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Welcome to our latest Annual Report.

Due to the pandemic, the past twelve months have been very challenging for us all, which is why we're particularly proud of how colleagues right across the business have stepped up, often in difficult circumstances, to provide much needed support for our customers.

Working with tenants, in communities and alongside partners we've been able to deliver essential services like access to food and medication; befriending calls to reduce social isolation; advice, activities and wellbeing support for families; grants to community groups so they can carry on the great work that they do; and been able to put a roof over the heads of those in real danger of becoming homeless.

As well as supporting you with essential services and advice, we've worked hard to make sure that your homes continued to be warm, safe, and comfortable places to live. Gateway colleagues have often gone above and beyond to make sure we delivered services to the required levels.

We also recognise that despite our best efforts we haven't always managed to carry out work to our usual standards, and where we may have fallen short we've worked hard to put things right. We've valued both your feedback and patience over the course of the year while we wrestled with the many restrictions placed upon us.

In addition to improving existing homes, we developed over 100 affordable homes during the year. A particular highlight was the launch of The Courtyards, our flagship extra-care scheme in Ingol. The Courtyards opened its doors in February and is already providing a wonderful home to many.

Community Gateway celebrated its 15th birthday this year and we remain as proud today as we were back in 2005 to be a membershipled housing association. Over those 15 years we've continued to put our tenants and members at the heart of everything we do and truly value the important contribution that you make to influencing and improving services. In keeping with these founding principles, over the past year we developed and launched our Gateway Promises to clearly set

out the levels of customer service you can expect from us. We're proud to say that these Promises have been developed by our tenants, for our tenants.

We hope you enjoy reading the report.

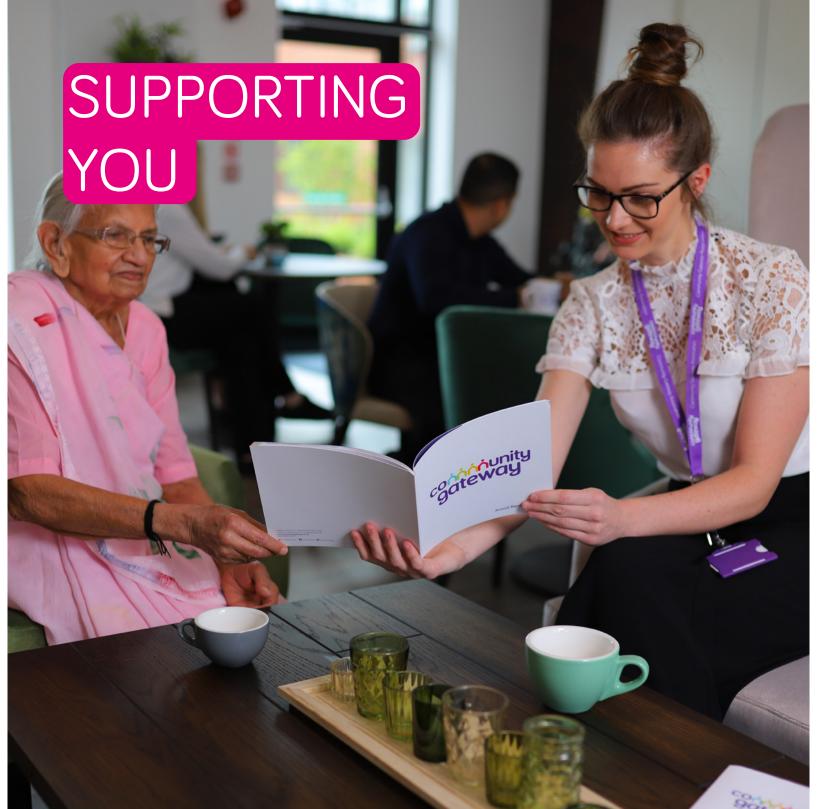






You can read more about our breadth of work in our communities in our Impact Report which you can find at www.communitygateway.

co.uk/impactreport



During 2020/21, with the impact of the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns, many of our customers quite rightly needed that little bit of extra support and we didn't shirk our responsibilities. That's one of the benefits of living in a Gateway property; it's what we do.

