

Scottish Social Housing Charter and Annual Report 2015/16



Introduction

This years' report shows West of Scotland Housing Association (WSHA) tenants how we performed against outcomes set out by the Scottish Housing Regulator. We also highlight our annual customer satisfaction feedback and areas of success and planned improvements. Encouragingly, there has been progress in many areas since 2014/15 and we will continue to ensure our services improve.

What is the Scottish Social Housing Charter?

The Scottish Social Housing Charter was introduced in April 2012 and it requires that Registered Social Landlords demonstrate how they perform against a number of outcomes.

What are the requirements of the Charter?

The Charter contains 15 outcomes and standards that are relevant to WSHA.

How do we report our performance?

The Scottish Housing Regulator publishes a report about our performance on their website  scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk

Scottish Housing Network

The Scottish Housing Network (SHN) is a benchmarking group of Registered Social Landlords in Scotland. This allows us to compare our performance with that of 84 other Registered Social Landlords across Scotland. It is very positive to see that we performed above the SHN average in many key areas.

Colour key

Performance declined since 2014/15

Performance improved since 2014/15

Performance the same as 2014/15

Charter indicator

Outcome 1, 2, 3

- Equalities
- Communication
- Participation

Outcome 4, 5

- Quality of housing
- Repairs and maintenance and improvements

Outcome 6

- Estate management, anti-social behaviour neighbour nuisance and tenancy disputes



The customer/landlord relationship



Housing quality and maintenance



Neighbourhood and community

Scottish Social Housing Charter

Access to housing and support

Getting value for money rents and service charges



Outcome 7, 8, 9, 10, 11

- Housing options
- Access to social housing
- Tenancy sustainment
- Homeless people



Outcome 13, 14, 15

- Value for money
- Rent and services

About WSHA

We provide high-quality, affordable homes to **3,384** tenants throughout the West of Scotland. The income from rent and service charges for these homes is **£13.4m** per year. Our homes range from 1 bedroom tenement flats to 4 bedroom homes with gardens. We provide homes that meet the diverse needs of our tenants including amenity and sheltered housing.



Welcome from Chief Executive



I'm passionate about making a positive difference to tenants and communities and delivering a quality service that reflects their needs. Since joining WSHA in October 2015, I have been working with staff to identify what is working well and what we could do better. It is reassuring that there have been a number of improvements such as increased levels of tenant satisfaction with the Association and the quality of their homes and also a marked reduction in the time taken to relet homes.

I am committed to ensuring we take action to address areas where we could do better, in particular with satisfaction with our repairs service and factoring service, and work is already underway to address this.

During 2015/16 we celebrated our 50th Anniversary, 50 years of renovating and building new homes and providing good quality housing services to our tenants. In our 50th year there were a number of important milestones. We welcomed 98 new tenants in Broomhouse, Glasgow and we began building much needed amenity homes in Camlachie, Glasgow. We also welcomed a new Corporate Management team, the members of which are committed to improving services and using their many years of experience to ensure tenants receive the quality services expected from a vibrant and forward thinking organisation. Changes to our Management Committee were finalised in October 2015 with the appointment of our new Chairperson, Ruth Simpson, and our committee was further strengthened with the addition of several new members who bring a wide range of skills and expertise to an already strong committee.

Going forward in 2016/17 we will build on past successes and achievements by focusing on improving customer service, finding out more about what our tenants need from us, improving the quality of our existing homes and embarking on a new build development programme. I am interested in hearing what our tenants have to say about the services we provide and I'm looking forward to getting out into local communities to meet with as many tenants as possible.

Our tenants are at the heart of everything we do, we will investigate alternative ways of delivering services and make sure they have every opportunity to influence the services we deliver to ensure their needs are met.

Lynne Donnelly

Chief Executive

Message from the Chairperson



As Chairperson of WSHA, I am pleased that there have been improvements in a number of areas during 2015/16. Our focus is to provide tenants with the best possible service and it is clear steps have been taken to achieve this. I am confident that WSHA has a committed and hard-working team in place to continue with this progress and also address any areas where there is still work to be done.

