

# Annual Report to Tenants

West Lothian Housing Partnership  
Highlights and performance  
2017/18



**Welcome to the Annual Report to Tenants.**  
**This year we have combined our Annual Highlights with our Report to Tenants about how we have performed.**

In each section you'll also see feedback from our Scrutiny Panel, a group made up of customers which meets regularly to review Wheatley Group's performance and services.

We hope you enjoy reading about what we achieved in the year and taking a look at how we performed on the key indicators we give the Scottish Housing Regulator each year.



## **What's inside?**

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# Welcome

from West Lothian Housing  
Partnership Chair **John M Hill**

It has been another successful year at West Lothian Housing Partnership (WLHP) as our plans to build new homes gathered momentum and we further improved and expanded services for tenants in the areas they asked us to.



We also continued our £1.3million investment in existing homes, with more tenants receiving new kitchens, showers and boilers as part of our five-year investment plan.

Our new repairs and maintenance service, delivered for us by our sister organisation Dunedin Canmore, went from strength to strength. Closer working between tradespeople and housing staff has helped create a more efficient, more responsive repairs service which has far greater focus on getting things right for the customer. I'm delighted tenants have told us how positive they feel about the improvements.

Overall customer satisfaction with WLHP is an important barometer of the progress we are making on our journey to excellence.

I am delighted to report that 97% of our tenants who were surveyed in 2017/18 said they were satisfied overall with West Lothian Housing Partnership as a landlord. This is the highest ever result in WLHP and is testament to the hard work and dedication of our staff at West Lothian and the relationship they have with our tenants.

On behalf of the Board I would like to thank all our staff for their commitment in 2017/18 and I look forward to further success in the year ahead.

You can read more of WLHP's highlights for the financial year here.



# Our journey to excellence

We improved our performance in a range of areas including customer satisfaction, one of the most important barometers of our success as a landlord.

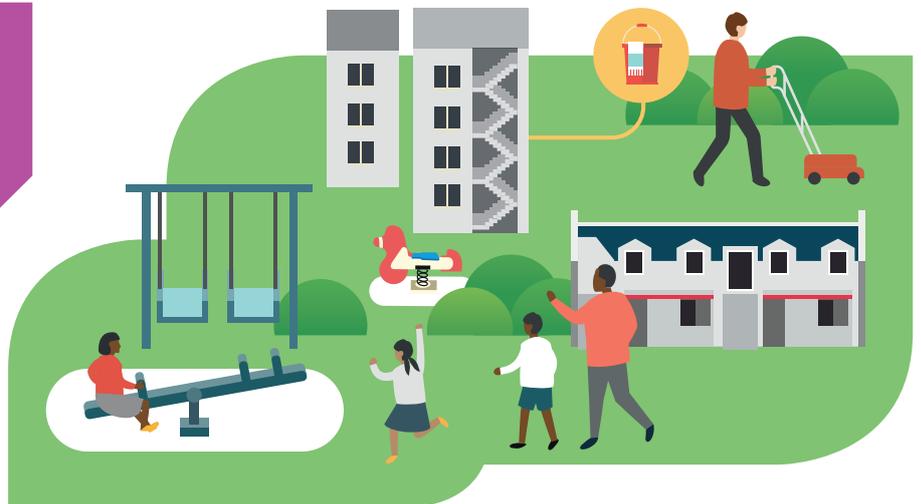


**Our tenant satisfaction rose to 97%, the highest ever and up from 93.5% the previous year. Other performance highlights included:**

- ▶ 94% of tenants were satisfied with their neighbourhood, which has increased from 90% the year before
- ▶ 94% of existing tenants were satisfied with the quality of their home, which has improved from 85.4%
- ▶ 100% of WLHP tenants were happy with the quality of their home when moving in.



**100%**  
tenants happy with the quality of their home when moving in



The Panel is pleased to see continued strong performance in overall customer satisfaction. Over the coming year we will monitor performance across all other aspects of customer satisfaction, including satisfaction with opportunities to participate and with rent as value for money.

