

Annual Report 2020 - 2021



Welcome

2020/21 has been a year unlike any other. I don't think any of us could have predicted how the beginning of this financial year would start. The Covid-19 virus hit us, and the rest of the world, hard; changing our everyday lives beyond recognition.

This unprecedented event temporarily changed any plans we had for 2020/21, our focus now was to respond to Covid-19 by supporting our customers and colleagues through this extremely turbulent time.

This meant we reluctantly had to stop some of the services we deliver to you for a short period of time, such as non-urgent repairs and visits to your home, to ensure your safety. It also required us to do things differently, like offering more services digitally, from virtual tenancy sign ups to online employment support through Reach. The wellbeing of our tenants was our top priority during this past year. We made over 7,000 calls to some of our most vulnerable customers and we surveyed over 2,000 tenants in October 2020 to find out what your main concerns were so that we could address these head on.

It has been a year of uncertainty, change and concern for everyone, and colleagues have risen to this challenge, going above and beyond to help each other and everyone in our communities. The Board and Executive Team continued to provide support and guidance to help us all navigate through the past year and we are extremely proud of the role everyone has played.

We'd like to thank you, our tenants, for being patient with us as we responded to the pandemic at different milestones throughout the year. You are always at the heart of everything we do and this has guided every decision we made. Our aim is always to deliver the best possible service to you and we have worked hard to ensure we do this in the safest possible way.

In this report we reflect more on this past year and how the challenges have impacted on our performance in 2020/21.

Looking ahead, we hope for a brighter future for everyone. We have recently set out our plans for the next 12 months in the final year of our seven-year Corporate Plan and we will be shortly consulting with tenants on our longer-term plans beyond 2022. We are making commitments to tackle carbon emissions in our homes and our workplace, to support the financial resilience of our customers through our additional support services and to work with customers to embrace the National Housing Federation's Together with Tenants charter.

We hope that you enjoy reading this annual report and if there is anything you would like to discuss, please get in touch.



Julie Fadden,
*Chief Executive of
South Liverpool Homes*



David Jepson,
Chair of the SLH Board

What's included in this report

This report gives you the key numbers from 2020/2021, ranging from how we have performed to an update on some of the services we have delivered to you.

In some sections of the report we will let you know how we have performed against our targets as well as how we compare with local housing associations of a similar size.

The information in this report is taken from operational performance reports and surveys we carry out throughout the year, including independent monthly tenant satisfaction surveys.



How have we performed against our targets

We set ourselves yearly targets in key operational areas.

The arrows indicate:



We have achieved our target



We have missed our target

How we compare to others

We compare ourselves to other local housing providers to give us a sense check of how we are doing. You can see how we compare to these organisations when you see the symbols below:



