

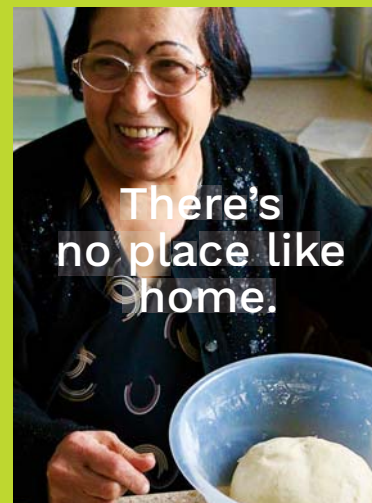
**R**

RESPECT



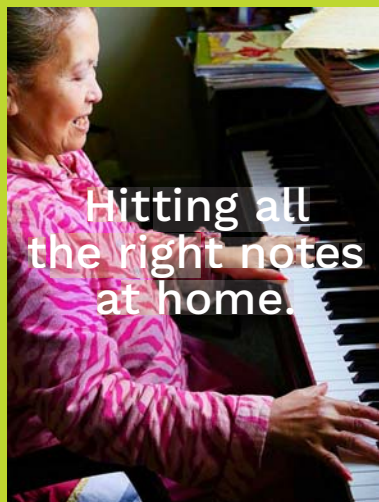
**A**

AMBITIOUS



**H**

HONEST



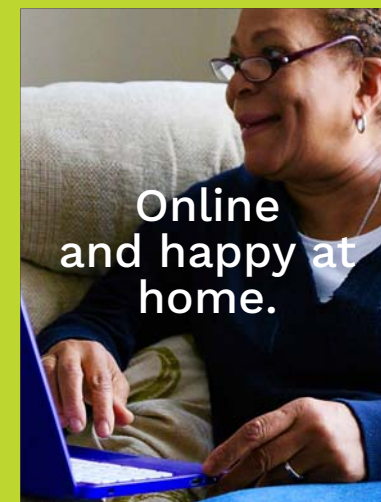
**E**

EMPOWER



**C**

CARE



WFHA Annual Report 2017-18

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# Welcome from the Chair and Chief Executive

In our first year as Chair and Chief Executive, we worked with our Board and staff to set out a positive new direction for WFHA.

We began by refreshing our purpose, vision and values: a process that inevitably became something more in the wake of the fire at Grenfell Tower – a period of reflection on what it means to be a social housing provider.

We settled on core values that express a renewed commitment to the needs and aspirations of the communities we serve – and focuses on the ambitious contribution that WFHA can make.

With these commitments as the starting point, we drew up a two-year business plan for 2018-20, with strategic objectives that are now embedded at every level of the organisation.

The business plan sets out a clear change of direction – prompted by two main drivers. WFHA's Supporting People funding ended in March 2018 and, in the same month, L&Q took back their Millennium House sheltered scheme, and Southern Housing Group took back the support service for their Peach Court and Lewis House sheltered schemes. So, firstly, we needed to review how best to use our staffing and resources.

Secondly, we want to be in a position to begin developing new homes for the community, as well as continuing to invest in our existing homes.

Restructuring the staff team meant taking some hard decisions, including having to let six longstanding staff go. We are grateful to all the staff for their support during an uncertain period. We now have the team we need to meet our long-term business objectives.

Revisiting our services, we spent the year consulting tenants and preparing to launch an intensive housing management service for our own sheltered housing tenants, as well as a floating support service for older people across Waltham Forest generally. Both went live successfully at the start of the current financial year.

Grenfell also prompted us to focus on health and safety. We spent £109,000 thoroughly reviewing our fire risk work and took health and safety roadshows out to our larger housing schemes. We were still able to reinvest £410,970 in home upgrades.

We would like to thank members of the Tenant Scrutiny Panel, who now play a more significant role in our work.

We would also like to thank the Board for its continuing support. We said goodbye to Board members Wayne Nembhard and Greville Norman this year. We will miss their valued contribution.



