



Annual Report

2018/19

Improving People's Lives



Halton
Housing

Welcome

As your landlord, we want to make sure that we are accountable to you for how we spend your rent money and how well we perform.

This report sets out our performance in a range of key areas, including how we keep our customers safe, how we provide landlord services including day to day repairs, and how we ensure value for money.

This year we have worked hard to improve our services to you and have made changes in response to your views. We've taken great strides to listen to our customers and make sure we are providing services that meet your needs.

That said, we are not perfect. We will continue to create better opportunities for you to have your say and hold us to account.

We will work to ensure that our services are easy to use, and that you have a choice of ways to contact us. We will increase our investment in neighbourhoods, working with you to create places we can all be proud of.

We will build more new homes to meet a range of needs including homes for older people and for those looking to get on the first rung of the property ladder. Most importantly we will work to ensure that our tenants are safe in their homes.

I hope you find our Annual Report interesting. If you have any questions or comments, please get in touch. Our contact details can be found on page 22.

From **Liz Haworth** - Group Chief Executive & **Clive Deadman** - Group Chair

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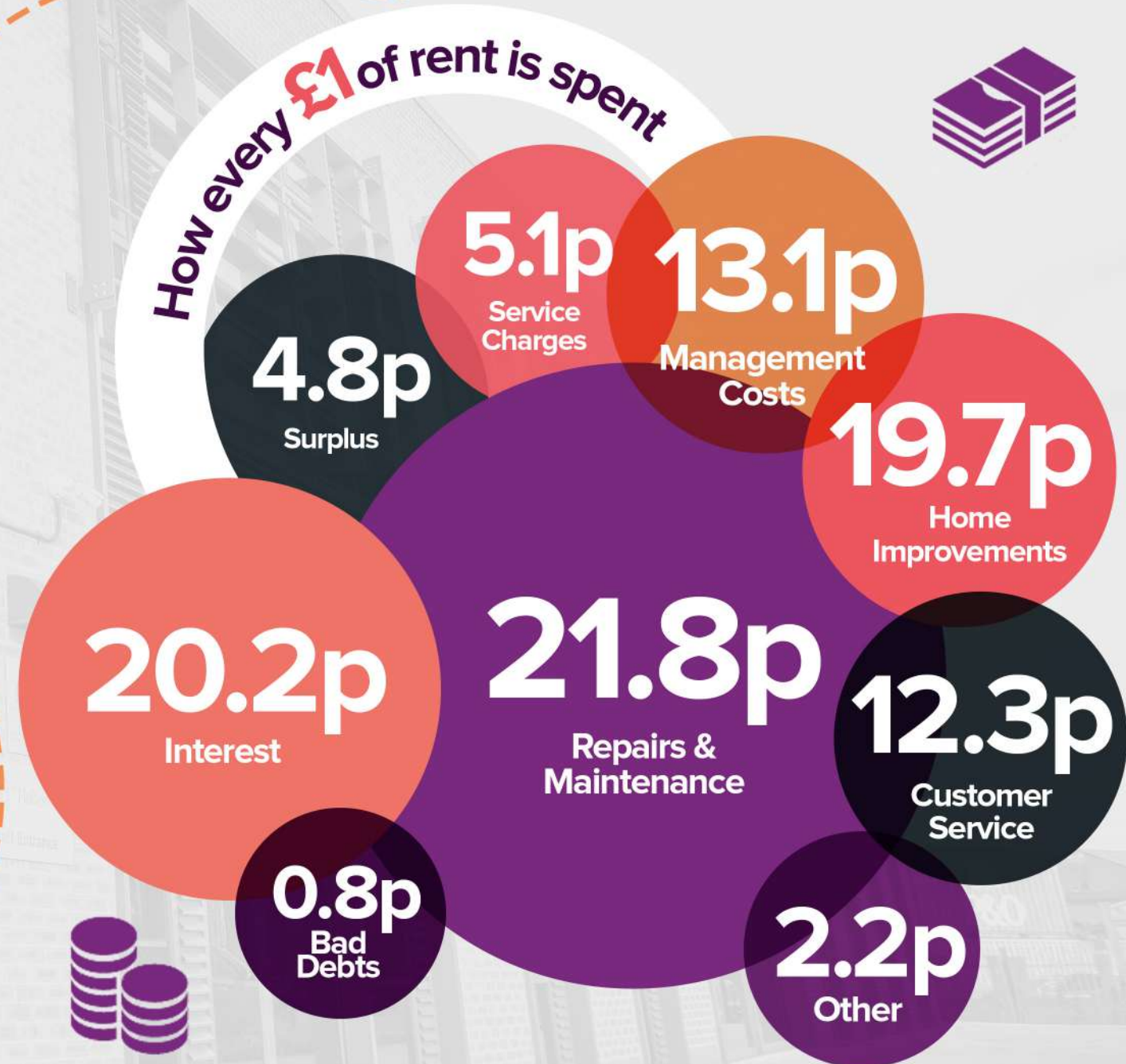


