



ForHousing

Annual Report

2020-2021

Hello!

After a year like no other, it is a privilege to once again welcome you to the ForHousing annual report.



Stephen Reuben
Chair

The COVID-19 pandemic has touched us in ways we could never have imagined or planned for. We will come through this and together we are building back better and moving forwards.

Our focus on improving lives and providing quality homes and places that make more things possible for more people has never been clearer.

Tenant and staff wellbeing have been at the forefront of our minds and the launch of our Wellbeing Strategy is testament to this.

The Communities section of our Corporate Plan highlights the achievements and social value we have delivered with partners across seven areas.

They are:

Stable Homes - A stable home is the foundation for a better life and providing a stable home for people continued to be a priority. Our involvement in the “Everyone In” emergency scheme also supported rough sleepers to get off the streets during lockdown.

Digitally Able - The pandemic has meant it is more important than ever for people to be able to get online, as people have been learning and working from home. We have helped from providing digital devices to tenants to introducing virtual visiting rooms at our extra care facilities.

Continually Learning - As our world changed, so have in-demand skills. We continued to invest in online learning activities for children and young people, to enable them to achieve their potential. We also continued school construction skills classes, virtually and in a COVID-secure environment.

Person Centred - The pandemic highlighted inequalities in communities. Our Neighbourhoods team provided a personal response to address these challenges by giving emotional and practical support to tenants, particularly those self-isolating or living alone.

Prosperous - Financial inequality became even more evident this year and our decision to fund Mustard Tree shops ensured communities had affordable food and resources to make a home. Our Income Maximisation team supported tenants in financial hardship due to the pandemic. We also introduced Cash Chats financial support sessions for people with money worries.

Healthy - This year shone a spotlight on everyone’s mental and physical health. We offered support for people finding lockdown mentally challenging and encouraged physical activity. This included balcony and doorstep social activities in supported housing and online sports for children and young people.

Connected - Communities pulling together was one of the most positive outcomes of the year. With partners we provided venues for food banks, delivered medication for people self-isolating and funded community-led projects.

I’m proud of our response and do not underestimate the challenges ahead.

I would also like to thank everyone at ForHousing for their dedication, passion and professionalism throughout the year.

I would also like to thank the many partners we work with, listed on our website. I am confident that by really listening to what matters most to tenants, together we will be able to make even more things possible for more people.

Last year we consulted with and listened to tenants, staff and partners to develop our Corporate Plan. This sets out how we aim to improve lives by building homes and communities that enable new and exciting possibilities.

These themes are:

Homes

...are the first building block on the journey to a better life. Everyone deserves a safe, warm and comfortable place to call home.

Communities

...influence the wellbeing of people who live and work there. Everybody deserves to be part of a thriving community where they can realise their potential and contribute.

This Annual Report shows our progress against these themes in Year One. The partners we work with are listed on our website.

Contents

Introduction	02
Community Outcomes Summary	04
Homes	06
- Sustainable	06
- Safe	12
- Green	16
Communities	20
- Stable Homes	20
- Continually Learning	26
- Digitally Able	32
- Person Centred	36
- Prosperous	42
- Healthy	52
- Connected	58

Some names have been changed throughout this document to protect the identities of tenants. Some photography has been used for illustrative purposes and some was taken pre-pandemic before social distancing measures were put in place.

Community Outcome Summary

2020-2021

The following outcomes were delivered together with partners:

55 key community activities delivered with £5,444,726 of internal and external investment.

Person Centred

341 social and private tenants sustained tenancies through tenancy support.

31,304 welfare calls were made, with 1,359 actions delivered.

Prosperous

£3,591 a year, on average, saved by tenants paying social rather than private rent.

510 people accessed work or learning, with 56 securing a job.

£454,692 welfare benefits and grants brought in for tenants.

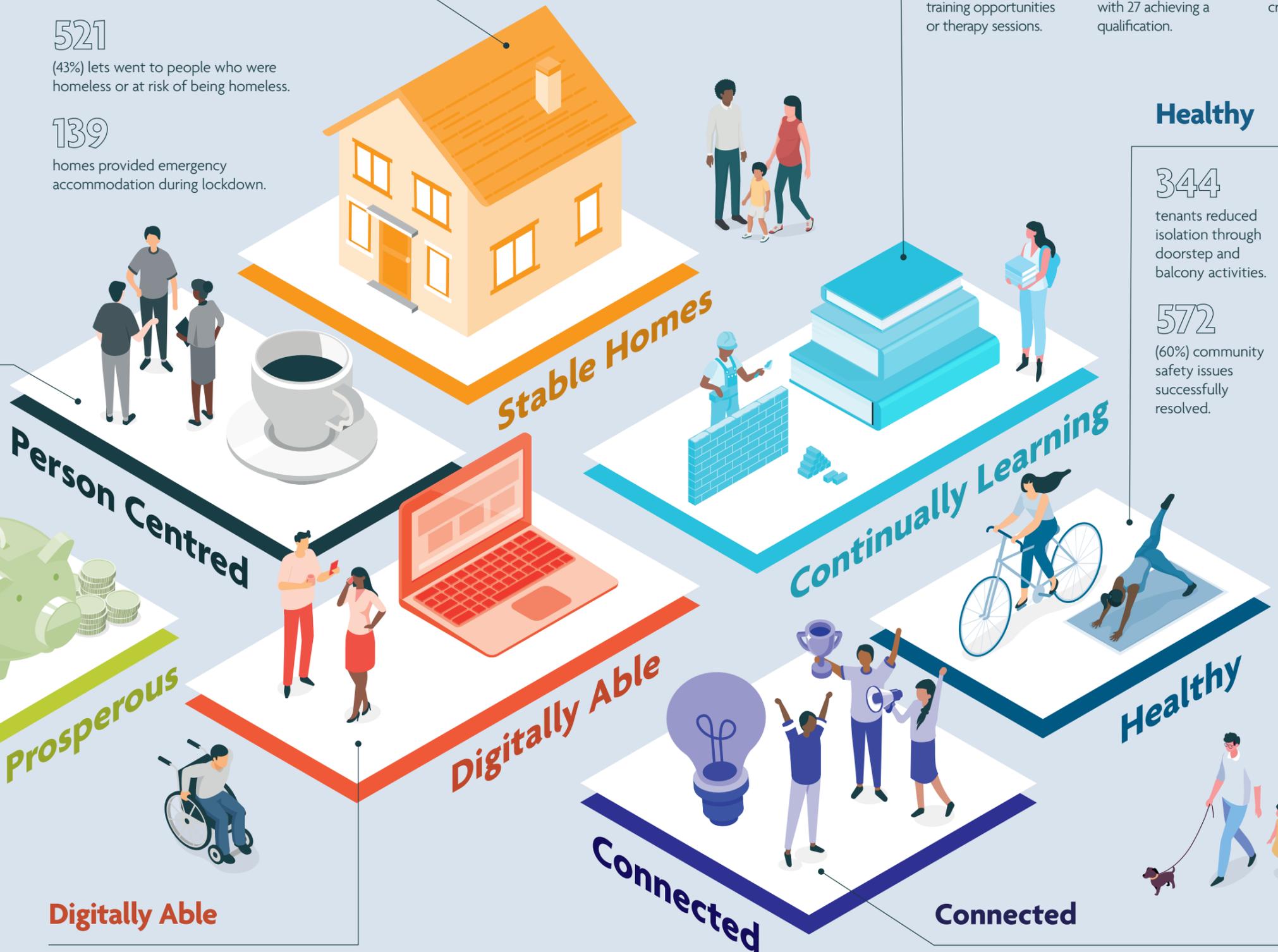
£31,005 reduction in fuel bills.

Stable Homes

17,679 social rent households live in an affordable, well-maintained and stable home.

521 (43%) lets went to people who were homeless or at risk of being homeless.

139 homes provided emergency accommodation during lockdown.



Digitally Able

12,000 webchats enabled tenants to self-serve and 837 virtual lettings took place.

39 tenants have affordable internet through their rent.

11 people supported to move their business online.

Continually Learning

151 children and families accessed learning and training opportunities or therapy sessions.

52 school pupils took part in construction training, with 27 achieving a qualification.

312 children took part in healthy, fun and creative activities.

Healthy

344 tenants reduced isolation through doorstep and balcony activities.

4 community hubs set up as emergency food points.

572 (60%) community safety issues successfully resolved.

1,433 tenant fall assessments completed with 8 support referrals.

Connected

£68,041 ForHousing grants supported 122 community and tenant groups.

£64,487 of external funds secured for 25 community activities.

2,519 hours volunteered by 73 tenants and customers.

Sustainable

Outcome: Well designed, truly affordable

We believe that a decent, truly affordable and secure home to live in is critical for the journey to a better life. Extending the supply and type of homes widens options for people to choose where they live, opening doors to new possibilities.

This year we invested £20.1m in maintaining and improving existing homes and £39.1m developing new homes.



Investing in assets

We invested £12.3m to improve homes, replacing 1,793 components, such as heating, kitchens, roofs and doors.

A further £7.8m was spent maintaining homes, with 46,093 responsive repairs completed. As a result, 100% of homes continue to meet or exceed the Government's Decent Homes Standard.

Tenants reported 88.4% satisfaction (representing 999 of respondents) with their most recent repair, exceeding the 82% target.