Top - We are performing better than other local housing providers

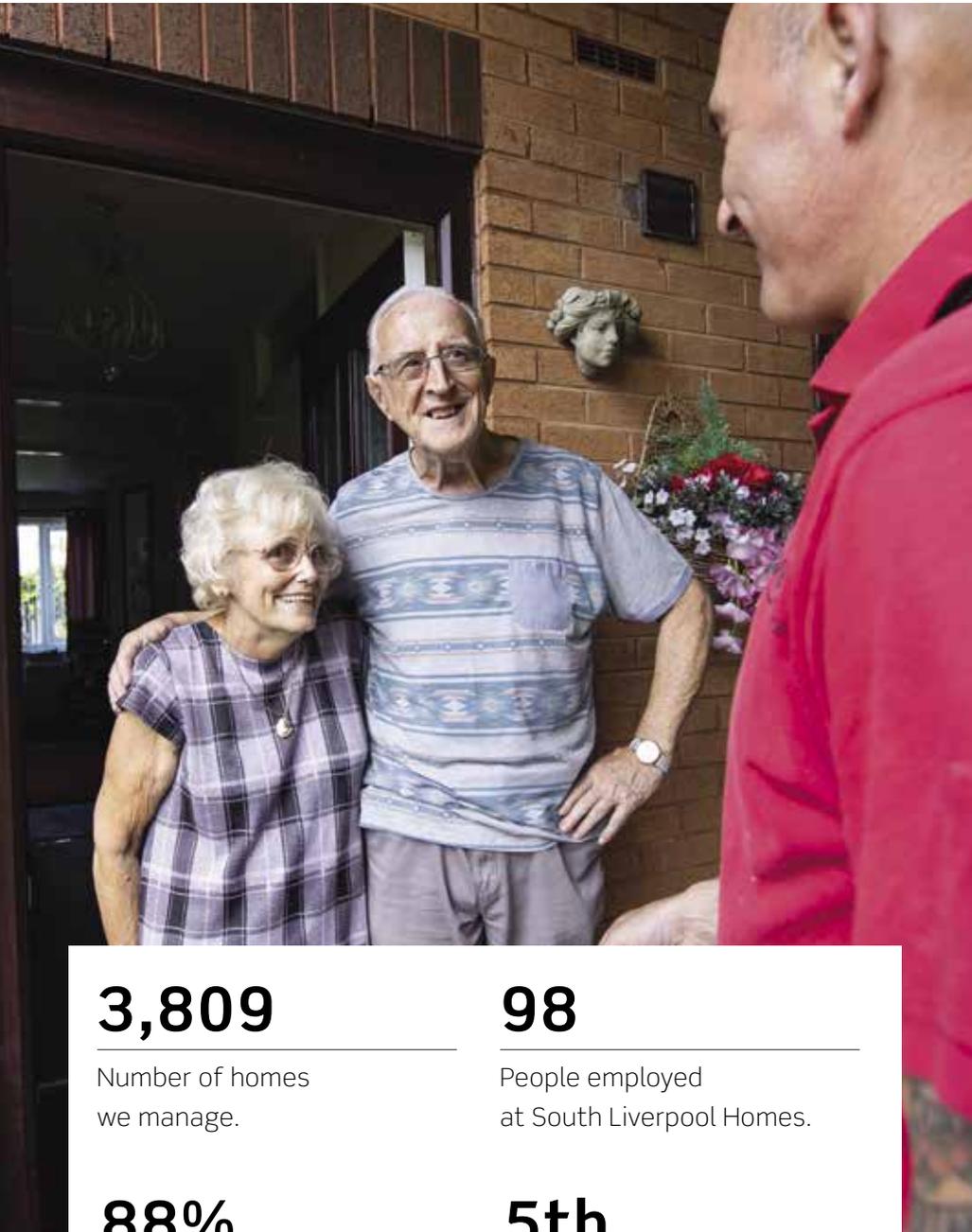


Middle - We are performing the same as other local housing providers



Lower - We are not performing as well as other local housing providers

About us



3,809

Number of homes we manage.

88%

Tenants satisfied with the overall service provided by SLH.

98

People employed at South Liverpool Homes.

5th

We came 5th in the Great Place to Work® UK's Best Workplace survey.

£23.3m

Group turnover.

Our corporate objectives

Every customer happy

Customers who are engaged, responsible, empowered and delighted with the services we provide.

Every place perfect

Thriving places where people choose to live and stay.

Every opportunity taken

Being the partner of choice.

Every penny counts

Continue to be a financially-strong, well-run and viable social business.

Every person positive

Colleagues who are engaged, empowered and deliver excellent services.

Improving your homes

We spent over £8.6m on improving your homes. This includes investment works such as new kitchens and bathrooms, day-to-day repairs and works such as external painting.



Kitchens	£1million
Boilers	£500K
Roofing	£500k
Major Adaptations	£400K
Windows	£200k

97%

Responsive repairs completed on target.

100%

Repairs appointments kept

Target 99.7%  

11,919

Day-to-day repairs carried out. The average number of repairs per home is 3.

100%

Of homes with annual gas safety check completed

Target 100%  

81%

Tenants satisfied with the way we deal with repairs and maintenance.



90%

Satisfied that SLH provide a home that is safe a secure.



We know how important our repairs service is to you and one of our biggest challenges over the past 12 months has been keeping tenants safe in their homes whilst ensuring we abided by the restrictions placed upon us. From the end of March to July 2021, we delivered an emergency-only repairs and compliance service. From August onwards we gradually restarted all our repairs and maintenance works under Covid-safe practices, working closely with tenants to ensure their safety and the safety of our operatives. Despite the restrictions, we still managed to complete an annual gas safety check in every one of our homes and we'd like to thank tenants for their co-operation with this during the last 12 months.

Although 85% of tenants are happy with our repairs service, there is still work to do to achieve the high standards we have set, and we will continue to seek feedback from tenants and work closely with Avela Home Service so that we can improve in this area. We are working with our Scrutiny Panel to review the process once a surveyor has visited a tenant's home. The aim is to improve communication and reduce the need for tenants to chase up the progress. We are looking at ways you can track the progress of repairs, from the point you report it to the point it's completed as well as talking to younger tenants to understand why they are most dissatisfied with the service.