# Homes and communities

## Investing in neighbourhoods

**Our environmental team continued to make a difference to our neighbourhoods by being out and about each day, cleaning, tidying, weeding, cutting grass, clearing litter and removing graffiti.**

Our Community Improvement Partnership (CIP) sees police and fire officers seconded to Wheatley Group to work closely with housing staff to keep local communities safe. It was further strengthened with a number of new roles, including five new behaviour change officers to support young people in trouble to turn their lives around and two new fire safety officers.

Fire safety remained a top priority for us and we introduced a Stay Safe campaign to encourage all tenants to get a home fire safety visit.

We were delighted 94% of tenants reported they were satisfied with their neighbourhoods, up from 90%.



We know local services and improvements are very important to tenants and we welcome the opportunity for tenants to improve their neighbourhoods. We will continue to review customer satisfaction with the management of neighbourhoods over the coming year.

## Building and improving homes

**West Lothian Housing Partnership progressed work on 182 new homes, 140 of them for social rent and 42 for mid-market rent. Mid-market homes provide a good alternative for people looking for affordable housing but who perhaps don't have priority for a social home.**

The three developments are part of ambitious plans for new homes which will see WLHP almost double in size by 2021.

We also invested £262,000 in existing WLHP homes, including 13 bathroom upgrades and 78 new boiler replacements.

The homes being worked on in 2017/18 included:

- 55 for social rent at Winchburgh as part of a wider regeneration project of Winchburgh village
- 42 for mid-market rent at Jarvie Street in Bathgate
- 85 for social rent in Dixon Terrace, Whitburn.

| No. of lettable units |     | Average weekly rent £ |
|-----------------------|-----|-----------------------|
| 1 apartment           | 0   | £0                    |
| 2 apartment           | 57  | £74.09                |
| 3 apartment           | 221 | £80.41                |
| 4 apartment           | 100 | £87.64                |
| 5+ apartment          | 3   | £94.29                |



| Size                        | 1 Apt    | 2 Apt     | 3 Apt      | 4 Apt      | 5+Apt    | Total      |
|-----------------------------|----------|-----------|------------|------------|----------|------------|
| House                       | 0        | 18        | 108        | 100        | 3        | <b>229</b> |
| High-rise                   | 0        | 0         | 0          | 0          | 0        | <b>0</b>   |
| Tenement                    | 0        | 21        | 35         | 0          | 0        | <b>56</b>  |
| Four-in-a-block             | 0        | 18        | 78         | 0          | 0        | <b>96</b>  |
| Other flat/maisonette       | 0        | 0         | 0          | 0          | 0        | <b>0</b>   |
| Total owned                 | 0        | 57        | 221        | 100        | 3        | <b>381</b> |
| <b>No of lettable units</b> | <b>0</b> | <b>57</b> | <b>221</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>381</b> |

# Your repairs service

More tenants were happy with the repairs and maintenance service in 2017/18.



**Satisfaction with the service was the highest ever for WLHP at 98% – up from 88.4% in 2016/17. Emergency repairs were completed on average in 2.8 hours, down from just over four hours.**

The improvements came after we rolled out our new repairs and maintenance service delivered by our sister organisation in Wheatley Group, Dunedin Canmore. Improvements to the service include:

- ▶ tradespeople becoming more multi-skilled so they can complete straightforward repairs during one visit



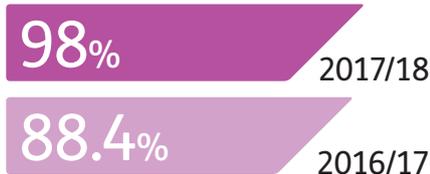
**Non-emergency repairs**

Average time to complete non-emergency repairs (working days)



**Repairs and maintenance**

Satisfaction with repairs or maintenance in last 12 months

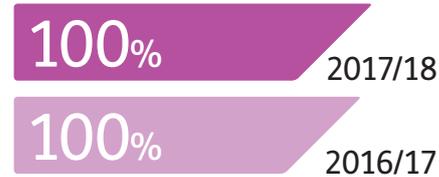


- ▶ closer working between repairs and housing staff
- ▶ greater focus on the customer, with tradespeople taking more control of each step in even the most complex job.



