



Housing Leeds Annual Report 2022/23

Welcome to Housing Leeds Annual Report for 2022/23

Welcome to the latest **Annual Report for tenants**, updating you on our activity and performance from March 2022 to April 2023. This year, in response to your feedback, we're publishing this report in June. This is earlier in the financial year, so that our updates to you are timelier. We also want to keep you updated more throughout the year. Look out for updates every three months on some of our key areas of work.

I took over the role of Executive Member for Housing from Cllr Mohammed Rafique in May 2023. I'm eager to work with you, staff, and our partners to focus on the key services that matter most to you. I'm committed to helping improve your satisfaction with our services. This has fallen in Leeds in recent years. We've seen a similar trend amongst other large social landlords across the country.

We've again seen challenges to our services over the last year. The increase in the cost of living continues to add financial pressures to many households. It's great to see that our teams have **supported over 1,200 households** to claim additional benefits to maximise their household income. We'll continue to work with you to help tackle the cost-of-living increase and provide support to tenants who are struggling.

Our commitment to build new council homes continues. I'm delighted to see the homes being built to meet housing needs across the city. We also delivered on our commitment to invest in our current homes.

Over the year we spent £92.4 million on 100's of schemes helping improve the quality of your homes. This included works to improve fire safety measures and more efficient and cheaper to run heating systems. We've included an update on our 'Fit for the Future' scheme. This is one of many improvement projects underway or planned in the next few years. These projects help tenants to reduce their fuel bills and support the Climate Emergency agenda.

We're always pleased to hear from you and get your feedback on our services. This report showcases how working with you helps to improve the services that we offer. We want to do more of this over the coming year. We're committed to reviewing our service offer based on your feedback and continuing to learn from complaints. Please get involved in our online 'Your Voice Leeds' community or join our growing Tenant Voice Panel. Visit our website to look at the different ways we work with input from tenants.

I hope you will find this report a useful summary of our work. Let us know what you think by emailing councilhousingcommunications@leeds.gov.uk



Councillor Jessica Lennox
(Executive Member for Housing)

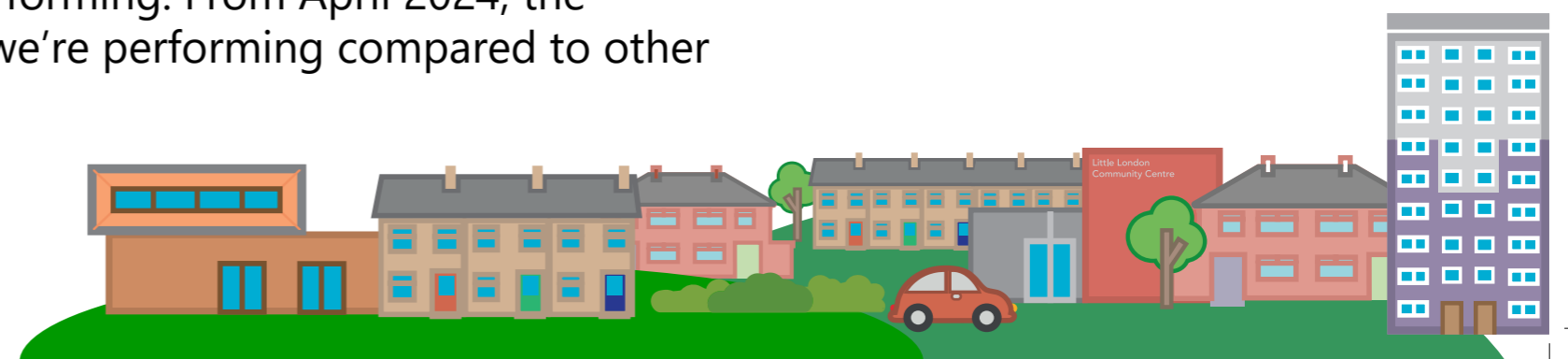
Your satisfaction with our service

Every three months we send a satisfaction survey to a random sample of residents to ask how satisfied you are with our service. We started this in April 2022, so we have our first full year of satisfaction information in this report.

