



IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT NEWS 2019-2020

INCORPORATING INVESTMENT PLAN FOR 2020-2021

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NEW HOMES AND PLANS
FOR THE FUTURE

Launching 40 new homes at
Hunts Grove in August 2019.

THE IMPACT OF CORONAVIRUS
ON OUR COMMUNITIES

AN UPDATE ON THE
REGENERATION OF
MATSON AND PODSMEAD

HOW WE INVESTED IN YOUR HOMES AND COMMUNITIES IN 2019/20

Everyone at GCH hopes you are safe and well, with life getting back to as normal as possible as we continue to cope with the challenges of the Coronavirus Pandemic.

This newsletter arrives a little later than usual due to the impact of the Pandemic, during which we continued to provide essential services whilst having to pause some services such as routine repairs in line with Government guidance. Our focus during this period has been the health and safety of our customers, particularly the most vulnerable members of our community. Consequently we have continued to deliver essential landlord health and safety works to ensure your homes remain safe.

Positively, the Pandemic highlighted the amazing community spirit that exists across our neighbourhoods and we were pleased to support a number of community responses with over £6,000 worth of funding and the support of our staff; setting up local food banks, delivering food parcels and activity packs.

Many of our staff are now working from home, answering your calls and engaging with you online. If you have any concerns about your home or tenancy, we encourage you to get in touch with us. We have now commenced the delivery of all our usual tenant services, whilst incorporating additional safety measures which you can read about on page 6.

We will not yet be opening our customer reception at Railway House as we refurbish and improve it to make it safe for you and our staff. We are also likely to move to appointments only as many customers now contact us via other methods.

This newsletter outlines our investment over the past year of 2019 - 2020 and we are pleased to have delivered many tenant

services and improvements over this time, investing over £9 million in maintaining and improving your homes across the city, whilst also investing over £20 million building 64 new homes (including work starting on further new schemes for 2020 - 2021). It is our priority to invest in both our existing and new homes to create safe and warm homes in strong communities whilst meeting the needs of local people.

Our in-house repairs and maintenance service PropertyCare, delivered over 21,000 repairs in your homes and communities. We have also continued to bring more of our services in-house to reduce the need for sub-contractors and to save money, so we can invest more into the services we provide our customers. We have more plans to expand our PropertyCare team over the next year and you can read about these plans on pages 8-9.

Over the next 12 months we will be spending a further £10 million maintaining and improving your homes and communities, ensuring all your homes continue to meet the Governments Decent Homes Standard and deliver the 'higher' Gloucester Standard where possible.

We have continued to deliver on our tenant promise to deliver new homes to meet housing needs and have delivered 205 homes since the Stock Transfer took place in 2015. So far this year we have started work on an impressive 230 new homes, take a look at pages 23- 26 for more information.

As always, we welcome any feedback you may have to help us further improve our services. Please continue to stay safe.



Michael Hill
Director of
Asset Management

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Railway House, Bruton Way,
Gloucester GL1 1DG

Call us on: 01452 424344
When the office is closed, calls will be transferred
to our 24/7 out-of-hours service.

email: tenancy.services@gch.co.uk

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DELIVERING SERVICES SAFELY AND THE IMPACT OF CORONAVIRUS ON OUR COMMUNITIES

WORKING HARD TO SUPPORT COMMUNITIES

We would like to thank all customers for their support and patience during the lockdown period throughout which we continued to provide essential services in line with Government guidance. It has been a difficult time for our communities and our team.

We are pleased that our repairs and investment programs are now back up and running and continue to ask for your patience as we catch up with work that had to wait during the lockdown period.



Delivering shopping to customers.



Delivering donated flowers to customers.



Delivering milk and bread to customers.

From the end of March until May we had to change the way we continue to work and deliver services. We worked closely with community partners across Gloucester to ensure that our vulnerable tenants and residents had access to vital support, including food and household supplies;

- We delivered information leaflets across Gloucester, including; Westgate, Podsmead, Tuffley and Abbeydale.
- Provided over **£6,000 emergency funding** and supported many partners to set up food banks, support schemes, delivering leaflets and essential items.
- Our Tenancy Sustainment Team were very busy providing up to date advice on the range of new benefits that the Government put in place to ensure our tenants were able to continue to pay their rent.
- Working from home our teams made around **450 daily welfare calls** to check on more vulnerable tenants offering advice and support, including delivering basic essentials whilst local foodbanks and support schemes were being set up.
- Staff from the Propertycare and Estate Services teams, helped deliver meals and shopping across the City.

WHAT YOU SAID

Mr Scannell in Tredworth wrote to us to say

“As past Chairman of the residents forum I would like to send my personal thank you to all the GCH staff in these terrible times for the way they have shown their attention and hard work they have put in over the past months.

Phone calls, letters and working from home was a fantastic thing to do.”

Mr Maltby in Tuffley said

“MASSIVE BIG-UP TO GLOUCESTER CITY HOMES!!

I rang them earlier to report a broken flush in the downstairs toilet. I told them that due to the current situation I didn't expect to see anyone quickly but I felt that still I ought to let them know.

Due to the fact that they are aware I'm self-isolating on NHS instructions and they told me that someone would be there within 4 hours!!

Someone was actually there within 1/2 hour!!! Also the job turned out NOT to be easy but the plumber persisted with it until it was working again - so RESPECT due to the plumber who attended my property today AND A MASSIVE 'THANK-YOU' TO ALL INVOLVED INCLUDING THE LOVELY LADY I SPOKE TO ON THE TELEPHONE!!!”



