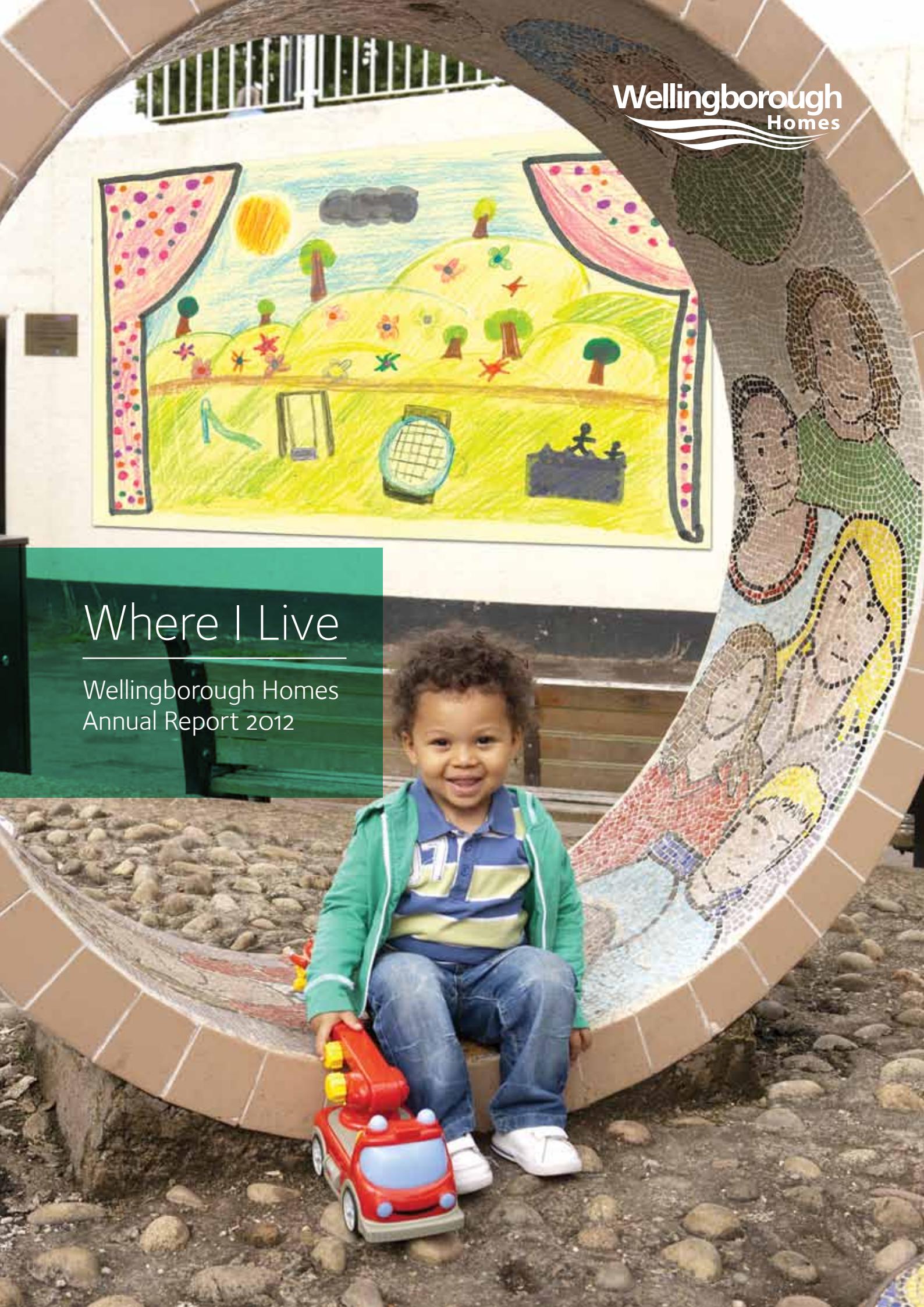


Where I Live

Wellingborough Homes
Annual Report 2012



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A welcome from the Tenant Advisory Panel

Welcome to Wellingborough Homes’ fifth annual report, which outlines their achievements over the last year, how they are performing and plans for the future.

The focus of this report is our community, and Wellingborough Homes have presented information based around the areas where we live. Each section highlights different parts of the borough and what has been going on there.