Above: Duncan Howard, Board Chair. Below: Shahron Shah, Chief Executive.

# About Waltham Forest Housing Association

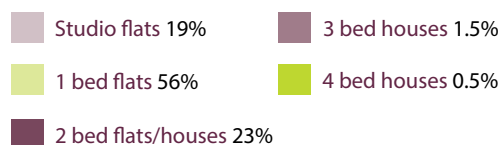
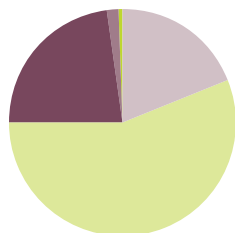
WFHA is an independent, not-for-profit, Registered Provider of housing. We currently work solely in the London Borough of Waltham Forest.

We are a member of the National Housing Federation's g320 group of smaller housing associations.

## Our homes

We own 331 homes and manage an additional 23.

### Bedroom numbers

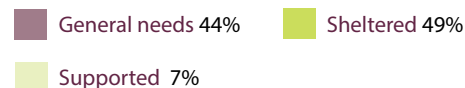
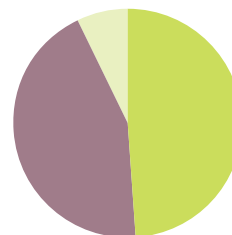


## Our households

Just over half of our tenants live in sheltered housing, while a small number live in supported housing.

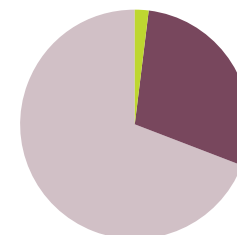
We also provide homes for 148 households of single people and families, in three blocks of flats and a number of street properties. Our general needs stock is mainly studios, one and two bedroom homes. We have a small number of three and four bedroom properties.

### Housing need

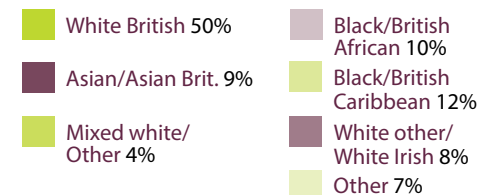
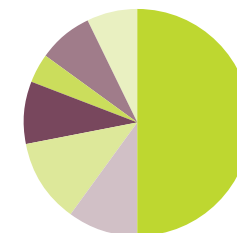


## Our tenants

### Age



### Ethnicity



# A year of renewal

We revisited our core values and business plan in 2017-18, reflecting the priorities of our new Chief Executive and Chair, at a time when we were preparing to restructure the business to meet our changing operational environment.

## Our purpose vision and values

### Our social purpose

Our social purpose is to provide housing and support services.

### Our vision

WFHA is working to deliver a future where everyone, in every community we serve, has a safe, truly affordable home and great life chances, in a society where they are valued and respected.

### Our values

- We **RESPECT** people and communities through our belief in equality, inclusion and the value of diversity. We believe we have more in common than things that separate us.
- We **EMPOWER** people and communities by maximising strengths and opportunities and building resilience.

- We are **AMBITIOUS**, constantly improving, delivering better value for money and striving to provide more homes and services.
- We **CARE** about what we do, step up to take responsibility and are passionate about our social purpose and making a positive difference.
- We are **HONEST**, act with integrity and are accountable to our tenants, our partners and each other.

**REACH.** *Oxford Dictionary* definition: *(verb)* 1. Stretch out so as to touch or grasp something. 2. Be able to touch something. 3. Arrive at or get as far as. 4. Achieve or come to a particular point or state. 5. Make contact with. *(noun)* 1. The distance to which someone can stretch to touch something. 2. The extent to which someone or something has power, influence or the ability to do something.

## Our business plan 2018-20

Our new business plan, launched in March 2018, sets a clear new direction for the organisation.

Our strategic objectives are to:

1. Deliver more for our tenants, service users and communities
2. Make the most of our resources
3. Invest in homes and services, and
4. Strengthen our organisation.