This Association is committed to providing outstanding customer service and does this not only by providing high-quality homes, but also through the delivery of a number of additional support services that aim to improve the health and wellbeing of tenants. Many of these services are delivered via our charitable subsidiary, Willowacre Trust.

I hope you find this report useful and recognise the commitment of WSHA in delivering improved services and continuing to work tirelessly to ensure customers receive services that meet, or exceed, their needs.

Please get in touch if you have any questions or feedback about this report – your views are always welcome.

Ruth Simpson

Chairperson

The Customer landlord relationship

We are committed to developing a positive relationship with our tenants and customers to ensure we deliver outstanding customer service. This relationship is developed in a number of ways including:

- Meeting the needs of our tenants
- Effective communication
- Meaningful tenant involvement
- Resolving complaints

	2014/15	2015/16	SHN average
Tenants satisfied with overall service	90%	94%	90%

We are pleased that tenant satisfaction levels have improved since 2014/15, however we recognise there are still a number of areas where we need to improve performance and we are taking steps to address this.

We monitor customer satisfaction through our Annual Satisfaction Survey and ongoing monthly surveys to get tenants' views about their experiences when dealing with us about a range of issues.

The analysis we receive allows us to improve and develop our services. We have appointed an independent company to carry out these ongoing surveys for us to ensure transparency.



Meeting the needs of our tenants

We strive to meet the wide ranging needs of our tenants and shape our services to make sure everyone is treated fairly and has the same opportunities and access, regardless of their circumstances and background.

Key facts

	2014/15	2015/16
% of tenants who felt they had been treated fairly by WSHA	87%	87%
% of tenants who found it easy to deal with WSHA	84%	89%

We let **59 properties to statutory homeless referrals**

We built **2 wheelchair adapted properties**

We let **61 properties to supported tenancies including sheltered units**

- We work in partnership with other agencies to provide a range of support services that promote independent living.
- We provide a range of housing for older people with varying levels of support.
- We employ an Older Persons Coordinator to ensure we support vulnerable older tenants including those suffering from social isolation whilst helping to develop educational and creative activities.
- We provide starter packs for new tenants where appropriate e.g. younger tenants with first tenancies.

- We installed and coordinated 77 medical adaptations to our tenants' homes with a total value of £203,000 which we secured from Scottish Government funding. These adaptations are vital to ensuring tenants are able to continue to live independently within their own home and community.
- It is particularly important that we recognise the serious homelessness problem in Scotland and we have arrangements with local authorities in which we have homes to ensure statutory homeless applicants are given fair access to vacant properties.
- Many of our older applicants need the security and support that sheltered accommodation offers. We have sheltered housing in Glasgow, Lanarkshire and Ayrshire.

In action...

We successfully rehoused a couple in one of our sheltered properties after coordinating an adaptation to the home.

The property had a bath installed which would have prevented the couple accepting the house due to a medical condition. We worked with their Occupational Therapist to secure a referral which allowed us to fund the installation of a wet floor shower.

This small adaptation meant the couple were able to accept the house which has made a significant difference to their quality of life.



Have you recently changed your phone number? Please get in touch and let us know.

Effective communication

We continually review how we communicate with tenants to ensure we provide clear information and make it easy for them to give us their feedback which can help improve services.

Key facts

	2014/15	2015/16	SHN Average
% of tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed about services and outcomes	95%	98%	92%

We received **78,916 telephone calls**

Over **800 likes/followers** on Facebook and Twitter

We provide a number of ways for our tenants to get in touch with us:

- Telephone
- Calling in at our offices
- Visits to tenants' homes
- Email
- Website
- Social media (Facebook and Twitter)

We provide current and relevant information to our tenants in a number of ways including our tenant newsletter, the Westworld, and via our website and social media. To ensure we communicate effectively we regularly seek the views of tenants. In our 2015/16 Annual Satisfaction Survey, tenants were asked to identify their communication preferences and habits. This information will be used in the coming months to shape our communications strategy.

How we involve tenants

We think it is essential to involve tenants in making decisions that affect them and their communities. Their views are important to us and we continually encourage feedback to give us a greater understanding of the needs of our tenants and communities so we can deliver services that meet their needs.

