



Better homes, better lives

Glasgow Housing Association

Annual Highlights 2016–17



Chair's welcome

Bernadette Hewitt
Chair of GHA

I was incredibly proud to become the Chair of GHA in September 2016. While my first year has certainly been a busy one, it is also one in which we achieved much as we pushed forward with our ambition for 'Better homes, better lives, a better Glasgow.'



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One of the highlights has been Wheatley, our parent company, becoming joint owners, with Glasgow City Council, in City Building (Glasgow). This gives us a platform to work more closely than ever before with the repairs teams and to create a new model for repairs which will achieve outstanding customer service for our tenants every time. People told us they wanted to see local repairs teams and that is our focus as we redesign the service over the next few months.

Another highlight has been the launch of Wheatley Foundation, our new charitable trust which supports our 'Better Lives' programmes.

It is chaired by Sir Harry Burns, former Chief Medical Officer of Scotland, and already it is supporting 15 different programmes across our communities, all of them designed to offer new opportunities to our customers, and their families. 7466 people have benefited from the Foundation's projects which include apprenticeships, bursaries, cultural and sporting activities and a new money advice service for vulnerable people.

Excellent progress has been made in 2016-17 on our ambitions to increase the supply of affordable housing with 142 new homes completed by GHA for social rent and hundreds more in the pipeline. I'm delighted to say among these were 129 amenity homes designed to help older people live independently for longer.

We also invested £47.6m in our existing homes with work including upgrades to many of the foyers and common areas in our multi-storey blocks.

Sadly, many of our tenants are still struggling financially and supporting them remains a major focus for us at GHA.

Our team of specialist advisors helped our customers save thousands of pounds on their energy bills, and claim thousands more in welfare payments. Our Tenancy Support Service, delivered by our partners at Loretto Housing Association, gave tailored support to vulnerable tenants who were having particular difficulties keeping their tenancy.



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invested in our existing homes.

Giving young people opportunities to achieve their potential and make the most of their talents is something in which I believe passionately. This year we took on more apprentices than ever before, including environmental apprentices, and introduced Changing Lives traineeships for people facing real barriers to getting into employment.

In my first weeks in post, I was delighted to meet two of them. Their enthusiasm, excitement and talent made me incredibly excited for what lies ahead for the organisation and our customers.

No review of the year would be complete without paying tribute to Gordon Sloan, who served GHA for six years as Chair before retiring last year.

Gordon played a significant role in the creation of Wheatley Group, campaigned for the UK Government

to think again about its welfare reform agenda and attended hundreds of community events. Customer satisfaction at GHA improved to 90 per cent during his time as Chair, hundreds of new-build homes took shape as part of the regeneration of the city and the organisation won a series of national and international awards and accreditations.

It was a huge privilege to work with Gordon and I wish him a long and happy retirement.

Turn over for the annual highlights 2016-17

Our highlights

Our homes

We continued our work to modernise and maintain our homes, investing £47.6m in upgrades right across our communities. The work included replacing kitchens and bathrooms, new heating, roofs, doors and windows.

We also invested in neighbourhoods, upgrading communal areas such as foyers in multi-storey flats, backcourts, stairwells, green spaces and community gardens.

We owned 39,091 homes at the end of the financial year 2016-17 with 98% of them meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard.

Building affordable housing

Our plans to build more affordable homes in our communities made progress with a total of 142 new homes completed for social rent. At the end of the financial year we were on site building a further 1075 and had 495 in development.

We marked completed developments over the year including at Kingsway in Scotstoun, where we built 116 homes, and North Toryglen where we completed 100 homes.

GHA's work to regenerate communities and build more affordable homes earned a series of awards. One of our flagship new-build developments at Sighthill was recognised as Affordable Housing Development of the Year in the Homes for Scotland Awards and as Large Affordable Housing Development of the Year in the Scottish Home Awards.



At the Herald Property Awards our North Toryglen new-build project won the title of Affordable Housing Development of the Year.

Homes for older people

We are also committed to building homes to help older residents lead easier, more independent and sociable lives.

Over the year we built or began work on 129 amenity homes which are designed to suit older people and usually have special features as well as communal areas. Our amenity housing projects include 54 in Knightswood and 56 in Castlemilk where the block includes a common room, laundry, lifts and a communal garden, as well as special features such as wet-floor showers.

142

new homes completed.

129

new homes designed to suit older people.

A new repairs service

Our ambition to create a modern, local and more efficient repairs and maintenance service took a major step forward over 2016-17 when we agreed a new joint venture with Glasgow City Council.

Our parent company Wheatley Group became 50/50 joint owner of City Building (Glasgow) on 1 April, 2017. This has given us the opportunity to reshape our repairs service, designing a service which delivers consistent excellence for customers, and work on this is under way.

The jointly owned company is providing repairs and investment work to GHA homes as well as those of Loretto, Cube, YourPlace and Lowther Homes.

Environmental services

Together with all our partners in Wheatley, we also invested £20million on strengthening our environmental services, restructuring the teams and recruiting almost 200 new staff including apprentices and trainees. As part of our mission to create communities people are proud to live in, we also launched a new partnership with Keep Scotland Beautiful which is involving tenants in assessing, grading and improving neighbourhoods.