Card sent to Independent Living tenants.

Mr Hogg from Podsmead told us

“During the lockdown I reported a blockage in my toilet and, much to my excited delight, 30 minutes later there was an engineer in my property fixing the problem.

Given the situation we are all having to live with, I felt so proud of GCH and their fantastic workforce.

My grateful thanks to the young lady who took my initial call, and to the polite and helpful Engineer who saved my day!”

“Service up and beyond!”

DELIVERING SERVICES SAFELY AND THE IMPACT OF CORONAVIRUS ON OUR COMMUNITY

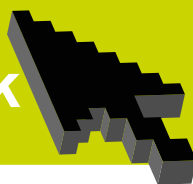
WORKING SAFELY TO DELIVER SERVICES

In line with Government advice we have reintroduced all our services incorporating social distancing measures alongside additional health and safety measures to protect our customers and staff.

We continue to deliver services remotely where it is possible. The best way to stay up to date with us is online.

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram and join our newsletter on our website.

www.gch.co.uk



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TO ENABLE US TO WORK SAFELY IN YOUR HOME, YOU MUST:

- Tell us if you or a member of your household is shielding or has a confirmed case of Coronavirus (COVID-19) so that we can agree arrangements to deliver essential services.
- Comply with Government advice in relation to 'Stay Alert – Control the Virus – Save Lives', particularly in relation to social distancing.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT WHEN WE VISIT YOUR HOME:

On your doorstep, we will again ask you to let us know if you or a member of your household is shielding or has a confirmed case of Coronavirus (COVID-19) so that we can agree arrangements to deliver essential services.

Before attending an appointment at your home, we will contact you and advise on how we intend to deliver the service in a safe manner to the following guidelines:

- Our staff wearing the appropriate PPE.
- Following social distancing rules wherever possible.
- Requiring residents to isolate in a separate room from where the staff member is working for the duration of the visit/works being undertaken.

These guidelines have been put in place to ensure the safety of both our staff and customers. If they are not followed our staff have been instructed to leave the property.

GCH COVID-19 WORKING SAFELY COMMITMENT:

When we provide a service or carry out work in your home we will:

- Contact you in advance to explain what safety measures will be put in place.
- Restrict work to emergency only in households where customers are symptomatic, self-isolating or shielding.
- Carry out all work in line with Government Guidance.
- Observe social distancing and avoid any contact wherever possible.
- Wear the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment.
- Maintain high levels of personal hygiene (including regular hand washing and use of hand sanitiser).
- Limit the number of staff working in your property.
- Do everything we can to keep customers and colleagues safe.



WHAT WE NEED YOU TO DO WHEN WE VISIT YOU OR CARRY OUT WORK IN YOUR HOME:

- Tell us if you are symptomatic, self-isolating or shielding.
- Maintain social distancing wherever possible and throughout the duration of the visit.
- Isolate in a separate room when the staff member attends and for the duration of the visit/works being undertaken.
- Understand that if these safety requirements are not followed that our staff will be required to leave your property.



DELIVERING FOR YOU

AN UPDATE FROM OUR REPAIRS SERVICE PROPERTYCARE

AN UPDATE FROM OUR REPAIRS SERVICE APRIL 2019 - MARCH 2020

Our in-house repairs team PropertyCare had an exceptionally busy year. The team completed **14,160** responsive repairs, **7,314** gas appointments and prepared **251** empty properties at a cost of **£3.15 million**.

Our team of 5 gas engineers visit every single one of our properties yearly to complete a home safety check to ensure our customer's homes are safe and not at risk.

Over the last year our average Customer Satisfaction score for our repairs service was **89%**. Here's some of the feedback our customers have given us:

Mrs M from Matson said “I would like to say big thank you to Scott who took the call and raised the repair for my sink. Tim the engineer who carried out the repair was great.”

Miss E from Meadowleaze said “I wanted to call and say a big thank you to Vicky who arranged the appointment and engineer Zac who unblocked the bath and sink yesterday.”

Mr W from The Oval said “Zac and Sam were at my property this morning and I want to pass on how polite and friendly they were. They worked quickly, tidied up after themselves and I was very impressed they took the time to cover their shoes.”

VOIDS TEAM

Our internal voids team has now been operating for over 12 months and have already delivered us substantial savings. Our customers have benefited from a reduction in turnaround time with the average void property being completed in just **11 days** so we are able to re-let our properties more promptly.



Adrian White, Contract Supervisor says

“With the savings we have made having our in-house PropertyCare team renovating empty properties, we have been able to increase our standard to include additional decoration which improved the customer satisfaction rate by **over 27%**.”

In the last year we prepared over 251 empty voids for re-letting with over **80%** costing over £500.

67 of these properties have required major upgrades including new bathrooms and kitchens.



ELECTRICAL ACHIEVEMENTS

In the last year we have made significant savings by bringing in-house an element of our electrical services that were previously outsourced and carried out externally.

This includes door entry system servicing, external light servicing, emergency light checks and electrical testing. The changes also provide in-house expertise which enables us to better invest in new electrical installation infrastructures within homes and communal areas and give us more control over the quality of works.



Andy Cunningham, Electrical Manager says “By bringing more work in-house we can demonstrate that having an electrical department in the future could deliver us many benefits. Our long term aim is to establish a robust team tending to the electrical needs of our customers and properties whilst making substantial savings.”