Key facts

	2014/15	2015/16	SHN average
% of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in their landlord's decision making process	95%	98%	83%

Our Management Committee is made up of **15 members** including **8 tenant members**

Our Tenant Advisory Group has around **20 tenant members**

We provide support to **5 community residents groups**

We offer a number of ways for tenants to get involved, including:

Management Committee

Decides the policy and direction of the Association. It is made up of volunteers and has a mix of tenants and others who have specialist knowledge that they can bring to the Association.

Tenant Advisory Group (TAG)

A group of around 20 tenants who are consulted on all policy reviews, legislative changes, proposed amendments to working practices and any significant issues affecting tenants.

Rate your Estate (RYE) Assessor

RYE is a tenant-led inspection of the condition of our neighbourhoods where we have homes. Tenant volunteers carry out regular visits to assess the quality of services like grounds maintenance and stair cleaning using a simple scoring method. The results are used by the Association to make any necessary improvements.

Community Residents' Groups

Members from the Tenant Advisory Group are at the forefront of this work, with opportunities for wider tenant involvement as the project rolls out to local communities. This may be in the form of organising community events or acting on behalf of the wider community to provide feedback to the Association.

Going forward

In June 2016, we started working with the Tenants Information Service (TIS) and a group of tenant volunteers to review how we currently engage and work with tenants. Members of the Tenant Action Group are at the forefront of this work, with opportunities for wider tenant involvement as the project rolls out to local communities.

This review will include speaking to other Housing Associations to learn and share best practice and seek the views of our own tenants about how we can best communicate with them, keep them informed and use their opinions to help shape our services.

Resolving complaints

We value complaints and use information from them to help us improve our services. We try our best to resolve every issue to the satisfaction of the tenant and learn from our mistakes to provide a better service.

Key facts

	2014/15	2015/16
Number of complaints received	130	206
Complaints responded to within timescale	75%	177 (86%)
Complaints upheld	66	114 (56%)
Largest number of complaints	79 - repairs	142 - repairs

In 2015/16 we carried out **12,716 repairs** and received **142 complaints**

During 2015/16 we made changes to the way we record and monitor the complaints we receive and this has had a positive impact as we have better information about the improvements we need to put in place to make sure our tenants receive a quality service.

By focusing on complaints, we improved the time it takes to respond to the concerns our tenants raise and we have made several changes to the way we work, please see right for examples. We welcome any feedback, whether positive or negative, as this lets us know what is working or where changes are needed.

You said...

Timescales for carrying out day-to-day repairs took too long

Delays experienced in planned and major repairs programmes

Lack of up to date information about when jobs would be carried out

Trees and bushes not being trimmed or cut often enough

We did...

New repairs response categories have been introduced to improve completion times for jobs

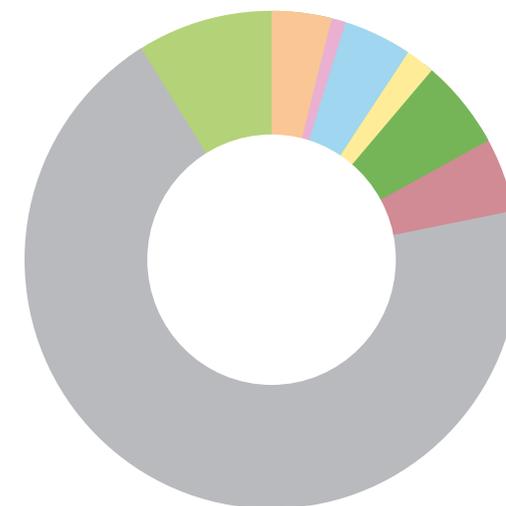
Full major repairs programme in place for 2016/17

Repairs staff can now electronically track contractor whereabouts to update tenants

Enhanced tree management schedule agreed and areas being prioritised by Housing Officers

Complaints categories

Repairs	142
Staff	19
Ground Maintenance	12
Rent	10
Estate Management	9
Allocations	8
Factoring	4
Anti-social	2

