

Your Customer Annual Report 2018

great
places
HOUSING GROUP

Great Homes. Great Communities. Great People.



Welcome.

Your 2018 Customer Annual Report is packed full of information that is useful, easy to understand and focused on what matters to you.

Welcome to your 2018 Customer Annual Report. It's been a really challenging yet strong year for Great Places and seeing some of the headlines of these past 12 months really emphasises how eventful 2018 has been.

I know that how we invest in our homes is important to you, so as usual, we have included lots of information on repairs, maintenance and safety in this report.

We are delighted to have achieved 100% gas compliance for the last three years, ensuring your home is as safe as possible, and this year we have invested £33m into building new homes.

I really enjoyed meeting up with customers in Blackpool, Oldham and Manchester this year who all helped influence our response to the Green Paper. The Green Paper sets out a proposed strategy for reforming social housing.

A key priority for us again this year has been making use of new technology. Our new Corporate Plan, released in March, was digital only and included our aspirations to be a fully digital business.

Thank you to everyone who helped to shape this report. Our customers' drive to get involved in improving our service is inspiring and I look forward to seeing a selection of your hard work recognised at the Community Stars Awards next year.



Our values are strong



We are fair, open and accountable.



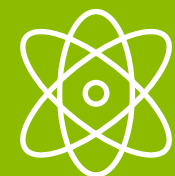
We know, respect and care about our customers.



We appreciate the effort of everyone who works with us.

