

Scottish Social Housing Charter and Annual Report 2014/15



## Introduction

The main purpose of this report is to show the progress of West of Scotland Housing Association (WSHA) in achieving the requirements of the Scottish Social Housing Charter. It is hoped that tenants of WSHA are reassured to see improvements in many areas since 2013/14 and the Association will continue to ensure service delivery is of the highest possible standard.

#### 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 14 outcomes and standards that are relevant to West of Scotland Housing Association.

#### How do we report our performance?

The Scottish Housing Regulator published a report on our performance in August 2015. This is available on **Scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk** 

#### **Scottish Housing Best Value Network**

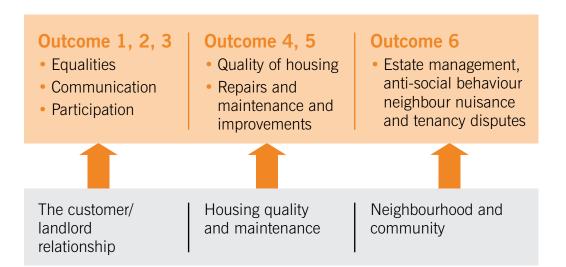
The Scottish Housing Best Value Network (SHBVN) is a benchmarking group of registered social landlords in Scotland. This allows us to compare our performance in this report with that of 84 other registered social landlords across Scotland. It is very positive to see that WSHA performed above the SHBVN average in many key areas.

#### **Colour key**

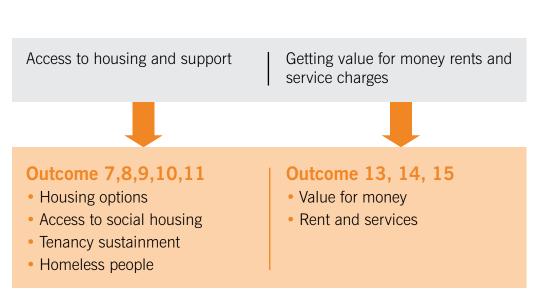
Performance declined since 2013/14

Performance improved since 2013/14

Performance the same as 2013/14



### **Scottish Housing Charter**





## Welcome



Our 2014/15 Charter and Annual Report provides a detailed overview of customer satisfaction and performance results for West of Scotland Housing Association (WSHA). I hope you find the report valuable and you find it reassuring to see improvements in many areas. I am delighted we have seen marked improvements in many areas, particularly with customer satisfaction. However, I recognise that there is still a lot of work to be done, especially in relation to our factoring and repairs services, and we will be making significant changes to improve service delivery and, ultimately, customer satisfaction in these areas. In the latter part of 2014/15, the Association introduced a performance improvement strategy and action plan with key targets and milestones that is monitored at both officer and committee level to ensure progress.

The Association has developed an ambitious five year growth strategy and our tenants will continue to be at the forefront of service delivery and improvement.

In March 2015, WSHA was awarded three awards from Investors in People - a Gold Standard; a Health and Wellbeing Award; and a Young People Accreditation. These awards reflect our commitment to development of our staff to ensure they have the skills needed to provide a high-quality service to our tenants.

I am proud of WSHA's commitment to improving the lives of our tenants which is demonstrated by our provision of an effective Sustainable Communities Strategy. A number of new roles were created during 2014/15 to deliver this strategy, including the Handy Person Service, Volunteer Coordinator and Older Person's Coordinator. These services have already made a positive impact to our tenants as you will see in this report.

We now look forward to another 50 years delivering to our communities, and we will continue to evolve to ensure we are truly living our values and improving the Art of Living beyond our imagination.

#### Carron Garmory Interim Chief Executive

## **Message from the Chairperson**



"Welcome to the 2014/15 annual performance report for West of Scotland Housing Association (WSHA). I feel it is important that all tenants receive information about how their rent and service charges are used to deliver an efficient and effective service." As a tenant of WSHA I am pleased to see there have been improvements in a number of areas. I recognise there is still work to be done and I am confident the Association will continue to progress to ensure that all tenants receive a first-class service in all areas. I am proud of the commitment WSHA has made, not only to providing high-quality homes, but also creating safe and happy communities.

I will step down as Chairperson in September 2015 after serving my three year term and during that time I have seen WSHA evolve and improve to ensure it puts tenants at the forefront of service delivery. I am certain that the Association will thrive and make a positive difference to the lives of its tenants and communities.