ESTATE SERVICES

Our grounds maintenance and estates team carry out critical work within Gloucester City Homes communities and we continue to grow this service.

After investing in training for our team, we were able to carry out over **100 tree surgeries** instead of using sub-contractors, saving money which was re-invested in our communities.

The team also moved over **50 tonnes of rubbish** to ensure our estates remain tidy and safe whilst allowing our customers to maintain pride in their community.

We have developed a strong partnership with the City Council’s contractor Amey, to ensure that together we create clean and attractive living spaces within our neighbourhoods, as a result our customer satisfaction levels have remained high.



AN UPDATE FROM OUR REPAIRS SERVICE PROPERTYCARE



With over **14,000** repairs completed and nearly **7,400** gas services over the last year our scheduling team work hard to book in your repairs related requirements at the earliest possible opportunity.

In December we changed the way our customers can reach us with repairs related calls now being directed straight into the scheduling team where we can offer a more efficient and tailored service. From December until 31st March the team managed **12,920 inbound calls** and made **11,985 outbound calls** liaising with not only our customers, but also engineers and suppliers. During this period the average wait time for a call to be answered was 10 seconds and we answered 99.2% of repairs calls.

A DAY IN THE LIFE...

Name: Chelsea Milne
Title: Scheduling Team Leader



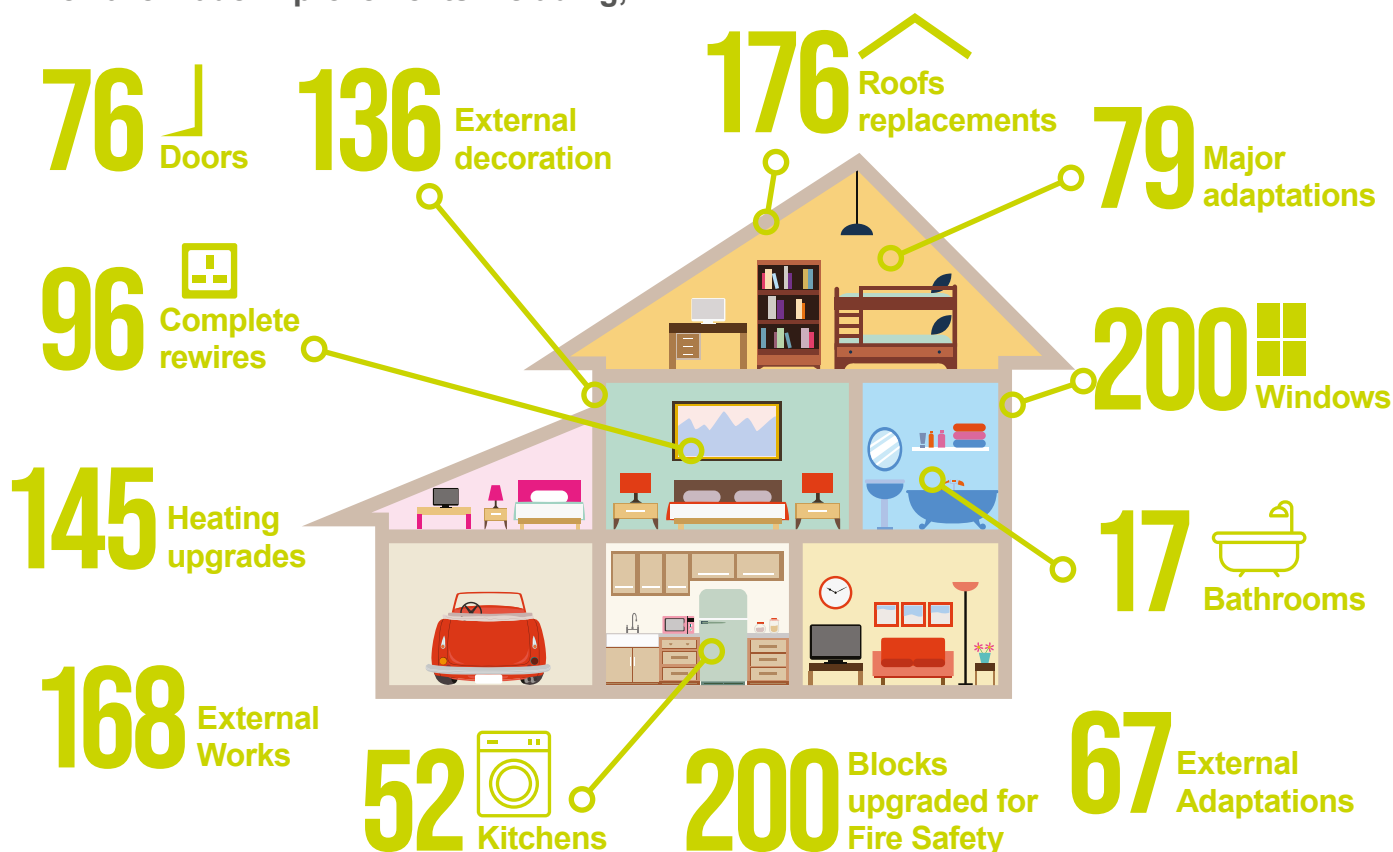
- 08:00** Review out of hours call requests from the previous night and raise repairs that are needed.
- 08:30** Review of all the jobs that are booked in for the day.
- 09:00** Assist with taking repairs calls during the busiest times.
- 11:00** Review the days jobs again to ensure we can keep customers updated on when their timeslot is after prioritising emergency jobs.
- 11:30** Review repairs emails and book in jobs.
- 13:30** Check materials order covers all the items we need and update customers if needed.
- 14:00** Ensure that Engineers notes are inputted onto our system and we mark the progress of all repairs from the day.
- 16:40** Contact the On-Call Engineer to send them any emergency jobs before 5pm.