OUR DIRECTION

OD3 2019-2022

At a Glance

How every **£1** of rent is spent



Customers ...are at the heart of everything we do

Customeyes



To put this into action, we developed Customeyes- which is our sector-leading customer experience programme. This helps us to know our customers better, and turns their feedback into action, by delivering easy, intuitive and personalised services. It also makes good business sense, as it means we are delivering services that our customers value, whilst fixing problems before they start, thus reducing avoidable contact.

Customeyes is split into four key stages Discovery, Planning, Delivery and Review.

CUSTOMER INSIGHT

One of the key priorities in our corporate strategy

Our Direction (OD3) is **Customer Focus** and we are committed to listening to your voice and turning this insight into measurable action, so we can improve our services.

Customer Focus

21,420

Number calls answered

87%

Likely/very likely to recommend us to friends/family

210

Number of compliments

316

Number of Complaints



CO-CREATION

We have held 9 co-creation events with customers, so we could collaborate over key issue and design better services.

The Customer Scrutiny Panel have commenced their next review which will focus on Customer Engagement.

Recommendations from this review will influence our new Customer Voice Strategy.

CUSTOMER PRINCIPLES

Our Customer Principles have been created by listening to what matters most to you, our customers. By applying these principles in everything we do, each & every time, we aim to provide you with a great customer experience.



GET IT RIGHT FIRST TIME

We want to raise the bar of the services we offer, to be consistent, professional and of a high-quality in all that we do.



MAKE IT EASY

We want to make it easy for customers to use our services by using an outside-in approach of service design.



KEEP PROMISES

We want to get the very basics of our service right, making sure that we do what we say we will do every time.



LISTEN

We want to offer an array of opportunities for customers to tell us how we're doing, shining the spotlight on how customers feel.



We have developed our customer principles after analysing feedback from **1,600** customers. **You said, and we have listened.** These principles are our 'mantra' - whether it's knocking on a customer's door, a home visit, taking a call, a conversation at a meeting, using our app, or our written word on social media - the principles apply to all.

Repairs & Recommendations



Our Customeres programme revealed that our customers value and feel most strongly about our repairs service. This feedback led us to complete a more detailed review of repairs to see how we could improve our customers experience and deliver services more efficiently.

The review resulted in **31** recommendations for improvement, which we are currently working on over the coming months.



SATISFACTION SURVEYS

We've also reviewed the way we gather customer insight and have introduced monthly satisfaction surveys that ask qualitative questions so we can measure the entire customer experience.

From this insight, we've made changes to our telephone system and have recruited additional staff, allowing us to increase our Live Chat operation hours

Consequently, our telephone calls abandonment rate is now less than 5%, our improved front of house services are making it easier for customers to contact us, and we have captured our customers' feedback confirming 92% rated their experience as "good".



TEXT REPAIRS FEEDBACK

We continue to conduct transactional SMS surveys when repairs are completed as these give immediate, actionable feedback that can drive service improvement.



We Love our... Community

CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT TEAM.

Every one of our customers has the opportunity to get involved, and we are keen to support you to make this happen. We want to empower our customers to play an informed and active role in decision making at Halton Housing. We're committed to ensuring that the customer voice is heard and listened to. If you would like to get involved or find out more, talk to us!

