

Your Customer Annual Report 2017



Matthew Harrison
Chief Executive

Welcome to your 2017 Customer Annual Report. This year, we have once again worked with groups of customers to produce a report packed full of information that is useful, easy-to-understand and focussed on what matters to you.

It's been another strong year for Great Places in delivering on our vision; maximising our investment in sustainable homes, building successful vibrant communities and providing outstanding customer service and support.

I know that how we invest in our homes is important to our customers, so as usual we have included plenty of information on repairs, maintenance and safety. We are proud to have achieved 100% compliance in all areas of safety this year to ensure your home is as safe as possible, especially in light of the tragedy at Grenfell Tower.

Making the best use of new technology has been a key priority for us over the last year. Our corporate annual report was digital only, and we have condensed this one down to just six pages. We have also invested a lot of resources into our brand new website, which is now full of information for you to browse, including a number of brilliant case studies which are highlighted in this report.

Many thanks to everyone who helped to shape this report, and who continue to make our magazines insightful, interesting reads. Our customers' drive to get involved in shaping our services is always inspiring and I look forward to seeing a selection of your hard work recognised at the Community Stars Awards next year.

I hope you enjoy reading this year's report and have a fantastic New Year!

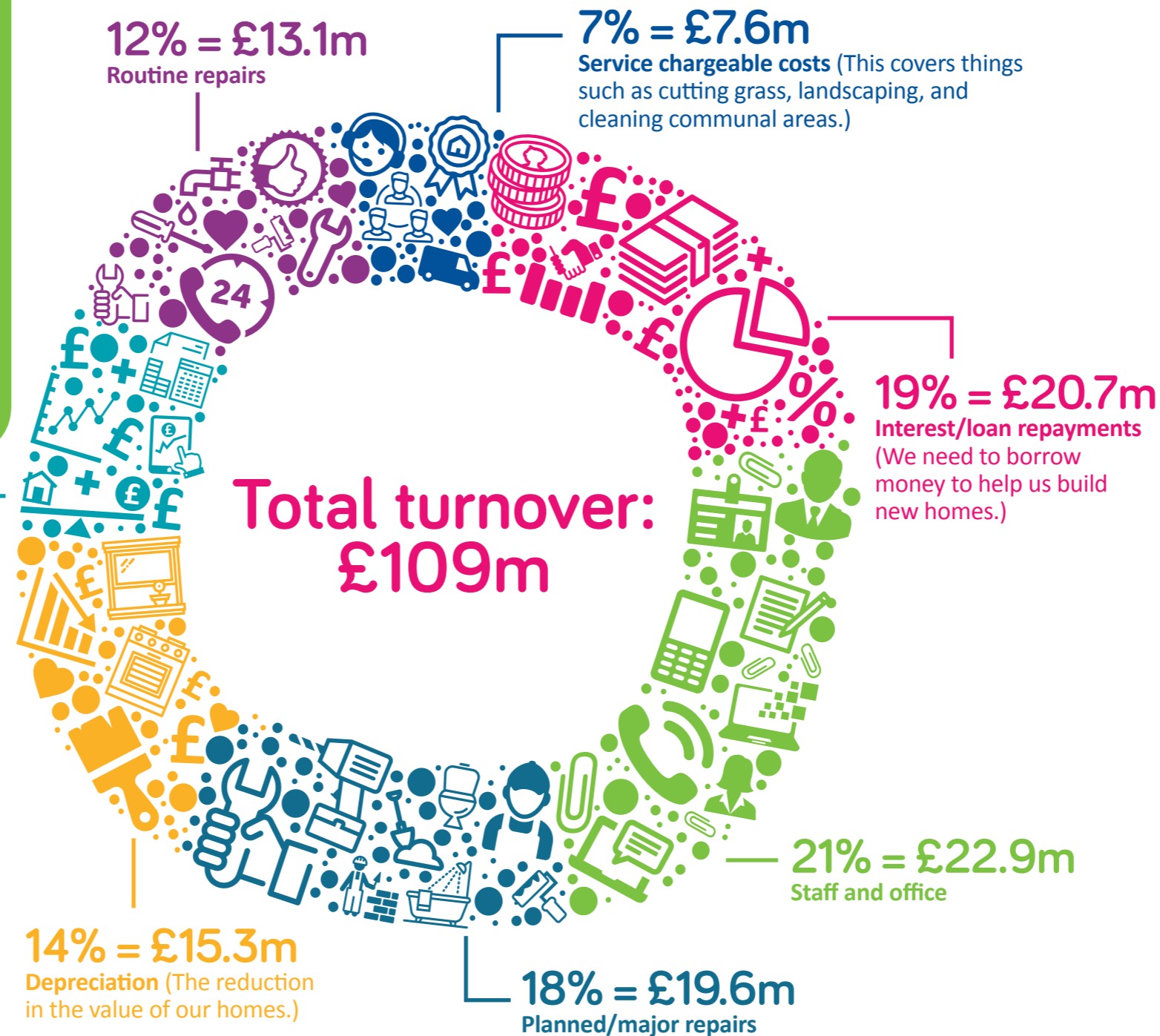
Our values

- We are fair, open and accountable
- We know, respect and care about our customers
- We appreciate the effort of everyone who works here
- We promote partnerships, efficiency and value for money
- We passionately embrace creativity, change and innovation

1. Finances

Profit for Purpose

As a 'profit for purpose' organisation, we aim to maximise our surplus to enable us to deliver our key priorities and realise our vision of **Great Homes, Great Communities, Great People**. We've created a visual document to explain how we make the most of our surplus and how we invest it back into our communities. You can view it on our website, www.greatplaces.org.uk.



Record breaking performances!



22 days

Average re-let time
(Improved for four years running!)



2.6% arrears

(We collected more money this year than last year despite the rent cut!)



£350,000
saved by re-letting homes quickly

2. Great Homes

Great homes are our bread and butter, and this year saw us build **625** new quality affordable homes across **14 local authority areas**, as well as investing **£14.4m** in existing homes.

We were also delighted to receive further funding from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) to develop another **872 new properties** through Great Places' home ownership specialist company, Plumlife.



92.3%
satisfaction
with repairs



85%
repairs completed
on first visit



10 days
average time to
complete a repair

£32m
spent on repairs,
maintenance and
investment



The introduction of our repairs materials distribution centre continues to pay off, delivering an annual saving of **£150k!**

3. Great Communities

Great Places' vision isn't just to build great homes, but to create thriving communities. We pride ourselves on being more than just a landlord and invest as much as we can into transforming the lives of our customers.