Target Satisfaction	82%
Actual Satisfaction	88.4%

We also worked with local authorities to complete 522 aids and adaptations, worth £180,557, to enable people to continue living independently in their existing home.

Case study

Carol's story

Carol has a reduced physical and cognitive function which meant she was unable to get in the bath due to restricted mobility. The use of movable equipment was considered an extra risk so, following an assessment by an Occupational Therapist (OT), a level access shower was installed.

Carol can now easily use the level access shower and a further OT assessment confirmed her quality of life has significantly improved now she can independently maintain her own personal care.



Achievements



176 new homes addressed a range of housing needs.



100% of homes continue to meet or exceed the Government's Decent Homes Standard.



10,191 (100%) emergency repairs were completed within the 24 hours target.

522 adaptations, valued at £180,557, enabled tenants to live independently.

16 outdoor spaces had investment of £51,610 to better use the space for tenants and residents to enjoy.

£36,271 of rent credits assisted businesses to sustain shop tenancies when they were unable to trade due to COVID-19 restrictions.



Environmental improvements

Our Neighbourhoods and Assets teams worked together to maintain the appearance and safety of areas where we have homes. This included:

- Unused community gardens at Denecliff high rise (Stockbridge Village) and Russell Court (Little Hulton) were tidied and grassed over making them low maintenance open spaces for residents to enjoy.
- Zinnia Court in Irlam had a secure patio area installed for drying clothes.
- Amblecote Gardens in Little Hulton had sensory raised beds installed for tenants to connect with nature and stimulate the five basic senses.
- New higher specification external doors enhanced security at The Green (Fitton Hill) and The Spinney and Cremorne Hey (Stockbridge Village).

We also regularly maintained **531 communal spaces** through the grounds maintenance service.



Case study

Preventing homelessness

Three new build schemes were developed on unused garage sites in Salford to provide shorter-term “entry level” homes for people at risk of homelessness.

The low rent for these furnished, smaller apartments includes electricity, water and Wi-Fi. This enables tenants to manage their tenancy and access the benefits of being online, in a home which gives a stable platform to a better life.



Case study

Jackson Gardens

Jackson Gardens is the first Extra Care scheme in Stockbridge Village, providing 64 apartments and 26 bungalows for tenants to maintain their health and wellbeing whilst living independently.

The spacious homes include high quality fittings and balconies or patio areas to enable easy access to outside space. Staff are on hand 24/7 to support those who need it, with assistive technology also giving peace of mind. Being in the heart of the community means tenants have easy access to local amenities to maintain independence. The scheme also has facilities such as a bistro, outdoor area for activities, laundry room, communal lounges, scooter storage and hair and beauty room.

One new tenant said: “I lived in a flat before, but the stairs were getting too much for me. The bungalow is gorgeous, I’m really thrilled to bits with it. The shower

room is fabulous, and my little garden is fabulous. I can walk, everything is local to me. I’ll still meet neighbours that I knew before, and then I’ll make new neighbours and friends, which will be lovely.”

Another said:

“It’s nice and warm, that’s the difference, you feel the heat when you come in. I have a lot of peace of mind because there are people you can go to if you need something.”

Development Programme

We have invested £150.4m to deliver over 1,397 new homes since 2013. Across a range of tenures this has extended the supply and type of homes to meet the housing need of current and future generations. This includes 218 market rent homes, with rents similar to private rented homes, but with the benefits of being owned by a regulated landlord. We have ambitions to build over 1,800 additional homes by 2026, with a significant number being truly affordable social rent.

This year, we invested **£39.1m** to build or acquire **176 new homes**, with a further **547 on-site** for completion in future years.

Breach of tenancy support

We supported 274 tenants to rectify breaches of tenancies such as poor property and garden condition, issues which can have a negative impact on neighbouring homes as well as the appearance and reputation of the area. Joint working with tenants and partners delivered 3,771 interventions to achieve a resolution.



Case study

Jerry's story

Jerry had been hoarding for some time and it was impacting on his quality of life, more so as he has a medical condition that affects his breathing and mobility. The hoarded items were further impacting his ability to move round his home.

A Neighbourhood Officer visited Jerry weekly, and Jerry eventually agreed for a local cleaning and de-hoarding company to clear and clean the property. When Jerry felt ready they worked together to agree what was to be removed and kept. With space in his home Jerry has since been able to get further belongings out of storage, saving him money.

Due to his restricted mobility Jerry would not have been able to return home, following a stay in hospital, had he not received the support. Jerry is now in touch with an old friend who helps him keep on top of the property condition, whereas he was embarrassed to invite anyone to his home before. The Neighbourhood Officer visits have reduced from weekly to every three weeks, to check in on Jerry.

Supporting local businesses and amenities

95 businesses, across 14 shop parades, provide much needed local employment, whilst the local amenities make places desirable to live and work in. During the year, we supported these businesses as COVID-19 restrictions put a halt to trading for some shops. As well as rent credits, we worked closely with our Better in Business initiative to provide business planning to secure grants and ran a digital 'shop local' media campaign at Christmas using our website and social media. We also offered information on current COVID-19 restrictions.

All units are currently let. We increased lettings by offering flexible terms and payment plans.

Case study

Paul's story

During lockdown, Paul's family accumulated more waste than usual and struggled to dispose of it in the available bins, so it built up in their front garden. Paul knew it looked unpleasant and it was having an effect on his own mental health.

A Neighbourhood Officer visited Paul and worked with the local authority who agreed the family were entitled to larger bins. The family were also referred to Children's Services, receiving support and funding

for their garden to be cleared so the children could use it. Since the intervention, there have been no further issues of poor garden conditions or excess waste.

Paul said:

"I'm incredibly grateful for this support. I now have a fresh start."



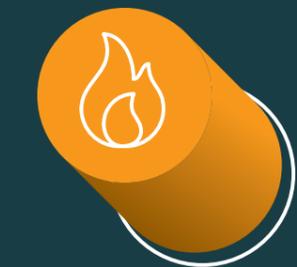
Safe

Outcome: Protecting people

We believe that tenants and residents should feel that their homes are safe, and through effective management, will remain safe. We have robust processes in place to ensure we remain compliant as a landlord and that tenants have a clear understanding of obligations in relation to maintaining the safety of their homes.



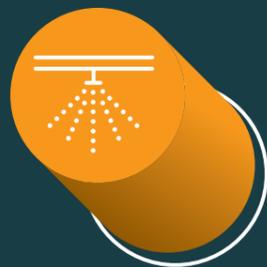
Achievements



100% (16,038) of homes with gas have been checked to ensure **appliances are safe.**



0 enforcement actions were imposed by the Health & Safety Executive.



100% of high-rise blocks have sprinkler servicing certificates to ensure they **assist with fire safety.**

1,150 neighbourhood and block inspections delivered interventions to maintain communal areas.

97.6% (17,749 out of 18,185) of **electrical installations** have valid certificates, as part of the incremental journey towards the 100% target.

Case study

Gas servicing

The outbreak of COVID-19 impacted our annual gas servicing programme as we were unable to go into all homes before the servicing certificate expired. For the first time since 2011 we did not have a 100% record for all properties with gas having an annual service.

Within the first few weeks of lockdown many tenants were understandably reluctant to let visitors into their home. However, we committed to carrying on with the programme to ensure appliances were safe. We also considered tenant concerns about limiting contact to reduce the risk of infection, whilst also ensuring operatives who carry out the service were safe.

We adapted the programme to manage concerns and arrange access. This included:

- Keeping in regular contact with tenants to make sure they were well and waiting until they were ready to welcome engineers for the safety check.
- Moving from a 10 to a nine-month programme to allow more time to arrange access, including when tenants were self-isolating or shielding.
- Risk-assessing appliances, based on the property information we hold, whilst also factoring in other available safety measures such as supplying carbon monoxide detectors. None of the properties that had outstanding certificates presented a high risk.

- Adapting letters to tenants to include information about COVID-19 measures introduced to limit contact.
- Forecasting properties that were due to expire to arrange access and answer any COVID-19 related concerns the tenant may have to put them at ease.

Over the year we remained compliant as we took all reasonable steps to gain access. Being proactive in how we communicated with tenants resulted in all homes having a valid gas safety check in place by the end of the year. Tenants gave positive feedback, with 98.7% (841 of respondents) satisfied with their recent gas safety check, better than the target of 97%. Feedback included:

“ForHousing organised my gas service to be completed on the same day as another repair, this was extremely convenient for me.”

“ForHousing are very good at communication and their staff are always understanding of my situation.”

Neighbourhood and block inspections

Neighbourhood Officers carried out 325 neighbourhood inspections with 417 actions completed to maintain the appearance of the neighbourhood and health and safety. This included removing three abandoned vehicles and 216 incidents of fly tipping.

We also carried out 825 block inspections, with 733 actions completed, including 140 fire safety measures, and 192 communal repairs. This also included 68 communal areas (stairs, halls and landings) being cleared of items such as prams, bikes, rubbish and mobility scooters, to ensure fire safety through maintaining clear entrances and exits in the event of an evacuation.



Case study

Fly tipping at Clifton Green

Neighbourhood inspections found regular fly tipping behind the shops in Clifton making the area unsightly and unsafe.