With our overall service	60%
With the repair service in the last 12 months	66%
With the time taken to complete your most recent repair	61%
That we provide a home that is well maintained	61%
That we provide a home that is safe	61%
That we listen to your views and act upon them	44%
That you are kept informed about things that matter to you	53%
That we treat you fairly and with respect	62%
With our approach to complaint handling	39%
That communal areas are kept clean and well maintained	56%
That we make a positive contribution to your neighbourhood	44%
With our approach to handling anti-social behaviour	42%



These questions have been set by the 'Regulator for Social Housing'. They require us to ask you about our service so that you have information about how well we are performing. From April 2024, the Regulator will use this information to assess us and you'll see how we're performing compared to other landlords. Many thanks to everyone who has completed a survey.



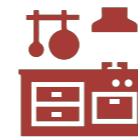
How we performed

We know that your home is important to you and we are committed to maintaining your home to a good standard. As part of this commitment we:

Spend on repairs and maintenance (excluding PFI)		
£20.2m (2021/22)	£31.1m	(2022/23)
Number of repairs carried out		
200,402 (2021/22)	143,982	(2022/23)
Repair appointments made		
65,906 (2021/22)	42,198	(2022/23)
Repair appointments kept		
61,952 (2021/22)	40,623	(2022/23)
Annual gas safety inspections completed		
99.63% (2021/22)	99.97%	(2022/23)

Investing in your home

Some highlights of the work we carried out.



New kitchens and bathrooms
238 (2021/22) **210** (2022/23)



New gas boilers installed
2,474 (2021/22) **1,975** (2022/23)



Re-roofing and insulation
417 (2021/22) **340** (2022/23)



Homes supplied by ground source heat pumps
274 (2021/22) **806** (2022/23)

Fit for the future

We completed a **£9.5 million** energy efficiency refurbishment programme to 300 homes in Boggart Hill. This included:

- external wall and improved loft insulation
- new environmentally friendly ventilation systems
- energy efficient lighting
- electric vehicle charging points to 50 homes with driveways

"I went into the winter months feeling less worried about ... my home being cold"

"I had lots of repairs on my property. This scheme has solved a lot of those issues I was having, worst of all the damp."



The difference we make

Adapting Homes

Our Health and Housing team provide adaptations to council and private homes, supporting residents to remain independent. This reduces the likelihood of injuries and accidents and the need for carers or care placements.

We completed **1,116** major adaptations in council homes and **955** in the private sector, an increase on the previous year. The service spent just under **£18million** on adaptations and the promotion of independent living for people across the city.

Case Study

One of our tenants living with her daughter in West Leeds struggled to access the upstairs of her property and required adjustments making to her kitchen, bathroom, and garden. Following an assessment, we adjusted the height of her kitchen cabinets and worktop, installed a wet floor shower, levelled her garden, and installed a through floor lift, providing access to upstairs. These adjustments have made her and her daughter's life much easier.

YOUR HOME












Find out more about our repair service and how to request a repair - www.leeds.gov.uk/repairs



Our commitment to tackling damp and mould



We want you to live in a home that is free from damp and mould. To make sure that we're dealing with your reports of damp and mould we:

-  Set up a dedicated Damp and Mould Team
-  Assessed ourselves against the Housing Ombudsman's spotlight report on damp and mould
-  Set up a Damp and Mould Prevention Board with senior officers overseeing all the work
-  Updated our website with new damp and mould advice and information
-  Developed a damp and mould policy
-  Developed damp and mould awareness training for all frontline staff and contractors
-  Changed the way we work to make sure that mould growth is treated quickly ahead of any survey visits or other activity
-  Provided hundreds of free mould sprays to residents to treat small areas of mould
-  Worked with the British Gas team to issue fuel vouchers to tenants with pre-payment meters
-  Sent regular updates to our tenants on how to report and prevent damp and mould
-  Translated the damp and mould leaflet into key community languages

