

# Annual Report 2022



Connexus



# New beginnings

**Hello and welcome to the Connexus Annual Report 2021/22. It's been created to update you on our recent progress and explain how as an organisation we're trying to improve for our customers.**

**With the threat of the Coronavirus pandemic beginning to diminish, this past year has been about recovery and new beginnings. I'm really aware that it's been a trying and difficult time for customers and our colleagues, but I'm confident that we're seeing Connexus emerge stronger and more resilient than ever.**

## Improved governance and financial viability

I'm immensely proud of the work that teams across the business have done to steer Connexus to a governance and viability compliance rating of G1/V1, the highest of four possible grades for governance and viability. The change in grading follows an In-depth Assessment by the regulator which concluded earlier this year. The new ratings reflect significant improvement work which has taken place to change the organisation's approach to health and safety, systems, and a number of processes. We're proud of the improvements we've made and it's great to see our new and more robust ways of working recognised with the highest level of compliance rating. Long-term stability is key for us, and we'll continue to provide strong governance and financial arrangements to support this aim.

## Building on our foundations

Governance and compliance will of course remain important going forward, but we recognise that having a robust and strong organisation is merely the foundation to delivering what matters to our customers. Our focus is excellent service delivery and the provision of high-quality affordable housing to the counties of Herefordshire and Shropshire. We do this through the development of new affordable homes, and by maintaining and improving our existing homes. Through the development of associated services, we aim to enhance the lives of our customers and those living in our communities.

## Safety in focus

Health and safety will always come first here at Connexus and I am pleased that the figures in this report relating to compliance checks in tenants' homes reflect this commitment. Connexus was fully compliant with checks for all heating systems within our homes (with 2% outstanding due to issues accessing properties). Connexus is committed to keeping people safe in their homes and will actively listen and engage with customers to ensure we understand what makes them feel safe.

## Listening to what our customers and communities say

As in any successful organisation, it is important that we are always learning and improving our services. Some figures in this annual report reflect the disappointment our customers have had with some of our services. The number of repairs completed in a satisfactory time for our tenants has been short of what we expect to deliver, and our repairs service is being reviewed as a result. Changes won't happen overnight, and will take a while to get right, but we'll be working hard to make improvements which we hope customers will begin to notice from 2023. Customer satisfaction levels with some of our services are also not where they should be. We are committed to improving our services through listening to our customers, be that through surveys, customer services interactions, consultations, or day-to-day conversations with our colleagues. However, following the pandemic, demand for our repairs service is high and Connexus will need to prioritise the most urgent cases.

## Reacting to global challenges

I strongly believe that, as an affordable housing provider, Connexus should be sensitive and responsive to the increasingly difficult conditions facing our tenants. Rising energy prices, fuel costs and inflation are increasing the financial burden for all of us. These problems are made worse in the rural areas in which we operate and those on lower incomes in the countryside are some of the most vulnerable when it comes to skyrocketing fuel costs. I must praise the hard work of our teams who are on the frontline, helping customers get the help they need to keep them in a warm and comfortable home through these difficult times.

## Next steps

Moving forward we must remain focussed on helping those in need while providing a pipeline of new affordable homes each and every year. Reacting to the social and economic challenges we face will be at the heart of our work over the next few years and will form part of our new corporate plan due in 2023. I'm very much looking forward to talking with customers and those we work with about where we go next and how we can continue to have a positive impact in our communities.

Richard Woolley  
Chief Executive, Connexus



Richard with the Connexus team, customers and Councillor Peter Broomhall, Mayor of Wem (far left) at a garden opening at the Westlands scheme, Wem.

# Listening to our customers

**Feedback is important. It allows us to identify where we need to improve and understand when we're doing well. Our aim is to always provide a high standard of service, but when our work (or the work of our contractors) is not up to an acceptable standard then our customers have the right to complain.**

We've been building on the principles laid down in our complaints procedure and policy, first launched back in January 2021. That means working harder than ever to resolve issues reported by tenants in a timely and satisfactory manner. Moving forward, we will continue to develop our complaints policy to ensure that we continue to deal with any complaints fairly and effectively.