We installed barriers to prevent vehicle access, installed signage prohibiting fly tipping and compacted the nearby communal bins to provide more capacity. Fly tipping has significantly reduced as a result of these changes.

Building safety

We have improved how we manage building safety:

- Our new fire risk assessment management system makes it easier to record assessments and monitor the completion of recommendations for improvement.
- New safety noticeboards in blocks include compliance checks so residents are aware of when they are taking place, giving assurance that we are doing everything we can to make sure the building is safe. They also provide easily accessible fire safety information for the block.
- Every tenant who needs a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) has one in place. Tenants and families said they have peace of mind that the fire brigade have information on tenant evacuation requirements if needed.
- We introduced a new Building Safety Team, with a strong focus on customer safety and engagement with tenants. This is part of our approach to the new Building Safety Bill, published following the Grenfell fire, which applies to buildings classed as high risk (above 18 metres).



Electrical installation inspection programme

We carry out electrical checks every five years to provide reassurance to tenants that their homes meet legislative requirements. This includes making sure existing electrical appliances, wiring and consumer units are safely installed and working properly. An Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) is provided for each home. This year we introduced changes to help us improve access rates. We appointed a Compliance Officer to contact tenants

to explain the importance of the checks and work with them to book appointments. We also engaged two new contractors to visit more properties to carry out more inspections.

Both changes have shown to improve access and performance by 2% (372 valid certificates), as we work towards the 100% compliance target. Performance is currently 97.6% (17,749 out of 18,185).

Governance

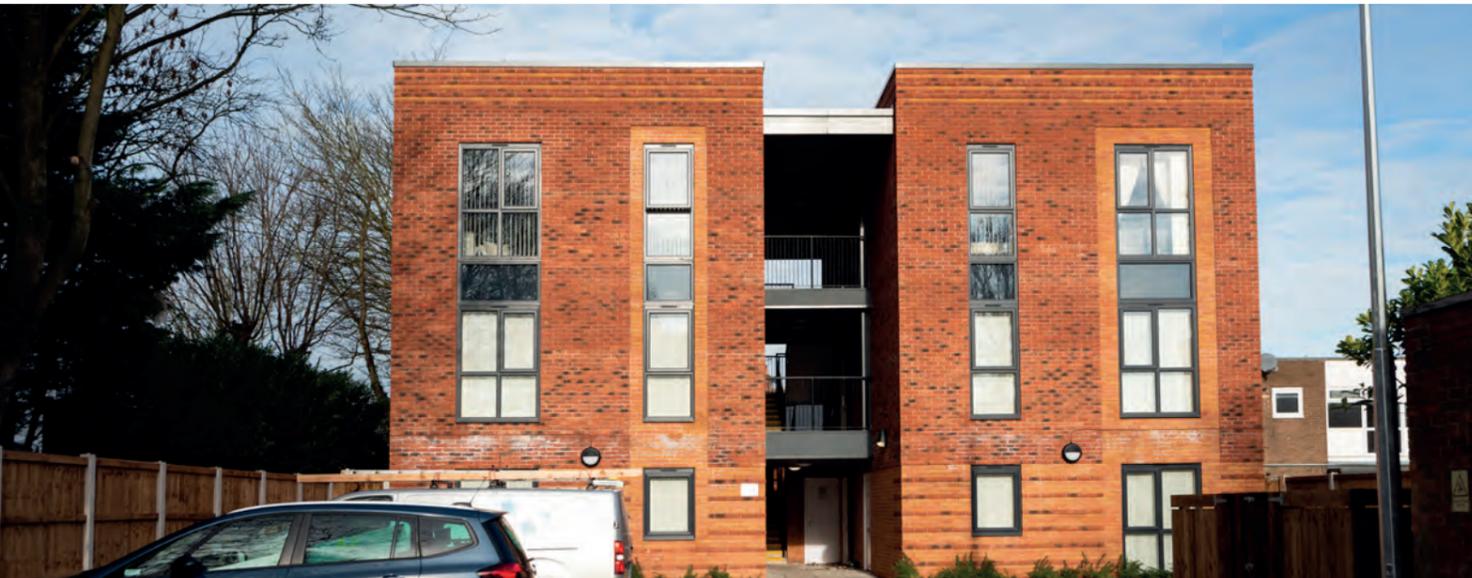
The ForHousing Board have new reporting arrangements, which bring together all the areas of landlord compliance they are responsible for overseeing, such as asbestos,

fire safety, gas safety, electrical safety and legionella. This gives a full overview of how we are doing and details actions where needed.

Green

Outcome: Reduced environmental impact

We believe that new build standards should reduce carbon emissions and energy costs for tenants and that waste is reduced or managed through sustainable and environmentally sound procurement and operational practices.



Case study

Waste Compactor

We successfully resolved an issue with household waste around communal bins which significantly increased as bin collections reduced. Our new waste compactor service compresses waste so the communal bins can hold three times more than before. The compactor, and the two new employees who operate it, carry out 700 visits to bin areas and compact 2,000 black bags per month. This has resulted in 62% (1,632) less orders needed to clear overflowing communal bins, compared to 2,660 last year. Because the excess waste would have been removed by an external contractor, this has reduced this service charge by 20%. It has also improved the appearance of communal areas and addressed issues with pests.

Tenants gave positive feedback, including
“I’ve really started to notice the difference, there used to always be a pile up of rubbish the day before the bins were emptied.”

Achievements



Band B is the average **energy efficiency** rating for new homes (the second most efficient rating out of a possible seven), resulting in **lower fuel bills and carbon emissions**.



ISO 14001 accreditation, to **drive improvement in environmental management systems**, was maintained.



62% (1,632) less orders were needed to **clear overflowing communal bins**, compared to 2,660 last year.

2.1 tonnes per home is the **carbon footprint**, representing the amount of greenhouse gas emissions produced, better than the UK average of 2.4 tonnes.

70 homes are taking part in the NetZero Collective pilot to help us understand which **energy saving technology** to use in homes.

NetZero Collective pilot

We put forward 70 homes to take part in a NetZero decarbonisation pilot scheme to monitor energy usage and the impact of retrofit works. This will involve installing renewable technologies in tenants' homes to understand their costs and benefit. This will help us develop a person-centred approach for any future rollouts of renewable heating technology by recommending what type we should use in each home to help eliminate or reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

These homes will be monitored for up to 12 months to make sure the solutions have a positive and lasting effect on carbon emissions, and either maintain or reduce energy bills for the tenant.



One tenant said about the new radiators they had installed:

“They look a lot better and bigger. There is a difference in what they expel and keep in so thanks for that.”

Energy efficiency and affordable warmth

As part of our property investment programme, we replaced 655 components in homes to make them more energy efficient. These included:



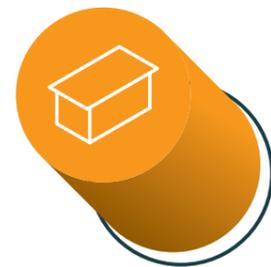
525

A-rated high efficiency condensing boilers, with full heating systems.



111

external door replacements, which also enhance security of homes.



19

flat roofs of low and medium rise blocks where the insulation was replaced or upgraded.

One to watch Green Strategy

We are developing a new Green Strategy to assist with the Government target of net zero for greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. We aim to increase the energy standards of existing homes through a fabric first approach, where we maximise the performance of the building materials to make homes more energy efficient and reduce carbon emissions. We will also be piloting the delivery of net zero homes through a new build scheme commencing in 2021/22.



Stable Homes

Outcome: A secure tenure of a well-maintained home

We believe everyone should be able to improve their quality of life. A stable, safe home allows people to put down roots in a community and make the most of opportunities to improve their wellbeing – particularly in health, education and employment.

This year we invested £512,713 in allocating new and vacant homes available to tenants, including taking part in local choice-based lettings schemes and excluding repair costs. This enabled 1,351 households to access or remain in a stable home.



17,679
properties...

and 37,405 bedrooms enable tenants and their families to make a stable home.

Case study

Achievements



1,219 individuals and families signed up to a tenancy.



43% of the homes we let last year (521) went to people and families that were previously homeless, at risk of being homeless or sleeping rough.



0 tenants were evicted from their home, for breaching their tenancy agreement.

173 homes provided temporary accommodation to support people who were homeless. That includes an extra 139 furnished homes provided as emergency accommodation during the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions.

43 of those families that were living in temporary accommodation have now gone on to secure a stable home through permanent tenancies with ForHousing.

105 households were able to make changes to their tenancy agreement, giving tenants peace of mind about their legal rights and responsibilities when circumstances changed.

27 successions have enabled people to remain in their home when a person they were living with is no longer the tenant, including where the tenancy transferred after a tenant passed away.

95 exchanges let tenants find more suitable homes, allowing people to move closer to work or family members or find more appropriately sized homes.



Carla's story

Carla had moved into a deceased relative's home, as a temporary solution. She was previously living with a friend but after the relationship broke down she felt there was no other option than to move out. Carla wasn't in any immediate threat of homelessness but her relative's property was up for sale so this was reflected in the housing need on her application.

Carla knew this was short term and with COVID-19 restrictions easing and the housing market beginning to move again, she explored private rented properties.

"I was starting to get desperate", Carla said "I'd started to look at renting privately but the rent was so high I wouldn't have had any money left even for food".