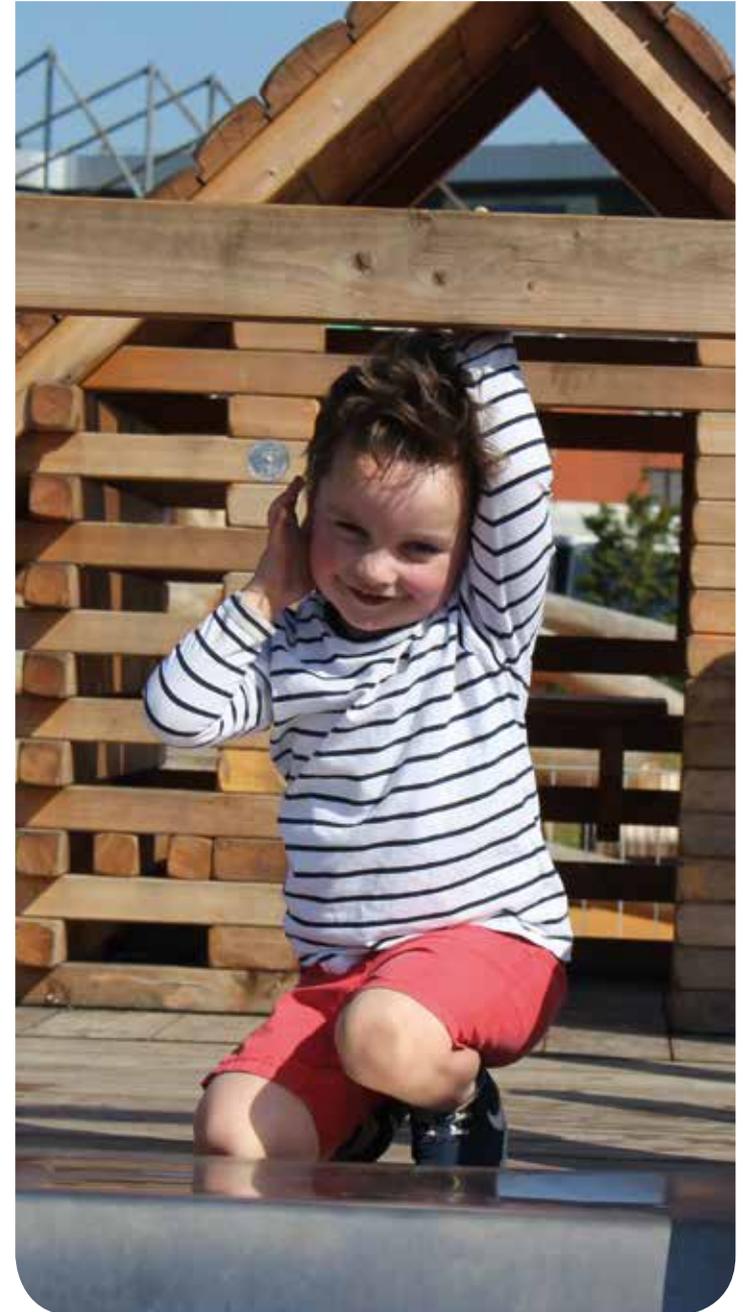


The quality of our homes

We are required to maintain our homes to meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS). However, we continually invest in our homes to ensure they meet, and even exceed, the expectations and needs of our tenants. This is achieved by carrying out day-to-day repairs along with the delivery of a structured programme of planned and major repairs.

Key facts

	2014/15	2015/16	SHN average
% of stock meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard	91.6%	93%	93%
% of tenants satisfied with the quality of their homes	83%	86%	86%
% of tenants satisfied with the standard of their home when moving in	93%	96%	90%
Gas safety			
% of annual gas safety inspections carried out	100%	100%	99.9%



Key facts

	2014/15	2015/16	SHN average
Repairs satisfaction			
Average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs	4.7 hours	3.2 hours	3.4 hours
Average length of time taken to complete non-emergency repairs	4 days	4.1 days	5.7 days
% of reactive repairs carried out in the last year, completed right first time	93%	92%	92%
Repairs appointment system - number of appointments kept	94%	95%	94%
% of tenants who have had repairs and maintenance carried out in last 12 months and are satisfied with the service	77%	76%	90%

£2.4 million investment in major and cyclical repairs which includes new kitchens, boilers and windows

£1.9 million spent on **12,716 reactive repairs**

Increased satisfaction

We are pleased to see that tenant satisfaction has increased in relation to the quality of their home. Our team has been working closely with appointed contractor, Mears, to improve the standard of homes we offer to new tenants. This includes changes to the void specification such as our installation of an over-bath shower in all properties where one is not in place. We look forward to continuing working with Mears to further improve the service we offer to new tenants.