DID YOU KNOW: YOU CAN EMAIL US IF YOU HAVE A NON-EMERGENCY JOB ON REPAIRS@GCH.CO.UK
On average between 09:00 – 12:00 is the busiest time to call us
– you will get through to us quicker if you call in an afternoon!

COMPLETED IMPROVEMENTS DURING 2019/2020



During the last year we have spent over £4.8million on improving your homes. We have made improvements including;



LOVELL

In 2019/20 Lovell completed their second year as our external works contractor. Here is some of the work they completed;



Major improvement works to blocks at Columbia Close and Sherborne Street including new insulated flat roofs, repairs to concrete structures, external painting and new fences.

Lovell insulated and renewed the cladding at 30 bungalows in Podsmead with very positive tenant feedback and reduced heating costs.



87%

of tenants were satisfied with our planned repairs service

COMPLETED IMPROVEMENTS DURING 2019/2020



Mr S in Tredworth wrote to us to say “I am so grateful to GCH for my wetroom bathroom, this have made things easier for me and I feel safer now that my bathroom has been knocked into one room. The contractors worked very hard in my home and they updated me at all stages of the works and tidy up after themselves. Thank you GCH.”



A new driveway in Tuffley.

Miss B at Bazeley Road said “Looks smashing, worked really hard, friendly and polite.”



Newly clad bungalows and new fences in Podsmead.



New fences in Matson.

Mrs M at The Retreat said “I can get out now, really big difference to my day to day life.”

Mr and Mrs B from Shakespeare Avenue said “Brilliant, I never thought I would be turning the heating off at 9pm because I’m too hot. Really pleased.”



New pathways in Robinswood.



New ramps to make access easier at Copperfield Close in Matson.

YOU SAID:

“The walkways in Winsley Road are very dark.”

WE DID:

Fitted two solar powered lights to brighten the area at night.



YOU SAID:

“People always park dangerously taking up the pavement on Barton Street.”



WE DID:

Fitted bollards to stop dangerous parking.

STOPPING THE SPREAD OF MOULD IN YOUR HOME

Nearly all properties suffer from condensation issues. This can subsequently develop into mould when left unmanaged however the good news is that this can be easily avoided.



WHAT IS CONDENSATION?

Condensation is caused by water vapour or moisture from inside a property which comes into contact with a colder surface such as a wall or a window. This creates water drops commonly known as condensation which can soak into wallpaper, paintwork or even plaster.

In time, the affected areas become damp and can attract black mould that grows on the surface. The black mould that we see usually forms from condensation and rarely as a result of another issue.

WHERE DOES CONDENSATION FORM?

Condensation mainly occurs during the colder months regardless of whether it's

wet or dry. It is usually found in the corners of rooms, north facing walls and on or near windows. It is attracted to areas where there is little or no air circulation such as behind wardrobes and beds especially when they are directly placed against external walls.

WHAT CREATES CONDENSATION AND ITS MOULD GROWTH?

The majority of homes will be affected by condensation at some point however certain activities can increase the problem. Habits and lifestyle are the primary reasons for this occurring meaning that it can be reduced or even completely remedied by our customers. It is important to note that normal day to day activities and even breathing will produce water vapour.

The following do's and don'ts will give a good guide on what you can do to reduce the risk of mould growth in your home;

✓ DO

- Keep the kitchen and bathroom doors closed whilst using these areas and for at least an hour afterwards.
- Keep the trickle vents open on your windows. This will allow some natural air flow whilst minimising any draughts or drop in heating.
- Open your windows daily wherever possible, air circulation is important.
- Wipe surfaces down daily where condensation occurs. This will greatly reduce the risk of mould forming.
- Part fill with your bath cold water prior to running the hot tap to reduce steam.

✗ DON'T

- Switch off extractor fans. They are designed to draw excess moisture out of your property at all times. They are effective to run costing less than a couple of pounds per year and are critical to reducing condensation especially in high humidity rooms.
- Dry clothes over radiators as this will dramatically increase the moisture levels in your property. If you are using airers, try keeping them in a ventilated room such as a bathroom.
- Vent your tumble dryer inside of the property. If you do not have a condenser dryer, always try to vent the heat through an external door or window.
- Fluctuate the heating in your property. Try leaving the heating on at a low level all day during winter months. This can also be cost effective as your heating will have to work harder if you keep turning it on and off.
- Put large furniture directly against external walls as it reduces the amount of airflow and is a primary place where mould spores will grow.

If you are doing all of the above but still find that that mould is an issue, please contact our repairs team who will be happy to arrange an inspection of your property.



A DAY IN THE LIFE...

Name: Martin Harris

Title: Stock Condition Surveyor



What does your role include?

My role is to ensure that GCH has a good understanding of its properties and their condition. This enables us to invest money where it is needed the most. My inspections help to inform lots of the improvements that you can see within this newsletter.

What does a normal working day include?

I start the day making a list of future visits to customers homes and arrange for appointment letters to be sent. I book around 15 visits a day and once I arrive my main objective is to record the condition and life expectancy of the kitchen, bathroom, electrics, heating, roofs, doors and guttering. I make sure that photos are uploaded to a central location so that the information is available to the Asset Management Team.