Please let us know if you have any questions or feedback about this report – your views are always welcome.

Katie McLeod Chairperson

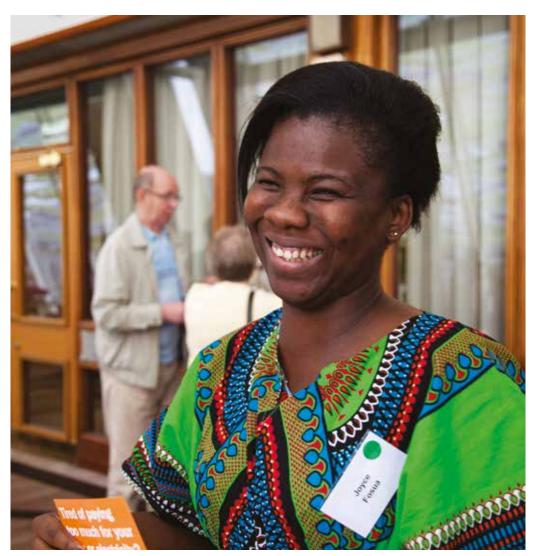
# **Section 1 - The Customer Landlord Relationship**

**Outcome:** Equalities - every tenant and customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing services.

We are committed to meeting the diverse needs of our tenants and customers. We strive to shape our services to make sure everyone is treated fairly and has the same opportunities and access, regardless of their circumstances and background.

- We carry out regular staff equality awareness sessions on issues such as mental health, domestic violence and substance abuse.
- Our offices are wheelchair accessible and have induction or 'hearing loops' to assist sensory impaired customers.
- For customers where English is not their first language we work with *Language is Everything* to provide telephone translation or interpreters when required.
- We provide information in a range of formats to assist those who find it difficult to communicate with us through language barriers or sensory impairments.

- We have private interview facilities. Customers can be seen by a male or female member of staff and we carry out home visits when required.
- Our **Older Person's Coordinator** works with our older tenants providing opportunities for them to engage in educational, social and creative activities within our communities.



#### We provide a range of housing to suit our tenants' varying needs.

- 187 Sheltered Houses with low level warden support.
- 10 Very Sheltered Houses for elderly tenants requiring extra support.
- 391 Amenity Houses for tenants over 50.
- We also lease properties to partner agencies who provide specialist support to tenants with specific needs.
- Specially adapted properties built to meet the needs of our less able tenants.

# We also work in partnership with external agencies to meet the particular needs of our tenants and customers.

- Last year we obtained £244,000 in grants from the Scottish Government to improve the quality of life for 85 of our tenants by carrying out adaptations to their homes to better meet their particular needs.
- In partnership with Womens Aid and the Scottish Refugee Council, we **rehoused 5 applicants** within our communities.



## Section 1 - The Customer Landlord Relationship

Outcome: Communication - tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get the information they need. It should also be easy to find out how, and why, their landlord makes decisions and more information about the services provided.

We believe that effective two-way communication is essential in providing a first-class service to our tenants. This means giving tenants and customers clear information on our services and making it easy for them to give us feedback, including complaints, which we can use to improve services.

We surveyed a sample of tenants who contacted us in 2014/15:

% of tenants who found staff courteous and professional to deal with

94%

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

- Telephone.
- Calling in at our offices.
- We can also visit tenants in their home if this is easier for them.
- Email or via our website.
- Facebook and Twitter.
- Skype.

# Our dedicated Communication and PR Officer oversees how we communicate with our tenants:

- We issue our newsletter, Westworld, every quarter.
- We have television screens in our offices providing current information to visitors.
- Our website gives information on our services and performance.
- We communicate through social media and in the local press.

# Tenant satisfaction is important to us as it shows us how well our services are being delivered and how we can improve.

### Our Annual Tenant Satisfaction Survey told us:

% of tenants who felt that WSHA was good at keeping them informed about their	2014/15	2013/14	SHBVN average
services and decisions	95%	85%	89.9%
% of tenants satisfied with the overall services provided by WSHA	90%	79%	N/A

Complaints are important to us – we strive to resolve every issue to the best of our ability and we use the information to make improvements to our services.

In 2014/15 we received 130 complaints.

We responded to **75% of complaints** within our target timescale.