Investing in your neighbourhoods

Everyone deserves to live in a peaceful neighbourhood and our dedicated community safety team is committed to ensuring our neighbourhoods are places where people feel happy and safe. Last year we increased our resources in this team to ensure we can proactively tackle issues that are causing you the most concern.

This has resulted in a significant increase in satisfaction about how we handle anti-social behaviour cases (up 15% from last year) and increased satisfaction with the outcome of these cases (up 10% from last year).

89%

Are happy with their neighbourhood as a place to live.





92%

Tenants happy with how we handled their anti-social behaviour case.

Target 96%  

96%

Tenants happy with the outcome of their anti-social behavior case

Target 94%  

365

Cases were reported to us, and 309 cases were successfully resolved.

In the last 12 months, we have supported 224 witnesses and victims of anti-social behaviour. Sadly, we have seen an increase in noise nuisance and domestic violence and we are working closely with tenants and local partners to address these issues.

It's pleasing to hear that more tenants are happy with their neighbourhood as a place to live. We have a newly-formed community investment team here at SLH who work hard to ensure tenants can get involved with SLH and their community. They lead on areas such as health and wellbeing, engagement, employment, enterprise and environment which all contribute to a happier and healthier community.

A recent survey told us that over 300 tenants would like to get more involved, with a monthly update of events, activities and volunteering opportunities sent out to all those that are interested.

Supporting tenants

Supporting tenants with their health, wellbeing and financial difficulties has never been more important than in the last 12 months. The pandemic has heightened issues with isolation, mental health and money concerns and we made it our priority to address these issues through the additional services we provide; including benefits and energy advice, tenancy support, employment support and our community garden, Grow Speke.

258

Tenants accessed the tenancy sustainability service.

128

Tenants moved on from the service and now live independently.

2,010

Tenants have received support from our benefits and energy advice service.

£1.5m

Additional income secured for tenants through our benefits and energy advice team.

859

Tenants are signed up to our community shop, The Market Place.

222

Customers received employment support through Reach, 10 went onto find paid employment.

2,293

Tenants took part in the Everyone Together surveys.





Our benefits and energy advice service saw an unprecedented number of people asking for help with benefits, an increase of 93% on the previous year. We also issued 298 foodbank vouchers to tenants who were struggling and made over 7,800 calls to vulnerable tenants who requested a regular wellbeing call.

Grow Speke has been a haven for some of our tenants and volunteers, many going along when we could open it up to the community again, to help reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness. As the world came to a halt, the garden continued to flourish, growing an abundance of fruit and vegetables which were regularly packed up and delivered to the most vulnerable people in our communities. We would like to thank our volunteers who work hard on behalf of the community to make Grow Speke the success it is.