Our day-to-day operations, as well as our longer-term plans are all informed by these objectives.

A full copy of the business plan is available from the website at [www.wfha.org.uk](http://www.wfha.org.uk), or on request from the office.





# Safe homes in good repair

In the shadow of the Grenfell fire, we thoroughly reviewed our fire risk arrangements, carried out additional safety checks and, above all, sought to reassure tenants.

## Health and safety first

We spent more than £109,000 on additional safety works to our homes.

Acting on the risk assessment recommendations, we spent £80,000 on a sprinkler system for Electric House, as well as introducing compartmentalisation to the loft areas. We also arranged for vertical fire stops to be installed into the ducts at Kevan Court.

In the summer of 2017, we took a fire safety roadshow to our larger housing schemes, assisted by a fire safety consultant. The roadshows were well

attended by tenants, who found them very informative. We sent out a fire safety mailshot to tenants.

We have commissioned more invasive new fire risk assessments to all our stock, and will meet any recommendations coming out of them.

Over the year, we also took the opportunity to review and improve our arrangements for managing electrical safety and the threats posed by legionella and asbestos.

From now on, we want to make it easier for tenants to tell us about new safety concerns. Tenants understand their living environment really well, and can help us manage safety more effectively.



Our Asset Services Team (from left to right): Elena Charalambous, Asset Services Officer; Michael Pughsley, Head of Asset Management and Development; and Tyrone Romulus, Asset Services Manager.

## Investing in homes

Last year, we made significant improvements to some of our existing properties.

We installed:

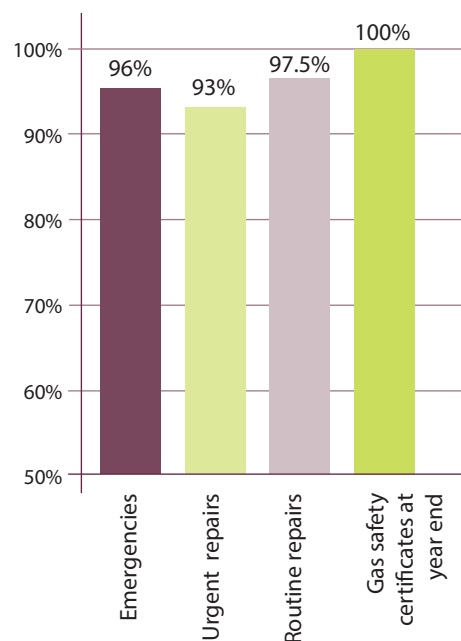
- 19 new kitchens, at a cost of £103,479
- nine new bathrooms, at a cost of £35,949
- 28 new windows at Heathcote Grove and two new doors at Libro Court and Omnibus Way, at a cost of £83,541, and
- 33 new boilers, at a cost of £79,000.

Our total spend on major projects came to £410,970.

## Day-to-day repairs

We carried out a total of 1,626 day-to-day repairs and tenants reported 100% satisfaction in their returned slips.

### Achieved on target



Our repairs performance is lower than the median for our benchmarking group (100% for emergencies, 95% for urgent jobs and 96.5% for routine jobs) and is an area we are working to improve.