There are many ways to get involved and make a difference to the services we provide now and in the future. This could be on a formal or informal basis, regularly or just now and then, working alone or as part of a larger group.

Ways you can get involved include:

- Board Members
- Customer Inspectors
- Customer Forum
- Street Representative
- Tenant & Resident Associations
- Community Events
- Customer Scrutiny Panel
- Editorial Panel
- Joining us on an Estate Walkabout
- Follow us on Social Media




Want to get involved?
 involved@haltonhousing.org
 or call 07903 594 957

This year, Grange Community Forum has been awarded the Annual Grant and Development Grant, receiving a total of **£1250**

This fantastic group put on many events throughout the year, including two children's events, an Easter and a Halloween event. This includes an entertainer, balloon modeller, face painter and tattoo artist which the children love. These hosted events are **FREE**, and all of the children are given a free lunch and a small gift when they leave.

The Grange Community Forum also runs an annual Christmas bingo event for the residents of the Grange Estate, which has over **100** attendees every year.



As well as ensuring that our homes are safe and secure, as the largest landlord in the borough we recognise that we have an active part to play in the wider community by helping to create new opportunities for individuals and groups and contributing to the quality of local life.

Through our Helping Hands initiative, we are able to provide community funding, materials and skills to projects which benefit the local community.

HOW IT WORKS

You can apply for funding via our application process. There is no limit to what you can apply for as each project will be assessed on an individual basis. So, tell us how you'd like us to help, and we'll be in touch.

These are just some of the initiatives we have helped in 2018/19 through the Helping Hands initiative:

- **YHA**
Provided breaks for families in hardship 
- **SEW HALTON**
Provided sewing materials and classes to people suffering from anxiety and depression
- **HALTON BROOK CHILDREN CENTRE**
Provided Christmas Hampers
- **HOUGH GREEN ALLOTMENT**
Funded solar panels allowing residents to make tea and coffee
- **THE WONKEY GARDEN**
Funded new garden project at the hospital 
- **AIDEN JACKSON**
Provided community defibrillator
- **VPX**
Funded Community Day at Victoria Park
- **FORTUNA FEMALE SOCIETY**
Funded a female empowerment event 



A Place ...to call home

ESTATE WALKABOUTS

We're doing everything we can to make our communities great. Our customers said they wanted to see us out and about more in their community, and one way we've responded to this is by starting walkabouts in April 2019.

Walkabouts are a vital way for us to see what we can do to improve our communities. They're an opportunity for customers to meet key Halton Housing staff, and to identify issues such as anti-social behaviour, environmental improvements and help create places to be proud of.

We have already carried out 14 walkabouts to date, and we have identified additional 112 anti-social behaviour issues and 27 environmental improvements. We regularly ask our customers to join us along with our partners and Council ward members to come along and see our estates.



9
Runcorn

ESTATE WALKABOUTS

18
Widnes

892 Number of ASB & Tenancy Enforcement Cases Dealt with

11 Joint Police Raids

16 Knife Sweeps Supported



DIGITAL GARDENING COMPETITION

This year's winners of our Annual Communal Garden Competition were Dovedale Court Tenant and Resident Group, voted for by our Customer Forum. The gardens are beautifully maintained, and Clive Odley, The Chair, ensures that the grass is cut, and the flowers are nurtured and looked after, turning the small space into what is now a fantastic courtyard garden that is welcoming, bright and aesthetically pleasing.

Not only have Dovedale Court Tenant and Resident Group won the 2019 Communal Garden Competition, but they have also been awarded the 2019 Tenant & Resident Grant of £500. The grant will be used to help with the cost of room hire and other things such as printing, ensuring the group can continue to run effectively and efficiently.



A NEW PLACE TO PLAY IN RUNCORN!

In October 2019, a newly renovated play park opened in Halton Lodge, Runcorn. The transformed play area now boasts two new multi-play units and sensory equipment, plus renovated equipment and is inclusive for all. There's also a new path which has replaced steps down to the basketball court, while the entrance to the area has been opened up to allow better views across the park.

Earlier this year, consultations took place with local children and members of the community asking what changes they would like to see, and what type of play equipment they would like to see installed.