A competition has taken place to invite young people to produce a picture depicting their local neighbourhood. Some of the entries feature in these pages.

We, the Tenant Advisory Panel (TAP), scrutinise the work of Wellingborough Homes on your behalf. We want to improve the services we receive and have over the past year looked in detail at the repairs service to see what works well and what can be done better.

Wellingborough Homes has accepted our findings, which included the need for improved communication with tenants and residents, to see what lessons can be learned and what changes can be made. Many of our recommendations have now been added to the specification for a new

repairs service that will start from April 2013, which demonstrates that our voice is being heard.

As a tenants group we want to ensure we represent you, the tenant. There are lots of different ways for you to get involved and help us shape Wellingborough Homes’ services. It can be a quick telephone call for feedback, reading a report, getting involved in a community event, emailing suggestions or attending one of the many service panels. If you want to find out more, please talk to us or pop in on the Customer Services Team at Thompson Court, in Silver Street, or call them on 01933 234450.

We hope you enjoy reading the report.

Wellingborough Homes’ Tenant Advisory Panel

Barbara Ashcroft, Daphne Simmons, Jean Ison, Keith Pentlow, Leslie Flight, Mary Reeves, Rosemary Churchett, Mike McGarity, Joyce Rafferty, Trish Harding.

Kingsway

Raising the roof

Hundreds of residents have seen their Kingsway homes improved thanks to £500,000 of roofing works over the last 12 months.

We have re-roofed 366 properties, ensuring they are fully watertight and protected against severe weather, whilst at the same time upgrading the insulation. This not only protects residents' belongings, but also reduces future maintenance costs and fuel costs for tenants.

Finding a voice

Tenants in Duncan Court have got together to form a new residents' group.

As a result, we are working together at making improvements such as fitting new front doors, upgrading lighting on communal stairways, enhancing fire safety and carrying out landscaping work.

Young people get on board

Our local young people are our future residents and they have a voice we want to hear. We have linked up with the Kingsway youth club to find out their opinions and involve them in plans for the community. Lots of ideas have come up, including improving leisure and sports facilities in the area – and we are looking to take these ideas forward. Watch this space!

Residents chip in

During the year we invited some residents over the age of 60 to a fish and chip lunch to get their views on the local neighbourhood.

They said:

- The area is nice, quiet and clean with no trouble and “brilliant” neighbours.
- Wellingborough Homes has made great improvements and made the area safer.
- They want more parking, trees replaced, a gardening service and better access to activities.

We are now looking at what we can do to help, including letting the wider community enjoy activities at our supported housing schemes.

Case Study

Carol Decker was one of a number of tenants at Duncan Court who attended court to help us resolve an anti-social behaviour case. Thanks to their statements, we won injunctions to keep the three men involved away from the area.

She said “They made my life a living hell, with their swearing, shouting, fighting, drinking and abusive behaviour. But, once we contacted Wellingborough Homes about the problem, they got it sorted. I can’t praise them enough and Elly Simms, the Community Manager, was fantastic. I’m very grateful to them.”

A Duncan Court resident with her beautiful display of flowers





A tenant of Blake Court
outside his new home

Queensway



Garden develops children's green-fingered talents

Children at Ruskin Junior School are getting to grips with their new garden created by Wellingborough Homes in partnership with our contractor Lovell. We provided four raised flower beds, a compost bin and water butt.

Head teacher Kate Finch said: "Getting out and about in the fresh air is one of the best ways to learn about the environment and, with this garden, the children will be able to reap the rewards of their hard work."

New homes take shape

A run-down pub has made way for our new development of affordable homes in Swinburne Road.

Bronte Court – on the site of the former Calendar pub and due for completion by November 2012 – will comprise 19 flats and four two-bedroom bungalows.

The scheme complements Blake Court, a development of three bungalows which we completed this Spring on the site of disused garages in Swinburne Road

Boosting security

We have improved security for residents in Rylestone as part of our programme of environmental work over the last year.

The scheme included creating dedicated parking spaces, opening up communal areas and carrying out landscaping. Residents have since reported a drop in fly-tipping and anti-social behaviour.

Tackling community issues

We are working with residents in Queensway to tackle anti-social behaviour and other neighbourhood issues.