## New homes

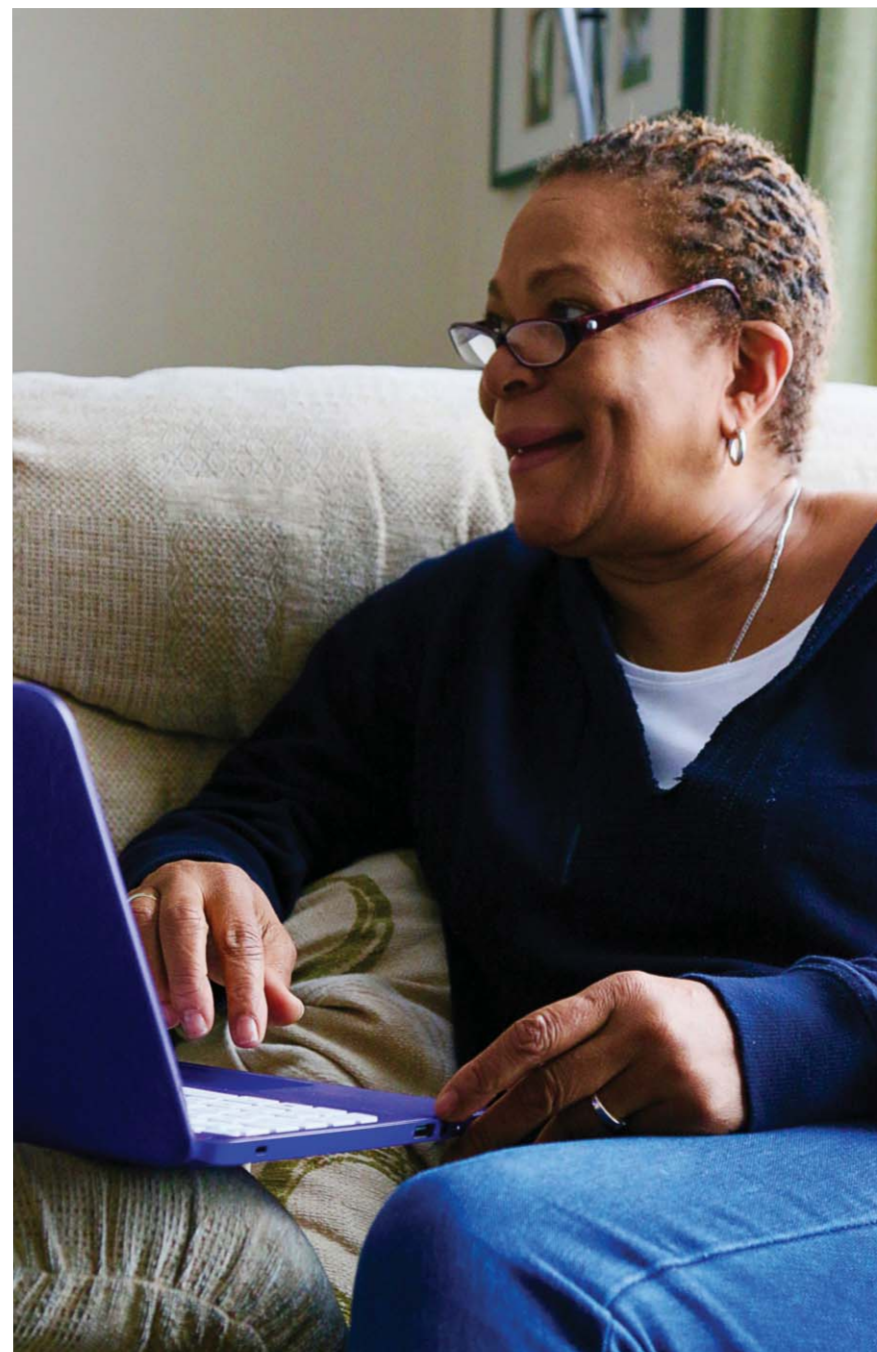
We continued to look for development opportunities during the year.

We carried out feasibility studies at two sites, with a view to building up to 30 homes. Unfortunately, neither would have allowed us to develop new homes for local people at genuinely affordable rents.

We will revisit these schemes with new architects during the current financial year.

*My flat gives me my peace and quietness*

**Pam McKenzie**



# Responsive tenant services

We renewed our commitment to good quality core services, by strengthening key front line roles during our staffing restructure.

## A welcoming atmosphere

During the year, we refreshed our offices in bright new colours, making them more lively and welcoming to tenants and other visitors. Closer staff team working is also aimed at making us more open and responsive to our tenants and service users.