All this is thanks to investment from Halton Housing alongside funding from the Environmental Fund and Halton Borough Council's Area Forum Fund.

“The residents of Halton Lodge deserve a huge amount of credit for making this happen. The new play area looks fantastic, and I have no doubt it will prove to be a big hit with children for many years to come.” Christine Walker - Environmental Services Manager

Previously this area had issues of anti-social behaviour with children, but since the garden maintenance began on the gardens, it is now respected by the local children and they seem to appreciate the hard work and efforts by the residents.

“We work hard keeping the gardens in good appearance. It's great to be recognised for our hard work. I plan on spending the vouchers on new pots and bushes to add to the array of flowers and plants we already have. It would be great to see more people get involved, it is very enjoyable.” Mr Odley



Everything

...under one roof

These are the improvement works we've done in your homes between Apr 18 - Mar 19:

367
REWIRES

299
BOILERS

211
FRONT DOORS

197
REAR DOORS

172
HEATING

102
KITCHENS

82
BATHROOMS

69
ROOFS

30
ROOFLINES

14 FRONT DOOR COMBI

5 GROUND FLOOR WCS

3 WINDOWS

KEEPING OUR CUSTOMERS SAFE



GAS

99.9% of our properties had an up to date certificate at the end of March 2019.



FIRE

100% of our communal areas have a Fire Risk Assessment (FRA)



ELECTRICAL

There are 6,215 electrical condition surveys (88.3%) that meet our five year requirement.



WATER HYGIENE

100% of planned legionella inspections were completed. Work started on risk assessing domestic dwellings in April 2019.



ASBESTOS

50.7% of applicable homes had an asbestos survey. 100% of communal areas had an asbestos survey.



LIFTS

100% of our lifts are in working order and regularly maintained

Number of repairs completed
21,698
Responsive Repairs

£6,431,000
Amount planned maintenance

£6,362,000
Amount spent on repairs

Number of repairs completed right 1st time
83.4%
From Customer SMS Survey Responses

Building Homes ...for the future

We have been involved in a number of key development projects over the past 18 months as we continue to deliver against our ambitious development programme to build and acquire 1000 additional new homes for rent, sale and shared ownership over the next 5 years.

Did you know?

We currently have a number of sites in the pipeline, including a 100 apartment Extra Care scheme providing the opportunity for customers to both purchase through Shared Ownership and rent through Affordable Rent. This scheme is currently in the planning phase.

TANNERY FIELDS - RUNCORN

In March 2018, Halton Housing acquired a plot of land on Picow Farm Road, Runcorn allowing us to create a £10.5million housing development, Tannery Fields of mixed tenure in a popular residential area of Runcorn, Cheshire. This development, supported by Homes England funding, comprises 71 brand-new homes and when fully completed, will be a mixture of two, three and four-bedroom houses and



bungalows. It will offer 30 homes for affordable rent, and our commercial subsidiary, Open Door will have 41 homes for Outright Sale, and there will also be Shared Ownership and Rent to Buy homes - helping more people onto the property ladder through different tenures that help meet customers' individual needs and circumstances.

Tannery Fields, also provides flexibility for customers, with shares available for purchase ranging from 25% to 75%,

depending on affordability and other eligibility criteria. Help to Buy is also available at this development, helping numerous families, first time buyers, and young professionals move into a home they can truly afford.

The first new build homes were handed over in May 2019 with all homes set to be completed by Summer 2020.

“Halton Housing has an ambitious growth and development programme, our aim is to build and acquire over 1000 homes by 2024. The investment in this development through Homes England’s Affordable Homes Programme, at a time when there is a significant national housing shortage, allows us to make a real difference to the provision of much needed high quality and genuinely affordable homes in this area”

- Paul Mullane
Director of Development & Growth, Halton Housing

BOWER BROOK GARDENS PHASE 2

Following the incredibly popular phase I development of Bower Brook Gardens, which was completed in summer 2018, we are now in the second phase of the large joint project in the Halton View area of Widnes. Working with project partners Open Door (our Commercial Subsidiary), and Russell Homes, the development will provide quality new build, semi-detached homes across a range of tenures.

With significant funding through Homes England Affordable Homes Programme, we’ve been able to respond to local housing demand for affordable housing within the Widnes area.