Kiln Way and Minerva Way Residents' Group have flagged up various concerns, including the need for better lighting and measures to tackle nuisance behaviour. We are now working with the group to find the best solutions.

Case Study

Patricia Teager has moved into one of the new homes at Blake Court.

She said: "When I moved in, I was over the moon. The kitchen is lovely and has more cupboard space than my last home. The central heating is a massive improvement too – my bills changed dramatically as the cost went down, and my house is warmer and takes less time to heat up."

Hemmingwell

Development unveiled

We completed Kingfisher Close, a development of 27 new homes, in Hemmingwell in spring 2012.

The scheme, on disused land off Nest Lane, is a mix of two, three and four-bedroom houses. It includes 18 properties for rent and nine for shared ownership.



Garage revamp transforms area

A number of garage sites have been redeveloped under our borough-wide programme of environmental improvements.

The work in Thrush Lane, Shearwater Lane and Robin Lane has created extra parking space and reduced reports of fly-tipping and anti-social behaviour in the area.

Apple harvest solves nuisance

We joined forces with partner agencies to tackle the problem of youths causing a nuisance by throwing fallen apples. With the help of the local residents' association,

borough council and Police Community Support Officer, we collected up the apples which were causing an eyesore and had become a trip hazard to our older residents.

Some were used for compost at the Hemmingwell Tenants' Resource Centre as part of a project to go green and help combat climate change. The rest were made into delicious home-made jam!

Schoolchildren design homes of the future

Schoolchildren got the chance to design eco-homes of the future in a competition inspired by our work to make Hemmingwell houses more energy efficient.

More than 40 youngsters took part after visiting our Kestrel Lane pilot project, where we have fitted energy-saving features to a house so that we can monitor the impact they have on running costs.

Case Study

Claire and Ivan Mascarenhas recently moved from a cramped two-bedroom house to a three-bedroom home in Kingfisher Close with their two children.

Mrs Mascarenhas said: *"The children need separate bedrooms so it was a nightmare at our old place and we had no room. Moving here has made a huge difference to our lives – we love it. The big garden is wonderful too – I can let the children go out and play, knowing they are safe."*



Town Centre

Keeping our promises

Work has started on a new £5.7 million supported living scheme for older residents in the town centre area.

We have demolished the old Knights Court complex, in Gold Street, and are rebuilding the scheme which will house 40 high quality, energy efficient, self-contained apartments for affordable rent.

All properties are being built to Lifetime Homes standards, so they can easily be adapted to residents' changing needs, and four have been designed to cater for wheelchair users.

There will be communal facilities too, such as an arts and crafts lounge, a library, a music room and a hair salon, plus landscaped areas outside and raised beds so residents can keep up their gardening skills.

At the same time we are also refurbishing the rest of the flats at Knights Court providing larger and more energy efficient homes.

The scheme is part of our promise to provide more quality supported housing for older tenants.

Youngsters gain sporting insight

Teenagers gained a unique insight into disabled sport thanks to a wheelchair basketball session in Wellingborough.

Around 60 over-15-year-olds got the chance to try out the game at an event we organised with Phoenix Basketball Club.

It was the brainchild of Wellingborough Homes tenant and Phoenix Basketball Club member Steve Cooper, who wanted to give young people an insight into how people with limited mobility can overcome challenges to compete in sport.

Supporting domestic abuse victims

During June we hosted an event at our Thompson Court office for the Northamptonshire Domestic Abuse Forum. This was to showcase services available for victims of domestic abuse. Over the past 12 months there has been a 10% increase in the number of incidents reported.

We work very closely with Wellingborough Women's Aid to provide support for existing and new tenants and, during the day, we saw over 100 people.

Hundreds flock to fun day

Over 850 residents enjoyed a host of stalls, games and dance displays at our tenants' fun day at our town centre offices last September.

Residents were full of praise for the event, summed up by tenant Ingrid Lugo-Jhonson who commented: "It is an awesome adventure to be a part of Wellingborough Homes."

Case Study

Jean Abbott, aged 80, has lived at Knights Court for 14 years but is living at Barringers Court, in Irchester, while redevelopment work takes place.

She said: "It was a big wrench to leave but everything was taken care of and the move was very smooth. I'm looking forward to moving back to Knights Court and seeing all the improvements. They were bedsits before but we will be moving back into modern flats with features like walk-in showers, which will make life a lot easier."



