

Cambs Home Improvement Agency  
Annual Report 2021 - 2022

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# Introduction

## by our Lead Councillors 2021/22

2021 saw the country continue to fight the pandemic with many council staff being deployed to provide support for essential services.

In our three districts, this involved staff being engaged in the immunisation process, providing visiting and telephone support to the most vulnerable and also making sure lockdown rules were adhered to.

Cambs HIA was identified as a team of key workers whose essential role included keeping older and disabled people safely in their own homes thereby reducing the impact on primary care services and the major hospitals in our districts.

Throughout this time the Agency also continued to develop the service working collaboratively with Cambridgeshire County Council on the Housing Support Fund,

with the NHS on a new Trusted Assessor pathway for bathing assessments and implemented a new Information Technology System to further improve the service.

The Service was awarded "Team of the Year" by Cambridge City Council and the Manager, Frances Swann was acknowledged nationally as an "Inspirational Leader" in her role managing Disabled Facility Grants.



**Cllr. Mike Todd-Jones**  
Cambridge City  
Council



**Cllr. Sarah Conboy**  
Huntingdonshire  
District Council



**Cllr. John Batchelor**  
South Cambridgeshire  
District Council

Photo Credit – Cllr. Mike Todd-Jones: Anna Smith

# Governance

Since 2012, Cambs HIA's Board continues to be well represented by officers from Cambridge City, Huntingdonshire, South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge County Councils.

## Our Management Board:



**Helen Reed,**  
Housing Strategy  
Manager, **Cambridge  
City Council**



**Finlay Flett,**  
Operational Manager,  
**Huntingdonshire District  
Council**



**Julie Fletcher,**  
Service Manager -  
Housing Strategy,  
**South Cambs District  
Council**



**Lisa Sparks,**  
Commissioner (Adults),  
**Cambridgeshire County  
Council**



**Frances Swann,**  
Manager,  
**Cambs Home  
Improvement Agency**



**Julia Hovells,**  
Principal Accountant,  
**Cambridge City  
Council.**

# About Us

The agency completed **£2.14m worth of adaptations**. This represents a small increase of £140,000 in comparison to 2020/21 although still £1.15m below the pre covid Disabled Facility Grant spending level of £3.3m.

Cambs HIA also completed **£214,259 worth of work funded by Special Purpose Grants** – this includes Top Up grants, replacing boilers, roof repairs, new windows and doors and remedying problems with damp.

The team also adjusted to working from home and are pictured here on a Christmas period meeting.



## A Message from Our Manager, Frances Swann:

The pandemic presented many challenges for our service and that of our Occupational Therapy partners.

Lockdown meant that we had to focus on work which was critical and high urgency such as adaptations which prevented falls, hospital admissions and kept families together at home safely.

In 2022, the Country's construction market is in high demand – furloughed staff had moved on to other roles and our contractors were reporting difficulties recruiting specialist bathroom fitters and other key trades. We tendered multiple new contracts to service our bathroom, kitchen and equipment needs and appointed 17 new suppliers. High demand is unfortunately still impacting on our construction work, something we hope will settle in the forthcoming months.

The team has remained buoyant and determined to deliver good services and I thank them and everyone involved for their resilience and hard work over the last 12 months.