Bower Brook Gardens 2 is located in the Warrington Road area of Widnes and has an industrial heritage. The development is located on a 7.2 acre formerly derelict piece of land in Widnes and we are transforming it into a new and thriving community in this area of Widnes. The development is



conveniently located near motorway links and a town centre, meaning it is very accessible for residents. It provides flexibility for customers, with shares available for purchase ranging from 25% to 75%, depending on affordability and other eligibility criteria. Help to Buy is also available at this development. These options make the process of buying a new home possible to those on lower incomes, those with low deposits, or those who have experienced a change in their circumstances.

TENURES WITHIN BOWER BROOK GARDENS

-  **20** Homes for Sale
-  **15** Homes Available on a Rent to Buy basis
-  **16%** Homes for Shared Ownership
-  **18** Homes for Private Rent =69 units (Scheme size)

Total scheme costs
£9,702,688

Value of Affordable Homes Programme support
£972,857

Our People

...the pulse of our organisation

TALENT & RECOGNITION

Two members of our Leadership Team were shortlisted for awards at the prestigious Women in Social Housing awards in September. Carole Galsworthy, Director of Transformation was nominated for 'Professional of the Year' and Sue Smith, Director of Finance, for 'Finance Professional of the Year'.



We were also shortlisted finalists at the Halton Business Awards for 'Employer of the Year' in November. We were so proud to have been shortlisted as one of the largest employers in the borough. We employ over **330** talented people, with a variety of teams who come together to deliver our services.

From bringing an empty property back to life ready to let, offering welfare benefit advice, maintaining safe homes, or developing technology systems to keep the organisation running; we have a wealth of talent at Halton Housing.

We're an innovative and forward-thinking housing association that breaks the mould in terms of our approach to agile and flexible working, and we're always looking for talented people to join us!

A QUALIFIED TEAM

During the financial year 2018-2019 we supported **53** colleagues to pursue Higher Education which equates to roughly **1 in 6** people developing their skills, knowledge and experience via a formal pathway. The qualifications studied/gained

were predominantly in Housing and followed an apprenticeship framework.

The Apprenticeship focuses on achieving an industry-recognised qualification (e.g. Chartered Institute of Housing Certificate in Housing Practice) but also requires the

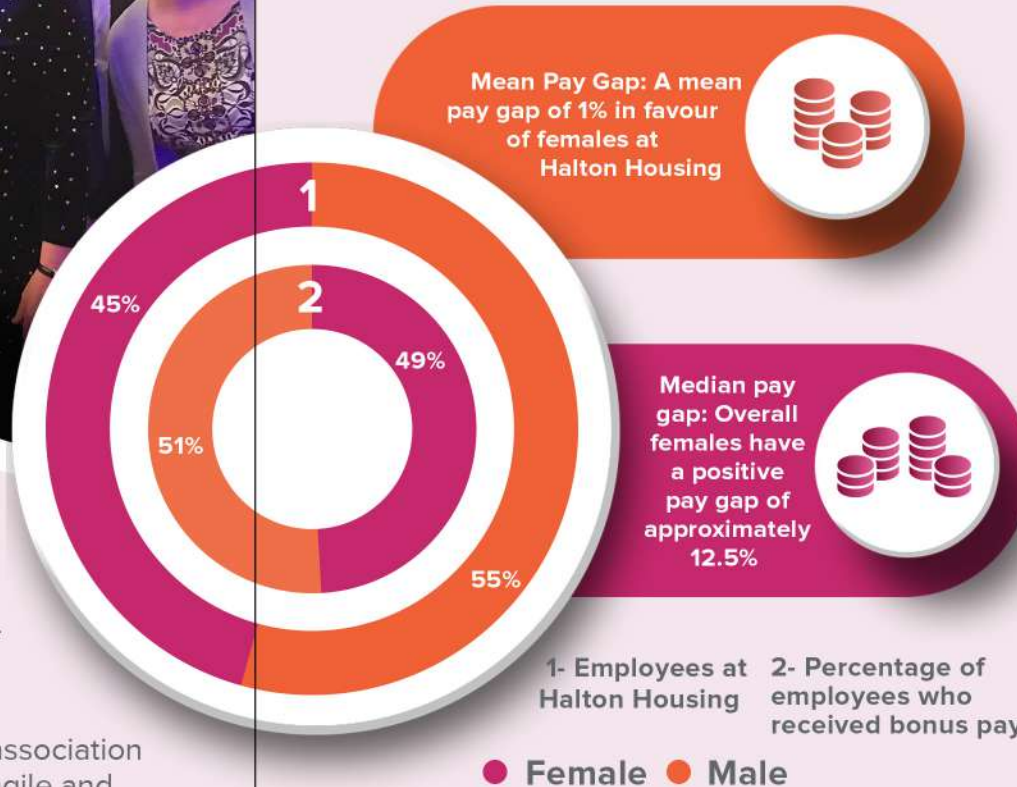
student to achieve set standards in functional skills (English, Maths and IT)

