of block fire safety inspections.
- Tackling the impact of Birmingham City Council bin strikes with swift action to keep the estate clean.
- Removing approximately 150 tonnes of fly-tipping and bulky waste.
- Working with the Neighbourhoods Team to resolve fire safety issues in communal areas.
- Delivering fire safety talks to all new residents in blocks of flats and sharing advice with those in complex buildings.
- Carrying out over 173 minor repairs to keep communal areas safe and well-maintained.
- Collaborating with partners like CET, GM contractors, and BCC to identify and improve neglected areas.
- Continuing our free bulky waste collection service and reporting issues on BCC land.
- Sharing CCTV intelligence with the Neighbourhood Police Team to support crime prevention.
- Using all available equipment to keep Castle Vale looking clean, green, and cared for.



IMPACT
Keeping the Estate
tidy during the
Birmingham Bin
Strikes

Income & Money advice

“You are brilliant and polite, always try and help. Never had a problem with the housing in all the years as a tenant. You do a great job.”

Tenant

Income		Money advice	
Current tenant arrears:	2.8%	Back lump sum	£98,688
Former tenant arrears	0.92%	Debt rescheduled	£22,316.48
Evictions	0	DHP	£15,418.50
Welfare referrals	391	Charitable grants	£360
Number of social lets	87	Income increased	£735,507.16
		Total value of outcomes for customers	£856,871.48

Your Community

Community is at the heart of Castle Vale, and over the past year, we've continued to bring people together through events, partnerships, and shared experiences that celebrate our heritage and strengthen local bonds.

VE Day Commemorations

We hosted themed Tea and Toast sessions and a special celebration at Chivenor to mark VE Day, bringing our customers together.

Castle Vale Easter Egg Hunt

In partnership with local organisations, we delivered a fun-filled family event that received fantastic feedback. Families have already asked for it to become an annual tradition.

Intergenerational Connections

Our work with Chivenor School and customers at Phoenix Court has created impactful moments between generations. Customers have described these visits as a “breath of fresh air” and something they truly look forward to.

25 Years of The Sanctuary

As part of our anniversary celebrations, we worked with Sheila Pennell, a former customer and current member of the Upcycle over-50s group. Sheila shared old photographs and stories that helped us reflect on the Sanctuary's legacy and its role in the community.

Christmas Tree Give a Gift Tags

Our first-ever festive gift tag initiative was a huge success, with the whole community getting involved. Thanks to their generosity, 82 children received gifts over the festive period.



What matters most

The Sanctuary

In 2024/25, we took an important step to safeguard our commitment to community regeneration by transferring Compass activities into The Pioneer Group.

This move makes sure we can continue delivering vital services and support for local people under one umbrella. Our team and services will still continue to operate from The Sanctuary.

Throughout the year, we worked closely with you to understand what matters most. Together, we identified gaps and shaped activities that reflect local priorities, making sure our community voice leads the way.

Warm Welcome

Thanks to £9,000 in Warm Welcome funding, we were able to:

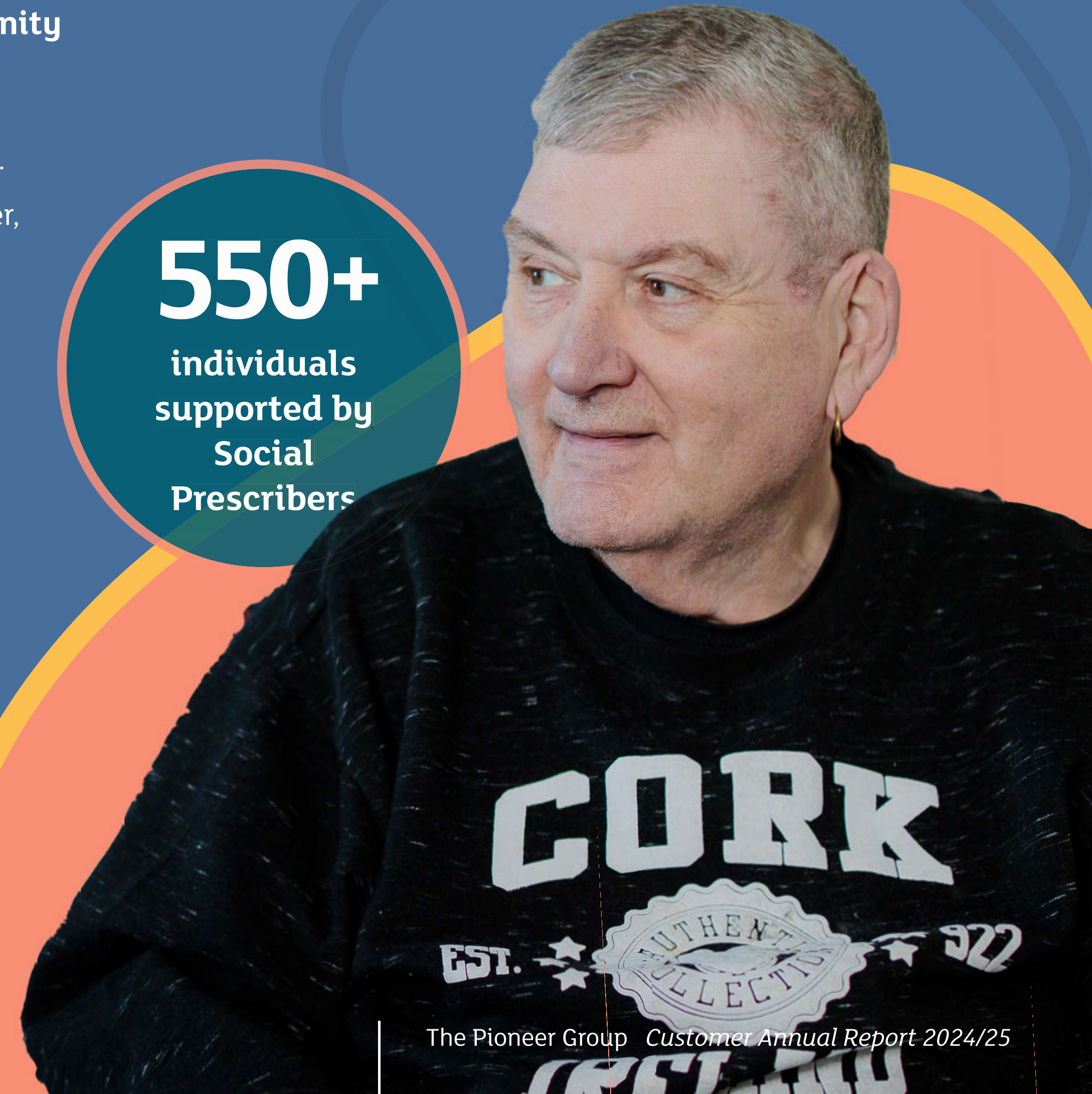
- Provide refreshments for resident-led groups meeting at the Sanctuary.
- Serve weekly hot meals to around 40 adults and 25 young people during youth sessions.
- Support our annual Joy to the Vale Christmas hamper project, helping families facing financial hardship.

Working with local GP practices in the North Birmingham Primary Care Network, our Social Prescribers:

- Supported over 550 people
- Welcomed 200+ attendees to monthly wellbeing activities

550+

**individuals
supported by
Social
Prescribers**



Employment and Training

Our Employment Team supported 189 people with careers advice, training and job search support. Through job clubs, digital skills sessions and one-to-one guidance:

- 55 people secured paid employment.

Health and Wellbeing

We delivered a full programme of community activities to help residents stay connected, active and supported. This included:

- Peer support groups
- Dementia awareness and training
- Mental wellbeing sessions

Family Support

We partnered with schools, community groups and Birmingham Children's Trust to support families facing challenges.

- 109 families received direct support
- Our Early Help Team worked with over 1,000 families through our partnership with Birmingham Children's Trust

1000+
families supported
by our dedicated
Early Help Team





126

young people
attended after-
school youth
sessions

Independent Living

Our Independent Living Team helped residents maintain independence and access vital resources. Through income maximisation work, we secured:

- £110,000+ in additional household income
- Provided ongoing support to 90 people
- Welcomed 149 individuals to our drop-in service

Youth

Our Youth Team delivered after-school and holiday activities, trips and enrichment opportunities for local young people.

- 32 play scheme places offered during school holidays
- 126 young people attended after-school youth sessions

Counselling

Our innovative counselling model supported 87 residents, delivering 758 hours of therapy. We also provided work-based placements for 4 students, helping build a responsive service that tackles trauma and supports long-term wellbeing.