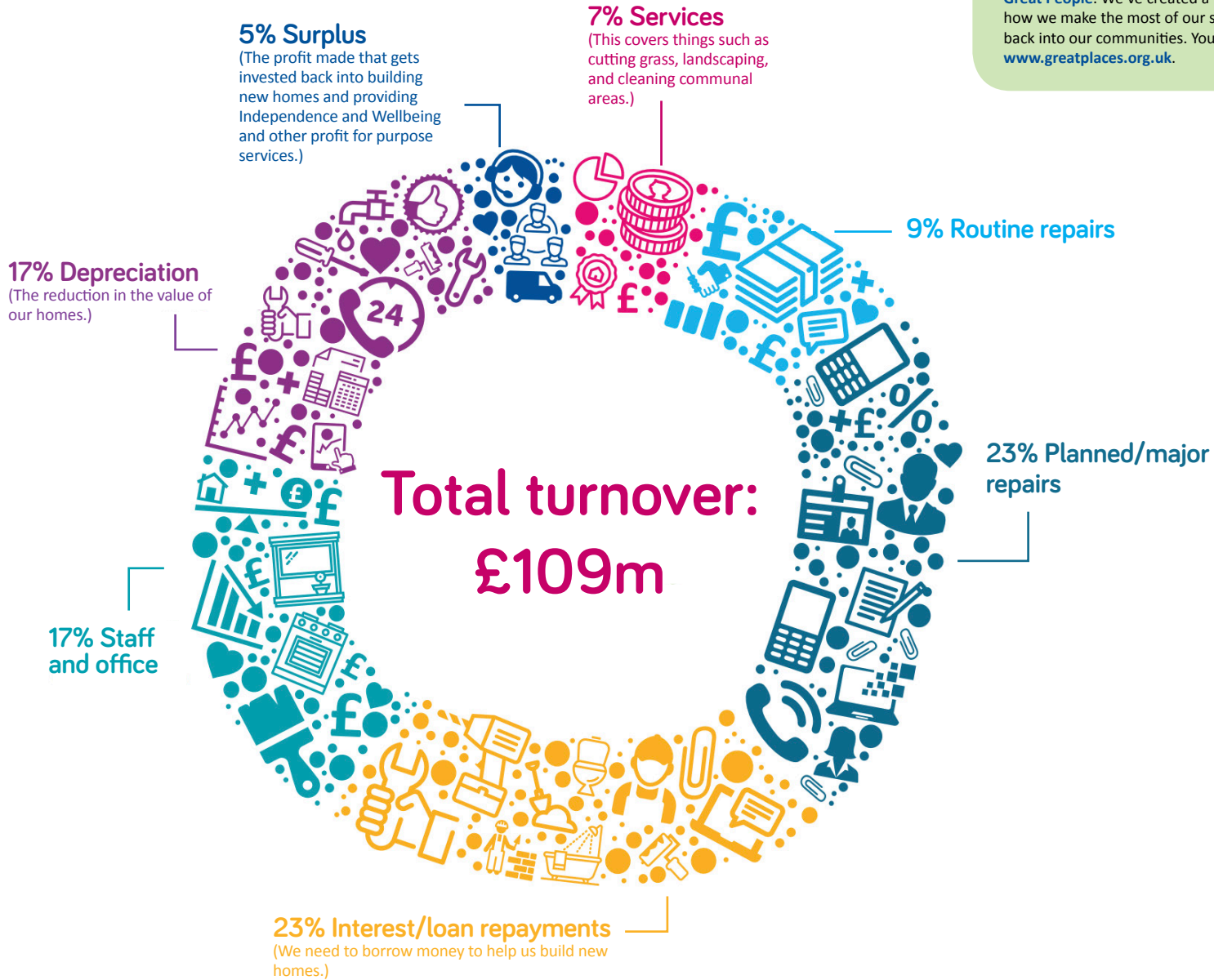


We promote partnerships, efficiency and value for money.



We passionately embrace creativity, change and innovation.

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 achieve 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.



Great performances!



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



2.8% arrears
(We collected more money this year than last year despite the rent cut!)



£16m
invested in improvements to our properties

Great Homes

Great homes are our bread and butter, and this year saw us invest over **£33m** in building new quality affordable homes, with **304** completed and another **523** on site.

We also invested a further **£16m** into our existing homes that facilitated nearly 3,000 programmed improvements to over 1,900 properties.



93.8%
satisfaction
with repairs



86.1%
repairs completed
on first visit



8 days
average time to
complete a repair



**100% gas compliant
for three years!**

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
- **93.37%** homes tested for electrical safety certificates
- **100%** of water safety checks completed
- **100%** of asbestos inspections completed



**Over
49,000
customers!**



19,000+
homes in our
portfolio



£33m
invested into
building new homes



99%
satisfaction with
our new homes



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!**

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 supported **1,163 households** into work or training, and over **1,774** people who took part in our community projects.

1,163 households into work or training

£2.3m passed on to customers

£300k spent on neighbourhood initiatives



A Bed Every Night

As part of Andy Burnham's A Bed Every Night (ABEN) provision, we will be providing 10 beds for rough sleepers at Pomona Gardens between 1 December 2018 – 31 March 2019.

Working in partnership with Trafford Housing Trust, Trafford Council and Irwell Valley, the accommodation will offer 10 camp beds, along with two bathrooms with wash basins and a small kitchen with kettle, toaster and microwave.

Read the full story at www.greatplaces.org.uk.

Saving you money!

Over the last year, our Welfare Reform Team helped **2,104** customers make savings of **£2.3m** through benefit advice, utility savings and affordable credit.

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 **20 million** litres of water and saving customers **£30,000!**



Chloe's story

Chloe, one of our customers in Trafford, has lived in a Great Places property for just under 10 years. With help from our Residents' Fund and Employment and Skills Team, Chloe started her dream business. Read her story at www.greatplaces.org.uk.

120 Community Stars nominations received



£30m saved

Involving our customers

It is important that we listen to what our customers think of our services and what is important to them.

Last year over **5,000 surveys** were completed, **1,788** of these measured overall satisfaction with Great Places as a landlord and **3,251** of these measured satisfaction with our repairs survey.

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.

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.

1,570
customers were
involved in shaping
our services this
year!

Fallon used the
Residents' Fund
to start her own
company.



Real Choice, Real Change

'Real Choice, Real Change' is all about showcasing the benefits of getting involved at Great Places. Hear first-hand from customers how they have been able to make a difference to themselves and their communities through volunteering with us.

Read Bev's story online at www.greatplaces.org.uk.

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 visit www.greatplaces.org.uk.

Meet the Chief Executive

This year our Chief Executive, Matt Harrison, hosted three 'Meet the CEO' events in Blackpool, Oldham, and our Head Office in Manchester.

Over **40 customers** attended the three sessions where they had the opportunity to meet Matt, find out more about how we work, and ask any questions they had about Great Places.

It also allowed customers to influence our response to the five themes in the Green Paper. We received some really useful feedback and it was brilliant to hear first-hand from our customers how they think the housing sector could improve.

Matt Harrison,
CEO



We have
10,000
community
centre users in
Oldham



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.

1,941
people supported

Which needs
do we
support?

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

We completed 416
aids and adaptations to
allow customers to
live independently

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.



Russell's story

One of our customers from St Wilfrid's Place, Russell, came to us while on Weather Watch, which means he was sleeping rough on the streets and had accessed our services because temperatures got dangerously low.

St Wilfrid's helped Russell turn his life around. Without it he fears it wouldn't have ended well for him.

You can read Russell's story on our website www.greatplaces.org.uk.



Esther came to Meadow Lodge after a particularly bad mental health episode, where she admits she spiralled – drinking and acting out. Read Esther's story at www.greatplaces.org.uk.