Since becoming a ForHousing tenant, Carla has made a lovely home to be proud of. "My family and friends don't recognise it, I've literally decorated everywhere", she said. "It looks so good now and I'm so happy. Getting the phone call from ForHousing was amazing, such a huge relief and weight off my shoulders."



Case study

Dennis' story

ForHousing has signed up to the Armed Forces Covenant, which is a promise to ensure that those who serve or have served and their families, are treated fairly within their community.

Dennis, an army veteran who had served in the Falklands, Northern Ireland and the Middle East, is one of the ten veterans who signed a tenancy with us this year.

Before Dennis came to us, he was renting from a private landlord in Salford. The landlord began making unreasonable demands like significantly raising his rent without warning and refusing to carry out repairs to his home. Unfortunately, the landlord's intimidating behaviour eventually forced Dennis into leaving his home and becoming homeless.

As Dennis owns two dogs, finding temporary accommodation was difficult and he resorted to living in a tent in the countryside for a short while.

Working with partners at Salford City Council we were able to find Dennis a safe place to call home and allow him to take positive steps forward so he could improve his quality of life.

At first, we were able to offer Dennis temporary accommodation, and then a more permanent home of his own.

Dennis said:

"Having the security of a life-time tenancy has made a massive difference to my life! I absolutely love my flat and I intend to stay here for a very long time.

"I've made friends with lots of my neighbours which has really boosted my mental health and my stress levels have reduced hugely too. I was surprised to find that my physical health has improved enormously, I love taking my dogs for walks in the field nearby!"

"I absolutely love my flat and I intend to stay here for a very long time."

Case study

KD's story

KD, 46, had been rough sleeping for several years as well as sofa-surfing and living in temporary, supported and shared accommodation. He was regularly admitted to hospital due to poor mental health and had not had a stable home to support his recovery.

The chaos of rough sleeping and his circumstances caused his mental health to deteriorate further.

When KD was discharged from hospital following three months of treatment for his mental health he found himself homeless again. Through the [Social Impact Bond](#)

partnership KD asked for support and was offered a home with ForHousing.

He has now moved into his new home and is receiving long-term treatment and ongoing support.

This is KD's first home in a very long time and he is excited about the stability and independence it brings home.

KD is one of six rough sleepers who signed a tenancy with us this year.



Case study

DJ's story

DJ was living in care leavers accommodation – but when he turned 18 his placement came to an end. DJ had been preparing to move on from this supported accommodation and had been concerned about where he would live in the future.

DJ was referred to ForHousing via the care leavers partnership and allocated his first tenancy at the Somerset Road development, which provides homes and wrap around support for people facing homelessness.

Each tenant is allocated a dedicated support worker who works with them to access training and employment opportunities, address any health and wellbeing issues and learn skills to sustain the tenancy and set up their new home.

The apartments are offered at a truly affordable sub-social rent, which includes all service charges, bills and Wi-Fi. They are furnished and include white goods so that tenants can move straight in.

DJ now has the stability and ongoing support he needs to sustain his tenancy and pursue his aspiration to go to University to study for his future.

“I couldn't wait to hold my own set of keys and get into a home that I could call mine”, he said.

DJ is one of nine care leavers who took up a ForHousing tenancy this year.



“I couldn't wait to hold my own set of keys and get into a home that I could call mine.”

Case study

Kirsty's story

Kirsty, 19, was studying at university when she became pregnant and found living in university accommodation very difficult, so she decided to return to care leavers services for support.

Kirsty wanted to move into her own home with her baby, but she needed financial support to enable her to do that alongside continuing her studies.

Next Steps, Salford City Council's care leaving service, contacted ForHousing to discuss Kirsty's needs. The two organisations work in partnership to support care leavers until they reach the age of 25.

Through the partnership, Kirsty was initially offered a one-bedroom apartment, but the team were aware that once Kirsty's baby was born, she would be entitled to a two-bedroom home.

To help Kirsty avoid having to move twice with limited resources, we offered her a two-bedroom apartment with the initial support of a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) to make up the shortfall in rent until the baby was born.

This meant Kirsty could move in knowing that she would be living there long-term and could make a home for her and her baby.

Kirsty's support worker said:

“Kirsty loves her new flat. It's so quiet and the location is great with easy access to the local shops.”

“My new flat is a great place to settle with my baby.”



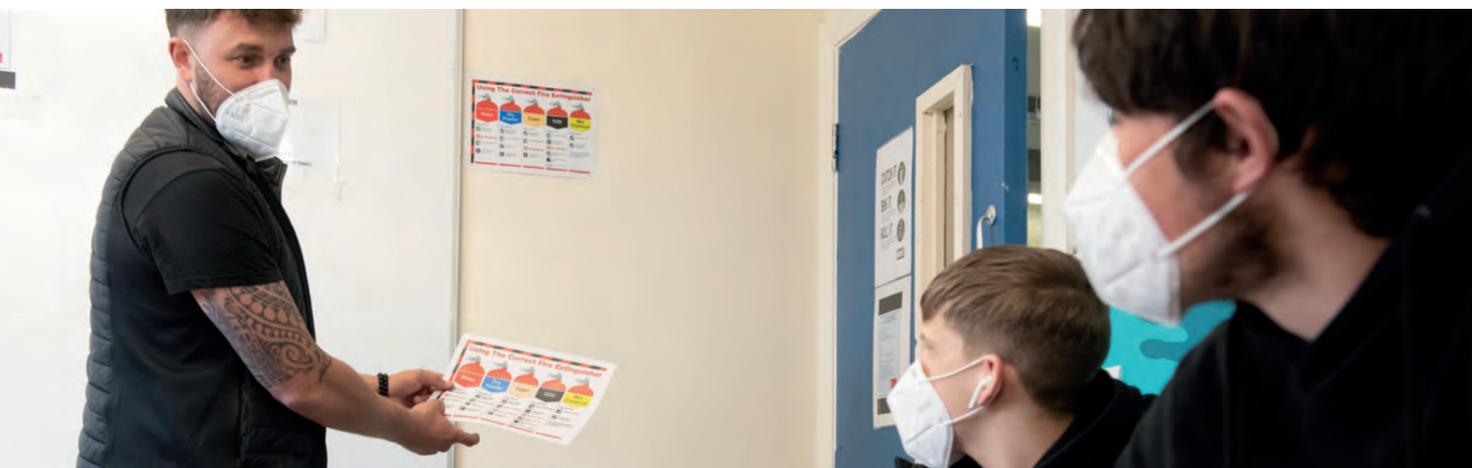
Continually Learning

Outcome: Support to acquire the skills and knowledge needed for life and work

We believe that learning ensures that people of all ages can successfully adapt in a changing world. We are particularly passionate about investing in children and young people to support the future of the next generation.

With partners, we invested £226,465 in activities which nurture the skills, confidence and self-esteem of young people to make more things possible for them.

This included enjoyable, challenging and fun things to do, as well as initiatives to support a positive home environment, healthy living and resilience to handle trauma, such as bullying or domestic abuse.



Case study

Sharna's story

Sharna and her son Noah, two, took part in Play Streets, which delivered 58 online activity sessions during the school holidays and closures.

These positive and entertaining sessions included growing food and cooking meals, science activities, arts and crafts, storytelling, reading challenges and sports.

Sharna found out about Play Streets through a post on the Play Street Facebook group and after signing up used the activity pack we provided to take part in as many activities as possible. Noah's favourite thing to do was arts and crafts, as he loves to get messy and creative, particularly painting.

Sharna said: "It's worth everyone giving it a try! It's great to let them experiment and be creative and it was a great chance to spend quality time with Noah doing something we both enjoy."

Another parent, Leslie, said: "My daughter loved the arts and crafts. It really helps as it gives her a break from schoolwork and something to do. She loves learning and this is something else to challenge her."

And mum Jenny said:

"Thank you guys for a brilliant week of ideas and challenges. They've all enjoyed it."

Achievements



312 children accessed **healthy, fun and creative online activities** delivered by Play Streets during the school holidays and closures.



145 families attended Inspiring Futures family clubs to **access education and training.**



16 primary school children attended Smart Choices **restorative and therapeutic programme.**

52 school pupils attended School Links **construction skills training.**

16 families attended Listening Ear one to one **counselling** sessions for children and young people affected by domestic abuse.

2,060 book packages, donated by the Book Trust, were given to children to **engage them in reading** and make it a part of daily life.

Case study

Inspiring Futures

62 family club sessions, across four primary schools, initially built relationships with families in the community as a pathway for parents to progress into training and development.

The families enjoyed a selection of games and educational activities suitable for all ages and abilities, alongside weekly themed activities of sport, crafting or baking.

Two adults gained a qualification in food safety and hygiene Level 2, and another completed an English language course.

Case studies

Aisha's story

Aisha, who attended every session, said it gave her the confidence to volunteer.

She has recently completed training with Home Start, a charity which supports families who are struggling to cope to prevent crisis and family breakdown. Aisha is proud to have been "allocated a family", who she successfully supported for three hours a week over Christmas.

John's story

John and his grandmother Susan attended consistently, taking part in the activities as a way of improving John's behaviour.

Susan said: "It used to be a nightmare taking him out because he wouldn't listen, but he's much better now."