How did your work change during the lockdown period?

Like many jobs, during the lockdown period I was unable to visit customers homes. Although things are getting back to normal, I was busy surveying outsides of flats across the City. I appreciated how quiet Gloucester had become; it was a delight to walk around the Westgate area and see the historic buildings alongside customer's homes. Walking down Westgate Street in lockdown only the banks appeared to be open and I may never get the chance again to experience such tranquillity in the City Centre again.



What is your biggest challenge?

My biggest challenge is getting access to properties. If customers are not in for their appointments it could delay future investment works so I encourage tenants to provide access and rearrange their appointment if necessary.

AIDS AND ADAPTATIONS HELPING YOU TO REMAIN SAFE AND INDEPENDENT IN YOUR HOME



Over the past year we have received over **380 requests for medical adaptations** to our customer's properties and our Occupational Therapist has carried out over **40 Housing Needs Assessments** to enable tenants to move into accommodation that is more suited to their needs.

We carried out
190
minor adaptations
to your homes

Over the past year, our PropertyCare team completed over **190 minor adaptations in 153 of our homes**. We have also carried out major works with external contractors including installation of level access showers, stairlifts, hoists, ramps and driveways at a cost of over £325,000.



Property Services Business Support Manager, Matt Dunne says

“We recognise that circumstances can change at any point due to disability or illness and we are committed to making a difference to the day to day lives of our residents. It is important to us that we support our customers by giving them the best opportunity to remain independent whilst being comfortable in their homes.”



We can offer a range of options which may assist with making your home easier to live in if you have a disability.

If you think that you may need assistance with this, please contact us on
01452 424344
or email
adaptations@gch.co.uk



Installation of a handrail and a shower in Matson.

Mrs P from Hardwicke said “I am really happy with the installation of the grab rail they have made such a big difference.”

Mrs K from Hardwicke said “I was really pleased with the installation of the grab rails. the engineer was polite and helpful and did an amazing job. It has made such a difference to my daily life.”

Mrs T from Westgate advised “Your Occupational Therapist was helpful and the service that I received from him was great. He was very efficient and went above and beyond to help me.”

Mr A from Gloucester commented “The sliding doors are very useful and I’m really pleased with the installation of the stair and grab rails.”

FIRE SAFETY ADVICE

GCH take fire safety and the safety of all customers very seriously. We work closely with our contractors to ensure all fire safety equipment testing and risk assessments within our sheltered schemes and blocks are regularly serviced and maintained through an extensive planned programme.

Following the tragic events at Grenfell Tower in June 2017 we, like many landlords around the country, reviewed our Fire Safety Policy and Procedure again to ensure it was as clear as possible. Our updated Fire Safety and Prevention Policy can be found at www.gch.co.uk/firesafe or you can contact us for a copy.



Compliance Coordinator, Tara Jones says

“We work closely with our Fire Risk Assessors and the Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service to ensure all necessary improvements and maintenance works needed in our blocks are carried out. These improvements include upgrades to communal areas and the installation and maintenance of modern materials that control and reduce the spread of flames in the event of a fire.”

We have ensured 100% Gas Safe compliance through 4,764 Home Safety Services in our tenants homes including;

- **5,147** home safety visits
- **1,980** emergency light tests
- **18** dry riser tests
- **56** fire panel tests
- **102** fire equipment tests
- **877** door entry auto unit and system tests
- **240** vertical lift services
- **93** stair lift services
- **30** fire risk assessments
- **3,273** electrical tests
- **333** lift checks and services
- **88** water safety tests

100%
OF OUR HOMES ARE GAS SAFE

Residents who live in our sheltered housing and purpose-built blocks of flat that have a communal area should follow our stay put policy in the event of a fire. You should be ready to evacuate if instructed to do so by the Senior Fire Officer.

Our residents who live in houses, maisonettes, bungalows and converted flats* should evacuate their building in the event of a fire. You should familiarise yourself with your buildings layout and ensure you know your exit routes and where there are safe locations beyond your building.

If you are not sure which of these applies to you, please get in contact with us.

FIRE SAFETY TIPS:

- Always try to smoke outside. Smoking in indoor communal areas is against the law. Never smoke in bed or whilst laying down.
- Never leave cooking unattended or leave anything on top of your cooker.
- Take care of loose clothing when cooking or near heaters as they can easily catch fire.
- Keep your exit routes and main walkways clear.
- Keep all communal areas clear from obstructions such as bikes, prams, furniture or rubbish.
- Communal doors and fire doors must remain closed and cannot be left open.
- Do not use chip pans, use a deep fat fryer.
- Extinguish candles safely before going to bed and use appropriate holders.
- Keep all heating sources clear of clutter and take care near heaters.
- Close your bedroom door whilst sleeping to prevent a fire spreading.
- Never leave items on charge overnight or for lengthy periods.
- The use of plug-in air fresheners is not recommended as they present as a fire risk.
- Do not use barbeques on balconies.
- Dust your smoke alarms regularly.
- Do not remove or paint over your smoke detector.
- Use one plug per socket rather than using adaptors or extension leads.
- Keep electrical appliances clean and in good working order to prevent them causing a fire
- If your clothes catch fire remember to **STOP! DROP! and ROLL!**



SAFETY FIRST

WHY DO I NEED A HOME SAFETY CHECK?