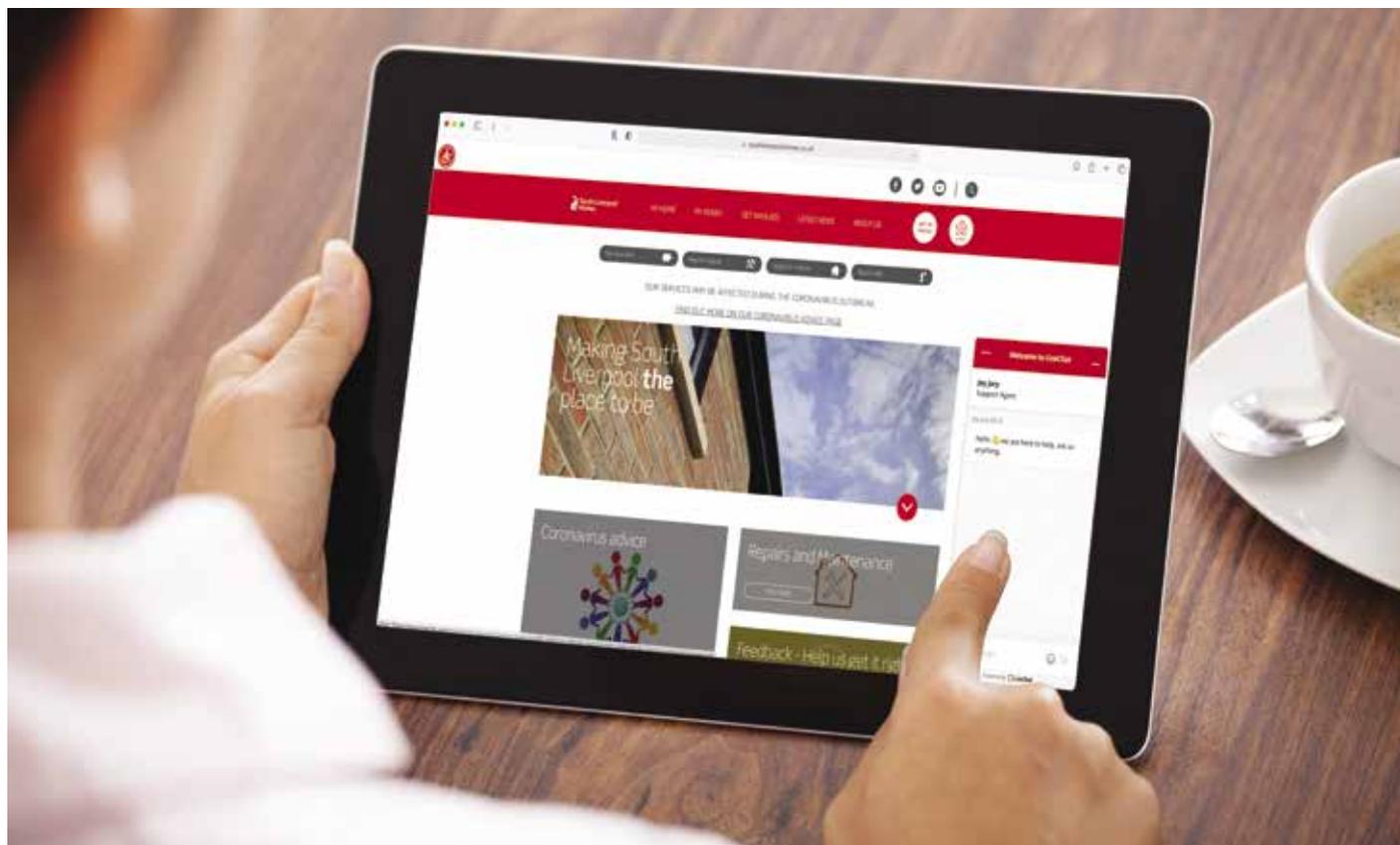
Unfortunately, we had to make the decision to temporarily close our community shop, The Market Place, for the safety of our customers, volunteers and colleagues. Despite its closure, we continued to support tenants with their food bills as much as possible; any surplus food in the shop was distributed

to the local community through ourselves and our partners. We continued to support food waste charity, FareShare, by donating our weekly food allocation to local organisations, including Five for Families and The Place to Be.

Employment support has become a lifeline to many over the last 12 months. Although we had to make the difficult decision to close the doors to our employability hub, Reach, we continued to offer employment and training advice virtually as well as sending out regular emails with the latest job opportunities to those who signed up.

We delivered year two of our Everyone Together campaign, an annual survey where we aim to speak to every single tenant to find out their experience of living in our homes and neighbourhoods. This year's campaign saw us speak to 61% of tenants and signpost them to our services to help them navigate these challenging times. Questions this year centered around finding out how Covid-19 had affected them, how they would prefer to contact SLH, what their support needs were and to promote access to SLH services.

Getting in touch and customer feedback



78%

Are satisfied with the way we handle complaints.

Target 90%



145

Complaints received.

2,373

Followers on Facebook.
11% increase compared to last year.

4,575

Followers on Twitter.
6% increase compared to last year.

260,153

Views on our website.
11% increase compared to last year.

25,381

Customer contacts. This includes mySLH, Facebook messages, emails, text messages and webchat.

2,400

Tenants registered on mySLH with the majority of tenants using it to report a repair or send us a message.

601

Tenants surveyed as part of our new monthly tenant satisfaction surveys.

79%

Satisfied that SLH listen to views and act upon them.