John's teacher Mrs Jackson also noticed an improvement. "He is listening more in class and finishing tasks more often," she said.

Case study

Smart Choices

Pupils are nominated by teachers for this restorative and therapeutic intervention programme at two schools in Salford. Delivered by Kick Start, over 10 sessions pupils are supported to express their feelings and given tools to manage their reactions in the classroom environment.

Session Delivery

Sam Lowe, from ForHousing's Learning and Development team, delivered a session on mindfulness and relaxation techniques and explained how to use tools to manage emotions and behaviour. The children filled a bottle with water, glue and glitter, shook it and imagined that the glitter was their mind when they are stressed or upset. Your brain is like the glitter, you can't think clearly when it's shaken. The group were then shown exercises that provided coping strategies.



Case study

Jack's story

"My first meeting with Jack was when I was asked to assist a member of staff to get him down from the school railings," Sam said.

"Jack was telling staff that he would injure himself if they attempted to get him down. He was often heard swearing at the teachers and hitting out at other children, as he found it difficult to maintain relationships. He was referred to Smart Choices and has since received a diagnosis of ADHD.

"Jack told his mother that he enjoys attending Smart Choices as he feels the facilitator "gets him". His mother Hannah has said there has been a marked

improvement in his behaviour at home and he is socialising a bit more. The school family worker said she has not heard him swearing as much.

"Jack particularly enjoyed the session on the brain and stress and mindfulness. He said it made sense to him that he struggled to calm down because he wasn't always given the time to "stop being mad". The session allowed him to visualise the effect of being still long enough to allow the brain to calm."



Case study

Adi's story

Adi, a child exposed to historical domestic abuse, was emotionally stressed due to his father not being consistently in his life.

Adi articulated worries associated with not seeing his dad and has feelings of loss and rejection. Initially the service provided a therapeutic safe space where Adi could explore his experiences and learn strategies to help alleviate any subsequent stress or anxiety. His mother Ranvir also engaged in six sessions, to build her own capacity to support his mental health at home.

Ranvir spoke about her and Adi's concerns about the deterioration of his relationship with his father, as well as relationships his dad was forming with others. The therapist was able to help Ranvir to identify common feelings Adi may be experiencing. Ranvir was provided with some activities, such as an emotions board game, a tree of worries and a storyboard she could use to improve emotional literacy and encourage Adi to open up and talk about his feelings.

Ranvir said she found these useful, and that the worry tree had enabled Adi to verbalise some concerns she was not aware of. However, despite the positive steps

Ranvir was concerned about Adi's inability to self-regulate his anger, which was causing some issues with behaviour and attitude.

Over time Ranvir learnt strategies and support plans to help Adi recognise any internal and external triggers that may contribute towards his anger. The therapist also supported Ranvir to reflect on her own responses to Adi, and how they could impact on their relationship. Ranvir also said both of them were struggling with lockdown. Their therapist encouraged them to schedule some time during the day where they could both check-in and talk about how they were coping.

By week five Ranvir said the relationship had begun to improve and that both of them were empathetic towards each other's needs.

At the final session she reflected on a sense of achievement and commented on how she felt proud of Adi for working hard and that he seemed to be 'thriving' at school. She felt more confident in supporting his emotional wellbeing and more prepared for any future issues.



"I would have been a school drop out..."

Case study

Cameron's story

Cameron attended ForHousing's Skills Centre to learn construction skills during the school year. He had been expelled from school and years of bullying had left him feeling dejected and prone to lashing out.

The change in environment at the Skills Centre really improved his situation. "It was great," he said. "Everyone got on and no one was bullied or was horrible to anyone else. The tutors listened to us and we could have a laugh as well as learning."

Cameron turned things around for himself. His commitment, behaviour and dedication gained him a construction qualification and improved his Maths

and English. This enabled him to successfully secure an apprenticeship with a gas company.

Cameron said: "I would have been a stereotypical school dropout without coming to ForHousing, my parents are buzzing and I'm so excited to start my apprenticeship."

At the end of the course, 27 Year 10 or 11 pupils went on to achieve a qualification in construction. Of these, 16 (59%) students moved on to further education, employment or training.

Pupils are also encouraged to take up Maths and English tuition and eight achieved a Level 1 assessment.

Ones to watch in 2021/22

We committed £18,021 to a local school initiative, which aims to make the school curriculum standards come to life by connecting learning to real world issues.

In Year One (2020/21) the funding created a new job and made connections with local partners and our Community Development team to **develop learning opportunities** once lockdown restrictions allow.

Access to education - Expeditionary Learning

This will include primary school children regularly connecting with tenants at extra care scheme, Jackson Gardens, to support intergenerational learning.



Digitally Able

Outcome: Equal access and use of technology

We believe that technology is embedded in day-to-day life and having equal access ensures that everyone can actively participate. This was never more evident than during COVID-19 restrictions, when being online was essential for being able to work, learn, shop and socialise safely.

Office-based staff were supported to move to a home working environment. This included staff meeting tenants, colleagues and partners through online collaboration software, and being given the flexibility needed to balance work with home schooling and caring responsibilities.

Most services moved online but socially distanced home visits took place where needed. We worked with tenants to use digital devices and in some circumstances loaned devices to them, to provide a face-to-face online experience wherever possible.



Achievements



39 tenants have Wi-Fi included in sub social low-cost rent, and are now able to get **internet access** without worrying about the cost.

2 virtual visiting rooms opened in extra care schemes for tenants to **connect with friends and family**.

32 devices were donated to families to **enable home schooling**.



12,000 web chats were carried out by our tenant-named website chat box Zippy, **enabling tenants to self-serve** through the internet.

837 virtual lettings took place to **view empty homes safely**.

11 people were supported to **move their business offer online**.



Digital access - Virtual lettings

Virtual lettings of empty homes are a good example of how moving to online delivery can have a better outcome for tenants, and actually be the preferred way of delivery post-pandemic.

We use video calls to do a live walk through of the whole property, meaning we answer any questions right there and then. Prospective tenants are fully involved throughout the entire process. People can share viewings of their new home with family and friends, at a time that suits them, so that everyone is involved in the experience. Pre-recorded videos provide tenants with all the information they need to kickstart a successful tenancy.

Harriet, aged 60, said,

“Being able to view the property virtually allowed my son to see my new home too. If this was a viewing in person, I would have had to attend by myself.”



Case study

Cynthia's story

Our new virtual visiting rooms launched in December 2020. The first user was Cynthia, a tenant at Bourke Gardens Extra Care scheme, who speaks to her daughter Suzanne regularly on the phone but hadn't seen her for over a year because she lives in Texas, USA.

Hannah, the Scheme Manager, planned a Zoom meeting with both Cynthia and Suzanne to ensure everything went smoothly.

They were both overjoyed to see each other after such a long time and Cynthia even had her hair done for the occasion. She met her great-grandchild for the first time on the call too.

Suzanne has expressed her thanks for making the video call possible.

She said:

"I'm grateful for all the staff who continue to support my mum and look after her. I know she is in good hands."

Suzanne is sad that she is so far away as she feels helpless, but is reassured knowing that she can have the virtual meetings and has booked another slot.

Case study

Scott's story

Scott used to be a Kingsman in the army. We supported him to create his own brand and website to offer personal training services online during and after the pandemic restrictions.

He is incredibly hard-working and has learnt a great deal about branding, performing online, the technology needed to deliver quality online classes and marketing strategy.

"Branding my website as 'Kingsman Personal Training' brought the idea closer to me, offering a unique

service rather than something similar to everything else on the market".

"The bringing of a 'fresh pair of eyes' was really needed, I feel like I had a little 'tunnel vision' with what I thought I had to do."



Person Centred

Outcome: Empowered and respected to influence decisions

We believe that when people are involved in decisions about their lives, they feel empowered and respected. This freedom to make choices has a big impact on wellbeing as it takes into account people's personal priorities.

Everything we do is with tenants and communities at the heart. We work with tenants to assess the most appropriate way to deliver services, based on their circumstances and preferences. We also recognise that when tenants are at risk of losing their tenancy we need to work together to put in place a plan that is right for the individual.

With partners, £321,011 was invested this year in tenancy sustainment services to identify and work with tenants who have additional support needs, to make changes that matter.



Achievements



341 social and private tenants accessed our tenancy sustainment services and **sustained their tenancy.**

31,304 welfare calls were made, with 1,359 actions delivered



Case study

Zach's story

Zach was referred to the tenancy sustainment service because of his rent arrears, council tax debt and the fact that he had no furniture in his flat.

He had been living in his home for six months but was barely living there because he had no heating or hot water. Zach was deaf, had a learning difficulty and struggled with his mental health.

Following our initial assessment, he was referred to Social Services for a Community Care Assessment. The local fire service attended the property and fitted a pillow alarm. A hearing loop system was also installed. We coordinated this partnership approach, which included an engineer checking the gas supply, which was uncapped and restored. Zach is now topping his accounts up regularly and has a warm home with hot water.

We successfully applied for a grant from a local charity to buy a fridge for Zach to store food. Previously he needed a food parcel due to welfare benefit delays. The foodbank

struggled to provide food for him because he had nowhere to refrigerate it. Zach also had limited cooking facilities but has since saved up to buy a kettle, toaster and microwave.