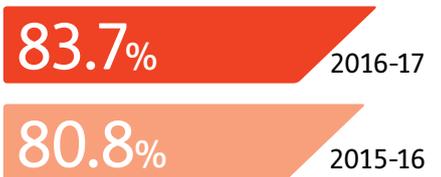
Improving performance

We continued to improve our performance with 18 out of 26 measures which we report to the Scottish Housing Regulator, or 69%, in the top quartile when

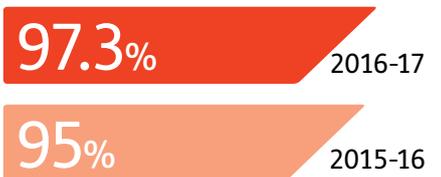
benchmarked with other Registered Social Landlords (RSLs).

Performance highlights for the year included:

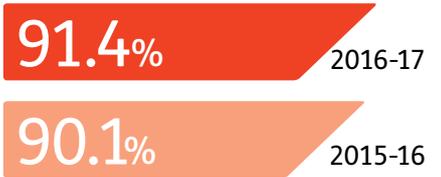
Tenants who feel their rent represents good value



Repairs completed right first time



Tenancies sustained for more than a year



New tenants satisfied with the quality of their home when they moved in.



Customer satisfaction for GHA was 89.1% while 87.8% of existing tenants were satisfied with the quality of their home, both down slightly on last year.



Awards and accreditations

Our journey to excellence continued to be recognised and rewarded through a wide range of awards and accreditations. GHA won the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) prize for Best in Europe for Building Organisational Capability, the second time we have won an EFQM prize on the European stage.

GHA also won Gold Employer of the Year at the Investors in People (IiP) Awards in July 2016 following its success earlier in 2016 in gaining IiP platinum, the highest IiP standard available and only achieved by a small number of organisations.

Over 2016-17, we also played a major part in our parent company Wheatley:

- regaining Customer Service Excellence accreditation with 19 'compliance plus' marks, a record number and up from 16 the previous year;
- being ranked no 47 in the Sunday Times list of best not-for-profit organisations to work for;
- making it into 24 Housing magazine's top 10 social landlords in the UK.

Rent campaign

Our annual rent campaign resulted in our best ever arrears performance over the festive period.

The campaign which urged customers to Put Rent First invited people who were facing difficulties to get in touch and access the wide



1877

registered users for online self-service, My GHA.

£1.6m

was paid by customers online.

range of help and support we have available. The campaign materials, which included posters, bus stop advertising, newsletter articles and regular content on social media and our website, also made clear to customers what their rent pays for.

We saw a £174,000 reduction in our traditional festive spike in tenant rent arrears – more than ever before. In benchmarking terms, our year end performance places GHA among the best in the country for collecting rent arrears.

More customers go online

We launched our new website in February as we continued to encourage and support our customers to go online. The website was designed in consultation with

tenants and within a few months saw the number of online visitors rise to around 20,000 a month.

The new website is mobile friendly, easy to navigate and features engaging content. Our target is to see 30% of all customer transactions carried out online and the new website plays a part in increasing the numbers of customers registering and using our online self services.

Over 2016-17, a total of 384 GHA tenants signed up for online self-service bringing the total number of registered users at GHA to 1877. £1.6m was paid by customers through the online channel over the 12-month period.



Jobs and training opportunities

The scale of our new-build and investment programmes at Wheatley mean we can create or support hundreds of opportunities for people from our communities to access jobs and training each year. This year we supported a total of 285 new jobs and training opportunities for our tenants and their families at GHA.

Some of these are created through clauses in our contracts which oblige our contractors to give opportunities to people in our communities. Our new charitable trust, Wheatley Foundation, also funds a range of employability initiatives targeted at tenants, owners and their families. These include apprenticeships, traineeships and Wheatley Pledge, a scheme which incentivises our suppliers to do even more for our communities.

In 2016-17, GHA tenants, or their families, accessed 52 Modern Apprenticeships including in environmental services, 35 jobs or training opportunities through Wheatley Pledge and 40 Changing Lives traineeships which help people needing extra support to get on the job ladder. 35 opportunities for tenants to get into work or training were created through the community benefit clauses in our contracts.

Helping tenants save money

We continue to support our tenants in a wide range of ways.

For example we helped tenants to save more than £360,000 on their fuel bills over the year.

GHA's fuel advisors provide free expert advice to tenants on cutting their energy bills and keeping their homes warm.

Advisors can help tenants access the cheapest tariffs, arrange low-cost payment arrangements and, depending on their circumstances, help them write-off long-term debt.

More than 2200 tenants used the fuel advice service in 2016-17 – and saved more than £360,000 on their bills.

Our My Great Start service which helps new tenants get off to a good start with their tenancy supported 1138 GHA customers to develop budgeting skills and manage their money.

Support for the most vulnerable

Bringing care and housing together in Wheatley Group is allowing us to identify and support vulnerable people in our communities in ways we couldn't before. Our Tenancy Support Service, delivered by Loretto Housing Association, launched in 2015 with the aim of helping people maintain their tenancy and get more out of life.

In 2016-17, 1608 GHA tenants who were struggling to cope received support for periods of up to eight weeks. 100% of tenants who returned a questionnaire said they were satisfied with the service they received.

52

Modern Apprenticeships for GHA tenants, or their families.

35

jobs or training opportunities through Wheatley Pledge.

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