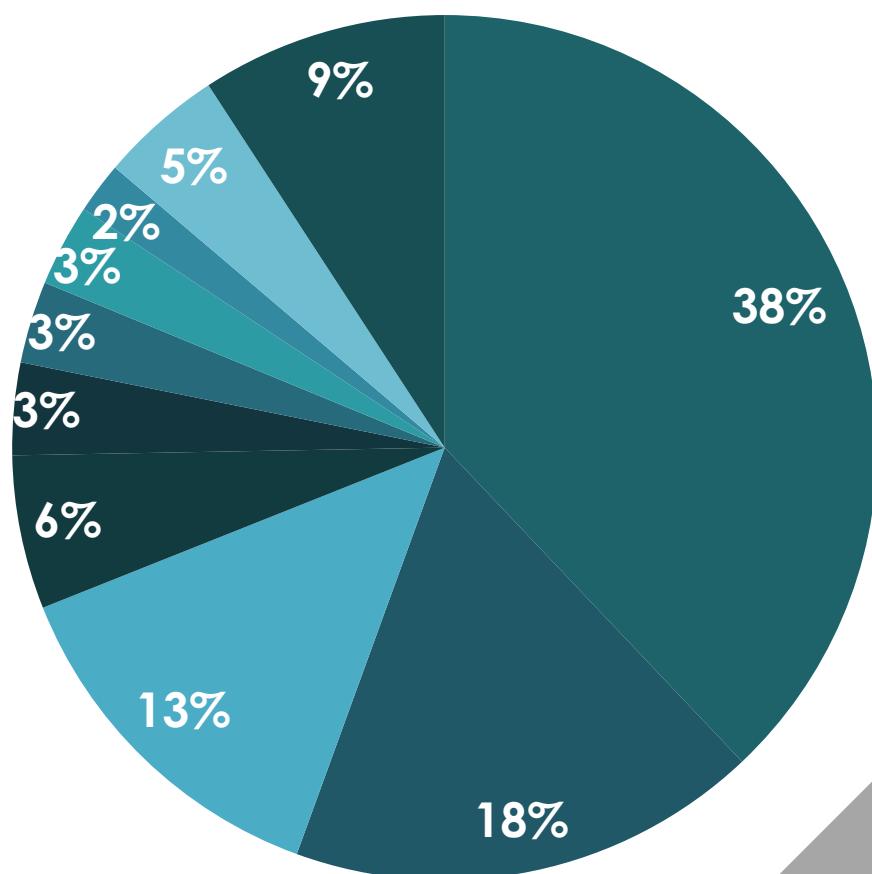


# 2021 – 2022: Highlights

## Completed Works

In 2021/22 we enabled 227 disabled and older people to adapt their homes. This represents a reduction on previous years which is attributed to fewer referrals because of the pandemic.

## Types of DFG completed



- Bathing
- Fixed Equipment
- Access
- Toilet Facilities
- Extensions & Conversions
- Boiler/Central Heating
- Kitchen Adaptation
- Bedroom Adaptation
- Safety
- Other

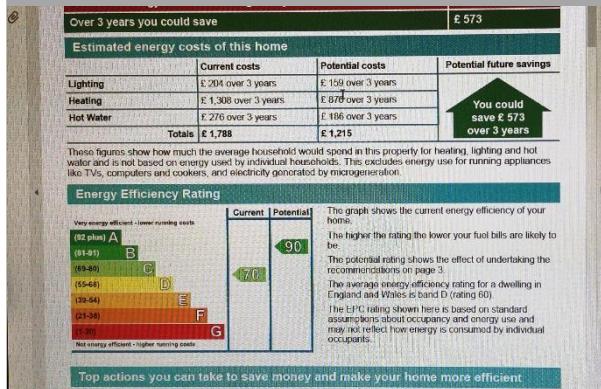
# 25

Private jobs completed for clients ineligible for a grant



# 34

Special Purpose Grants completed in Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire



# 40

Disabled Facilities Grants completed for disabled children across Cambridge City, Huntingdonshire and South Cambridgeshire