Right at the start of the pandemic, we responded to customer needs and promptly set up a dedicated Support Hub, which went on to help an incredible **866** people. Our Hub team worked with partners city-wide to offer food, medication, befriending, social activities and help with mental and physical wellbeing. Everyone who got in touch with us also received a Winter wellbeing support letter through their door.

Reducing social isolation

Supporting older people to feel less socially isolated is something our customers tell us in all our regular surveys that they care deeply about. So, our teams all made a tremendous effort to keep in touch with those who needed us most over what was an especially tough year.



"I live on my own so the calls from the Outreach and Support team kept me going and really were my lifeline; having someone to talk to is worth its weight in gold."

-Mary Gateway tenant



Here's what our fabulous Outreach and Support team have been up to:

20,000

SupportLine team visits and calls.



28,539

'Let's chat' extra calls made, helping to connect people.

13,920

Sheltered newsletters were delivered.



786

People attended our virtual events.

£250

Was raised during our virtual Christmas Market.



In the early stages of the pandemic, many people told us they were feeling extremely vulnerable, self-isolating or shielding, and needed help getting food and financial support.

Between March and July, colleagues from across the organisation worked tirelessly to deliver **2,904** emergency food parcels to people in financial hardship, and a further **6,146** hampers to customers who were self-isolating or shielding.







"Thank you very much for my food parcels over the last few weeks - you have been lifesavers! I've not left my house for over five weeks as I am disabled with 3 young boys at home and my carer has had to self-isolate. I don't normally ask for help, but I needed to. The support from Gateway made all the difference to us."

> -Emma Gateway Tenant

OUR PURPLE PANTRY



Customers told us that they loved the food in the mobile hampers we delivered. Many said they had not bought fresh fruit and veg for years, so it had been a real treat. One said it was the first time in months that they hadn't gone to bed feeling hungry.

It became clear to us that people frequently struggled to afford a weekly shop or had to stick to buying a limited range or 'value' products. So, we stepped up and launched our own affordable food outlet – The Purple Pantry in Moor Nook. It's stocked with top notch food including tins, fresh, chilled and frozen goods as well as sweet treats. Membership is open to all Community Gateway customers and local people.

Everything on our shelves is fresh surplus food from our suppliers. We are lucky to work with James Hall & Co (Spar UK) who supply most of the food.

In the last 12 months, over **5,200** people visited the Pantry, and it has provided food to more than **8,500** adults and **5,000** children.



More information on our Purple Pantry can be found in our Impact Report



We awarded £9,000 from our Community Fund to 16 community projects benefitting 2,579 local people. Our grants helped groups like Fishwick Rangers deliver a basketball programme for 30

black and minority ethnic women.

We also continued to provide regular support, both practically and financially, to our valued local partners including: Preston Domestic Violence Service, Lancashire Women, The JJ Effect (pictured opposite), Church on the Streets, Sahara, Preston Community Hub, Preston Windrush Descendants, Deepdale Community Association, Disability Equality North West, local primary schools, and Withy Trees Welfare and Education, to name but a few.

We used our experience to help groups bid for other sources of funding. At Farringdon Park, this allowed them to purchase activity packs for young people to entertain them during lockdown.





The impact of our support:



People benefitted from our Community Fund grants.



Local Partners supported.



Families took part in our Safer Streets campaign.



Children entered our Christmas Card competition.





We regularly work with partners in the Police and Preston City Council. so when Covid-19 restrictions eased, we were glad to be able to deliver one of our regular multi-agency action days in Larches and Savick.

The event allowed us to hear first-hand local concerns, as well as offer advice and guidance where appropriate on anti-social behaviour and promote our new anti-social behaviour and noise nuisance Apps.

We've delivered numerous community projects across our estates to try and tackle antisocial behaviour, prevent it from happening or offer support to those affected. These projects usually start by our teams going out and

listening to people sharing their views and concerns about what matters to them.

Bleasdale Street East

One such project was at a communal area on Bleasdale Street East in St. Matthew's. Nearby residents told us the patch of land had become an eyesore, attracting anti-social behaviour and criminal activity. It was clear that some of the overgrown areas made it easy to hide, which made people feel unsafe. People liked the idea of creating a garden but didn't know where to start.