Although Gas is a safe and cost effective method of providing heat and hot water to your home, if appliances are not regularly checked and maintained they may become dangerous. Faulty gas appliances can cause explosions and give off poisonous fumes such as Carbon Monoxide, which kills around 50 people every year. You can't see, taste or smell it and it can kill in just hours. **Even low levels can cause serious health problems!**

WHAT IF MY PROPERTY DOESN'T USE GAS?

Home Safety Checks allow us to monitor other things including detectors and not just gas supplies, therefore we must attend every property. If you have a gas supply but don't use it, you could still be at risk.

WHY DO YOU CHECK DETECTORS?

Detectors are a great way of identifying risks that we wouldn't notice day to day. We now ensure that every property has a heat and smoke detector and where necessary a CO₂ detector. Some newer detectors identify both heat and CO₂ together. If we find that your home doesn't have the necessary detectors, we will arrange for an engineer to fit one at another time. It is our responsibility to maintain these detectors each year.

WHAT IS MY RESPONSIBILITY?

By law, we must carry out Home Safety Checks each year, so you are responsible for letting our Engineers into your home. We are not responsible for checking gas appliances that you have fitted yourself but we do need to carry out a visual inspection to check that there is no obvious danger and that they have been fitted correctly. It is your responsibility to get your own appliances checked and serviced every year, by a Gas Safe registered engineer.

WHAT DO YOU TEST?

The service includes testing of all GCH owned gas appliances, pipework and an inspection of all detectors within your property.

HOW CAN I HELP?

We will give you at least a weeks' written notice of the appointment and the service itself will take no longer than an hour. If this date is inconvenient, please contact us to rearrange immediately. If you continue to refuse access then we will have to start legal action to take possession of your home and all costs will be recharged to you which can cost up to £350. If we smell gas or are concerned for your welfare, we reserve the right to force entry into your home to take emergency action. Not allowing access presents a risk to you and your neighbours.

Simon Heal, Lead Gas Engineer says

“It is really important that we can get into your home to service your appliances, if you don't you are putting your own and other lives at risk of illness or death.”



We can provide our leaseholders with a range of professional services through fully trained engineers at competitive prices including:

- Installation of central heating systems
- Medical aids and adaptations such as walk-in showers, ramps and grab-rails
- Replacement doors and windows
- Replacement fencing
- Gas servicing and Home Safety checks

GAS SAFETY

Leaseholders should ensure that an annual gas safety check is undertaken at their property each year and if sub-letting their property and it has a gas supply, there is a statutory duty to provide an annual gas safety check for the tenants and a copy of the safety certificate to us, as the freeholder.

It is an offence not to do so!

If you are a resident leaseholder, you are expected to have an annual check, for your own safety and that of other residents in the block. We would appreciate a copy of your safety certificate for our records each year. Please email Lynne.Phillips@gch.co.uk



One of our Gas Engineers undertaking a Home Safety Check

DO YOU HAVE HOME CONTENTS INSURANCE?

Gloucester City Homes do not cover your contents as part of your tenancy agreement. It's a good idea to consider what a home contents insurance policy would cover in order to help you make an informed decision on whether you need one. Contents insurance is designed to help protect your possessions. No matter how careful you are, there's always a risk that your belongings could be broken, damaged or stolen so home contents insurance can help provide peace of mind should the worst happen.

You can find any home contents insurance to cover your belongings. GCH tenants are eligible to apply for the Crystal Home Contents Insurance which is designed for tenants of social and affordable housing.

CRYSTAL HOME CONTENTS INSURANCE

Thistle Tenant Risks Contents Insurance scheme can offer you insurance for the contents of your home including cover for items such as furniture, carpets, curtains, clothes, bedding, electrical items, jewellery, pictures and ornaments.

10 REASONS TO CHOOSE CRYSTAL HOME CONTENTS INSURANCE

- Apply over the telephone or complete an application form.
- No excess (you don't pay the first part of the claim).
- Covers theft, water damage, fire and many more household risks.
- Covers tenants improvements (up to £2,000 or 20% of the sum insured, whichever is the greatest).
- Covers contents in sheds, outbuildings and garages (up to £2,000).
- Covers damage to external glazing for which you are responsible.
- Covers replacement and installation of locks for outside doors or windows and alarms, if keys are lost or stolen.
- You don't need to have special door or window locks.
- All postcodes are included.
- Flexible regular Pay-As-You-Go payment options.

GET IN TOUCH

If you'd like to apply for this home contents insurance or want more information you can visit www.gch.co.uk/insurance or www.crystal-insurance.co.uk or call Thistle Tenant Risks on **0345 450 7286**.

NEW HOMES AND PLANS FOR THE FUTURE



Building new affordable homes is a key priority for GCH, with a growing number of families and individuals in housing need on the waiting list and existing tenants needing larger or more suitable accommodation to meet their changing requirements.



In December 2019 we were thrilled to deliver our 200th new home. We celebrated the milestone by switching on Christmas tree lights and singing carols at St James Close where 16 homes have been delivered including new bungalows, a conversion of a coach house and the previous communal area. The event was a great opportunity to pull together the local community.



NEW HOMES AND PLANS FOR THE FUTURE



HUNTS GROVE

40 houses for affordable rent and shared ownership

In the late Summer/Autumn, we completed our biggest development yet of 40 new homes in a new area of Hardwicke called Hunts Grove. Part funded by Stroud District Council and Homes England the scheme provided 28 family homes for rent and 12 for shared ownership.