13

A resident of
Woolston Road, Erchester

Small towns and villages

Makeover for Earls Barton homes

Families can enjoy warmer homes and lower fuel bills thanks to £400,000 of work to transform houses in Earls Barton.

12 of our non-traditional “Airey houses” – steel framed and concrete clad properties – in the village were wrapped in a highly insulated “skin” to improve energy efficiency and prolong their life.

The work – part of our ongoing investment in homes across the borough – also included kitchen, bathroom, heating and electrical improvements.

Jubilation in Finedon

Members of the Finedon community came together for a fabulous day of Diamond Jubilee celebrations this summer.

Wellingborough Homes helped organise the fun day, which was held at Finedon Cricket Club in July. Villagers old and young gathered for a parade through the streets before enjoying the host of festivities on offer, from crown-making to singing competitions, bands to dance displays.

Residents benefit from upgraded homes

A £1.8 million refurbishment has transformed one of our supported living schemes in Irchester.

Bedsits at Barringers Court have been converted into self-contained one-bedroom flats, with level access showers and refurbished communal areas. One flat has been adapted for wheelchair use and two will offer temporary accommodation for patients leaving hospital.

Overall, we have spent over £7 million turning bedsit-style schemes into modern spacious flats, as we promised tenants when we took on these properties at transfer.

Case Study

Patrick Nesbitt has lived for 29 years in one of the Earls Barton “Airey houses” which have had makeover.

He said: “The workmen were excellent and did a thorough job. You can already feel a real difference in the temperature inside and, at the end of the day, the disturbance has all been worthwhile.”





Making where I live a better place

Refurbishments reach milestone

During the year we met our milestone and refurbished 3,000 homes. By the end of the year over 4,100 homes have received some kind of improvement since transfer in 2007.

Working with contractors Lovell and Wates, we have – in 2007 – fitted 2,724 kitchens, 2,259 bathrooms, 1,647 new heating systems, 741 new boilers and completed 1,411 electrical rewires.

The homes have been brought up to our “silver” standard – developed as part of our agreement with tenants when homes were transferred from the council – which exceeds the Government’s Decent Homes target.

Keeping estates spick and span

We have taken on four extra caretakers to improve the way we look after communal areas on our estates.

Following resident feedback, we took our grounds maintenance service in-house to make improvements to our timetable of grass cutting and general landscaping maintenance. The team has already received compliments on the quality of their work and the number of complaints about landscaping has reduced considerably.

Ted Adams, of Lea Way, Wellingborough, told us: “I would like to thank the grass cutting team for doing a brilliant job. The grass has never looked better around the flats.”

CASE STUDY

Linda Pullman, of Nest Farm Crescent, was the 3,000th resident to benefit from our improvements work.

She said: “My new kitchen and bathroom are lovely – I’m really pleased. The workmen were really friendly, cleared up after themselves and finished the job in the time they said it would take.”



Going the extra mile

Fishing for help

A total of 1,800 Wellingborough residents have benefited from a new one-stop shop advice service – the FISH (Free Impartial Support and Help) Shop, based at 2A Cambridge Street, Wellingborough.

The FISH shop opened in November 2011 in partnership with a number of community organisations as a free confidential advice service to people on low incomes. The service offers advice on a range of subjects, including debt, budgeting, benefits, job seeking, training and healthy living.

If you would like to use the service please pop into the shop or call 01933 278248 to make a free appointment.

A new way of working

Wellingborough Homes is spearheading an innovative way of delivering support services to improve the quality of life of the borough's residents.

We have launched Support Wellingborough – a group of organisations including Housing 21, Delos Community, Mayday Trust and Catch 22 – to provide a more coordinated approach to helping people in need of support.

Boosting skills

Our Tenant Resource Centre provided training to over 914 people during the year and we are working in partnership with Tresham College to deliver more courses in 2012/13.

Courses cover a variety of subjects including sign language, horticulture, IT for the Terrified, meditation and managing your finances.

We have also recruited four apprentices under the National Apprenticeship Scheme, as part of our commitment to helping local young people into work.

Case Study

Lauren Rixon (19) and Adine Hubbard (18), are two of our apprentices working towards an NVQ Level 2 in Business and Administration.

They said: "Our apprenticeships have given us a great opportunity to thrive and learn new skills. We are gaining experience and working knowledge, which will help us in our future careers."