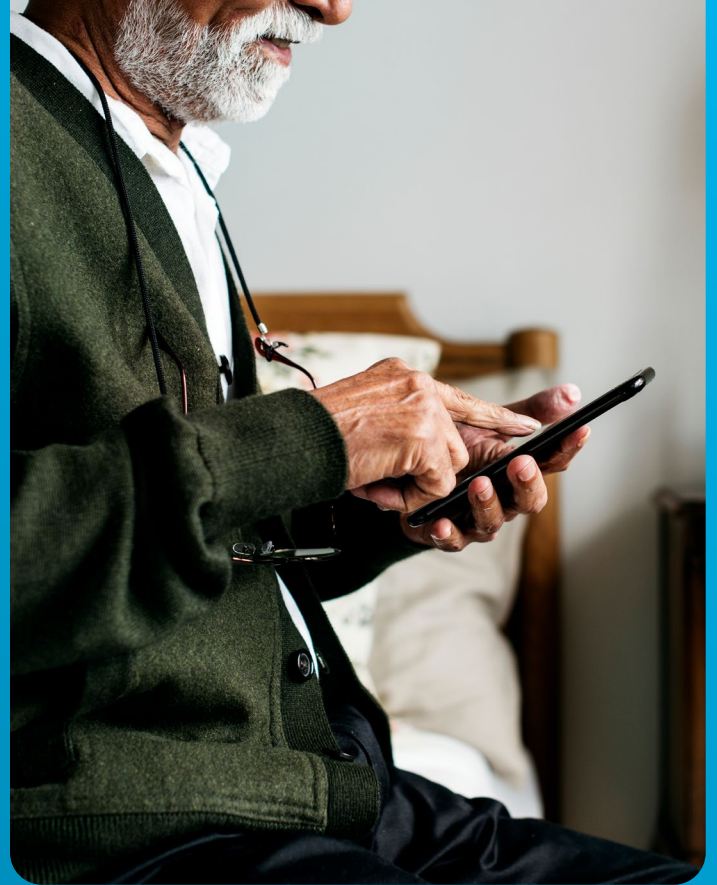
## Call waiting times

Following feedback around call waiting times and dissatisfaction to colleague responses, we have:

- Reduced the time the customer service team have between calls, so they are available for calls more often
- Taken on additional customer service advisers who handle the calls about repairs
- Appointed a customer service adviser to train other colleagues on the most efficient use of our computer systems
- Refreshed training approach for new colleagues
- Worked with ICT to review the telephone system and address intermittent quality issues that impact on the ability of colleagues to deliver the service effectively.

## Being clear about what we can and cannot do

Complaint feedback showed that we need to be clearer about what Connexus can and cannot do about anti-social behaviour (ASB). We found that the expectations of the person reporting ASB were different from what was possible, leaving them feeling like we have not acted as we should have (i.e. evicted the person causing the problem). We are working with the communications team to provide information and articles on ASB, focusing on what we can/cannot do and to encourage reporting, both to Connexus but also other agencies such as the police, environmental health teams and local authorities.



## Proactive, not reactive

Complaints and feedback show that we are often reactive rather than proactive. Earlier this year we held a customer feedback forum, considering opportunities to change this. The group discussed simple things like letting customers know about any work taking place that could impact them, or if we became aware of something that could affect their home that we get in touch. This will take time to implement. However, there are opportunities to do simple proactive work immediately, and where these are seen, the Head of Communities and the Customer Services Manager are highlighting them to the relevant area of the business.

The themes of complaints for repairs match the themes in customer satisfaction surveys. We are therefore taking a proactive approach and where a customer raises an issue in a survey, the respective team is notified so that they can act to address the issues.



Feedback received

**573**



Compliments received

**167**



Number of customer contacts

**90,842**



Percentage of calls resolved first time

**90.20%**

### Read our self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code

You can read the Connexus complaints self-assessment by visiting the documents section of the **Connexus website**. The self-assessment explains how Connexus meets the Housing Ombudsman code and gives examples of learning and how customer feedback is used to improve our service.

If you do not have access to the Internet, you can request a copy of the complaints self-assessment by calling 03332 31 32 33.

### The Housing Ombudsman Service, who can provide help and support can be contacted:

**By phone:** Tel: 0300 111 3000 / 9.15am-5.15pm: Monday to Friday

**By post:** Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 152, Liverpool L33 7WQ

**By email:** [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

**Online:** <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk>



Complaints received **53**

Complaint outcomes:



19 complaints were not upheld



18 were partially upheld



16 were upheld

### The most common things complained about by customers were:

- Communication issues
- Issues relating to outstanding repair or maintenance work
- Dissatisfaction with a response to an enquiry or complaint
- Relating to damp/mould/condensation issues
- Response time for repairs

### Themes customers mentioned in complaints, but less often were:

Conduct, re-occurring issues with repairs, service charges, ASB related issues, failed appointments, policies, compensation, prioritisation, GDPR and communal cleaning.