On the Estate

Supporting our customers every day

Our Housing Team plays a vital role in the day-to-day life of Castle Vale, offering practical support, building relationships, and helping residents feel safe, secure, and heard.

A more personal approach

This year, we welcomed two new Community Housing Officers and reshaped the role to focus on more person-centred support. You'll now see our officers out and about more often, engaging directly with residents, working alongside other teams, and being a visible, approachable presence in the community.

Tackling anti-social behaviour together

We've updated our Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) policy and worked closely with West Midlands Police to resolve ongoing cases. Our aim is to find positive, long-term solutions that improve quality of life for everyone on the estate.

Listening to customers

To make it easier for customers to raise concerns, we've launched monthly drop-in surgeries at The Sanctuary in partnership with the local councillor. These sessions have helped many residents connect with their housing officers and get the support they need.

Keeping tenancies up to date

We've also started a programme of tenancy update visits, ensuring we have the most accurate information and can better support customers in their homes. These visits help us stay connected and responsive to changing needs.

Listening HUBs

Our Listening Hubs have become a key part of how we connect with you. These informal, accessible spaces allow our Engagement Team to meet people where they are, especially those who may not feel comfortable visiting our High Street office.

By creating opportunities for open conversation, we've been able to:

- Hear directly from you about their concerns, experiences and ideas.
- Identify and address issues before they escalate.
- Build trust and strengthen relationships between you and our teams.

Listening Hubs will continue to play a key role in 2025–26, helping us shape services that reflect the real needs of our community.

“Thank for the help you gave to my 91 year old husband in relation to our garage notice to quit and helping with the over the phone payment”

Mrs Stanley





Our Customer 1st Team

Our Customer 1st team continued to be a key contact for customers, handling a wide range of enquiries both in person and over the phone. Over the past year, the team answered 22,691 calls and welcomed 6,466 visitors to reception. Of those, 1,120 customers made rent payments in person, while 2,540 chose to pay over the phone.

Whether it's offering advice, resolving queries, or signposting to external support services, the team is committed to delivering a helpful and responsive service.

To support this, all team members during 2024/25 completed Customer Service training, helping to create a more consistent and effective approach to service delivery. Looking ahead, further training is planned for 2025/26, with a focus on improving ways of working and supporting team development.

Complaints

At the end of the reporting period, 7 cases were under investigation by the Housing Ombudsman. These relate to historic complaints from 2023. Progress has been slower than expected due to sector-wide backlogs, but we're now seeing more regular updates thanks to the Ombudsman's new online portal, which allows for direct communication with landlords.

“I wanted to email firstly to say thank you for sorting out the issue with my oven, a new one is now in place.”

Chivenor House

Customer 1st Team stats

Complaints raised (stage 1 and stage 2): **243**

Income-related queries: **5,439**

Calls answered: **22,704** with an abandoned call rate of **6%**

Rent payments processed: **2,540** by phone and **1,120** in reception

Repairs: **6,429** calls

Tenancy Management: **1,318** calls. **816** requests for a **Neighbourhood Officer** and **292** tenancy enquiries

Other issues: Anti-social behaviour **319** calls

Complaints and compensation **243** calls

Housing waiting list enquiries **1020** calls

Visitors to reception **6466**

Get Involved

Your Voice, Your Community

We know that the best services are shaped by the people who use them. That's why we offer a range of ways for customers to get involved, whether you want to influence decisions, improve your neighbourhood, or simply share your views.

Customer Influence Committee (CIC)

CIC meet around six times a year to help shape services, challenge performance, and ensure transparency. CIC members ask questions, share ideas, and promote fairness and inclusion.

Scrutiny Panel

Customers review how services are delivered, identify improvements, and ensure value for money. Meetings are held face-to-face around six times a year, with a flexible two-hour commitment.

Block & Green Champions

Block Champions help monitor communal cleaning, repairs, and maintenance. Green Champions provide feedback on grounds maintenance. Both roles support pride in our shared spaces.

Readers' Panel

No meetings required, just flexible feedback on leaflets, policies, and publications. Help us make sure our communications are clear, useful, and customer-friendly.

Whether you want to be hands-on or contribute from home, there's a way to get involved that suits you. Together, we can shape the future of our communities.





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