In total, **66 complaints** were upheld. This means we felt the tenants had reason to complain and we took steps to rectify their issues.

The largest number of complaints were about repairs which is our highest volume service. In 2014/15, we carried out **9,808 repairs** and received **79 complaints**.

8

We use complaints to improve our services:

You told us	We did
More information on progress of more complex repairs	Repairs staff now have weekly meetings with our main contractor to monitor repairs and update tenants
Better information about ongoing boiler repairs and delays with parts being obtained	Repairs staff now have access to our gas contractors system to monitor repairs in real time and advise tenants

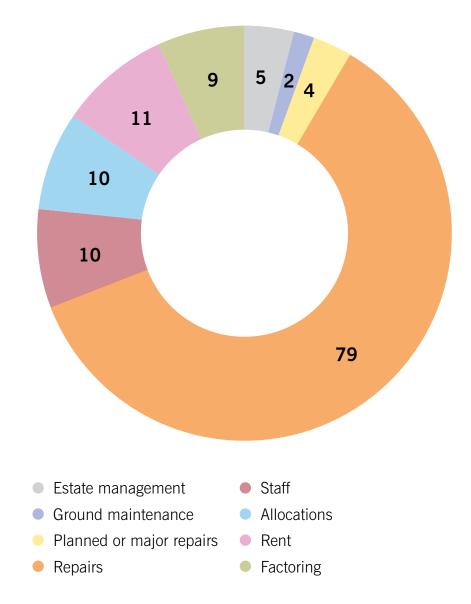
#### Communication priorities for 2015/16

It's important that tenants are aware of customer satisfaction with our services.

• We will publish quarterly information on customer satisfaction and complaints in our newsletter and on our website.



## **Complaints categories**



# **Section 1 - The Customer Landlord Relationship**

Outcome: Participation - tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord's decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.

We want tenants to be fully involved in shaping and influencing our services. We have a comprehensive Customer Engagement Strategy that outlines formal methods for tenant participation:

- Our Management Committee is made up of 15 members including 8 tenant members.
- Our Tenants Advisory Group (TAG) has around 20 tenants and is consulted on all policy reviews, legislative changes, proposed amendments to working practices and any significant issues affecting tenants.
- Our **Tenant Consultation Panel** comprises tenants who want to give their views on any policy and housing related matters without attending meetings.
- We work with, and provide support to, **four Tenants Groups** who represent local communities.
- We hold an **Annual Tenants Conference** organised by staff and tenants, which gives tenants the opportunity to influence current housing issues and the direction of WSHA.

#### Our Annual Tenant Satisfaction Survey told us:

% of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in the decision making	2014/15	2013/14	SHBVN average
process	95%	74%	80.3%



Last year, with support and training from the Tenant Participation Advisory Service, we developed our **Tenant Scrutiny Panel** made up of **13** tenant volunteers.

The panel scrutinised the void process covering the journey from a tenancy being terminated, to the property being offered to a new tenant. It is a complex process and involved our lettings, repairs and neighbourhoods teams working alongside the panel members.

#### Improvements arising from the Scrutiny exercise included:

- Improved literature for new tenants, setting out the minimum void repair standard they should expect from a new property and details of all repair work carried out.
- More flexibility in staff working hours to fit in with tenants' lifestyles e.g. evening property inspections and accompanied viewings.

#### Participation priorities for 2015/16

• Build on the experience of our scrutiny of the void process to review our approach and identify further areas to be scrutinised.

# **Section 2 - Housing Quality and Maintenance**

Outcome: Tenants' homes as a minimum meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) by April 2015 and continue to meet it thereafter. When allocated, homes are always clean and tidy and in a good state of repair.

### Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)\*

Scottish Flousing Quality Standard	91.57%	89.2%	92.0%
% of properties meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard	2014/15	2013/14	SHBVN average

\*A number of our properties have exemptions.

This reflects our £2.1m investment in major repairs projects, which included installation of district heating systems, double glazing and Biomass heating.

### Our Annual Tenant Satisfaction Survey told us:

% of tenants satisfied with the quality of their home	2014/15	2013/14	SHBVN average
	82.8%	79%	86.1%

Our investment in our properties is reflected in improved customer satisfaction last year compared to 2013/14.