We can do better

During 2015/16 we recognised that we could do better with regards to the repairs service we provide and have taken steps to improve this. In August 2016 we appointed Carillion to deliver our day-to-day repairs contract. This essential contract builds on our existing relationship with Carillion who provide a high level of customer service delivering our planned maintenance programme.

Tenants will benefit from improved emergency and non-emergency response times and the introduction of two hour appointment slots for internal repairs. The new target for emergencies will be to make safe within 4 hours and for non-emergencies it is 7 days. A new computer system will be introduced that will allow WSHA staff to track the progress of repairs to answer tenant enquiries. There will also be ongoing service improvements being identified via tenant feedback during repair post-inspections. We are confident that the partnership we have established with Carillion will lead to an increase in tenant satisfaction with the quality of our repairs service.

Neighbourhood and community



Our tenants live in diverse communities across west central Scotland which we aim to keep safe and well maintained. We have developed a strategy for the general management of our communities however we also aim to meet the specific needs of each community.

Key facts

	2014/15	2015/16	SHN Average
Number of cases of anti-social behaviour reported	328	277	
Number of cases resolved within locally agreed targets	285 (87%)	255 (92%)	87.5%
% of tenants satisfied with the management of the neighbourhood they live in	90.5%	92%	86%

Working in partnership

A key element of our success in effective estate management is to work in partnership with other service providers in the area such as police, local authorities and third sector organisations. This partnership working allows us, and the other organisations, to deliver services that make a real difference to communities.

Anti-social behaviour

We cannot resolve anti-social behaviour issues without incidents being reported to us and it is vital that we continue to build the trust and confidence of our communities so that we can help make their neighbourhood safer.

We use a system called Streetwise to record, monitor and resolve anti-social behaviour issues or to refer issues on to other agencies.

It is positive that we have witnessed a reduction in the number of anti-social behaviour incidents along with an increase in the percentage of cases we have resolved within the agreed targets. We take anti-social behaviour seriously and work closely with partner organisations to resolve any issues.





Rate your Estate (RYE)

The quality of the environment is a key indicator of how well we maintain our communities and it is encouraging to see an increase in the number of tenants who are satisfied with the management of the neighbourhood they live in.

One way we assess the quality of the environment is through our Rate Your Estate (RYE) Initiative. RYE involves a group of Tenant Inspectors visiting our housing stock on regular programmed visits to assess the standards of services provided, for example, grounds maintenance and stair cleaning.

Last year the Tenant Inspectors visited 23 areas where we have homes and assessed 82% as being very good or good. Their findings are used to help us identify where improvements are needed.

Building communities

We are constantly seeking new opportunities that will allow us to provide a service to more tenants and make a difference to communities. In October 2015 we began construction on phase 10 of development in Camlachie, Glasgow. The £2.4 million development consists of 18 Amenity Cottage Flats designed for older people with two of the ground floor flats being designated for Wheelchair users. The project, funded by Glasgow City Council and WSHA, also includes a community car park and was completed in May 2016.

In November 2015, we completed the transfer of Broomhouse Housing Association which sees us providing a housing service to an additional 98 homes. This welcome addition to our stock adds to the variety of type of houses we can offer our existing tenants and applicants.

Access to Housing and support

We want to make it easy for people to apply to live in one of our homes. We try to provide clear information about the housing options available to new applicants and existing tenants. We actively support existing tenants to ensure they get the support they need to remain in their home.

Key facts

	2014/15	2015/16	SHN average
% of new tenants sustaining tenancy for more than 12 months	92%	92%	88%
% of properties abandoned	0.6%	0.7%	0.61%
Average number of days to let properties	48	37	32
Applicants rehoused from own waiting list	160	143	
Applicants rehoused from transfer list	39	23	
Applicants rehoused from local authority nomination	27	28	



Performing better

We are pleased to see an improvement in the time we take to let our homes. This was the result of us proactively making changes to the letting process and the appointment of Mears to work on our void properties. Reducing the time to let our homes means that applicants have a reduced waiting time to enjoy their new home.