A Discretionary Housing Payment of £651 cleared his rent arrears and helped ensure he kept his home. We have also helped Zach to get an exemption from Council Tax - he qualifies because of his mental health issues - and he has received a refund of previous payments.

We contacted Zach regularly during lockdown which helped boost his mental health. He is now confident when contacting his GP and other health services.

Zach said the officer he worked with 'made a real difference' to him and he is feeling much more positive.



Case study

Aoife's story

Aoife, aged 29, had secured a tenancy in a high rise flat after previously being homeless. She needed white goods and help budgeting her welfare benefits as she was struggling to buy food. She also had a history of substance misuse.

Aoife was reluctant to speak to us, but after a number of attempts an assessment of support needs identified that psychologically she was not in a good place. She had several issues impacting on her mental health.

She was drinking daily and using drugs and told us that she did not want to be here anymore and had thoughts of taking her own life. She visited hospital frequently over a five-day period and was admitted to a secure mental health ward for three weeks.

We liaised with Housing Options, homeless outreach, the drug and alcohol team and mental health team to support Aoife when she was discharged from hospital.

We also had regular contact with her family and the hospital throughout.

Since being discharged, Aoife has been attending sessions and her mental health has improved significantly. She is now looking forward to a fresh start in a new home with hopes of eventually moving on into employment.

Aoife said:

“You are the only person I have listened to. I couldn't have done this without you.”

Her mum said: “You have saved my daughter and I can't thank you enough for your help.”

Case study

Derek's story

Derek, a 50-year-old male victim of domestic abuse, had been living in temporary accommodation and needed support after moving into a permanent home. Derek had a history of depression, anxiety, self-harm and suicidal thoughts.

Derek wasn't willing to speak to us at first but after a few phone calls explaining the support available he had an initial assessment to identify his support needs. It was clear that a negative experience in a relationship with a previous partner had impacted significantly on his mental health.

He arranged for advice and assistance with budgeting, maximising his welfare benefits and reducing his alcohol consumption. These services, along with our weekly contact, and engagement with the Community Mental Health Team helped Derek to reduce his drinking.

We supported Derek to have rent payments made directly to his private landlord, resulting in his tenancy being sustained and preventing any further issues with rent. We also completed successful applications for kitchen items and a sofa to help Derek settle into his new accommodation.

Derek is now looking forward to making positive changes within his life.

He said:

“Thank you for all your help and support in getting me settled into my new home.”



Deliver services that people want and need

- Welfare calls

When the first lockdown of the UK hit at the start of 2020 we knew we had to be proactive. Staff made 31,304 successful welfare calls, contacting tenants over the age of 70, single parents, vulnerable people, those receiving tenancy support and people with a welfare or safeguarding concern.

We maintained that contact for as long as the tenant needed it or asked us to. We also promoted the Salford “Stay In Touch” service, developed to support lonely and isolated tenants during the COVID-19 response. In total 950 tenants required medical, food or wellbeing-related support.

Here are just some of the positive outcomes delivered by ForHousing staff:

- Cat, recently got in touch with Patricia who was celebrating her 60th birthday. Patricia had mentioned that she felt really down about having a milestone birthday during the lockdown.

Cat wanted to check in with Patricia to make sure that she had celebrated her birthday as best she could. Patricia let Cat know that although her son and daughter hadn't been able to visit, she'd managed to have a few socially distanced drinks in the garden with some friends. They'd even found an old music player with some songs from when they were younger to enjoy.

She was grateful that Cat had remembered her birthday and reached out.

- Nicola spoke with a lone parent and NHS key worker. They told Nicola: “I have been working crazy hours and not had much time to think about the wellbeing of myself and my own family. I'm taken aback by the thoughtful call and that someone is asking about me and my family whilst I am looking after everyone else. I really appreciate the call.”
- Sharon spoke with Fred who is elderly and lives alone. After some conversation, Sharon discovered he hadn't had a proper meal for weeks as his food parcels hadn't arrived and he didn't know what to do.

Fred was trying to work it out through his GP and was hopeful it would be sorted soon. Sharon wanted to make sure Fred received a proper meal as soon as possible, so she contacted Knowsley Council who were delivering meals to vulnerable and elderly people. They sprang into action and a hot meal was delivered to him that same day. Fred is now on the list for a daily delivery.

- Andy had been trying to make contact with a tenant, Lawrence, without success so wrote a letter. A few days later, a member of Lawrence's family contacted Andy to say they had noticed the letter when visiting to provide him with essentials, and thanked Andy for his kind words and offers of support.

During the conversation, it became clear that Lawrence would benefit from further support and a referral has been made to Spirit of Salford, which provides support and advice on lots of different issues including wellbeing.

- Josh was able to finally make contact with a tenant, Oliver, after three failed attempts. Oliver initially said that everything was okay, but Josh knew Oliver was elderly and lived alone, and was concerned he was struggling to hear everything Josh was saying.

Josh had a feeling something wasn't right – so after the call had finished he sent a courtesy follow up text. Oliver responded to the text sharing that, actually, he had no heating or hot water in his home, and he had no idea how to report it. Josh quickly raised an urgent repair and kept Oliver up to date throughout the whole process via text message.

“I'm taken aback by the thoughtful call and that someone is asking about me and my family whilst I am looking after everyone else. I really appreciate the call.”

Prosperous

Outcome: Reduced poverty and increased wealth

We believe access to more financial resources helps improve the wellbeing and quality of life for tenants, enabling them to buy healthy food, pay essential utility bills and socialise.

Key to this is 17,679 social and affordable rent properties (37,178 bedrooms), which provide tenants and their families with a truly affordable home.

This year, we invested £1,274,533 in our rent collection and arrears recovery services, to support tenants to meet their rent obligations and avoid debt.

We invested £717,226 to support people of all ages to improve their employability. 60% (£433,085) is funded by income from programmes we deliver on behalf of partners. These pathways into employment returned £733,208 of social value – which is how we measure the difference made to the people who took part. This means each £1 invested returned £1.02. This is expected to increase over time as participants go on to use their new skills to move into work or progress in their career.

We also supported the charity Mustard Tree to stay open during the pandemic. This enabled two staff to stay in post to run the shops, which provide low cost food, furniture and clothes to the community.



Achievements



£3,591 a year, on average, was saved by tenants living in **truly affordable social housing** compared to private sector housing.



510 people received support to **access work or learning** - 207 had complex barriers to work.



Of these, **175** people **improved their employability** by completing training or a work placement, also achieving 43 qualifications.

56 people went on to **secure a job** or started to move into self-employment.

504 tenants received fuel advice / provider-switching advice and 287 took it up, **reducing fuel bills** by a total of £31,005.

£22,293 of decoration vouchers assisted 259 tenants to **reduce financial difficulties** when improving the appearance of their new home.

£11,114 supported 118 tenants to **set up a new home** using furniture vouchers from the charity Mustard Tree.

30 participants attended the virtual Cash Chats workshops, which offer information on how to feel **more in control of finances**.

£454,692 of welfare benefits and **grants were brought in** for tenants through our tenancy sustainment service.

Case study

Gemma's story

Gemma attended one of the virtual Cash Chats workshops, which support tenants experiencing financial difficulties due to the pandemic. Gemma told us she was not keen on using Zoom as she was “sceptical about whether it would work” but found it helpful, particularly while looking after her children.

She told us: “I could take part with my children there and not worry that I might be called away.”

“I’ve learnt that it’s ok to revisit issues for which I’ve previously been told there’s no support available. I’m no worse off by asking again and may be better off.”

As a result of Cash Chats, Gemma has been referred to Citizens Advice for support with questions about the Bedroom Tax. Gemma said that as a result of Cash Chats she felt better able to cope with her finances, manage her

home and improve her wellbeing with a greater awareness of support in her local community.

“It has opened my eyes about support for my children, who are disabled.”

“For example, I can apply to charities for help with beds. I bought them all myself as I didn’t know support was out there. The course has given me a more assertive way of looking at things and thinking, “ok do we really need that or can we do without?”

Sixteen of the 30 tenants who attended these chats have already reduced their arrears with an overall reduction in rent balances of £982.85.



Case study

Catherine's story

Catherine was referred to the team by Macmillan Cancer Support nurses after being diagnosed with cancer. She could no longer work, was only receiving Statutory Sick Pay and was struggling to meet a shortfall in rent payments.

She needed to move to a more affordable home because her current home was a private let with a much higher rent. Moving to a registered social landlord property would not be possible if there were any arrears on the rent account.

Due to Catherine’s diagnosis and not being able to work for a long period of time she was entitled to apply for a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP). Catherine was

awarded £664 to clear her arrears plus £65 per week while she explored more suitable long-term affordable accommodation.

Not only did Catherine keep her home, a clear rent account meant she could apply for the housing waiting list. She was successfully allocated a more affordable home in a location of her choice. Her income now covers the new affordable rent.

Our tenancy support service took a lot of the stress away from a tenant who was already going through so much, and the DHP enabled her to make changes to improve her long-term situation.



Ifti's story

"I can't really put into words how much I appreciate and have benefitted from being in contact with you. Only four weeks ago I was homeless, sofa surfing and sometimes sleeping in a friend's shed. I had no idea where to turn. And as hard as it is to admit, I was close to the edge.