In line with our business plan, in future, we will aim to be clearer about what people can expect from us. We will review and improve services, with practical plans to meet the needs of our tenants and service users.

Our Housing Services Officer, Hollie Nicette.



## New website

### A work in progress

Our website, launched in 2016-17, became out of date, so we closed it temporarily while we updated it.

In future, we will keep the website up to date with news and information for all our tenants, service users and stakeholders.

We are looking at ways to make the website more user friendly. If you have any comments on our website, please contact us.

## Tenant complaints

We received five complaints.

- One complaint about a managing agent.
- Three complaints about anti-social behaviour.
- One complaint about the way we delivered services.

We can confirm that two of the complaints were closed within our target timescales.

Three of the complaints took longer than expected due to their complexity, but all are now formally closed.



## New lettings

During 2017-18:

- we re-let 18 homes, and
- 11 of the re-lets (61%) were let to BME households.

## Voids management

During 2017-18:

- we re-let empty homes in an average of just over 19 days (our target is 20 days). This is better than the median for our benchmarking group (25 days).

*WFHA has been fantastic since I have been here – for almost two years. My neighbours and staff have been so helpful in assisting in every difficulty that I have faced. I like the place, the services, and all that they do to make me always happy. Thank you WFHA!*

**Iddirisu Natogma**



# A new approach to support

We reviewed our approach to providing support and prepared to launch two new services.

## Supporting People

In our last year of Supporting People funding, we delivered floating support to 204 tenants. This included:

- housing-related support for 160 WFHA tenants
- support services and a full housing management service to 17 tenants of L&Q at Millennium House, and
- support services only to 28 tenants living at the Peach Court and Lewis House sheltered schemes owned by Southern Housing Group.

### End of contracts

Southern Housing Group's support contract ended on 29 March 2018. We wished our service users well.

L&Q took the decision to take back Millennium House from 29 March 2018, ending a longstanding arrangement where we had acted as managing agents and provided the support service since 2008. Tenants at the scheme organised a special 'thank-you' event on 21 March, to say goodbye to our staff.

## New services Intensive housing management

In April 2018, we introduced an intensive housing management service for tenants living in our sheltered schemes. We now have three independent living officers as part of our housing services team.

The service operates from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday, and includes daily, twice-weekly or weekly visits, depending on need.

Our independent living officers focus on intensive housing management and independent living issues, and can offer advice and support on benefits and debt management, as well as signposting tenants to other services.

Outside office hours, tenants have access to 24-emergency support via a community alarm system that is monitored by a control centre.

We also offer 'Housing Pro-Active' – an optional monitoring system. We give tenants a special phone with a button to press each day to confirm they are fine. If a tenant fails to activate this button, the service calls their next of kin.



Our Support Services staff (from left to right): Doreen Jordan, Floating Support Officer; Alisha Husbands, Floating Support Officer; and Chris Seon, Senior Independent Living Officer.



## New services

### The Navigator hub

We consulted tenants on two new services, designed to make the best use of our resources as we respond to funding changes.

We launched the new services at the start of the current financial year.

We have called our new floating support service the Navigator Hub. It is staffed by a team leader and two floating support workers.

The Navigator Hub is a free service for any Waltham Forest resident aged 50+, who needs a bit of support to carry on living independently.

We offer flexible, personalised support to service users by phone, during home visits, or at our office.

## Support partnerships

We continued to work with Outward Housing, Outlook Care and YMCA East London, who provide support services at our learning disability schemes and single homeless services.

We remain closely involved with erosh, the national consortium for older people's housing and support. Our Head of Operations, Cheryl Whittle, is currently national Vice Chair and Co-Chair of the London network.

We belong to Waltham Forest Dementia Action Alliance and we are the only housing association represented on Waltham Forest Council's Sheltered Housing Panel, which allocates sheltered housing to people on their waiting list.