RECTORY CLOSE

10 houses and bungalows for affordable rent and shared ownership

In the Autumn we also completed our first development in the village of Maisemore, just on the outskirts of Gloucester. It provided 6 bungalows for rent and 4 family homes for Shared Ownership.



PARKLANDS

3 affordable rent bungalows

At the end of March we completed 3 bungalows at Parklands in Quedgeley. The new homes offer accessible homes for local residents.

PROGRESS ON NEW HOMES...

We have been busy working on lots of new properties including:



DEER PARK ROAD

5 bungalows for affordable rent

Work has also started at the former garage site in Hucclecote to build 5 bungalows which we also aim to complete in the Autumn.



HEADLAM CLOSE

2 houses and 1 bungalow for affordable rent

Work is underway to build 2 affordable houses and one bungalow by the end of July.



LICHFIELD ROAD

3 houses and 1 bungalow for affordable rent

Work has started at this garage site in Cathedral City to build 3 houses and 1 bungalow which are due to be completed in the Autumn.



CLEARBROOK HOUSE

31 flats for affordable rent

Work is well underway at the former Sherborne House site in Kingsholm. The new name will be Clearbrook House and will consist of 31 one and two bed flats. The homes are due to be completed in December 2020/January 2021.



BELL FARM

15 shared ownership and affordable rent homes

We bought land for our second development in Maisemore in March and started work shortly afterwards to construct 8 family homes for Shared Ownership and 7 for Affordable Rent. Ready at some point in 2021.



WORCESTER STREET

24 flats for affordable rent

Work has started at this site on the corner of Worcester Street, which you may have seen near town. 24 one and two bed affordable flats are due to be completed in December. The flats are being built by Cape Homes and incorporate part of the former historic Tanner's Hall building.



PARKLANDS FARM

10 shared ownership and affordable rent homes

We continued our partnership with Newland Homes to secure 6 family homes for affordable rent and 4 bungalows and houses on their private development in the village of Whitminster on the outskirts of Gloucester. 2 of the units have already been handed over and we will complete the rest in September.



DENMARK ROAD

16 shared ownership and affordable rent homes

Redrow Homes approached us to become a partner on their development in Kingsholm Gloucester on the old Civil Service Club grounds. GCH agreed and we signed contracts to develop 16 affordable homes on their private development to be completed over the next few years.



TUFFLEY CRESCENT

7 houses for shared ownership and affordable rent

Work has already started on 7 new homes which are due to be ready for Spring 2021. They will be let as a mixture of affordable and shared ownership homes.

PLUS, LOTS MORE!



We have agreed terms on more sites across the city and surrounding areas to bring forward much needed affordable housing as part of our plans to complete another 390 homes by 2024. These are at various stages of negotiation and cover developments in the City, Brockworth, Longford, Hempsted, Kingsholm, Matson, Longlevens and Hucclecote.

HOW TO APPLY...



All of our new homes are let through Homeseeker Plus and we cannot take any direct applications. If a property meets your needs you will be able to bid on it through your Homeseeker Plus account. If you do not have an account you can register online at www.homeseekerplus.co.uk

Please note that the system for bidding on Homeseeker changed in September and rather than available properties being advertised weekly, they are now advertised any time throughout the week (Monday -Friday). You can also set up property alerts to tell you when appropriate homes have been advertised.

If you are interested in part rent, part buy please visit www.gch.co.uk/sharedownership to find details of available properties. All available properties in the Gloucestershire area can be found at www.helptobuysouth.co.uk and you must have an account on this site and meet the eligibility criteria to apply.





GCH is committed to building homes and communities where people can thrive in terms of investment in existing homes, building new homes and community regeneration.

In March 2017 we secured **funding of £1.25m** from the Government's Estates Regeneration Fund. This has allowed us to consult with residents in Podsmead and Matson about potential regeneration of their communities and the development of Supplementary Planning Documents. The aim of this project is to provide additional new homes and facilities, designing places where people want to live and visit, supporting a thriving community and improving the quality of life for all residents.

There is ongoing commitment to the regeneration of both Podsmead and Matson which includes the MP for Gloucester Richard Graham in his pre-election manifesto, Gloucester City Council in its Housing and Homeless Strategy and Gloucester City Homes' Board in allocating extra funding to support the planning process.

We have recently written to residents in both areas to provide an update on progress and it is our intention, subject to the situation with the current lockdown arrangements, to provide more consultation opportunities with residents over the Summer.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS? JULY 2020 – APRIL 2021

- Encourage more residents to join the open to all Community Advisory Group.
- Continue discussions with City Planning Officers to agree a financially deliverable option which meets City Council planning policy requirements.
- Continue to consult with the community on the regeneration proposals and gain their support for a planning application.
- Submit individual planning applications for the communities to the City Council for approval.
- Finalise land transfer with the City and County Councils, securing land for free or at low cost to help make regeneration financially possible.
- Continue talking to the Government about available funding options.
- Carry out initial discussions with potential partners that we could work with to deliver the regeneration programme.
- Hold more consultation with all residents and stakeholders in Podsmead.
- Select partners who we would work with to make the project happen.

Podsmead and Matson both have a Community Advisory Group which is made up from residents. (Residents include, leaseholders, home owners, private tenants and tenants of all housing providers). If you live in either of these communities and want to get more involved please contact Jenny Vernon and Mal Harrison from TPAS who are providing independent advice in relation to the regeneration project.