Fire safety

To keep you safe we have:

- Carried out **538** 'safe and well' visits to our more vulnerable residents giving home safety advice
- Fitted sprinklers to a further **22** high rise blocks. We've now fitted sprinklers to **62** blocks
- Completed fire safety work in 'back to back' homes, including internal fire doors, fire alarm systems, and fire safety work to basements
- Continued fire safety works to buildings that have been converted into flats. The works include fire stopping measures, new flat entrance doors, hard wired smoke alarms, and fire alarms in communal areas
- Commenced fire safety checks on passenger lifts, flat entrance doors, and communal doors in line with the new Building Safety Act.

Building new homes

We let **115 new council homes**. This included apartments, bungalows, semi-detached and terraced properties.



Our priorities for the year ahead

- Continue to improve the way we manage damp and mould, in readiness for the colder winter months
- Ensure we meet all the requirements of the Building Safety Act
- Reduce the time it takes us to re-let empty homes
- Invest £72m to undertake further improvement works to homes
- Continue to build new homes to meet housing need across the city






YOUR HOME

Find out more about our repair service and how to request a repair - www.leeds.gov.uk/repairs






How we performed

	Rent collected	95.63% (2021/22)	95% (2022/23)
	Collected from former tenants	£757k (2021/22)	£878k (2022/23)
	Households supported to claim additional income/benefits	926 (2021/22)	1,216 (2022/23)

Annual tenancy check ins

We aim to check in with you at least once every 3 years. This gives you opportunity to meet your local Housing Officer or Retirement Life Support Officer and talk about any issues you may have. We also check your home is in a good condition and there are no concerns.


	19,096 Annual tenancy check ins completed		256 Hoarding cases identified		176 Safeguarding cases identified and responded to
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Rent and support

We support tenants to pay their rent, reduce their arrears, maximise their income and manage their overall living expenses. Rent collected is used to keep council homes in good repair and to provide services to our tenants. If a tenant leaves a council tenancy with arrears, we will seek to collect the money owed.

Rent enforcement

We always try to work with tenants who are having difficulties paying their rent. We will only take eviction action as a last resort, if other attempts to recover arrears are unsuccessful.

	Evictions during the year	3 (2021/22)	28 (2022/23)
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Tenancy fraud

Last year we recovered 20 properties where we identified housing fraud. Tackling housing fraud enables us to let homes to those who need them most. Of the fraud cases we investigated:

- **52%** for subletting fraud
- **24%** for right to buy fraud
- **17%** for non-occupation fraud
- **6%** succession/assignment fraud
- **1%** application fraud

The difference we make

Supporting tenants with the cost of living

We held several events across the city to support tenants with the cost of living. Working with partners we:

- signposted to financial advice and support
- supported tenants with rent and council tax arrears
- helped reduce Yorkshire Water debt
- gave advice and support on job opportunities
- shared tips on how to save energy and reduce fuel costs



Cost of living event for residents in **Gipton**

Our Housing Support Team helped tenants to maintain their tenancy by providing additional support with:

- the cost of furnishings and carpets
- food parcels
- rent arrears and other debt
- unemployment
- day to day support



Cost of living event in **Little London**

Case Study

A couple with three children were worried about increasing rent arrears after the closure of their Universal Credit (UC) claim. We worked with the DWP and the tenants to have their claim reassessed as some information was incorrect. Their UC claim was backdated resulting in a payment of over £4,000. This paid off the rent arrears and helped towards Council Tax arrears.

A lot of our tenants pay their rent by Direct Debit, you can also pay your rent online, by phone or in person. Visit www.leeds.gov.uk/rent for more information.



We understand that many of our tenants are impacted by the cost of living. If you are worried about paying your rent, we are here to help. Please contact your housing office. We can support you and check your entitlement to welfare benefits.