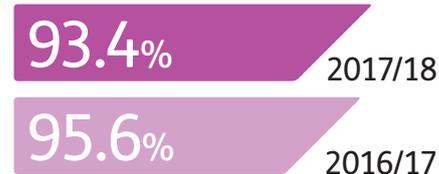
**Gas safety**

Properties requiring a gas safety record which had gas safety check by anniversary date



**Reactive repairs**

Reactive repairs completed right first time



The Panel is currently carrying out a review of the repairs service from the customer point of view, including repairs completed right first time and quality of repair. Our aim is to identify what works well and what needs to be improved. We will report our findings and recommendations later in 2018.

# Rent and value for money

We want our tenants to feel their home and services are good value for money.





**We want tenants to feel their rent represents value for money and are pleased to report 89% of tenants said they felt it was good value for money, up from 87.4% in 2016/17.**

Gross rent arrears saw a significant reduction in WLHP over the year, coming down from 4.2% to 2.2%.

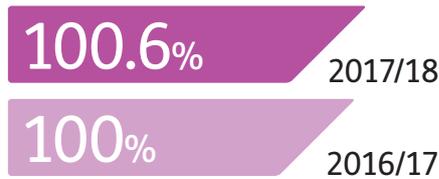
**Value for money**

Tenants who feel their rent represents good value for money



**Rent collected**

Rent collected as a percentage of total rent due



**Rent arrears**

Gross rent arrears



**Rent lost**

Rent lost through properties being empty



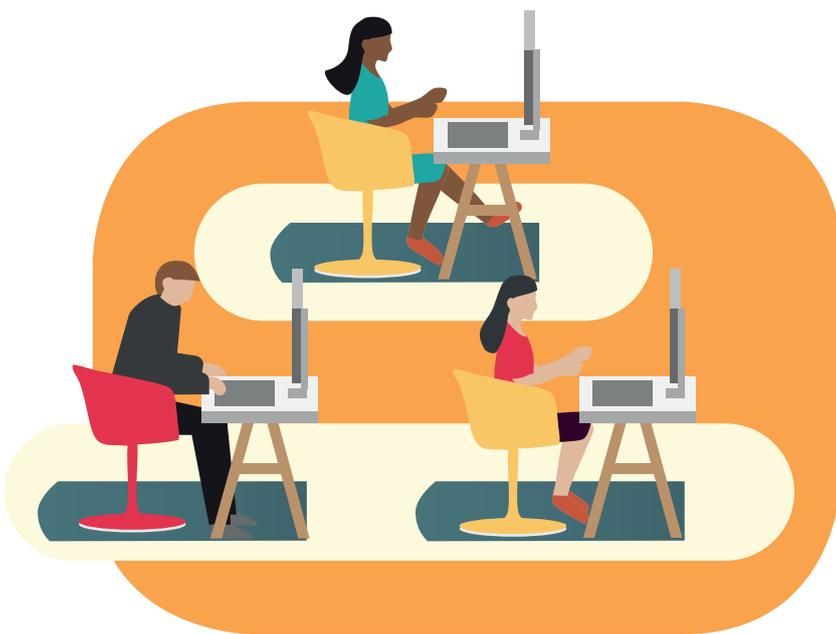
**Re-let properties**

Average length of time taken to re-let properties (calendar days)

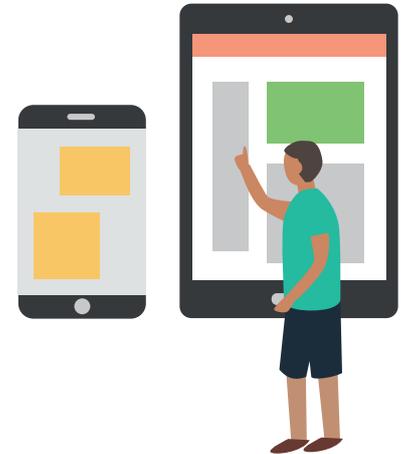


# Engaging with tenants

We continued to engage with customers in various ways, listening to their feedback and using it to improve services.