# **Section 2 - Housing Quality and Maintenance**

#### **Day-to-day repairs**

Last year we spent £1.4m on reactive maintenance on our houses and carried out 9,808 day-to-day repairs. Our performance in most areas has improved since 2013/14 however, we recognise there are still improvements to be made in relation to tenants' satisfaction and we are working to resolve this. We aim to complete certain single trade, less complex repairs on time, at a time agreed with the tenant and to their satisfaction, getting it 'right first time'.

#### Day-to-day repairs

% repairs completed 'right first time'	2014/15	2013/14	SHBVN average
	93.2%	84%	89.2%
Number of emergency repairs reported and % attended to and	1903	1704	N/A
completed within 24 hours	100%	100%	N/A
Average number of hours taken to complete emergency repairs	4.72	5.6	4.4
Average number of days taken to complete non-emergency repairs	4.02	4.1	5.9

While there was an increase in emergency repairs reported, we continued to carry out **100%** of them within our target of **24 hours** and reduced the average time taken to complete emergency repairs from **5.6 hours** in 2013/14 to **4.72 hours**.

93.8%

90.9%

93.5%

### **Repairs appointments**

% of appointments made that were kept



#### **Our Annual Tenant Satisfaction Survey told us:**

% of tenants who had repairs carried out in the last 12 months and were satisfied with the repairs service provided

iirs	76.9%	80%	89.4%
S	2014/15	2013/14	SHBVN average

#### **Repairs to empty houses**

#### **Our Annual Tenant Satisfaction Survey told us:**

% of tenants satisfied with the standard of their home when	2014/15	2013/14	SHBVN average
moving in	93.3%	85%	85.6%

Last year we let **321** properties, and **93.3%** of new tenants were satisfied with the condition of their new home, compared to **85%** last year.

Gas safety			
% annual gas safety inspections carried out	2014/15	2013/14	SHBVN average
	100%	100%	99.6%

#### Housing Quality and Maintenance Priorities for 2015/16

While repairs performance improved in 2014/15, tenants' satisfaction with the repairs service has fallen. We have listened to feedback from tenants and we have implemented the suggestions. Improvements include:

- Gather tenants' views on all our contractors' performance for all repairs at the point of service delivery, allowing us to clearly identify and resolve issues and improve services.
- Meet weekly with our main contractors to resolve ongoing issues to improve services and communication with our tenants.



# **Section 3 - Neighbourhoods and Community**

**Outcome:** Social landlords working in partnership with other agencies to ensure tenants and other customers live in well maintained neighbourhoods where they feel safe.

WSHA communities are diverse – from rural developments in Lanarkshire to urban communities in Glasgow. We deliver local and organisational plans that meet the individual needs of each of our developments. We reorganised our staff to provide dedicated Housing Officers who have an increased focus on the communities they work with. We have also introduced mobile working for our Housing Officers to allow them to plan their workload more efficiently and increase their time working in communities.

#### **Our Annual Tenant Satisfaction Survey told us:**



We are now in the second year of our Rate Your Estate initiative which has enabled our tenants to assess the standard of the environment and services in our communities. This initiative has led to a number of improvement projects such as the conversion of a derelict play area in Cumbernauld.



### We use your feedback to improve our service

You said	We did
Problems with trespass at amenity properties in Fernhill	Metal perimeter fencing installed
Make it easier to contact staff	Options phone system installed and all direct dials and mobile numbers for staff on website.
Upgrade disused swing park in Cumbernauld	Upgrade complete. Flowerbed feature installed
Defective boundary fencing at Woodend Oval	Fencing installed
Improve environment at Somerset Gardens, Ayr	Planters installed and maintained

#### **Anti-Social Behaviour**

#### Anti-Social Behaviour cases recorded on our Streetwise system

Number of cases of Anti-Social Behaviour reported	328
Number of cases resolved (including outstanding cases from 2013/14)	330
Number of cases resolved within locally agreed targets	285

#### Performance compared to last year

% of Anti-Social Behaviour cases resolved within locally agreed	2014/15	2013/14	SHBVN average
targets	87%	80%	84.3%

Our locally agreed target is to resolve, or refer on to other agencies, in cases which escalate within 28 days.

### Neighbourhood and Community Priorities for 2015/16

- Use of mobile working to allow Housing Officers to increase their presence in our neighbourhoods.
- Allocate funding to projects identified by Rate your Estate Tenant Inspectors and Housing Officers.
- Begin retender process for new grounds maintenance contract from April 2016.
- Monitor Estate Action Plans in every development.