YOUR TENANCY

To find out more about ways to pay your rent and the support available visit www.leeds.gov.uk/rent



Living In a Friendly Environment
Retirement LIFE

Our service supports over **4,500 residents** to live independently in their homes in our **125 Retirement LIFE schemes** across the city.

- Our dedicated and friendly team of Support Officers are available to provide regular well-being checks, offering choice and flexibility to suit changing needs
- 'Living in a Friendly Environment' is at the heart of the services we deliver across all schemes. We have continued to increase staff presence on site, attending meetings with residents and social activities
- We are committed to scheme improvements, and in 2022/23 schemes at Cranmores, The Willows, Arthington Court and Greenside had new furniture, carpets and decoration to improve the look of the communal areas. Several schemes had successful HAP bids to provide outdoor furniture, garden storage and contributions to support tenants to celebrate events important to them.



Retirement Life service improvements

This year we're:

- Working closer with our partners Adults & Health and Local Care partnerships to improve signposting/referrals to support older people to live independently
- Speaking to our residents about things that matter most to them to improve the service we provide
- Making sure that our engagement with residents and activities are diverse and inclusive

Extra Care update

Extra Care Housing combines specialist housing with on-site care services for people 55+. It assists people with a range of support needs to live in their own home, within a community setting. It helps people maintain their independence and receive flexible support and care services.

In partnership with us, Home Group opened a 62-unit Extra Care Scheme in Seacroft in October 2022. Another Home Group scheme in Woodlesford is due for completion in January 2024. Our 60-unit scheme in Middleton is due for handover in early July 2023. We've also built 12 bungalows for working age disabled adults in the area. The scheme includes a bistro, a hair salon, communal gardens, an amazing roof terrace, and orangery. Residents of the bungalows can use the Extra Care Scheme facilities.

Our priorities for the year ahead

- Maximise rent collected from tenants to ensure that we are able to deliver our ambitious investment programmes to improve the quality of homes
- Support tenants who are affected by the increased cost of living, to maximise their income, pay their rent, and maintain their tenancies
- Visit as many tenants as possible through our Annual Tenancy Check In programme to identify any tenancy issues and ensure that tenants are supported in their tenancy
- Review our lettings policy to meet housing need, and to support new tenants into their home.



YOUR TENANCY

If you want to find out more about the services that we offer you can contact the **Older People's team on 0113 378 3696** or email housing.leeds.olderpeople@leeds.gov.uk

How we performed

- Helped **support 60 local tenants, residents and community groups** – helping them be independent groups and effect the change they want to see in their communities
- Invested in a **new mobile office** so we can meet with residents in their own communities
- Held a number of **events to help with the cost of living**, supporting residents to help maximise their incomes and work with partners and other services who can help.
- Continue to **support 100's of health and well-being activities** in our Retirement Life Schemes
- Worked with Leeds University, involving volunteer residents in research about **energy use** and it's links to **health and well-being**
- **Consulted with over 450 high rise residents** about building safety to help us improve our approaches to how we listen and respond to high rise residents.



The difference we make

Tenant Voice Panel

In February we launched a new 'Tenant Voice Panel' to strengthen your influence at all levels of our service. Open to tenants, residents and leaseholders, there are currently 170 members.. The panel's role is to:

- Act as a general sounding board on strategic and operational issues
- Help hold us to account on our service planning and improvement activity
- Be an editorial group, testing draft communications

The panel is designed to be accessible, seeking to attract a wide range of people living in different communities, and to give choice in how and when members wish to take part. So far, the panel has been involved in helping design this annual report, and are helping the Tenant Scrutiny Board with a review on damp and mould. We thank everyone for coming forward and being part of the new panel.