## Improving the customer experience

Over the next 12 months we will be focusing our efforts on the following:

- Helping to make it easier for our customers to contact us, get access to information and answers to questions and queries. This will involve enabling customers to access more things on-line 24/7 as well as improving how we deal with "in person" and telephone calls during working hours.
- Working with customers to collect additional data so that we understand what individual household needs are and how we can best provide support. We are keen, for example, to fill some of the Connexus careers opportunities by recruiting customers and so we may ask about your skills and experiences so we can best target our jobs.
- Developing and agreeing with tenants what we mean by our "customer offer", setting out expectations of what Connexus will do and what expectations we have of customers.

# You said, we did

In addition to learning from complaints, customers continued to have their say on the services they received throughout 2021/22. In early 2022 surveys by text message were introduced, enabling customers to give feedback at the touch of a button. Every three months, we review all the feedback sent through to us with the findings reported to our Senior Management Team. This allows us to understand what is driving satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and what we need to do to improve.

Here's a few of the things customers raised throughout the year and what we did to improve things:

**You said:** Connexus lacks communication on the next steps we are taking when it came to follow on visits and completing repair jobs.

**We did:** We now offer a 10-working day timescale to get in touch with customers to arrange any follow up work. We are continuing to improve this further and will continue to monitor satisfaction in this area.

**You said:** We are suffering from damp and mould in our home.

**We did:** We have put in place better monitoring to catch the signs of damp and mould in properties. This includes capturing customer feedback not reported as a repair, for example on satisfaction surveys. We're currently recruiting a specialist surveyor who will be the lead for Connexus. Meanwhile we have changed the arrangements we make with contractors to provide a simpler and quicker process while still completing our programme of health checks for all properties. These are carried out on a five-year cycle and check the condition of each property.

**You said:** When we use the contact us form on the Connexus website, we don't always get a reply.

**We did:** Investigated, found problems with the process and created more robust system checks which flag when email responses have been missed.

**You said:** We're not receiving the level of information we expect during a property viewing.

**We did:** Introduced a new and more effective process before customers start a tenancy which is being used by teams across Connexus. This makes sure customers receive all the right information during a viewing. This applies regardless of what type of property or tenancy is being offered.

**You said:** Sometimes customers are not able to view properties until the day they get keys.

**We did:** We now make sure we let customers what's happening as soon as possible and by using a preferred communication method.



## What we're working on

Some of the things that customers mentioned in 2021/22 require bigger changes to how processes and some of our teams work, but we are listening and planning improvements. These include:

- Improving the standard of repair work
- Reducing our repair response times wherever possible
- Improving communication between our internal teams and also to our contractors
- Offering more flexibility when it comes to appointments
- Catching up with key improvement work on our homes following contractor and material shortages during the pandemic
- Letting customers know how they can make homes more energy efficient, with how to make the best use of heating systems.



## Find out more

For more information about how we're performing you can visit our dedicated customer feedback and performance page on the **Connexus website**. This page includes comments from customers, and the latest satisfaction figures for key areas including repairs and property lettings.

# Investing in our communities

**At Connexus, any savings we make are re-invested back into our customers' homes and communities. Last year we donated over £53,000 worth of grants to local community projects. Projects from across Herefordshire and Shropshire applied to our Community Development Fund (CDF) for grants of up to £5,000 each.**

The fund has been set up to help fund communities working together, on local projects, which have a positive effect in their area of Herefordshire and Shropshire. Connexus is not-for-profit, and the CDF is us actively reinvesting in, supporting, and engaging with the communities we serve.