Housing Advice Service

The introduction of our Housing Advice Service allows all applicants to have a face-to-face interview with a member of our housing team. This is to ensure all applicants have the chance to have an open discussion about their prospects of rehousing with advice being given on realistic options. This service is available to new and existing applicants.

Going forward

All our houses are allocated through our Allocation Policy and in 2016/17 we will carry out a review of the policy, taking account of changes in legislation and the needs of our applicants. Once this is complete, the details of any changes will be circulated to all tenants.

Value for Money

Tenants, owners and other customers receive services that provide value for money for the rent and other charges they pay.

Key facts

	2014/15	2015/16	SHN average
% of tenants who felt their rents represents good value for money	81%	93%	78%
% of rent lost through properties being empty in the last year	0.85	0.75	0.92%
Rent collected from tenants as a % of total rent due in the reporting year	96.7%	103%	99%
Gross rent arrears	£721,897	£545,189	
Rent arrears as % of rent due	5.08%	4.39%	4.48%
% of owners satisfied with factoring service	74%	56%	64%

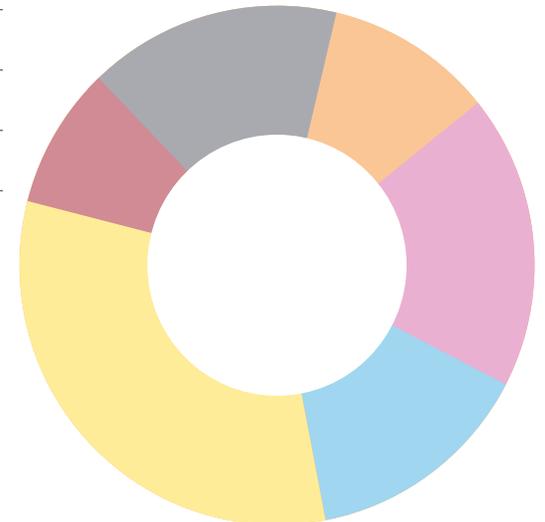
The total income due for our rents and service charges in 2015/16 was **£13.4m**.

Factoring service

We are aware that satisfaction levels with the factoring service do not meet our required standards and we are committed to taking action so every owner feels they are getting a high-quality service. We have recently completed a full review of the factoring service we deliver to owners. The purpose of the review was to evaluate the type, quality and cost of delivering an effective service and to consider how the Association can make improvements. There will be a number of changes implemented over the coming months which owner occupiers will be informed about. One of the first changes was a slight reduction in the Management Fee. Owner occupiers will receive an updated Owners Handbook and our website has been updated with relevant information and contact details.

How every £1 is spent

Housing stock charge	32p
Repairs	19p
Staff costs	15p
Overheads	13p
Transfer to reserves	12p
Loan interest	9p



Value for money

The reduction in gross rent arrears means we can reinvest this income to deliver improved services to tenants. One way we have achieved an increase in the rent collected is through our Income and Welfare Rights Teams who work hard to help tenants who are having trouble paying their rent. They offer advice and practical support and work with staff across the Association to help tenants get the welfare benefits they are entitled to.

In 2015/16, our Welfare Rights Team secured **£491,609** in backdated welfare benefits owed to tenants.

Our Welfare Rights Team recently supported couple, Alison and Jim*, who got in touch to get some advice about their benefits. Following some investigation by the team it was discovered that Alison was not receiving her state pension and an application was made which resulted in a backdate of over **£4,000**. They also received a savings credit of **£15.83** per week and an underlying carers premium of **£34.60** per week.



*Please note names have been changed to protect identity.



Making a difference

The Association is committed to making a difference to the lives of tenants and communities. Our dedicated Regeneration Services Team deliver a number of support services focused on the following themes - health and wellbeing; employment, training and education; tackling poverty; financial inclusion; community safety and environment. Many of these services are delivered via our charitable subsidiary, Willowacre Trust.