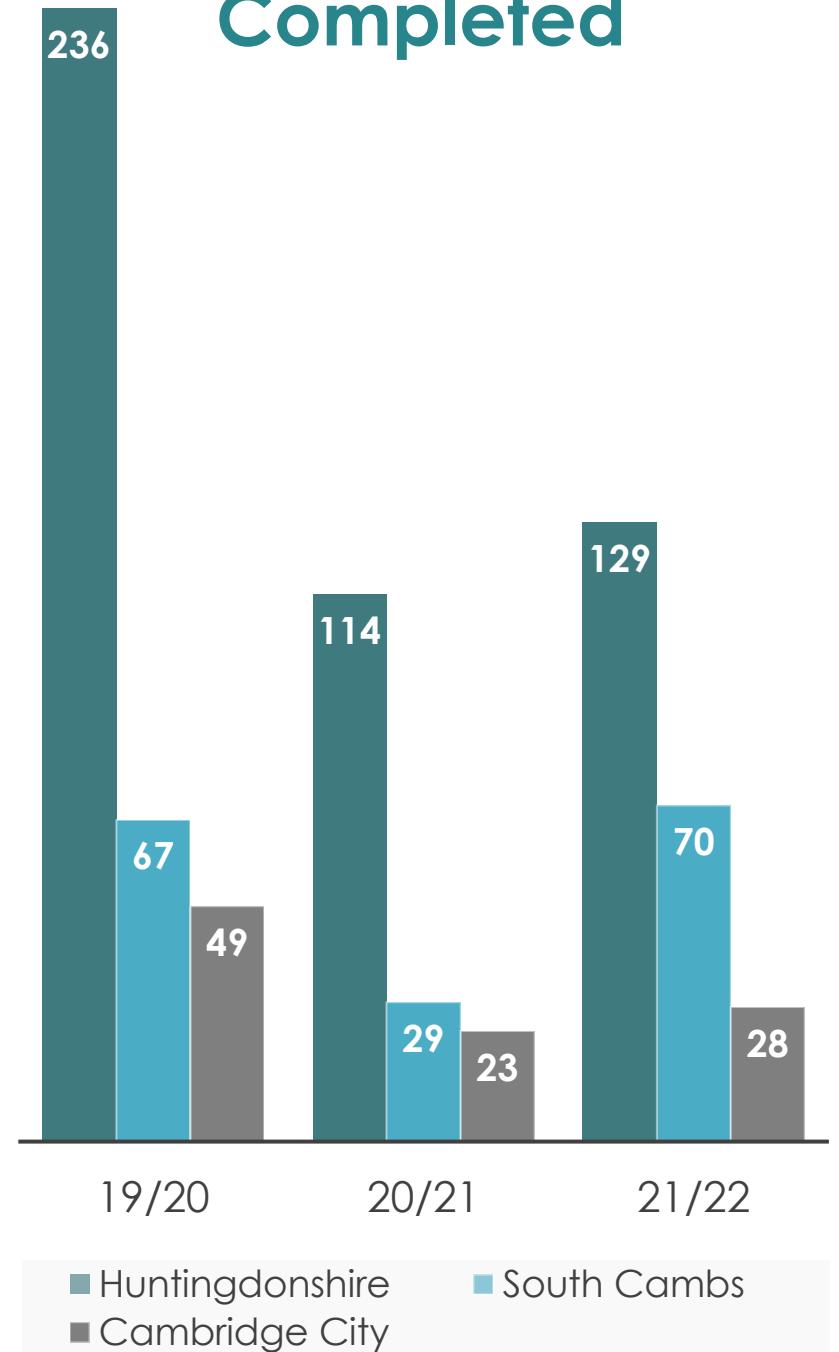


228

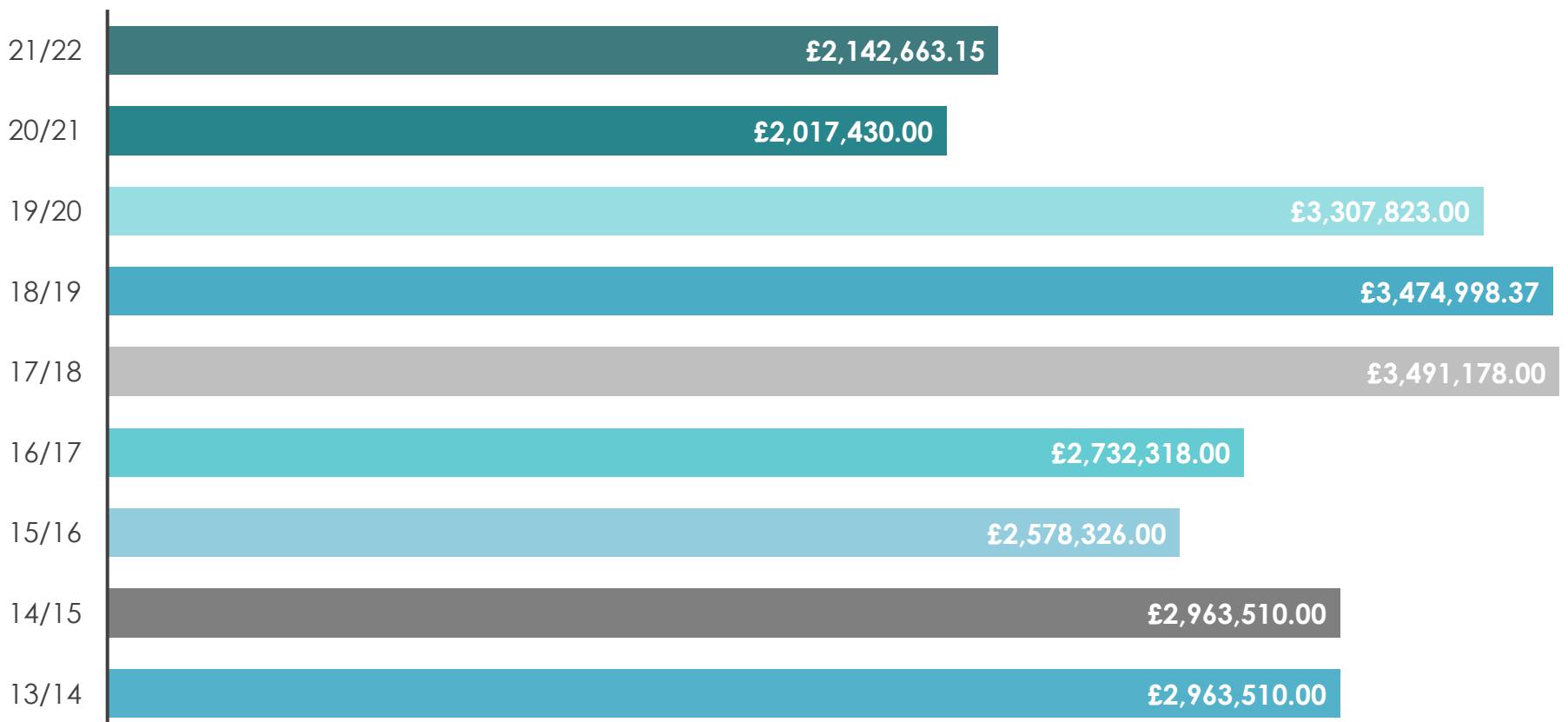
Preliminary Tests of Resources completed to check client eligibility