Working together with our customers, our Tenancy Management and Community Engagement teams developed a plan to transform the whole area into a beautiful community garden. Tutors and young people from our charitable vocational training subsidiary, Preston Vocational Centre, built wooden raised beds and the whole area was cleared and cut back. Once it was ready, we arranged for six keen residents to undertake training with Let's Grow Preston to help them to manage the garden moving forwards.



Our Employability team continued throughout the pandemic to support local people to find work or better jobs. We invested in new creative ways of connecting with and supporting people, including providing much of our skills training and resources online. Our weekly job club sessions took place both in person and 'virtually'. Where we couldn't meet in person, we continued to check in with people over the phone - often that lifeline call they needed.

A

We supported others to run job clubs in our neighbourhoods, like those offered by voluntary group Sahara in Fishwick, and we worked with large employers like the NHS to train local people to be 'job ready' ensuring they were given a guaranteed interview after their training.

Our charitable subsidiary, Preston Vocational Centre continued to deliver vocational construction skills training to **301** young people outside of mainstream education, of which 95 studied for a BTEC qualification.

People accessed 149 employability support.

Students at Preston Vocational Centre

People went on 16 to get a job.

People gained 49 qualifications.

People went into education.

People took up volunteering.



More information can be found in our Impact Report





When sounding out your views about your priorities, you told us clearly you wanted us to take a lead in reducing homelessness.

We're pleased to report that we have already made great strides in tackling the issue and have taken strong and decisive action, finding homes for many of our city's homeless people and rough sleepers.

When Methodist Action North West went into liquidation in 2019, we were more than happy to step in and support the existing Fox Street community. Shortly after the pandemic struck, we quickly realised that the old-style building was unsuitable for social distancing.

Our priority had to be to keep the men living there safe. There was only one feasible plan of action - to relocate the 18 residents into available Gateway homes as soon as they became available.

It was a proud moment for us all as we witnessed people step through the door of their very own home, often for the first time

For homeless men, unused to living in and managing their own homes, this was a significant and challenging step so we made sure that there was an ongoing package of care for everyone, tailored to their needs.

Working with local charities like the British Heart Foundation and the Salvation Army, we were able to furnish the properties plus buy new white goods, kitchen utensils and TVs so that new residents not only had a home, but everything they needed to start afresh.

"This is my chance and I'm going to make a really good job of it, I've got a place of my own and it's going to be grand, I can't believe it to be honest, everyone has been so helpful sorting me out. I'm over the moon."

-Brett Former Fox Street resident As well as the Fox Street community, our dedicated Housing Pathways team worked with the local authority and others to help 60 other people, who were previously homeless, secure a place to call their own. At Gateway, we are now providing a package of support to these new tenants, including help with budgeting, cooking, finding a job, access to welfare and legal aid.

We continued our strategic approach to tackling homelessness by starting building work at the end of the year. The work involves transforming two of our empty sheltered accommodation complexes into modern, spacious

flats for homeless people and families (the start of the refurbishment pictured above).

It's a significant investment, but we know it will bring unique and much-needed accommodation to Preston. We are proud to be at the forefront of helping play our part in developing solutions to this complex problem.









Over last Summer, families told us the one big worry on their mind was being able to buy school uniforms in readiness for September. We put our heads together and set up a Uniform Bank, with support from the Lancashire Community Fund.

We created 11 donation points across Preston and customers responded in droves! Our staff managed to deliver enough parcels to kit out **600** children with laundered pre-loved uniform, as well as brand-new shirts, lunch bags, stationery and toiletries. Anything left over was given to local schools.

Kids in the Kitchen

We worked with 'The Larder' to provide families with food and online cooking classes, so they could learn key skills and share nutritional meals at home when many were struggling – 177 families took part sharing quality family time.

Other family activities included the Big Lunch, a bake off, craft events, environmental challenges, CGA Bookworms and a Safer Streets campaign.



"After my marriage recently broke down my son and I were struggling for money, so this was a MASSIVE weight off my shoulders and very much appreciated. Thank you for your act of kindness."

Gateway Tenant





When the pandemic first started, our priority was to keep our customers and colleagues safe, whilst still delivering our essential repairs and maintenance service.