Key facts

287 people attended football, dance or boxing classes as part of the Urban Stars programme

82 starter packs provided to tenants

Our Christmas activities programme was enjoyed by **785 tenants**

189 tenants made use of the Handy Person service

96 vulnerable people received Christmas hampers

Our Money and Energy Advice Service provides support to **632 tenants**

44 children living in our households received free books via the Imagination Library

79 events held at our community centre with 2,715 attendances

Some of the support services provided include:

- Handy Person Service
- Volunteering Service
- Money and Energy Advice Service
- Energy Advice Services
- Older People's Service
- Emergency Food Aid
- Starter Packs
- Youth Diversionary Projects
- Imagination Library





Giving tenants a good start...

Jonathan*, 23 moved into one of our homes as he had to leave the family home due to overcrowding. This was the first time he had lived alone so had no household goods and did not have the income to afford to buy anything. Our Welfare Rights Team supported Jonathan to apply to the Scottish Welfare Fund to provide him with a starter pack with a range of household items such as a microwave, a toaster and kettle to help him move in.

Jonathan acknowledged that without a Starter Pack it would have been much more difficult to move in as he wouldn't have been able to cook. He thanked the Association for their support in helping him in his first tenancy.

Christmas activities programme

In 2015/16 we delivered an extensive Christmas activities programme for tenants and household members. The programme aimed to:

- Provide new opportunities for tenants and household members by spending meaningful time taking part in fun activities with family and friends at Christmas
- Provide access to activities that families may not have the income to experience
- Enhance health and wellbeing through activities that contained elements of physical activity and healthy eating

WSHA is delighted that nearly 800 tenants enjoyed the festivities and feedback was very positive:

"I'm a single parent with two kids and only work part-time so it's too expensive for us to do things like this normally. Thank you WSHA."

"We would not have been able to take part without WSHA. It made a massive difference to us at this time of year."

"I'm on benefits so things are difficult for me, especially after Christmas when there's not much money left... it was really good to get out."

"We were super excited to find out we got tickets to the Carnival and couldn't wait to tell the kids. We normally can't afford to take them."

*Please note names have been changed to protect identity.

Help when it's needed the most...

Background

Betty*, heard about our Money Advice Service via a leaflet we posted through her door. She is an older person who had been recently diagnosed with a cognitive disability due to an accident which resulted in memory loss. Unfortunately, Betty had a high level of credit card and personal loan debts which she did not want her family to know about as she feared it would be a burden to them.

What we did

Betty received both energy and money advice from our team which included one-to-one appointments, 16 phone calls and negotiations with creditors which totalled 36 hours of staff time over 131 days.

Due to her medical situation the team were able to negotiate for all interest and charges on two credit cards to remain frozen for the life of the cards, along with no set arrangement for monthly payments and a guarantee that her accounts would never be sold or passed to any other debt collector or team. Previous points on her credit card statement were also discovered and a £10 Argos voucher was sent to Miss Smith, this allowed her to buy a family birthday present.

With support from the service Betty also gained the confidence to talk to her family about her financial situation.



The Outcome

Energy Advisor:

- Updated current meter reading which showed a credit balance
- Repayment plan set up to a more manageable amount

Money Advice Officer:

- Approx. £5,000 of projected interest saved over two credit cards by freezing interest and charges
- Supported to build a stronger relationship with her family
- Referred to advocacy service for ongoing support services
- Budgeting advice given

Betty said; *“Before your visit I felt like I was in a black hole, I feel much more positive about the future now. I’m very grateful for all your help.”*

*Please note names have been changed to protect identity.

Our people

Management Committee Members

Ruth Simpson (Chair)

Ann Reid (Vice-Chair)