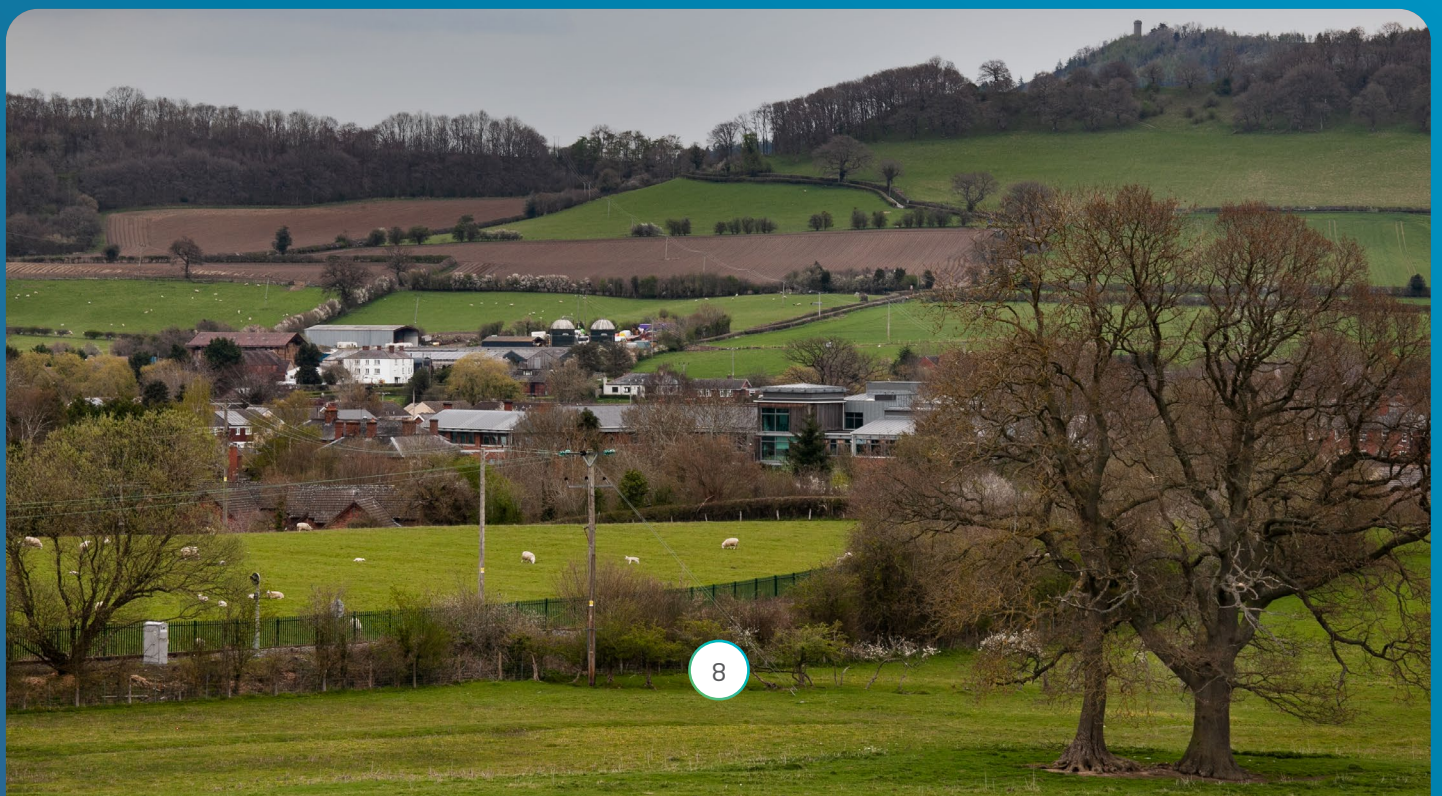
The community projects we support:

- Benefit our tenants and develop links with the wider community
- Encourage interaction between different generations within the whole community
- Lead to activities people want, but no one currently provides
- Generate training or employment opportunities.

Here are just a few of the projects that our Community Development Fund supported in 2021/22:

## **Rockspring Community Choir**

Rockspring Community Choir applied for funding to help rebuild its membership which had been severely impacted by the pandemic. The CDF donated £500 to go towards the costs of rehearsal spaces for the choir, who now meet weekly at a new location - with membership starting to grow again.





### Craven Arms Youth Group

Craven Arms Youth Provision received a grant of £3000 to continue running their Tuesday night youth club. They will continue to provide support, alongside healthy, positive activities for their members, increasing their health, wellbeing, aspirations, and engagement levels.

### West Mercia Women's Aid

West Mercia Women's Aid (WMWA) is an organisation dedicated to reducing the incidence and impact of domestic abuse and violence against women and girls in West Mercia by providing support, protection and prevention services. A grant from Connexus helped WMWA kickstart their resettlement programme, which offers safe and secure accommodation to victims of domestic abuse. West Mercia Women's Aid supports around 50 women and their children to move into permanent housing in Herefordshire each year.