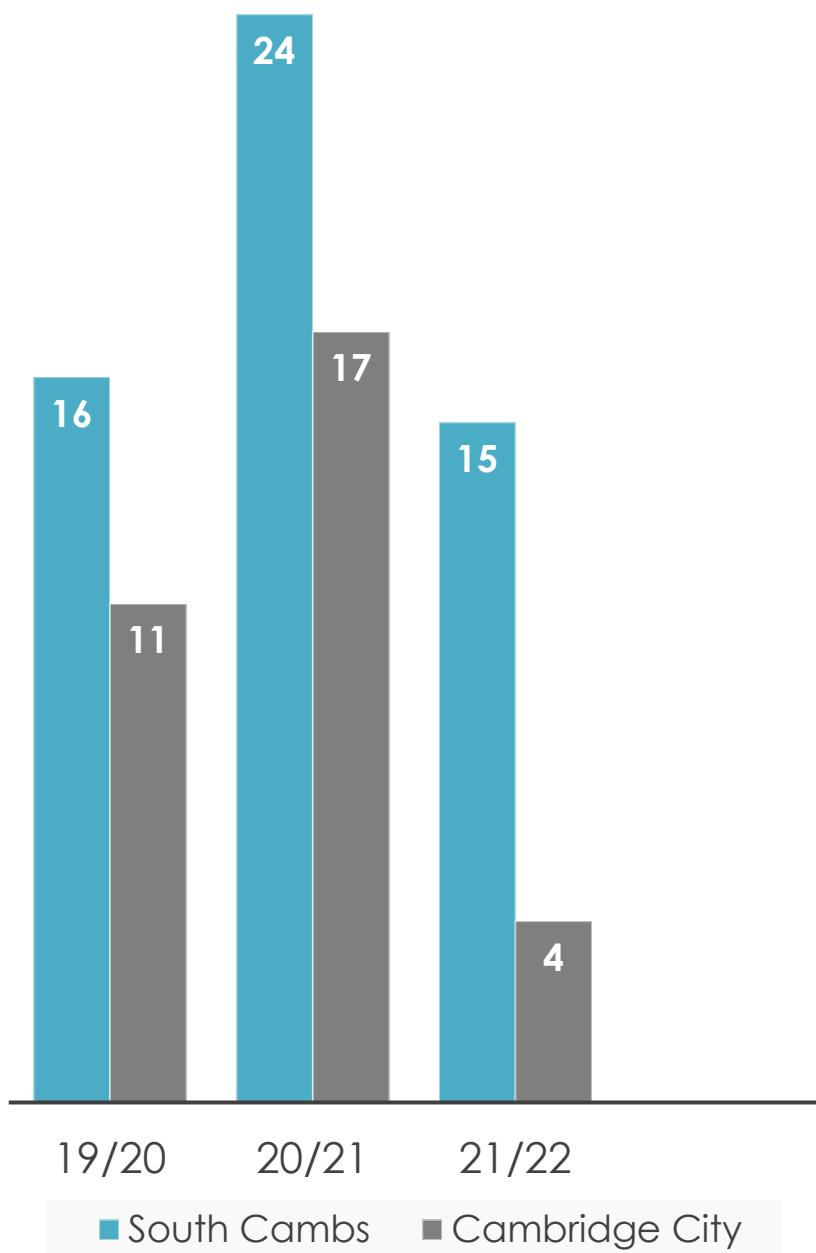
## No. of Disabled Facilities Grants Completed