Our Social Investment Team continue to make a real difference to people's lives, and in the last year have helped nearly **200 customers** find jobs, as well as supporting **180 customers** into voluntary placements. We've also given information, advice and guidance to over **1000 people**.

463
customers helped
into training

78.4%
satisfaction with
the handling of
ASB cases

£2.3m
passed on to
customers

Saving you money!

Over the last year we helped our customers save **£2.3 million** through benefit advice, utility savings and affordable credit.

We provided support to customers struggling with Universal Credit, and joined up 14 other housing associations nationwide to conduct further research into how Universal Credit affects residents across Greater Manchester through the Sharing the Credit project.

We've also continued to help hundreds of customers cut down their bills through our home energy visits and 'check, switch and save' events, saving residents **£33,000** on fuel last year!



Fallon's story

From a kayaking and outdoor pursuits instructor to a leathercraft specialist, with help from our Residents' Fund and Employment and Skills Team, Fallon started her dream business. Read her story at www.greatplaces.org.uk.

Over 64,000
customers!



19,000+
homes in our
portfolio



£87.3m
invested into
building new homes



97.3%
satisfaction with
our new homes

Keeping your home safe!

Your safety is our number one priority. In the last year we achieved the following:

- **100%** properties checked for gas safety
- **100%** communal areas with in-date fire risk assessments
- Fire risk assessments carried out on **100%** of our high-rise properties, providing reassurance following the Grenfell Tower fire
- Maintenance checks on **100%** of elevators
- **100%** homes tested for electrical safety certificates
- **100%** of water safety checks completed
- **100%** of asbestos inspections completed



How do we manage the allocation of repairs jobs?

Jobs are allocated based on customer need, urgency and the availability of resources. Emergency jobs are attended within **four hours** and non-emergencies within **28 days** at a time convenient for the customer. Improvement works are planned using a database which records the condition of each Great Places home. This information is kept up-to-date by our stock condition surveyors who complete over **2,000 property reviews each year!**



Tackling anti-social behaviour

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) remains an important priority for us and this year we achieved a **78.4%** satisfaction rate with our handling of ASB cases. We continue to invest in preventative measures and long-term solutions to ensure your communities remain great, safe places to live.

This year we were delighted to be commended by the Morecambe police force for resolving a spate of youth-related ASB incidents. You can read the full story at www.greatplaces.org.uk.

160
Community Stars
nominations
received



4. Great People

We believe it's the people that make our neighbourhoods special, which is why we try to include you in our decision-making as much as possible. From mystery shopping and call audits to scrutiny reviews, every year we use customer experiences to help us improve, and allow our people to deliver the best service they can.

1,621 customers were involved in shaping our services this year!