### Hereford Winter Night Shelter

Hereford Winter Night Shelter were granted £2500 to help with provisions during their busy winter months. Due to demand for overnight shelter being so high, this funding allowed the shelter to provide kit bags for those in need, along with Greggs vouchers for those staying at the shelter so they could have coffee and breakfast the following morning.

### New Saints FC Foundation

The New Saints of Oswestry Town FC were granted £2500 of our Community Development Fund. The grant went towards providing free holiday activities and food parcels for 258 children and young people living in Ellesmere during the school holidays in 2021.

The New Saints FC Foundation aims to engage with the local community to provide positive, sustainable football, sports and educational activities for young people.



## Apply for funding

Connexus welcome applications for funds and assistance for new and existing projects. If you feel your project meets the criteria for our **Community Development Fund**, then apply for funding on our website. You can also get in touch by calling 03332 31 32 33 and asking to speak to our Customer Experience Team.

# Involving our customers



**We encourage customers to work with us to shape the delivery of our services. Connexus has lots of ways to get involved, ranging from focus groups and consultations, having your say in surveys or even becoming part of our resident scrutiny team. And whether you have lots of time to give, or just a few minutes - there are lots of options for you to help us improve the service you and others receive.**

Last year, restrictions to reduce the spread of coronavirus meant much of our customer engagement work still had to take place online to keep people safe. Despite the difficulties, we still managed to hear from lots of our customers and kept on learning from the feedback you gave.

## **Together with Tenants**

In early 2021, discussions took place around how customers can have a voice and influence what happens at Connexus in a special Together with Tenants online webinar. Customers fed back about the importance of accountability, protecting rights and interests and about setting clear expectations - especially important following service disruptions caused by coronavirus.

## **Scrutiny Bootcamp**

The Together with Tenants webinar led to further work later in the year to develop a Scrutiny Bootcamp in which customers could volunteer to take part over the course of two days to provide feedback on the topic of communication. The sessions looked at what could be improved and what Connexus should do. The bootcamp was a resounding success, with over 20 areas of improvement identified. These included the customer newsletter, making better use of preferred

communication methods, improving the accuracy of contact information, visiting schemes more often and closing feedback loops. Work on improvements from the feedback is well underway, with teams across the organisation making changes to how they operate as a result.

## **Having your say through our consultation portal**

On our online customer consultation portal, where customers can register to input into service proposals and new policies, we ran eight consultations in 2021/22. Customers provided feedback on key topics such as anti-social behaviour, support and housing, our offer to customers and a new pet policy.

## **Trying something different**

In January of this year, Connexus and other providers across Shropshire and the surrounding areas came together to deliver Tenants Voice - the first ever online event dedicated to directly hearing the voices of the 19,000 social housing tenants across Shropshire. Read all about the event opposite.

## **Be involved**

If you'd like to learn more about getting involved with Connexus please visit the **community page of our website**. You can also get in touch by calling 03332 31 32 33 and asking to speak to our Customer Experience Team.

# Tenants Voice 2022

**Tenants Voice was an ambitious step forward for social landlords in Shropshire: the first event dedicated to directly hearing the voices of the 19,000 social housing tenants across the region.**

## What was discussed?

Colleagues from teams across Connexus joined teams from Shropshire Council and other social landlords, listening and responding to hear what customers had to say on a range of issues, including but not limited to:

- Tackling loneliness and isolation
- Climate change
- Health and wellbeing
- Creating stronger communities.

## How did it go? Reflections from our Customer Engagement Team



Following months of planning, it was fantastic to join other social landlords in getting down to what Tenants Voice is all about: engaging with the issues that really matter to our tenants.

Day one kicked off with an insightful discussion on loneliness and isolation, issues that have affected more tenants throughout the Coronavirus pandemic. Office for National Statistics (ONS) figures showed 3.7 million people across the UK reported feeling lonely “often” or “always” in February 2021 (up from 2.6 million in April 2020). Tackling these tricky issues can be difficult for social housing landlords but it’s important to remember that good customer service can go a long way: an extra two minutes conversation from one of our Repairs team, for example, can make a huge positive impact on the day-to-day life of tenants feeling lonely or isolated.

Discussions on day two focused on the importance of outdoor spaces, artistic spaces, and learning environments (including libraries and museums) to tenants and their local communities. The local groups and projects supported by initiatives such as the Connexus Community Development Fund help develop links between tenants and their communities, in the long-term often leading to a greater sense of wellbeing. In short, social housing has always been about more than just the bricks and mortar our tenants live in.