Target 96%

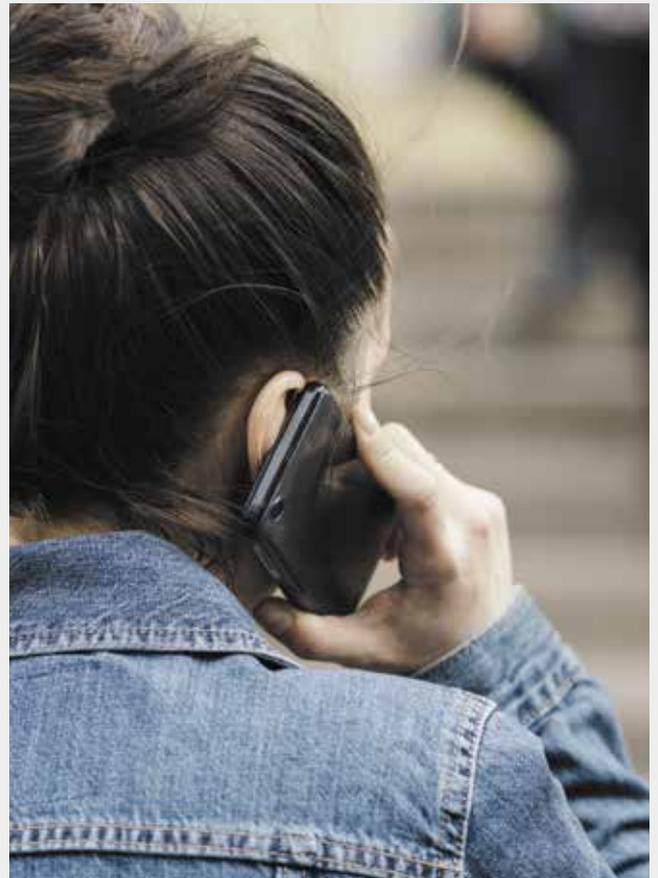


In 2020/21 we have seen a huge increase in customers using our digital services compared to the previous year. This shift has inevitably been brought on by our office being closed, with a 76% increase in the use of our range of digital services such as mySLH, webchat, emails, social media and text messaging.

Since launching our new web chat, Chat Bot, in August 2020, it has helped provide answers to over 2,700 queries from customers. Registrations for mySLH, our online customer portal, have increased by 36%. Over the next 12 months, we are working to further improve our digital offer and provide automation and self-service facilities for our tenants and customers who want a 24/7 response.

We welcome all customer feedback, whether that's complaints, compliments or suggestions. Of the 145 complaints we received last year, five went to stage two of our customer feedback process and no complaints were escalated to the Housing Ombudsman.

In February 2021, we launched a multimedia campaign to promote and encourage customers to provide feedback on our services, as well as outlining the process to make a complaint. This demonstrates our commitment to listening and learning from your experiences with us.



Tenant satisfaction surveys

Earlier in the year, we introduced a new way to measure tenant satisfaction. Instead of carrying out a satisfaction survey for all tenants to complete every two years, we have implemented a real-time approach to collecting this data so that we can identify areas for improvement on a more regular basis.

This means that we survey a small number of tenants every month and this, coupled with our Everyone Together campaign, gives us a rich source of intelligence about how our customers feel about us, their homes and where they live. More details on the Everyone Together survey on page 9.

In 2020/21 we surveyed 601 tenants using this real time approach and the results of these surveys are detailed throughout the report.

New homes for customers

Over the last 12 months, it has taken us much longer than normal to let our homes to new tenants once a previous tenant has left. Between March 2020 and June 2020, restrictions imposed upon us meant that we did not let any homes. When we did let homes, we looked to do things differently so that we could start to let them in a safe and secure way. We introduced digital sign ups with customers which has proved to be a more efficient way of letting our homes and we will continue with this online approach beyond this year. We also let many of our homes through the City's Homelessness Reduction Project, resulting in over 1,500 people being rehoused across Liverpool.

87%

Are satisfied with the quality of their new home.

Target - 96%



1,192

People have applied for a new home with us.

2,124

People on our waiting list.

230

Homes let to new tenants

39 days

On average it took to relet homes to new tenants.

Target - 15 days





We have continued to build much-needed new homes during the last 12 months. We are coming close to completing our 118-home Greenway development in Speke with over 100 tenants moving in so far. One of these homes has changed the life of one family forever after it was purpose-built with specialist equipment and space to cater for the needs of their 10-year-old daughter who needs a wheelchair to get around.

Work also continues on the refurbishment of three historic Grade II listed cottages at Hale Road in Speke, which will be surrounded by 17 new bungalows. We completed our development at 18 Livingston Drive which comprises of 22 homes for shared ownership and for sale close to Sefton Park.

We have worked closely with local housing providers and Liverpool City Council to house homeless people, so that the most vulnerable could secure a home during the pandemic. The project has helped the city to secure £746k funding to continue to end homelessness, collectively providing over 1,000 individuals and families with permanent furnished homes across the city.

71

New homes were built

45

Homes for affordable rent

17

Homes for shared ownership.

5

Homes for outright sale.

4

For rent to buy

The numbers

Our Board leads our approach to value for money and we ensure that they are clear on the costs of running SLH so that they can make the right decisions on how we spend our money. This is so that we have the right balance between maintaining your homes, building new ones, offering additional support services as well as continuing to maintain a happy and healthy workforce.