"How things have changed since I've had your support. I now have a place to call home. I've been in regular contact with Healthy Minds, Achieve, Shelter and the HEN Project. My life has been turned on its head for all the right reasons. I feel

safe, I feel comfortable and my mental health is in such a better place.

"I feel honoured to have benefited from the support you have provided."

"You quite literally have saved my life. And I can't thank you enough."

Reduced unemployment & improved employability Employment Pathways

Apprenticeships

Seven apprentices worked collectively for 255 weeks, in the areas of caretaking, business administration and Human Resources. Of the two people who completed their apprenticeship this year, one **moved into employment** with a caretaking and cleaning company and the other started a career in the armed forces.

New - Skills Support for Growth end to end

This new programme supported 15-24 year olds who were not in education, employment or training.

We provided tailored **support to 54 participants to improve their employability** through work experience, qualifications, CV writing and help with job searches. Support was also provided to access further education, such as assistance with college registrations and getting ready for college. There is no limit on how long participants sign up with us and we keep in regular contact, usually at least every two weeks, to review and discuss next steps.

Motiv8

Key workers provided support to tenants and customers aged 25 and over, whose complex needs prevented them from accessing training and employment. As well as being distant from the job market, participants were usually socially excluded and living in poverty.

Of the 207 participants, 46% (95) had a positive outcome, such as accessing a stable home and support services to help with mental health issues, substance dependency, self-esteem and resilience. Support was also provided to improve financial health, such as debt advice and opening a bank account, and improve employability, such as training and CV writing.

While most Motiv8 clients do not move into work straight away they **step closer to the job market** by breaking down some of the complex barriers they face to getting into work. This year 37 clients progressed to achieve a training or employment result.

The programme is funded by The National Lottery Community Fund and the European Social Fund.





Case study

Mark's story

After losing his job, going through a relationship breakdown and being violently attacked outside his own home, Mark's confidence was extremely low, and he was struggling to cope with day-to-day life. Soon he became dependent on alcohol which severely impacted both his physical and mental health.

After arranging a new phone for Mark, his tenancy support worker, neighbourhood officer and Motiv8 keyworker worked together to make sure they took the best approach to help him get back on his feet.

Unfortunately, after a minor incident, the Police told us that he had been feeling suicidal. He had also found out that a close relative had committed suicide, which took its toll on his mental health.

We knew we needed to take action to help and support Mark. We worked with him to arrange a move from his high-rise flat into a more suitable home that was located on the ground floor, with an extra bedroom for his daughter, close to her new college. We are still supporting him to get the most out of his life and working closely with the local authority to make sure he has the furniture he needs.

Mark is on the road to a better quality of life. Making his house a home really boosted Mark's mental health – he finally has found a place he can feel safe and secure.

Do Your Own Thing

COVID-19 restrictions made this a difficult year for anyone wishing to start a business outside of their home. For those who had a business, many had to close, pause trading or apply for loans.

A large part of what we do is encouraging people to get 'to the starting line'. This means encouraging testing, trials, focus groups and experiments. Unfortunately, none of this was possible because people simply were not allowed to mix or hand over

products to other people outside of their family, for the vast majority of the year.

However, we were still able to support 18 business start-ups, with seven receiving funding from us, totalling £2,267. The businesses this funding supported were wide ranging, including hair and beauty, graphic design, personal training and even selling eggs from home-roasted chickens.

Case study

Andy's story

Andy was a warehouse manager until being made redundant. What Andy went on to do next is very different, starting a business which sells wax melts, perfume and car air fresheners, among other scented products. He uses scents similar to expensive brands for customers with a smaller budget.

We supported Andy with advice on funding, positioning, naming products and seeking legal guidance on trading with similar brand names to high end products. Our funding enabled Andy to run a website throughout the pandemic. It has been a very hard year for Andy and his family, but things are looking brighter now. He is looking forward to starting a market stall outdoors.

Ones to watch

21/22 Kick Start

Our application for Kick Start Government funding, to deliver 25-hour-a-week work placements, has been successful. The programme targets young people, aged 16-24 who are claiming Universal Credit and at risk of long-term unemployment. We have already secured 74 work placement opportunities to deliver the programme, with the first participants starting in March 2021.



Rent collection and arrears

Housing Benefit and Universal Credit payments made to us directly were generally maintained, but we saw a slight reduction in payments made by tenants as a result of the pandemic.

Reasons for non-payment, and therefore increased arrears included:

- tenants being unwell
- not being able to pay because of reduced income or increased costs
- preferring to set money aside for emergencies.

We continued to provide support and guidance, and actively sought to negotiate agreed payment plans (which in some cases meant a short term increase in arrears) so that the tenant could keep their tenancy in the longer term.



Case study

Anna's story

Anna has been a tenant for 13 years and she had never had significant issues with her rent account. During 2020 we began trying to contact her as arrears had started to accrue. We were contacted by her nephew who advised he was now supporting Anna to manage her affairs. We had permission from Anna to speak with him on her behalf.

Concern grew for Anna as we could no longer speak with her and her nephew was giving us conflicting information. It was important that we contacted her directly - once we did we saw that Anna was completely unaware of the arrears and had no knowledge about the conversations which took place with her nephew.

This triggered us to complete a referral for safeguarding. Working closely with Social Services, we have helped Anna to sustain her tenancy.

Referring Anna for external support with her debts and maximising her income by applying for additional benefits has enabled her to maintain living independently.

Anna is extremely grateful for all the help that she has received and has a trusted relationship with the staff who worked with her.

Case study

Ben's story

Ben, who lived with his daughter, was struggling with his tenancy since suffering a relationship breakdown.

He got behind with his rent payments during the pandemic and couldn't afford to pay the arrears in a lump sum. Ben didn't want to talk to us and avoided phone calls as he was embarrassed about the situation he had found himself in.

We contacted Ben and reassured him. Staff worked with Ben to agree an affordable payment agreement.

We made **4,449** affordable repayment agreements with tenants during the year with **57% (2,535)** maintained and over **£927,897** paid by tenants to their accounts.

Our Income Maximisation team made over **21,311** successful contacts with tenants and referred **129** tenants for external support, such as debt advice.

Healthy

Outcome: Improved physical and mental health

We believe that well-managed physical health can improve people's quality of life and that mental health influences how we feel and act, what choices we make and how we handle stress and relationships with others.

We improve lives by focusing on the individuals we are serving and being the best landlord we can be.

This is why we invested £2,034,220 in improving mental and physical health this year through our Supported and Extra Care housing and Community Safety services.



"The neighbours are fabulous, I've gone from no social life to a great social circle. I'm much happier."

Case study

Pennington Close

Lockdown has been hard for tenants at supported housing schemes. Tenants at Pennington Close, however, have taken the opportunity to get to know and support each other. Attached to the community centre are bungalows. On most days, you can see a group of tenants sitting socially distanced outside, talking and laughing together. Three tenants moved in recently and can't believe the difference it's made to their lives.

Eileen and Bernard and their dog Booboo moved here in January 2020, just before the first lockdown. Bernard has breathing difficulties and says he is really glad they moved, as he has gone from a property where he felt he had no support or community spirit, to one where he has plenty. He is now able to sit outside and benefit from the fresh air, and social interaction. He has been shielding through the pandemic and says, "if we weren't here, I don't know what I would have done". Eileen also helps out their neighbours by picking up things from the local shop.

Anne Marie moved to Pennington Close in July 2020, as soon as lockdown restrictions lifted. Previously, she lived alone in a three-bed flat, and was lonely and isolated. She also struggled with the stairs leading to her home, saying "I cried when I knew I'd got the bungalow". Anne Marie feels comfortable and reassured

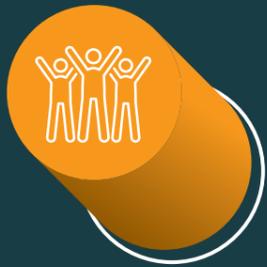
that she has support to help her live independently. She loves the security of living within a gated scheme, with a pendant and pullcord in case of emergencies. She has made firm friends with the other tenants, saying, "the neighbours are fabulous, I've gone from no social life to a great social circle. I'm much happier." Anne Marie says that when her daughter rings her to ask how she is, she now says

"It's fine here in paradise, thank you!"

Ernie has lived at Pennington Close for 14 years. He says that without his new neighbours he would have gone stir crazy during lockdown and feels good about the support he and his neighbours give to each other.

Patricia and her husband moved here in August 2019. For medical reasons they moved into a bungalow, and although the move was one they approached with caution, Pat now says "I'm quite content, I've got friends I can ring up if I need anything and the Scheme Co-ordinator will help with anything she can".

Achievements



344 tenants in supported and extra care schemes **reduced isolation** by taking part in over 150 doorstep and balcony social activities.



572 (60%) **community safety issues were resolved**, following 5,037 complainant contacts and 1,643 perpetrator contacts.



469 **wellbeing packs were delivered** to tenants identified as needing a lift in lockdown.

1,433 **fall assessments** took place in supported and extra care schemes with 8 support referrals.

519 **prescriptions were collected and delivered** to patients self-isolating.

4 community hubs were utilised as **emergency food distribution and collection points** as part of the community COVID-19 response.