It’s no secret that the relationship between social landlords and their tenants can be strained, often by a lack of communication. Tenants Voice 2022 was a valuable way for landlords to engage with these issues and display our clear commitment to our tenants and their communities. Of course, we know there’s always room to improve, and we’re looking forward another Tenants Voice event in 2023 and to more partnerships between landlords and organisations in the future.



Faith Jones (far right), Connexus Business Development manager on a panel at Tenants Voice



A virtual panel at Tenants Voice

# Supporting our customers



## Support services

Connexus' support services - including assisted accommodation, Independent Living, Younger Persons Service, Domestic Abuse Service, falls response and Prevention Support Team provide help and support across Shropshire and Herefordshire.

Many residents now call one of Independent Living Schemes home, enjoying the benefits of supported living while maintaining their independence. Independent Living Schemes are at the core of our housing and support strategy, which includes expanding this service and ensuring rural communities are great places to live for older residents.

Our Younger Persons Service has provided high quality supported accommodation and outreach support across Herefordshire to 63 young people (aged between 16 - 25) this year, with the Ludlow Foyer and Grain Loft also providing a stepping stone to independence for young people in Shropshire.

Against the sad but very real backdrop of an increased demand for domestic abuse support, Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service (SDAS) has provided vital support for 600 individuals and their children who are fleeing domestic abuse. SDAS' hard-working staff continue to provide an outreach for individuals and their children whose lives are affected by domestic abuse, empowering them to make decisions about their own futures.



Number of Connexus homes

**10,176**



Number of tenancies ending the year with a clear rent account

**8,866**



Current arrears as at end of year

**£920,981**



Current Customer Rent Arrears %

**1.87%**

## Lettings

While there are always improvements to be made, Connexus can report a strong performance for lettings for 2021/22. The lettings process should always run as efficiently and smoothly as possible for our customers and so our teams are proud to report that satisfaction with our lettings process was 89.68% this year (an increase of 2% on the previous year).

Of course, having an efficient lettings process is nothing if our customers are not happy with their new home when they move in. This year the number of tenants satisfied with the condition of their properties increased more than 6% to 76.92%.

With a housing shortage continuing to increase demand on rented properties, a priority for Connexus going forward is letting our properties quickly while still delivering high quality homes. This year we improved the coordination and management of our work to empty 'void' properties by moving to a new central housing management system, reducing the number of days it took us to re-let our properties to 43.2 days (down from 60.8 days in 2020/21). We're developing our new standard for void properties in the coming year so Connexus can provide a consistent standard of service when a new tenant moves in.

The cost-of-living crisis is having a significant impact on our customers, with costs for fuel and food currently increasing daily. With these difficult circumstances in mind, our Tenancy Sustainment Officers have been continuing to provide support to new tenants before, during and after they move in, helping to ensure that their tenancy can be sustained.

# Our repairs and maintenance service

We aim to provide an effective and efficient repairs service that our customers can rely on. And we know that when repairs go wrong, it really matters to customers. The figures on this page show that our repairs service needs improvement to meet the expectations of our customers, with 87% of our customers satisfied with our repairs service (compared with our target of 92%). Furthermore, the number of repairs completed within the target time was recorded at 75% (target 90%). These gaps between expectation and delivery mean a real re-focus on repairs is needed, and we are reviewing how our repairs teams work to improve our performance.



Total spent on repairs and maintenance

**£25.9m**



Jobs completed by the Connexus repairs team

**35,126**



Repairs completed in first visit (target 91%)

**94.02%**



repairs completed in target time frame (target 90%)

**75%**



Customer satisfaction with repairs (target 92%)

**87%**

## Maintaining homes

Connexus aims to provide properties that meet the Decent Homes Standard and our tenants' expectations. We are committed to improving the standard of our existing properties, carrying out regular stock condition surveys to inform and update our planned maintenance programme. Our improvement works in the coming year see a renewed focus on the way our customers heat their homes and trying to combat the increasing stresses of rural fuel poverty, as well as contributing to the UK Government's target of a net-zero carbon economy by 2050.



### £11.5m spent on component replacements\*.



**159**  
Kitchens



**98**  
Bathrooms



**252**  
Rewires



**220**  
Heating Systems



**305**  
Boilers



**170**  
Windows



**144**  
Doors



**179**  
Roofs

\* The £11.5m spent of component replacements is included in the £25.9m total spent on repairs and maintenance.