Housing Advisory Panels

HAPs made **277 local funding decisions**, to a value of **£492,000**, helping improve neighbourhoods and support community activity. You can see some examples of HAP funded activity in our HAP film. The 11 local Housing Advisory Panels, or HAPs, are made up of tenant volunteers and local councillors. They are given a budget to invest in local community or environmental activity in response to resident feedback and local priorities. HAPs also receive regular updates about performance and other issues or initiatives by local housing teams. Anyone can apply for funding, and each application is judged on it's merits and the benefit for residents as a whole



Citywide HAP get together where we shared the council's response to the cost of living and the support housing and other teams are giving to help residents



Housing Advisory Panels - Shaping a local community

Tenant Scrutiny Board

The Tenant Scrutiny Board reviewed how we listen and respond to your feedback, making a number of recommendations to us on how the new Tenant Voice Panel should work. We accepted these, and are grateful to the board in helping make the Tenant Voice Panel work as well as possible. In the second half of the year the board met with a number of staff from different parts of our service. As a result the board have chosen to review the advice and support we give to tenants about damp and mould as their topic for review in the year ahead.

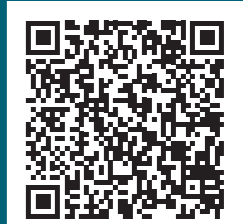
Who are the Tenant Scrutiny Board?

The Tenant Scrutiny Board are a group of tenant volunteers who review our services and make recommendations for improvement. When carrying out a review, they may speak to tenants, staff or any of our partners or contractors. They'll also look at management and performance information, and good practice from elsewhere to help them identify areas for improvement.

Outer North East HAP funded a 3 week summer youth radio and art camp which finished with a tour of parliament

YOUR VOICE

To read more about all the ways we listen and respond to your feedback visit www.leeds.gov.uk/tenantinvolvement



Complaints

Number of complaints received
2,538 (2021/22) 2,405 (2022/23)

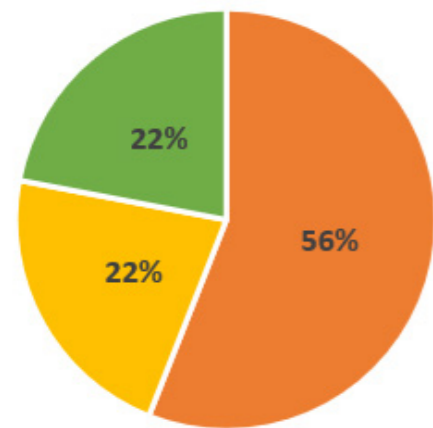
Complaints responded to in timescale
65% (2021/22) 73% (2022/23)

We welcome your feedback as it helps us improve the service that we offer. If our service fails you, you can complain to us so we can put things right.

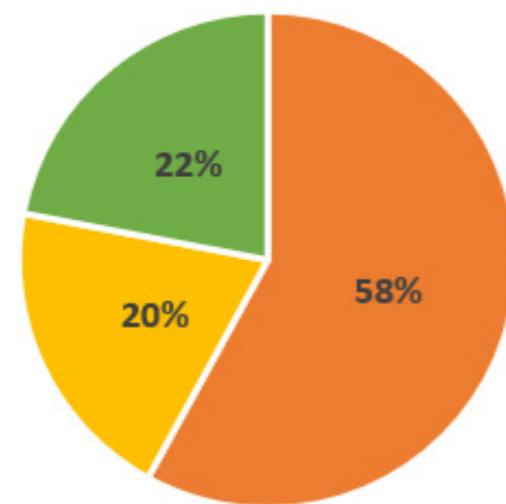
Four out of five complaints were resolved at **stage one** and **98%** were resolved without involving either Ombudsman. We work closely with both Ombudsman services to make sure that residents are given advice and information on how to access their services if they wish to.

What your complaints were about

2021/2022



2022/2023



- Day to day repairs
- Tenancy management
- Other

Our priorities for the year ahead

This year we will....

- Continue to support staff and contractors to listen to you and put things right
- Improve our record keeping as recommended by the Housing Ombudsman
- Work with both Ombudsman services as they develop their joint Complaint Handling Code
- Complete our annual complaints self-assessment alongside the new Tenant Voice Panel
- Continue to support staff with training and development to better respond to complaints

Case Study

What happened?