£86k worth of projects funded this year



Residents' Fund

The Great Places Residents' Fund is a pot of money to support employment opportunities or community projects. Funding is decided by Great Places customers, via our Customer Funding Panel to ensure we remain open and accountable. To read about funding recipients, VOICE Sunday Family Club, visit www.greatplaces.org.uk.

Who are Insight?

Insight are a group of customers who volunteer their time to scrutinise our services – this involves collecting feedback from other customers, interviewing staff and assessing which areas could use improvement.

Insight not only offers customers the chance to learn new skills, it also keeps us 'fair, open and accountable' and gives us a true picture of ways we can continue to improve.

Insight's latest update

Insight completed **four** service reviews last year and have now started their next review around 'customer communication and repairs'. The group have so far interviewed key members of the Repairs Team, listened to incoming calls to our Customer Service Officers, and surveyed customers about the services they have received.

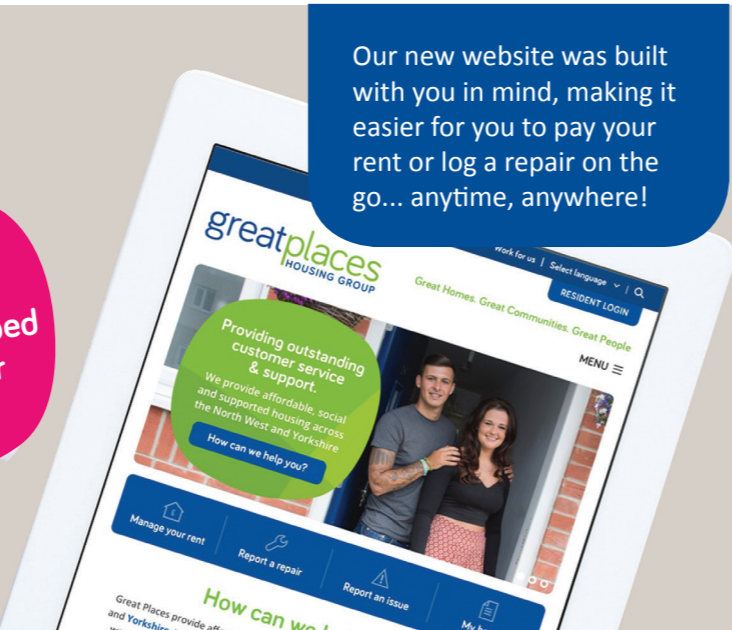
Suggested areas of improvement will be taken to the Board in December. To read the full list of recommendations, visit www.greatplaces.org.uk.

420 calls audited by customers

86.1% satisfaction with Great Places

128 repairs call-outs audited

900 customers helped us shape our website



Our new website was built with you in mind, making it easier for you to pay your rent or log a repair on the go... anytime, anywhere!

Interested?

Insight is always looking for new members who can help with scrutiny. So if you want to get your voice heard and you feel you have skills you can offer, contact us on **0161 447 5020** or email Involvement.Team@greatplaces.org.uk.

5. Independence and Wellbeing

Our business change journey, Building Greatness, has seen us rebrand our Supported Housing service as 'Independence and Wellbeing'. This better reflects the service we provide, and the goals of our supported schemes, which are committed to helping our customers develop key life skills and achieve their goals.

2,579 people supported

Which needs do we support?

- Homelessness
- Young parents
- Mental health issues
- Addiction
- Older people



Shannon's story

Shannon's mum passed away when she was 18, meaning she had a lot to deal with emotionally, as well as becoming suddenly independent. With accommodation and support from Bluebell Court, Shannon is now working towards a career in the Police as well as completing a social care course. Read more at www.greatplaces.org.uk.

How do we help our customers reach their goals?

When a new customer moves into one of our supported housing schemes or receives a support package, we work with them to identify their goals and strengths and help them to develop a plan. We can do this in a number of ways including:

- Providing high quality accommodation, including specialist accommodation for those with additional needs.
- Support, with a focus on promoting and maintaining independence and wellbeing.
- Working with other agencies, allowing us to provide holistic support.
- Partnerships with voluntary and statutory organisations to provide innovative services.

Getting you online!

We understand that not all of our residents have the time to complete face-to-face training, which is why this year we introduced a new range of e-learning courses. Parents at Sarah Lodge were the first to try it out, completing their choice of accredited courses at a pace that suited them. We plan to roll out e-learning across more of our schemes over the next year.

1,600 customers who maximised their income

450 customers who progressed with training



994 customers completed a planned 'move on'



A total of **eight** MPs visited our Independence and Wellbeing schemes to champion supported housing during the General Election!