# Developing in our communities

**The continuing UK housing crisis is not new and ensures that the need for high quality, affordable and energy efficient housing is higher than ever.**

Connexus are committed to rural communities across Herefordshire and Shropshire and building homes in places where people want to live. New homes for families with a local connection help to support schools, businesses and other amenities and ensure that those communities - and their residents - continue to thrive.

In 2021/2022 we completed 164 new homes for residents in Herefordshire and Shropshire, with these units a mix of affordable rent, private rent, shared ownership and Independent Living (sometimes known as sheltered housing). While every new home available is a win, we realise that this figure is short of our current commitment to building 250 new homes every year. External conditions have played a factor, with the knock-on effects of the Covid pandemic and Brexit still being felt in the construction sector through materials and labour shortages. Properties that did not complete in the last financial year due to these external factors will complete in this financial year instead.

**Completed in 2021/2022 financial year**  
**Approx. £40m spent on developments in 2021/22**  
**Total number of properties completed was 164, including:**

## **Bath Street, Hereford**

- Phase 2 - consisted of 47 units
- 1 and 2 bed apartments
- All affordable rent - general needs
- Old working boys school and then Herefordshire council offices.

Among our most significant new schemes was the regeneration of Bath Street, Hereford. The Bath Street site, situated on a former Victorian working boys' home, retains the historical façade while transforming old council offices into 74 new build apartments for both private and affordable rent.

This theme of redeveloping an area into a place our residents really want to live continues through the coming year, with Phase two of our scheme in Beattie Avenue, Hereford. The 41 prefabricated bungalows that existed for over 60 years in the area are being replaced, and a further 30 new homes will be built consisting of affordable housing and shared ownership properties, allowing first-time buyers to get onto the property market in the area.

Below and opposite you can see some of the properties completed in 2021/22. We'll be continuing to work with partners to make sure our development programme is tailored to the needs of each community, carefully considering the right mix of affordable rents and Shared Ownership homes.





**Minsterley, Shropshire**

- 16 properties
- 6 affordable rent
- 10 shared ownership
- 2 and 3 bed houses.

**Highley, Shropshire**

- 20 properties
- 8 affordable rent
- 12 shared ownership
- 2 and 3 bed houses.

**Llewellyn House, Oswestry, Shropshire**

- Our new Independent Living development in Oswestry, Llewellyn House consists of 33 two-bedroomed apartments suitable for three people and 5 one-bedroomed, 2-person apartments, all for rent.



Our Highley development in Shropshire



Llewellyn House in Oswestry



Our Minsterley development in Shropshire



A new kitchen at Minsterley

# Building the future with our apprentices

**Apprenticeships are an important part of how we grow and develop people at Connexus. Our aim is to shape future leaders and keep talent, with learning and development focused around the individual as they progress through the organisation.**

They are an important part of how we attract new talent and develop our people. Whether someone is new to the organisation and just beginning their journey, or already with us and wishing to learn new skills, apprenticeships offer great opportunities for career progression and personal development.

We've been consistently developing and refining our approach to apprenticeships over recent years - linking our programme with succession planning and our overall recruitment and people strategy.

For those new to our business, we offer a tailored approach which matches personality, skills and training to suitable roles and opportunities across departments. Following recruitment challenges brought about by the pandemic, we've also been working with our apprentices in areas where we have a skills shortage or difficulty recruiting, which is mutually beneficial for both our apprentices and Connexus.

Through the Apprenticeship Levy, we're able to access training for existing colleagues too. This allows us to provide additional support on top of our internal training offer, developing existing skills which ultimately allow us to serve our customers better. Developing skills, particularly for those in our management teams, is a key part of our succession planning.





## Meet our apprentices

Here's what some of our apprentices had to say about their experience of learning on the job and how the programme had helped them to develop.



"I'm delighted to be working at Connexus as a Business Administration Apprentice and feel valued as part of the Governance Team. I am working with a number of colleagues across the organisation as well as my particular role in governance which I truly appreciate. This opportunity will enable me to widen my knowledge, skills and qualification outcome.

"I am looking forward to growing my talent and hope to progress within the organisation. I'm grateful for the opportunity Connexus has been given and excited to see where my apprenticeship takes me in the future."

**Melissa, Business Admin Apprentice**



"I had been looking into starting a career in HR for a couple of years and when I saw Connexus had an opportunity to join I jumped at the chance. By doing an apprenticeship I can get on-the-job experience, alongside completing a qualification providing the best start to my career. As an 'older' apprentice, I was a bit nervous about starting and attending college, but I have been given so much support by Connexus and made to feel so welcome and part of the team. I'm able to complete my apprenticeship work within my working hours and have the support and guidance of not only my team, but the wider organisation too."