We developed new ways of working to protect our colleagues and customers, so that emergency repairs and vital gas safety inspections could continue. During lockdown, we redeployed people immediately to front-line roles to ensure people in our neighbourhoods were kept safe, fed, and supported.





By the end of May 2020 we were back to delivering most of our services, including our work to develop a new and enhanced standard for our 'ready to let' properties. Customers had told us this was a priority for them moving home, so we now go the extra mile with enhanced finishings, such as decorating and flooring, to help new tenants get off to a flying start.

Our HomeCare programme was developed directly with our customers to make repairs and maintenance of your homes more effective, efficient, and convenient for households, who wanted the most important work carried out with minimal inconvenience to them. It involves us carrying out a thorough review of each property every five years to ensure it remains in good condition.

We carried out **725** HomeCare internal surveys and **1,265** external surveys throughout the year. From the survey results and in conversation with residents, we can prioritise any work required and complete it in the fewest number of visits. During the lockdown periods when we were not permitted to go inside

people's homes, we invested that time on outdoor projects, such as roof replacements and external painting or brickwork repairs.

During 2021/22 we will invest in getting our internal works like fitting your new kitchens and bathrooms back on target, by redirecting teams and buying extra supplies.

We redesigned outdoor bin stores and landscaped some of the shrubberies, verges, and patches of land in several neighbourhoods. We talked with customers in Moor Nook to see what mattered to them and went on to redecorate eight blocks of flats and fit new flooring. We also added security lighting and repaired and spruced up the flagging surrounding the blocks.

During 2020/21 we fitted:





Unfortunately, the first lockdown restrictions fell at the start of our grass-cutting season, which meant we were unable to deliver the quality of service then that we would have liked.

We had to dramatically change the way our GreenCare team worked. We fitted screens to our Gateway vans and leased additional vehicles, as well as bringing in extra equipment and people to make sure we could get our estates in tip-top condition as quickly as possible, despite the challenges. We took time to hold great conversations with customers, which led to further grounds maintenance quality measures being included in our Gateway Promises – our new service standards.

In the early days of the pandemic our GreenCare colleagues were unable to carry out their normal work, but were first in line to volunteer to make a valuable difference in other ways. They swung into action to help customers by delivering food parcels to the elderly or those shielding and got stuck in with the mammoth logistical task of rehousing 18 people quickly and safely from the Fox Street Homeless Shelter.

Football pitches' worth of grass cut.

6,444 Front gardens' worth of hedges cut.



I enjoyed working with different colleagues from across the business. The fact that we were helping those who most needed food support was really rewarding.

> -Adam Boulton, Gateway GreenCare

WELCOME TO THE COURTYARDS

We were delighted to open the doors to our flagship extracare scheme 'The Courtyards' in Ingol, in Spring 2021.

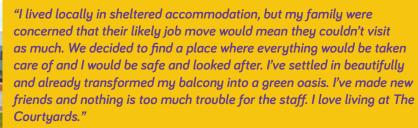
Customers worked with us to develop much needed suitable facilities for older people and devise a blueprint for a place that would offer high-quality affordable apartments for the over 55s, with support and community close by.

Out of this vision was born The Courtyards. Residents are already enjoying the stunning facilities, spacious living, landscaped grounds and that real sense of community spirit. "I moved here with my wife, who has some health problems. We don't need care services yet, but it's reassuring to know it's here when we do. We feel completely safe here. I've already made myself at home on the outdoor exercise equipment. Touches like that make a real difference."

- Ala



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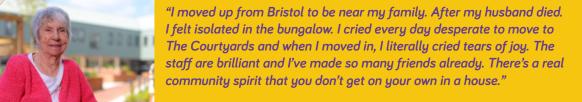


Gwen



"We lived in a nearby flat, but were starting to struggle with the stairs. We're neither of us getting any younger, so decided to take the plunge and move somewhere now that was more accessible, with facilities on site. We're really happy here and love meeting new people at the coffee mornings in The Bistro."

-George



-Dot



We're committed to providing more affordable homes for local people, so we are delighted to have built **79 brand** new homes during 2020/21. There are new homes for rent right across Preston and beyond, including at Steeple View, Garrison Road, Isherwood Street and Geoffrey Street. We also brought eight eyesore empty homes back up to scratch as part of our 'Making Homes from Houses' project with Preston City Council.