Case study

Stockbridge Village caretaking

Caretaking teams have been onsite throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. We asked them to tell us in their own words how the pandemic has impacted on their role.

“As caretakers we have actively worked through these uncertain times by reassuring all the tenants that we are working hard to disinfect all lift controls, door handles and stair handrails (touch points) three times a day,” Andy said.

“We have also helped tenants, including directing people to get a COVID-19 test using the 119 NHS system, which was especially helpful for older tenants as they were not always computer-literate. We became counsellors for the tenants in many respects during the height of the first national lockdown, people could tell us their worries about the virus.

“We had to reassure tenants that we were doing everything possible to keep them safe.”

This helped a lot of tenants feel at ease in their homes, but they also knew we were here as a security blanket.

“We have also directed food parcel deliveries to ensure they reach the right people whilst keeping up with our normal duties of keeping the blocks clean and safe places to live. We have dropped off shopping to most of the elderly tenants from family members, who could not visit due to the lockdown. We have also kept in touch with some of the elderly tenants who we know are alone with no family to help out.

“We went to pick up a heating top-up card, milk and bread for a tenant who was having to shield due to being elderly and vulnerable.

“We ask some elderly tenants to leave their rubbish by their front door, so they don’t have to go down to the bin room. We then take it down for them each morning.”

Being physically and mentally active - Social activities

We continued to deliver social activities in supported and extra care housing, even when communal areas were closed by COVID-19 restrictions.

Activities included celebrating VE day with a socially-distanced Vera Lynn singalong from windows, balconies or front doors; external providers delivering activities in communal gardens such as balcony bingo; sourcing knitting patterns and supplies for tenants to form a knitting group, knitting bears for key worker children, and a programme of Christmas activities including craft sessions, party on the doorsteps, carol singing and a visit from Santa.



Case study

Extra Care

Mary moved in at the start of the pandemic and was really worried and scared. She said “I was quite withdrawn and staff encouraged me to attend the doorstep activities.” We provided her with a table and chair on her doorstep to help her to take part.

She says

“Attending the activities has had a massive impact on my health and how I feel...”

“I feel more confident and I make sure I look after myself by eating more and doing my hair and makeup. I’ve made friends along my corridor which is lovely, and we chat every night about our day. I thought I’d made a massive mistake moving here throughout lockdown but I couldn’t have been more wrong, it’s the best thing I’ve done. A big thank you to the staff for making it so special.”



Living independently and safely - Prescription delivery service

During the COVID-19 restrictions, we coordinated a medicine delivery service in partnership with Salford CVS, commissioned by NHS Salford Clinical Commissioning Group.

This service supported eight pharmacies across Salford to deliver medication to those shielding and unable to leave their homes, and with no support

network able to assist. Pharmacies contacted us to request assistance with the collection and delivery of medication. Staff and volunteers safely delivered 519 prescriptions to patients' homes.

Staff also volunteered at vaccination centres to support the national effort to protect people from COVID-19.



Community Safety Service

We dealt with 905 reports of anti-social behaviour (ASB), hate crime and domestic abuse this year.

Of these, 572 (60%) were closed after successful intervention by the Community Safety Team. This is relatively high considering the complex nature of the service which includes investigating allegations and collecting the evidence required to take action.

We were awarded HouseMark's ASB accreditation for the fourth time and are the first landlord to achieve 100% compliance.



Connected

Outcome: Increased community cohesion

We believe that people who are inspired to build strong and positive relationships at home, out in the community and at work are more likely to succeed. This is why we work together with tenants and customers to deliver activities that are important to them and their community.

We invested £470,590 in community development and 81 tenants and customers engaged with us to co-design services, or access funds and support to run tenant-led activities.



Achievements



£60,343

in ForHousing grants supported 110 community groups and volunteers to **deliver activities**, benefiting 1,387 tenants and residents.

38 families took part in **doorstep photography** as a lasting memory of the first lockdown.



£64,487

in **external funds** were secured with community groups and external partners to deliver 25 activities.

95 tenants took part in Community Conversations to **co-produce investment priorities** and influence local service offers.



£7,698

supported 12 tenants and residents' groups to pay for running costs so they could **deliver COVID-safe activities** in their communities.

2,519 hours were **volunteered** by 73 tenants and customers, including 24 new volunteers.

Doorstep photography

There have been many inspiring people who have supported others in their community this year.

Some have made and delivered food packages and hot meals to those in need, others have shopped and looked out for their neighbours, while others have raised money for charity. Some tenants even coordinated crafters to create scrubs and PPE equipment for businesses who needed it. And we must of course recognise the dedication of every person who carried on going to work as a key worker.

During the first lockdown we worked with photographers to capture this shared experience, visiting families, care homes and key workers to spread a little bit of joy by taking doorstep photographs of them. The 38 photographs captured people and groups nominated for their involvement and support in their community or simply because they would cherish having a portrait.

All those involved received a framed copy of their photo as a memory of this unique time in history.

Case study

The Safari Club Tenant and Residents Group

The Safari Club, in Stockbridge, used a grant to enable the tenant and customer group to hold an online interactive Annual General Meeting and feedback session, and to advertise to local families to encourage the highest possible attendance.

The group wanted everyone who took part to feel involved and they were keen to understand which activities local families would benefit from the most when social restrictions were lifted following the pandemic. The group intends to organise a day trip for local children to enjoy once it is safe to do so.



Case study

Incredible Education CIC

Incredible Education CIC received funding to develop the Cleavley Community Forest Garden in Winton, Eccles, including two COVID-secure community events.

The first, Pumpkins and Halloween, showcased the forest garden, provided family activities and encouraged people to learn new skills, join in and volunteer. The events led to the creation of

a 'Friends of' group with its own presence on Facebook to ensure that the local community can influence the future of the site.

Ian from Incredible Education said: "In these difficult times, where families are finding it difficult to get outdoors, our new site has offered an escape in a safe outdoor space with lots of room to enable being socially distanced from others while being part of a community event."

Case study

SJ Dance Academy

SJ Dance Academy in Oldham used a grant to purchase rehearsal kits for young people, reducing additional costs for their families. Samantha from SJ said that the children are very excited about their new uniforms.

"They feel like they belong to something, they have a purpose, in uniform they all feel as one and

connected," she said. "Some of the parents wouldn't have been able to afford the rehearsal kits if they had to buy them themselves so this funding has allowed children to take part that otherwise wouldn't have been able to."

Grants for activities for young people were the most in demand, with 22 activities funded.



Case study

For the Love of Food Salford

For the Love of Food Salford used our grant to buy ingredients, containers and PPE.

The not-for-profit organisation was set up in response to the pandemic, offering low cost cooked chilled meals for struggling families, pensioners and veterans.

Samantha Bellamy, who set up the organisation said: "Everyone we've helped has been provided with a meal that they may not have otherwise had. We've offered a good quality, fully balanced meal at a very low cost."



Case study

Salford Pride

Salford Pride used our grant to raise awareness of LGBTQ+ history online after the festival was cancelled due to the pandemic. "It showed people the struggles older LGBT people had to deal with," they said. "It also engaged the community by sharing people's real-life stories."

1,387 tenants and residents benefitted from projects wholly or mostly funded by our grant. A further 8,946 tenants enjoyed larger activities where the fund contributed to part of the cost.

The £64,487 of external funding secured by community groups included:

- £1,800 from Salford CVS for 360 supermarket vouchers worth £5 each given to families taking part in our school holiday activities to **help combat holiday hunger.**
- £25,000 from Knowsley Council through the government's COVID Winter Grant Scheme to provide **financial support** to 348 tenants affected by the pandemic, for food and utility bills.

Community Conversations

Our Community Conversations project engaged with 95 tenants to find out what is important to them to help shape ForHousing's priorities for investment.

The project included six digital storytelling sessions, four sense-making sessions to identify key themes and a classroom activity with 15 school children to talk about their local area.

We have just launched a video activity with family clubs, local schools and via Play Streets which asks children to tell us what they liked about where they live (treasure) what they don't like (would feed to the sharks) and what their perfect treasure island would be (how would they like their neighbourhood to be).

Phase three of the project will target engagement with under-represented groups. Tenants and their families already co-produce activities with us.

This year this included:

28 families wanted to focus on cooking, and arts and crafts in our school holiday activities.

75 families would like to see new activities such as arts and crafts and day trips, when youth clubs restart.

16 tenants redesigned the Craigs community garden in Stockbridge Village to improve access.



We worked with tenants who wanted to influence what we offer and how we work.

This included:



Recruitment of Board members

Tenants were involved in the recruitment of Board members, with shortlisted candidates producing a short video explaining how they would work to **embed tenant voice**.



Tenant Scrutiny Panel

The Tenant Scrutiny Panel examined our repairs service and found appointments made and kept and repairs completed at first visit perform well.

The panel fed back that issues arise with communication when follow on works are required. We have **introduced automated updates** to improve this, which the panel will monitor through tenant satisfaction.



Complaints Panel

Five tenants were involved with the Complaints Panel to oversee eight Stage 2 Panel Hearings and made offers of redress and compensation to help **resolve the complaints**.

Customer Inspectors assessed 30 (83%) service standard measures as passed, out of 36.



Getting in touch

Your feedback is important.

If you have any comments or suggestions on this Annual Report please get in touch with us.



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