*I am pleased and happy here. I have been here for 10 years and the staff are very helpful. I am happy to be living in a home like this and wish to continue.*

**Bibi Karoo**



# Tenant Scrutiny Panel

The Tenant Scrutiny Panel continued to scrutinise our work, as well as providing important feedback on our plans for policy and service changes.

With an independent Chair, Jenny Crook, and five to six members during the year (one member resigned in June 2017), the Tenant Scrutiny Panel worked well as a team last year. All passed their annual appraisals with flying colours.

Four of our current members are from sheltered housing and one lives at Garenne Court – a large general needs scheme. Over the current year, we aim to encourage more general needs tenants to apply to join.

Following the Grenfell fire, there was a three-month break while we concentrated on fire safety work. This put the Panel's work behind schedule. However, as well as monitoring our overall performance, the Panel were then able to begin work on a review of our voids process.

Panel members took part in estate inspections, pre-void inspections and post-void inspections. They also contacted new tenants to get first-hand feedback on the quality of their home and the information we supply them with. Their final report will be ready by September 2018.

During the year, Panel members got the chance to meet their opposite numbers at Octavia Housing Association.

Two members attended the TPAS (Tenant Participation and Advisory Service) conference this summer.

In the current year, the Panel will review our responsive repairs service and prioritise estate services and communication.

We will also ask them to assist with our next tenant survey and our review of the intensive housing management service.

The Tenant Scrutiny Panel (from left to right): Pamela McKenzie, Arthur Bernard, Jackie Ginger, Jenny Crook (Chair) and Stephen Dudmish.



*I'm lucky to be living in the centre of Waltham Forest – I like my flat!*

**Jackie Ginger**

*I appreciate the quietness of where I live*

**Stephen Dudmish**

*Great to have a roof over your head. Easier to get transport to anywhere in London*

**Arthur Bernard**



# A committed staff team

We experienced a year with a higher than usual staff turnover, as we prepared to respond to a changing operational environment.

## Staff leavers

Linda Milton, our former Chief Executive, officially left the organisation in June 2017.

Asset Services Manager, Mairead Mooney, also left during the year.

Sadly, our restructuring plans meant letting go of six members of staff, whose roles no longer applied. Some of them had been at WFHA for a long time.

They included our three sheltered housing officers: Jane Howard (14 years), Tina Addai-Poku (nine years) and Ruth Kintu (five years). All were important in delivering our sheltered support services, and many of our tenants sent thank-you messages.

Three office-based staff also left: Governance Officer, Sharon Littlejohn (16 years); Housing Services Manager, Jo Joannou (three years); and Director of Housing and Support Hayley Mulhall (22 years).

We offer our thanks to all these former staff for their commitment to WFHA over the years and we wish them the very best for the future.

## New staff roles

Among the remaining staff, some have taken up new roles since the start of the current financial year.

Cheryl Whittle (Support Service Manager for the past 10 years) is now Head of Operations.

Michael Pughsley has moved from a temporary contract to become Head of Asset Management and Development.

Angela Hendrick is Housing Team Leader, while Sally Rowe is Floating Support Team Leader.

Linda Wright is now our Governance Manager. Nicky Anderson joined us as Operations Manager, Tyrone Romulus is our Asset Services Manager and Chris Seon is our Senior Independent Living Officer.

The new-look staff team will continue to provide tenants and service users with robust and relevant services.

Left to right, staff members: Sally Rowe, Floating Support Team Leader; Nicky Anderson, Operations Manager; and Angela Hendrick, Housing Team Leader.



# Board matters

The Board continued to play a crucial role in setting our strategic direction and monitoring our performance.

During 2017-18, the key issues taken up by the Board were tenant health and safety, organisational development, risk management and growth.

The Board oversaw the review of tenant health and safety arrangements.

It advised on the new staff structure, the organisation's new values and the introduction of two new services.

In its strategic role, the Board reviewed the risk map and developed the new business plan for 2018-20.

In line with WFHA's growth ambitions, the Board set up a new Asset Management and Development Committee, which will advise on investing in existing homes and the development of new homes.