Illustration by Dannielle Smith age 3

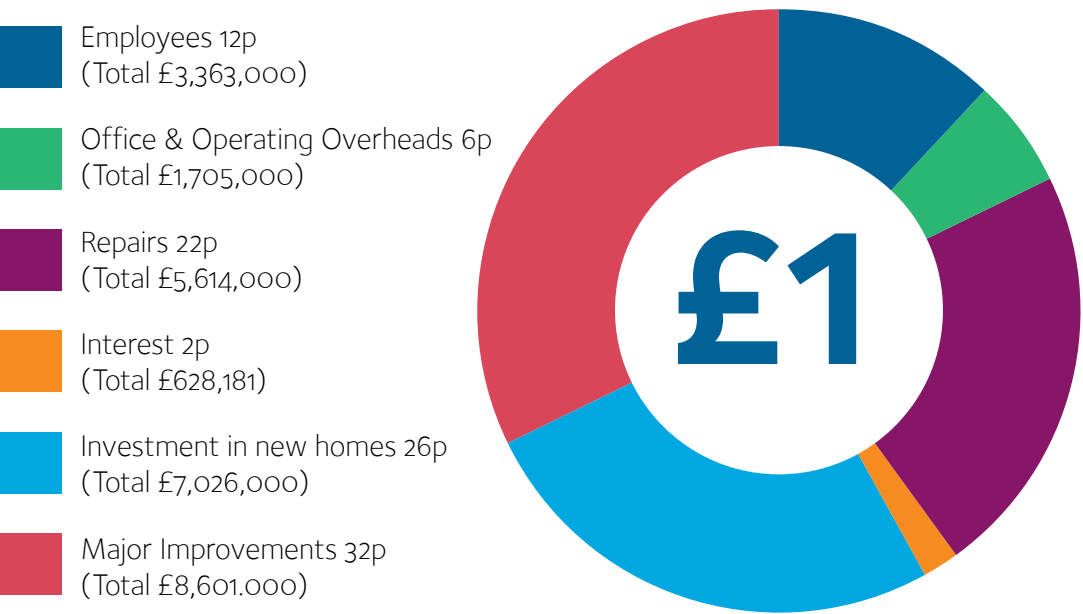


How we are doing

Income and expenditure

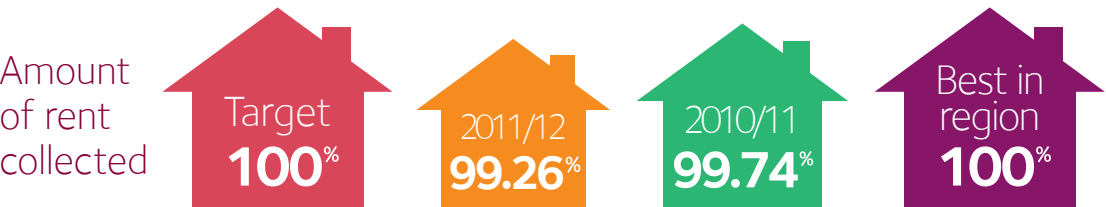
Our total income for the year was £19.3m, of which £17.2m was from rents. We spent £15.7m on major improvements to existing properties and new homes, £3.6m on repairs and £4m on management costs. We have borrowed money to pay for the cost of the improvement works and have met the conditions of our loan.

How we spend each £1 of your rent



Rent collection

In 2011/12 we collected 99.26% of rents against a target of 100%. Rent arrears worsened slightly in 2011/12 compared with 2010/2011, increasing from 2.6% to 2.63% which represent unpaid rent of £430,00 over the year as a whole.



We provide advice and support to help tenants pay their rent but, when it is not paid, we are forced to take legal action – we evicted 16 households in 2011/12 for not paying their rent.

From 2012/13 the Government will be reducing some people's housing benefit. We have sent all our residents information regarding these welfare reform changes and are planning services to ensure help and advice is available to all who need it.

Value for Money

We are committed to providing the best services possible and the best value for money.

For example, by having repairs fixed first time we reduce our customers' wait for work to be done and the time our contractors spend doing the work. In 2011/12 nearly 93% of responsive repairs were fixed first time against a 90% target. This compares to 89% the previous year.