We built new homes on unused garage sites and pieces of land, which were often neglected, overgrown and a magnet for anti-social behaviour.

All our new-build homes come with energy-efficient features, saving our customers money and we are pleased too that by the end of last year, **5,227** of all our properties were rated at Band C or above for energy efficiency.

78% Of p exce

Of properties meet or exceed the Band C energy efficiency rating.

98

Affordable homes for rent developed.

8

Empty Homes refurbished and relet.











It's important to us that we represent the communities we serve, so that we can better understand the needs of everyone who lives in our neighbourhoods.

We employ people from the local area where possible and it's reassuring to see that nearly 80% of our colleagues live nearby. This allows us to gain that important local knowledge so we can offer an informed and tailored customer service. We also take great steps to ensure we are an inclusive and welcoming employer and last year 95% of our people were 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with Gateway as a place to work. We're proud to have been an accredited Living Wage Employer since 2014.

As a founding member of the 'Preston Model', we directly support the regional economy by buying our goods and services from local companies, boosting the supply chain, creating more jobs for local people.

We spent over **£9m** in the region over the last year on jobs, goods and services.

We employ 287 people (of which 52% are men and 48% women).

8 out of ten colleagues live locally.

18% Of our workforce are 55 years plus.

Over 10% of our workforce are from black and minority ethnic groups.

During 2020/21, 18% of our 33 new starters were from ethnic minority groups.

Colleagues have declared a disability with a further 40 advising us of a long-term health condition.

AGE POSI+IVE









We put tenants at the heart of all we do, so are always keen to increase opportunities for everyone to get involved in shaping our services.

In response to what customers told us, we launched a digital tenant consultation and engagement portal in November. By the end of March, it had 280 tenant members who had used it on more than 7,000 occasions. It complements our face-to-face events and group discussions as a vital consultation tool.

Our tenant-only Facebook group helps us keep in touch with customers and also enables tenants to connect with each other. Being able to provide services online, listen and involve people was more important than ever last year. The insight we gained during lockdown from our digital platforms, allowed us to better tailor services to meet customer needs, such as our children's cooking activities and our 'Crash Course to Employment' training, the latter giving pre-employment and life skills to young schoolleavers.

We offered more bite-size opportunities for tenants to get involved with us, including polls, mystery shopping, and informal focus groups, as well as traditional committees. Our CGA website has been totally refreshed making it clearer and easier for people to find what they need, and our social media channels offer a constantly updated stream of 'need to know' information. Our quarterly tenant magazine Gateway News, overseen by our tenant champions group, was redesigned to reflect more of what customers wanted to see.



We launched a digital tenant consultation and engagement portal in November.

7 Digital newsletters were produced and issued to customers.

Digital Training courses were completed by customers.

Devices were issued to customers to help them get online.

1,125 Customer views gathered.

We are committed to providing customers with the best possible service, but sometimes we know we might get things wrong. If anyone is unhappy with any aspect of our service, we encourage them to let us know, so we can try to put it right.

In the last year we received **40** complaints, **33** of which were upheld or partially upheld and our aim is always to learn from these.

We made several changes as a result of complaints received over the last 12 months, including:

- •Improving how we communicate with people about health and safety matters, providing more information on social media in bite-sized chunks to ensure everyone knows what is expected and why.
- •We also made sure that when we couldn't get into homes to check the property was safe, action was taken quickly to avoid further delays.

- •We asked our repairs contractors to provide more thorough notes after home visits, so we know what customers have been told and that the work meets their and our expectations.
- •Amended our rent letters to make them clearer and supportive, so people know what help is on offer and changed the wording on our leaseholder service charge letters to make them simpler and more transparent.
- •Changed the way we deal with pest control issues, with more focus placed on investigating how pests were getting into homes and fixing those issues.
- •Gateway PropertyCare teams were trained on the importance of spotting patterns in repairs issues, so that when repeat problems occur they can be addressed quickly.
- •Retraining our Gateway GreenCare team to ensure standards were being met when cleaning communal areas in blocks of flats.



Our PropertyCare team are trained to spot patterns in repairs.