£926,718k

Arrears owed by current and former tenants. This includes rent, service charges, chargeable repairs and court costs.

Target £945,746 

91%

Tenants think their rent is value for money.

83%

Tenants think that their service charge is value for money. Service charges are the amount that tenants pay to cover the cost of services we provide to communal buildings, such as apartment blocks.

13

Homes bought through Right to Buy and Right to Acquire.

£231,060

Savings across the group. This is a reduction in the amount of money or time needed to complete a task or project.

Target £300,000 

14%

Surplus to reinvest back into our communities.

When we set our budget for 2020/21, it was impossible to predict the changes and uncertainty that the last 12 months have brought. The long-term impact of Covid-19 on our financial position is still unknown, however we do know that in the short term, a move to colleagues working from home has resulted in savings on the cost of running SLH. We are looking to see how we will adapt our ways of working in the future, to capitalise on these savings whilst continuing to provide the best services for our customers.

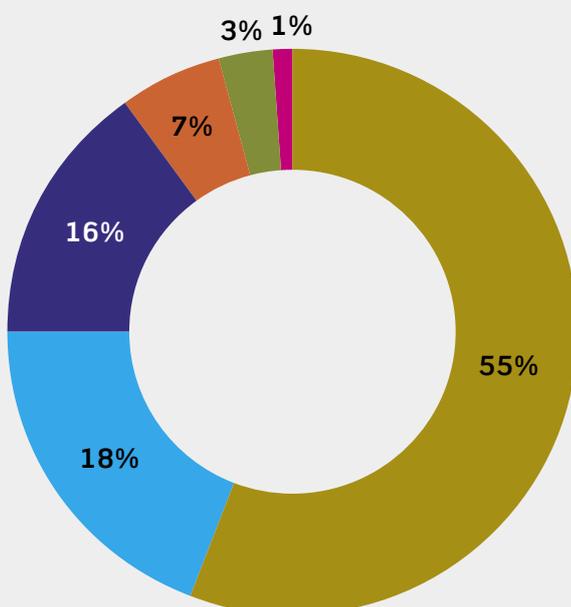
Considering the extremely difficult year, it is pleasing that our rent arrears target has been met. This is debt owed to us by tenants who have not kept up-to-date with their rent payments. The rent arrears figure includes money owed to us by our current tenants (85% of arrears) and money owed to us by tenants who no longer live in one of our homes (15% of arrears).

Our income team works hard to recover this debt and reduced rent arrears means more money to spend on your homes, such as improvement programmes, and in your community, so that you can enjoy living in a happy and safe environment.

This year we have also continued to review our approach to service charges, embedding more robust processes and improving the transparency of communication around charges so that it's clearer to tenants what they are paying for.

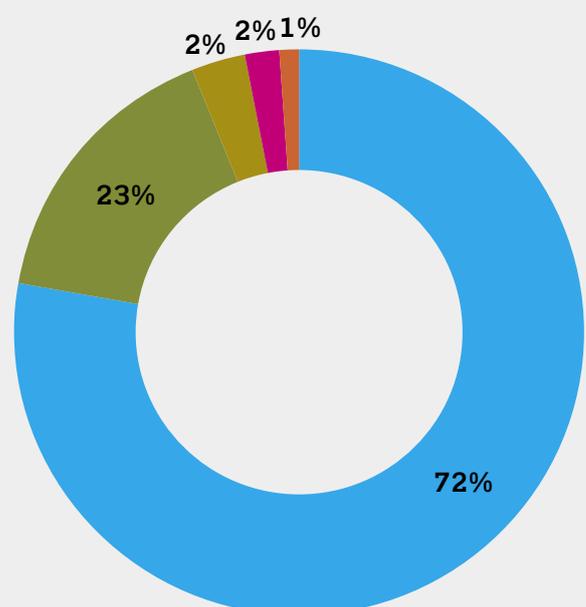
What your rent is spent on

- 55%** Maintaining and investment in homes
- 18%** Staff costs
- 16%** Overheads (running costs)
- 7%** Interest
- 3%** Community investment
- 1%** Other costs



Where we receive our money from

- 72%** Rent from homes
- 23%** Grants, sale of homes and other income
- 2%** Supported housing rent
- 2%** General needs service charges
- 1%** Supported housing service charges





Get in Touch



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Take a look on social media



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Take a look at Our Journey to 2022 Year 7 for more information about our future plans.