In addition to this, colleagues completed in excess of **4000** training hours during the period.



GENDER PAY GAP

We published our gender pay gap report for 2019, for the second year. We're delighted that we have maintained our positive gender pay gap with female employees receiving on an average (mean) salary 1% more than male counterparts and the overall median salary showing **12%** in favour of female employees in comparison to male employees. This year we have also appointed two females within the Executive Team (Group Chief Executive and Chief Operating Officer). **60%** of Halton Housing's Leadership Team is made up of women.



330 | Number of Employees **71%** | Colleague Engagement
7.5 | Average days lost through sickness/absence

"We are incredibly proud of our workspace and culture and champion equality, diversity and inclusion. The open and diverse culture of the business is integral to our ongoing success."

Natalie O'Hara, Director of HR & OD

OUR BEHAVIOURS

As your landlord how we interact with, and behave towards our customers is incredibly important.

All of our staff are committed to displaying our company behaviours.



WE KEEP OUR PROMISES

Making decisions and taking responsibility for seeing things through to the end. It means being open and honest, and explaining what is and isn't possible.



WE ARE INNOVATIVE & CREATIVE

We challenge how things are done. We are flexible and open to new ways of doing things. We learn from mistakes and continually seek to learn and improve.



WE WORK IN PARTNERSHIP

We work in a collaborative way. It means listening carefully to our customers and colleagues and playing our part in the team, and supporting each other.



WE TREAT EVERYONE WITH RESPECT

Most importantly we treat people with kindness. By being helpful, approachable and treating people with respect, we can create a place where difference is valued, and where everyone can thrive and enjoy their job.