We received compliments about our Grounds Maintenance teams.

We received **70 compliments** in the past year, which means we received almost double the number of compliments than complaints - really positive news!

Customers thanked several of our staff, but a couple of teams received numerous compliments; our Tenancy Support team for their support during the pandemic and our GreenCare colleagues for their work on our garden scheme and Grounds Maintenance service.

Throughout the year, we worked in partnership with tenants to develop our brand-new set of Gateway Promises. These detail 17 customer service commitments for the standards our customers can expect from our teams.

In creating our Gateway Promises, we consulted directly with more than **280** people. We also listened to what tenants told us when completing surveys, participating in focus groups, or raising complaints if we hadn't got something quite right. This allowed us to consider a further **1,125** views, with the whole process overseen by our strategic tenant body, Gateway Central, who ensured we truly listened to and involved customers every step of the way.

The result was a brand-new simpler set of standards, created by our customers, for customers.



Adapting through new technology
In the early days of the pandemic,
our IT Team responded quickly
to ensure colleagues had the
equipment they needed to work
remotely – ensuring we continued
to deliver essential services to our
customers. Thankfully, everything
went smoothly and colleagues
continued to deliver a high-quality
and flexible service, away from
their normal workplace.

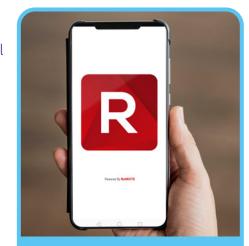
We undertook a successful pilot of testing WiFi in our sheltered schemes and will be rolling this out to all sheltered schemes in the year ahead.

Feedback from the Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR) told us that our customers would welcome alternative ways of reporting issues. After a successful trial period, a new digital App was launched in November 2020, which allows people to record and report anti-social behaviour and noise nuisance. To date, almost 200 people have downloaded the App.

You can find out more about our App at www.communitygateway. co.uk/anti-social-behaviour

"I'm out at work all day and making phone calls to explain my issue is the last thing I want to do when I get home. The Reporting App just downloaded to my phone and it lets me send in information in my own time, quickly and easily. It also lets me know that CGA have received it and what they are doing about it. It's much less time consuming, so better all round for everyone."

Mr Gardner, a CGA customer of over ten years



Our new Remote Reporting App

25



Community Gateway is a not-for-profit organisation - this means we operate for a social purpose and provide services that people need. All the money we receive is invested in our homes and a range of neighbourhood and associated services that you will have read about within this report. As such, every penny is spent on the things that you have told us are a priority for you.

In 2020/21, most of our income came from the rent you pay, which totalled £28.5m, plus additional borrowing of £21m.

Despite the impact of Covid-19 we continued to invest heavily in maintaining and improving your homes, spending almost £15.7m during the year (an increase of 32% on last year).

We carried out external works to a number of homes, such as roofing and internal works (including kitchen, bathroom and central heating replacements).

By continuing to use the HomeCare approach you developed with us, we were able to maintain the quality of your homes in a more targeted way, carrying out over 700 internal and 1,250 external works.

This proactive approach generates savings that we can redirect into maintaining your homes and the services we deliver to you.

Our strong financial management meant we could spend £13.9m to build and acquire 106 homes for rent, including remodelling 12 properties. We also started work on a further 147 during the year.

In line with our Growth Strategy, we have **669** new homes approved for construction, with 161 of these (25%) already contractually committed.

These include our first shared ownership homes at Oak Lane, Newton and Lightfoot Lane, Preston. We have also identified sites where we plan to develop an additional **231** homes.



Internal works continued as part of our scheduled programme.



Investing in high quality appliances in our new properties.



Work began on our shared ownership properties in Oak Lane.

We believe our services are efficient and continue to provide value for money. Over 84% of our customers feel that they get value for money from the rent they pay.

We continue to have higher than average levels of customer satisfaction, with almost 90% of you saying you are 'very' or 'fairly' satisfied with our services. We also compare well in terms of our costs, putting us in the **top 25%** of most efficient housing associations.

During the year, we were delighted to secure an additional £95m of low rate, long-term funding.