If you would like to join the group please contact Jenny and Mal;
Call freephone* number **0800 731 1619**
or email **gloucester@tpas.org.uk**.

PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS IN 2020/2021



We have plans to make over **1,400 improvements** in the next year with a budget of

£5.7million...

IMPROVEMENT	2020-21
Kitchens	84
Bathrooms	234
Heating Systems	354
Rewires	88
Major Adaptations	158
Windows	50
Doors	48
Door Entry Systems Upgrades	12
Fire Safety Upgrades for Blocks	8
Roof Replacements	133
External Decoration	133
External and Environmental Improvements	133



TIPS FOR SAVING THE ENVIRONMENT

Five simple things you can change to do your bit towards saving the environment:

- Switch off your lights whenever you are not in the room and do not need them on.
- Save water by taking a shower rather than a bath and turn off the water whilst brushing your teeth.
- Give your garden a good breakfast; coffee grounds and eggshells are ideal for composting.
- Try walking or cycling for short journeys.
- Use reusable bags and containers.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Recycling one aluminium can saves enough electricity to power a TV for 3 hours. Aluminium cans can be recycled an unlimited number of times.



IN YOUR HANDS

SAVING THE ENVIRONMENT

RECYCLING IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE

We CAN recycle	We CAN NOT recycle
Cardboard / Cartons / Mixed Paper & Card	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Thin card boxes like tissue or cereal boxes■ Juice cartons■ Magazines and newsletters■ Envelopes with or without a window■ Mixed paper and light card■ Corrugated cardboard (flattened)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Foil wrapping paper■ Bubble wrap■ Greeting cards with glitter on■ Polystyrene packaging■ Large amount of corrugated cardboard■ Wet cardboard
Food Waste	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Raw or cooked meat and fish■ Fruit and vegetables■ Bread■ Dairy products■ Nutshells■ Teabags■ Uneaten food from plates	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Large amounts of cooking oil or liquids like soup etc.
Glass	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Clean glass jars and bottles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Broken glass■ Spectacles■ Light bulbs■ Pyrex dishes■ Glass medicine bottles
Plastic Bottles & Packaging / Aerosols / Food Tins & Cans	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Aerosols (MUST BE EMPTY)■ Food and drink cans■ Plastic bottles and lids■ Foil food trays■ Plastic containers e.g. butter tubs, fruit and meat trays, yoghurt pots etc■ Aluminium foil	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Crisp packets■ Pet food pouches■ Paint tins■ Black plastic■ Dirty containers■ Large protein powder tubs or powdered infant milk containers

WASTE COLLECTIONS FOR HOUSES AND BUNGALOWS:

Residents of houses and bungalows with enough recycling for more than one box should sort items as follows. This will help the recycling vehicles move down your street quickly.

- **Blue Sack** - Corrugated cardboard e.g. packaging boxes, pizza boxes without food residue etc. Flattened or broken up to fit in the sack.
- **Recycling Box 1** - Thin card, paper, glass bottles or jars, cartons.
- **Recycling Box 2** - Mixed plastic, EMPTY aerosols, aluminium foil, plastic bottles, tins and cans.

WASTE COLLECTION FOR FLATS:

Residents living in blocks of flats are all responsible for arranging their waste in the correct way to ensure Gloucester City Council will take away the collections:

- Recycle bins will not be emptied if they contain unacceptable items.
- Bin lids must be shut.
- Waste and bulky items must not be left at the side of the bins.
- Please ensure all recycled wastes is put in the correct bins and containers.
- Please recycle as much as possible.
- You can arrange for bulky items to be removed by contacting the Council or by taking them to the Household Recycling Centre in Hempstead.
- Large amounts of corrugated cardboard should be taken to Hempstead Household Recycling Centre or a local supermarket recycling bank.

FLY-TIPPING IS ILLEGAL

In 2019/20 our Estate Services Team removed flytipped waste from GCH estates at a cost of **£124,920**. This is not a service that we can provide for free and culprits will be charged.

Fly-tipping of rubbish or waste on land not licensed to take waste is illegal and regarded as a serious crime.

If you know of or see anybody fly tipping in your area please report it to Gloucester City Council on **01452 396396** or email **heretohelp@gloucester.gov.uk**



ENTER OUR **VIRTUAL** PRIDE **ART** COMPETITION!

SUPPORTING EQUALITY, CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

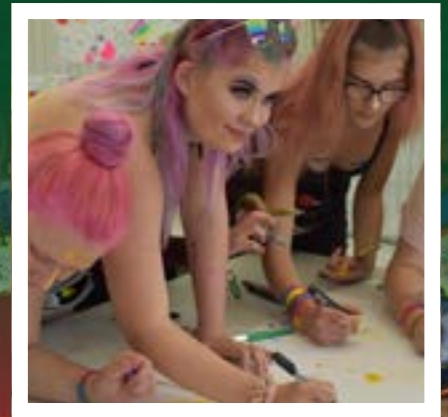
Help us celebrate Pride in 2020 by entering our online Art Competition and **WIN** vouchers to spend on new materials!

Theme: Show us how you embrace and celebrate diversity and equality in our City.

All media is welcome including:

- Painting & drawing
- Photography
- Video
- Sculpture

Prizes will awarded for under 16s, 16-24s and over 24.



gloscityhomes

To enter, please send your entries to communications@gch.co.uk or share with us via Facebook

Closing date for entries is Monday 31st August and winners will be announced in conjunction with Gloucester Pride weekend on 12th September