## DFG Spend



## Special Purpose Grants Completed



We saw an increase in the number of general enquiries in 2021/22



ifted

## Onward referrals

We made **79** onward referrals last year to help people:



**Get housing advice**



**Claim benefits they are entitled to**



**Request fire safety checks**



**Improve their home security**



**Install a Community Alarm**

# Customer Satisfaction

We monitor our performance carefully to ensure we are meeting the needs and expectations of our clients.

Last year we saw a small increase in the number of complaints we received about our contractors.

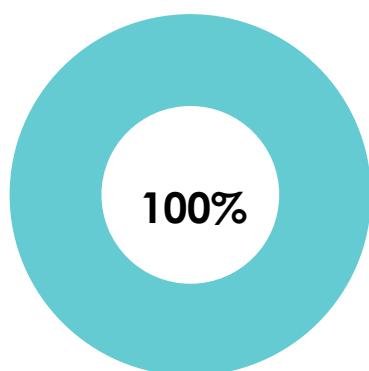
This year we awarded 17 new contracts to new suppliers and attracted two new builders to our supplier lists.

New relationships do bring about some teething issues which we are presently working through and we have also received some really positive feedback about our new suppliers too.

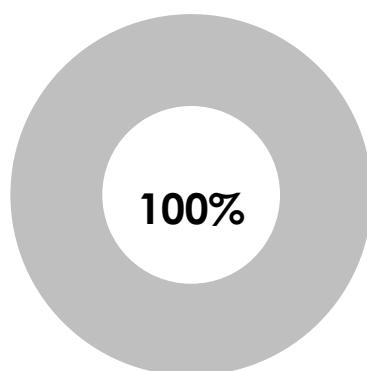
**My son can now shower independently rather than being washed by his carer (myself). He does not have to worry about falling over and uses the seat while showering himself.**

## Satisfaction

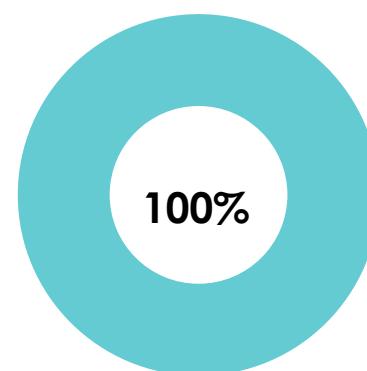
Despite a small increase in dissatisfaction (mentioned above) overall satisfaction remains high and based on feedback from customer surveys:



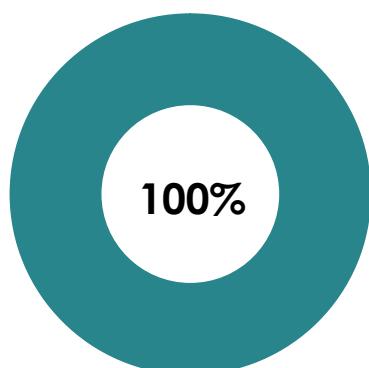
Rated the Cambs HIA'S advice as good or excellent



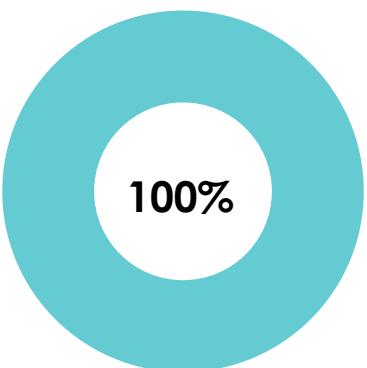
Said that work met expectations



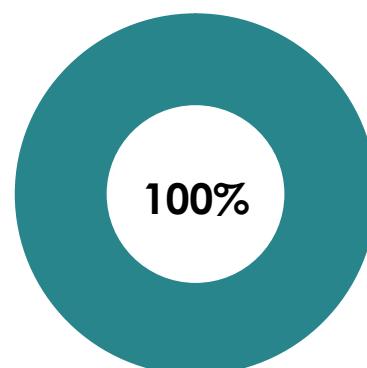
Felt that work represented value for money