# **Section 4 - Access to Housing and Support**

### **Outcome: Housing Options**

- People looking for housing get information that helps them make informed choices about the range of housing options available to them.
- Tenants and people on housing lists can review their housing options.
- People at risk of losing their homes get advice on preventing homelessness.

### **Outcome: Access to social housing**

People looking for housing find it easy to apply for the widest choice of social housing available and get information they need on how the landlord allocates homes and their prospects of being housed.

Our most exciting and significant letting area this year was at the Commonwealth Games Village in Dalmarnock, Glasgow. We own 102 highquality, low carbon homes which benefit from a district heating system and PV roof panels ensuring energy costs are significantly lower than many other similar properties.





# We have different ways in which people looking for housing can access our stock:

- Direct Application.
- Nominations from Women's Aid and Scottish Refugee Council.
- Accessing the Common Housing Register in South and North Lanarkshire.
- Homeless referrals from the Council.
- Mutual Exchanges.

### We also have a range of housing to suit various needs:

- Sheltered Housing with low level warden support.
- Very Sheltered with intense support.
- Amenity Housing for older tenants who wish to have smaller self-contained homes.
- Tenement flats with security entries.
- Houses and own door flats.
- Properties with care providers on site for various types of support needs i.e. Quarriers Support for young people.
- Wheelchair adapted properties.

### At the end of 2014/15 we had 2250 people on our waiting list.

#### We let properties throughout the year to the following:

Applicants rehoused from our own waiting list	160
Applicants rehoused from transfer list	39
Applicants rehoused who were assessed as statutory homeless by local authorities	76
Applicants rehoused from local authority nomination	27
Applicants rehoused via others	17

#### How did we perform in letting houses in 2014/15?

Letting performance 2014/15		
Average no. of days to let our properties	2014/15	2013/14
	48	40

Our performance in letting houses was disappointing this year and we are making changes to ensure we improve on this performance next year.

We have carried out a full review of our letting process to ensure we are lettings properties in the most effective and efficient manner.

We have brought together staff working on all parts of the letting process into one merged team to improve performance.

#### Tenancy support and sustainment

#### **Tenant sustainment**

% of new tenants sustaining tenancy for more than 12 months	2014/15	2013/14	SHBVN average
	92%	89%	88.9%
% of properties abandoned	0.6%	0.7%	0.7%

Our Welfare Rights, Financial Wellbeing, Incomes and Neighbourhood teams all contribute to supporting tenants to establish and sustain their tenancies.

When notified of tenancy terminations, we will offer assistance to enable the tenancy to be sustained where appropriate.

We spent a total of £224,993 on aids and adaptations to assist our tenants to continue to live in their homes.

#### Access to Housing and Support Priorities for 2015/16

- Improve the information given to customers when applying for houses. This will include appointments to answer questions about the areas where we have houses and discuss the number of empty houses usually available etc.
- Talk about possible support needs with customers before the house is allocated.

## **Section 5** - Value for Money, Rents and Service Charges

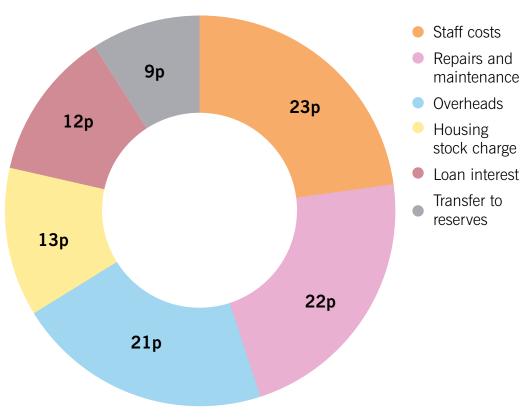
**Outcomes:** Tenants, owners and other customers receive services that provide continually improving value for money for the rent and other charges they pay.

A balance is struck between the level of services provided, the cost of the services and how far the current and prospective tenants and other customers can afford them. Tenants get clear information on how rent and other money is spent, including any details of individual items of expenditure above thresholds agreed between landlord and tenants.

The landlord services we provide are funded fully by the rents and service charges our tenants pay.

Our total annual income due for rents and service charges in **2014/15** was **£12,295,545**.