## The Board in 2017-18

Duncan Howard (Chair)

Joe Mensah-Dankwah (Vice-Chair)

Julia Andrews (Chair of the Remuneration Committee)

Emma Brett (Chair of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee)

Wayne Nembhard (stepped down in July 2017)

Greville Norman (stepped down in March 2018)

Nevil Osborne (Chair of the Asset Management and Development Committee)

Bobby Supiya (until September 2017)

### Co-opted

We co-opted two people to sit on the Asset Management and Development Committee. They are:

Maggie McCann

Richard Saunders

# Value for money

Achieving value for money is one of our continuing priorities. We draw up practical and meaningful annual plans, which are informed by the strategic objectives in our business plan.

## Savings in 2017-18

Our specific savings over the year included:

- reducing the cost of our lift maintenance contract by 35%, and
- introducing a service standard and schedule of rates for responsive, void and planned repairs, which has reduced our average repair spend by 4% and reduced the cost of emergency repairs by 58%.

## New regulations

In April 2018, the Regulator of Social Housing published a new value for money standard. Our most recent business plan, annual action plans and asset management strategy all meet this more exacting agenda.

In future, new metrics will oblige us to report on:

- our reinvestment levels (amount spent as a % of the value of our stock)
- how many new homes we provide
- gearing (level of debt and dependence on the finance market)
- surplus levels against interest paid, as a %
- headline costs per unit
- operating margin, and
- return on capital employed.

Against these measures, we can report that in 2017-18, we had very low gearing (-9%) compared to benchmarking figures from similar landlords. At the same time, our surplus level against interest paid was very high (at 972%). These measures show that we are in a strong position to begin borrowing to advance our growth plans.

Our headline costs per unit were higher than the London median (£4,995) at £6,845. This was due to one-off costs during the year. We plan to reduce this figure over the next two years.

# The financial year

WFHA had another strong financial year, despite meeting a number of challenges.

We ended the year with a net surplus of £289,097 (compared with a net surplus of £403,468 in 2016-17). The reduction was mainly due to exceptional costs during the year.

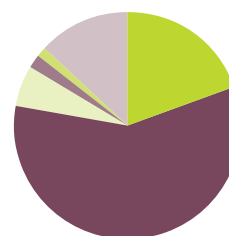
The gross surplus of £328,241 shown in the pie chart opposite is a percentage of income through social housing lettings only.

We began the new financial year confident that we are in a more robust position to meet our obligations as a Registered Provider and to deliver our new business plan.

In particular, we are appropriately resourced to deliver our current growth target, which is 23% over the next five years. We also plan to introduce new services.

## Operating expenditure

As a % of turnover from social housing lettings



Management costs	– £1,481,591 (58.4%)
Service charge costs	– £497,284 (19.6%)
Operating surplus	– £328,241 (12.9%)
Major repairs expenditure	– £31,974 (1.3%)
Planned maintenance	– £50,598 (2%)
Routine maintenance	– £148,579 (5.9%)

Total turnover from social housing lettings **£2,538,267**

## Rent collection

We collected 97.13% of the rent due, against a target of 100%. This was lower than the median for our benchmarking group (99.75%).

We missed our 4% rent arrears target, with arrears at 5.89%. This was higher than the median for our benchmarking group (3.28%).

We are concentrating on significantly reducing our arrears over the coming year.