Told us that work has helped their health/ wellbeing



Felt that work increased their independence



Were satisfied overall with our service

# Trusted Assessor Pilot with Cambs and Peterborough Foundation Trust

We worked with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Foundation Trust, to trial a new way of working which involves staff trained as Trusted Assessors at Cambs HIA assessing clients with basic bathing needs. The project which was also progressed by East Cambs and Fenland District Councils has so far progressed well and Cambs HIA will continue it again later in 2022.

Our staff are pictured right on a visit trying out the equipment for themselves.



# Team of The Year Award

Cambs HIA was awarded Cambridge City Council's Team of the Year Award last autumn.

The team was recognised for its continued improved performance over the last three years.

This award built on the previous year when the Agency won South Cambs Team of the Year award.



# Housing Support Fund

This year we collaborated with Cambridgeshire County Council to help those who were experiencing financial hardship to service or repair their boilers as part of a fund made available from the government.

The funding was only available over a few weeks between January to March 2022 during which time we received 5 referrals. In most cases the boilers could not be repaired and we utilised other funds to replace the boilers with new, more energy efficient ones for our clients.



**Surveyor, Anne Devenport and Caseworker, Melanie Mynott during a home energy visit**

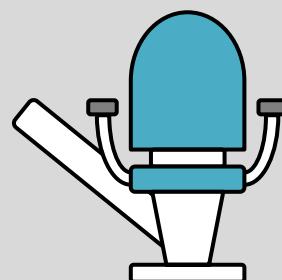
# Statement of Financial Activities

	31 March 2020	31 March 2021	31 March 2022
<b>Income</b>			
HIA Fees	(383,594)	(244,035)	(301,051)
External Funding (Cambridgeshire County Council, etc.)	(177,990)	(225,990)	(265,990)
Other Income (including landlord & client contributions, & fees from private works)	(40,245)	(31,491)	(54,754)
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>(601,829)</b>	<b>(501,516)</b>	<b>(621,795)</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Cost of generating funds	554,327	494,300	508,364
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>554,327</b>	<b>494,300</b>	<b>508,364</b>
<b>Net Income/expenditure before recognised gains and losses</b>	<b>(47,502)</b>	<b>(7216)</b>	<b>(113,431)</b>
<b>Trading (Surplus) /Deficit b/f</b>	<b>(279,354)</b>	<b>(326,856)</b>	<b>(334,072)</b>
<b>Trading (Surplus) /Deficit c/f</b>	<b>(326,856)</b>	<b>(334,072)</b>	<b>(447,503)</b>

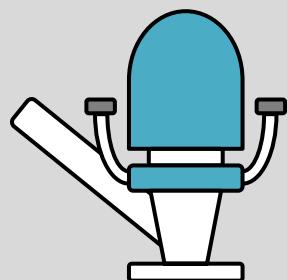
## Last Year We...



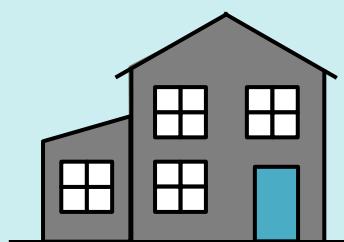
...became accredited  
HHSRS assessors (Housing,  
Health and Safety Rating  
System)



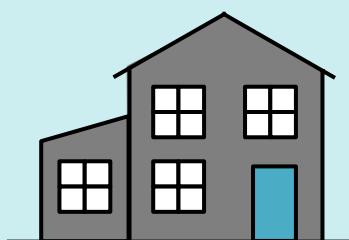
...installed **23** new boilers



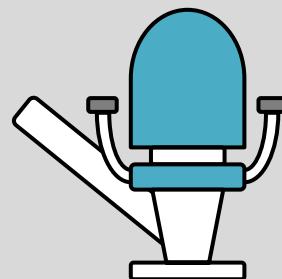
...appointed **17** new fixed  
equipment suppliers