Balancing ...the Books



Our Lifeblood Measures

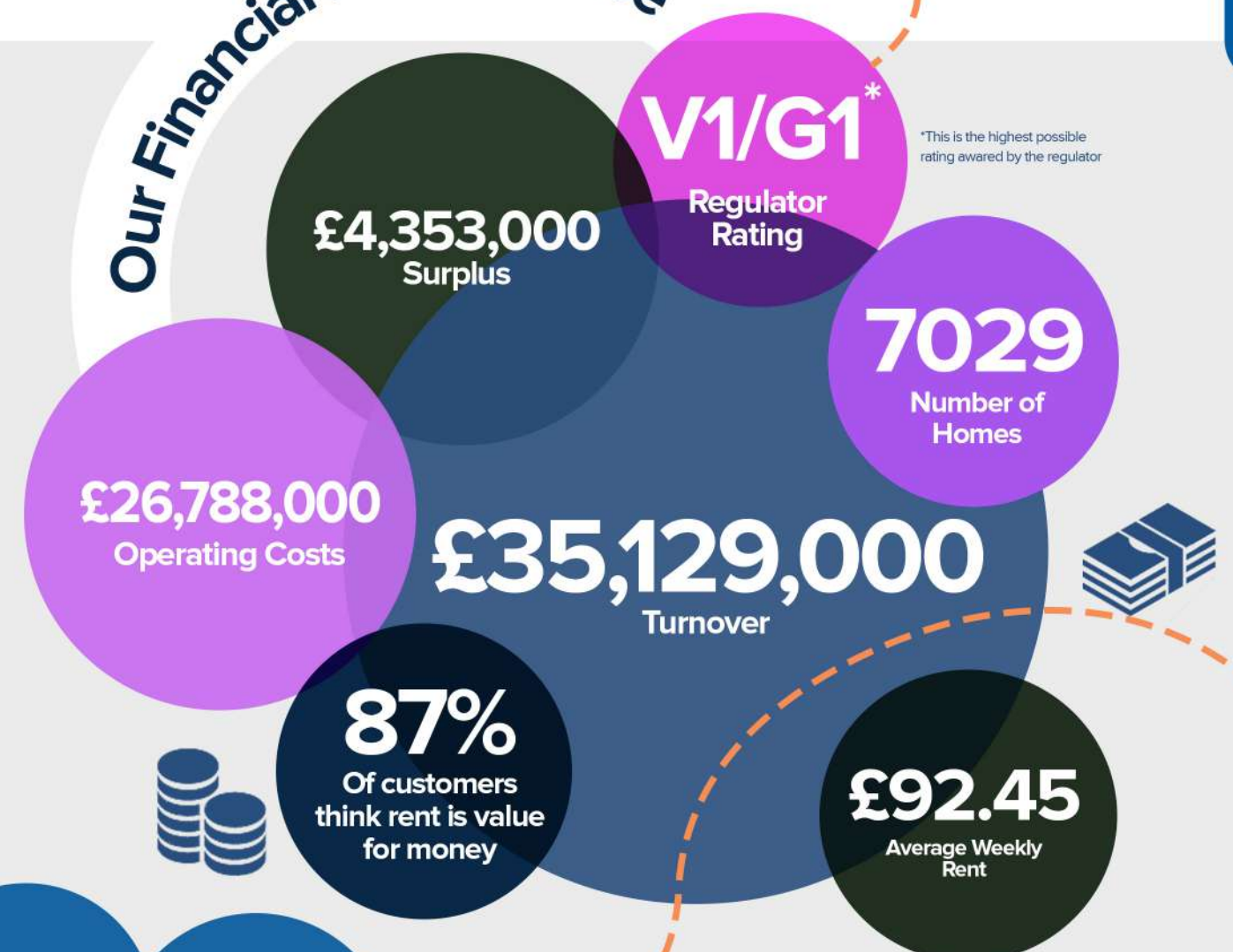
Measure	Actual ^{2018/19}	
Income collected from current customers	Cash Collection: 96.34% Arrears: £904k	The target has been achieved despite the impact UC has had on our cash collection and arrears. If income collection against arrears that were brought forward from the previous year is excluded, then our performance is 99.67% (17/18: 99.78%). Median performance for 2017/18 is 99.81%.
Void rent loss	£140.5k	547 properties were re-let this year with an average void period of 19.73 days. Our property occupancy level is 99.51% (17/18: 99.27%). Median performance for 2017/18 is 99.40%.
Customer Feedback	91.07%	4,217 surveys were completed during 2018/19 following day to day repairs and gas services. 91.07% of customers said they would recommend HH as a landlord to a friend or family member.
New Homes Completed	32	HH has built 256 new homes since April 2017. This includes 20 new shared ownership properties, four general needs bungalows and eight houses during 2018/19
Number of Unsold Homes	3	Two shared ownership and one buy back property were unsold at the end of March 2019.
OSUK Return on Investment	3.24%	The Return on Investment from OSUK to HH was 3.24% for the 12 months up to the end of March 2019. OSUK reported a profit (after interest) of £66k against a budgeted profit of £44.5k for 2018/19. The methodology for calculating this measure is different from 2019/20 onwards
Employee Engagement	71%	The average response rate of the six employee 'Pulse' Surveys carried out in 2018/19 was 71%.

Each year, as part of our annual budget setting and business planning process, we produce service area plans with our key objectives, and the resources needed to meet those objectives. **Performance** against the annual budget is discussed at our Board meetings. We review our budget every six months and update our Business Plan on a regular basis as the need arises. We have clear savings targets that are linked to our strategies. **Overall, we continue to outperform the budget each financial year, and 2018-19 was no exception.**

To measure how we are delivering our core strategy 'Our Direction' (OD3), a suite of success measures have been identified that link OD3's six priorities and key strategies. We call these our "**Lifeblood Measures**". They are reported to Board and cascaded throughout the organisation via the monthly Performance Clinics that are held with the Leadership Team and each operational service area.