*Happy, satisfied and looking forward to the future!*

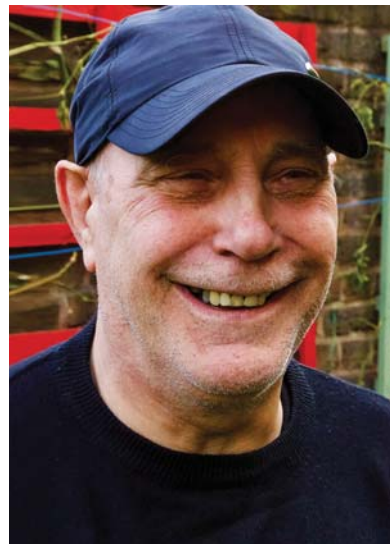
**Stephen Gander** (Above)

*I'm very happy in my home and enjoy being part of the Association's wider community*

**Ricky Stiffell** (Centre)

*I am very happy.  
My home is my happy place to be.*

**Eleni Antoniou** (Right)



# Financial statements

## Balance sheet for the year ending 31 March 2018

	2018 (£)	2017 (£)
<b>Fixed assets</b>		
Housing properties	12,882,671	12,477,283
Other fixed assets	295,203	357,507
	13,177,874	12,834,790
<b>Current assets</b>		
Debtors	265,342	196,215
Cash and cash equivalents	2,209,485	2,183,675
	2,474,827	2,379,890
<b>Creditors</b>		
Amounts falling due within one year	(848,683)	(505,649)
<b>Net current assets</b>	1,626,144	1,874,241
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>	<b>14,804,018</b>	<b>14,709,031</b>
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year</b>	7,714,562	7,908,673
<b>Capital and reserves</b>		
Called-up share capital	20	19
Revenue reserves	7,089,436	6,800,339
	<b>14,804,018</b>	<b>14,709,031</b>

## Cash flow statement for the year ending 31 March 2018

	2018 (£)	2017 (£)
<b>Net cash generated from operating activities</b>	791,421	448,695
<b>Cash flow from investing activities</b>		
Interest received	2,168	3,725
Sale of tangible fixed assets	28,728	–
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	(705,948)	(511,450)
<b>Net cash generated from investing activities</b>	(675,052)	(507,725)
<b>Cash flow from financing activities</b>		
Interest paid	(39,978)	(71,677)
Repayment of borrowings	(50,582)	(47,530)
Issue of ordinary shares	1	–
<b>Net cash used in financing activities</b>	(90,559)	(119,207)
<b>Net increase in cash &amp; cash equivalents</b>	25,810	(178,237)
<b>Cash &amp; cash equivalents at start of year</b>	2,183,675	2,361,912
<b>Cash &amp; cash equivalents at year end</b>	<b>2,209,485</b>	<b>2,183,675</b>



**Statement of comprehensive income for the year ending 31 March 2018**

	2018 (£)	2017 (£)
<b>Turnover</b>	2,709,217	2,580,351
Operating costs	(2,381,910)	(2,108,931)
<b>Operating surplus</b>	<b>327,307</b>	<b>471,420</b>
Surplus on disposal of fixed assets	28,728	–
Interest receivable	2,168	3,725
Interest payable	(69,106)	(71,677)
<b>Surplus for the year</b>	<b>289,097</b>	<b>403,468</b>
<b>Total comprehensive income for year</b>	<b>289,097</b>	<b>403,468</b>



## **Waltham Forest Housing Association**

Energy Centre  
31 Church Hill  
Walthamstow  
E17 3RU

Phone: 020 8524 6987  
Email: [info@wfha.org.uk](mailto:info@wfha.org.uk)  
Web: [www.wfha.org.uk](http://www.wfha.org.uk)

Regulator of Social Housing  
Registered Number: L0461

Co-operative and Community Benefit  
Society Number: 21186R

## **Executive Team**

Shahron Shah  
*Chief Executive*  
(from June 2017)

Cheryl Whittle  
*Head of Operations*  
from March 2018

Michael Pughsley  
*Head of Asset Management  
and Development*  
from March 2018

Yusuf Kuti  
*Director of Finance*

Hayley Mulhall  
*Director of Housing and  
Support*  
until March 2018

**Special thanks**  
Linda Milton  
*Former Chief Executive*  
(retired June 2017)

## **Bankers**

Lloyds Bank

## **Auditors**

Nexia Smith & Williamson – External  
Mazars – Internal

## **Solicitors**

Blake Morgan