...fitted **13** new kitchens for  
older or disabled clients



...installed new doors and  
windows at **19** homes

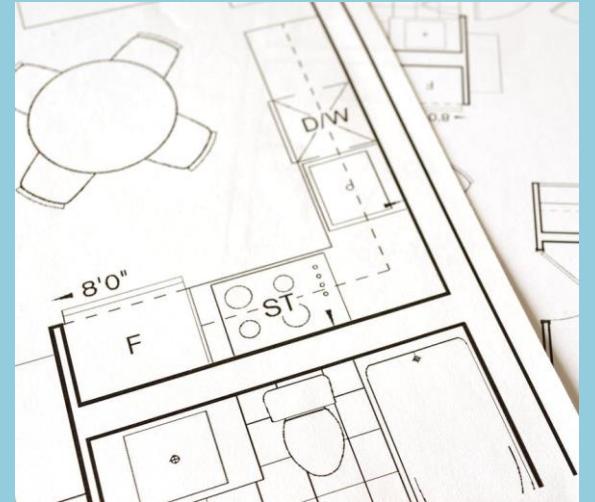


...ensured our staff and  
contractors were compliant  
with covid safe working  
practices

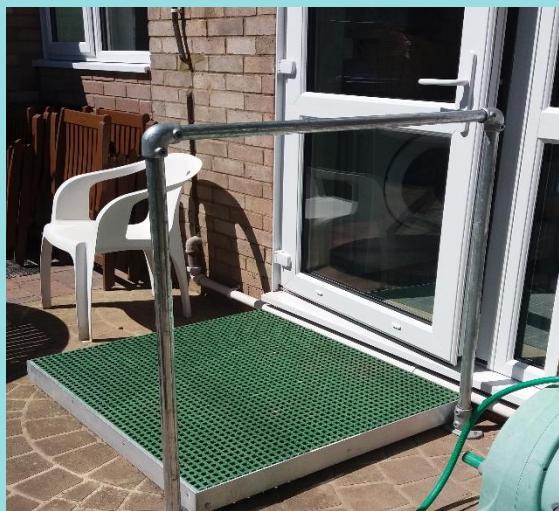
# What Our Customers Say



“Much better than having to try getting in and out of bath”



“Not having to worry so much about getting to the toilet on time”.



“Easier to use shower and toilet/wash basin downstairs when not feeling too well”.



“I feel so much more independent”



*I am so happy with the shower, especially that it's a blessing*  
- Miss D

“I was unable to afford a new boiler and mine had completely broken. I can't thank you enough”.

**Cambs Home Improvement Agency** @CambsHIA · 20 Feb  
We're very grateful to have received these lovely cards from some of our happy clients in @huntsdc and @SouthCambs

“#Thankyou 🙏 for all your #time, #effort, #patience, #understanding and #care. It is very much #appreciated...”

#DisabledFacilitiesGrant #DisabledAdaptation #Thanks 🙏



“Everyone concerned has been wonderful from start to finish”.

# With Thanks to...



## Approved Contractors

who are trusted and experienced in this field to complete building works on the clients' behalf.

## 3C Building Control

who check and sign off work as being compliant with building regulations.

## Occupational Therapists

who assess people's need for adaptations and determine how those needs can be addressed within the relevant legislation.



## Local Authority Grants Officers & Private Sector Housing Teams

in each of the three districts who check and approve mandatory and discretionary grants for qualifying people.

## Charitable Organisations

who help us by providing additional funding where the cost will be above the £30,000 grant limit.

Usually needed for complex work including extensions and conversions.

# Our Aims for 2022-2023

## Improve Performance by:

- Closely monitor the performance of new contractors
- Introduce one new service Level Agreement aimed at speeding up the landlord consent process
- Developing the service in light of new guidance issued in 2022



## Improving Customer Service:

- Continue to develop the new IT system and develop the customer portal
- Publishing new Customer Service Standards
- Increase take up of non grant funded adaptations/develop self funded market

## Increase Awareness and take up of Grants in Cambridge City by:

- Targeted work on promoting DFG's in Cambridge City where current uptake of grants is lower
- More focussed campaigns targeting health inequalities



## Promote Well Being by:

- Continuing to provide targeted grants that improve Housing, Health and Safety Assessment outcomes
- Continue targeting grants to help reduce fuel poverty

# Tell Us What You Think

## Your Feedback

We welcome your comments about our Annual Report and how you think it could be improved.

We also welcome your views about the work of Cambs HIA, now and in the future.

## Contact Information

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