**Hannah, HR Apprentice**



"As part of the next generation looking to build a future in the electrical industry, I feel lucky to have been given the opportunity to become part of the team. I learn on-the-job from amazing colleagues that go above and beyond to pass on their knowledge. I'm learning new skills every day and have gained confidence in my ability to produce work to industry standard, under the supervision and guidance of electricians that have been through the same journey that I am currently on.

"Connexus as an organisation are enthusiastic to help me build on my portfolio in order for me to qualify as an approved electrician and have provided me with everything I need to carry out my role on the job. I feel the apprenticeship scheme is an amazing way for an organisation to build their own future. Seeing apprentices develop throughout the programme builds trust and confidence in the employee's ability to eventually be out on the job by themselves, knowing that they have had the appropriate training and experience required to communicate with colleagues and tenants in a courteous manner, and carry out work to a professional standard."

**Aaron, Electrical Installation Apprentice**

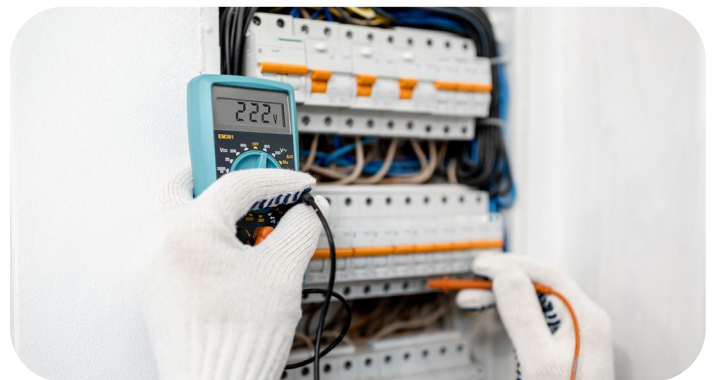


## Compliance and safety

**The health and safety of our tenants and employees remains the highest priority for Connexus, with the past year focused on embedding a compliance culture within the business. Put simply, we're investing more each year in our colleagues and systems to make sure everyone is safe.**

At Connexus we have worked hard to ensure that we've got robust compliance data and reporting systems, a well-planned out programme of works using our internal workforce (supported by trusted contractors) and, importantly, we involve customers in continually improving our approach, particularly around accessing homes where the customer doesn't understand the importance of compliance work.

This work in improving our commitment to compliance is reflected in our scores for gas safety certificates (99.95% of properties compliant), oil safety certificates (99.28% compliant) and solid fuel safety certificates (98.88% compliant). As ever, there is still room for improvement: only 93% of our properties had their electrical periodical test in 2021/22 and this is something we plan to address in the coming year.



Gas safety compliance

**99.95%**



Oil safety compliance

**99.28%**



Solid fuel safety compliance

**98.88%**

# Balancing the books

## A strong financial finish

At the end of 2021/22 Connexus secured V1, the highest possible rating for financial viability from The Regulator of Social Housing in a regulatory judgement. Judgements are required for all housing providers who own 1,000 homes for social housing. They determine whether a provider is meeting the regulator's governance and financial viability standards.

Connexus are pleased to have a strong A3 Moody's financial agency rating, making us financially sound and resilient.

## Better Value Together

Getting value for money is extremely important, particularly when it comes to getting the balance of understanding right about what matters most to our customers. We always want to get the best possible service for the best price, but that doesn't always mean going for the cheapest option.

To represent this more accurately, we now call our value for money activity Better Value Together.

In 2021 we launched a Better Value Together Strategy, which sets out our approach, priorities and outputs to be achieved over the next three years. You can find out about the strategy by visiting our dedicated **Better Value Together** page on the Connexus website.

## Better Value Together log and efficiency savings

Our Better Value Together log shows the savings delivered through the year by operating effectively, the total costs avoided or saved totalled £908k, with a further £63k delivered directly through savings on customer fuel bills, made possible through investments in our properties.

During 2021/22 we also delivered £877k of permanent efficiencies and £48k of one-off savings which were reinvested back into the business.

## Digging into the detail

If you'd like to see the full set of financial accounts for Connexus, these are available by clicking **here** or by visiting the documents page of the website, which you can find in the About/Contact section.