In 2018/19 we have continued to perform well against our lifeblood measures, with six out of the seven meeting our stretching targets. A summary of our performance against these measures is included in the table (Right)

Our Financial Performance



Governing ...well

2018-19 saw two significant changes in the Leadership Team and the Board of Halton Housing.



Clive Deadman was appointed Group Board Chair in September 2019. Clive's background is in private equity, and he has held senior leadership roles in a range of utilities and infrastructure companies. Clive brings extensive experience from within the social housing sector, the NHS, consumer champions and a range of other commercially driven not-for-profit organisations. He passionately believes in the importance of great customer service.



In July 2019, Liz Haworth joined Halton Housing as new Group Chief Executive. Liz came from Torus where she was Chief Operations and Transformation Officer with responsibility for all customer-facing service areas and led their ambitious transformation & integration programme. Liz brings a wealth of experience in service transformation, people leadership and performance management from her roles within the financial sector, local government and housing organisations.

Leading digital...

As your landlord we want you to be able to access information relating to your tenancy, as easily and conveniently as possible. Our App and customer portal contain a wealth of information and allow you to interact with us over a variety of issues.

How you've chosen to engage with us this past year through the App, customer portal and Live Chat

436

Number of devices given to customers without online access

718 Per Month

Average volume of Live Chat conversations for the last 12 months

25-30%

% of repairs raised online

99%

% of rent balance checks online

***2000**

Average monthly volume of payments made online

*Approximately

Don't Forget!

You can contact us via Live Chat on our website, Mon-Fri, 9am -5pm, to speak to an advisor for help on a range of issues.



What you can do ...on the app

By using the Customer App you can manage your tenancy anywhere, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year

- Set up a direct debit & pay your rent
- Check your rent balance
- Report repairs
- Organise maintenance appointments
- Tell us about a problem in your area
- Update your contact details
- Keep up to date with Halton Housing news
- Access our digital toolkit to manage your finances
- Give notice to end your tenancy

62%

Number of customers registered on the app and portal

83%

Average % of customer-led transactions online for the last 12 months

Download our App now!



LEADING THE WAY IN ALL THINGS DIGITAL

In the past year we have held many 'Digital First' events at Waterfront Point, where 11 housing associations from all over the country have visited us to see first hand how we are implementing our digital programme with success. We're proud to be sharing this way of working and delivering services to our customers.

Carole Galsworthy from our Leadership Team has spoken at 7 events nationally, sharing best practice and talking about the work that we're doing at Halton Housing.

OUR DISRUPTORS

During the past year we have partnered with three leading UK universities on a project to develop, test and demonstrate technologies that measure the thermal performance of homes using smart meters and other data. We're doing this to trial new, innovative ways to improve the condition of your homes, and the service we provide to you.

Currently, the energy and environmental performance of a home is calculated using a SAP (Standard Assessment Procedure) method which can be inaccurate. Whereas the **SMETER programme** we are working on, will demonstrate whether tools based on measurement of energy use, can provide a more reliable and accurate assessment.

The programme will improve the reliability and accuracy of Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs), which are based on SAP, alongside the ability to measure and incentivise actual improvements to a building's energy performance.



Did you know
...that by 2030, all social housing homes must have a minimum EPC rating of C (the current guideline is E) Once our SMETER tools testing is complete, we will be starting an in-depth trial using special sensors in 40 of our homes to find a precise way to measure the same value in a less intrusive way. It could be **YOUR** home!

Engage ...with us!

- @haltonhousing
- @HaltonHousing
- @haltonhousing
- @haltonhousing
- Your Halton Housing Customer Account
- Live Chat
- talktous@haltonhousing.org

- Waterfront Point, Warrington Rd, Widnes WA8 0TD
- Tel: 0303 333 0101



Download on the App Store

GET IT ON Google Play

Download our App!

Within this report, all performance data is from April 2018-March 2019. There is additional narrative news/information from the past calendar year of 2019.



Halton
Housing