In January this year, the Housing Ombudsman published a finding of 'severe maladministration' on one of our complaint cases. Severe maladministration is a formal decision by the Ombudsman that a landlord has failed to do something, done something it shouldn't have or, in the Ombudsman's opinion, has delayed unreasonably. In this case the customer was waiting for repairs to be completed over a long period of time, which was largely due to poor communication, not just with the customer but also between council teams

What did we do to make it right?

We apologised to the customer for the delay in completing the outstanding repairs and the time taken to resolve the complaint. We welcome feedback from our customers to help us improve the service that we offer. On this occasion, the service that we offered fell below the standard that our customers should expect. We continue to review lessons learnt from all our complaints.

Our aim is to continually learn from customer feedback. We ask all customers to complete a satisfaction survey after we have responded to their complaint and after every repair. This allows us to understand what works well, and where we need to improve.

What changes have we made?

- Given our 'out of hours' staff mobile devices to update our repairs system. This allows our day-time staff to see exactly what work is outstanding and information isn't lost
- Shared the learning as a case study with all Housing Leeds staff and our contractors – this helps staff to understand the impact on our customers when things go wrong
- Refresher training for all officers who investigate and respond to complaints, including our contractors, to make sure that we are meeting our service standards – during the complaint investigation we missed the opportunity to put things right for the customer
- Introduced a new process which tracks any further works needed after a job has been attended. Our system tracks these orders
- Set up a new Damp & Mould team that tenants can contact directly. This makes sure that damp and mould reports are recorded and responded to quickly, and that tenants are kept updated
- Created a minor works team to manage this type of 'multi trade' jobs in the future

Other improvements made as a result of your complaints

- Developed our 'Early Intervention' team to help resolve your repair queries quicker
- Worked with our contractors to improve responses to complaints
- Carried out quality assurance checks on our complaint responses and supported Investigating Officers with training, advice, and guidance

YOUR VOICE

To read more about all the ways we listen and respond to your feedback visit www.leeds.gov.uk/tenantinvolvement



Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour

Leeds Anti-Social Behaviour Team (LASBT) work alongside Housing Leeds to respond to anti-social behaviour (ASB) complaints and concerns from across the city.

We've seen an overall decrease in ASB across Leeds over the last year. Working with West Yorkshire Police, we've focused on early intervention and prevention, as well as enforcement. Several initiatives to tackle ASB across the city have been successful.

Highlights from the last year include:

- Investing in initiatives to reduce anti-social bike use
- Using the Safer Streets fund to increase officer visibility
- Working with Youth Justice Service and Early Help Hubs to divert young people away from crime
- Improving local partnership working in hotspot areas to reduce nuisance and ASB committed by young people
- Conducting targeted operations to minimise ASB during 'peak' periods
- Creating a Leeds-wide Public Spaces Protection Order to prevent anti-social cruises across the district
- Working with partners to help address arson and nuisance fires
- Holding ASB Awareness Week. The theme was the impact of anti-social behaviour on young people



The difference we make

Estate walkabout summary

Estate Walkabouts give residents the opportunity to walk a set route around their local area with a Housing Officer to spot problems and suggest improvements. During the year we consulted with residents and ward members about how often we do walkabouts in each area. We're committed to completing two walkabouts per area each year. Last year we completed **547** across the city. We know that not everyone is able to attend a physical walkabout so last year we introduced Virtual Walkabouts. This allows more flexibility for residents to engage at times that suit them. Look out for virtual walkabouts in your area.