We have reviewed our printing contract to ensure that we receive our customer publications more quickly and at a lower cost and saved 23% of total costs.

This year we saved:

- £32,000 by reviewing our buying of office supplies and audit services
- £41,000 in lost income by reviewing the voids process
- £30,000 by bringing the grounds maintenance service in-house
- £340,000 by developing our derelict garage sites and developing Knights Court with other blocks under one contract.

Customer Services

We received nearly 51,500 calls during the year – 4,000 more than 2010/11. In 2011/12 1.55% of calls were abandoned by callers, down from 1.85% in 2010/11. The target was less than 5%.



Repairs and Maintenance

Over 16,700 repairs were carried out in 2011/12 – an average of almost four repairs for every home. Of tenants who returned surveys, 91% were satisfied with the service against a target of 95%.

We give our repairs contractors time completion targets and compare ourselves with the region's top performing housing associations. We are working with our current contractor, Lovell, to improve performance and are re-tendering the service during 2012/13.



Improvement work

In 2011/12, we spent £8.6m on improvements to homes and £841,000 on environmental improvements. Work included 567 kitchens, 180 bathrooms, 180 heating systems and 321 electrical rewires.

97.5% of our homes now meet our “silver” standard and we are now talking to tenants and leaseholders about improvements at Diana House and Sylvanus House on Queensway.

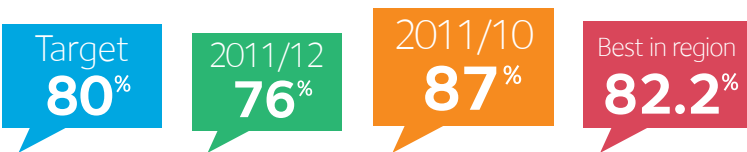
Developing new homes

We are currently building 74 new homes. Over the last year, we bought eight properties and built 18 for letting and nine for shared ownership. Over the next two years we have a target to build or acquire a further 100 homes.

Feedback

During the year we received 102 complaints, compared to 161 in 2010/11. Nearly one in three complaints were upheld and over 99% resolved within target times.

Satisfaction with complaint handling

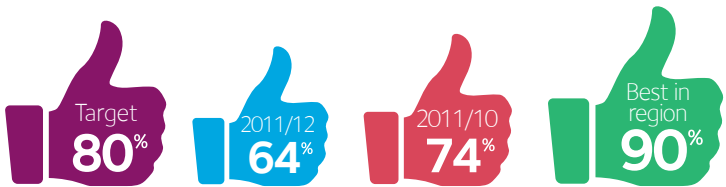


Customer satisfaction has fallen so, to make improvements, we have centralised our feedback service and provided more staff training. We also received 82 compliments during the year, of which seven out of 10 were for our repairs and maintenance service.

Michael Arch, of Doddington, said: “The service was first class, as the repair was carried out later in the same day.”

Mrs. Pidcock, Finedon on the caretaking team “ whatever the weather they get on with the job and are always cheerful”

Satisfaction with complaint outcome



Lettings

In 2011/12 we let 334 homes, including 46 sheltered housing properties.

It took on average 32 days to re-let a home in 2011/12, compared to 27 days the previous year. We are working hard to reduce the time and hope to see big improvements during 2012/13. Top performance benchmark 23 days.

Average time taken to re-let a home



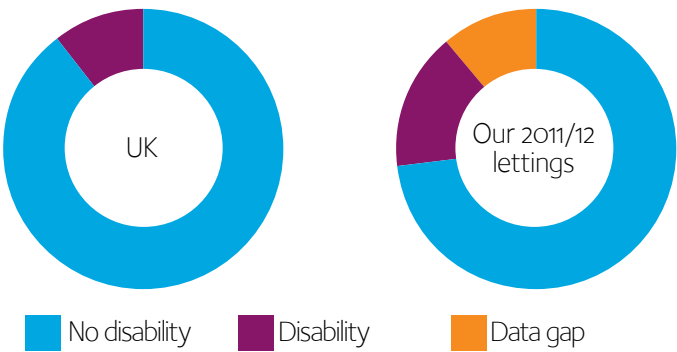
Equality & Diversity Impact Assessment 2012

The purpose of equality & diversity impact assessments is to determine whether or not policies unlawfully treat some groups of people more, or less, favourably than others.