**Satisfaction with keeping tenants informed about services and decisions rose from 93.5% to 95%.** Tenants were also happier about opportunities to participate in decision making at WLHP, with satisfaction on this improving from 94% to 96%.



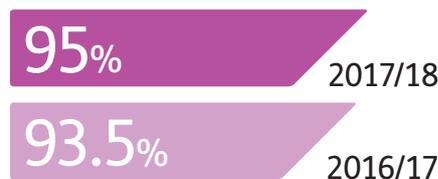
**Decision making**

Tenants who were happy with opportunities to participate



**Keeping you informed**

Tenants who were satisfied with their landlord keeping them informed about their services and decisions



**We consulted customers formally on a new allocations policy – due to be introduced as part of MyHousing, our new housing advice, information and letting service later in 2018 – with their feedback influencing the final service.** We also consulted tenants on three options for rent charges for 2018/19.

We held a range of community events across all our areas and continued to involve tenants in local decisions through our scrutiny panel and forums. Our ‘Snappy Chats’ – with staff out meeting customers face to face in the heart of their communities – have helped us build relationships and better understand our customers’ needs and priorities.

We also reached out to more tenants through online channels, with over 660 people following us on Facebook and our website audience growing with around 600 visitors a month. Almost 100 tenants were registered for online self-service at the end of the financial year with people finding it quick and convenient to pay rent, check their account, book a repair or request a service. Since then we have simplified the sign-up process, encouraging dozens more people to register and use online self-service.



The Panel carried out a review of online self-service. We believe the new, streamlined registration process has resulted in more customers using online self-service. We found the service easy to use and convenient for customers. We will continue to review the take-up of online self-service and customer satisfaction with the service over the next 12 months.

# Supporting customers

We supported our tenants and their families to get the most out of their lives through a range of services and projects, many of which are funded through the Wheatley Foundation, our charitable trust.



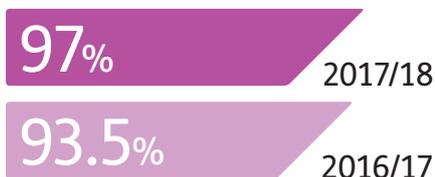
We meet with staff to find out first-hand how tenants are supported. We welcome the range of services tenants can receive, especially those which help with money, budgeting and longer term support which can help people who find themselves in challenging circumstances.

**This included providing jobs and training opportunities, support to get ready for work for those facing the biggest challenges, help with money, budgeting and benefits, access to bursaries to go to university and access to arts and sports projects.**

- In 2017/18 WLHP supported four customers into jobs and training
- We helped two people from our homes go to college or university through Wheatley Foundation’s bursary scheme which provides people with up to £1500 funding a year
- WLHP supported 40 newer tenants to help them manage their finances and settle into their community through Wheatley’s My Great Start service.



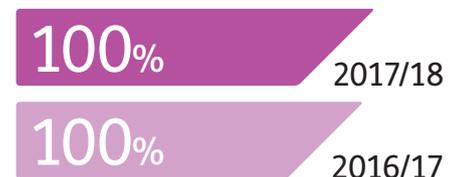
**Overall satisfaction**  
Tenants satisfied with the overall service



**Medical adaptations**  
Average time to complete approved applications for medical adaptations (calendar days)



**Complaints**  
Complaints responded to in full within SPSO timescales





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