Other highlights over the year include:

- Working with the Tree Management Team to adopt a new approach to pruning work across the city
- Working with the Cleaner Neighbourhoods Team, Environmental Enforcement, and Waste Management to tackle environmental concerns
- Working with our partners to carry out 'Estate Action Days' to improve the environments of our estates
- Working with the Parks and Countryside Team to enhance ground maintenance during the winter months



Environmental action day in Seacroft

YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

For more information on how to report Anti-Social Behaviour please visit our website via the QR code



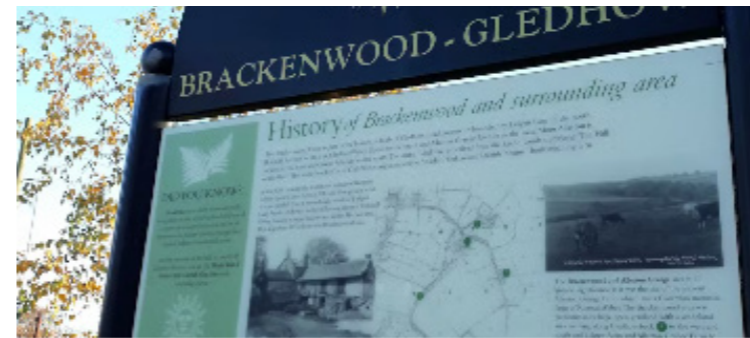
Lincoln Green MAFWA partnership

Roxby Close Community Garden

A disused playground in Lincoln Green, has been transformed into a community garden. The area is now an attractive, open green space with seating, planting, and areas to meet and play. We've worked with MAFWA and the local community to create a space that can be used to grow food, join workshops, meet friends, eat picnics, and enjoy the garden.



Our priorities for the year ahead



Your Place - Brackenwood

Carry out more online estate walkabouts to hear from a wider range of residents about local issues



Continue to respond to local issues, working with residents to achieve positive outcomes



Take a proactive approach to managing the environment



Work with our partners to improve how we manage anti-social behaviour

YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

Belle Isle Tenant Management Organisation

Belle Isle Tenant Management Organisation (BITMO) manages 1,800 council homes in Belle Isle on behalf of Leeds City Council. It is run by tenants of Belle Isle and is the largest estate based TMO in the country.

I'm pleased to share with you a short summary of the work of BITMO and what we're doing to build a better future for Belle Isle. As a tenant led organisation we rely on the commitment of our tenants to tell us what their priorities are, and to provide leadership through our Board.

If you would like to find out more about BITMO or get involved in our volunteering programme.

Please get in touch, we'd love to hear from you.

Deborah Kelly (BITMO Chief Executive)

Percentage of rent collected

96% (2021/22) **95.99%** (2022/23)

Investing in your homes

£1.5m (2021/22) **£1.9m** (2022/23)

Additional income generated for customers

£166k (2021/22) **£107k** (2022/23)

Homes with a gas safety certificate

99% (2021/22) **99%** (2022/23)

Number of complaints received

32 (2021/22) **42** (2022/23)

Complaints responded to in timescale

63% (2021/22) **69%** (2022/23)



Engaging with our residents

Working with our residents is important to us. We have lots of ways for tenants to get involved in reviewing what we do and helping us make decisions. Here are some examples of how we have improved services with you:

- Improved security and décor in response to feedback from our residents living in flats
- Improved the cleaning standards in our blocks of flats and installed CCTV

Thank you to everyone who has come to see us at our consultation events. We're listening to what you're telling us and this will help improve our services to you. There are opportunities for tenants to be part of working groups and join our board, to influence how we work.

Supporting our community

The **BITMO Community Fund** has been open for two years providing financial support to individuals and groups in six categories:

- Decorating and minor works
- Tenancy sustainability
- Training and skills
- Environmental improvements
- Voluntary group initiatives
- Green strategy

The Community Fund is able to give grants up to £500 in each of these categories. We have supported 69 applications so far. We've seen the highest demand in the tenancy sustainability category, as this supports with purchases of essential items such as beds, fridges and cookers. Some grants have been given to groups to run activities linked to health and well-being. Equipment has been provided for a new community garden on the site of a disused garage area. Last year we gave out **£11,000**. We are relaunching the fund this year to support more of our residents.



Building a better future for Belle Isle