This allowed us to repay some of our existing debt, but more importantly, provided funding to deliver the priorities within our Corporate Plan including building and acquiring much-needed new homes across Preston and the surrounding areas. During the coming year, we will also continue to maintain your homes to a high standard and offer you our full range of support services that you have told us are important to you.

For further information please see our 2020/21 Financial Statements on the Community Gateway website at www.communitygateway.co.uk.



We will continue to maintain your homes to our same high standards.



Crystal rose gifts for our involved tenants.

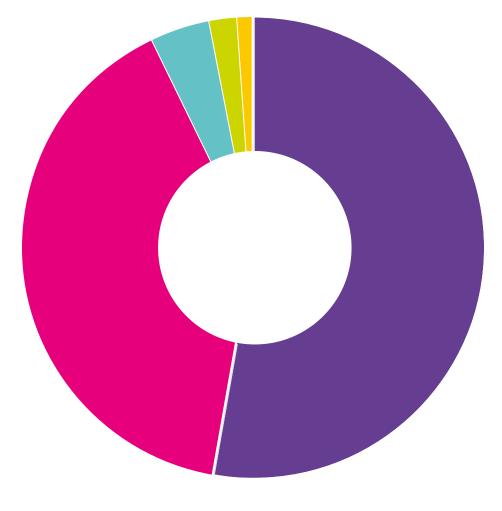


Almost 90% of our tenants are 'satisfied' with our services.



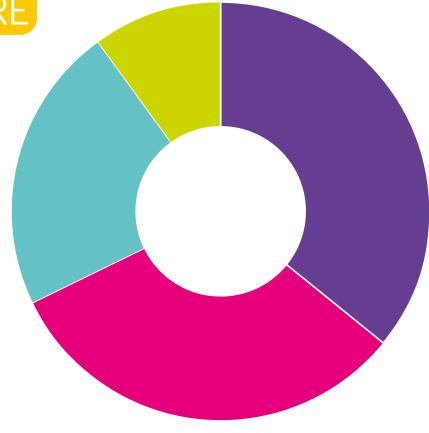
An additional £95m of long-term funding has allowed us to continue building and purchasing much-needed affordable homes.

2020/21 INCOME



- Rents and Service Charges (including garages) £28.5m (53%)
- Borrowing £21m (40%)
- Grant Income £2.3m (4%)
- Property Sales £0.3m (1%)
- Other Income £1m (2%)

2020/21 EXPENDITURE



- Improving and maintaining your homes £15.7m (36%)
- Development £13.9m (32%)
- Housing Services £9.6m (22%)
- Interest £4.4m (10%)

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
Turnover	31,810	31,258
Operating Costs	(23,754)	(23,118)
Gains on disposal of property	285	1,287
Operating surplus	8,341	9,427
Other interest receivable and similar income	12	21
Interest and financing costs	(4,415)	(4,065)
Movement in fair value of investment properties		_
Surplus before taxation	3,938	5,383
Taxation on surplus from ordinary activities	-	(1)
Surplus for the financial year	3,938	5,382
Actuarial losses on SHPS defined benefit pension scheme	(1,291)	(67)
Actuarial (losses) / gains on LGPS defined benefit pension scheme	(4,061)	1,621
Total comprehensive income for year	(1,414)	6,936

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 MARCH 2021

	2021	2020
	£'000	£'000
Fixed assets		
Tangible fixed assets - housing properties	191,773	181,967
Tangible fixed assets - other	8,425	8,100
Investment properties	1,065	1,065
	201,263	191,132
Current assets		
Stocks	1,494	-
Debtors - receivable within one year	6,408	2,019
Cash at bank and in hand	14,181	4,550
	22,083	6,569
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(7,129)	(5,746)
Net current assets	14,954	823
Total assets less current liabilities	216,217	191,955
Conditions are supplied falling due of the areas there	(156.460)	(176 220)
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	(156,469)	(136,220)
Pension liability	(6,612)	(1,184)
Net assets	53,136	54,551
Capital and reserves		
Income and expenditure reserve	59,748	55,735
Pension reserve	(6,612)	(1,184)
	53,136	54,551

This report is also available at communitygateway.co.uk/ annualreport where you can use 'Recite Me' to translate it into another language or read it out loud.

Tenant-only Facebook Group f /groups/CGAEngagement

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