### How every pound is spent:



We understand that some of our tenants may have financial difficulties. We aim to support them by limiting our rent increase while delivering the broad range of services necessary for our tenants.

#### **Our Annual Tenant Satisfaction Surveys told us:**

Taking into account the accommodation and services WSHA provides, and the percentage of tenants who thought the rent for their property represents good value for money?

ł	80.9%	76%	average 76.7%

Landlords have two main areas where income can be lost - rent arrears and empty houses.

Rent arrears			
% of total rent due collected	2014/15	2013/14	SHBVN average
	96.7%	96.9%	99.6%
Gross rent arrears	£721,897	£577,864	N/A
Gross rent arrears as a % of rent due	5.08%	4.7%	4.7%

Controlling arrears is an area where we aim to improve. We recognise that welfare reform measures are affecting our tenants' disposable income. Our Welfare Rights Team, alongside our Income Team, has had significant success in obtaining financial help and assistance for our tenants. Last year, our Welfare Rights Team secured £247,811 in Welfare Benefits and £270,212 in backdated Housing Benefit for our tenants.



# **Section 4 - Value for Money, Rents and Service Charges**

#### How we can help

Our Welfare Rights Team supported one couple to claim for Personal Independence Payment, Pension Credit and Carers Allowance. All of the claims were successful however, it took nine months for all the payments to be finalised which resulted in a large backdate payment. The successful claims resulted in an increased weekly income of £172.25 with backdates of £2,432.

### Empty homes

% of rental income lost through empty houses	2014/15	2013/14	SHBVN average
	0.85%	0.80%	1%
Average cost to repair an empty house	£1,589	£1,407	N/A

While our lost rental income on empty houses has increased since last year, our performance in this area is better than the SHBVN average. This is an area we are actively focusing on to reduce spend whilst maintaining a good quality standard.



### Our Annual Tenant Satisfaction Surveys told us:

% of owners satisfied with their factoring	2014/15	2013/14
service	74%	74%

Satisfaction with our factoring service remains unchanged and we are reviewing this service to ensure we can deliver a significant improvement to customers.

### Value for Money Service Priorities for 2015/16

 We are developing a Value for Money Strategy and will consult with customers and key stakeholders to obtain their views on what value for money represents to them. This will allow us to focus on key priority areas for our customers. Our strategy will be published on our website and we will feed back to customers on progress made. We will be reviewing our costs as part of our procurement approach and ensuring that we achieve value for money.



# Making a Difference

West of Scotland Housing Association is committed to making a difference to the lives of our tenants and communities. To achieve this, our Regeneration Team provides a number of services focused around the following themes health and wellbeing; employment, training and education; tackling poverty; financial inclusion; community safety and environment.

#### Money and Energy Advice Service

WSHA's Money and Energy Advice service offers confidential one-to-one support to our tenants within their homes. The service assists with household budgeting advice, debts in relation to personal loans, rent, council tax, fuel cost, food and clothing.

The service received **409** referrals in 2014/15.

#### In action...

James\* was referred to the service when his gas and electricity supplies were disconnected and he had no access to heating, hot water or cooking facilities. James could not afford to pay for an ongoing supply or to reduce his substantial energy debt. This issue was affected by a welfare benefit sanction which meant James had no source of income to purchase food or pay any household bills. The welfare benefit sanction also limited his independence which resulted in increased stress and deterioration in his mental health.

Our Energy Advice Officer contacted the energy suppliers to negotiate to have the electricity debt cleared and agree a lower repayment for the substantial gas debt. Both suppliers also provided credit for the meters to assist with the reconnection. To ensure that James was able to continue to manage the financial situation in the long term, the team also applied for a British Gas Energy Trust Grant to provide extra money for the energy debt and bills. WSHA's Officers also made an immediate referral for an emergency food pack to support James whilst a welfare benefit application was being processed. WSHA's Money and Energy Advice Team was able to give James a better understanding of his financial situation and arrange a more manageable agreement.

\*name changed to protect identity.

### **Older Person's Service**

This service provides a range of activities for older tenants of WSHA to improve health, reduce social isolation and support them to live independently for longer. Examples of activities that tenants participated in during 2014/15 include:

• **Mindfulness Course** - provided to 12 WSHA residents in partnership with Glasgow Association for Mental Health (GAMH). This was a two hour weekly workshop which began with relaxation methods through mindfulness followed by arts and crafts and massage therapy.