Clare Newton

Colin Menabney

Ian McGibbon

Rab Morrow

Katie McLeod

Ena Hutchison

Jim Hayton

Elaine Davidson

Robert Higgins

Paul Macaninch

Lynn Clark

Kelly Adams

Michelle Meldrum

Corporate Management Team

Lynne Donnelly

Chief Executive

Stewart Gibb

Director of Housing and
Customer Services

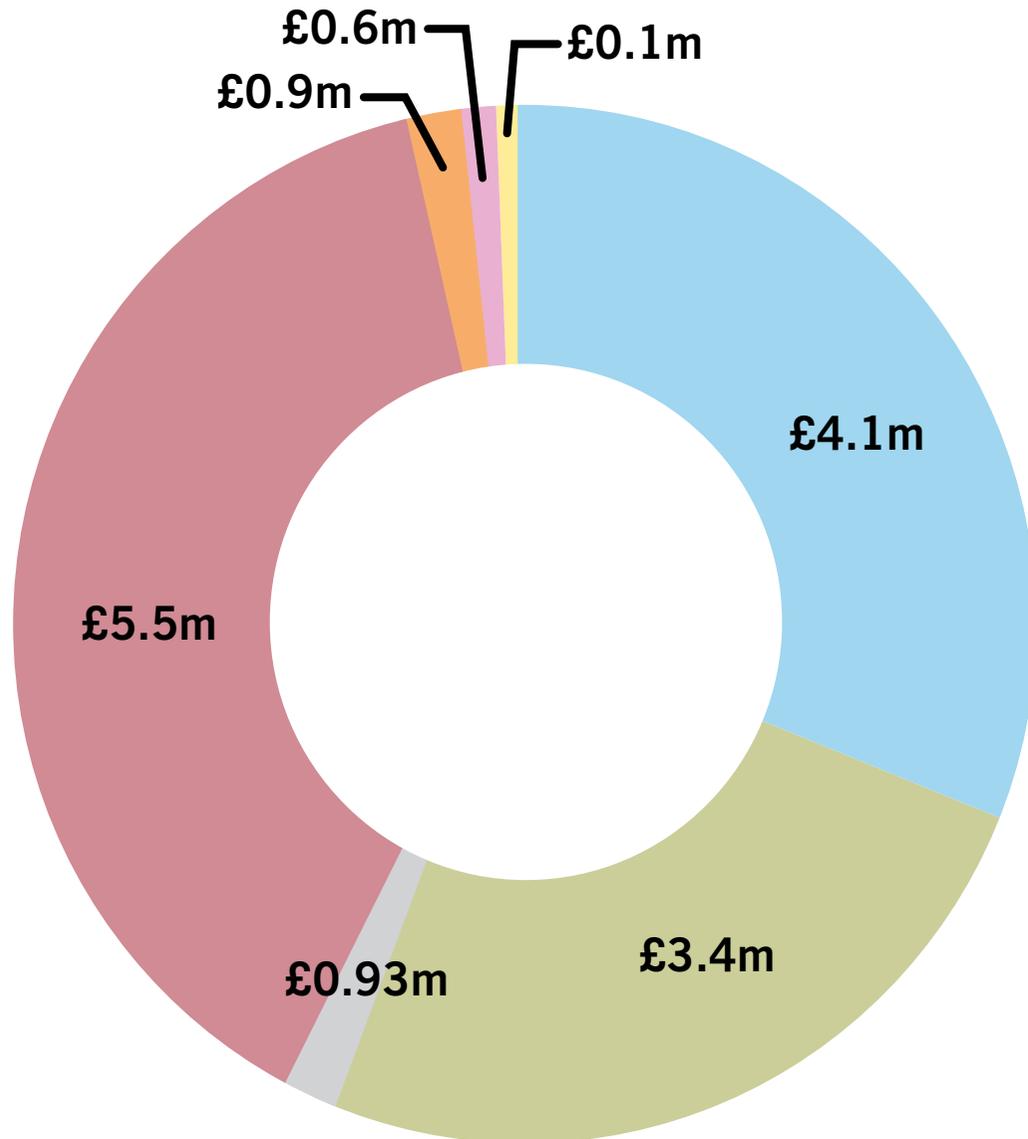
Colin MacCallum

Director of Finance and Corporate
Services

To see our full staff structure please visit our website.



Summary of accounts for 2015/16



Total Income £17.7m

(this includes £3.5m of Housing Association Grants)

Expenditure

Management Costs	£4.1m
Repairs & Maintenance	£3.4m
Capitalised Maintenance	£0.93m
Depreciation	£5.5m
Other Operating Costs	£0.9m
Service Costs	£0.6m
Bad Debt	£0.1m

Contact us, we want your feedback!

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