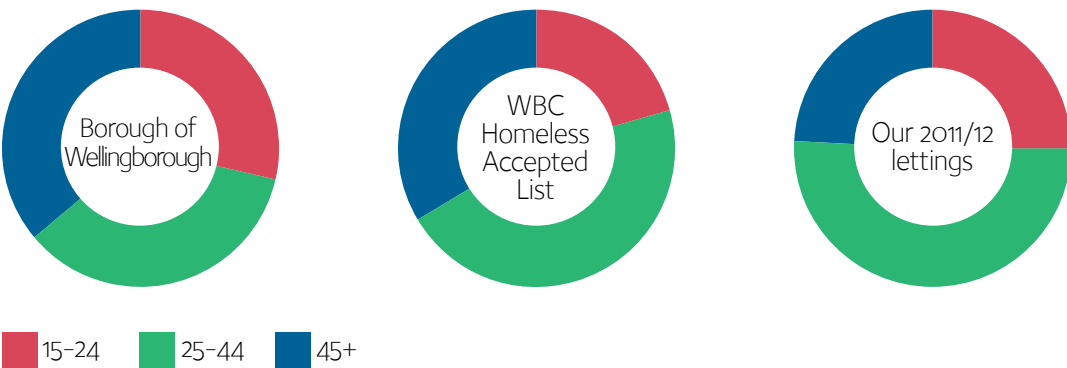
The summary impact assessment below is for NEW LETTINGS, in other words people who were allocated a home with Wellingborough Homes during the year ending 31 March 2012 and the two graphs shown are the areas where there was an anomaly of statistical significance.

- Four out of 10 were allocated to tenants aged 30 or under
- Nearly one in four were let to people in full or part-time work
- One in three were allocated to single adults
- Almost one in five were let to a black or minority ethnic households

The charts on the right show that when we compare the profile of new tenants with the profile of the local or national population we were a little more likely to house someone with a disability than not.



The charts below show we were much more likely to house people aged 20-34 and more likely to house people aged 35-44 than other age groups and less likely to house people aged 65 plus.



The profile of the people we house was affected by:

- The profile of applicants registered on Keyways (those accepted onto the Homeless Accepted list).
- The allocation policy and priority criteria for the Wellingborough Area.
- The type and size of homes available for letting during the year 2011/2012.

Taking these factors into consideration we believe that the profile of those housed does not identify any discriminatory practices or policies. Please visit our website for more information about our Equality & Diversity Impact Assessment results. The full impact assessment covered all protected characteristics and did not identify any further results of statistical significance.

Looking to the future

As Wellingborough Homes' fifth anniversary approaches, it is with some pride that we can take stock of our achievements to date and our aspirations for the future.



We made a number of important promises to tenants at the time of transfer in December 2007. These included carrying out major improvement works to bring homes up to comfortable modern standards, investing in initiatives to tackle anti-social behaviour and making rent increases in line with inflation.

As well as our organisational success in setting up as a new housing provider, we have delivered on all these promises to our residents.

Our teams have also worked extensively with communities, including children and older residents, on a variety of initiatives from communal gardens at our supported living schemes to environmental projects with schools.

Working in partnership with local training providers, our Tenant Resource Centre has delivered a range of popular courses – and the new FISH one-stop advice shop has already helped hundreds of people.

We have started building some impressive new developments, with 30 homes now complete and over 85 more taking shape. As well as investing in new homes, we are developing an exciting new approach to delivering support services to our tenants through the Support Wellingborough partnership.

Looking to the future, our aim is to deliver a people focused service that recognises that we are all different and want and need services that respond to and recognise our individual circumstances. If we, either directly or through our partners, achieve this then the people of Wellingborough will prosper in a way that benefits the locality and its communities. This in turn helps to protect the value of our housing asset giving us resources to grow in the future.

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to our tenants, our staff and to our Board members for their commitment to improving the services we provide.



Tim Davy, Chair



Dave Willis, Chief Executive



The Community involvement team has been bringing creativity and fun to children over the summer. This is the Step by Step play scheme at the Hindu Community Centre Wellingborough.

Wellingborough Homes

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www.wellingboroughhomes.org



www.wellingboroughhomes.org.uk

www.facebook.com/wellingboroughhomes

www.housing.org.uk



Illustration by Jessica Mayhew, age 6



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