- **Commonwealth Tea Morning** this event was held in conjunction with Cowlairs Development Trust. A community fun day was arranged by Cowlairs Development Trust for the area and as a precursor; one of our sheltered housing complexes held a Commonwealth tea morning and was the hub for volunteers and attendees throughout the day.
- Seaside Trip 24 residents from across four of our sheltered housing complexes enjoyed a trip to Largs. They had lunch and visited a bowling club with entertainment provided. With the assistance of four volunteers, all attendees were able to fully participate and enjoy the day.

# Making a Difference

#### Handy Person Service

The Handy Person Service is offered free to tenants who are aged 65 or older, are disabled or a vulnerable family. This service is for those who may find it difficult to undertake certain household tasks and minor odd jobs. Feedback from the service has been extremely positive with it making a clear difference to the lives of our tenants.



### **Barrowfield Community Park**

Working in partnership with Glasgow City Council, Central Scotland Green Network, Clyde Gateway and Sport Scotland, WSHA has completed phase 1 of the Multi-Purpose Green Places project in Camlachie. Phase 2/3 focuses on delivering improved adventure play and natural play to meet the identified needs and aspirations of the local community and to encourage health and wellbeing.

#### **Gateway to Health Project**

In March 2015, Celtic FC Foundation announced a grant award of £450,000 from the Big Lottery Fund Scotland, Clyde Gateway and West of Scotland Housing Association to deliver this fantastic new three-year community project. Gateway to Health promotes healthier lifestyles and supports participants to address and manage long-term health problems with a view to removing this barrier to employment. It combines employability support with activities that promote physical and mental health to motivate people to take their first steps towards employment.

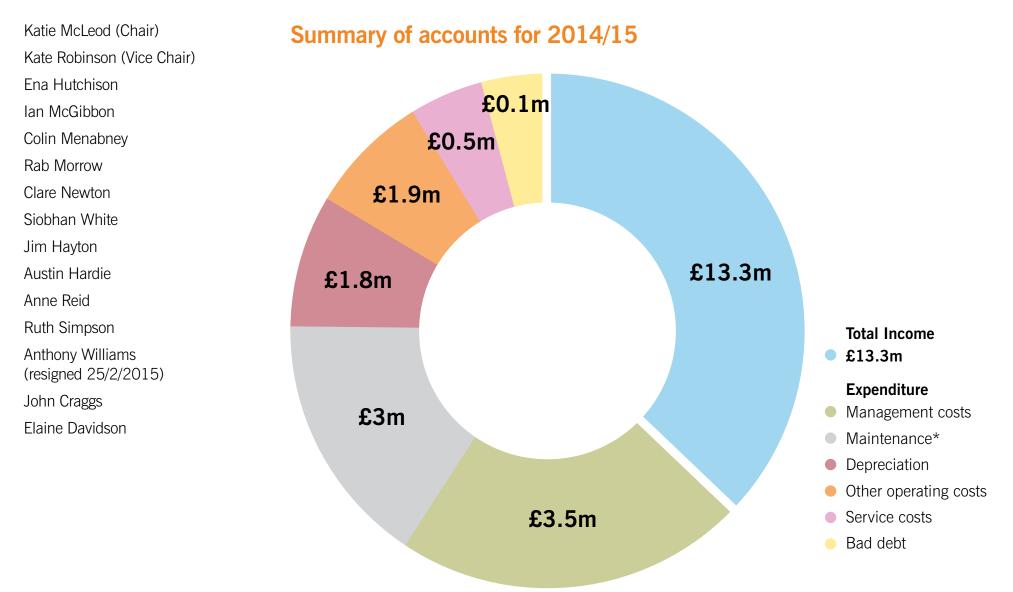
### **Imagination Library**

WSHA is the only registered social landlord in Scotland that is enrolled in this innovative scheme that gives children 60 free books.

Imagination Library was created by the Dolly Parton Foundation and all children enrolled in the programme will get a free book every month until their fifth birthday.

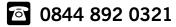


# **Management Committee Members**



\*a further £1.2m was spent on capitalised maintenance which includes the replacement of windows, heating, kitchens and bathrooms.

Contact us, we want your feedback!



info@westscot.co.uk





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